

Valley Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Valley News

January | February 2015

Volume 72 | Issue 1



Against-the-odds: Cat rescue matches strays with new homes

Pages 4-5

www.valleyrec.com

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Looking ahead to serving you

A few weeks ago at a conference, I had the opportunity to hear a geopolitical strategist speak about what is likely to happen across the globe in the next several decades. The speaker shared some exciting and disturbing thoughts, on things most folks don't think about. This man could rattle off facts about out-of-the-way countries whose names I can't spell. He had memorized the gross domestic product (GDP) figures for multiple nations, knew the latest trends in shipping and trade and made many predictions that kept the audience's attention.

He certainly held my interest. In fact, I was intrigued enough that a few days later I decided to buy the speaker's new, nearly 400-page book to learn more about, what he thinks, will happen as energy supply and demand dynamics change globally.

I'm still logging through that book! There are a lot of charts and graphs but I hope to learn which countries will do well and which could succumb to population collapse or trade imbalances.

While I'm still flipping pages, there are two things I've grown to appreciate about the author/speaker. The first is that he took the time to learn enough about geopolitics to fill a book. The second is his forthrightness about how difficult it is for even an expert to prognosticate with any degree of certainty when the subject is human beings and their various endeavors.

This uncertainty doesn't diminish people's desire to speculate. Certainly everyone has at least some curiosity about what the future holds. Think not? See if Feb. 2 has you paying attention to a certain groundhog in Punxsutawney.

While no one, not a best-selling analyst nor a woodchuck, can say for certain what the future has in store, I feel pretty comfortable making some predictions about what 2015 holds for the co-op and its members, because of what has happened in the co-op's past.

For starters, it's a good bet that when the co-op's employees show up each morning they'll be ready to do their best for the co-op. I predict that trend will continue because many of our linemen, staking engineers and office staff are either members themselves or have family and friends on Valley lines.

It's also likely that the co-op will con-

tinue to show concern for community and be committed to education. In fact, these two co-op principles come to life at Valley REC through our annual charitable golf outing and our Youth Tour and Brighter Future scholarship programs. Planning for the 2015 golf event is underway and applications for both youth programs are being accepted now.

Another "educated guess" is that members will continue to be involved in the operation of their business. The three district nominating meetings being held in February give consumers in those districts a chance to select members to serve on the board. April's annual meeting will again see members exercise the principle of democratic member control by electing those nominees. At least that's my forecast.

A prediction I feel pretty safe in making is that the co-op will continue to share energy-saving tips with members in 2015 and ask that you consider participating in the demand response program, which helps stabilize the co-op's wholesale power bill by periodically cutting power to water heaters. The program offers a \$100 bill credit and should not inconvenience you. If you'd like to see a bill credit and more stable rates in your future, ask about this important program.

For more than 75 years, Valley REC has been committed to providing safe, affordable and reliable electric service. I'm not a geopolitical expert (or a woodchuck) but my bet is that this trend continues.

Cooperatively yours,



Doug Roles
Director of Member Services



Doug Roles
Director of Member Services

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Valley Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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On the cover ...



Photo by Doug Roles

Laura Meyers of James Creek, Huntingdon County, president of the Mom's Cats rescue program, works to reduce the number of stray and feral cats through a mix of trapping, adoption and education. See story on Pages 4-5.

Co-op uses digital metering to lessen connection costs, late balances

By Doug Roles

Director of Member Services

Valley REC is using its new digital metering capability to lessen the amount of time spent disconnecting and reconnecting service at accounts with high rates of member turnover, such as apartments and other rental properties. The co-op's automated metering infrastructure (AMI) also modernizes the way the co-op conducts its load limiting program.

Thanks to AMI, the co-op has begun deploying and using remotely controllable meters that can set how much electricity is used at an account or start and stop service. The device makes it possible for co-op personnel to activate or terminate service without the expense of manually performing such work on-site. The load limiting capability of the meter replaces the need for other equipment that dates back to the era of manually reading meters.

The co-op uses load limiting to curtail the growth of unpaid balances in delinquent accounts where service cannot be terminated. The goal of the program is to give affected members an opportunity to bring balances current without allowing the past due amount to swell.

In certain circumstances, such as medical needs or extreme outdoor tempera-

tures, the co-op may exercise load limiting in lieu of complete disconnection of electric service. The co-op conducts load limiting only where capabilities exist and when service would otherwise be subject to disconnection for non-payment.

"Load limiting allows consumers who are struggling to meet their obligations an opportunity to continue using electricity for necessities, such as medical equipment or heating, but reduces extraneous use that drives their past due balances even higher," says Luanne Eckenrode, Valley REC vice president of consumer services and public relations. "Valley's automated metering system provides a better mechanism to assist consumers in controlling their kilowatt-hour use while keeping the co-op's accounts receivable in check."

Deployment of load-limiting meters allows these consumers to use only a predetermined amount of electricity. Curtailing the co-op's past due balances is important to the financial health of the co-op and the membership as a whole.

Members with accounts that will be placed in the load-limiting program began receiving notices by mail in recent weeks explaining the new equipment. The communication describes the load-limiting meter's function and how to reset the

meter if use exceeds the allowed amount and trips the meter.

If the maximum threshold is exceeded and an interruption occurs, the consumer must manually restore service by locating the meter and pushing the black button in the upper-right corner. The meter cannot be reset for five minutes after it is tripped.

Consumers should turn off as many electrical devices as possible before reactivating the meter. Once the meter has been reactivated, they must slowly bring on smaller electrical loads (such as lights) to manage the household's peak load.

To restore full power to their properties, members must make payment of the total amount owing on their account at the time use was limited and pay disconnect/reconnect fees and a security deposit. Payments may be made by cash, check or money order at any cooperative office. Payments also may be made by credit/debit card or e-check online or via the automated phone system. Consumers are encouraged to visit the co-op's website, www.valleyrec.com, or call 1-800-432-0680. Service restoration will occur only during regular business hours, Monday-Thursday, 7 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

Valley REC scholarship applications available now to traditional and returning adult students

For the sixth consecutive year, Valley will award up to 25 \$1,000 Brighter Future scholarships to deserving students who apply. The money to fund this initiative comes from unclaimed capital credits refunds that previously had to be turned over to the state treasury. Thanks to the efforts of the cooperative's political advocates, these funds can be kept in our local communities.

ELIGIBILITY

Any prospective student applying for a scholarship must be a Valley REC member or dependent of a member. Valley REC directors and employees and their dependents are not eligible. The applying student must be attending or planning to attend an accredited post-secondary institution. The applicant must be enrolled or planning to enroll as a full-time student for the 2015-2016 academic year. Previous Brighter Future Scholarship recipients are not eligible.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications may be obtained by visiting the co-op's web site at www.valleyrec.com. Follow the "Programs and Services" link to the "Scholarships" section. There are two versions of the application: one for high school students and one for high school graduates. Paper applications are also available at all Valley REC offices and in many school guidance offices, including the following public high schools:

Altoona Area High School
Central High School
Claysburg-Kimmel High School
Fannett-Metal High School
Forbes Road Junior/Senior High School
Hollidaysburg Area Senior High School
Huntingdon Area High School
Juniata High School
Juniata Valley High School
McConnellsburg High School
Mifflin County High School
Mount Union Area High School

Valley Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.
brighter future
Scholarship Program

Northern Bedford County High School
Southern Fulton Jr./Sr. High School
Southern Huntingdon Co. High School
Tussey Mountain High School
Tyrone Area High School
Williamsburg High School

APPLICATION DEADLINE

Applications and all required information must be mailed to: **Valley Rural Electric Cooperative - Scholarship, PO Box 477, 10700 Fairgrounds Road, Huntingdon, PA 16652**. Mailings must be postmarked by April 15, 2015. Transcripts must be official school copies and be submitted in a sealed envelope. Scholarship selections will be made in May. Award recipients will be notified by the end of June. Applicants should direct questions to memberservices@valleyrec.com or call the member services department at 800/432-0680.

Rescue and trapping program hopes to

By Doug Roles

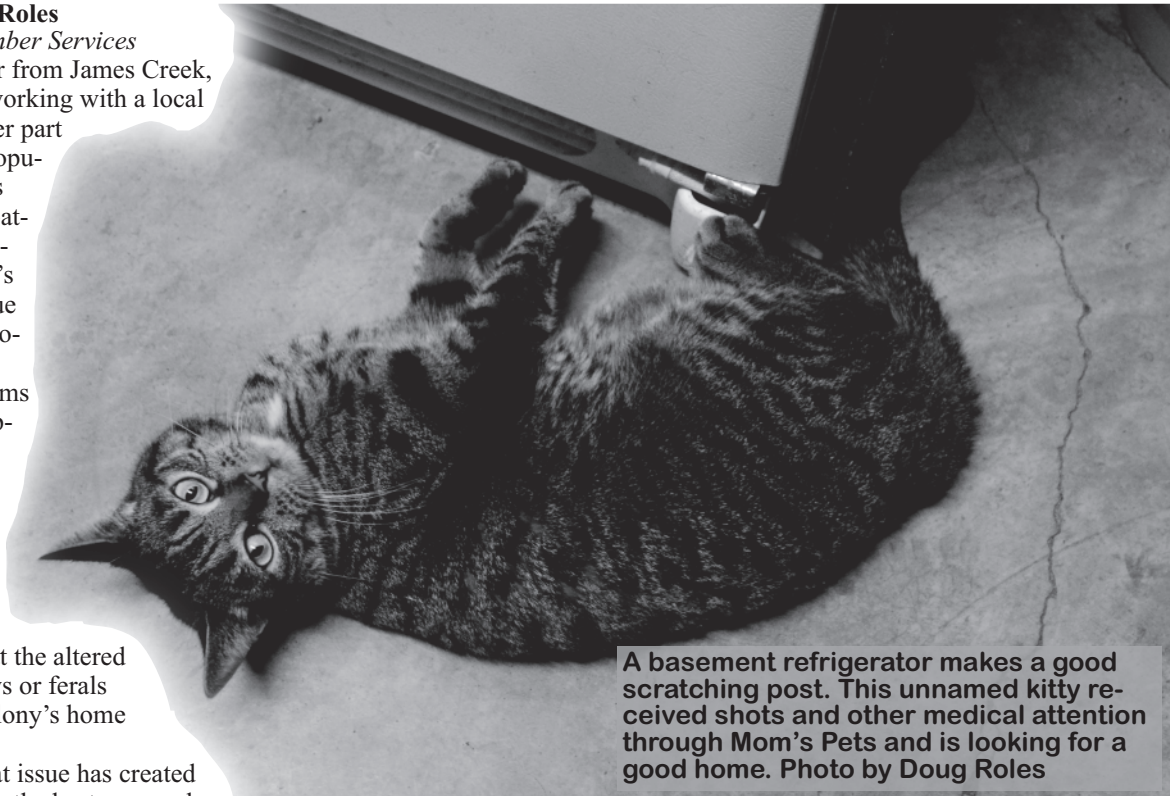
Director of Member Services

A Valley REC member from James Creek, Huntingdon County, is working with a local non-profit group to do her part to control the stray cat population, though she admits she's fighting an uphill battle. Laura Meyers is serving as president of Mom's Pets to help run the rescue and trap-neuter-return programs.

The goal of the programs is to place rescued or captured cats with adoptive families after the cats have received appropriate medical care. If the cats are not sociable enough for adoption, they are returned to the outdoors, in the hope that the altered cats will keep other strays or ferals from moving into the colony's home area.

Nationally, the feral cat issue has created various points of view on the best approach (See story below). Laura knows there are those who will disagree with her approach. But she believes euthanizing is not a solution and says something has to be done.

"I'm trying to eliminate the problem. There are way too many cats," she says. "How I started was with one stray. At first I



A basement refrigerator makes a good scratching post. This unnamed kitty received shots and other medical attention through Mom's Pets and is looking for a good home. Photo by Doug Roles

Approaches vary to feral cat solution

By Doug Roles

Director of Member Services

The problem of feral cats impacts humans and wildlife whether the setting is farm and country, small town or urban area. Some estimates put the number of American household cats at 60 million and the number of feral cats at 100 million.

Approaches to dealing with the problem are varied and, at times, contentious. A quick web search will turn up opposing websites and widely different estimates on the impact of stray and feral cats on songbird and small mammal populations. Cat lovers and animal rights groups argue that trapping cats, "fixing" them and releasing them back into the wild allows existing colonies to decline over time while exterminating a colony would just allow a new colony to fill the void. Trap-neuter-and release (TNR) also improves the lives of the cats, advocates say.

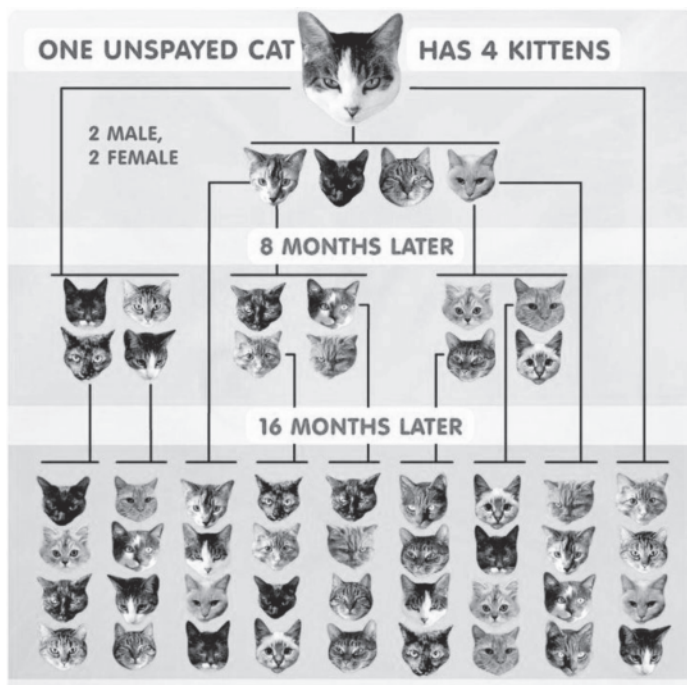
Wildlife groups contend that the worldwide number of songbirds and wild animals killed by cats is in the billions. The website Smithsonian.com reports that a recent study "shows that cats - especially feral ones - kill far more birds and small mammals than scientists previously thought." TNR advocates have said as many birds are lost due to flight into buildings, habitat loss and changes to farmland as are impacted by cats.

Pennsylvania's game and wildlife code prohibits the release of certain animal species, cats included, into the wild.

would take in fosters and try to get good homes for them."

Laura has volunteered with clinics in Bedford and Franklin counties since 2006. In 2011 she joined Mom's Pets, which was started in 2009 in Robertsdale. She first assisted the group by selling her baking and canning goods. In 2012 she was asked to become an officer in the organization and earlier this year she became president.

Mom's Pets helps cat owners get their pets spayed or neutered at a reduced cost. Cats also receive medical treatment and shots as part of the spay and neuter program.



www.totalwildlifecontrol.org

cut number of strays

Local Feature



Laura Meyers of James Creek, Huntingdon County, operates a cat rescue program. She hopes her efforts with the not-for-profit Mom's Pets program can stabilize or decrease the number of stray and feral cats in the area. Photo by Doug Roles

Laura operates a shelter from the basement of her home. She and other volunteers operate a rescue and foster program that focuses on fostering cats that are in harm's way and then attempting to have them adopted by a loving home.

In January 2014 Mom's Pets began a trap-neuter-return program for feral, outside and barn cats. With the property owner's permission, cats are caught in a box trap. They are then quarantined in Laura's basement shelter until their appointment with a veterinarian. Colored ribbon on traps and index cards are used to keep track of the cats.

The cost to a property owner for the trap and release program is \$30 per cat. The cats are released at the same location where they were caught, if the property owner agrees. At first it may seem counterintuitive, but Laura is among those who believes releasing the animals back to the same site is a way to control local cat numbers. She says keeping a colony in place will keep other strays from moving into an area, allowing the number of local ferals to decrease over time due to decreased reproduction.

"The trap and release program is necessary, especially in our area with all the ferals," Laura says,

Traveling to the York County SPCA monthly, she hauls 30 to 40 cats in her van for spaying and neutering and treatment that includes vaccinations, treatment of ear mites, screening for feline leukemia and ear notching to mark spayed or neutered cats.

Laura says it takes the work of volunteers, veterinary technicians and vets alike to create a successful program.

"You can't do something like this by yourself. You have to have a team."

Laura says irresponsible owners are a big part of the problem. People get kittens that grow into unwanted cats that are then dumped along the road. Additionally, Laura says she has gone on trapping jobs where the property owner was a hoarder and health and safety authorities were involved, for both the humans and the cats concerned. One job she went on found 28 cats living in a home. Conditions are often no better for the truly wild cats.

"Most of the cats we're handling don't have a very good life before they get here," Laura says. "Some of these cats have never been in a building until they come here."

Once the cats return from their appointment with the vet, they are held at Laura's home for three to five days before being released where they were trapped. If the property owner does not want them returned, they are kept at the shelter, hopefully to be socialized for adoption.

Laura says her operation is "no kill unless absolutely necessary." For cats that are adopted, Laura conducts a follow-up visit to ensure the cat has found a caring family. Those who drop off cats to Laura typically make a donation. These cases often involve cats where an aging person can no longer look after the animal or someone is moving.

Laura and her husband, Donald, are the parents of seven children ages 12 to 33, and are used to giving lots of care. In addition to bake sales, the Meyers family sells firewood to help defray the cost of supplies, like pet food, towels and cleaning supplies. Donations are always welcome.

Cats transported to York have to have their own bath towel and hand towel. The bath towel goes over the trap to calm the cat and the hand towel is used in the carrier for sanitation and comfort. Sanitation is an ongoing job.

"The cleaner you keep your facility, the fewer colds and respiratory issues you have," Laura says.



Reba, a calico rescued by Mom's Pets, naps in a comfortable spot. She is one of the many cats up for adoption through the non-profit group. Photo by Doug Roles

Those wishing to adopt a cat are asked to schedule an appointment. That way Laura can get some information ahead of time and try to select several cats that fit what the family wants. Unfortunately, the number of calls for people wanting rid of cats eclipses the number of families adopting a pet.

"The phone's always ringing," Laura says.

Mom's Pets beginnings

Mom's Pets traces its history to Eunice Pepper, a Robertsdale, Huntingdon County resident who helped any cat or kitten with which she came into contact. Her last request was for her belongings to be sold and for the money to somehow be used to help cats. Her daughter, Bonnie Goodling, carried out Eunice's wishes, creating Moms Pets in 2009. When Moms Pets started, it was only in the Robertsdale area. The non-profit now operates in Huntingdon, Bedford, Blair, Fulton, Mifflin and Centre counties. For more information, phone 814/658-2621 or email moms_pets@hotmail.com. Visit Mom's Pets on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/pages/Moms-Pets

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REAL ESTATE

10-acre farm 6 miles from Raystown Lake. 1,394 sq. ft., 3 or 4 BR, 2 BA, 12 x 22 sunroom, 2 car garage. Land in Clean & Green, oil rights, lots of deer, turkey. Taxes \$1,710. Huntingdon Co. 717/413-8283.

AUTOS/TRUCKS

2005 Mazda Tribute. Good tires & body in good shape. Needs a motor. \$15,000. 814/667-2264.

1934 Ford three-window coupe body. \$2,600 OBO. 717/734-3569.

4 tires. 175/65R15, 5/32 tread left. Were taken off a Honda Fit. \$50. 814/667-2151.

1985 Dodge Omni GLH. Rare, runs & drives, smokes. Good tires, new fuel pump, extra parts. Restorable. \$1,000. Call 717/485-5262 or 240/310-3968.

Leer truck cap. full size w/ sliding glass & wing vents for 1995 Ford F150 pickup & compatible years. Exc.

cond. \$250. 717/860-7186.

Hydraulic tailgate for pickup, \$900. Fiberglass compact truck cap 62" W x 82" L, white, \$150. 814/448-2215.

2000 GMC Suburban. 331.5K miles, needs transmission. \$3,000. 814/448-2215.

Flatbed trailer w/ sides, dual axle 76' W x 14' L, heavy homemade. No title \$600. 814/448-2215.

RECREATIONAL

1997 Kawasaki Prairie 4x4 400. Gd. cond., garage kept, gently used. Asking \$2,000 OBO. email: aub2221@atlanticbb.net Call 814/943-6507 or 814/935-6457.

Chrysler, Vintage 1980, SnoRunner single blade snowmobile for \$750 OBO. Works good, garage kept, only used for about 100 miles. Needs track replacement that can be bought online for about \$125 & some TLC. Have manual w/ schematic diagram. Be the only one in your neighborhood with a single blade snowmobile! 717/426-

4426.

FOR RENT

Daily, weekly, monthly refrigerated trailer, 7' x 12', 10 to 50 degrees digital control. Runs on 115 volts, available with generator. Schedule now for your summer events! 814/329-0408 or chilled@iceboxtogo.com

VACATION RENTALS

Bair Acres house rental. Weekends, weekly stays. Birthdays, dinner parties, camping, swimming, picnic area, reunions, etc. Beside Stone Creek for fishing. 814/667-3154 or 814/251-2070.

South Myrtle Beach year round vacation rental. 2 BR, 2 BA condo at an ocean-front resort. Fully furnished including linens, towels, cable w/ HBO, wireless internet, AC, 6 pools including a lazy river, lighted tennis courts, saunas, jacuzzis & more. \$450-\$950 weekly. Monthly rates available. Phone 717/263-2717.

Lake Raystown Vacation House Rental. Sleeps 11. Lg. great room w/ fireplace, 4 BRs, dining table for 12, central AC, 2 new flat screen satellite TVs, 2 full BAs, 2 half BAs, lg. recreation room, fully equipped kitchen & laundry rooms, screened-in porch, lg. parking area, 1 mile from lake (Snyders Run boat launch). Linens & towels provided. Minimum 2 nights. Available March-December. For more information see www.laurelwoodsretreat.com or call Dianne at 814/931-6562.

Heating assistance program remains open until April 3

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps low-income families pay their heating bills. LIHEAP offers assistance in the form of a cash grant, sent directly to the utility company, or a crisis grant for households in immediate danger of being without heat.

The program reopened in November and closes on April 3, 2015. The Department of Public Welfare may extend or shorten the program depending upon the availability of federal funds. You may complete an application at your local county assistance office or apply online at www.compass.state.pa.us.

For more information, please contact your local county assistance office or contact the LIHEAP hotline at 1-866-857-7095, Monday through Friday. (Individuals with hearing impairments may call the TDD number at 1-800-451-5886.)

FREE

660 Lawn & Garden yard machine riding lawn mower. Needs work, sitting at my camp in Blacklog Valley. Phone 717/428-1491.

3 person Hotspring hot tub. 15 yrs. old. Needs a new back pump. 814/627-4195.

WANTED

Military collector seeks U.S. military items - WWI, WWII and Korea. 240/367-6667 or 814/448-9977.

Good items for our auction. We sell it all - guns, boats, cars, household items, big items, small items, estates, partial estates, & more. **YOU BRING IT - WE'LL SELL IT!** For more info, Gene's Auction, Fairgrounds Road, Huntingdon. 814/643-2734. Auction every Friday 6 p.m.

Old paned windows & old barn boards. Please call 717/734-0096.

Rider(s) wanted. Port Royal/Thompson town/Newport to Capital Complex/Harrisburg Hospital, 8-4:30. Parking Chestnut St. garage. No smoking. 717/783-2551 work, 717/527-0217 after 6 or jbachman@pa.gov

TOOLS/EQUIPMENT

Used pushmatic 100 AMP panel box. Loaded w/ main, 1-40 AMP; 1-50 AMP; 2-30 AMP; 1-20 AMP; 220 breakers; 6-20 AMP; 4-15 AMP; 120 volt breakers. \$100. 814/667-2145.

Allis Chalmers RC model. Best offer. 717/580-3042.

Tractor chains. 1 set 15" x 60", \$200. 1 set 12" x 48", \$100. Construction trailers. 8' x 20' w/heat & AC. Three to choose from for \$3,000 each. 814/448-2215.

Onan emergency generator. 15KW, 208/240/480V, indoor unit, 4 cyl. air cooled, LPG fuel regulator & strainer, exhaust system w/ muffler, flex. conn. & drain, vibration isolators, auto. transfer switch. \$3,000. 814/448-2215

Zurn PEX plastic potable waterline. PD3NXF ASTM975/F877. Hot 100 psi @ 100 degrees F. Cold 160 psi @ 73 degrees F. 93'- 3/4" diameter (id), 7/8" diameter (od.). Well-X-trol pressurized diaphragm storage tank. Amtrol model WX250. Up to 100 psi working pressure. Easy to install w/ just one pipe connection. Save electricity & your well pump from extra cycling. 814/695-4632.

MISCELLANEOUS

1950's Monarch twin-efficiency cook-stove. \$250 OBO. 814/667-3622.

Whirlpool water softener 33k. New, used one week. \$200. 814/643-3395.

Lift chair w/ heat & massage. \$900. GE washing machine, HD, lg. cap. & lg. cap. dryer. \$250. Tree shelters. \$1.50/each. 814/448-2215.

Like new slate pool table (blue) with rack, balls, cue sticks & cover. Asking \$750. You haul. 814/937-2827.

Wahl Deluxe razor w/ attachments, good cond. Old wooden desk from the '50's. 814/447-3735.

Inovacare motorized wheelchair, never used. \$3,000 OBO. 814/447-3735.

4-8" I beam columns, 8' long, \$40 ea. 11 concrete 2-hole posts, \$15 ea. Used tin roofing 8' long. 8N belt pulley, \$40. 18" exhaust fan, new, \$50. 4-drawer filing cabinet, heavy, \$40. 2 aluminum tool boxes, side mount, 4' long, \$75 each. 3 ph. cut off saw frame, \$30. Large oxygen & acetylene tanks, no gauges. \$75. 717/987-3619.

SERVICES

Kenneth W. Reigh Carpentry & Masonry. Decks, landscaping blocks, siding, additions, kitchens & baths, screened-in porches, natural stone, brick, block & concrete. Fully insured, 35 yrs. exp. For estimates call 814/658-9998.

Moore Hair - Where looking good is still affordable. 814/667-2221 for appt.

Book Construction, LLC - We do excavating, utility work, stone, slate, dump truck service, septic systems, prep site for building, snow plowing & snow removal. 814/599-6262.

Forestry Consultant. Timber sales, appraisals & management. B. S. Forest Management, Penn State 1964. 45 years local forestry experience. Mark Kane, Consulting Forester, 6118 Geisler Run Road, Huntingdon. 814/667-3620.

Harold Harper Income Tax Service. Personal, farm & small business. 18+ yrs. experience. 21968 Mt. Carmel Road, Three Springs. Office hrs. Monday-Saturday by appt. only. 814/448-3832.

Dublin Electric, LLC - Wiring solutions for your bright ideas! Providing a wide variety of electrical services to the Fort Littleton & surrounding areas, fully insured & free estimates, please call Jeff Croft at 717/491-0676. PA. Reg. #075050.

Classified Ads

Tax Preparation. Dan Whitsel's Tax Service is taking on new clients. We do Federal, State & Local tax returns for individuals, businesses, & farms. Rates start at \$35. Please call 814/542-8511.

Cowan's Gun Shop. Gunsmith, fix, buy, sell, trade. Guns & ammo. Best price on 22 mag. shells. 23965 Decorum Road, Neelyton, PA. 814/259-0030.

Decker Electric Inc. Call us for all your electrical needs. We do quality work & comply w/ all electrical codes. We offer free estimates & are totally insured. Call 814/599-0835 or 814/643-4338.

Keller's Home Improvements. Free estimates. Fully insured. Specializing in replacement doors & windows, siding, decks, & other home improvements. 814/667-2236

JEWELRY REPAIR. Ring sizing, stone setting, soldering, and custom work. 30 yrs. goldsmithing experience. Watch batteries & repairs. New jewelry sales also. Call Neil at 814/251-2959.

ES Ministries Thrift Shop. 7603 Shavers Creek Rd., Petersburg, PA 16669 at the Nazarene Church. Open Fri. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. & Sat. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Clothing, toys, books, household items. New items weekly. Donations accepted during store hours. We cannot take TVs or electronic equipment.

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