


**Valley
Rural Electric
Cooperative, Inc.**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

Valley Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.
10700 Fairgrounds Road
P.O. Box 477
Huntingdon, PA 16652-0477
814/643-2650
1-800-432-0680
www.valleyrec.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

James Stauffer
Chairman

Leroy Barnes
Vice Chairman

Kevin States
Secretary

Clair McCall
Treasurer

Robert Holmes
Allegheny Director

David Wright
PREA Director

Cindy Bigelow
Mervin Brumbaugh
Earl Parsons

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

The power of community

The following is the final editorial in a series focusing on the cooperative difference.



by **Wayne Miller**
President & CEO

DIRECTORS and employees at Valley Rural Electric Cooperative want to see the communities we serve succeed. Why? The answer is simple: We live here, too. That's the essence of the Seventh Cooperative Principle, "Concern for Community," one of seven guidelines that governs electric cooperative operations.

First and foremost, Valley strengthens our communities by doing what we do best: providing a safe and reliable supply of electricity at an affordable cost. As our service area grows, so does our distribution system. So it's easy to see why strengthening the local economy makes sound business sense. Your board of directors and staff support policies and projects that are good for the communities we serve because what's good for them is good for the co-op.


We have strong community roots. The co-op has been in business for more than 70 years. Our business was founded here by members just like you, and we are not going to pull up stakes to pursue greener pastures elsewhere. Your co-op was formed locally, and it's still managed by your friends and neighbors.

We employ local folks and that, in turn, helps strengthen the local economy. By providing jobs, we keep our towns healthy because employees and their families don't have to move away to make a living. The more people we retain who pay taxes and contribute to their communities, the more vibrant those communities will be.

The benefits our communities reap from our presence aren't only financial. We open doors for our young people with scholarship programs and the annual Rural Electric Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C. We teach children about electrical safety through free educational programs in schools and online. We help members identify ways to save money by performing free home energy audits.

We also strengthen our communities by raising money to support local charities.

Our employees go out of their way to serve by coaching youth sports teams, volunteering on committees, participating in church activities, even serving in elected offices. Many are co-op members like you, and, like you, they want to make their communities stronger.

When it comes to Valley Rural Electric, community comes first. That's the cooperative difference. 

Notes & Nature

Environmental center hosts first outdoor music festival

BY SUSAN R. PENNING
Director of Member Services

“There’s music in the sighing of a reed; there’s music in the gushing of a rill; there’s music in all things, if men had ears. Their earth is but an echo of the spheres.”

Lord Byron’s poetry often emphasized the connection between nature and music. And recently, Shaver’s Creek Environmental Center employees reiterated the poet’s sentiments by organizing the center’s first-ever outdoor music festival.

Nestled in the Stone Valley Recreation Area of the Penn State Experimental Forest (which sits on 7,000 acres and contains the 72-acre Lake Perez), Shaver’s Creek Environmental Center offers an educational, in-depth look at the habitats and activities of Pennsylvania’s

wildlife. Center visitors can tour the Raptor Center, home to 20 different birds of prey, and get up close and personal with various indigenous snakes and turtles.

Served by Valley Rural Electric Cooperative, the facility also provides access to a variety of hiking trails and picnic areas as well as a bookstore and gift shop.

The center’s recent music festival offered guests an added bonus to its everyday spectacular surroundings: sweet melodies performed by talented artists from throughout the state.

Some of the bands that played at the all-day fall event included John Cunningham & Friends, Pure Cane Sugar, Tussey Mountain Moonshiners, Tolins Bluegrass Revue, Ted & the Hi-Fi’s and Wissahickon



Chicken Shack.

The idea for hosting the festival came from Shaver’s Creek employees.

“Interestingly, the staff here is pretty musically inclined,” says Paul Brigman, who is in charge of facilitating the center’s educational camps. Paul plays the guitar and upright bass in his spare time.

“We also wanted an opportunity to showcase the space and natural backdrop we have here,” he adds.

Center employee Jen Brackbill was in charge of securing food vendors for the event.

“The food was so good, we sold out of some of it,” she laughs. There were booths from Doan’s Bones Barbeque, Standing Stone Coffee Company, Gemelli

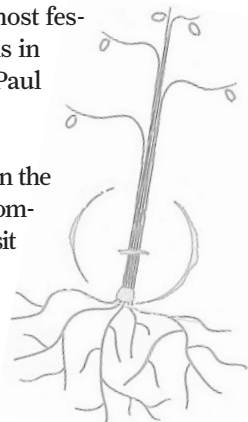
TWILIGHT FIDDLE: Kiley Ryan of acclaimed Philadelphia-based band Wissahickon Chicken Shack woos the outdoor audience during a final performance at the Shaver’s Creek Music Festival.

Bakers and The Enchanted Kitchen.

“We consider this event a total success,” Jen continues. “There was good music, good people and good food.”

“We are undoubtedly planning to host festivals like this in the future,” Paul concludes.

For more information on the center or upcoming events, visit www.outreach.psu.edu/shaver-sreek.



COURTESY GRAPHIC



LEFT: Festival visitors tap their toes in the chilly autumn air during a live set.

Get Smart About the Smart Grid

Here are a few helpful smart grid terms:

Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI):

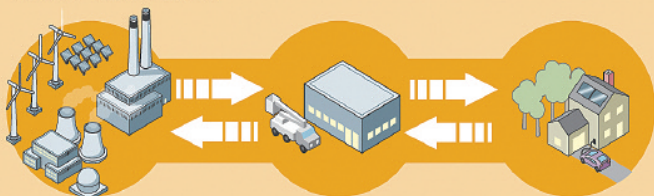
Includes technologies and software applications that combine two-way communications with smart meters to provide electric utilities—using frequent meter reads—with near real-time oversight of system operations.

Automated Meter Reading (AMR):

A component of AMI, AMR allows meters to report electric use back to a utility's office.

Real-Time Pricing: A method of setting rates where the retail rate for electricity varies on an hourly or more frequent basis as the price of wholesale power changes. Smart grid applications would allow consumers to adjust their power use according to the fluctuating retail rates.

Demand Response: Programs or mechanisms that reduce electricity consumption in response to market signals or other incentives. Demand response includes direct load control, time-of-use rates, interruptible contracts, utility dispatch of consumer-owned (distributed) generation, personal energy management, and other initiatives.



Source: National Rural Electric Cooperative Association
Graphics by Funnellinc.com

Cool off energy bills this winter

YOU'VE BEGUN to budget for holiday gifts, meals, maybe a vacation — and with money tight, that doesn't leave much room for home energy efficiency upgrades. Does that mean you're powerless to lower your electric bill? Not at all. Keep your energy bill cool this winter with the following tips and tricks:

Drape Delivery: Are you using your curtains to capture heat? Make sure drapes and shades are open to collect free solar heat during the day. Close them at night to keep the heat inside.

Thermostat: Set your thermostat to 68 F (or lower if comfortable) to maximize the efficiency of your heating system.

Got tape? Though not as durable as foam, rubber or vinyl, you can use non-porous tape (first-aid cloth tape, for example) to keep cold air from squeezing its way into your home. Tape is good for blocking corners and irregular cracks, and can be used at the tops and bottoms of window sashes, door frames, attic hatches and inoperable windows. Reinforce with staples if needed.

Fan it up: Operate ceiling paddle fans on low and reverse the rotation to force air upward in winter. This keeps the warm air circulating without cooling you.


Free vents: Your HVAC system will need to work twice as hard if air registers and vents are blocked by rugs, furniture or drapes. Keep them clear to allow air to flow freely.

Garage drain: Leave your garage door down to keep the icy winds out. A warmer garage in winter will save energy.

Rug relief: Have a spare rug? Use it to cover bare floors for added insulation.

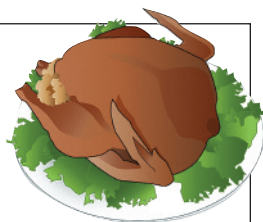
Cool food: Don't make your refrigerator work too hard. Clean coils every year, and set the temperature between 34-37 F; leave the freezer between 0-5 F. And keep the freezer full — frozen food helps your freezer stay cool. When cooking, keep lids on pots, and let hot food cool off before placing it in the refrigerator.

Hot savings: Water heating accounts for 12 percent of your home's energy use. Set your water heater temperature no higher than 120 F. For households with only one or two family members, 115 F works.

There are other ways to conserve energy, too. Remember, you don't pay for what you don't use. When you're not watching TV or using lights, computers and other electronics, turn them off. Lower your room temperatures a bit and wear a sweater to stay warm, or place an extra blanket on the bed at night. Find more ways to save at www.TogetherWeSave.com. 

Source: TogetherWeSave.com, Alliance to Save Energy.org, EnergySavers.gov

From the board and
employees at Valley
Rural Electric Co-op:
Have a blessed Thanksgiving!



GIFT IDEA

Smart surge protectors for sale at all Valley offices

BY SUSAN R. PENNING
 Director of Member Services

VALLEY RURAL ELECTRIC CO-OP

members may now purchase high-quality “smart” surge protectors for their homes or businesses at a cost of \$39 plus tax. The devices may be bought and picked up at any Valley REC office location. Or they may be mail ordered (with shipping charges added to the final total).

These Smart Strips go above and beyond standard power strips with surge protection by also reducing standby energy loss.

What is standby energy loss?

Many electronics continue to draw power when they are plugged in but in “sleep” or “off” mode. They use what is called standby energy (also known as vampire power), and it can add up quickly on electric bills. Smart surge protectors can help significantly curb a home or business’s vampire power use. That means smart surge protectors like the Smart Strip are the only surge protectors on the market today that have the potential to pay for themselves.

How does a Smart Strip work?

The Smart Strip actually senses how much power computer peripherals and electronics use. When the Smart Strip detects that you’ve turned off your computer (or whatever device is plugged into the “control” outlet), it automatically shuts off the peripherals that are plugged into the strip as well, preventing them from drawing any idle current.

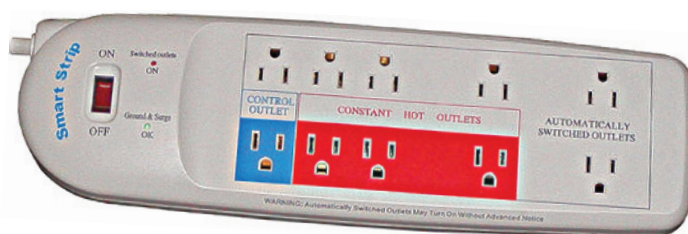
Most computer systems now have at least a monitor, scanner, printer, DSL/cable modem and a USB hub. Although the computer may be turned off, each peripheral still draws an idle current of 50-400 milliamps. Components drawing an idle current of 400 milliamps (24 hours a day) would use more than 400 kilowatt-hours a year and cost you more than \$40 annually on your energy bills. Just a printer and monitor can

draw as much in idle current as a 60-watt lightbulb that is turned on 24/7.

Additional benefits

The Smart Strip features advanced circuitry that not only offers power surge protection and the ability to help reduce standby loss, but also provides line noise filtering.

SMART IDEA: Smart Strip surge protectors offer added benefits like improved energy efficiency and convenience of use.



amps of continuous power handling means that anything a standard wall outlet can handle, the Smart Strip can handle.

The strip features a red status indicator light that clearly shows when smart switching is active. The 45 degree-angled space saver plug is designed so it won't block other wall outlets. The recessed, lighted power switch minimizes acciden-

It is another small step that environmentally conscious consumers can take with regard to their energy use. Did you know that Energy Star studies indicate that if every homeowner replaced all of his or her computer equipment with Energy Star-labeled computer equipment, it would save 219 billion pounds of greenhouse gases? While Energy Star does not yet offer a category for energy-

tal switching (i.e. turning off the power strip accidentally by kicking it). The power switch is also a 15-amp circuit breaker.

The Smart Strip can be used anywhere a regular power strip is used. While only certain electronic devices (such as computers, monitors, fluorescent lamps, motors and electronic devices that have a high-efficiency power supply) will

Sample uses of Smart Strip automation

Control outlet

- Computer
- TV
- Fluorescent lamp
- Home shop equipment

Switched outlet(s)

- All computer peripherals, desk lamp
- Home theaters, DVD, cable box
- Fan, home stereo, small heater
- Work light, dust collector, shop vac

saving power strips, by using the Smart Strip on an existing computer system, you will save energy and subsequently reduce your carbon footprint and greenhouse gas contribution. And you will help keep more computer components out of landfills because their life spans will be maximized.

Smart Strip features

The Smart Strip has 10 outlets. One is the control outlet. Three are constant hot outlets (for components that you may never want to power down, such as digital video recorders). The remaining six are automatically switched outlets. Fifteen

turn on the switched outlets, the four outlets that are always hot can be used just like a normal power strip. This allows you to automate certain repetitive tasks without any additional cost.

“This is a great tool that average homeowners can use to help boost the energy efficiency of their homes,” says Travis Kuhstos, Valley Rural Electric Co-op energy specialist. “I have two in my own home: one on my computer system and one on my TV/entertainment system.”

For more information or to order a Smart Strip, call 814/643-2650 or toll-free 800/432-0680 or email memberservices@valleyrec.com.