

# 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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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Vice Chairman

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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



# April showers bring May ... storms

By Rich Bauer

THE FAMOUS SAYING, “April showers bring May flowers,” is usually accurate, but for your cooperative, those same showers usually bring thunder, lightning and strong winds. Historically, spring is one of our busiest outage times, and the main culprit is those April showers.

The obvious outage cause is lightning. People expect to have a few outages during electrical storms. But the not-so-obvious cause is saturated ground. When those soaking rains occur in the spring, the ground is usually already wet from the winter thaw. The combination of wind and saturated ground usually spells disaster as trees uproot and fall onto power lines. We strive to keep an open right of way around our lines, but we can't control those falling trees that are outside of the right of way. Beech, birch, silver maples and spruce trees have very shallow root systems. Hopefully, we won't see too many of these falling trees this spring, but we will be ready when they occur.

With the nicer weather just around the corner, I would like to remind you of a few safety tips. Spring is a great time to change batteries in your smoke alarms or at least test them if they are hardwired. It is also a smart time to check and change furnace or heat pump filters. A dirty filter can cause

your heating and cooling unit to operate less efficiently. Filters are relatively inexpensive and the cost saving to your furnace or heat pump pays for it in a short amount of time.

## Annual meeting cancellation

Valley REC's board of directors has decided to cancel the 2020 annual meeting due to the coronavirus pandemic. We're disappointed to have a break in our long tradition of hosting annual membership meetings, but the health and safety of our employees and members is our top priority.

Each year, three of your nine directors are selected to represent you on the co-op's board during annual meeting. Since we had no contested races this year, the three incumbent directors who were nominated at our February district meetings will continue to serve.

At the annual meeting, I would have had the opportunity to tell you Valley REC is financially strong and operating at an extremely high level.

I hope everyone has a safe and enjoyable start to the spring and those April showers don't cause April outages. 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. 

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, our 2020 annual meeting, which had been scheduled for Friday, April 3, has been canceled. Valley REC's board of directors made this decision to protect the health and safety of our employees and members.

# Golf tournament will benefit three local families

By Doug Roles  
Vice President of Member Services

VALLEY Rural Electric Cooperative is gearing up for its ninth Annual Benefit Golf Outing, which will raise money for three area families with children facing serious illnesses. The tournament will be held Thursday, June 25, at Huntingdon Country Club.

The co-op's employees have been reaching out to potential donors, sponsors and golfers who make the event possible each year. On golf tournament day, Valley REC's corporate office and three district offices are all closed as employees staff the event.

"This is truly an employee-driven event," says Valley REC President & CEO Rich Bauer. "We're all excited to pitch in and do what we can to help lessen the burden on these families."

This year's beneficiaries are two young boys and a high school junior. Each family has had to adjust to a new routine of medical treatments and doctor visits while learning all they can about the health conditions their loved ones face.

## Gilbert McClain

Gilbert "Gib" McClain, 2, is the son of Trey and Caroline McClain of Mapleton, Huntingdon County. Gib was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia Dec. 18 at Penn State Hershey Medical Center.

"Before Thanksgiving one day I thought he looked a little



MCCLAINS: Trey and Caroline McClain of Mapleton hold their sons Gilbert, right, and Gideon in this photo submitted to VREC. Gilbert is fighting leukemia and is one of three beneficiaries of Valley REC's upcoming golf tournament.



yellow," Trey recalls. "Then two family members said the same thing over the next two weeks."

Gib has endured spinal taps and placement of a heart port. Doctors put him on four rounds of chemotherapy, which will run through June. A silver lining is that he has one of the most curable forms of leukemia at the "best" age to have it, Caroline says.

"The first days were really rough," Trey recalls. "But we were blessed in a lot of ways. Our faith is seeing us through this."

Trey and Caroline also have a son, Gideon, who is almost a year old. Trey is a CNC machine setup operator at Bonney Forge, Mount Union. Caroline is a stay-at-home mom.

## Talan Arnold

Talan Arnold, 4, is the son of Eric and Lauren Arnold of Duncansville, Blair County. He has had cystic fibrosis since birth. His first year of life was very tiring and stressful with daily breathing treatments, special meals and frequent trips to UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. Family members have to keep their homes very clean as to not aggravate Talan's condition.

"Basically he does everything a little boy does," Eric says. "There are just some things he can't be around."

"There's a big learning curve; I can't believe where we were at four years ago compared to now," Lauren says about their knowledge of cystic fibrosis and care for Talan. "We listen to everything the doctors and nurses tell us to do."

"We're trying to make his life better and longer," Lauren adds. "There is no cure."

Talan has a 7-year-old sister, Reagan. Lauren works as an X-ray technician at Tyrone Hospital. Eric is a railroad carman at Norfolk Southern, Altoona.

## Elizabeth Brumbaugh

Elizabeth Brumbaugh, 17, is the daughter of Wade and Alison Brumbaugh of Alexandria, Huntingdon County. At the end of May 2019, Liz began having very bad headaches that kept her in bed all day.

"She started feeling sick and lost a lot of weight," Alison says. "At first, I thought it was something she could sleep off, but it didn't get better. It was a shock. We knew something wasn't right."

In July, an MRI showed she had a tumor on her brain stem.



**ARNOLDS:** Four-year-old Talan Arnold, front center, is shown with his parents, Eric and Lauren, and older sister Reagan. The family is from Duncansville.



**BRUMBAUGHS:** Elizabeth Brumbaugh, center right, is a junior at Juniata Valley High School. In this family photo, she is joined by her oldest brother, Matthew, front right, younger sister, Olivia, and brothers Camden, rear left, and Noah.

It turned out to be a rare form of cancer (lepto meningeal melanocytic neoplasm) that is usually found in the eyes.

A surgical team at Penn State Children's Hospital, Hershey, was able to remove 55 percent of the tumor. Elizabeth underwent radiation treatments and is now taking oral chemotherapy at home.



## Path Valley substation project progresses

**NEW SUBSTATION:** Todd Ross, right, Valley REC vice president of operations, talks to Dan Carney of Carney Fence, Inc., about fencing at the site of the Path Valley Substation. The new substation will be located along Route 75 north of Fort Loudon, Franklin County. Construction should be complete in late spring. The facility will replace the Metal Substation, which is located about seven miles to the north.



Elizabeth is a junior at Juniata Valley High School. She has a sister, Olivia, 12; and three brothers: Matthew, 20 (who is serving in the Marine Corps); Noah, 17; and Camden, 12.

Alison works in the office of Henderson's Printing, Altoona. Wade is a copier technician for Doing Better Business, Inc., Altoona.

Each family has health insurance, and family members say they've been fortunate so far with the amount of expenses that have been covered. Of course, travel and treatment entail other costs not covered by insurance.

Valley's Employee Health and Wellness Committee organized the first golf tournament in 2012. Over the years, the event has raised more than \$180,000 and assisted adults and children with serious illnesses or injuries.

The four-player scramble will feature morning and afternoon flights. Registration for the morning flight will start at 7 a.m. with tee-off at 8 a.m. Registration for the afternoon flight will start at 11:30 a.m. with tee-off at 1 p.m. Lunch will be provided from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., and a buffet dinner will start at 5:30 p.m.

The registration fee is \$100 per player, which includes 18 holes of golf, cart, lunch, dinner, entry into all events and various prizes. For more information, contact Lisa Carper at [lcarper@valleyrec.com](mailto:lcarper@valleyrec.com) or call 800-432-0680. 🌟

# If your lights are on, thank a lineworker!

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association sets the second Monday in April as National Lineworker Appreciation Day. In honor of the day, we're recognizing several of our lineworkers. We asked how and when they got into line work and what they find rewarding about the job.



*"My dad worked in line construction. I did, too, before coming here," Greg says. "It's rewarding, getting the lights back on for members. It's a great work environment."*

**Greg Dilling, crew leader**  
26 years VREC (34 years total)

*"It's always been in the family," Trevor says, noting his father is a retired CEO from New Enterprise Rural Electric Cooperative, while his stepfather made a career of line construction and training. "I enjoy helping our members. Valley's a good place to work, and the job is different every day."*

**Trevor Eichelberger, journeyman**  
6 years with VREC (10 years total)



*Ken got started in utility work on a tree-trimming crew after high school and got into line construction work in 1998. He took a job with VREC*

*because he was tired of being on the road. "This is different than construction work; there's a lot more service work," he says. "Here it's more about interaction with the members."*

**Ken Sipes, crew leader**  
16 years with VREC (22 years total)

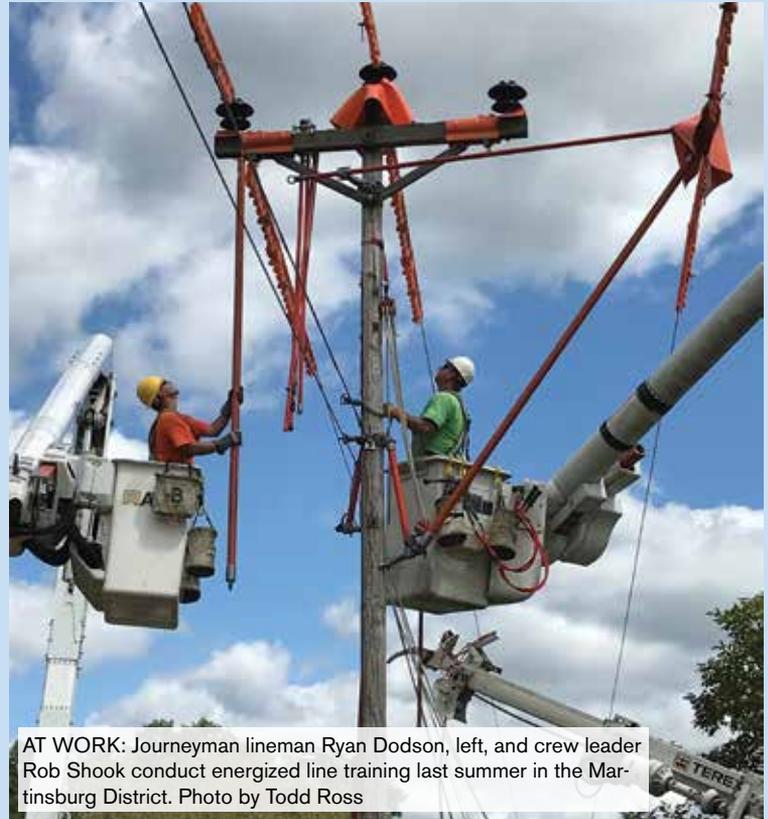


*Brandon says working at VREC is like working with his buddies at a good-paying trade with a lot of opportunity. "I like the variety of work we get to do every day. One day you're in a track digger; the next you're hanging area lights."*

**Brandon Shook, journeyman**  
8 months with VREC (12 years total)

*Josh grew up hearing his father, a veteran VREC crew leader in another district, talk about the job. "He taught me a lot before I even got started. I like it all. I like construction work, building new line," Josh says. "It's like being on a football team; everyone works together. You couldn't ask for a better group of guys."*

**Josh Gutshall, lineman third class**  
3 years with VREC



**AT WORK:** Journeyman lineman Ryan Dodson, left, and crew leader Rob Shook conduct energized line training last summer in the Martinsburg District. Photo by Todd Ross

*"I've always enjoyed working with my hands," says Seth, who holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice but ran into a state police hiring freeze in his wife's native North Carolina. "I had a buddy in line work, so I decided to attend a lineman school on a Duke Energy scholarship. I worked line construction for six years before coming here. We have a good group of guys."*

**Seth Glover, journeyman**  
2 years with VREC (eight years total)

