

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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Corporate Office Hours
Monday - Thursday
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



Think spring

By Rich Bauer


FLOWERS are sprouting out of the ground and the buds are forming on the trees — a sure sign spring has finally arrived. Though this winter had some terribly cold weather right after Christmas through the middle of January, the overall winter was pretty mild in our area. The days are getting longer and the nights are getting shorter, which means more time to spend outside and get to those projects that you have been delaying all winter.

Nicer weather is just around the corner, and I'd like to remind you of a few safety tips to start the season. Spring is a great time to change those batteries in your smoke alarms or at least test them if they are hardwired into your home. It is also a smart time to check and change furnace or heat pump filters if you have one. Most of the time, people forget about those filters, and a dirty filter can cause your heating and cooling unit to operate less efficiently because your unit is working harder to get the correct amount of air flow. Filters are relatively inexpensive, and the cost saving to your furnace or heat pump pays for it in a short amount of time.

April may also be a great time to take a look at your lightbulbs in your home. I know that sounds strange, but stick with me on this. Though most people don't think about it, the average home has 40 lightbulbs. If the average size bulb is 60 watts, that lightbulb, when on for one hour, uses 2,400 watts or 2.4 kilowatts (kW) per hour. The average lightbulb is used approximately

three hours a day for 365 days a year. Those 40 lightbulbs during the year use approximately 2,628 kW per year, costing around \$262.80. If you would consider changing those bulbs out for LED lightbulbs, the same number of bulbs burning the same amount of time, producing the same amount of light would cost you \$26.28 per year, a savings of \$236.52 per year. A 60-watt-equivalent LED bulb uses slightly under 6 watts to produce the same amount of light as a conventional 60-watt lightbulb. Start the spring off right by changing out as many bulbs as you can, and I can promise you that you will see the results on your electric bill.

One other item that occurs in April is your cooperative's annual meeting, which is being held this year on Friday, April 6, at the Huntingdon Area High School. I encourage you all to attend if possible. Three of your nine directors will be elected by the membership there to represent your cooperative, plus you'll receive an update on how Valley REC is performing and what to expect in the coming year. Members will also hear music from the Werner Family Band, receive a \$15 bill credit and also get a great giveaway. I hope you will be able to attend.

I hope everyone has a safe and enjoyable start to the spring and as always, if you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please don't hesitate to let me know. Spring has sprung and there are many things to be thankful for. Take care and God bless. 

Valley REC's 2018 golf outing to benefit two recipients

The Duvalls

Amy and Tom Duvall live in Huntingdon, Pa. They have three children and are also expecting a baby girl in June. Lincoln, their second oldest, is 6 years old and was born with a rare chromosome deletion. He has had



TOP LEFT TO RIGHT: Amy, Saylor, Jayden, Tom, and Lincoln Duvall. BELOW: Nicole and Owen Davison.



numerous surgeries and will likely be required to undergo several more as he gets older. He currently has a feeding tube. Missing 50 percent of his body's collagen, Lincoln is very small at his age. That doesn't hold him back though, as he loves playing on his iPad and watching YouTube videos.

The Davisons

Nicole and Gary Davison of Hollidaysburg, Pa., are the parents of Carter and Owen. On July 3 of last year, Owen was diagnosed with a Wilms tumor on his right kidney that was the size of a small cantaloupe. A few days later, doctors had successfully removed his right kidney and the tumor that overtook it. Owen then started radiation and chemotherapy a few weeks later to remove any cancer cells that remained. Since then, the family has made several trips back and forth to the Pittsburgh Children's Hospital and will continue those trips for routine scans. Owen is now 3 years old and loves memorizing books and playing outside.

"The progress Owen has made since the diagnosis has been a blessing thanks to God," Nicole Davison says.

Past tournament success

The Valley REC Charity Golf Outing has benefitted several recipients over the past few years, with success trends

moving upward as each year passes. Since the inception of the tournament in 2012, the co-op has raised more than \$104,000. In 2017 alone, the golf outing raised \$32,000, which more than doubled what was raised just three years prior in 2014. The rate of success has grown so rapidly it has prompted the cooperative to form a committee devoted directly toward the planning and development of the tournament.

Over the years, Valley REC has had a tremendous amount of support from vendors, local businesses and donors who have played an instrumental part in facilitating successful outings. Special thanks go out to all of those who have contributed and participated in Valley REC's annual golf tournaments. Without you, this charitable work would not be possible. 🌟



2017 GOLF OUTING: Valley REC employees Billy Ayers, left, and Kevin Detwiler participate in last year's tournament.

WHERE?



WHEN?

Thursday
June 28, 2018

Registration:
Morning - 7 to 8 a.m.
Afternoon - 11:30 a.m. to
1 p.m.

Tee times:
Morning - 8 a.m.
Afternoon - 1 p.m.

DETAILS?

4-Man Scramble

\$100 per player

50/50 raffle

Silent auction

Hole challenges/bag of tricks

Lunch, dinner & snacks

For more information, contact:
Travis Kuhstos, 814/506-1652, or Lisa Carper, 814/506-1637

Celebrating National Lineworkers Appreciation Day with a few of your cooperative's own

Each year, a day in April is set aside to honor and give thanks to lineworkers across the country for their service. This year's National Lineworkers Appreciation Day will be celebrated on Monday, April 9. Valley REC is grateful to have a group of talented and skillful linemen to help keep the lights on. In an effort to recognize their hard work, a sampling of Valley REC linemen were asked what they enjoy about their job and what they feel is most important about it. Listed below are their responses.



19,000 linemen.
One mission.

Power ON.



"I enjoy being outside and working with the guys. It's like a family because we spend more time with each other than we do with our families at home. Valley is a great place to work and I couldn't ask for a better job."

— **Justin Berrier**
Crew Leader
9 years with VREC

"I enjoy my job because no two days are the same. The most important thing I do is help provide safe and reliable energy to the members."

— **Logan Booher**
Journeyman Lineman
5 years with VREC



Did you know?

20 – Linemen presently working at Valley REC who are responsible for maintaining 2,750 miles of line

19,000 – Linemen across the nation that work for rural electric cooperatives

115,000 – Linemen that work for electric utilities across the country

170,000,000 – Number of wood poles in service in the U.S.



"I enjoy my job because of the challenges it presents. Whether it be maintenance work, replacing a pole or troubleshooting an outage, the job requires thinking on the fly. We work in weather conditions such as thunderstorms and snowstorms to ensure that the members' power stays on."

— **Matt Fagan**
Journeyman Lineman
18 months with VREC

"I like being a lineman because it's a job that not everyone can do. Climbing 40 feet in the air with rain or snow coming down, in the middle of the night is definitely a unique job. What's important about being a lineman is ensuring safety for myself and my co-workers, all while keeping the lights on for the membership."

— **Trevor Eichelberger**
Journeyman Lineman
3 years with VREC



There when you need them
MOST.



"Being a lineman can be one of the most grueling and demanding jobs you could ask for. I enjoy working with my fellow linemen because we are a team and have to trust each other with our lives. Being a people person, I look forward to talking with members that I get to meet out on the job. The most rewarding part of my job is getting members' lights turned back on."



— **Jonathan Shields**
Journeyman Lineman
13 years with VREC

Meet your employees ...

FEATURED in this column is a recent addition to the Valley REC team, Brandon Clemons. Brandon resides in Mount Union, Pa., and is working out of the Huntingdon District office. Originally, Brandon was hired in as a lineman on May 1, 2017, but has been working as the district's staking engineer since the following November.

Brandon is a 2007 graduate of Mount Union Area High School, where he played baseball for illustrious, longtime coach Nick Imperioli. After graduation, he worked as a lineman for Penelec. His cousin, who was a dispatcher for Penelec at the time, talked to him about being a lineman, and Brandon immediately was interested.

"I always had an interest in working in an electric-related field, so I knew after talking with my cousin that being a lineman would be a great start for me after high school," says Brandon.

While working for Penelec, he was granted the opportunity to head back to school through a program offered by the utility. He completed his Associate Degree in Applied Science & Industrial Technology through Clarion University, at the Venango Campus in Oil City. He would spend the next eight years working with the utility before deciding to explore other job opportunities. It wasn't long before Brandon found his way back into line work, though, when he discovered the opportunity to work for Valley REC.

"I really enjoy working for Valley because of how family-oriented the company is," explains Brandon. "I like being a part of the cooperative model."

Mike Lansberry, former Huntingdon staking engineer, was promoted as the district manager of the Martinsburg District



ON BOARD: Huntingdon District's Brandon Clemons is one of Valley REC's newest employees. He works as the district's staking engineer.

to replace Mike Shawley, who relocated to another cooperative. That left the staking position vacant, which opened up an opportunity for Brandon.

"I really wanted to expand my knowledge in a different area of line work, so I was really excited to have the opportunity to work as a staking engineer," says Brandon.

Outside of work, Brandon enjoys being around his family. He and a few of his family members own several acres of land in the Mount Union area, with part of the acreage running along a stretch of the Juniata River. Fortunately for Brandon, his hobbies include hunting and fishing, so he has plenty of room to satisfy his spare time interests.

Brandon says his co-workers are a great group of people to be around. The Valley REC team is glad to have him on board. He's one of the people you can count on. 🌞

Keep your family safe during a flood

ALREADY this year, we have experience heavy rainfalls. If this is at all a sign of what spring may have in store for us, it's time now to prepare for possible flooding situations.

Heavy rains often cause flooding in lowland areas, homes and basements.



The prospect of an electrical accident is probably not the first thing that comes to mind when you're dealing with a flooded basement, room or even outdoors. Truth be told, it's the first thing you should think of before you step foot in the water.

Below are a few safety measures to keep in mind during heavy rainstorms:

- ▶ Never step into a flooded basement or other room if water may be in contact with electrical outlets, appliances or cords.
- ▶ Never attempt to turn off power at the breaker box if you must stand in water to do so. If you can't reach your breaker box safely, call your electric utility to shut off power at the meter.
- ▶ Never use electric appliances or

touch electric wires, switches or fuses when you're wet or when you're standing in water.

- ▶ Keep electric tools and equipment at least 10 feet away from wet surfaces. Do not use electric yard tools if it's raining or the ground is wet.
- ▶ If an electrical appliance has been in contact with water, have a professional check it out before it is used. It may need to be repaired or replaced.

Consider having ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) professionally installed on outlets. These safety devices can cut off power instantly if there's a problem. GFCIs are recommended for outdoor outlets and outlets near wet areas of the home such as the kitchen, bath, and laundry room. 🌞