

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



Watch out for scams

By Ethan DeVore, *Director of Member Services*

IN THE DAY and age we live in, scams are as prevalent as ever. It's unfortunate, but we find ourselves adopting new ways to handle interactions with people we don't know. If you don't have some level of caution, you could quickly find yourself a victim of a scam. Whether it be ignoring the door when a stranger comes knocking or phone calls from unknown numbers, many of us have accepted the possibility that at any given time someone could be out to steal our personal information.


There are several ways scammers coax people into turning over their banking or credit information. As a utility, Valley REC would like to inform you about a few of the different types of scams you could experience, as well as what you can do to avoid them.

First and foremost, Valley REC will never ask for credit card or bank account information over the phone. If you receive a call from what appears to be the co-op's phone number, that doesn't mean it is an employee. This tactic is known as caller ID spoofing. Caller ID spoofing is when a phone number is disguised to make it look more familiar to the person receiving the call, increasing the chances that the receiver falls victim to the scam. If you do receive a call where someone is posing as a Valley REC employee and is asking for information that makes you hesitate, hang up the phone and call in to speak with someone to let them know what happened.

Another tactic scammers use is stopping at your home claiming to be an employee of the cooperative. If you receive this type of visit, and the person is unable to provide an ID badge or doesn't have a company vehicle with a co-op logo, call us to confirm they are one of our employees. If they are not, call local authorities for assistance and do not let the individual into your home. Those are the two most popular ploys used by scammers in relation to utilities, but their tactics don't stop there. There are several other types of scam tactics out there.

Keep in mind that government agencies like the IRS will never call to inform you that you have unpaid taxes or other liens against you. That information comes through the mail.

Another popular scam tactic is using email to send malicious links and attachments that can be used to gain access to sensitive data. Watch out for emails from unknown senders or ones that threaten action. Don't click any of the links within those types of messages and do not reply. Simply delete it or send it to your spam folder.

The methods listed above are a few of the most common methods used by scammers to gain access to your information. Valley REC wants to make sure you avoid any scam that could result in financial crisis. If you receive any contacts from people claiming to be affiliated with the co-op and you are unsure, call us at 814-643-2650. 

Valley REC staffer nearing end of Middle East deployment



OVERSEAS: Sgt. 1st Class Doug Roles, with Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, 28th Infantry Division, Pennsylvania Army National Guard, pauses for a photo in his unit's motor pool at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, in September. The battalion concludes its deployment this month. Roles looks forward to returning to work with Valley REC at the start of the new year.

By Ethan DeVore
Director of Member Services

A VALLEY REC staffer is wrapping up a nearly year-long deployment to the Middle East with his Pennsylvania Army National Guard Unit. Doug Roles, Valley's vice president – member services, mobilized in January with the Harrisburg-based Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, 28th Infantry Division.

The nearly 500-soldier unit is deployed to Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, where it serves as the headquarters of Task Force Spartan (TFS). The task force — comprised of more than 9,000 service members — has a mission, in part, to build interoperability with U.S. allies throughout the Middle East through training exercises, symposia and subject matter expert exchanges.

Now entering its seventh year, TFS is designed to maintain a U.S. military posture sufficient to strengthen U.S. defense relationships, build partner capacity and execute U.S. Central

Command (CENTCOM) contingency plans when necessary.

“Our battalion has had a complex mission in a complex region of the world,” Roles says. “It’s been interesting to see how the Army coordinates training with partner militaries over here.”

“It’s been long days at times,” he adds. “We’ve had a successful deployment, but we’re definitely ready to come home.”

Roles serves in the division’s public affairs section. Many of his military duties as a print journalist correspond to his civilian employment back here in the states. At the co-op, his responsibilities include media relations, event planning, producing Valley’s local *Penn Lines* pages and overseeing the member services department.

While deployed, his role as a public affairs operations noncommissioned officer have included media analysis, photography, and editing press releases submitted by subordinate units and soldiers in his section.

Roles has traveled to Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Jordan while also experiencing many highlights during this deployment. One he mentions was covering a joint U.S.-U.A.E. artillery exercise. He also had the opportunity to travel with Florida Gov. Rick Scott when the governor visited Camp Beuhling, Kuwait, to see Florida Army National Guard soldiers.

Another experience Roles shares about is covering an Operation Proper Exit (OPE) iteration. OPE events facilitate the return of wounded warriors to theater — sometimes to the very location of injury — to give them the opportunity to leave Iraq or Afghanistan on their own terms. He seems very appreciative of having such an opportunity.

“Those soldiers had some powerful, compelling stories of resiliency,” Roles says. “It was a privilege to help tell those stories as part of my deployment.”

The biggest challenges Roles experiences during his deployment

are separation from family and living conditions. The average daytime temperatures through late summer often reached 115 degrees, sometimes with periods of high humidity. Fortunately, the soldiers' living quarters and office spaces are air-conditioned. Additionally, Camp Arifjan provides resources such as a United Service Organization (USO) recreation center, gyms, an education center, shops and chapels.

Roles says guard soldiers rely on the support of employers as well as families. He said he appreciates Valley's staff working with him in preparation for his absence from and his return to work. He's also grateful for all the care packages he has received from Valley REC, the Huntingdon Rotary Club and his family. He noted that his parents, Tom and Darlene Roles of Wayne Township, Mifflin County, have periodically sent him copies of *The Daily News* not just to keep him abreast of local events but to give him something "normal" to do such as reading the paper. Roles spends his off-duty time reading, working out in the gym and running.



BATTALION ANNEX TEXT: Doug Roles stands in front of a mural, which was painted by one of the soldiers to commemorate the unit's deployment. The painting, known as a T-wall mural, remains even after the unit returns home.

"Being away from home can be a challenge, and days here can become repetitive," Roles says. "But it also becomes your new normal because the soldiers around you are going through the same experience. They become your second family, especially in guard

units where some of these soldiers have served together for many years."

The battalion is scheduled to return to the Pennsylvania later this month, following redeployment processing at Fort Hood, Texas. Roles says he's looking forward to spending time with family before heading back to the co-op's office after New Year's. He is particularly eager to see this area's natural beauty again and hopes to be home in time for a few days of deer hunting. The team at Valley REC greatly looks forward to having him back, where his presence in the office will continue to brighten everyone's day.

"Doug is always upbeat," says Terri Cohenour, Valley's office services clerk/receptionist. "When you are having a bad day, he makes you laugh. He is one of the Valley employees you can count on, and we greatly miss him,"

Roles has served with the guard for 17 years. In 2008-09, he deployed to Iraq with the division's 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team. He has also participated in overseas training events in Egypt, Korea, France and Lithuania. Roles resides in McVeytown, Mifflin County, with his wife, Jody, and their son, Hunter, 16. 🌟



VALLEY REC TEAM: Valley employees gather together to take a group photo to send to Doug Roles with his care package. This photo was intended to help him feel as close to home as possible while overseas serving his deployment.

Meet your employees ...

FEATURED in this column is a recent addition to the Valley REC team, Stephen Bruno. Bruno and his family reside in State College, and he has worked out of the corporate office since early July as an IT support specialist.

A native of State College, Bruno graduated from State College High School in 2005. While in high school, he was captain of the hockey team and also played football.

Bruno went on to enroll at Penn State University after high school, where he completed his degree in computer science in 2010 while maintaining a job at Best Buy.

Upon graduating from Penn State, Bruno started his professional career working various jobs before applying to the co-op. His first job was with a company based in California called Support.com as a client support specialist. From there, he went on to work for MD Office Solutions as an IT administrator of data centers for a few years before deciding to take a job at Morefield Communications.

“After working at Morefield, I realized I wanted to travel less and work closer to home,” Bruno says.

That’s when Bruno found out about the job opening at Valley through an online job finder. So far, he’s been very pleased with the opportunity to work at the cooperative.

“I love working at Valley,” Bruno says. “I really enjoy the impact helping others brings on a day-to-day basis.”

Upon asking Bruno what he thinks about his co-workers, he states, “I really enjoy the people I work with and the laid-back atmosphere. Everybody has been very engaging,



ON BOARD: Stephen Bruno is the newest member of the Valley Rural team, working as an IT support specialist out of the corporate office.

friendly, and helpful.”

Outside of work, Bruno likes to be active. He enjoys playing a variety of sports, including hockey, flag football and softball. In his spare time he flies model airplanes and drones. One of his favorite hobbies, though, is taking care of his pets, which include his dog and two cats.

Bruno has quickly proven himself to be an asset to the Valley REC team. He’s one of the people you can count on. 🌟

FALL INTO ENERGY SAVINGS

Contact us for more energy-saving tips!

- Check to see if your home insulation levels are up to par.
- Seal air leaks around doors, windows and electrical outlets.
- When heating your home, set the thermostat to 68 degrees to save energy.