

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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Huntingdon, PA 16652-0477
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1-800-432-0680
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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

James Stauffer
Chairman

Kevin States
Vice Chairman

Cindy Bigelow
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Robert Holmes
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Leroy Barnes
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James Stauffer
Allegheny Director

Gregory Henry
Randall Huntsman
Linda McMath
Joanne Whitsel

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

Guest Column



We want to stay in touch, just enough

By Doug Roles, *Vice President of Member Services*

LIFE is full of fine lines: between genius and insanity and between confidence and arrogance. Comedian Steven Wright used to say there's a fine line between fishing and standing on the shore looking like an idiot.

And there's probably a fine line between communicating effectively and hounding someone, too. At Valley Rural Electric, we always want to be on the right side of that line. We want to keep in touch, but just enough.


To most effectively communicate with our members, we rely on you to make sure we have your most accurate contact information. Up-to-date contact information is critical. It can even speed up the power restoration process during an outage. For example, the phone number you provide is linked to your service address in our outage management system. This means when you call to report an outage, our system recognizes your number and matches it with your address. Accurate information makes it easier for our crews to find and correct service disruptions.

Many of you have been members of the co-op for years, and it's likely that your information hasn't been updated for some time. Many members now

use a cellphone as their primary phone service, and we might not have that number in our system.

We call members directly about payments or changes to accounts. So, having a good contact number is important. However, we never ask for personal information over the phone. If you receive a suspicious call, hang up and then contact us at 800-432-0680.

We will never share your contact information with any third parties. It is only used by us to send important information to you. And we only use automated calls to share information we assume members would want to know. There's a saying that assuming too much is foolish, but we think members appreciate automated calls about planned outages or reminders if you have registered to attend a district nominating meeting. Because the meeting includes a homestyle supper we think most folks appreciate that automated reminder, because of another saying — "Free meal, spin the wheel."

If you're not sure we have your most up-to-date contact information, please contact us and we'll update our records. We're always glad to hear from you and we want to be able to reach you when you need to hear from us. 

2020 Annual Meeting

7 p.m., April 3, 2020 – Huntingdon Area High School
Scenic territory slides - 6:30 p.m.
Elections – Districts 1, 3 & 5

Activities and a dairy presentation for the kids
Entertainment: Folk music performer & storyteller Joseph

Door prizes – Co-op gift certificates
1 – \$200 & 6 – \$100

\$20 OFF YOUR ELECTRIC BILL AND A GREAT NIGHT OUT! YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS IT!

Districts 1, 3 & 5 hold nominating meetings

By Doug Roles

Vice President of Member Services

IN FEBRUARY, Valley REC held nominating meetings in co-op Districts 1, 3 and 5. The nominees shown on the following page were selected to stand for election to the co-op board of directors at the annual meeting to be held Friday, April 3, at Huntingdon Area High School.

Nominating meetings are held each year in three of the co-op's nine director districts. This year's meetings were held at Morrison's Cove Memorial Park, Blair County (District 1); Marklesburg Volunteer Fire Company (District 3); and Shavers Creek Volunteer Fire Company (District 5), both in Huntingdon County. After a home-style meal, members heard an update from VREC President & CEO Rich Bauer. Members then had the opportunity to participate in a question-and-answer session.

"We had a good year in 2019. When we got near the end of the year, we started to notice that our power costs were coming in lower than anticipated," Bauer said. "They ended up \$1.1 million lower than expected."

He explained that the \$1.1 million windfall spurred the decision by the board of directors to reduce the kilowatt-hour rate for November by half. That savings was reflected on December's bills, which also reflected a \$2.3 million capital credits return.

Bauer said several factors contributed to the banner year. The Susquehanna Steam Electric Station — a nuclear plant in Berwick, Pa., that provides Valley REC with 60% of its wholesale power — operated with just 16 down days in 2019.

Mild weather also helped. And members used power efficiently by operating ovens, dryers and swimming pool pumps in the early mornings or evenings — or by participating in the co-op's demand response program. The program centers around a water heater switch that temporarily cuts power



DISTRICT 3: Valley REC President & CEO Rich Bauer speaks to members from District 3 at the Marklesburg Fire Hall. Photos by Doug Roles

to electric storage tank water heaters during peak load periods.

Bauer explained that part of the co-op's power bill is comprised of capacity charges driven by peak load periods. Kilowatt-hour rates can skyrocket during these periods.

"I don't want to sell you expensive power," Bauer told members.

He reported that the co-op trimmed 500 miles of rights-of-way in 2019. He thanked members for their cooperation as trimming crews accessed rights-of-way.

He also reported that in 2019 the Community Service Grant Program handed out \$61,000 in assistance to civic projects and to members struggling with bill payment due to hardships. The grant program is funded through unclaimed capital credits returns.

Bauer updated members on substation improvements planned for this year and 2021. The co-op is currently re-replacing the aging Metal Substation, in Metal Township, Franklin County, with the new Path Valley Substation. The project will increase reliability by decreasing the likelihood of a loss of power supply by the private power company that serves the substation.

Valley REC had a record 53 outages in 2019 that were caused by loss of power to the co-op's substations.

This summer, Valley will replace the Atkinson Mills Substation in Wayne Township, Mifflin County. The old wooden structure will be replaced with an all metal structure. In 2021, the Sinking Valley Substation in Tyrone Township, Blair County, will be replaced.

Questions from members ranged from the economics of home solar ar-



DISTRICT 1: Valley REC Vice President of Operations Todd Ross, center, and Martinsburg District Manager Mike Lansberry, right, talk with member Regis Butler, left, of Martinsburg about a service territory location as Bill Stotler of Williamsburg looks on during the nominating meeting for District 1, held at Morrison's Cove Memorial Park in Martinsburg.

2020 Valley REC board candidates

DISTRICT 1

Randall (Randy)

Huntsman

**194 Fair Valley Road
Martinsburg, PA 16662**



Randy Huntsman works as an animal nutritionist with Renaissance Nutrition in Roaring Spring. Additionally, he is a crops manager with Kulp Family Dairy in Martinsburg and a bookkeeper for Hilecrest Farm, Tyrone.

A 1977 Central High School graduate, he and his family owned and operated a dairy farm, PA Fair Valley Farms, for more than 30 years. He also served on the North Woodbury Board of Township Supervisors for 24 years.

He has a wealth of co-op experience. He is a member of the following cooperatives: Land O'Lakes, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, Select Sire Power, Ag Choice Farm Credit and Bedford Farm Bureau.

He has also served on various boards of directors, including the boards of Blair County Farm Bureau, Blair County Holstein Club and Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania.

Huntsman and his wife, Karen, are members of Martinsburg Grace Brethren Church, where he serves as an elder and a deacon.

In his free time, he enjoys touring the country on a Harley Davidson motorcycle, hunting and spending time with family. He and his wife are the parents of three grown children, two sons and a daughter. They have two grandchildren and two more on

the way this summer

Huntsman is 60 years old. He has been a Valley member since 2007 and has served on the Valley REC board since July 2016. He is running unopposed on the ballot for District 1.

DISTRICT 3

Kevin R. States

12817 Redstone Ridge Road, Hesston, PA 16647



A 58-year-old native of Hesston, Huntingdon County, Kevin States works on his family's 200-acre dairy farm with 60 milking cows and another 80 head of young stock. The operation utilizes the services of Land O'Lakes cooperative and Bedford Farm Bureau Cooperative in addition to Valley Rural Electric.

He is a 1979 graduate of Huntingdon Area High School, a past member of the National Holstein Association and a member of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau. He was formerly involved with the Huntingdon County 4-H dairy and beef clubs and was a member of the Rural Electric Youth Tour delegation in 1978.

The States farm has received electric service from Valley REC since 1952, and he has been a member of the cooperative since 1982. He has served on the co-op's board of directors since 1999 and has held the position of vice chairman for the past five years. Additionally, States held the office of secretary for 10 years. He has previously attained the Gold Level director certification, the highest level of training for electric co-op directors.

He and his wife, Sarah, were married in 1996. He has one son, one daughter,

one stepson, three grandsons and two granddaughters. In his free time, he follows NASCAR racing.

States is running unopposed on the ballot for District 3.

DISTRICT 5

Robert (Bob) Holmes
**4684 Cold Springs Road
Huntingdon, PA 16652**



Bob Holmes was principal at Huntingdon Area High School for 19 years, and was assistant principal for five years prior. From 1997 through 1999, he served as acting superintendent for the Southern Huntingdon and Huntingdon Area School Districts.

A graduate of Turtle Creek High School, Holmes obtained bachelor's and master's degrees in education from Bucknell University. He also earned 40 graduate credits in educational administration at Penn State. During his tenure in the U.S. Army Reserve, he attained the rank of captain.

Holmes is an active member of Community Chapel of Hesston. He is a past president of the Huntingdon County chapter of the Pennsylvania Association of School Retirees.

He is 84 years old and was married to his late wife, Barbara, for 57 years. They are the parents of four children and have seven grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

He has been a Valley member since 1969, he served on the co-op board for eight terms and held the office of secretary for one year. He serves as the board treasurer and has represented Valley REC on the board of Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc. for 13 years.

Holmes is running unopposed on the ballot for District 5.

rays to the co-op's notification process for planned outages. Several members encouraged Valley to keep up the good work.

"I want to thank you for the fact that we're all working together as a team," said one member at the Martinsburg location. "In rural America, we're all in it together, and a lot of the rest of the country needs to be more like that."

Members were given a jute shopping bag as a token of appreciation for their attendance. Three members at each location also won a \$50 bill credit. ☀

DISTRICT 5: VREC

President & CEO Rich Bauer, center, and Ben Gorman, VREC vice president, engineering and technology, left, welcome

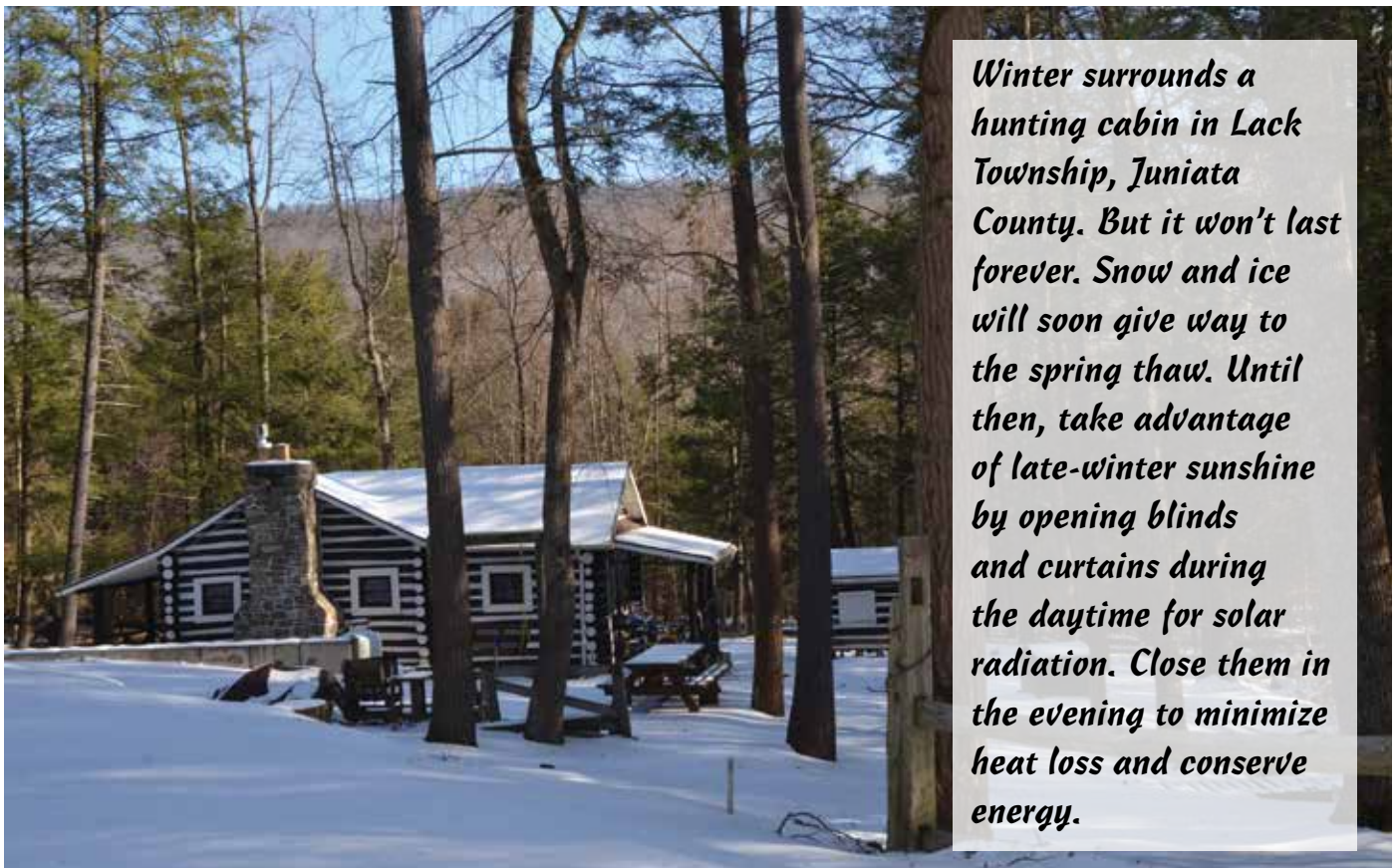
John Randolph of Jackson Township, to the District 5 meeting. Photo by Doug Roles



Valley REC line crews conduct annual grounding equipment testing



Our line crews tested their grounding equipment in February with the assistance of Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association safety instructor Randy Hoover. The safety event included classroom instruction on proper grounding procedures and inspection of all cables. Above: Hoover, left, and lineworkers Seth Glover and John Fogelsonger check resistance using a protective grounding set tester. At left: Eric Yingling, left, Glover and Rich Sunderland prepare cables for testing.



Winter surrounds a hunting cabin in Lack Township, Juniata County. But it won't last forever. Snow and ice will soon give way to the spring thaw. Until then, take advantage of late-winter sunshine by opening blinds and curtains during the daytime for solar radiation. Close them in the evening to minimize heat loss and conserve energy.