

**Valley  
Rural Electric  
Cooperative, Inc.**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



*One of 14 electric  
cooperatives serving  
Pennsylvania and  
New Jersey*

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**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

**Leading the way in building a  
'smart grid'**



by **Wayne Miller**  
President & CEO

**THE FEDERAL** stimulus package and various U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) initiatives are promoting the development of a "smart grid" to help solve America's energy crisis. In fact, DOE Secretary Steven Chu recently declared our nation's electricity transmission and distribution system a national priority.

But what does any of this mean for electric co-op members?

The electric grid that covers our nation is quite literally the largest machine ever built. It includes millions of miles of transmission and distribution lines that deliver power from generating stations to your home's electrical outlets.

This grid has sustained us for almost a century, keeping electricity safe, dependable and affordable. But like a high school graduate heading off to college, there's a lot of room for growth and improvement — in this case, in the areas of energy efficiency and reliability.

The first step toward building a smarter grid involves installing a strong system of smart meters that can talk back and forth to utilities about outages and electric use.


Seventy percent of the nation's co-ops have already installed some form of a smart meter, and Valley has joined the 11 percent that will soon begin the project.

This summer, we will start to install equipment that will allow our computers

to talk to smart meters that will eventually be deployed at every home, farm and business throughout our service area. Our plan is to have the system fully operational by the end of 2012.

It's important to note that electric cooperatives lead other industry sectors in deploying smart meters and related automation devices, creating an advanced metering infrastructure inside the grid. A recent Federal Energy Regulatory Commission report showed that only 2.7 percent of private power company customers currently have smart meters.

Smart meters will benefit our co-op by cutting down on operating costs and helping us more effectively manage outages. For example, smart meters can tell us when the power is out instead of relying on you to call the outage in, and they can help us more quickly diagnose problems. In the future, they will also be a great tool to help you manage energy use, breaking down your consumption by hour and helping you make smart energy choices when using appliances.

At Valley Rural Electric, we're committed to building a smarter grid and making it faster, more efficient and smart enough to handle the challenges this century promises to bring. An intelligent, strong grid will help you save money and may minimize future government-mandated increases in power costs resulting from climate change and other policy goals. It's critical that we support innovative technologies that make economic sense. These technologies will allow us to continue providing you with safe, reliable and affordable power for years to come. 



# Backwoods **BARBECUE**

BY SUSAN R. PENNING  
*Director of Member Services*

*Hungry customers keep coming back for more of Doan's Bones*

At the age of 20, when most of his peers were concerned about passing their college math tests or finding a date for Saturday night, Valley REC member Brandon Corvin was already realizing his dream of becoming a restaurant owner.

"He has always loved to cook. So when he told me about his idea to open a barbecue shack, I wanted to help," says Brandon's mom and business partner, Anita Corvin.

## Dream becomes reality

Anita bought the Whipple Dam Store along Route 26 in northern Huntingdon County, and in 2003, Brandon — known to friends as "Doan" — served his first customers in the store's parking lot. He started with no formal business plan, no banker, not even any walls. His restaurant investment consisted of a credit card, a fire pit and an E-Z-Up Tent.

Brandon's meticulous cooking methods and mouth-watering menu of home-made recipes quickly developed a following of folks, not only from nearby areas like Huntingdon and State College, but even from neighboring states. Within a year, the barbecue "tent" became a

full rib shack with a takeout area and picnic seating.

Anita came up with a name for the place.

"Brandon's nickname is Doan, and the ribs and chicken he barbecues are his bones," she explains. Hence, the restaurant was dubbed Doan's Bones.

## Business expansion

In October 2006, Brandon and Anita partnered to open a second restaurant, Doan's Bones and Ice Cream Cones in Centre Hall, Pa.

The two managed both thriving locations for a few years. Then, in 2008, the entrepreneurs decided to make some changes. They moved the Centre Hall

**FOR A GOOD MEAL:** Doan's Bones barbecue shack is located adjacent to the Whipple Dam Store along Route 26, north of McAlevy's Fort, Huntingdon County.

business to West College Avenue in State College. And they purchased a more suitable facility for the rib shack — across the street from the old location in a small 1940s log home. Interestingly, it was the original location of the Whipple Dam Store.

The log home was renovated and Doan's Bones at Whipple Dam became an eat-in restaurant with a full menu and wait staff. Of course, the Corvins didn't want to lose the ambiance that had contributed to their success at the first location, so they made sure the new venue included picnic seating and a takeout counter.

The food at Doan's Bones really speaks for itself. It's not uncommon to see eight or 10 customers lined up in the parking lot, waiting for their orders. And the crowd is diverse. There are Penn Staters, hunters, fishermen, campers, construction workers and Whipple Dam beach-goers. The one thing they all seem to have in common ... they've made more than one trip to Doan's Bones. Most folks who eat there make it a habit.



**ABOVE:** Brandon Corvin's famous barbecued and slow-roasted ribs have been known to draw repeat customers from out of state. He uses secret family recipes and sells 100-percent homemade menu items.

**RIGHT:** Doan's Bones waitress/cook Betsy Brumbaugh of Alexandria, Huntingdon County, displays a menu favorite, "The Tusseyville." The restaurant specializes in sandwiches and entrees, but also offers breakfast items, appetizers, salads, burgers and ice cream.



When a new customer comes in for some of Doan's ribs, Brandon will tell them, "See you next week."

"And you know, I usually do," he notes.

**LOGGED IN:** In 2008, the Corvins moved their rib shack from the parking lot of the Whipple Dam Store across the street to this 1940s log home.

### Recipe for success

The Corvins attribute the success of Doan's Bones to the quality of food they serve.

"Everything we make is from scratch. Even our potato chips are homemade," Brandon says.

He adds, "My recipes are unique, family recipes. Over the years, I've perfected them through trial and error."

One of Brandon's winning techniques is his method of cooking the pork and chicken. He barbecues over an open fire, then slow-roasts the meat until tender. According to Brandon, "It's not done until it's ... Doan."

A few of the menu favorites at Doan's Bones include: "The Whipler" — pulled pork barbecue with fresh coleslaw and homemade fries on a steak roll; "The Tusseyville" — pulled pork barbecue and melted cheddar cheese topped with french-fried onions on a roll; and Doan's famous baby back ribs and chicken.

In addition to entrees and sandwiches, the restaurant also offers breakfast items, appetizers, soups, burgers, wings, salads and ice cream.

Hungry yet?

For more information, visit [www.doansbones.com](http://www.doansbones.com) or call 814/861-7675 or 667-3670.



COURTESY PHOTO

# Huntingdon District office relocates

BY SUSAN R. PENNING  
Director of Member Services

**VALLEY RURAL ELECTRIC** Cooperative's Huntingdon District office opened for business April 6 at its new location just south of Huntingdon. The district office, previously located on Standing Stone Road (Route 26 North), now occupies the former Shaner Energy building at the intersection of Fairgrounds and Station roads.

"This move has increased our efficiency and allowed us to more effectively serve our members," said Valley REC President and CEO Wayne Miller. "We had been actively looking to vacate the

*"This move has increased our efficiency and allowed us to more effectively serve our members."*

— Wayne F. Miller  
Co-op President & CEO

facility on Standing Stone Road for a few years. It was determined by the co-op board of directors — with the help of an outside building consultant — that it would be more cost-effective to find a new location for all of the personnel and equipment there."

Along with renovation and expansion issues, the district office's former location posed transportation problems.

"It was becoming increasingly difficult for our line personnel to maneuver



**ABOVE:** Valley Rural Electric's Huntingdon District operations recently moved to the former Shaner Energy building along Station Road in Walker Township, Huntingdon County. The facility offers a more ideal setting to transport equipment and vehicles throughout the district's service territory.

**RIGHT:** The district's former facility along Standing Stone Road (on Route 26 North) will be sold.



large trucks and equipment through town," said Huntingdon District Manager Todd Ross.

Moving to the new location on Station Road solved many of the district operation's issues.

"We will significantly reduce our travel time by gaining better access to two of our main arteries, routes 22 and 26 (south)," said Ross.

"In addition, our engineering and technical services and purchasing and warehousing personnel are now able to work in closer proximity to our corporate headquarters, which is about a mile away on Fairgrounds Road," Miller noted.

"This move has increased our efficiency and allowed us to more effectively serve our members."

The co-op bought the 5-year-old building, which is situated on 7 acres, in May 2008. Since then, minor renovations were made to the interior and an additional garage/warehouse was built on the property to accommodate equipment and vehicles.

Co-op members who prefer to drop off payments in person are welcome to do so at the district's new location.

The facility on Standing Stone Road will be sold. ☀



## Co-op pole inspections scheduled

The cooperative has scheduled pole inspections to begin this month in Brady, Henderson and Oneida townships in Huntingdon County, as well as Lack Township in Juniata County.

Crews from Osmose Wood Preserving Company of Buffalo, N.Y., will be responsible for the project. They inspect and treat about 3,000 of the co-op's poles annually.

Pole inspection involves checking for hollow

areas and sampling the wood. Treatment includes swabbing pole bases with a preservative.

Crews also repair ground wires, replace guy guards and report pole-top problems.

At an average installed cost of \$1,000 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.