

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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Guest Column



Resolve to stay safe around electricity

By Doug Roles, *Vice President of Member Services*

EVEN THOUGH it just started, we'll be looking back on 2021 sooner than we realize. When you look back on this "new" year, will it have been one of using electricity safely?

If 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic taught us one thing, it's that we don't have control over many things. Fortunately, using electricity is one area where we can safeguard ourselves, as long as we're aware of the dangers. Since this is the time of year for making resolutions, let's resolve that an electrical accident won't be part of our 2021.

Our modern lifestyle puts electricity at our fingertips, but it also means electrical hazards surround us. It could be an overloaded outlet, a damaged extension cord or a faulty appliance. Bad habits we've developed could make us more vulnerable to shocks, too. To hail 2021 as one of electrical safety, let's review a few basics about our power supply.

A particularly dangerous misconception is that a downed power line is a dead line. Whether caused by a storm or a car accident, a fallen power line can still be energized, with no telltale sparking or crackling. If you come across this situation, assume the line is still energized. Stay back and call 911 immediately.


A line doesn't have to come crashing down to pose a hazard. Sometimes people get too close on their own. Be cautious when using ladders or operat-

ing heavy equipment near power lines. And remember, children climbing trees can get dangerously close, too.

A safe approach to electricity also means doing your part to keep our crews safe. One of the biggest dangers to lineworkers when restoring power is that a consumer will use a portable generator unsafely. Plugging a generator into an outlet creates a dangerous backfeeding situation. When a portable generator sends electricity back through power lines, it can injure or kill lineworkers who are restoring service.

To safely power portions of your home during an outage, contact us and ask about a GenerLink switch. This meter-mounted transfer switch ensures you can safely use a generator while our crews get the lights back on.

Many people don't believe that household electricity poses danger like larger lines do. The fact is household current can kill, particularly if water is involved. Be cautious of using lights, appliances, or power tools near water, when exiting the shower or a pool, or when it's raining. All outlets near water sources should have ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) that shut off power if there is an irregularity, preventing an electric shock.

After the challenges of the past year, it's good to know that there are some hazards we can greatly minimize just by building awareness. Here's wishing you a safe and Happy New Year. 

ORDER UP: Diana Beatty boxes up an order of cupcakes in her basement bakery in Wayne Township, Mifflin County. She started Love & Butter Bakery after retiring last spring from a career as an education counselor. She hopes to use her business as a learning tool for local culinary students.



PHOTO BY DOUG ROLES

Passion Flour

Valley member's bakery business gives rise to learning opportunities

By Doug Roles

Vice President of Member Services

A MCVEYTOWN-area Valley REC member hopes to turn her home-based bakery into a learning opportunity for culinary students while using the business to breathe new life into a local landmark. Love & Butter Bakery, in Wayne Township, Mifflin County, is the realization of a dream for Diana Beatty, who has always enjoyed cooking and baking, and is equally passionate about lifelong learning.

Diana retired in March 2020 after a career as a state Department of Corrections school principal at State Correctional Institution (SCI)-Huntingdon. Her husband, Larry, also worked as a school principal for the department

and retired six years ago. He encouraged Diana to make a transition last year to pursue combining her passions for baking and education.

"I thought, 'If I ever want to do it, now's the time,'" Diana explains. "I've always baked, always made cookies for weddings."

Diana, a Fayette County native, was working at SCI-Greene near Pittsburgh, when she met Larry at a DOC training event. Larry worked at SCI-Smithfield, near Huntingdon. Diana transferred to SCI-Huntingdon and worked as a counselor at SCI-Smithfield. She was later promoted to principal and supervised the education department. DOC counselors advise inmates on education opportunities and assist them with getting their GEDs or taking a variety of vocational

and postsecondary courses.

"We had GED graduations, and I'd meet families of inmates," Diana recalls. "We had some success stories. I really liked that kind of work."

Since her retirement, Diana and Larry have been busy buying secondhand restaurant equipment. Larry follows auctions in Harrisburg and has found some deals, including a walk-in refrigerator. Diana's basement bakery boasts a commercial microwave, a convection oven, a bread proofer, and several refrigerators and freezers in addition to a large granite-topped table that Larry built.

Diana has gotten into a rhythm of taking orders, baking and washing dishes. She enjoys home improvement work and continues to improve her basement workspace as time allows.

She installed a 220-volt electric line to power her oven and recently finished installing tile in a bathroom constructed near the workspace.

Diana and Larry will have plenty of opportunity for building projects as they prepare a new space for Love & Butter. Last fall, they purchased the Mt. Nebo Church — in Shirley Township, Huntingdon County — from the Mount Union Area Historical Society.

The Beattys have painted the roof and installed gutters on the one-room church, which was built in 1853. The couple had a well drilled by Eriksen Well Drilling and Pump Service of Hesston, and Carl Bilger Contracting of Mount Union is putting in a septic system. Plans include building out the sides of the church, installing restrooms and creating an area for customers to pick up orders.

Diana will move most of her equipment to the church but will continue to do some baking in her home. She hopes to continue helping students reach their goals by working with the Huntingdon County Career & Technology Center to arrange for culinary students to tour her facility and possibly complete internships there.

“It’s more than just running a business,” Diana says. “I want it to be about community and education.”

On her mother’s side, Diana’s family is of Slovak descent and carries on a tradition of making platters of cookies for weddings. Families try to outdo each other by putting out the most elaborate spreads. Diana had a name in mind for her bakery since taking cookies to a niece’s wedding in Newport, R.I., several years ago. One of the attendees remarked that he could tell the cookies were made with love.

“I said, ‘And butter,’” Diana recalls. “And the name stuck.”

“I made cookies for all my kids’ weddings,” Diana says. “I taught myself how to make cupcakes from scratch. I don’t cut corners. We don’t use margarine. We use butter. Everything is homemade.”

Love & Butter Bakery makes wedding cakes, smash cakes, cupcakes and caramel apples. Customers can create



PHOTO BY DOUG ROLES

custom cupcakes by choosing the flavors of the cupcake, filling and icing. Popular flavors include chocolate-peanut butter, classic yellow, red velvet and even chocolate mocha. Filling flavors include vanilla, coffee, custard, and fruit flavors, and a variety of icings are available. For something more daring, try ordering a Guinness stout or pink champagne cupcake.

Diana, who was an art minor, invites

people to give her ideas for cakes and decorations so she can make it happen. She recently made a Star Wars-themed cake complete with the Death Star planet and the R2-D2 droid. Love & Butter Bakery customers can pick up their orders at Diana’s house, or at the church building in the future. She will also deliver. Find out more online at loveandbuttercupcake.com or call 724-984-6964. 🌞

ABOVE: The Mount Nebo Church, in Shirley Township, Huntingdon County, will be the new home to Love & Butter Bakery. Valley REC members Diana and Larry Beatty have begun making repairs to the building since purchasing it last fall.

BELOW: Diana Beatty, left, and her daughter, Katy Jones, offer a variety of baked goods at a Christmas bazaar in November at the McVeytown Fire Co. social hall.



PHOTO BY JODY ROLES

Co-op scholarship applications available now

VALLEY Rural Electric Cooperative will award up to 15 \$1,000 scholarships this year to eligible students who qualify. The money to fund this scholarship program comes from unclaimed capital credits refunds that previously had to be turned over to the state. Thanks to the efforts of our political advocates, we can now keep those funds in our local communities.

Eligibility requirements

The applicant must be:

- ▶ an active Valley REC member or dependent of an active member. (Valley REC directors and employees and their dependents are not eligible.)
 - ▶ attending or planning to attend an accredited post-secondary institution.
 - ▶ enrolled or planning to enroll full-time for the 2021-2022 academic year.
- Previous Brighter Future scholarship recipients are not eligible.

How to apply

Applications will be available at the end of January on the co-op's website. Visit valleyrec.com and follow the "Programs and Services" link to the "Scholarships" section.

There are two versions of the appli-

cation: one for high school students and one for high school graduates.

Applications are also available at all Valley REC offices and in the guidance offices of the following public high schools:


- Altoona Area High School
- Central High School
- Claysburg-Kimmel High School
- Fannett-Metal High School
- Forbes Road Junior/Senior High School
- Hollidaysburg Area Senior High School
- Huntingdon Area High School
- Juniata High School
- Juniata Valley High School
- McConnellsburg High School
- Mifflin County High School
- Mount Union Area High School

- Northern Bedford County High School
- Southern Fulton Junior/Senior High School
- Southern Huntingdon County High School
- Tussey Mountain High School
- Tyrone Area High School
- Williamsburg High School

Application deadline

Applications and all required information must be delivered to a Valley Rural Electric Cooperative office, or be postmarked by, March 31.

Scholarship selections will be made in late April. Award recipients will be notified by the end of June.

Email memberservices@valleyrec.com or call 1-800-432-0680 for more information. 



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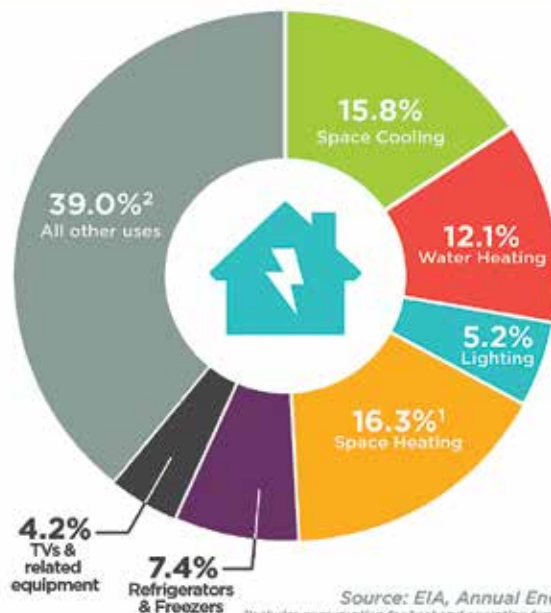
COVID concerns cancel Youth Tour program for PA/NJ cooperatives

In a normal year, Valley Rural Electric Cooperative would be reminding high school juniors to consider applying now for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., this summer. Sadly, the COVID-19 pandemic canceled NRECA's 2020 event and has now caused the cancellation of the June 2021 Youth Tour event as well.

NRECA and the statewide organizations of electric cooperatives, including the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association, made the difficult decision to cancel with the health and safety of all participants in mind and due to the uncertainty and planning complications related to the ongoing pandemic.

How Americans Use Electricity

The latest data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration shows the combined use of clothes washers and dryers, computers, dishwashers, small appliances and other electrical equipment (noted as "all other uses" below) accounts for nearly 40% of electricity consumption in American homes.



Source: EIA, Annual Energy Outlook 2020

¹Includes consumption for heat and operating furnace fans and boiler pumps.
²Includes miscellaneous appliances, clothes washers and dryers, computers and related equipment, stoves, dishwashers, heating elements, and motors.