

Valley
Rural Electric
Cooperative, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

Valley Rural Electric
Cooperative, Inc.
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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

James Stauffer
Chairman

Leroy Barnes
Vice Chairman
PREA Director

Kevin States
Secretary

Cindy Bigelow
Treasurer

Robert Holmes
Allegheny Director

Corey Brumbaugh
Mervin Brumbaugh
Gregory Henry
Linda McMath

CORPORATE OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Friday
7 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

HUNTINGDON/MARTINSBURG/SHADE GAP
OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Thursday
7 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

OUTAGES & EMERGENCIES

1-800-432-0680

FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Don't energize us; we'll energize you



by Wayne Miller
President & CEO

IT SEEMS more people are into “prepping” these days than ever before. At one end of the preparedness spectrum, there are folks trying to get ready for “the big one” — whatever catastrophe they think that may be — by digging bunkers and stockpiling years’ worth of supplies. On the other end, there are people who just think it

prudent, and rightfully so, to have some extra food, water and a first aid kit on hand in the event of a storm. Either way, for a lot of people this preparation includes having a portable generator in case the electricity is off for an extended period of time.

Generators certainly can be useful. But they also present some dangers. Since May is Electrical Safety Month, it’s a great time to think about how best to utilize a generator and how to prevent it from becoming a threat to our line workers. When Valley REC crews respond to an outage or begin scheduled line maintenance, there are safety procedures to follow. One of the most important is to determine whether or not a line is energized, since there’s a lot of difference between working with a “dead” wire and a live one. For this reason, we ask that you never, ever plug a portable generator directly into one of your home’s outlets — unless you have had a qualified electrician install a “transfer switch” in your home. If you don’t have a transfer switch, power provided by the generator can “backfeed” onto the power lines, endangering any crews working on the system.


There are Valley REC members who can safely feed power onto our distribution lines — through properly connected, small-scale, renewable energy generation systems. That equipment has been properly designed so it cannot backfeed onto an unenergized line.

To avoid energizing our lines the wrong way, please remember: transfer switch and proper installation. Additionally, if you come across a generator interconnection that you’re not sure is safe, contact an electrician. Valley REC sells ProTran transfer switches for proper generator installation.

Here are a few other things to keep in mind: gas-powered portable generators create carbon monoxide (CO), an odorless, colorless gas that can be deadly. Exhaust from the engine needs to be vented outside. Having the unit in an attached garage and opening the windows isn’t good enough; the CO could seep indoors. It’s recommended the unit be at least 15 feet from the home.

Also, generators should be kept dry. This often means erecting a canopy over the unit. Plug appliances directly into the generator using heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cords, but don’t overload the unit. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for maximum load.

To avoid risk of fire, shut off the generator before refueling. And it’s a good idea to have a fully charged fire extinguisher nearby, just in case.

At Valley Rural Electric Co-op, safety, for our employees and members alike, is top priority. Our commitment is to provide safe, reliable service. Let us bring electricity to you — and please don’t send any back, unless you have a properly-connected generation system. 

Valley REC members elect two new directors, one incumbent at 2013 annual meeting

Event draws nearly 600 voting members

BY LUANNE H. ECKENRODE
Vice President, Consumer Services & Public Relations

THE 592 voting members in attendance at Valley Rural Electric Cooperative's Annual Meeting Friday, April 12, at Huntingdon Area High School elected two new directors and one incumbent to represent the utility's nearly 22,000 consumers.

Chosen to serve on the co-op's board of directors for a three-year term were:

District 7 — Gregory M. Henry of Hustontown, Fulton County;

District 8 — Linda J. McMath of Shade Gap, Huntingdon County; and

District 9 — Cindy D. Bigelow of Williamsburg, Blair County.

Incumbent David Wright of Needmore, Fulton County, ran against Henry, and incumbent Earl E. Parsons of Blairs Mills, Huntingdon County, ran against McMath. Bigelow ran unopposed on the ballot.

Valley REC board Chairman James R. Stauffer of McVeytown, Mifflin County, presided over the meeting, which drew a crowd of about 1,000. He and Valley President and CEO Wayne F. Miller presented reports on how technological innovations are impacting the co-op's operating efficiencies and service reliability and the role



LEADERSHIP: Valley Rural Electric Cooperative President and CEO Wayne Miller, left, and Chairman of the Board James Stauffer, right, offer congratulations to newly elected directors, from left: Gregory Henry, Linda McMath and Cindy Bigelow, at the co-op's annual meeting April 12 at Huntingdon Area High School. Below: Miller explains Valley's rate structure during a speech to members.

members play as owners of the cooperative.

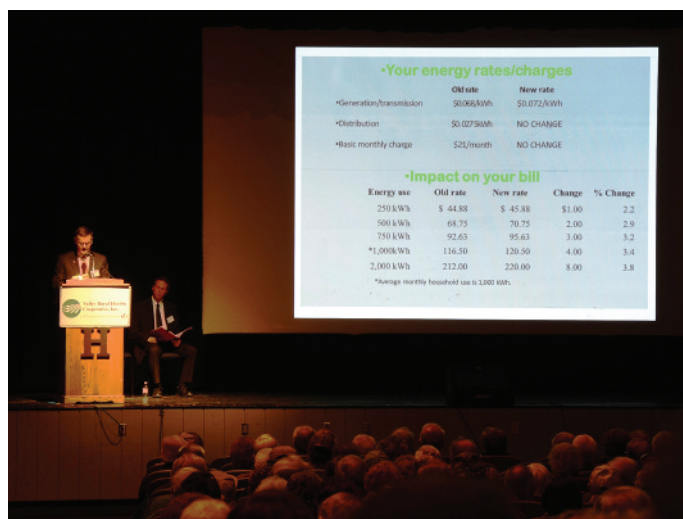
"Because of flat energy sales and rising generation costs, it's more important than ever that we look to innovative technologies to help us work smarter to keep your electric bills affordable," Miller said during the meeting. "This is all the more true when you consider that your co-op serves less than eight consumers per mile of line, compared with an average of 25 consumers per mile of line for private power companies."

"We are efficiently integrating new technologies into our system operations," Miller said. "As part of our technology work plan, we have just deployed a robust outage management system that integrates our computerized mapping, automated metering and interactive voice response communications system.

Incorporating these technologies into the outage management system provides prompt, specific information to our staff, so they can better analyze and respond to service interruptions. This means reduced outage time for you, especially during severe weather events."

Miller also reminded co-op members about the benefits and responsibilities of co-op membership. "As not-for-profit cooperatives, our power supply needs are met by Allegheny Electric Cooperative through a mix of self-owned generation resources providing about 70 percent of our energy needs, with the rest coming from market purchases," he said. "You may find it surprising, but, by comparison, private power companies in Pennsylvania rely solely on the open market for their generation needs."

"Having some of our own resources, through Allegheny, provides great benefits in terms of keeping our power costs low and our rates stable," Miller added. "In order to ensure that those resources continue to bring us these benefits, we have a responsibility to properly operate and maintain them."



*Your energy rates/charges			
	Old rate	New rate	
*Generation/transmission	\$0.06/kWh	\$0.072/kWh	
*Distribution	\$0.0275/kWh	NO CHANGE	
*Basic monthly charge	\$21/month	NO CHANGE	

*Impact on your bill				
Energy use	Old rate	New rate	Change	% Change
250 kWh	\$ 44.88	\$ 45.88	\$1.00	2.2
500 kWh	68.75	70.75	2.00	2.9
750 kWh	92.63	95.63	3.00	3.2
*1,000 kWh	116.50	120.50	4.00	3.4
2,000 kWh	212.00	220.00	8.00	3.8

*Average monthly household use is 1,000 kWh.

“Our diversified approach to meeting your energy supply needs combines self-owned generation assets, like the Susquehanna nuclear plant near Berwick, Pa., and the William F. Matson Generating Station at Lake Raystown here in Huntingdon County, with market-based power purchases,” he stated. “This combination has been providing electric co-op consumers an extremely reliable and competitively priced supply of electricity for many years. It seems the thinking of our co-op founders holds true today: The best way to ensure that our demand for electricity is met is to meet that need ourselves — by working together, cooperatively, to bring that energy to our homes, farms and businesses.”

Board Chairman James Stauffer followed Miller’s speech with comments about the term “the cooperative advantage” and what it means to co-op members.

“The cooperative business model thrives

This ownership extends to our power supply portfolio, where reliability and affordability are the chief concerns — not maximizing profits. Simply put, each of us is a part-owner of the machinery that powers our homes and businesses.”

“As Valley members, you’re also part of a larger co-op community, through our statewide organization, the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association; our generation and transmission cooperative, Allegheny Electric Cooperative; and, on a broader stage, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association,” Stauffer continued. “By banding together, we have the power to safeguard our interests — through political activity on the state and national levels, and by taking advantage of the purchasing power of an alliance of electric cooperatives in the region.”

“As members, we even have the power to impact the rates we pay for electricity,”

Stauffer added. “Electric co-ops across the state have led the effort to curb peak demand. Valley has been operating a load management system since 1986. Thanks to the cooperation of more than 4,500 members, Valley has been able to save nearly \$9 million in wholesale power costs over the past 24 years by controlling water heaters and heating and

cooling systems during those times when the demand for, and the cost of, electricity is the highest.”

“This helps us control electric rates because it trims costly demand charges and reduces our need for new generating capacity,” he stated. “On a larger scale, this program has saved Pennsylvania’s electric cooperative members more than \$106 million since it began.”

Distinguished guests in attendance included state Sen. John Eichelberger (R-Blair); state Reps. Mike Fleck (R-Huntingdon) and Jerry Stern (R-Blair); Huntingdon County Commissioners Dean Fluke, Gary



ABOVE: Members vote during the business portion of the annual meeting.

O’Korn and Jeff Thomas; National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation Regional Vice President James Meiers; and Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association Public Affairs/Member Services Specialist Stephanie Okuniewski. Other highlights of the meeting included entertainment provided by vocalist Joanne Stiffler, who presented “A Tribute to Patsy Cline.” Nearly 25 children attended the event. They enjoyed a big-screen viewing of Dr. Seuss’ “The Lorax,” refreshments, balloons and a presentation by 2012 Huntingdon County Dairy Princess Samantha Bliss of Huntingdon.

Christina Parson of Blairs Mills, Larry and Mary Buckwalter of Honey Brook and Herbert Grove of Felton each won a \$100 co-op gift certificate, and Ross Walters of Hustontown won a \$250 co-op gift certificate. Members in attendance received a \$15 credit on their electric bills and a souvenir indoor/outdoor thermometer. In addition, meeting attendees who brought with them spent compact fluorescent lightbulbs had cooperative staff properly dispose of them. ♻️



FUN FOR ALL: Children attending the event enjoy a snack and a movie. After registering, below left, members could visit energy efficiency and equipment displays, below right, prior to the start of the meeting. (Photos by Bob Wareham)

because of the special relationship between consumer-focused electric cooperatives and their owner-members,” Stauffer said. “As Valley members, we have a direct ownership stake in our co-op. That’s a very powerful advantage you have over your counterparts served by a private power company.



School lets out soon: How much electricity will the kids be using all day?

DEPENDING on the school district in which you live, classes could be letting out for summer vacation before the first full week of June has passed. If your house is one that will go from quiet and empty all day to kids hanging out and powering up video games, computers, cell phones, fans and more, a higher-than-normal electric bill could be in the works.

Summer vacation can create the perfect storm for high electric bills. Think swimming pools, air conditioning and lights burning even if no one is in the room. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) estimates that 9 percent of household energy costs are dedicated to air conditioning alone. So, try these tips to keep costs down when the kids are home.

Use power strips

Get your family in the habit of turning electronics on and off via power strips as they move from one activity to the next. As electronics and appliances become more technologically savvy, they often draw power even while turned off. It's called "phantom load." A good indicator is lights or clocks that stay on even when the appliance is "off."

Sound scary? This phantom will add a few kilowatt-hours to energy consumption on each of your many electronic devices. To avoid this silent power draw, unplug the device or invest in a "smart" power strip, which allows certain electronics — like a cable box, which takes time to reboot after it's been unplugged — to continue using electricity while others can be com-

pletely shut down. Valley REC has smart strips available for sale at all offices.

Keep it cool, not cold

More people in the house plus doors hanging open from the last trip to play outside plus high temperatures equal an air-conditioning unit that has to work harder to keep the house cool. Adjust settings to maximize efficiency. Use the "auto" function instead of keeping the fan running all the time.

Regular maintenance to keep your air conditioner or heat pump in good working order is a good idea, as is checking the air filter every few months and replacing it if it's dirty.

Set your thermostat as high as you can while maintaining your comfort level. The smaller the difference between indoor air and the great outdoors, the lower your cooling costs will be. And make sure to rearrange your furniture so that appliances that put out a lot of heat aren't near the thermostat.

Cover the pool

About 70 percent of the heat lost from swimming pools results from evaporation, caused by both wind and water. Frequently refilling the pool bumps up electric use if you have to reheat the water.

To save energy, cover a pool when it's not in use. Pool size and shape factor into choosing the right cover. The most expensive pool covers are incorporated into the pool structure and can come with an automatic retraction and storage system.

Manual covers may be cheaper, but removing them can be a dirty job. You can also choose solar covers resembling bubble wrap.

Make your co-op your resource

Clicking on the "Save Energy & Money" tab at www.valleyrec.com can get you started on the path to energy efficiency. Our energy efficiency expert can help you determine the right steps for your home, including whether an energy audit will help find more savings. ☀

Sources: U.S. Department of Energy, Cooperative Research Network

Magen Howard and Michael Kahn contributed to this report.

Pole inspection slated

Valley REC has contracted with Osmose Utilities Service, Inc. to conduct a pole inspection. The survey verifies the stability of utility poles and requires inspectors to access rights-of-way. The inspection begins in May and runs through the fall. This year's inspection will take place in the following areas:

Huntingdon District — Tyrone Township, Blair County; Harris Township, Centre County; and Barree, Franklin, Jackson, Spruce Creek and Warriors Mark townships, Huntingdon County.

Martinsburg District — Pavia Township, Bedford County; and Allegheny, Blair, Freedom and Greenfield townships, Blair County.

Shade Gap District — Bethel, Belfast and Licking Creek townships, Fulton County; and Lack and Tuscarora townships, Juniata County.



INVESTMENT: Valley REC line crews in April set new poles and string new wire along School House Hollow Road in Henderson Township, Huntingdon County. The upgrade is part of a 2013 work plan project that will continue into the fall. Crews completed the initial work with minimal interruption of service to members. (Photo by Doug Roles)