

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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A Cup of Cheer and Some Duct Tape



DOUG ROLES

A FEW YEARS AGO, my wife wanted to replace both the traditional coffee pot and the single-serve coffeemaker on our kitchen counter with a newfangled dual unit. This one would give you 6 ounces to 12 cups of brewed goodness at the push of a button. My counteroffer for a countertop contraption was to duct tape the two existing machines together to avoid the expense of a new appliance.

When we took the new dual machine out of the box and plugged it in where its predecessors had been, we began putting it through its paces — single cups on workday mornings or other times when we were headed out the door in a hurry, and full pots on weekends when we were going to be around the house. The machine's options enable you to have a little or a lot (if there is such a thing as a lot of coffee). But coffee consumption is not the only thing that varies with the appliance; choosing the right amount of coffee gives you some ability to tailor your electric use. And that's important.

Knowing how much energy an appliance uses matters because of the way countertop appliances and larger devices contribute to monthly electric bills. There are three things you need to know to figure out an appliance's impact to your wallet: the wattage of the device, how much you use it (total up shorter and longer use periods for a whole month) and the kilowatt-hour (kWh) rate charged by your electric provider.

First, look for a stamp or tag on the appliance stating its wattage. Multiply the wattage by the number of hours it is used in a month and divide that number by 1,000. This calculation gives you the number of kilowatt-hours the device uses in a month. Then, multiply the calculated kilowatt-hours by \$0.1145 (Valley Rural Electric Cooperative's rate). This will tell you how much you spend on electricity to operate the device for the month.

For example, if you use a 1470-watt coffee pot/single serving appliance for an hour a day, in 30 days you have used 44,100 watts over 30 hours, or 44.1 kWh, at a cost of \$5.05.

Here's another example. Space heaters are used a lot this time of year. Most space heaters are typically 1,500-watt appliances. If you operate one for eight hours a day, in 30 days you have used 360 kWh (divide 1,500 by 1,000 to get 1.5 kilowatts, then multiply by 240 hours to get 360 kWh). The cost to operate the space heater would then be \$41.22.

Understanding how electronics contribute to your electric bill is good information to have in this season of decorative lighting, extra cooking and electronics as gifts. It'll take some of the mystery out of your electric bill at this most wonderful time of the year.

Between the hustle and bustle, I hope you take some time over the holidays to have a cup of cheer (coffee or otherwise) with loved ones. If you still have shopping to do, the clock is ticking. Me, I'm ahead of the game. Someone on my list is getting a lightly used, well duct-taped addition to their kitchen counter. ☺

DOUG ROLES

VICE PRESIDENT, MEMBER SERVICES

Church Sweet Home

DOUG ROLES, VICE PRESIDENT, MEMBER SERVICES

A 19TH-CENTURY HOUSE of worship in Juniata County is now home to a couple who appreciates the historic structure as well as the rural landscape that provided the stone for its walls.

Valley Rural Electric Cooperative members Steve and Cindy Glatfelter spent two years converting the former Reeds Gap Wesley Methodist Episcopal Chapel along Route 35 into a two-bedroom, one-and-a-half-bath living space.

Their effort preserved the old church, one of many in the region that has fallen into disuse as parishioners either built new structures or consolidated their congregations. The Glatfelters purchased the property in 2005.

“It was always a dream,” Cindy says. “We always wanted a stone house.”

Steve is a York native, and Cindy is from Williamsport. Steve began visiting the Reeds Gap area as a youth in the 1960s on family hunting trips and fell in love with the area.

“We moved up here in 1999,” he says. “I’ve had ground up here since 1976.”

The couple moved into the church full-time in December 2022. The completion of the project marked their fourth, and final, building or renovation adventure.

Their first stop in Juniata County was East Waterford, where they lived for a year before moving to Thompsons Hollow Road in Tuscarora Township, where Steve had a cabin. They lived in the cabin as they started building a house. Part way through, they tore down the cabin and lived in an RV — with three dogs and a cat — until the house was finished.

All of this took place in their off hours. Steve worked as a maintenance technician for Nestle Purina. Cindy worked at a Mifflintown financial office.



CHANGED CHURCH: Steve and Cindy Glatfelter and their dog, Lovey, stand in front of their Reeds Gap home. The couple spent two years turning this 1867 church into a living space.

In 2012, the couple moved to Maine and then later to South Carolina. In each state, they purchased a home, took it down to bare studs, and renovated it. All the while, the Glatfelters were thinking about central Pennsylvania and a forever home.

“It was time to come home,” Steve says of their decision to move back to the area in 2021.

The Glatfelters were familiar with the building. They attended the East Waterford Methodist Church — part of the charge that included the Reeds Gap church as well as one in Cross Keys — and had attended dinners at the Reeds Gap building.

The church was built in 1867. A front vestibule was added in 1969. The Reeds Gap congregation merged with another congregation in 2002, according to an online real estate listing. When the property first changed hands, the on-site mobile home was used as a hunting camp, and the church sat empty. But Steve and Cindy always admired the construction.

“The stones came from the mountain,” Cindy says of the 22-inch-thick walls. “They were brought down by horse and cart.”

“It’s amazing what they did with what they had,” Steve says of the masonry, which he believes is a mix

of sandstone and limestone.

In 2021, Steve and Cindy moved to the church property. They fixed up the mobile home for temporary full-time living and then razed the 1,300-square-foot fellowship hall, salvaging as much of the materials as they could.

“We had to tear it down,” Cindy says. “It was too far gone. The outside of the fellowship hall is now our interior shiplap siding, and the floors are on our walls.”

“One of the first things we did was to have the roof replaced,” Steve says about the church renovation project.

Black metal roofing now tops the building. A brick chimney on the east side of the building was taken down because it was leaking into the roof. The Glatfelters had an engineer look at the building’s roof trusses to ensure the 12-by-16-foot beams were still in good shape.

Next came the installation of energy-efficient double pane sashes to fill the 9-foot-by-32-inch window openings. The eight original stained-glass windows were put in storage. The original floor of the church remains intact and was refinished. The raised platform at the front, previously the altar area, was expanded slightly to become the kitchen space.

“I extended the altar area out so I could run my plumbing and electric underneath it,” Steve says. “That worked out very well.”

The Glatfelters’ creativity is evident all around their home. Cindy furnished the house with period pieces, and the 1960s era ceiling tiles were covered with 420 stylish 2-foot-square metal panels. The partition walls for the two bedrooms, bathroom and pantry/utility closet have a log cabin motif, featuring rough cut, live-edge planks from local sawyer George White. The vestibule was in disrepair



and dismantled. Local contractor CM Construction replaced it with a timber portico, exposing the church’s stone archway and the original double doors.

Work still to be accomplished includes placing weather stripping around the exterior door and outside painting and repointing. The Glatfelters are using a propane, forced-air system for heating and finishing a central-air unit for cooling. Ceiling fans help balance the temperature, pushing warm air down from the 15-foot ceiling in cold months. LED lighting is used throughout the residence.

Steve and Cindy say they’ve met a lot of great people and made a lot of friends through the process. They believe area residents were glad to know the building would not be left to deteriorate.

“People would literally stop out here on the road and yell out, ‘We’re glad you’re saving that,’” Steve says.

Those familiar with the property might ask about the church’s bell. The Glatfelters have plans for it. Before moving to their property and starting the renovations, Steve and Cindy used to go over to the church to ring it in the new year. They hope to get a new pull rope installed. Perhaps the old church’s chimes will resound through Reeds Gap in celebration of an old building’s new life. 🍷



TOP: The former altar area platform provides space for a linear kitchen layout. The door next to the refrigerator opens to a utility closet and pantry. **MIDDLE:** Eight-foot partitions with a log-cabin facade create a hallway to the exterior double doors. **BOTTOM:** An oil lamp, hardwood dresser and matching single-bed quilts give the spare bedroom an old-fashioned feel.

Meet Your Employees

DOUG ROLES, VICE PRESIDENT, MEMBER SERVICES

THIS MONTH'S COLUMN FEATURES

a recent addition to the Valley Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) team: Nathan Berry of Mifflin, Juniata County. Nathan works out of the co-op's Shade Gap District Office as a second-year lineman. He joined the co-op's workforce in March 2022.

Nathan is a 2020 Juniata High School graduate and worked for JPH Enterprises, a landscaping and erosion control company, while a senior and after graduation. He was a laborer and also worked in the office using software for bidding jobs.

"I worked from 6 to 10 a.m. and had to be at school at 10:30," he recalls.

Nathan attended a 15-week course at Southeast Lineman Training Center in Trenton, Ga., after graduating high school. He returned to landscaping work briefly while looking for a job as a lineworker. He said he has a family member and several friends who are lineworkers.

His first job as a lineworker had him traveling out of state. But during that time, Nathan's brother, Austin, was building a house in Valley REC territory. He mentioned to one of the co-op's staking engineers that

Nathan was a new line-worker, and the staking engineer suggested a career with Valley REC.

"In those short couple of weeks, I heard about Valley REC having an opening, and I applied here," Nathan says.

One of the things he likes most about line work is "seeing how the system works. How all the equipment works together to supply people with power."

Nathan enjoys working in a technical profession that's unfamiliar to most people. He also likes being part of a team.

"They welcomed me with open arms," he says. "The guys I work with every day have turned more and more into family."

Outside of work, Nathan and his family raise Simmental beef to sale weight. They sell beef by the half or the cut and have all their butchering done by Locust Hill Custom Butchering.

He and his father, Ken, enjoy restoring old pickup trucks and taking them to shows. Nathan is an avid racing fan and has traveled the



SOMEONE TO COUNT ON: Nathan Berry of Mifflin, Juniata County, is a second-year lineman at Valley Rural Electric Cooperative's Shade Gap District Office.

East Coast supporting his brother, who was a go-cart racer and now drives late-model, dirt-track race cars.

"We travel some, but Port Royal [Speedway] is where we go on a weekly basis," he says.

Nathan lives at home but has a piece of property, and the home he hopes to build there would be served by Valley REC.

"I'll be a Valley member myself someday," he says.

Nathan also enjoys fishing and hunting in his free time. Each year, the family heads to the ocean for a fishing excursion.

"I really got 'hooked' on the deep-sea fishing," he quips.

Valley REC is hooked on Nathan. He's one of the people you can count on. 🇺🇸

LINWORKERS PRESENT HOT-LINE TRAILER SAFETY PROGRAM

Lineworkers with Valley Rural Electric Cooperative's Shade Gap District Office demonstrate overhead lines and electrical equipment to members of Smithfield Volunteer Fire Company on Oct. 25. **TOP:** Riley Price, a fourth-year lineman, powers an LED area light by making contact with an energized line. **BOTTOM:** Journeyman Linemen Curtis Starr, left, and Logan Booher talk about electrical hazards with Smithfield firefighters.



CO-OP MEMBERS CAN HELP STABILIZE ENERGY COSTS

Co-op members who participate in the demand-response program help to lessen the impact of volatile wholesale market pricing. More than 5,500 Valley Rural Electric Cooperative members already participate in this program, which installs a remotely operated switch on the electric supply line of the consumer's water heater storage tank. Temporarily shutting off water heaters during periods of peak demand helps to lessen the cooperative's future generation costs.



Participants receive a \$100 bill credit and are also eligible for rebates on the purchase of new water heaters.

If you're already participating, we'd like to say thank you for doing your part over the years. If you're not signed up for the program, please consider joining. Control periods should not inconvenience you, and you'll be helping to keep our costs in check.