

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



New bill dates coming in February

By Ethan DeVore, *Director of Member Services*

VALLEY REC has always prided itself on its ability to continuously become more efficient. Whether it be by deploying iPads in the field for our linemen to complete work processes or upgrading system resources such as our Outage Management System (OMS) to improve outage restoration times, the co-op is always striving to implement practices that improve operational procedures.

Most recently, your co-op made the decision to make enhancements to its billing cycle. Currently, the billing date for the majority of accounts is the 20th of the month. The new method will disperse the billing dates to either the 15th, 20th, or 25th, depending on your service location and type of account. The list below will provide guidelines on the new billing procedures, which take effect with January's bill — due in February:

- ▶ **Martinsburg service district members** – bills will be mailed out on the 1st and are due back by the 15th of the month.
- ▶ **Huntingdon service district members** – bills will be mailed out on the 5th and are due back by the 20th of the month.
- ▶ **Shade Gap service district members, large commercial and net metering accounts** – bills will be mailed out on the 10th and are due back by the 25th of the month.


The main reason for this modification is to help evenly distribute the billing workflow. This will alleviate

the abundant inflow of bills due back on a single day of the month. Please note these adjustments will not affect your bill amount. The only thing that is changing is the mailing date and the due date.

There are a few advantages these changes will bring for your cooperative. Evenly distributing the billing cycle throughout the month will increase the overall efficiency for the billing department. It will also level out the incoming call volume regarding billing inquiries from members.

Another benefit is that the auto-pay option will become more time conscious. This means that if you need to make changes to your auto-payment option, you can do so up till the day before your bill is due.

If you are not sure which service district you live in, call our office toll-free at 800-432-0680 and one of our customer service representatives will assist you. Otherwise, please make sure to view your January bill, which is due in February, and pay extra attention to when your new due date occurs.

Lastly, keep in mind the several ways offered to you to pay your bill — online through SmartHub, by phone or auto-pay, and by paying at the front desk of either the Martinsburg District, Shade Gap District, or the corporate office. All of these options are provided to you with no additional fees. If you have any questions about your bill, please contact our billing department at billing@valleyrec.com. 



FROM LEFT: Valley President & CEO Rich Bauer and linemen Greg Dilling, Bill Bogel, Ryan Dodson, and Rob Shook stand in front of the newly constructed Martinsburg District office. The building, located on 2585 Cove Mountain Road in Martinsburg, will open on Jan. 28, 2019.

Co-op opens new district office

By Ethan DeVore
Director of Member Services

VALLEY Rural Electric Cooperative recently completed construction of a new district office building that will help improve operational efficiency. The new building will host employees from the Martinsburg District, where they will continue to work for co-op members located within the service territory.

“We are very excited about the new district office because it will allow us to improve operations and better serve members in that area,” says Rich Bauer, president & CEO of Valley REC.

Palmer Construction performed the majority of work on the district office. Co-op employees also played role in the building’s completion. Wiring, electrical, and data cabling were taken care of largely in part by the Valley REC Energy Services electricians with help from linemen and other co-op personnel. Overall, the joint effort was successful in developing the final product.

“Palmer Construction did a fantastic job,” says Bauer. “We are very pleased



HARD AT WORK: Valley linemen Trevor Eichelberger, left, and Greg Dilling brace the lighting system in the new office building.

with how everything turned out.”

Residing east of Martinsburg off Route 164, the new building will replace the previous district office, which is located in town on 721 West Allegheny Street in Martinsburg. Moving out of town was a contributing factor in making the decision to relocate the district.

“The new location will make it much more convenient for line crews to get in and out,” says Bauer. “That’s one of the benefits of moving out of town.”

Plans to build the new district office originated a few years ago when co-op personnel realized the company had outgrown the building and needed more space for the office, warehouse inventory, and a pole yard. The property of the former district office is limited in size. Linemen had to travel about a mile off-site just to get to the district’s pole yard, which caused an inconvenience every time repairs and replacement needed to be completed.

“With the need for additional warehouse space, property, and office improvements, it just made more sense to construct a new building that better

suits us for development down the road,” says Todd Ross, Valley’s vice president of operations. “It will also give us the space we need to complete work more efficiently.”

Plans to start the project came to life in August of last year as the final decision was made to go ahead and build the new office. After land was purchased and permits were obtained, the “moving dirt” phase finally began.

Once the process started, it only took a few months for the entire district building to be completed.

“We are thrilled to get everyone situated in the new office to start the new year,” says Mike Lansberry, Valley’s Martinsburg District manager. “It’s an



RUNNING CABLES : Valley’s Information Technology Manager, Max Hetrick, running ethernet cables during the construction phase of the new Martinsburg District office.

upgrade we have all been looking forward to for quite some time.”

The Martinsburg District will operate out of the old building until Jan. 17. The office will then close the week of Jan. 21-25 for final preparations and will reopen at the new location on Jan. 28.

As for the previous office building, the co-op plans to sell the property, which has an office and two small warehouse buildings. For inquiries on Valley’s former Martinsburg District office, contact the co-op at 800-432-0680 or send an email to memberservices@valleyrec.com.

Valley Rural Electric’s Martinsburg District serves Blair County; the Woodbury, Bloomfield, Kimmel, and Pavia townships of Bedford County; and the Morris, Franklin, Warriors Mark, and Spruce Creek townships of Huntingdon County. Incorporated in November 1938, Valley energized its first line in November 1939. ⚡



DEVELOPMENT: From the top left clockwise, the photos show the construction of the new building from the “moving dirt” phase to the building’s office and warehouse frames being erected.



Lineman retires after 25 years of service

VALLEY Rural Electric Cooperative recently had a lineman retire after serving more than two decades. Boyd Gelvin of Three Springs, Huntingdon County, worked from the Shade Gap District office for the entirety of his career with the co-op. A Valley member in addition to an employee, Boyd truly appreciated how being lineman affected people's lives.

"Being a lineman is a great job to have if you like to help people," says Boyd. "Probably one of my favorite parts of the job was getting people's lights back on."

Graduating from Forbes Road High School in 1980, Boyd went on to work on a dairy farm before being employed at Valley in 1992. He quickly realized how much he enjoyed line work and spent the next 25 years climbing the ranks before he would retire as a crew leader in February of last year.

Line work was really tailored to Boyd's personality. It enabled him to have a job working outside while being hands-on. As a people person, it provided him the opportunity to meet people in the area and make an impact in their lives by working around-the-clock through extreme weather conditions to ensure that their power was restored. The aspect of the job he'll miss the most is, however, being with his work family.

"Working with everyone for so long really allows you to become family," Boyd says. "I'll really miss some of the



FREE AT LAST: Retired Valley REC lineman Boyd Gelvin enjoys his newfound free time at his home in Three Springs, Huntingdon County. Boyd was employed with Valley for over 25 years and retired from the co-op as a crew leader.

people I had the opportunity to work with for several years."

Boyd mentioned that over the course of his career, the most significant change he experienced was the advancement in technology with equipment used out in the field. He went on to explain how digger and bucket trucks alone greatly improved over his tenure with the co-op.

"Everything seemed to get better," he says. "We went from reading meters at the members' residents to having systems implemented that could read them from the office. Life as a lineman definitely changed since the time I started."

Now enjoying his retirement, Boyd finds himself still involved with electrical work. He currently works part time as an electrician for Fulton Electric. He says the work is enjoyable and helps him keep busy. Outside of the part-time job, he enjoys calling bingo every Friday night at the Fraternal Order of Eagles in Harrisonville. He also recently joined a pool league and is on a team for the Eagles, where he's been brushing up his skills as a billiards player.

Those who knew Boyd knew he had a knack for making people laugh. You could always count on him to have a joke on hand and raffle tickets for sale. He'll be greatly missed by his Valley REC team. We wish him the very best in his retirement. 🌞

