

Valley Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A 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

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Chairman
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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



Upcoming changes in a year full of surprises

By Rich Bauer

COVID-19 has caused our world to rapidly change, and here at your cooperative, we have instituted procedures to try to halt the spread of the virus.

Electricity is a vital part of life, and we are committed to providing it to you during this pandemic. We have a four-step plan of action in place. We have split our employees into two groups, and each group is working every other week to ensure we will always have someone available to take care of any issues that may arise. During their off-week, employees are required to work remotely and be available in case they are needed for an outage or emergency project. This method seems to be working well, and we will continue to use it until the spread of the virus drops below an acceptable level.

Another change we have implemented has to do with our district nominating meetings and our annual meeting. Your board of directors struggled with this decision because the cooperative has always prided itself on being out and about in the community, as well as meeting face to face to conduct its business. Having said that, your board felt strongly that the safety of our membership must always come first.

So we are moving forward with changing our face-to-face district nominating meetings and annual meeting for 2021.

Nominating meetings are going to be replaced by the opportunity for a member in one of the three districts (Districts 2, 4 and 6) up for election in 2021 to obtain a petition to run for the board.

Please read the article on the following pages for a more detailed explanation. Every member in those three districts will also receive a letter explaining the procedure, as well as who is eligible to run. We will hold our first “drive-thru” annual meeting at the Huntingdon County Fairgrounds April 9, 2021, from 4-7 p.m. Members will receive their ballots and drop them off without ever leaving the comfort of their vehicles.

We felt this was the only way to ensure our membership would be safe while still allowing the democratic process to continue. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the office.

To try to help everyone affected by this pandemic, your board of directors has authorized approximately \$2.2 million to be returned to the membership in capital credits retirements. These retirements will be credited on your December bill if you are still a cooperative member, while a check will be issued to those who are no longer members. This retirement will be the largest your cooperative has done, but all involved in the decision believed this would be the best solution to try to help the entire membership during this trying time.

I hope you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving and are looking forward to a Merry Christmas. As always, if you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me or the office. Thank you for being part of this wonderful cooperative family and God Bless. ☀️

Valley REC's 2021 annual meeting to use drive-thru format at Huntingdon County Fairgrounds

COVID-19 concerns cancel co-op's district nominating events

By Doug Roles

Vice President of Member Services

ONGOING COVID-19 restrictions have caused Valley Rural Electric Cooperative's board of directors to implement changes for next year's four member meetings. Uncertainty about the level of restrictions that may be in place in the next two to four months has led to cancellation of in-person gatherings for the 2021 district nominating meetings and the annual meeting.

The April 2021 annual meeting will be a drive-thru event at the Huntingdon County Fairgrounds instead of being held at the Huntingdon Area High School as usual. The three in-person nominating meetings, normally held in February, have not been scheduled, and members in those districts will instead be nominated for election to the board by gathering signatures.

"Like other organizations across the country, electric cooperatives have had to find ways to conduct member business while ensuring the safety of consumers and employees," says Valley REC President & CEO Rich Bauer. "We're disappointed that we won't be sharing a fire hall meal and fellowship with members at nominating meetings

MEETINGS CANCELED:

District nominating meetings, like this 2020 event at the Marklesburg fire hall, are normally held in early February. Due to COVID-19 concerns, the 2021 events have been canceled and replaced with a signature-gathering process.



PHOTO BY DOUG ROLES



PHOTO BY DOUG ROLES

DRIVE-THRU: Uncertainty about how long COVID-19 restrictions will be in place for gatherings has caused Valley Rural Electric Cooperative to move to a drive-thru format for its 2021 annual meeting. The member event is slated for Friday, April 9, at the Huntingdon County Fairgrounds.

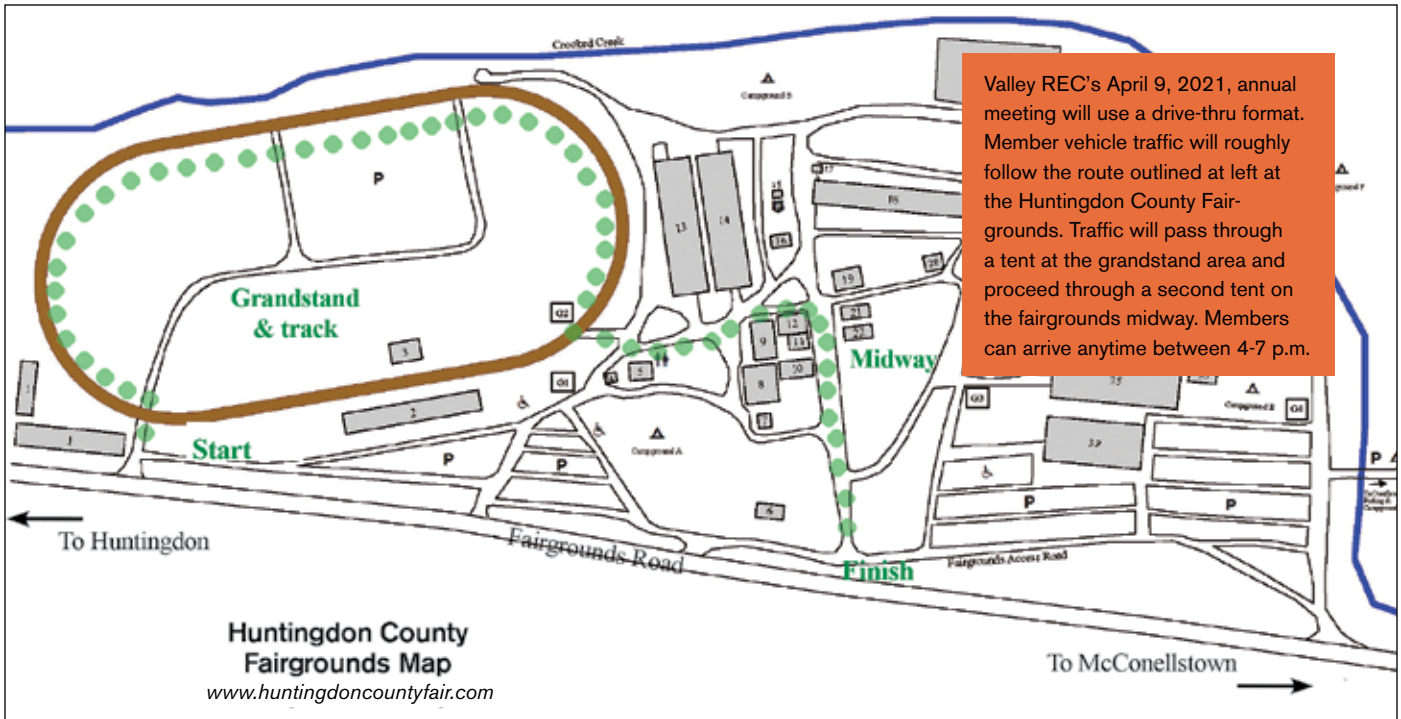
this February, but we believe members will find the drive-thru format for April's annual meeting a safe and convenient way to participate in their business."

Valley's 2021 annual meeting is slated for Friday, April 9. Members can come to the fairgrounds, across from Valley REC's corporate office, any time between 4-7 p.m. Member vehicle traffic will be directed through tents erected at the grandstand track and the fairgrounds midway. At the grandstand

tent, members will be provided with an annual report, a ballot and other items. Ballots will be collected at the second tent where a free gift will be distributed and bill credit stubs will be collected.

Each participating membership will receive a \$25 bill credit. There will be a drawing after the meeting for one \$200 bill credit and six \$100 bill credits. Members will not have to be present to win. A letter with more information about the annual meeting will be mailed to all members in March.

Each year, three of the nine seats on the co-op's board of directors are up for election. Members in the districts with open seats in 2021 — Districts 2, 4 and 6 — will receive a mailing this month explaining the signature-gathering process in place for those who would like to be nominated. Interested members will be required to collect the signatures of 10 members in good standing within their districts, using a form provided by the co-op. The names of nominees will appear on the ballot at the annual meeting.



Valley REC's April 9, 2021, annual meeting will use a drive-thru format. Member vehicle traffic will roughly follow the route outlined at left at the Huntingdon County Fairgrounds. Traffic will pass through a tent at the grandstand area and proceed through a second tent on the fairgrounds midway. Members can arrive anytime between 4-7 p.m.

Valley REC's 2020 district nominating meetings took place prior to the pandemic. The co-op's 2020 annual meeting, which had been slated for April 3, was canceled as COVID-19 cases climbed and restrictions on gatherings first went into effect. There were no contested races for board seats in 2020, so the three incumbent nominees retained their positions on the board.

The nation's electric co-ops have come up with a variety of ways to hold

member meetings. Some meetings have been live streamed or prerecorded and then made available online. Drive-in theaters have also been used in addition to drive-thru events.

Valley REC's planning for nominating meetings and the annual meeting begins months in advance of the events. Nominating meetings typically include an update from the CEO and a question-and-answer period following the meal.

In addition to the election of directors, normal annual meetings have included an update from both the CEO and the board president, live entertainment and brief comments from a high school senior who participated in the previous summer's National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Youth Tour program. The COVID-19 pandemic canceled the 2020 Youth Tour program as well as many of Valley REC's normal events and activities. 🌞

Heating assistance funds available now

The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services is reporting that help is now available with winter utility and heating bills. The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps families living on low incomes pay their heating bills in the form of a cash grant.

Households in immediate danger of being without heat can also qualify for crisis grants. The cash grant is a one-time payment sent directly to the utility company/fuel provider to be credited on the bill. These grants range from \$200 to \$1,000 based on household size, income and fuel type. Remember: This is a

grant and does not have to be repaid.

Applicants can use the COMPASS website (www.compass.state.pa.us). The website also provides an application that can be printed and taken to a local county assistance office. Applicants may also visit an office in person to fill out an application.

Applicants will receive written notice explaining their eligibility and the amount of assistance they'll receive. Allow 30 days for a response.

Residents do not have to be on public assistance to apply. They also don't have to have unpaid heating bills and may rent or own their home. 🌞

LIHEAP income guidelines	
Household Size	Income Limit
1	\$19,140
2	\$25,860
3	\$32,580
4	\$39,300
5	\$46,020
6	\$52,740
7	\$59,460
8	\$66,180
9	\$72,900
10	\$79,620

Retiree keeps one foot in workaday world, other on the green

By Doug Roles

Vice President of Member Services

FITTING it all in can be part challenge and part blessing for those who keep one foot in the workaday world after retiring. Judy Post, a recent Valley REC retiree, is balancing those two worlds, enjoying sleeping in and improving her golf game most days while maintaining a sprinkling of work commitments she and her husband, Paul, are continuing.

Judy's last day with Valley REC was April 30. Like anyone who retired or semi-retired this spring, Judy found herself with more free time but fewer options on what to do with it due to COVID-19 restrictions on travel and gatherings.

"I was pretty fortunate. The lake (Raystown) and the golf course were still open," says Judy, who lives across from the Huntingdon Country Club (HCC) course.

"We're looking forward to when we can travel again," she says, adding that a return trip to the Caribbean is on their wish list when flying and booking hotel rooms get back to normal.

Judy came on board with Valley REC in May 2010 as a cashier. It was a move back to full-time work after having reared two children while living in South Carolina and in the Huntingdon area.

"I was opening mail, processing payments and answering the phone," Judy recalls.



PHOTO BY DOUG ROLES

RETIRED LIFE: Paul and Judy Post pause for a photo at the Huntingdon Country Club golf course. Judy retired from Valley REC in April. She worked in the accounting department and served as capital credits clerk.

She came to Valley REC from a part-time teller position with Clearfield Bank & Trust in Huntingdon. Working with numbers, at the bank or at the co-op, was nothing new for her.

"Math was my background before I had children," says Judy, who has a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Mercer University in Macon, Ga., and has completed multiple graduate-level courses in applied mathematics and management science.

"My first job was as a computer programmer, and I wrote accounting programs," Judy recalls. "I actually wrote a package for Western Area Power Administration [a federal power administration company], so I knew a little about utilities."

Three years into her co-op career, Judy was assigned to Valley REC's accounting department for half the work week. She later moved into the accounting department full time and took on the responsibilities of capital credits clerk. She says working with Valley's process for returning patronage capital to members was the part of the job she enjoyed most.

"I liked dealing with the people," Judy says. "I was able to give them money. I enjoyed the work and learning new things."

Judy was familiar with her local electric cooperative, having been a Valley

REC member when she first moved to the Huntingdon area. A Florida native, she has lived in this area for about 20 years but has called a lot of places home. Her father made a career of the U.S. Navy, serving on carriers and as an instructor, and the family lived in the Carolinas, Florida, Rhode Island, Tennessee and on the West Coast.

Paul and Judy, who married seven years ago, have Florida in common. He has family connections to the state and has a home there. Paul has a degree in economics, and he and Judy plan to continue to do tax preparation work in Pennsylvania and Florida. They'll be spending January, February and March in the Sunshine State but plan to be back in Pennsylvania about the time the weather here turns into golfing weather.

The Posts are just a long drive (golf club, not cart) from the HCC clubhouse and have enjoyed hitting the links together for years. Paul worked as a caddie at the club while a teenager and has worked on the groundskeeping crew. Judy now helps out in the pro-shop one day a week and enjoys talking to club visitors.

Upon her retirement, Valley REC presented Judy with a charming wooden rocking chair. The way she's still going, it should last her a long time. Here's wishing Judy, and Paul, a productive and restful retirement. 🌞

Celebrate safely!

1/3 of Christmas Tree fires are caused by electrical malfunctions.

Information collected from The National Fire Protection Association.