

JUNE 2026

PENNLINES

A Powerful Legacy

Allegheny Electric
Cooperative
Turns 80



**CYBERSECURITY:
PROTECTING THE
GRID BEHIND THE
SCENES**

**LOW- TO NO-COST
WAYS TO SAVE
ENERGY**

**RAISING
PROBLEM-SOLVERS**

**INSIDE!
BIG BOY
BARRELING
INTO PA**

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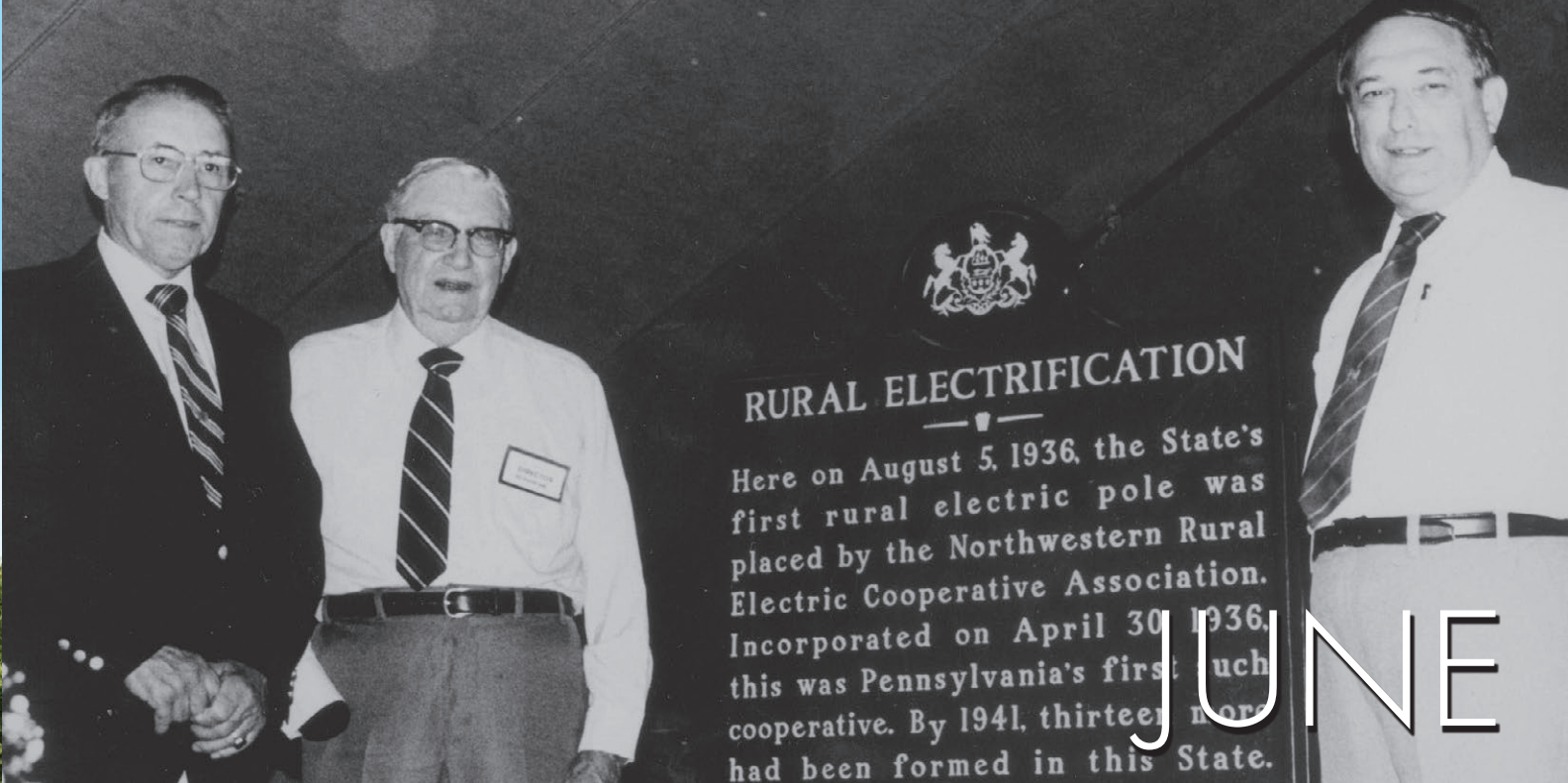
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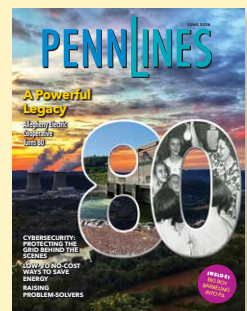
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Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative was the first cooperative established in Pennsylvania. Many other milestones have followed, including the establishment of Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc. in 1946 to lower wholesale energy costs for co-ops.



ON THE COVER

For eight decades, Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc. has been helping rural electric cooperatives deliver safe, reliable and affordable power to their members. Now, that's something to celebrate!

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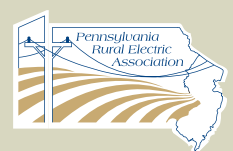
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Still Built for This

Allegheny's 80-Year Mission Remains as Important as Ever



JIM STAUFFER

WHILE COOPERATIVE MEMBERS MAY NEVER see the name on a truck or power bill, Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Allegheny) has been part of daily life in rural Pennsylvania and New Jersey for generations.

A wholesale power provider, Allegheny works quietly behind the scenes, helping your local electric cooperative secure safe, reliable energy at an affordable cost. That mission started 80 years ago when cooperatives proved once again they could accomplish more together than they could on their own.

The same people who brought electricity to rural communities also understood something else: getting power to the people was only part of the challenge. The cost mattered, too.

At the time, Pennsylvania cooperatives were paying some of the highest wholesale electric rates in the country; Allegheny was created to restore balance.

By banding together to procure their own energy needs, cooperatives ensured decisions about power supply were made locally — with local interests in mind. That structure continues today.

The Allegheny board — whose directors represent the 14 electric cooperatives in Pennsylvania and New Jersey — has developed a track record of making long-term investments that are built to last.

It has secured hydropower, invested in nuclear energy, and developed programs that reduce electric demand during peak periods — a system that helps lower power costs for cooperatives and their members. More recently, Allegheny secured a federal grant that's expanding the use of affordable, carbon-free energy across rural communities. A recent federal tax credit is also helping to offset operational costs at Allegheny's nuclear power plant in Luzerne County.

None of these decisions was flashy. Instead, they were careful, long-term choices made by people who understand that their members value common sense.

That steady approach is just as important now because the electric industry is under a lot of pressure. And much like 80 years ago, affordability is one of the biggest challenges.

While the circumstances may be a bit different today, the results are the same: People are feeling squeezed by costs everywhere, and electricity has emerged as a focus of those conversations. Across the country, utilities are dealing with rising power supply costs, expensive transmission projects and growing demand on the grid.

It's a serious problem — one that's not going away any time soon — but I'm proud to say that cooperatives, with support from Allegheny, have been part of the solution. Serving members is the primary reason electric cooperatives exist. So while the governor is imploring investor-owned utilities to be more transparent and less profit-driven, cooperatives have operated that way for nearly a century — it's simply how we're wired.

We're local, we're accountable, and every decision has a singular focus: the communities that all of us call home.

While cooperatives can't control every market force driving their costs, we have worked hard to minimize the impact on consumers. The long-term investments mentioned earlier — in nuclear energy, hydropower and load management — have enabled Allegheny and your cooperative to avoid much of the market volatility that's driving sharp rate increases elsewhere. In fact, Allegheny's rates continue to be among the lowest in the region.

And we're not stopping there. Together, Allegheny and its member cooperatives continue to look for smart, member-focused solutions to deliver on our long-standing promise of providing safe, reliable and affordable energy. That was true in 1946, and it is still true today. 🇺🇸

JIM STAUFFER

CHAIRMAN, ALLEGHENY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. BOARD OF DIRECTORS
CHAIRMAN, VALLEY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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10-10, 2 & 2

Some messages stay with you not just because they're meaningful, but because of the person who said them.

Ken Macken had one of those messages: 10-10, 2 & 2.

Ten fingers, 10 toes. Two arms, two legs.

Go to work that way. Come home that way.

Ken was the director of safety programs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). He passed away unexpectedly in April after suffering a heart attack while driving near his home in Oklahoma. He was only 64.

Just two days earlier, Ken had wrapped up NRECA's Safety Leadership Summit in St. Louis, where he led discussions on safe work practices for more than 1,300 cooperative line personnel and safety professionals.

I had just shared some laughs with him at the conference. Though we had met only a handful of times, he treated me like an old friend — pretty much the way he treated everyone. He made sure to give me one of his red "10-10, 2 & 2" wristbands, a gospel he never stopped preaching.



Across the cooperative world, that message became more than a reminder. It became a standard. Ken used it to keep the focus where it belonged: not just on the work, but on the people doing it and the lives waiting for them at home.

When lives are on the line, words matter more when they come from someone people trust. Ken was that person.

Colleagues across the country describe him the same way: positive, genuine and full of life. He had a gift for bringing people together and getting them to talk openly about safety — in a profession where those conversations matter every day.

To Ken, safety wasn't about checking a box. It was about culture, consistency and connection. It meant making sure people felt comfortable speaking up, looking out for each other and doing the job the right way every time.

Ken's passing is a deep loss for the cooperative community, but his message remains.

That wristband now sits in my car, wrapped around my gear shifter. It's a reminder of that message — but also of the messenger.

PETER A. FITZGERALD
EXECUTIVE EDITOR



FULL SPEED AHEAD: As part of the 250th anniversary of the United States, Union Pacific's Big Boy No. 4014, the world's largest operating steam locomotive, will make stops throughout Pennsylvania this summer.

COAST TO COAST

World's largest locomotive to make several stops in Pa. this summer

In celebration of the 250th anniversary of the United States, the world's largest operating steam locomotive — Union Pacific's Big Boy No. 4014 — will make stops in Pennsylvania as part of a historic coast-to-coast tour.

The tour, which launched April 10 in Sacramento, Calif., and is in collaboration with Norfolk Southern, will include a Fourth of July observance in Philadelphia, display events in eight cities and more than 50 whistle stops in 10 states.

While in Pennsylvania, the locomotive will be on display June 15 and 16 in Scranton; July 4 and 5 in Philadelphia; and July 9 and 10 in Altoona.

Whistle stops in Pennsylvania will include June 9 in North East; June 13 in Nicholson; June 17 to 30 at the Steamtown National Historic Site in Scranton; July 2 in Reading and Pottstown; July 7 in Lebanon; July 8 in Lewistown and Altoona; and July 11 in Cresson, Leetsdale, and at the Horseshoe Curve National Historic Landmark in Altoona, a ticketed event.

The tour will end July 29 in Cheyenne, Wyo. For more information, visit upsteam.com.

GAME ON

Pa. hunting, trapping seasons to include Sundays

The Pennsylvania Game Commission approved its 2026-2027 hunting and trapping seasons recently, and all — with the exception of migratory bird season — include Sunday hunting.

Here are a few key dates:

- ▶ **Firearms deer (regular):** Nov. 28 – Dec. 13, 2026
- ▶ **Archery deer:** Oct. 3 – Nov. 20, 2026, and Dec. 26, 2026 – Jan. 24, 2027
- ▶ **Antlerless muzzleloader:** Oct. 17 – 25, 2026
- ▶ **Flintlock deer:** Dec. 26, 2026 – Jan. 24, 2027
- ▶ **Small game (squirrel/grouse/rabbit):** Various seasons starting Oct. 17, 2026, with most running continuously through Feb. 28, 2027

The Game Commission also announced 1,469,000 antlerless deer licenses will be allocated statewide, up from the 1,312,000 allocated for the 2025-2026 season. Those licenses go on sale June 22. Meanwhile, 155 elk licenses (80 antlered, 75 antlerless) were allocated across four 2026-2027 elk seasons. 🐾



WE WANT YOU!

With our 60th anniversary in full swing, we're looking to feature even more of our readers in *Penn Lines*.

► **Have you been married 50 years or more?**

Penn Lines has reached a milestone – and we want to recognize cooperative members who are celebrating similar ones. If you're a couple – or you know a couple – who's been together 50-plus years, let us know. You could be featured in an upcoming issue. Please email your name, years married, address, daytime telephone number, and the name of the cooperative serving your home, business, or seasonal residence to PennLines@prea.com by **Wednesday, July 15**.



► **Are you feeling reflective?** Answer one of the following questions – and the best responses will be featured in the magazine:

1. *Where were you and what were you doing in 1966?* (50-100 words)
2. *What would you put in a time capsule to be shared with readers in 2086?*
3. *Write a letter to the future: What do you hope rural life looks like in 2086?* (50-100 words)

Please email your name, response to the question, address, daytime telephone number, and the name of the cooperative serving your home, business or seasonal residence to PennLines@prea.com by **Wednesday, Aug. 19**.

TIME LINES



JUNE 2016

A decade ago, *Penn Lines* highlighted the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service (NPS) by showcasing the Find Your Park campaign, which included 19 NPS parks, memorials, battlefields and historical sites in the Commonwealth. Among those featured were the Gettysburg National Military Park and the Flight 93 National Memorial, which one volunteer stressed maintains its relevance to this day. "I really love that the Flight 93 site is among these national parks," she said, "because it's an important story and an important place to be protected."

JUNE



SQUATCH TIME

Have you been itching to come face to face with Bigfoot? Marienville might have you covered when the town hosts the Forest County Bigfoot Festival June 12-14. The free event will feature live music, speakers, contests and, of course, the Bigfoot Hunt. Learn more at forestcountybigfootfestival.com.

FACEBOOK.COM



CELEBRATE THE ARTS

Stroll the streets of downtown Bedford from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. June 13 during the 2026 Art Walk. Live, interactive demonstrations are slated along with live music at the downtown gazebo. Learn more at downtownbedford.com.

TUNKHANNOCKBUSINESS.COM



FINDERS KEEPERS

More than 150 art and food vendors will take over Tioga and Warren streets in Tunkhannock as part of the community's 45th Founder's Day celebration June 27. Live music and entertainment will also be provided during the free event. To learn more, visit tunkhannockbusiness.com/founders-day.

START YOUR ENGINES

There may be a fair share of car shows in Butler throughout the summer, but nothing compares to the 31st Cruise-A-Palooza, slated June 28 on Main Street. Beginning at 10 a.m., the event will feature food and craft vendors, games of chance, DJs, auctions and more. Learn more at therodfathers.com.



THERODFATHERS.COM



A POWERFUL LEGACY

Allegheny Electric Cooperative Turns 80

MICHAEL T. CRAWFORD

Senior Technical Editor

ON MAY 19, 1937, a light came on at a farm in rural Crawford County. With power flowing from the newly formed Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) in Cambridge Springs, electricity was no longer a convenience exclusively for the Commonwealth's more populated areas.

At the time, Pennsylvania farmers were starting to bring electricity to their communities by forming cooperatives, with Northwestern REC — the first of 14 cooperatives in Pennsylvania and New Jersey — laying the groundwork.

But it was no easy feat.

Cooperative leaders were keenly aware that electrifying the rugged rural regions of the Commonwealth would be a costly endeavor — it's why investor-owned utilities (IOUs), focused on turning a profit for shareholders, wouldn't extend their lines beyond urban population centers in the first place.

"But anything is possible if enough people say, 'We're going to do this,'" says Lowell Friedline, who retired this year after 51 years of service on the Somerset REC Board of Directors. "That's what a cooperative is all about. It's the ability of a group of people to do what an individual can't

dream of doing. That word is important: We should be dreamers who can dream of what we can do."

'We are those people'

While rate affordability is making headlines and becoming a fixture in policymaker talking points, the question of how to procure energy at the lowest cost possible has always been vital to rural electrification.

In the early days, each cooperative purchased its power from IOUs. By 1944, however, rural electric cooperatives in Pennsylvania were paying more than anyone else in the nation for wholesale power. Recognizing the strength of collaboration that helped to illuminate their lives, those cooperatives came together and formed their own generation-and-transmission (G&T) cooperative — Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Allegheny) — to secure affordable sources of energy.

"It can be easy to forget when you look back at these old photos and see men in suits that these were farmers, blue-collar workers, banding together to make something happen that the big companies said couldn't be done," notes Jim Stauffer, chairman of both the Allegheny and Valley REC boards. "They knew the people whose homes were depending on this electricity. Today, we still know those people because we are those people."

Recalled in the book, "Miracle Blessing," which details the earliest days of rural electrification in the Commonwealth, the first step toward Allegheny's creation was taken March 17, 1944, at a board meeting of the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association (PREA). Formed two years earlier, in 1942, PREA represents the same

POWER WITH PURPOSE: Through Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc., cooperative consumer-members in Pennsylvania and New Jersey own nearly two-thirds of their electric generation resources. Those assets include, top left, the Susquehanna Steam Electric Station, a nuclear power plant in Luzerne County; and, bottom, the Raystown Hydroelectric Plant in Huntingdon County. For decades, Allegheny has also purchased power from the New York Power Authority, top right, which operates hydroelectric plants along the Niagara and St. Lawrence rivers in upstate New York.



cooperatives as Allegheny and serves as their unified voice and advocate. Both organizations are based in Harrisburg.

Officially formed July 24, 1946, Allegheny began securing short-term power purchase agreements to supply wholesale energy to distribution cooperatives like Northwestern REC and Somerset REC. In little more than a year, Allegheny reduced power supply costs for cooperatives by more than 20%, and the average kilowatt-hour (kWh) rate for consumer-members dropped from 6.07 cents/kWh in 1941 to 2.36 cents/kWh in 1965.

“I think the cooperative way of doing business is such a breath of fresh air in today’s world,” says Brooks Shoemaker, general manager & CEO for Bedford REC. “It’s so refreshing to work at a co-op; it isn’t beholden to investors. The recipe is tried-and-true: fiscal conservatism and good old-fashioned common sense — but we’re able to make the right choice every time, and that’s due 100% to our cooperative nature.”

In its first two decades, Allegheny only had a few part-time employees, and cooperative directors and managers would routinely travel across the state to address issues, drive home that night, and drive all the way back to wrap up unfinished business. Without a centralized headquarters, directors conducted business all over the Commonwealth, including Altoona, Carlisle, Clearfield, Danville, Edinboro, Harrisburg and Sharpsville, to name a few.

“The early pioneers of cooperatives set a tone for Allegheny that continues to this day,” PREA/Allegheny President & CEO Steve Brame says. “Cooperatives show up for their members day and night, near or far, because they’re rooted in the places they serve. The results they produce — safe, reliable, affordable electricity and community-focused initiatives — are for their neighbors.”

‘The best thing since sliced bread’

After 20 years, Allegheny reached a game-changing milestone, commemorated in the first issue of *Penn Lines*:



SUITS AND BOOTS: Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc. staff and board members show up, ready to work, for members wherever they’re needed – sometimes in boots and overalls, and other times in suits and ties. ABOVE – Michael Kovachik, a power delivery engineer, examines transmission lines for potential reliability upgrades. LEFT – Board Chairman Jim Stauffer, left, who also chairs the Valley Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) Board of Directors, meets with Lowell Friedline, former Allegheny board chairman and recently retired member of the Somerset REC board, at the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association’s Legislative Event. During the annual event, cooperative leaders meet with state policymakers to advocate for rural communities.



BEHIND THE SCENES: Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc. employees at the Raystown Hydroelectric Plant work behind the scenes to produce electricity around the clock.

ABOVE – In a throw-back photo from 1988, Mary Ann Hosko, former hydroelectric projects manager, and Bill Shearn, second from right, former plant superintendent, meet with representatives from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

ABOVE, RIGHT – Current Raystown staffers include, from left, Victor Jackson and Eric Reed, operations and maintenance technicians; Clay Harshbarger, plant superintendent; Charles Hackenberg, senior operations and maintenance technician; and David Wagner, operations and maintenance technician. **RIGHT** – Hackenberg and Jackson secure piping to reroute water during maintenance at the plant.



For the first time, member cooperatives had secured a long-term power purchase agreement. Through it, energy would flow from the New York Power Authority (NYPA) and its hydroelectric plants along the Niagara and St. Lawrence rivers in upstate New York to Pennsylvania and New Jersey cooperatives.

“Looking back, we relied heavily on NYPA power,” recalls Friedline, who was also a longtime Allegheny board member, serving as chairman from 2005 to 2009. “Niagara helped to keep rates down. ... Hydropower, once you take care of your investment, is pretty cheap.”

After that accomplishment, Allegheny engaged in a wave of initiatives to bring new generation assets into its portfolio while improving its own system efficiency. In 1977, Allegheny became a part owner of the Susquehanna Steam Electric Station (SSES), a two-unit nuclear plant being constructed in Luzerne County. Coincidentally, Allegheny established its current headquarters — the Locust Court Building in Harrisburg — that same year.

Becoming a part owner of a nuclear plant came with some growing pains.

“It looked pretty risky,” Friedline recalls, noting the board knew finances would be tight for years after sealing the deal. In fact, when SSES began generating electricity from its first reactor in 1983, and then its second reactor in 1985, rates increased to begin recovering the costs of construction.

The alternative, however, was no better. In 1982, rates from the private power companies selling to Allegheny rose anywhere from 20% to 90%, according to “Miracle Blessing.” Allegheny estimated its part ownership of the plant would

reduce future power costs by \$92 million over 17 years.

“We saw when our investment would cross the line and be less expensive than the IOUs,” Friedline says. “It took a while, but we got past the line, and it was the best thing since sliced bread.”

An investment pays off

To this day, Allegheny maintains a 10% share of SSES, which has historically produced approximately 60% of cooperative energy needs year over year.

“The SSES nuclear plant was an investment that continues to pay dividends,” says Todd Sallade, PREA/Allegheny vice president — power supply & engineering. “Allegheny saw rates remain steady — even drop — for years and years because of the power being produced at our nuclear plant.”

The combination of NYPA and SSES, however, didn’t completely cover cooperative energy needs, requiring Allegheny to continue to buy what it couldn’t generate on its own. To minimize the cost of its power purchases, Allegheny celebrated its 40-year mark in 1986 with the launch of the Coordinated Load Management System (CLMS), an innovative demand-response program done in partnership with cooperative consumer-members. (See more about CLMS on next page.)

“The idea is that the cheapest kilowatt-hour is the one

you never have to purchase,” explains Brian Smith, PREA/Allegheny CLMS manager. “By volunteering to let us turn off certain appliances in their homes when energy demand peaks, cooperative consumer-members save themselves and their neighbors money. The idea worked so well that other utilities modeled their own demand-response programs after CLMS.”

Later that year, Allegheny began construction of the

Raystown Hydroelectric Plant (Raystown) in Huntingdon County. Today, Allegheny continues to operate the plant, which began generating electricity in 1988, in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Compared to similar plants, Raystown operates at the top of its game, available to produce power nearly 24/7 thanks to decades of meticulous care.

“All the small things that we do from day-to-day — whether it’s replacing air compressors or doing our annual inspections — prevent service interruptions,” explains Clay Harshbarger, superintendent of Raystown operations. “When you’re familiar with the plant, you get a sense of how it’s running. We sweat the small things here so they don’t affect the greater mission.”



BRIGHT IDEA: In 2018, Allegheny led another energy- and money-saving effort when it distributed thousands of LED lightbulbs to cooperative members, urging them to replace their CFL and incandescent bulbs.

CLMS CELEBRATES 40 YEARS OF PEAK SAVINGS

In the mid-1970s, staff at Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc., realized that if electricity use by cooperative members could be shifted from times of peak demand to off-peak hours, the financial benefits would be significant.

In 1986, Allegheny, the wholesale power supplier for Pennsylvania and New Jersey cooperatives, launched a pilot program – the Coordinated Load Management System (CLMS) – to test its theory with four cooperatives: Gettysburg-based Adams Electric Cooperative, Wysox-based Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative (REC), Cambridge Springs-based Northwestern REC and Somerset REC.

“Cooperatives have made rural electrification possible for decades because they were open and unafraid to try something new,” CLMS Manager Brian Smith says. “That’s what we’ve always had to do, and this program was a new way to think about power supply ... to think about balancing supply and demand ... without having to spend millions of dollars on a new power plant.”

Today, after 40 years of beating the peak, CLMS has saved consumer-members nearly \$180 million in avoided power purchase costs.

How it works

To participate, cooperative consumer-members volunteer to have a load control receiver (LCR) installed on a major appliance, typically an electric water heater because of its built-in ability to store heat for hours without affecting comfort. Heat pumps, central air systems, electric thermal storage units and dual-fuel heating systems may also be controlled. There is no cost to participate and the LCR’s installation is free.

Load-management operators in Harrisburg analyze real-time data around the clock, monitoring load and weather information from PJM Interconnection, which oversees the electric grid in Pennsylvania, 12 other states and the District of Columbia. When demand is expected to peak, load management operators notify cooperatives. Just before the peak, an operator sends a signal to the LCRs, which temporarily disables any connected appliances, reducing load across the system. When the peak passes, a signal is sent to reactivate appliances. In this way, consumers still use the same amount of electricity but that use is shifted to a time when demand is lower – and power costs are cheaper.

“The program’s success is rooted in cooperation among

And as demand across the grid has risen, Allegheny has continued its tradition of innovative solutions. In 2018, the G&T cooperative had a bright idea to conserve energy without disrupting consumer-members by replacing their incandescent lightbulbs with LED lightbulbs. This created a reduction in load equal to building a plant half the size of Raystown at a fraction of the cost.

“The idea was that the energy-efficient LED lightbulbs would reduce the amount of energy needed by the local distribution cooperatives,” Sallade says. “When cooperatives reduce their power needs due to consumer efficiencies, this reduces Allegheny’s need to purchase more expensive energy from the market. This brings down the costs for local distribution cooperatives and, ultimately, saves the consumer-member money.”

With energy policy at the forefront of the industry’s ongoing challenges, Allegheny works with PREA to develop strategic approaches to power supply and energy issues. In 2023, the organizations established an Energy Transition Task Force to explore new opportunities to support rural electric cooperatives. Through this group’s work, Allegheny secured a \$20.5 million federal Empowering Rural America (New ERA) grant to develop an innovative power-purchasing program that is significantly expanding affordable carbon-free energy use across rural Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The grant will cover up to 25% of the project’s total cost.

“This is making us one of the most, if not the most,

carbon-free generation and transmission cooperatives in the country,” Brame says.

The next generation

For Rachel Hauser, president & co-CEO of Mansfield-based Tri-County REC, Allegheny’s story is personal. Her first exposure to the cooperative model came as a Youth Tour student in 2004.

“We’ve come a really long way,” says Hauser, who represented Wysox-based Claverack REC on Youth Tour. “Over the years, smart investment decisions and carefully maintaining our system have made Allegheny one of the lowest-cost providers of wholesale energy in the state.

“Purchased power costs have risen everywhere,” she adds, “but it’s been much less significant for an Allegheny cooperative. That’s the result of prioritizing affordability and long-term thinking.”

As markets continue to roil from global unrest and unprecedented demand, affordability remains at the forefront of every energy conversation. While the circumstances have changed, this is the very mission for which Allegheny was created.

“Allegheny was formed to address a problem, and it was very successful in doing that,” Hauser says. “If we stay member-driven, we can keep showing that value to the next generation.”

cooperatives, one of seven core principles all cooperatives share,” Smith says. “Looking ahead at the next 40 years, we’d like to diversify and enhance the program. There’s the potential to incorporate smart thermostats, EV charging and tap into battery storage.”

Today, with more than 42,000 LCRs installed on appliances across cooperative homes, CLMS remains one of the cooperatives’ most effective tools for managing electricity use.

SMOOTH OPERATORS: The Coordinated Load Management System (CLMS) operations center in Harrisburg helps reduce generation and transmission costs by shifting energy use away from periods of peak demand. Members of the CLMS team are, from left: Steve Oyler, information analyst; Matt Shaud, technician; Brian Candage, information analyst; Brian Smith, manager; Jeremy Kelley, supervisory control & data acquisition and database administrator; and Operators Joe Andrews and Tim Cope.



Cybersecurity: Protecting the Grid Behind the Scenes

MICHAEL T. CRAWFORD, SENIOR TECHNICAL EDITOR

WHEN PEOPLE THINK ABOUT ELECTRIC reliability, they usually picture poles, wires and crews restoring power after storms. But today, keeping the lights on also depends on protecting the digital systems that operate the grid, making cybersecurity essential to reliability.

“Cybersecurity is hard to see, but it plays a big role in keeping everything that we can see on-line,” says Tyler Worthen, technical operations assistant at Forksville-based Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative (REC).

This spring, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency warned that hackers have already started targeting the internet-connected hardware used in grid automation. This includes the programmable logic controllers that are part of supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) systems.

SCADA systems allow cooperatives to remotely monitor and control devices, such as voltage regulators and substation circuit breakers, connected to their distribution system. If there’s a problem, SCADA helps locate and isolate it, limiting the impact and making repairs and restorations more efficient.

Measures, such as separate firewalls, strict access controls and dedicated authentication, help ensure those systems remain secure even if other networks are compromised.

But people make it all work.

“The human side of cybersecurity is critical,” explains Debbie Stauffer, manager of information technology for Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Allegheny), the wholesale power provider for rural electric cooperatives in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

“Technology alone cannot stop every threat. Employees play an essential role in recognizing phishing attempts, safeguarding credentials, following secure practices and reporting suspicious activity promptly.”

Cyberthreats can spread quickly across the utility sector, making information sharing critical. Federal law has allowed utilities to share cybersecurity information with one another and with the federal government without legal risk, helping cooperatives identify vulnerabilities and respond faster.

“Utilities learn more by sharing what they see,” says Matt Leonard, Allegheny manager of government & regulatory affairs. “That coordination helps the entire grid respond more

quickly when new threats emerge.”

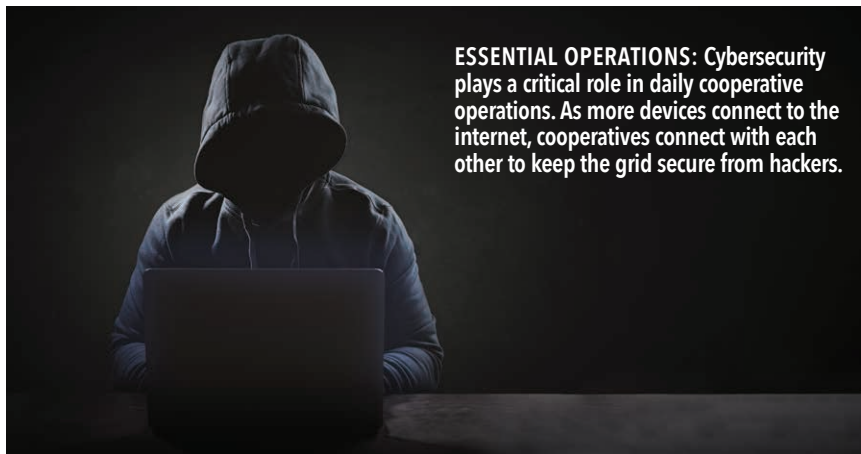
Through its Rural Electric Cyber Advancement Program, Allegheny works with cooperatives to share lessons learned and identify practical improvements.

“It’s invaluable,” says John Lykens, CEO of Sullivan County REC. “It’s that cooperation among cooperatives that you don’t find in other industries. Any co-op that I’ve ever dealt with in my career has been more than happy to share their experiences and help out another cooperative.”

More than ever, devices rely on connections to the internet and to each other. As technology becomes “smarter” — from phone lines to billing and from monitoring the distribution system to restoring power efficiently after outages — cybersecurity is critical to daily operations.

“With smart-grid technology, cybersecurity is essential to overall grid security,” explains Thomas Dimperio, director of information technology (IT) at Cambridge Springs-based Northwestern REC. “The IT department must make sure these systems are secure and only accessible to cooperative employees. A bad actor could really wreak havoc on the systems if they gain access, but our IT team works directly with the engineering and other departments to keep our systems secure.”

Cyberthreats continue to evolve, but behind the scenes, so does the cooperative response. 🛡️



ESSENTIAL OPERATIONS: Cybersecurity plays a critical role in daily cooperative operations. As more devices connect to the internet, cooperatives connect with each other to keep the grid secure from hackers.

ALLEGHENY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC., based in Harrisburg, Pa., is the wholesale power provider for the 14 rural electric cooperatives in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The cooperative has a proud history of investing in sustainable energy solutions to benefit the communities it serves while providing reliable energy at an affordable price.



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Local Lore

REA Energy Cooperative

Drunk on Violence

While the origin of Whiskey Run’s name has been debated over time, one thing is certain: It wasn’t safe to live there.

About 12 miles west of Indiana, Pa. — in territory now served by REA Energy Cooperative — the town had a short but colorful history. Founded in 1906, it came into existence when the demand for coal spread into the area. R&P Coal & Iron Company (R&P) rushed to construct a handful of shanties, where employees could live while mining. Between the residents’ heavy drinking and the toll a coal miner’s life can take on a family, Whiskey Run soon became known for its violence and lawlessness.

By 1926, the town was the site of 22 unsolved murders; however, the brutality started long before that. In



1907, a pistol duel left two men dead. From there, as legend has it, there were fights between men competing for a woman’s heart, accusations of a wife paralyzing her husband with “a five-barrel, .38 caliber revolver,” and “revenge killings” by a man collecting money for what he called his “organization.”

By 1932, the town’s coal seams had dried up, and R&P shut its operations down. Now jobless, many of Whiskey Run’s residents hopped on trains to flee the area as the number of unsolved murders ticked up to 25.

A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE: Iselin, Pa., once neighbored Whiskey Run, when both were established as mining towns in Indiana County in the early 1900s. While Iselin remains, Whiskey Run, a place steeped in violence and lawlessness, was abandoned in the 1930s and is now one of Pennsylvania’s most infamous ghost towns.

These days, the locale is best known as one of Pennsylvania’s most infamous ghost towns — even if its thirst for violence remains the only reason its legend still exists. 📍



Main Office: Indiana, Pa.
Consumer-members served: 22,714
Website: reaenergy.coop

HEY KIDS!

EMAIL YOUR ART

CALLING ALL KIDS, ages 5 to 17: Show off your artistic skills!

Each month, we’ll feature the artwork of our young readers (or our readers’ youngsters), inspired by something they’ve read in *Penn Lines*. Paints, pencils, crayons, clay, sand — any physical medium is OK! You may send digital photos of the creation to CommunityCorner@prea.com, but please: no digital artwork.

Please include the artist’s name, age and electric cooperative, plus a 25- to 50-word description of the art.



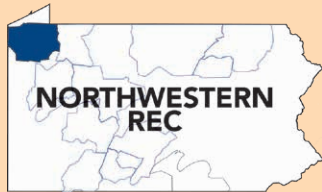
Smart as a Fox

This month’s artwork comes from Ava Ebersole, age 8 and the granddaughter of Timothy Ebersole, a member of Gettysburg-based Adams Electric Cooperative. Ava decided to draw a fox under a tree because, according to her grandfather, she loves animals. Thank you, Ava, for sharing your artwork with us!

Ava Ebersole, 8, Adams Electric Cooperative

Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

NORTHWESTERN REC

P.O. Box 207
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Cambridge Springs, PA 16403
www.northwesternrec.com

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LOCAL EDITORS

Amber Till
Emily Sonntag

Diplomats in the Fields: How Electrification Took Root



RYAN MELLER

BUILDING ELECTRICITY FROM THE GROUND UP was no easy task. In the early days, the first members of Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) had to convince many of their neighbors to join so the cooperative could meet the minimum number of consumer-members per line to make the project feasible. This was the only way the cooperative would be able to pay back the original REA loan that funded the start-up utility's costs.

Collecting rights of way

Signing on to receive electric service was one thing, but agreeing to allow power lines to be built across farmland was even more of a challenge. Many folks invited to join the cooperative were fearful. Others allowed superstition to take over.

Thelma Jackson, a schoolteacher from Spartansburg, was one of the early collectors of right-of-way agreements.

"You got some very peculiar responses when you asked for rights of way in some places," she recounted to Mary Ellen Romeo in "Darkness to Daylight, An Oral History of Rural Electrification in Pennsylvania and New Jersey."

Rumors circulated that power lines would poison the farmland and that the cooperative planned to plant crops along their lines, resulting in fields being broken up. Farmers were skeptical of the promises being made, and they were also protective of their land. But when they were told that allowing power poles on their property would also help them receive the electricity running through those lines, their tune changed.

Farmers become diplomats

"We had one man down the road there, he said he wouldn't have any poles on his farm, and his farm was right along the road where we had to go up," recalled A.D. Stainbrook, an original incorporator of Northwestern REC. "I went up to see him one day. He was milking his cows by hand, of course. And I said, 'You wouldn't have but a pole or two on your place down there; it wouldn't hurt you at all.' Well, he wasn't going to have no poles on his farm."

It was fortuitous that Stainbrook visited during milking hours, a task that would have been much easier if the farmer had the modern convenience of electricity. But continuing to face resistance, Stainbrook told the farmer they would come up with an alternate route for the poles.

"All right, we'll have to turn and go down along the creek. And I said, 'It'll make a pretty crooked line, but worst part is, you won't be able to get the electricity,'" Stainbrook said. "Boy, that changed his mind pretty quick!"

"Those were times that made a diplomat out of a field man," recalled Bill Wenner, who helped to organize dozens of rural electric systems. Wenner also served as a Rural Electrification Administration field engineer from 1940 to 1944 before becoming Northwestern REC's manager.

Continued on page 16D

Your 2026 Youth Tour Representatives

EMILY SONNTAG, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

EVERY JUNE, THE RURAL ELECTRIC YOUTH TOUR offers exceptional high school students a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to embark on an educational journey to Washington, D.C. We are excited to introduce the students chosen to represent Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) and their communities on the 2026 Youth Tour. Congratulations to these outstanding young leaders!

- ▶ Ella Marendt, Cambridge
- ▶ Natalie Briggs, Crawford Christian Academy
- ▶ Emma Rohrer, Crawford Christian Academy
- ▶ Abigail Burton, Maplewood
- ▶ Karlie Horn, Rocky Grove
- ▶ Vincent "Max" Leytrick, Saegertown
- ▶ Brayleigh Hunter, Saegertown
- ▶ Abigail Orosz, Saegertown
- ▶ Shyanna Snyder McFarren, Saegertown
- ▶ Allie Staab, Saegertown
- ▶ Halie Staab, Saegertown

On June 15, these students will embark on an exciting journey to Washington, D.C. They will join about 1,800 other high school juniors from across the country for an unforgettable week. This incredible experience will allow them to engage with their legislators on Capitol Hill, explore historic monuments and memorials, witness the solemn changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and participate in many more enriching activities.

Each year, our Youth Tour students return with inspiring stories, lifelong friendships, and a deeper appreciation for the cooperative story. We are incredibly proud of these remarkable students and look forward to the positive impact they will have on their communities.

To learn more about how to participate, visit youthtour.northwesternrec.com. Recruitment for the 2027 Youth Tour will begin this fall! 🗓️





Northwestern Rural Electric
Co-operative Association, Inc.
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**AUG. 19: COUNTRYSIDE GRILLE
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Why Vegetation Management Matters

EMILY SONNTAG, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

THERE'S SOMETHING TIMELESS ABOUT TREES. They ground us, reminding us of where we've been while reaching toward what's ahead. In our community, we take pride in the natural beauty that surrounds us — the shade on a summer afternoon, the vibrant colors marking the changing seasons and the quiet strength of growth that endures over time.

At the same time, we share another responsibility, one that's essential to our daily lives: keeping the lights on, powering our homes and businesses, and ensuring that when you flip a switch, the energy you depend on is always there.

That's why Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) works every day to strike a careful balance between preserving the nature we cherish and providing the reliable electricity on which our members depend.

One of the most important ways we achieve that balance is through regular tree trimming.

Tree trouble and new tools

It may not always be obvious, but keeping power lines clear of overgrown vegetation is crucial for preventing outages. Severe weather — strong winds, heavy ice, or sudden storms — can bring down branches, causing power lines and poles to fall. In fact, nearly half of all outages can be traced to trees or other vegetation that makes contact with electrical infrastructure.

That's why you may notice Northwestern REC or our trusted tree service contractors working in neighborhoods throughout the year. Our teams are highly trained and certified, following the latest industry standards to ensure their work is safe and effective. What might seem routine is a proactive step that helps prevent problems before they start.

And it's not just good practice — it's a requirement. Electric utilities nationwide are obligated to manage vegetation near power lines. Scheduled trimming removes dead or weakened limbs and keeps fast-growing trees from

becoming hazards. Staying one step ahead is essential, especially as severe weather becomes more frequent and intense.

We're also using new tools and technologies to work smarter. For example, drone inspections help us monitor power lines and surrounding vegetation more efficiently, reducing costs and improving accuracy. These innovative tools enable us to identify potential risks early and respond quickly.

But beyond reliability and efficiency, there's another reason this work matters: safety.

Safety first

Electricity is a powerful force, and when trees grow too close to power lines, that power can become dangerous. Branches that touch or even approach power lines can carry electrical currents. Children climbing trees in their yards may not realize the risk. During storms, fallen trees can create hazardous conditions for families and lineworkers restoring service.

There's also a financial reality we can't ignore. Preventive maintenance — like tree trimming — is far more cost effective than repairing widespread damage after an outage. Left unchecked, overgrown vegetation

Continued on page 16D

3 Ways to Help Limit Tree Trimming

Did you know electric utilities are required to trim trees and other types of vegetation that grow too close to overhead power lines? We know you love your trees, and we will do everything we can to avoid trimming them. **Here's how you can help:**

- 1. Plant trees in the right place.** Trees that will be <40 ft. should be planted at least 25 ft. away from power lines (>40ft. should be at least 50 ft. away).
- 2. Don't block pad-mounted transformers.** Plant shrubs at least 10 ft. away from transformer doors and 4 ft. from transformer sides.
- 3. Report dangerous branches.** If you spot a tree or branch that is dangerously close to power lines, please let us know.

Trimming improves safety for all. Let's work together to enjoy the beauty of trees and reliable electricity.

FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Continued from page 16A

90th Anniversary Celebration

It is my sincere honor to invite the members of Northwestern REC and other residents of the communities we serve to join us as we celebrate 90 years of cooperation.

On Saturday, Aug. 1, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., we'll host our 90th Anniversary Celebration at the cooperative headquarters, 22534 Highway 86, Cambridge Springs, PA 16403.

The event will feature live music by Salmon Frank, face painting by Taradoodles, food vendors, safety demonstrations, touch-a-truck opportunities and guided tours of our new garage.

We will have giveaways throughout the day, and the first 1,500 members who donate a nonperishable food item or a brand-new toy will receive a special 90th anniversary insulated cooler bag.

Food collected will be distributed to local food pantries, and toys will be donated to Taradoodles Toybox of Erie, a nonprofit organization that provides gifts for children in need. Keep an eye on future issues of *Penn Lines* and our website and social media for additional details.

We hope you'll be able to join us. 📍

Cooperatively yours,

RYAN MELLER
PRESIDENT & CEO

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

Continued from page 16C

leads to more frequent disruptions and higher costs for everyone. A thoughtful, strategic vegetation management program helps keep costs low for our members.

You can help, too. When planting new trees, consider their mature height and distance from power lines. Trees that grow up to 40 feet tall should be planted at least 25 feet from overhead lines. Large trees — those exceeding 40 feet — should be planted at least 50 feet away. If you're landscaping near pad-mounted transformers, keep shrubs at least 10 feet from the front and 4 feet from the sides for safe access.

If your neighborhood has underground lines, don't forget to call 811 before digging. It's a simple step that can prevent serious accidents.

At the end of the day, we all want the same thing: a community that's safe, resilient and beautiful. At Northwestern REC, we're proud to be part of that effort. Our roots run deep here, just like the trees we steward. 🌳

Celebrate 90 Years of Cooperation!

Northwestern REC

90
YEARS

Saturday, Aug. 1, 2026
11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Members & public welcome!



Electrical Safety *around* Water

Prevent
shocks around
pools, hot tubs and
spas before
they happen.



- Use a qualified electrician for any new pool, hot tub or spa wiring.
- Use covered outdoor outlets.
- Make sure outlets are GFCI-protected and tested monthly.
- Keep cords away from water. Don't use extension cords for pool equipment.
- Replace cracked outlet covers, frayed cords, loose plugs or damaged equipment.
- Choose battery-operated and waterproof TVs, radios and speakers.
- Don't handle phones, tablets, laptops or charging cords when you're wet, and keep them away from pools, spas and sinks.
- Check power line clearance with an electrician or your utility when installing pools, spas and structures like diving boards; and have utilities marked before digging.
- Schedule periodic electrical inspections and upgrades for your equipment.
- Have an electrician show you how to shut off all power in an emergency and make sure the shut-off switch is labeled.

Know the risks: Wet skin + wet surfaces = increased risk when electricity is present.

Warning signs of shock in the water:

- Tingling sensation.
- Muscle cramps.
- Restricted movement.

If you suspect electrical shock:

- Turn off all power immediately.
- Do NOT enter the water to rescue anyone.
- Use a non-conductive rescue tool (such as fiberglass).
- Call 911.

If you feel a shock in the water, move away from the source and get out.

Low- to No-Cost Ways to Save Energy

MIRANDA BOUTELLE

SAVING ENERGY DOESN'T HAVE TO be expensive or time-consuming. You don't need to spend thousands of dollars or get the newest technology to use less energy. Try these easy, low- and no-cost improvements to reduce energy waste and improve

comfort in your home.

Adjusting the thermostat is an easy way to save. Nudge the thermostat a few degrees closer to the outside temperature, especially on extreme weather days. I often hear people say, "I didn't change anything, and my bill is higher." On the hottest and coldest days your heating and cooling equipment must work much harder and use more energy to maintain the same temperature. Add an extra layer of clothes or some cozy slippers in the winter and lighter layers in summer.

Fix any hot water leaks or dripping faucets. Those tiny drips can add up to big waste. If you need to hire a professional to fix it, turn the shut-off valve under the sink to stop the leak until you can get it fixed.

Wash clothes in cold water to avoid using the energy required to heat it. Washing on hot or warm settings can really add up, especially if you have a top-load or older washing machine that uses more water.

Adjusting the temperature on your water heater can save energy and money, too. Depending on the water heater, this is either an easy adjustment or something a little more complicated that requires removing access panels. If you don't know how, consult a professional.

Air sealing is a do-it-yourself, beginner-friendly project that improves comfort and reduces energy waste. For about \$20 and a couple of hours, you can fill

gaps, cracks, and holes to prevent air from leaking in and out of the home. From the inside of the home, seal trim on windows and exterior doors with caulk for about \$4 per tube. Buy paintable caulk so you can touch it up when it dries, if needed.

A can of spray foam costs about \$5 and seals gaps around pipes, especially under sinks and in the crawl-space or basement. Cold air can travel up through those spaces, causing drafts and wasting energy. Air sealing also stops insects and rodents from using these gaps to enter your home.

Spray foam is messy and nearly impossible to get off whatever it touches, so wear disposable gloves and clothes you don't mind getting dirty, and use drop cloths to protect finished floors. Be careful if you're working with spray foam overhead; if you get it in your hair, it's not coming out with anything less than a haircut. Move any items and clean surfaces of dust and debris in areas you intend to seal before cracking open a can. Put the can in a cardboard box to carry throughout the house so you don't leave a trail of spray foam.

For \$10 to \$15, you can buy weather stripping to improve the seal on exterior doors. If you can see light around doors or feel a draft between a closed door and the door jamb, weather stripping will help. 📌

MIRANDA BOUTELLE is the chief operating officer at Efficiency Services Group in Oregon, a cooperatively owned energy efficiency company. She has more than 20 years of experience helping people save energy at home, and she writes on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.



SEAL THE DEAL: Weather stripping helps seal drafts around exterior doors, which saves energy and improves comfort in your home.

MARK GILLILAND, PIONEER UTILITY RESOURCES

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

The Amish "Secret" to Prostate Woes?

Prostate Relief Pill Combats All-Night Bathroom Urges and Embarrassment: Thousands have snapped up this safe & affordable way to get relief from prostate woes

And prostate woes rank near the top! Like the rest of us, Amish men struggle with prostate issues like:

-Too many bathroom trips, which disrupt a good nights sleep

-When it can seemingly take forever for our flow to start

-And when our flow does start, it's a weak stream, which causes us to have to stand seemingly forever to go

-When it feels our bladders are not emptying, which makes us very uncomfortable

Saw Palmetto has been kicked around for years as being helpful for prostate issues.

But the Amish have found that while taking some Saw Palmetto can be helpful—There are several other herbs that are just as helpful if not more so, and the Amish take a combination of all of them!

And over the past several years there is one product on the market many Amish men now swear by as being a key to improved prostate health—And that product is Prost-Fix.

30 INGREDIENTS IN ONE SMALL CAPSULE!

Scott Adams, the Product Manager behind Prost-Fix had this to say, "It took a great deal of research and time in order to create Prost-Fix. We wanted to create the perfect solution for those struggling with their prostate—I'm one of those myself and I take the Prost-Fix every day."

And that ingredient list starts with Saw Palmetto, which is considered the "granddaddy" of prostate ingredients. It's been used to help treat prostate

issues since the 1800s. And it has been extensively researched over the past four decades.

Many of those studies have showed that Saw Palmetto can help shrink the inner linings of the Prostate which when enlarged can put pressure on the tubes that control urine flow.

But Saw Palmetto is just a small part of what's in Prost-Fix. Here are several of the other ingredients included in each capsule of Prost-Fix:

Zinc: There's more zinc in one's prostate than in any other part of the body. One study supported the premise that zinc is needed for a healthy prostate.

Copper: Copper helps the body maintain healthy blood circulation, which is helpful for the prostate.

Selenium: In several studies Selenium has been shown to help protect the prostate.

Cernitin flower pollen extract: In one study helped improve prostate symptoms in a majority of men participating.

Quercetin: Helps fight prostate problems within cells.

Pumpkin Seed Extract: Helps maintain a healthy flow.

Nettle Root Extract: Very popular in Europe for prostate issues.

Vitamin B6: Helps boost your immune system.

And that's just a few of the ingredients found within each bottle of Prost-Fix. These ingredients have helped thousands get their prostate issues under control.



The Amish pride themselves on finding more "natural" solutions to a number of health challenges that affect the rest of us...

"I ordered this product for my father who is healthy and just turned 64. He had issues with frequent bathroom trips. Since taking this product for four weeks, he has noticed a fewer number of bathroom trips. We very much appreciated this product!"
-James Wilson

If you're looking for help for prostate issues then you need Prost-Fix!

- **REDUCE NIGHTLY BATHROOM TRIPS!** Get more sleep & stop waking up every night
- **INCREASE FLOW RATE** – Effective blend of 30 herbs, vitamins & minerals support urinary function
- **QUALITY YOU CAN COUNT ON - MADE IN THE USA** and tested for purity by a third party
- **NO ALLERGENS-NO GMOs**, binders, fillers, preservatives, soy, gluten, dairy, shellfish, peanut and eggs
- **60 Veggie caps** within each bottle. Each bottle is a 30 day supply

GET A FREE BOTTLE!

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It's All About the Buzz

ANNE M. KIRCHNER

PHOTOS BY ANNE M. KIRCHNER



HONEY MUSTARD FETA BOARD

- 2 tablespoons stone-ground mustard
- 2 tablespoons honey
- ½ cup feta cheese
- 4 ounces cream cheese
- 1 tablespoon milk
- ¼ cup crushed pistachios
- Crackers or pita chips

In a small bowl, stir together the mustard and honey; set aside. Whip together the feta, cream cheese and milk until smooth. Spread the cheese mixture onto a platter or charcuterie board. Drizzle the cheese mixture with the honey mustard. Garnish the board with crushed pistachios. Serve with crackers or pita chips. *Makes 8 to 10 servings.*



PROSCIUTTO-WRAPPED ASPARAGUS

- 1 bunch asparagus
- ½ pound prosciutto
- 4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons orange juice
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Bundle three stems asparagus and wrap with a strip of prosciutto. Arrange the asparagus bundles on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Bake the bundles for 10 minutes or until the prosciutto is crisp. Meanwhile, whisk together the remaining ingredients in a small bowl. Arrange the baked asparagus bundles on a serving platter and drizzle with the dressing. *Makes 6 to 8 servings.*



HOT HONEY CHICKEN SALAD TARTLETS

- ¼ to ½ cup Greek yogurt
- 2 tablespoons hot honey, plus more for garnishing
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 pound cooked chicken, diced
- ¼ cup chopped celery
- ¼ cup chopped red onion
- 48 mini phyllo cups*
- Parsley for garnish

In a large bowl, whisk together the Greek yogurt, 2 tablespoons hot honey, mustard, salt and pepper. Add the diced chicken, celery and red onion to the bowl. Mix well to blend all ingredients. Refrigerate the chicken salad for 1 to 2 hours. Scoop the chicken salad into mini phyllo cups and drizzle with hot honey. Garnish with parsley. *Makes 48 tartlets.*

**Mini phyllo cups can be purchased in the frozen food section in most grocery stores.*

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Raising Problem-Solvers

ABIGAIL ZIEGER

IT'S A MIDWEEK SCHOOL MORNING, and we are rushing out the door, as usual. To my great dismay, I realize one child can't find her shoes, another has misplaced the hairbrush and a third has forgotten a homework assignment that was due yesterday. With 12 minutes before we need to be out the door, I retrieve the shoes from under the kitchen table, spot the hairbrush sitting on top of the clean laundry pile (still waiting to be folded) and check our school's online portal for the homework assignment.

We made it out the door, but once again, I found myself solving my kids' last-minute problems. I default to being the finder of lost things and the rescuer of the distressed, often at the cost of my personal sanity.

It's amazing how easy it is to fall into the trap of becoming our children's personal troubleshooters, and it doesn't only happen during our morning rush. I might ask a child to vacuum, only to jump in and finish when I discover they're missing the corners and under the furniture. When my students at school struggle with an assignment, I sometimes catch myself helping so much

they hardly have to think. The result? Kids learn it's easier and more efficient to wait for the adult to handle the issue instead of making the effort to solve problems themselves.

How can we counter this trend of learned helplessness? How can we get our children to exercise their problem-solving muscles to resolve the challenges that inevitably arise?

The first solution I am practicing is to step back — sometimes way back. This doesn't mean abandoning them — there are plenty of times a parent should indeed step in — but far too often I barge in and over-manage a situation my kids could have figured out themselves. A better approach would be giving my children some time to sit in the discomfort of problem-solving.

It can be genuinely unpleasant as a parent to watch our kids struggle, but kids who are given the chance to work through challenging situations — like sibling arguments, solving a puzzle, or completing a new household chore —

learn to exercise their own ingenuity, perseverance, critical thinking, and self-regulation.

Second, I am also working on helping my kids exercise their executive functioning — the process we use to plan, organize and complete multi-step tasks.

It's tempting to lay out step-by-step instructions or hand my children well-organized lists to help them along. While this can sometimes be necessary, it is also important to give kids the opportunity to think through the steps they need to take to complete any given task. When we ask,

“what do you need for this activity,” or “what comes next in the process,” we help them to build the executive-functioning skills to solve problems on their own.

A third solution is to praise the process, not the results. I want to look for engagement from my kids, even if I disagree with the thinking or their conclusion. I'm learning to praise their efforts to find a solution, even if the outcome falls short. If I only praise success, my kids will eventually stop taking risks. I want to

notice and celebrate our children's effort, persistence, and creative thinking, not just their achievements.

Raising problem-solvers isn't about stepping back and doing nothing — it's about resisting the urge to step in too soon. Our kids need time to figure things out without adults overstepping, and that often means being OK with things getting messy or uncomfortable. Every time a child solves a problem on their own, it builds their skills and their confidence that they can figure things out. That's a valuable lesson that will last a lifetime — even after they figure out how to find their own shoes. 📌



ABIGAIL ZIEGER is a music teacher and singer by trade, but also enjoys capturing life experiences through writing. When not singing, teaching or typing, she can be found working in her kitchen, helping her kids with school or consuming copious amounts of coffee. A member of Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative, Abigail lives with her husband and four children in northeast Pennsylvania.

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BURIED TREASURE

Reader Uncovers 1967 Issue
of *Penn Lines* Among Parents' Papers

KELLY M. LUVISON

PENN LINES CONTRIBUTOR



THE YEAR WAS 1966. The Vietnam War was escalating. Ronald Reagan was elected governor of California. “Star Trek” made its television debut, and John Lennon sparked outrage by declaring The Beatles were “more popular than Jesus.”

To just a bit less fanfare, this very magazine was born that year, too. In October, the maiden issue of *Penn Lines* rolled off the printing presses and began a 60-year journey, making its way today to some 168,000 co-op homes and businesses.

Penn Lines was born from a mission to update, educate and inform — and, yes, to connect on a personal level with rural residents, many of whom have been saving and collecting the magazine for years.

So when we asked them to share their oldest issue with us, we weren’t surprised by the response. Issues surfaced from nearly every decade, but we could have only one winner.

QUITE A FIND: United Electric Cooperative member Dolores Pry did a little digging at her family’s homestead and came up with the winner of the oldest issue of *Penn Lines* contest, held to celebrate the magazine’s 60th anniversary. The issue was published in February 1967, a few months after *Penn Lines* was first introduced to cooperative members. Dolores will receive a \$50 gift card.

And the winner is ...

Meet Dolores Pry, 81, of Cherry Tree, who has a special *Penn Lines* story to tell about a 100-year legacy, a life well-lived in Indiana County and a long-standing family homestead, powered today by United Electric Cooperative.

Dolores found her 59-year-old edition of *Penn Lines* among a sheaf of papers left behind by her parents, Alden and Violet Beck, who bought the family farm outside of Cherry Tree in 1925. The cover of the winning entry — from February 1967 — features an open letter to *Penn Lines* readers from then-editor William F. Matson. In it, he encouraged readers to “lift out and retain” a special Pennsylvania Legislative Directory that was inside the magazine.

“Political leaders need and want your opinions in order to make wise decisions,” Matson implored.

Also found among her treasure trove of family archives was a copy of *Watts on the Line*, dated May-June 1965 and published by United Electric’s predecessor, Clearfield Electric Cooperative, Inc. The newsletter featured a piece of cover art warmly reminiscent of Mark Twain’s famous characters, Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer. The crisp black-and-white photo features a young boy, barefoot in a straw hat and rolled-up britches, fishing in a rocky Penn’s Woods creek.

“I just sort of liked it ... that boy standing and fishing in the middle of the creek,” Dolores says. “It caught my eye. I always thought that was so cute, so I kept it and set it aside for all these years along with the *Penn Lines* issue.”

For many years, Dolores enjoyed *Penn Lines* with her husband, Sam. The couple made their home next door to the Beck family homestead for 42 years. Sam Pry passed away March 2 at the age of 85.

“He was a very good man,” Dolores says. “He loved the Lord, and I know where he is now.”

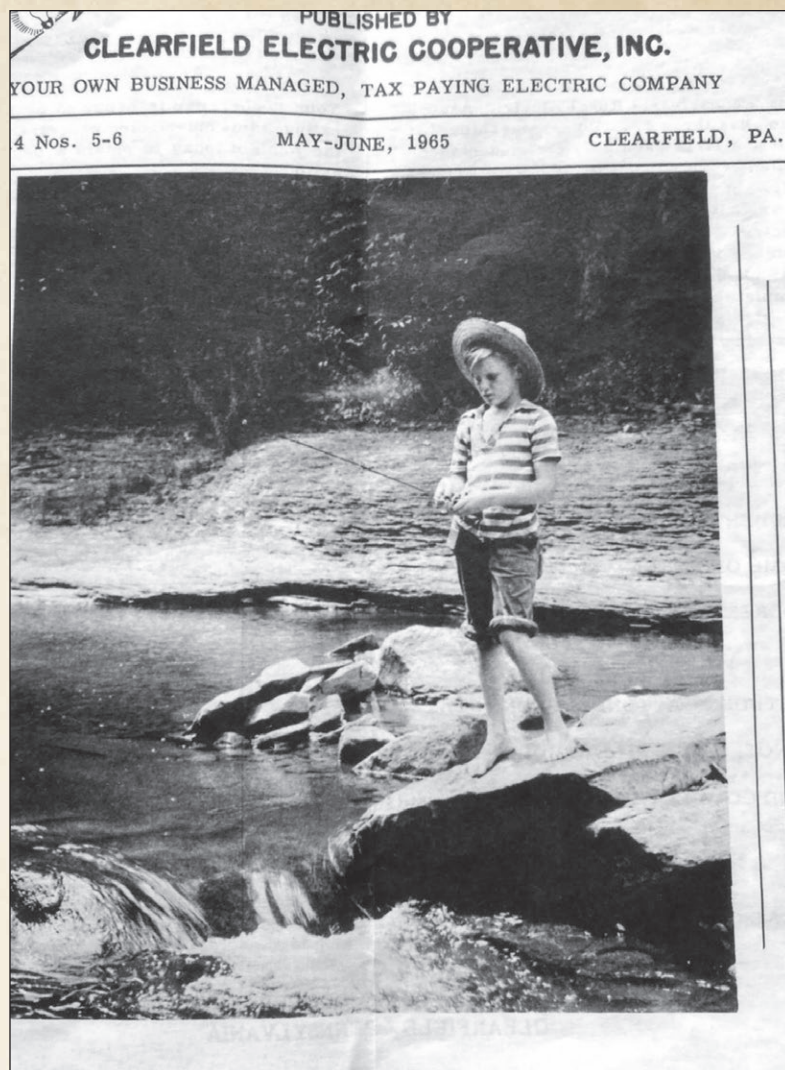
“We had a good life,” she adds. “We weren’t rich by any means, but the door here was always open to visitors for a cup of coffee.”

‘Part of our lives’

Dolores says she and Sam looked forward to receiving *Penn Lines* in the mail.

“We really liked seeing if we knew anyone each month,” she says. “It (*Penn Lines*) was part of our lives. We both scanned it often.”

Dolores particularly enjoys the magazine’s recipe section and the reader-submitted photos featured in Rural Reflections. She proudly points out that her great-niece, Lindsay Mulhollen, had a photo published in the



ANOTHER TREASURE: After uncovering the 1967 issue of *Penn Lines*, Dolores Pry also found this gem, a copy of *Watts on the Line*, a newsletter dated May-June 1965 and published by United Electric Cooperative’s predecessor, Clearfield Electric Cooperative, Inc. United Electric is celebrating a milestone this year, too – its 90th anniversary.

magazine and also was a recipient of United Electric’s Shine the Light scholarship.

These days, Dolores shares her home with one of her daughters, Darla, “which makes things easier.” Darla has worked at the little country store in downtown Cherry Tree for 33 years. Next door, Dolores’s brother, Alden Beck Jr., lives in the family homestead with his wife, Bernie.

“I absolutely love where we all live ... out here in the country,” Dolores says with a lilt, adding she’s already looking forward to *Penn Lines*’ 70th anniversary. “Maybe they’ll have another contest in 10 years, and I can enter again!” 📷

Tropicals for Pennsylvania Yards

GEORGE WEIGEL

PENNSYLVANIA SUMMERS CAN RUN hot and humid for weeks on end — weather that seems, well, tropical, if only temporarily so.

Given that scenario, it's no wonder tropical plants do surprisingly well outside for four to five months of our growing season. They think they're at home.

Yet a lot of Pennsylvania gardeners steer clear of tropical plants altogether, while those who dabble in them generally stick to growing in pots.

Hardly anyone plants a Croton or a palm in the ground.

The truth is that most tropicals — including a lot of our so-called “houseplants” — will grow nicely in our summer landscapes, where they add diversity and a new dimension with their bold, colorful foliage and blooms.

Two caveats: First, if you plan to keep tropicals more than one season, you have to dig them and pot them for inside storage once the late-season temperatures dip into the low 40s. Frosts and near frosts will kill most tropical natives, but most are up for double-duty as winter houseplants before going back outside the following May. Hose off or spray your tropicals after potting so you don't take bugs into the house.

Second, be careful about light. Even a tropical that prefers full sun can wash out in color or drop leaves if it goes directly from inside to full sun outside. The solution is to acclimate the plant to increasing outside light over a seven- to 10-day period — or to plant it outside in shade or part shade. This includes plants bought from garden center greenhouses and those you're moving inside and out each year.

Tropicals appreciate going into warm, real soil where their roots are free to roam. You may notice them thriving like never before.

Life in a pot is stunting. Species sold as houseplants are good at tolerating that, but none of them prefer it. If you'd rather not unpot and plant tropicals, go ahead and sink them in the ground, pots and all. It will cut down on how often you have to water them compared with potted tropicals sitting on the deck or porch.

You'll find tropical plants in three main places:

- ▶ In a garden center's houseplant section. This is where you'll find such species as peace lilies, Chinese evergreens and snake plants that really are common landscape plants in their homelands.
- ▶ In a garden center's annuals section. These are plants sold for single-year summer use. These include varieties such as “spike plants” (*Dracaena*), ti plants (*Cordyline*), New Zealand flax (*Phormium*) and tender ornamental grasses.
- ▶ Catalog companies specializing in tropicals. Two of the better known options are Louisiana-based Almost Eden Plants and

Connecticut-based Logee's Greenhouses.

One of the best uses for tropicals in the landscape is as a specimen or focal point. Even just one tropical hibiscus or palm in a bed of annuals or low perennials can make a dramatic difference.

They also make good summertime shady groundcovers. In the tropics, plenty of plants grow as under-tree creepers. Philodendron, pothos, inch plants, purple heart (*Setcreasea*), Moses-in-a-boat (*Tradescantia*) and aluminum plants (*Pilea*) can cover our ground in summer just as they do all year round in the tropics.

All of those can be converted into living room pot-and-basket plants in winter.

Remember, steamy weather calls for steam-happy plants. And if most of them are willing to tolerate our dark, dry living rooms in winter, too, so much the better. 🌿

GEORGE WEIGEL is a retired horticulturist, author of two books about gardening in Pennsylvania, and garden columnist for The Patriot-News/PennLive.com in Harrisburg.

SOME OF THE BEST TROPICALS FOR IN-GROUND USE IN PENNSYLVANIA SUMMERS

In sun, Crotons and copper plants grow into bushy shrubs with bright red, gold, and green leaves.

Century plants (Agave) and bromeliads make excellent eye-grabbers with their strappy, succulent upright forms.

For big, bold foliage, try elephant ears or banana plants. Red-leafed bananas add showy color to their sheer gigantesque.

In shade, many common houseplants will fill holes in those outdoor shady spots, such as peace lilies, dieffenbachia, jade plant, Chinese evergreens, schefflera, chenille plants, breynia, and “Triostar” stromanthe with its cream, green, and purplish leaves.

GO BIG: A dark-leaved elephant ears plant makes a bold, tropical focal point along this sidewalk.



GEORGE WEIGEL

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- Ad copy as it is to appear in the publication.
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A Key Fob, a Key Fob! My Kingdom for a Key Fob!

JOHN KASUN

I HAVE WRITTEN PREVIOUSLY ABOUT how column ideas often seem to fall into my lap. A close friend once said, “Everyone does dumb stuff, but normally people keep it to themselves. You are the only person I know who doesn’t mind sharing it.”

He just might be right.

I was working in my office when my wife popped in to announce, “The doctor’s office just called: They scheduled X-rays for me today, and I need you to drive me in. I am going to change quickly and will be ready in a few minutes.”

My wife had a knee replacement and was unable to drive at the time. I placed my wallet and key fob on the hallway table and rushed to take the dog out, not sure how long we might be gone. As I came back inside, my wife was impatiently waiting.

“I don’t want to be late,” she said. “I am not sure how long they are open.” I knew it was not the time for discussion, so I grabbed my wallet and helped her into the garage and in the car.

As we reached the medical center, I stopped at the entrance, left the driver’s door open and engine running to help her inside. Once she was safely inside, I rushed back outside to park the car. I eased into an empty slot and hit the “Stop Engine” button on the dash. As I started to open the door, bells went off, lights flashed and the car eased forward.

The engine had not shut off, and it obviously had not automatically shifted into park as normal. I thought, in my rush, maybe I didn’t press the button properly, so I repeated the process, then repeated it again. Suddenly, I realized I had no control over the car. The engine was running and I could not shut it off. It seemed as if my only choice was to keep my foot on the brake and wait until I ran out of gas. With three-quarters of a tank, however, that

could take at least three days.

Slowly, my wits returned, and I manually shifted into park. Then I noticed a message flashing across the dash: “NO KEY AVAILABLE!”

Then it dawned on me: I left the house without my key fob. My wife’s key fob was in her pocketbook, so it allowed me to start the car and drive to the doctor’s office. When I helped her and her pocketbook out of the car, I no longer had a fob and, therefore, no control over the still running car.

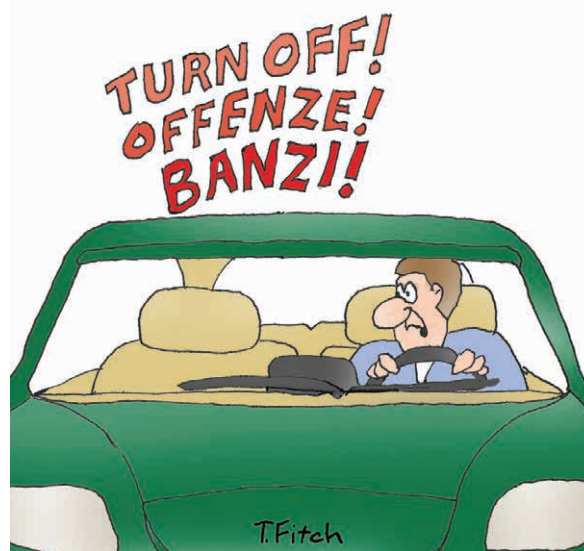
I glanced up just in time to see a woman walking through the parking lot and waved to attract her attention. As I explained the situation, I could see doubt in her eyes and hoped she did not have pepper spray in her purse. She listened politely, and rather than start yelling for the police, she agreed to watch my still-running car until I retrieved my wife’s key fob.

Halfway to the doctor’s office it hit me, “Did I just hand my running vehicle over to an attractive young car thief?” In the moment, it seemed like the least of my problems. A short time later, with key fob in hand, I returned and all was well. The young lady graciously brushed off my thanks, indicating that we all should help others when the need arises. I decided not

to share with her that for several minutes I thought she might be a car thief.

I have since learned how to solve the missing or inoperative key fob problem if it happens again. If you don’t know how to do so, I strongly suggest you check your owner’s manual. Unless, of course, you also write a humor column, need material and don’t mind making yourself look stupid. 🙄

JOHN KASUN, a lifelong Pennsylvanian with more than 30 years of writing experience, looks for the humor in everyday life and then tells a story from that perspective. He is a member of Huntingdon-based Valley Rural Electric Cooperative.



Staying Cool

WHILE THE SEASONS CHANGE LIKE the color of a night sky, we are reminded to stay cool during summer's first month. Whether you're a bird on a branch or a child looking for a quick sip of water, June is a perfect time to slow down, enjoy the weather and gear up for warmer days ahead.

Have any cool photos you'd care to share? Submit them to our Rural Reflections contest. The best photos in each of five categories (animal, artistic, human, landscape and editor's choice) will run in the January 2027 issue and receive a \$75 cash prize. Runners-up will appear in the February 2027 issue and receive \$25. See the entry information below 📄



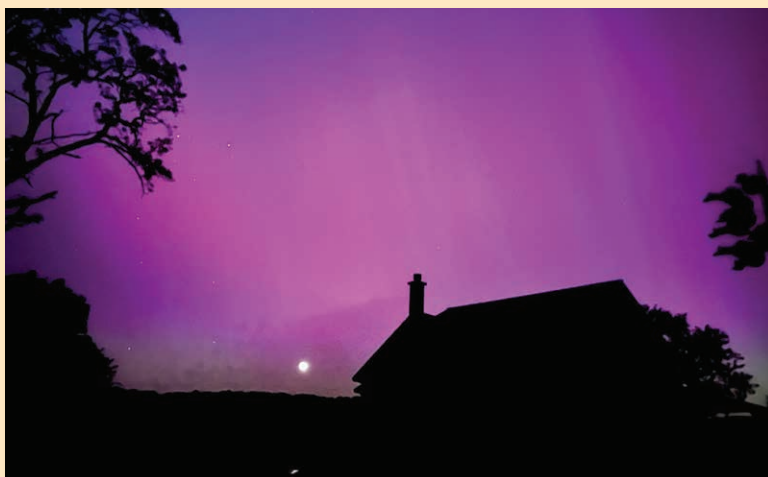
RUTH HORST • TRI-COUNTY REC



WALTER SHIRK • SULLIVAN COUNTY REC



LUCY ZIMMERMAN • NEW ENTERPRISE REC



LUKE FISHER • BEDFORD REC

How to enter

TO SUBMIT ENTRIES, email your photos (no more than five digital images per person, per year) to photos@prea.com or send prints to *Penn Lines Photos*, P.O. Box 1266, Harrisburg, PA, 17108-1266. With your entries, be sure to include your name, address, daytime phone number and the name of the rural electric cooperative that serves your residence, business or seasonal home.

Remember, our publication deadlines require that we work ahead, so send your seasonal photos to us early. We need fall photos before mid-July and winter photos before mid-September. *Please note:* Hard-copy, physical photos mailed to our office will not be returned. Therefore, if you mail a photo, please make sure it's a print, not an original.

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