

# 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



# A penny's worth of electricity is still valuable

By Doug Roles, *Vice President, Member Services*

I HEARD on the radio the other day that Americans throw away 7 million pennies each year. That's \$70,000! But it's in a lot of small pieces.

It's debatable how much of that coinage was deliberately thrown away. There probably are some people who just don't want to be troubled with pennies anymore. But a good chunk of that \$70,000 probably got sucked up in vacuum cleaners or brushed off restaurant tables. Holes in pants pockets are probably to blame. And who knows how many thousands of dollars' worth went missing in the cracks and crevices of car seats and sofas.

Losing a single 1-cent piece likely won't cause you to lose any sleep. But chances are, you wouldn't purposely throw away a penny if you pictured it in terms of electric use.

Curtis Condon, editor of *Ruralite* magazine in Hillsboro, Ore., recently wrote, "About the only thing of value you can still get for a penny is electricity."

Condon offered some easy math to figure the penny's value as it relates to your consumption. He asked his readers to suppose that the average rate for a kilowatt-hour (kWh) of electricity is 10 cents. That is 60 minutes of 1,000 watts of electricity for a dime. So, a penny of electricity equates to 100 watts. That's enough to power a 9-watt LED lightbulb — the equivalent of a 60-watt incandescent bulb — for 11 hours.

"Where else can you get that kind of value?" Condon asks. "How many eggs will a penny buy? How much milk, bread, coffee, medicine or gasoline?"

If a gallon of gas costs \$2.50 and your car gets 25 miles to the gallon, you can drive 176 yards — about two blocks — on a penny's worth of gas. Compare that to the 11 hours of lighting.

That same penny's worth of electricity will charge your iPhone more than 18 times. In fact, you can charge it every day of the year for about 20 cents total.

Electricity has remained a good value as prices of other commodities have risen over time. A penny in 1940 had as much buying power as 17 cents today, which means the residential price of electricity — which now averages 12 cents per kWh nationally — is actually a better deal today than it was when electric co-ops were formed in the late 1930s and 1940s.

Here are a few more examples of what a penny will do: power a 1,000-watt microwave on high for 6 minutes; run a 200-watt desktop computer for 30 minutes; allow you to watch 2.5 hours of your favorite shows on a 40-watt, 32-inch, LED television (or 1.3 hours on a 75-watt, 75-inch mega TV).

I guess there's still some truth to the old saying "Find a penny. Pick it up. All the day you'll have good luck." Kind of makes me want to go check the car seats and turn the couch upside down. ☀

# Fulton County Medical Center is building a better community

## First phase of construction project nears completion

By Doug Roles

*Vice President, Member Services*

FULTON County Medical Center (FCMC) administrators and staff are looking forward to pioneering a new era in health care in Fulton County with an expansion of the medical center and addition of the Center for Advanced Medicine (CAM).

The \$20-million project expands current patient care services while introducing new service lines, all in a person-centered care model that features state-of-the-art clinical space and equipment.

The FCMC campus in McConnellsburg has been transformed into a large work zone since an October groundbreaking ceremony. The first phase of the construction project is a new, two-story wing that brings together expanded primary care, specialty services and behavioral health, along with IV therapy. It will also house MacDonald's Pharmacy, which is moving from its downtown location to expanded retail space on Peach Orchard Road. The first phase is expected to be completed this fall. Phase One is situated on the left end of the existing structure (looking at the main entrance from outside). Palmer Construction of McConnellsburg is the general contractor.

"This expansion features more health care choices locally for our community," says Jason Hawkins, FCMC president/CEO. "The 60,000-square-foot expansion will offer express care, a retail pharmacy and expansion of physician offices, offering a one-stop health care experience."

The second and third phases will include express care, expanded services in physical and occupational therapies, a lab, and a child sanctuary/safe room, along with a café and expanded gift shop. Phases Two and Three, which will be done concurrently, are expected to be completed by next spring. The



PHOTO BY DOUG ROLES

**BUILDING PROJECT:** The Center for Advanced Medicine (CAM) is under construction at Fulton County Medical Center. It is the first phase of a multi-year project that will also include building a second story above the south end of the medical center and expanding the front corridor.

overall project also includes the addition of several hundred new parking spaces.

The endeavor got a shot in the arm with a \$1 million gift from the Wilbur C. and Betty Lea Henderson Foundation.

FCMC, which opened its doors in 1950, was formerly located in downtown McConnellsburg. In 2007, the medical center moved to its current location just west of the borough. The move initially was facilitated by the donation of a 23-acre parcel along Route 30. The campus area now encompasses 90 acres.

FCMC, with a \$40-million annual operating budget, employs about 500 full- and part-time medical and support staff. The medical center includes 21 beds in FCMC's acute care facility and 67 beds in the long-term care (LTC)

department. The center offers telemedicine, 3-D mammography, MRI and radiology.

"We do a lot of diagnostic testing here," says Chris Boryan, FCMC Foundation grants and donor relations manager. "It allows our local residents to stay close to home for their care. We're able to provide a lot of services to folks who otherwise would have to travel to seek care. And in many cases that's a determining factor for our patients."

Valley REC has had the opportunity to assist FCMC with two Community Service Grants (CSG). In 2016, FCMC received a grant for the purchase of an iPad used to give directions to patients who are transitioning to outpatient status after hospital stays. Another CSG donation was utilized by the center to purchase an otoscope set (two heads, two handles and a charging base)



COURTESY FCMC

**FUTURE CENTER:** An artist's rendering shows the future Fulton County Medical Center.



for FCMC's new occupational health department. The device is used for looking at the back of the eye and examining the ear, nose and throat. It will be used in PennDOT-required physicals and other occupational health assessments.

"It's nice to have a dedicated unit for our occupational health department," says Jason Goshorn, director of physician services. "There is a need for occupational health services in this area. Previously, people had to travel 30-50 minutes for these services."

In 2013, the hospital built a wound care center that includes a hyperbaric chamber. FCMC also offers a sleep disorder center, and the hospital plans to expand its cardio room where patients and staff use exercise equipment as part of the hospital's wellness program.

FCMC also features two wings for long-term care residents. Housed between the two LTC wings is the new Lakey's Greenhouse, dedicated in April to long-time employee Eugene Lake.

ABOVE, LEFT: Work progresses inside the new Center for Advanced Medicine. Above, right: A second story will be erected to the right of the main entrance.

The greenhouse provides an additional activity for long-term care residents.

"We're calling this project 'Moving Forward' because our goal is simple and precise," Boryan says. "We want to give members of our community the best care they deserve."

*The FCMC Foundation is managing a*

*capital campaign for the building project. F&M Trust is matching donations up to \$25,000. Donors giving specifically to the building project should reference "CAM" in their donations. For more information, contact: Fulton County Medical Center, 214 Peach Orchard Road, McConnellsburg, PA 17233 or call 717-485-3155. *



**VALLEY GRANTS:** Valley Rural Electric assists FCMC with two equipment purchases totaling \$1,600 through the co-op's Community Service Grant program. Above: Mandy Garlock, BSN, RN, transition-of-care nurse, provides patient education with a VREC-funded iPad. Left: Physician's Assistant Amber Thomas (a Valley member) and Chris Boryan, FCMC Foundation's grants and donor relations manager, display an otoscope (used for eye and ears/nose/throat exams) purchased with a grant from the cooperative.

# Meet your employees

FEATURED in this column is a recent addition to the Valley REC team, Josh Gutshall. Josh was hired as an apprentice lineman in the Shade Gap District in January. Josh completed Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association's basic climbing school in May and was recently promoted to lineman first class.

Josh helps install new services, conducts line maintenance and responds to outage calls. He says his co-workers are easy to get along with and he's fortunate to have a job that's something different every day.

"I love it so far," he says. "I'm outside. I'm always learning. There's always something new."

Josh is a 2013 graduate of Huntingdon Area High School, where his extracurricular activities included wrestling and football.

Prior to joining the Valley team, Josh worked as an assembler and fabricator at the Fluid Containment plant at Mount Union. Additionally, he was a mechanic at Runk's Towing & Service in James Creek, where he also helped with a building expansion project. Prior to that, he worked at Rick Singleton Rental, Huntingdon, where he received his commercial driver's license (CDL). While still in high school, Josh was a lumber stacker at Garner's Lumber near Marklesburg.

In his spare time, Josh enjoys spending time with family,



WELCOME: Josh Gutshall is one of Valley's newest employees. He is a lineman in the Shade Gap District.

hunting and fishing. He also enjoys working on his "beater truck," a 1993 Ford F250.

"Something always needs fixed," Josh says of his indirect injection diesel pickup in which he's installed a turbocharger.

A James Creek native, Josh now resides in Henderson Township. He is the son of Steve and Diane Gutshall.

Line work runs in Josh's family as Steve is a crew leader in Valley's Huntingdon District.

Josh and his fiancée, Katelyn Kester of Mount Union, are the parents of 9-month-old Hadlee Linn Gutshall.

Josh's co-workers are glad to have him on board. He's one of the people you can count on. ☀

## Smart Strip reduces standby loss while protecting appliances

By Doug Roles  
Vice President, Member Services

Did you know the outlet power strip offered by Valley REC can pay for itself over time by stopping idle appliances from using electricity? Not only can the BITS Limited Smart Strip eliminate the use of standby energy (also known as vampire power or leaking electricity), the strip acts a 15-amp circuit breaker, protecting appliances from power surges.

Many electronic devices continue to use power when they are plugged in but in "sleep" or "off" mode. This standby loss can add up, possibly costing you \$50 a year or more. Devices susceptible to standby loss can be found throughout the home.

"Your entertainment center is the biggest one," says Travis Kuhstos, Valley REC energy specialist. "Cordless phones. Alarm clocks. DVD players. Anything that has a clock, has an LED light, has a remote (transmitter/receiver) or charges a battery has standby

loss associated with it."

The Smart Strip actually senses how much power computer peripherals and electronics use. When the 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.

VREC has offered the units since 2010. The co-op sells them for \$39, plus tax. Valley REC will also mail the units to members, with shipping charges added to the final total.

"We offer them to members because up to 10 percent of the average home's energy consumption is standby loss, according to the U.S. Department of Energy," Travis says.

One way to get a feel for the amount of standby loss in your house is to turn off your lights after dark and tour your home. Any illuminated clocks or glowing red or green device lights will show you where your appliances are spending money while you sleep.

Travis, a Valley member, is on his own personal quest to stamp out standby loss in his home. Years ago he got rid of his alarm clock and instead uses the alarm function on his cellphone. He saves energy this way because he keeps his phone with him whereas a clock would use power when no one is home to see it.

While not everyone will follow suit with their alarm clock, Travis encourages people to give some thought to cordless phones. Unplug the charger when the phone is powered up so energy is not wasted. Leaving a "full" phone on the charger continues to draw power.

"Standby loss frustrates me; it's use that our members never get any benefit from," Travis says. "Why would you pay for something that does you no good?"

For more information on the Smart Strip, call the co-op at 800-432-0680 or email [memberservices@valleyrec.com](mailto:memberservices@valleyrec.com). ☀

