

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

Robert Holmes
Vice Chairman

Kevin States
Secretary

Cindy Bigelow
Treasurer

Leroy Barnes
PREA Director

Robert Holmes
Allegheny Director

Mervin Brumbaugh
Gregory Henry
Linda McMath

CORPORATE OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Thursday
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
District nomination meetings



by Rich Bauer
President & CEO


LAST MONTH, the cooperative held district nominating meetings in Districts 2, 4 and 6. One candidate from each district was nominated to run for the board of directors, and there was a lot of good discussion.

As a CEO who is new to a co-op that holds nominating meetings, I wanted to try a new approach to the “CEO remarks” section. I’m not a slide show presenter or a charts-and-graph person. I consider myself more of a talker, a “question-and-answer guy.” So, I asked members what was on their minds. At all three meetings, I received great questions on everything from windmills to the national grid. That’s awesome. This truly is what a cooperative is about.

The topic that generated the most questions was our demand response unit (DRU) program. Now, what is a DRU and how does it work? A DRU can turn the elements in your water heater on and off. This is important because during peak use times, when the cost of capacity is the highest, we are able to turn off the elements to conserve electricity. By doing this, the entire cooperative benefits from lower capacity costs. We have over 3,700 DRUs installed and would like to double or triple that number. Participating members should not be inconvenienced. If for some reason you run out of hot water, we will come and adjust the unit to make sure that doesn’t happen again. It is truly a win-win for the members and the cooperative. If you don’t already participate in this program, please take a minute to consider it because not only is it helping to keep your power costs down, but you also receive a \$100 bill credit.

Right-of-way cutting was probably the second most popular topic discussed. We have more than 2,500 miles of line to maintain on a five-year cycle, so we try to cut approximately 400 miles of line a year. Please be understanding with our cutting crews. Remember that every person “downstream” of you on the line is counting on good rights-of-way “upstream” to keep their power on.

“Why do my lights blink?” was another frequently asked questions. The good news is that the line is doing its job. If there is a problem in your house, one of your breakers trips and you reset it. Because our system is exposed to the elements, tree limbs and furry critters, we have installed “advanced” breakers. Sixty-five percent of all line contacts (such as a tree limb or squirrel) clear themselves. Our breakers will open if a contact occurs, but then reclose up to three times to determine if the contact is still there. Those are the blinks you see. If the problem clears itself, then the line stays on. If the problem persists, the breaker will stay open until our crews can come to the site. Blinks, though annoying, show the breakers are working properly. If our breakers worked like your house breakers, every time a tree limb brushed against a power line, you would be out of power and our crews would be called out.

Again, thank you very much for the opportunity to serve you at Valley REC. I really appreciate the attendance and questions at the nominating meetings, and I hope to see more of you at next year’s meetings. If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please don’t hesitate to call and ask. Have a safe and happy month, and I hope to see you at this year’s annual meeting on April 10 at Huntingdon Area High School. Take care and God bless. 

Work plan projects improve system reliability



BY DOUG ROLES

Manager of Member Services

WHEN Valley REC's operations manager, Todd Ross, talks about the work plan projects to be completed this year, he repeatedly uses two words — system reliability. He says efforts now to replace aging equipment in various parts of Valley's service area will benefit the distribution system for years to come.

"A work plan is all about system reliability," Todd says. "It's about improving service for members."

Operations and engineering staff at Valley REC bundle the most pressing system maintenance needs into multi-year work plans. The projects to be completed this year are part of the \$16.3 million 2014-17 work plan.

"Most of the power line we're replacing now is from the 1950s and 1960s," Todd says. "It just gets old. It's conductor that has a steel core that rusts and becomes brittle. That's what's happening."

Work plan projects will take place in each of Valley's three service districts — Huntingdon, Martinsburg and Shade Gap.

In the Shade Gap District, system improvements include pole replacements and "reconductoring" (the term co-op personnel use for replacing power lines) in Licking Creek Township, Fulton County.

Rebuilding of distribution lines will also be done in Catharine Township, Blair County. That work is in the Martinsburg District near Williamsburg.

"Members will see us there a lot this year," Todd adds. "And we're working in both Cass and Todd townships in Huntingdon County (Huntingdon District) this year."

The work in those two townships will entail converting some of the distribution system from single phase (one line) to three phase (three lines). Doing so enables operations staff to "backfeed" circuits in those areas in the event of a localized outage. Converting areas to three-phase service has been a routine part of work plan projects.

"On top of that work,

we're going to perform various substation improvements," Todd says of equipment upgrades in certain locations.

Replacement of deteriorated wire and poles can be viewed from a glass-half-full standpoint. Sections of power line being replaced now have served the co-op for more than half a century. Todd says line crews still come across original poles that date to the late 1930s, when the co-op was incorporated and the first lines were energized. ☀

ABOVE: Valley REC line crews set a new pole in Catharine Township, Blair County. **Below:** Trevor Eichelberger, left, Ryan Dodson, Bill Bogel and Greg Dilling attach hardware to the pole top.



2015 Valley REC Board Candidates

IN FEBRUARY, Valley REC held nominating meetings in co-op Districts 2, 4 and 6. The members featured on this page were nominated for positions on the board of directors.

Their names will be placed on a ballot, and members attending the annual meeting April 10 at 7 p.m. at Huntingdon Area High School can vote for the candidates of their choice.

Entertainment for this year's annual meeting will feature John Denver tribute artist Chris Collins. Children may also attend. They will enjoy a big-screen movie, snacks and a dairy promotion presentation.

Each member who attends will receive a \$15 credit on his/her electric bill and a folding bag chair. Those registered will also be eligible to win one \$250 or one of four \$75 co-op gift certificates.

In addition, attendees may bring to the meeting any spent compact fluorescent light bulbs (compact spirals only, please). Co-op staff will properly dispose of them. Please plan to attend the annual meeting, April 10, 7 p.m., Huntingdon Area High School. ☀

District 2

James Stauffer
175 Aultz Lane
McVeytown, PA 17051



A 1978 graduate of Kishacoquillas High School, Jim Stauffer owns and operates a 180-acre dairy farm with a herd of 140 milking cows. He farms a total of 200 acres and ships his milk through Dairy Farms of America Cooperative.

Jim was employed for 10 years as manager of Brookland Mills, a retail livestock feed and fuel oil delivery service in McVeytown. Prior to that time, he worked as a truck driver for a fertilizer plant in the Belleville area.

Jim and his wife, Carol, are members of Centre Union Church, Lewistown. Jim teaches an adult Sunday school class and serves as an elder.

Jim and Carol have three grown children, twins Ben and Brittney, and their younger sibling, Josh. The Stauffers have been married for 34 years.

A native of Belleville, Jim is 55 years old. He has been a member of Valley REC since 1993, and has served on the co-op board of directors since 1997. He held the office of vice chairman for two years and currently serves as chairman of the board. He is running unopposed on the ballot for District 2.

District 4



Joanne Whitsel
7925 Windy Summit Lane
Mapleton Depot, PA 17052

Joanne is running unopposed on the ballot for District 4. She retired from serving as director of the Crossroads Pregnancy Center, a faith-based and life-affirming service with offices in Huntingdon, Mifflin and Juniata counties. She also served as a jury commis-

sioner for the Huntingdon County Court of Common Pleas for 14 years. For the past year, she has served the court as tipstaff.

Joanne graduated from Captain Jack (now Mount Union Area) High School in 1964, then completed a cosmetology program at Penn State Beauty Academy, State College. She worked as a self-employed hairdresser for 20 years.

Joanne is a native of Wayne Township, Mifflin County. She likes to stay active and, when time permits, enjoys painting and drawing. A year ago, Joanne and her sister started an antique consignment business. They have a booth at the Duncansville Antique Depot, Blair County.

Joanne is a member of Cornelius Chapel Methodist Church and also attends Beech Run Brethren Church, both in Hares Valley. Joanne enjoys spending time with her seven grandchildren. She and her late husband, Nelson, have three grown children, Jonelle, Nathan, and Jonathan.

Joanne is 68. She has been a Valley REC member since 1971.

District 6

Leroy Barnes
445 Sarah Drive
Portage, PA 15946



Leroy Barnes has successfully operated his family's dairy farm in partnership with his brother, Barry, since 1968. They currently milk 220 Holsteins and raise corn and alfalfa on approximately 700 acres of ground.

A 1966 graduate of Claysburg-Kimmel High School, Leroy holds an associate degree in computer management from the ICM School of Business in Pittsburgh.

Leroy is a member of the Mount Hope United Church of Christ near Blue Knob, where he serves on the consistory. He is a former member of the Blue Knob Fire Company and served three years as a director for Long's Dairy, a milk marketing cooperative in Tyrone. He currently serves as a director on the Allied Milk Producers board.

In his free time, Leroy enjoys hunting.

Leroy is 66 years old and has three grown children and six grandchildren. A native of Blue Knob, Leroy has been a member of Valley REC for more than 30 years. He has served on the co-op board for nine years, including as vice chairman, and is currently the co-op's representative on the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association board. He is running unopposed on the ballot for District 6.

2015 golf tourney to benefit Southern Huntingdon High School classmates

BY DOUG ROLES

Manager of Member Services

THE 2015 Valley Rural Electric Charity Golf Outing will benefit two Southern Huntingdon County High School classmates, Destiny Devlin and Wade Stains. The students, both 15 and from Cromwell Township, Huntingdon County, have been fighting cancer as their families cope with the trauma and expenses caused by the disease.

Destiny is the daughter of Duane and Ronnie Hardy. She was diagnosed with Hodgkins lymphoma in June 2011, a week after her 12th birthday. She has endured three rounds of chemotherapy, stem cell and bone marrow transplants and has seen her cancer go into remission and return. Destiny has spent many weeks at Hershey Medical Center.

"We know the Stains family really well," Duane says, adding that the two teenagers have kept tabs on one another. "Destiny's heart just broke when she heard about Wade."

Wade is the son of Darren and Stephanie Stains. He was diagnosed with neuroblastoma in May 2012, about a year after Destiny's diagnosis. He also has undergone treatments in Hershey and in Philadelphia. The disease limits him to just several hours of wakefulness each day. He has not been able to attend school since November.

Stephanie says the Hardy family has been a support system for her family. The

two teens have been able to lean on each other.

"They've been best friends for a long time," Stephanie says. "They're pretty tight. They were even at clinic together one day."

This year's golf tournament, organized by Valley REC's Health and Wellness Committee, will help these two families with medical and related expenses. The event will be held at the American Legion Country Club, near Mount Union, on Thursday June 11.

This will be Valley's fourth annual charity golf outing. The tournament is the largest event planned each year by the committee, which is comprised of co-op employees from all three district offices and the corporate office. Along with planning the event, the committee is responsible for selecting beneficiaries.

Registration for the tournament, a four-player scramble, is set for 11 a.m. with tee-off at 1 p.m. The tournament will follow a "best ball" format and include a putting contest and longest-drive contest. The cost is \$75 per player. That registration fee includes 18 holes of golf, a cart, lunch and a buffet-style awards dinner.

Donations of prize or food items are welcome and teams are still forming. Those wishing to enter the event or make a donation should contact Travis Kuhstos, committee chair. He can be reached by phone at 814-386-3815 or by email at tkuhstos@valleyrec.com.



WINNING TEAM: Southern Huntingdon County High School classmates Wade Stains and Destiny Devlin are the beneficiaries of Valley REC's 2015 golf tournament. The two 15-year-olds are a great support to each other as they fight cancer.

Valley's Health and Wellness Committee has raised more than \$36,000 for charity since its inception in 2010. In addition to the golf outing, fundraising events have included a walkathon, a horseshoe tournament, a "Kickin' It For Cans" food drive, two softball tournaments and participation in Relay for Life events in 2011, 2012, and 2013. 🌟

2015 Annual Meeting - Valley Rural Electric Cooperative

7 p.m., April 10, 2015
Huntingdon Area High School
Scenic territory slides - 6:30 p.m.
Elections - Districts 2, 4 & 6

**\$15 OFF YOUR ELECTRIC BILL
AND A GREAT NIGHT OUT!
YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS IT!**

**Entertainment
John Denver tribute artist Chris Collins**

**Kids enjoy a big-screen movie,
dairy presentation and snacks**

**Door prizes - Co-op gift certificates
1 - \$250 & 4 - \$75**

More details coming soon in your mailbox