

# Valley Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

Valley Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
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www.valleyrec.com

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**James Stauffer**  
Chairman

**Leroy Barnes**  
Vice Chairman

**Kevin States**  
Secretary

**Cindy Bigelow**  
Treasurer

**Robert Holmes**  
Allegheny Director

**David Wright**  
PREA Director

**Corey Brumbaugh**  
**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.

**OUTAGES & EMERGENCIES**

**1-800-432-0680**

## FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO Honor Electrical Safety Month



by Wayne Miller  
President & CEO

**EVERY MAY**, we celebrate Electrical Safety Month. It's a time when we spotlight ways we keep you, our members, safe.

This year, we're focusing on how to stay safe after a storm. No matter the type of weather or damage to electrical equipment and infrastructure, resulting hazards are generally the same.

To stay safe after a major storm or natural disaster strikes, we urge you to develop a family action plan. Designate a place for everyone to meet. Map out different ways to evacuate your home. Create a laminated card with emergency contact names and numbers for each family member. Consider listing a relative or friend who lives far from your community as the point of contact — if your family gets separated, that person can let others know who is safe.


And don't forget pets in your family action plan. Many rescue shelters will not accept pets after a catastrophe, so it's important to decide beforehand where Fido or Tabby can take up residence for a while.

Consider putting together an emergency storm kit as well, in case your family has to live without electricity for an extended period of time. General items to include in the kit are: flashlight(s), extra batteries, manual can

opener, phone that does not require power, small gas or charcoal grill or camp stove (to be used outdoors only), fire extinguisher(s), prescription medications, tarpaulins, garbage bags, disposable wipes (and diapers for baby), insect repellent, portable radio, matches (stored in a waterproof container), duct tape, 100 feet of rope or heavy cord, address book with important phone numbers, toilet tissue and paper towels, pet food and cat litter, bleach for cleaning and for purifying water (eight drops per gallon), first aid kit, bottled water (1-3 gallons per person per day), powdered or evaporated milk, prepackaged snacks and canned foods (such as meats, fish, fruits and vegetables, and soups).

It's not hard to understand why safety remains a top priority at Valley Rural Electric. Working around electricity is a life-or-death situation every day for many of our employees. As a result, we work hard to instill a culture of safety that our folks can take home with them and live 24/7.

We also strive to raise safety awareness among co-op members. Be on the lookout for safety tips in our publications and on our website at valleyrec.com.

Pledge to honor Electrical Safety Month by fashioning an emergency action plan and creating an emergency storm kit for your family today. Learn more about weathering storms safely at [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov). 

# Co-op annual meeting draws crowd of 900

BY LUANNE H. ECKENRODE  
Vice President, Consumer Services & Public Relations

**ABOUT 900 CONSUMERS** attended the 2012 Valley Rural Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting, held 7 p.m. Friday, April 13, at Huntingdon Area High School.

The meeting focused on the co-op's legacy of innovation and investment in local communities, and included the election of three directors to the board.

"Innovation is helping us keep electric bills affordable, despite our lagging energy sales and sparse consumer density," co-op President and CEO Wayne Miller said during the meeting. "For example, deploying a more advanced distribution system infrastructure — which includes automated meters — allows us to better pinpoint outages and restore power more quickly. This investment is helping us cut operating costs and improve service reliability. We anticipate that all meters on co-op lines will be automated by the end of this year."

"We've also recently developed a Technology Work Plan that will provide us with a five-year road map to efficiently integrate new technologies into our system operations," he said. "As part of the work plan, this year we will be deploying a robust outage management system that will integrate our computerized mapping, automated metering infrastructure and an interactive-voice-response, or IVR, communications system. Incorporating these technologies in the outage management system will provide our operating personnel with faster and better information to analyze and respond to power outages on the electric distribution system more efficiently. This will translate into reduced outage times for you, especially during significant weather events."

"Our innovative energy efficiency programs are helping to keep your electric bills down, too," he added. "Our voluntary demand response program, which is used to turn off electric water heaters and home heating and cooling systems during periods of peak demand, helps us



control electric rates because it trims costly demand charges and reduces our need for new generating capacity. Over the years, this program has saved Pennsylvania's electric cooperative members more than \$106 million."

Miller also updated co-op members about results received from a recent American Customer Satisfaction Index survey.

"Last fall, we asked a random sampling of our membership to rate us on a scale of 1-10 regarding their experiences with the co-op to date; whether or not their expectations have been met by us; how we stack up against the "ideal" electric utility; and how likely they would be to choose Valley for their electric service if they had other options," he said. "Our members rated us, on average, with a score of at least 9 out of 10 in every category. In fact, our overall score of 91 placed us in the top percentile in the nation for customer service. The most recent average score for private power companies is 74."

"Despite our favorable score, we are going to try even harder to meet and hopefully exceed your expectations," he concluded.

**REGISTRATION:** Members line up to register at annual meeting and receive information and a complimentary three-outlet adapter.

**CONSUMER SATISFACTION SCORE:** During his annual meeting speech April 13, Wayne Miller shares that Valley REC is one of 23 cooperatives in the nation that scored 90 or above in a recent national consumer satisfaction survey.

Board Chairman Jim Stauffer followed Miller's speech with comments about the designation of 2012 as the International Year of Cooperatives and the impact co-ops make in our communities.

"The International Year of Cooperatives ... reminds us of what's important in business — putting people first," he said. "We understand that one of the keys to community strength is creating opportunities for our children to succeed. That's





**ABOVE:** Members turn in their ballots after voting at the co-op's annual meeting.



**ABOVE:** 'The SharpTones' entertain the crowd at annual meeting with favorites from the 1950s and 1960s.

**RIGHT:** Huntingdon County Dairy Princess Samantha Bliss of Huntingdon distributes cheese and pretzels to guests at the annual meeting. Samantha also entertained youngsters in attendance with a dairy program and snacks.



why we support the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Youth Tour and numerous scholarship programs. Each year, Valley sends about a dozen high school students to our nation's capital to learn about leadership, teamwork, electric co-ops and the ideals our nation was founded on. Through Valley's Brighter Future Scholarship Program, we also provide up to 25 \$1,000 scholarships each year to deserving students."

"Of course, the bulk of our income continues to go toward maintaining and upgrading our electric distribution system," Stauffer added. "Because we put consumers first, our rates are set to cover the cost of doing business, not to generate profits for distant stockholders. In fact, you get the credit when our revenues exceed costs. I'm proud to report that, in 2011, we returned more than \$950,000 in patronage capital to eligible members and former members of the co-op. Nearly \$19 million has been given back over the years, and we plan to continue that course into the foreseeable future."

Following the president's and chairman's remarks, the 514 voting members in attendance at the meeting elected three directors to represent the utility's nearly 21,000 consumers.

Chosen to serve on the co-op's board of directors for a three-year term were:

District 2 — Jim Stauffer of Oliver Township, Mifflin County;

District 4 — Corey Brumbaugh of Shirley Township, Huntingdon County; and

District 6 — Leroy Barnes of Greenfield Township, Blair County.

Louis Mamakos of Cromwell Township, Huntingdon County, ran against Brumbaugh. The other two candidates ran unopposed on the ballot.

Another highlight of the meeting was entertainment provided by "The SharpTones," who performed favorites from the 1950s and 1960s.

Distinguished guests in attendance included state Reps. Mike Fleck and Jerry Stern; Huntingdon County legislative aide to state Sen. John Eichelberger; Gerry Wityk; Huntingdon County Commissioners R. Dean Fluke and Jeff Thomas; National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation Regional Vice President James Meiers; *Penn Lines* magazine Senior Editor/Writer Kathy Hackleman; and Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association Public

Affairs/Member Services Specialist Stephanie Okuniewski.

Nearly 20 children attended the event. They enjoyed a big-screen viewing of "Puss in Boots," refreshments, balloons and a presentation by Huntingdon County Dairy Princess Samantha Bliss of Huntingdon.

Beverly Haldeman of Manheim, Mel Nissley of Middletown, and Bruce and Betty Hicks of Huntingdon each won a \$100 co-op gift certificate; and Sandra Kearney of Duncansville won a \$250 co-op gift certificate. Members in attendance received a \$15 credit on their electric bills and a three-outlet adapter.

In addition, meeting attendees who brought with them spent compact fluorescent lightbulbs had cooperative staff properly dispose of them. Families that brought a bulb received a free replacement (while supplies lasted). ☀

# Pump up your pool's efficiency

BY KELLY TRAPNELL

National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

**AFTER HOURS** of yard work under the hot, summer sun, nothing beats a cool dip in the backyard swimming pool. But who wants it to be a wallet drain? Soak up the following pool efficiency tips to save money while maintaining your personal, pristine oasis.

Each pool is equipped with its very own energy guzzler: the pump. And the bigger the pump, the higher the power bill. Make sure your pool uses the smallest pump necessary. New products like

variable-speed pumps offer a good way to save. A knowledgeable pool supply or service firm can help you choose a proper pump for your pool, taking into consideration its size, filter and piping.

Greater savings can come from decreasing pump operating time, regardless of the pump size.

Keep drains clear of debris, or your pump will need to work harder to circulate water. Also, find a proper balance for backwashing the filter. Too much backwashing — the process of filtering and disposing of dirty water — wastes water,



while too little strains the pump.


Here are some common **myths** that lead to extra pump time (and wasted energy):

**I need to run my pump to keep chemicals mixed.** FALSE. Circulate while adding chemicals, and they will stay mixed. There is no need to recirculate the water each day to “re-mix” the water.

**My pool will be dirty if I don't run my pump to constantly clean debris.** FALSE. Try running your pump for six hours or less a day, as suggested by the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) EnergySavers.gov. If the cleanliness is not up to your standards, increase filtration time by 30-minute increments until you are satisfied. If six hours works well, try decreasing filtration time to find a balance with energy efficiency. To keep debris down without running your pump on overtime, use a skimmer to manually clean the water. Also, try using a timer to run your filter for several short periods during the day rather than allowing debris to pile up after one long, continuous filtration.

**I need my pump to run continuously to keep algae at bay.** FALSE. Proper chemical balance and brushing down pool walls are the best algae fighters.

Make sure your pool isn't draining energy dollars needlessly. Adjust pump time and invest a little legwork. You'll have a prime poolside spot to relax in afterward, and the relief you'll see on your electric bill will be well worth the effort.

Find more ways to save energy around your home at [www.TogetherWeSave.com](http://www.TogetherWeSave.com). 

Source: U.S. DOE, Pentair Water Pool & Spa, Inc. Susan Penning contributed.



Cooperatives provide electricity, financial services, insurance, marketing, health care, child care, food and more! Learn about the founding cooperative principles by solving this crossword puzzle!

[www.usa2012.coop](http://www.usa2012.coop)



**Across**

1. Name of town where modern co-op. principles were created in 1844.
7. Cooperatives are autonomous and \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Who controls the co-op?
10. More than 8,300 \_\_\_\_\_ provide financial services to 100 million members.
11. Co-ops provide over 100 million \_\_\_\_\_ worldwide.
12. Every member has one voice, one \_\_\_\_\_.
13. Co-ops offer voluntary and \_\_\_\_\_ membership.
14. Country where modern co-ops were born.

**Down**

2. When the co-op is in good financial shape, members receive money back, called \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Cooperatives show concern for \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Cooperatives are committed to providing \_\_\_\_\_, training, and information for members.
5. More than 42 million Americans receive \_\_\_\_\_ from co-ops.
6. Working together shows \_\_\_\_\_ among cooperatives.
7. 2012 was declared the \_\_\_\_\_ Year of Cooperatives by the United Nations.
9. Number of co-op principles.

The answers will be in the June issue of Penn Lines.