

Valley Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

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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.

FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Co-op seeks safety re-certification



by Edward A. Dezich  
President & CEO

**MAY IS** designated as National Electrical Safety Month. It's a time when we focus on raising consumer awareness about electrical safety issues. It's also a time when we reflect on what the cooperative is doing to keep safety as a top priority.

In 2005, Valley Rural Electric earned certification from the Rural Electric Safety Accreditation Program (RESAP), a service of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. This year, we plan to seek re-certification from RESAP.

The safety accreditation program promotes the highest standards of safety among electric co-ops nationwide. Our goal is "zero injury — zero loss."

Rigorous preparation

Electric co-ops seeking accreditation must complete a rigorous preparation and evaluation process. Co-op staff must submit an application that includes documentation covering a three-year period. These records relate to 22 aspects of the system's safety policies and procedures (from accident investigation and employee education to job supervision and public hazard recognition) as well as facilities (administration buildings, warehousing, substations) and equipment (vehicles, protective gear and personal tools).

The co-op must then undergo a demanding peer review and audit. Regional safety professionals form an on-site inspection team. The four to six-

member group observes and evaluates the co-op in various categories. The information gathered is used by the national accreditation committee during its final review process.


Rewarding results

Successful applicants earn a certificate of excellence in recognition of their safety accreditation. More importantly, they get an impartial evaluation of their efforts to safeguard employees, consumers and the general public. They also receive an assessment of their vulnerabilities, so they can make any necessary changes. And they gather invaluable information from experts in security and loss control.

The purpose of safety accreditation is not to obtain a piece of paper to hang on the wall. The goal is to preserve life and prevent injuries. Safety accreditation recognizes the endeavors of our employees who resolve every day to maintain a safe working environment.

Of course, by achieving safety accreditation, we also reap the benefits of lower insurance premiums. If accidents are prevented, financial losses are decreased. So, accreditation ultimately saves our consumers money.

In 2005, we proudly joined the 465 electric cooperatives nationwide that earned this coveted certification. And now, through the leadership of our safety committee, we want to prove that we have stayed the course and remained vigilant in our pursuit of a safe workplace and community.

We believe that safety should drive every action within our organization, and we're willing to put that conviction to the test. 

Local couple converts  
to veggie-oil vehicles

# GETTING A FILL-UP FROM THE FRYER

BY SUSAN R. PENNING

*Communications Specialist,  
Member Services Department*

**FUEL IS EXPENSIVE.** Used restaurant cooking oil is free. Vehicles can run on either. That's why Valley Rural Electric members Tony and Paula Seguin of Miller Township, Huntingdon County, decided two years ago to convert their diesel Jettas into deep fryers on wheels.

The couple's interest in using alternative fuel in their cars was piqued after Tony read the book *"From the Fryer to the Fuel Tank"* by Joshua Tickell. At the time, the Seguins were paying to dispose of the old cooking oil from their cafe on Penn Street in Huntingdon.

Tony says he originally intended to convert the oil to biodiesel fuel but discovered it was more feasible to modify their Volkswagens instead.

## Cooking with grease

After vehicle conversion kits were purchased online for about \$850 apiece, the couple's mechanic, Chris Fisher of Car Tunes in Huntingdon, went to work.

He added a fuel tank in the trunk to hold the vegetable oil and installed fuel lines, a filter and valve set, and toggle

switches so the driver can switch between vegetable oil or conventional diesel fuel. The car must start on diesel until the veggie oil is preheated to at least 160 degrees.



**LIQUID GOLD:** Boxers employee Steve King prepares to use the fryer at the cafe.

Barring some added parts, there seems to be no difference in the look or drive of the Seguins' veggie oil-run vehicles versus ordinary diesel-guzzlers. In fact, they can still operate strictly on diesel if vegetable oil is not readily available.

"You will need to replace a \$15 fuel filter at least every 5,000 miles," Chris notes. "But other than that, there is no change in the performance or economy of the car."

Since the Seguins' project, Chris and his son Isaac have installed three more vegetable fuel systems for local folks.

## Hold the fries

A fill-up for Tony and Paula's two converted Jettas involves first filtering the restaurant's used oil through a suspended cheesecloth-like contraption. This removes any food particles that could wreak havoc on the engines. The filtered goop then collects in 5-gallon buckets, ready to be poured directly into the gas tanks.

The minor inconvenience of collecting and filtering the oil seems well



**LEFT:** Tony and Paula Seguin own and operate Boxers Cafe on Penn Street in Huntingdon. For the past two years, they have been using the old vegetable oil from their fryer to fuel their diesel Volkswagen Jettas.

**ABOVE:** Filtered vegetable oil is poured into a second fuel tank located in the car's trunk.

**RIGHT:** Before the oil can be put in the cars, it must be filtered to remove food particles.



environmentally responsible decisions. The vegetable oil from their cafe fuels additional converted cars in the area.

“We’re trying to do our part to make good choices,” Paula notes. “We do what makes sense and what we can afford.”

For more information on vegetable fuel systems, visit [www.greasecar.com](http://www.greasecar.com). ♻️

worth it, considering the fuel savings. Tony estimates that \$10 worth of diesel now lasts him a couple of weeks.

In addition to having more money in their pockets, Tony and Paula are reaping the benefits of driving greener “carbon-neutral” automobiles. They consider themselves avid environmentalists.

“We recycle as much as we can,” Paula says.

They use earth-friendly takeout containers at the cafe and purchase organic produce, paper products and clothing whenever possible. They also take all their food waste to a local farmer who feeds the scraps to his livestock.

At home, they use energy-efficient compact fluorescent lightbulbs, hang their clothes outside to dry and have installed an on-demand water-heating unit.

They’ve also helped others make

## Rudolf Diesel: Pioneer of produce-run vehicles

**WHEN RUDOLF DIESEL** introduced his claim-to-fame at the 1900 Paris Exposition, he said two words as he started his signature engine: “Peanut Oil.”

He’d designed his engine so that farmers could essentially grow their own fuel. Most diesel engines were indeed run on vegetable oil until the 1920s, when the petroleum industry produced the gasoline byproduct now known as diesel fuel. At the time, it was the cheaper alternative.



# Field inventory project will soon bring crews to your neighborhood

**VALLEY RURAL ELECTRIC** Cooperative is in the process of implementing a complete system inventory to better serve our members.

The new digital mapping system will give us detailed information about our distribution network.

We have contracted Southeastern Reprographics, Inc. (SRI) of Alpharetta, Ga., to help us record the precise location of every piece of equipment on our nearly 2,900-mile distribution system.

Technicians from SRI will be traveling throughout the cooperative's service territory with global positioning system (GPS) devices. Their equipment is based on technology developed by the U.S. Department of Defense that is now available for public use at an affordable price. It essentially uses satellite signals

to compute map coordinates for a specific location.

Of course, this data collection project will be no small feat. The work is expected to take up to two years to complete.

However, once it is done, the facility mapping system will provide big benefits to Valley members. For example, it will help crews get lights back on more quickly. The mapping system will include information about all equipment associated with a particular pole, such as any transformers it may carry. When crews head out to fix a problem, they will know they have the right equipment with them to fix the issue and do the job right.

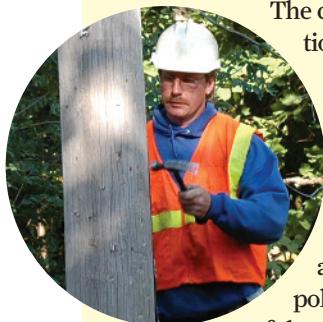
In June, SRI technicians will begin a pilot project in the Centre Union

Substation area in Huntingdon County. You may notice them slowly driving down the road in their white trucks with flashing yellow lights. They also may be riding four-wheelers or traveling on foot. They will probably be sporting backpacks with antennas and carrying hand-held GPS computers. Don't panic if they point equipment at your house. They're just using a laser to quickly and accurately record the location of an electric meter.

SRI vehicles will be plainly marked and technicians will carry a letter that identifies them as contractors hired by Valley Rural Electric Cooperative.

For more information on this project, call the co-op at 814/643-2650 or 800/432-0680. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have. ☀

## Pole inspections scheduled



The cooperative has scheduled pole inspections beginning this month in the following areas:

**Huntingdon County:** Penn, Walker, Juniata, Dublin and Tell townships

**Juniata County:** Lack Township

Crews from Osmose Wood Preserving Co. of Buffalo, N.Y., inspect and treat about 3,000 of the co-op's poles annually. Typically, only a handful of them need to be removed and replaced.

The procedure for inspecting poles involves digging a hole around each pole and checking the wood for visible decay or ground rot. To test for internal damage, workers "sound" and "bore" the pole (hammering and listening for hollow noises and drilling to extract a sample of wood). Crews also repair ground wires, replace guy guards and report pole-top problems.

At an average price of \$150 each, utility poles comprise a large portion of the co-op's physical plant. Routine inspection and treatment help extend the useful lives of poles by years or even decades.

As the system approaches 70 years of operation, it is vital for the co-op to take care of its aging equipment. Pole inspection is one way to ensure that Valley can continue to provide superior service.

## Call before you dig!

Safe digging should begin with a call to the Pennsylvania One Call System (POCS). This service relays information on your specific project to all local utility companies, so that any underground lines on your property can be marked. Available 24/7, POCS is free for homeowners having excavation work done at their residences.

If you are planning to dig:

- ▶ Call POCS 3-10 working days before the project is scheduled to begin. This is the timeframe required by law.
- ▶ Be ready with all important information: the county, municipality, street address, extent and type of work, excavator/contact person and phone number.
- ▶ Wait for the site to be clearly marked. Marking could be done with paint, flags or stakes.
- ▶ Dig with care. Always hand dig within 18 inches on either side of any marked line.

By not calling POCS, you risk personal injury or even death, legal problems, and environmental and property damage. You also risk costly destruction of utility routes including cable, telephone, electric, gas, sewer and water lines as well as emergency communication equipment and traffic signals.



**Digging soon? Call 811**  
Pennsylvania One Call System, Inc.