

DECEMBER 2024

# PENNLINES

## Sugar, Spice and Everything Nice

Cookie Creators Make  
Magic in Every Batch

YOU CAN CREATE  
YOUR OWN  
EFFICIENT KITCHEN

WHERE DO GARDEN  
BUGS GO IN  
WINTER?

SMILES ARE ALWAYS  
IN SEASON

**INSIDE!**  
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# DECEMBER



MICHELLE KIMMEL

Creativity is on display when Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative members Michelle Kimmel and Pam Weimer gather friends each year to decorate dozens of sugar cookies for a good cause.



**ON THE COVER**  
Sure, Christmas cookies are a welcome treat when December rolls around. But as you'll find in this month's feature, cookies can have a greater purpose.

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# The Power of Knowledge

## How *Penn Lines* Informs and Connects Our Cooperative Communities



**LEROY WALLS**

**AS WE PREPARE TO CLOSE** the door on 2024, I'd like to take a moment to reflect on a key part of our mission, Cooperative Principle No. 5: Education, Training and Information. This principle encourages cooperatives to provide resources and initiatives to help bolster an understanding of electric co-ops, energy-related matters, and rural quality-of-life issues. By enabling people to make well-informed decisions in these matters, this cooperative principle serves to empower people.

One of the best ways to carry out this mission is through your monthly cooperative magazine, *Penn Lines*, which has been serving rural communities in the Commonwealth for nearly 60 years. Many of you have been a part of this rich history. Some of you have been reading *Penn Lines* for more than two decades, and we are inspired by such loyalty.

Much more than a monthly publication, *Penn Lines* is an essential means of keeping readers connected to and informed about topics that affect their cooperative, their community, and their way of life here in rural Pennsylvania.

What you may not realize, however, is that *Penn Lines* is a partnership — a partnership between our statewide organization in Harrisburg and your local cooperative. This local connection allows us to produce a magazine that's not only informative but also is a trusted resource in the communities it touches.

Over the past year, *Penn Lines* has brought readers articles that blend cooperative updates with stories about rural life, energy and local issues. Whether it's a feature on the state's thriving lumber industry, an in-depth look at cooperative efforts to strengthen energy reliability, advice on avoiding utility scams, or columns with helpful tips on boosting your home's energy efficiency, our monthly magazine is here to provide you with practical, common-sense information — or as some would say, "news you can use."

*Penn Lines* is also dedicated to capturing the richness of rural life and helping you feel more connected to the wider community of cooperative members across the state. And with the holidays approaching, it's a great time to reflect on how important that sense of connection — and community — really is. We truly appreciate how much co-op members have shared with readers in the pages of *Penn Lines*, because that collaboration is what co-ops are all about. From the very beginning, when rural electric cooperatives were formed decades ago to bring light to rural Pennsylvania, we've been in this together.

And we are committed to continuing that collaboration. We view the co-op principle of education and information as a two-way street. We learn a lot from our readers, so please reach out with any questions or comments you may have about your cooperative magazine.

As always, thank you for being a part of the cooperative family and being a loyal *Penn Lines* reader. We wish you and your loved ones a joyful holiday season and look forward to bringing you another year of *Penn Lines*, filled with news and stories that help us stay connected — and informed — as a community. 📧

**LEROY WALLS**

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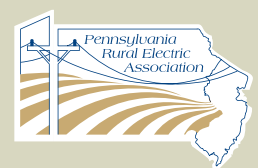
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## HAIL MARY

The first Christmas without my dad at home was a tough one. I remember wandering through the house in the quiet of 3 a.m., only to find that my mom was awake too. I suppose we were both looking for "Santa."

We ended up sitting together on the couch, flipping through channels, and of course, there it was – "It's a Wonderful Life," the 1946 classic that seemed to play on every channel during the holidays back then. There was George Bailey of Bedford Falls, brought to life by Pennsylvania's own Jimmy Stewart.



Stewart, who was from Indiana, Pa., home to REA Energy Cooperative, has said this was his favorite film. He believed it showed how an ordinary person with small-town values could make a positive difference to others. George's "concern for community" – a core principle of cooperatives – made him a hero to many in Bedford Falls.

I had seen the film before, of course, but watching it there on the couch with my mother was special. It gave me a chance to reflect on the often-unsung hero of the film: George's wife, Mary Bailey, played so superbly by Donna Reed. While Clarence the angel gets plenty of credit for helping George see what the world would be like without him, some have argued that it's Mary who quietly – and consistently – saves the day. I would agree.

Mary is the one who sacrifices their honeymoon savings to rescue the Building & Loan. She's the one who transforms a run-down house into a warm, loving home. When George feels defeated by his unfulfilled dreams, she's the one who reminds him of the importance of family and community. And when George reaches his darkest moment, it's Mary who rallies the community to help him.

The movie's central theme is the interconnectedness of our lives – how one life influences many others. While George's journey is at the heart of the story, it's Mary who, in many ways, embodies the spirit of this message. Her love and support provide George the foundation for his happiness and ultimate redemption.

This Christmas, I'll be sure to watch the film (again) with my own Mary Bailey: my wife, whose love and influence have made my life all the more wonderful. Here's to all the Mary Baileys out there. Merry Christmas.

**PETER A. FITZGERALD**  
EDITOR



**REDUCE WATER USE:** With 35 Pennsylvania counties experiencing drought conditions, the state Department of Environmental Protection is asking residents of those areas to voluntarily reduce their nonessential water use.

## DROUGHT WATCH

### Pennsylvanians asked to voluntarily conserve water

Dry conditions have persisted across Pennsylvania, prompting the Pennsylvania Drought Task Force to announce that 33 counties are under a drought watch.

Residents and businesses in these areas are encouraged to voluntarily reduce nonessential water use by 5% to 10%. Public water suppliers may request additional water conservation measures to ensure drinking water is available.

Counties under the drought watch are Adams, Allegheny, Beaver, Bucks, Butler, Carbon, Chester, Clearfield, Columbia, Cumberland, Dauphin, Delaware, Fayette, Franklin, Greene, Indiana, Lancaster, Lawrence, Lebanon, Lehigh, Luzerne, Monroe, Montgomery, Montour, Northampton, Northumberland, Perry, Philadelphia, Pike, Somerset, Washington, Westmoreland and York.

Berks and Schuylkill counties are under a drought warning, which asks residents to voluntarily reduce their water use by 10% to 15%.

If conditions become more severe, a drought emergency can be declared by the governor, and emergency water restrictions can be implemented.

## THE AWARD GOES TO ...

### Penn Lines wins three 'Willies' for writing

*Penn Lines* recently received three writing awards at the 2024 National Electric Cooperatives Statewide Editors Association (SEA) Willies Awards.

The magazine won a first-place honor for "Coming Home: Co-op Lineman Gets Back to Work after Near-Death Experience" in the category of "Best News Feature." The article, published in the magazine's May 2024 issue, shared the story of Branden Bauer, a lineman for DuBois-based United Electric Cooperative who survived contact with a 7,200-volt electric line.



*Penn Lines* also received an Award of Excellence in the "Best Column" category for "The Quality of Courage," an Editor's Desk column that appeared in July 2023. The column also touched on Bauer's road to recovery after his life-threatening accident in January 2021.

In the "Best Editorial" category, the magazine won an Award of Merit for "Striking the Right Balance: Ensuring Reliability for the 21st Century," a First Word column that appeared in



June 2023. The op-ed highlighted concerns about the impact of energy policy on grid reliability.

The Willies Awards — named in honor of electric cooperative mascot Willie Wiredhand — were announced this fall. The annual competition draws more than 300 entries from cooperative publications nationwide.

**ALL BUTTERED UP**

**This is knot your ordinary perfume**

Looking for a unique Christmas gift for the soft pretzel lover in your life? Auntie Anne's pretzels, headquartered in Lancaster, has created a perfume that smells like its snack.

The fragrance, called Knead, is being sold at [auntieannes.com/knead](http://auntieannes.com/knead) for \$25 per 1-ounce bottle or \$45 for a 3.4-ounce bottle. The company says the scent is infused with notes of buttery dough, salt and a hint of sweetness.

"Over the years, fans have shared their memories and experiences that began with just a whiff of our pretzels," Julie Younglove-Webb, Auntie Anne's chief brand officer, said in a news release. "We've bottled that

moment and can't wait for fans to enjoy it in a whole new way."

**NATURE NEWS**

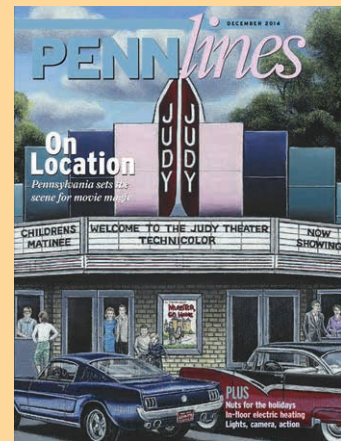
**Hundreds of acres of older-growth trees near Lake Erie protected**

Erie Bluffs State Park, the largest undeveloped stretch of land overlooking Lake Erie, has been added to the Old Growth Forest Network (OGFN), an organization dedicated to creating a national network of protected forests.

The woodlands within the park include approximately 430 acres of older-growth trees — mainly oaks and sugar maples — along the Lake Erie shoreline and the Duck Run ravine in Erie County. It is the 33rd Pennsylvania forest to join the OGFN, which is working to identify at least one forest in each U.S. county that can sustain a forest.

The 587-acre park offers a mile of lake shoreline, 90-foot bluffs, trails and fishing at Elk Creek. To learn more about the park visit [dcnr.pa.gov](http://dcnr.pa.gov) and choose "State Parks" then "Find a Park."

**TIME LINES**



DECEMBER 2014

A decade ago, *Penn Lines* was celebrating the role Pennsylvania has played on the big screen. The Commonwealth has provided the backdrop for several iconic American films, including "Rocky," "Flashdance" and "The Night of the Living Dead." It was also home of one of Hollywood's most famous stars, Jimmy Stewart, who hailed from Indiana, Pa., where REA Energy Cooperative is headquartered. While Pennsylvania's beautiful and varied scenery has been a draw for film crews, a tax incentive, which gives a 25% tax credit to productions that spend 60% of their budget in the state, has helped, too.



**A HOMETOWN HOLIDAY**

Get a head start on those holiday vibes at Christmas in Montrose, Dec. 6 to 8. This communitywide event in Susquehanna County will feature a visit and photos with Santa, lots of shopping and crafts, a parade of lights, a live reindeer display, and more. For the full schedule, go to [christmasinmontrose.com](http://christmasinmontrose.com).

CHRISTMASINMONTROSE.COM

**WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED**

Martin's Mill Bridge, a historic covered bridge in Franklin County, is continuing its 175th anniversary celebration with a Winter Wonderland drive-thru Dec. 15. The Antrim Township bridge will be decorated for the free, public event, featuring music, hot cocoa and cookies, and an appearance by Santa and Mrs. Claus. Learn more on the township's Facebook page.



COMMONS.WIKIMEDIA.ORG



FACEBOOK.COM

**CHUGGING ALONG**

The Clinton Central Model Railroad Club will host two open houses this month, Dec. 17 and 28, at its building, 15 Logan Ave., Lock Haven. The club's updated layout features more than 2,000 feet of track with diesel and steam sound-equipped locomotives. Admission is free. Learn more at [ccmrr.org](http://ccmrr.org).

**ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHRISTMAS**

John Denver fans can reminisce and celebrate the holidays at the upcoming Rocky Mountain Christmas: The Music of John Denver featuring Jim Curry. Slated Dec. 20 at the Kovalchick Convention & Athletic Complex in Indiana, Pa., the performance will take you on a musical journey through many of the singer's timeless hits. Tickets start at \$35. Learn more at [visitindianacountypa.org](http://visitindianacountypa.org) (click on the "Events" tab).





# SUGAR, SPICE and Everything Nice

Cookie Creators Make  
Magic in Every Batch

**KATHY HACKLEMAN**  
*Penn Lines Contributor*





# *“A balanced diet is a cookie in each hand.”*

**COOKIES – WHO DOESN'T LOVE THEM**, especially this time of year?

So to get you in the holiday spirit, we scoured our cooperative territories to find bakers who have spent years cultivating the cookie craft, much to the delight of their families and friends.

These sweet treats may come from the oven, but when it comes right down to it, they really come from the heart.

## **For a good cause**

Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) members Michelle Kimmel and Pam Weimer share a spirit of giving and a love of cookies.

Kimmel bakes 15 dozen sugar cookies each year for the Christmas Cookie Walk, a fundraiser held at Shanksville's St. Mark Lutheran Church. Then, she invites co-workers, friends and family to join her for a cookie-decorating party.

“I enjoy baking the cookies,” she says. “It’s a good way for people to get a selection of homemade cookies. It’s all donation-based, and the money goes to a good cause. People line up for this.”

Weimer enjoys helping Kimmel, a co-worker at the UPMC Hillman Cancer Center, with baking, but she definitely doesn't want to miss out on decorating.

“We have a good evening and good fellowship for a great project,” she says. “People look forward to our cookies because they are so colorful. It’s fun. It’s creative, and they all turn out beautifully.”

Volunteer bakers from several area churches provide

cookies for the holiday event, and participants can fill a box for \$15. This year's event will begin at 9 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 14, at the church, 823 Main St., Shanksville, with funds going to hurricane relief.

“Each year, we are grateful and amazed our community bakers amass this generous amount of cookies,” says Gayle Miller, one of the walk's organizers, “and we feel blessed we can donate the proceeds to worthy charities.”

Pam Foor, an award-winning baker and member of Bedford REC, also whips up dozens of cookies this time of year — and as many as 15 different kinds — for family, friends and local holiday events. She mixes the dough before Thanksgiving, freezes it and then bakes the cookies as the holiday draws closer.

“Cookies are a grab-and-go, universal dessert,” Foor says.

But Theresa Lingle, customer service and billing supervisor at United Electric Cooperative in DuBois, has found that “people are pretty particular about their cookies.”

In her spare time, she creates confections for weddings and the cooperative's annual meetings. Most of her regular baking, however, is done for family, where she concentrates on providing each person's favorite.

## **Getting creative**

While Lingle calls herself a “hobbyist,” Adams Electric member Judy Morley has turned baking into a business. At the Gettysburg Cookie Company, she sells her creations on consignment to gift and coffee shops, at festivals, and online at [gettysburgcookieco.com](http://gettysburgcookieco.com).

She also mixes her love of baking with her love of history by naming her cookies after local battlefields. There's the Devil's Den cookie (chocolate), the Peach Orchard cookie



## BLACK WALNUT MAPLE COOKIES WITH BROWN SUGAR ICING

Recipe courtesy of Barbara Hall, [mycookiejourney.com](http://mycookiejourney.com)

### Cookies:

- ▶ 1 cup (227 g) butter, unsalted
- ▶ 3 tablespoons pure maple syrup
- ▶ 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- ▶ ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- ▶ 2 cups (250 g) all-purpose flour
- ▶ ½ cup (62.5 g) Black Walnuts, finely chopped

More  
cookie  
recipes on  
page 16

### Icing:

- ▶ ½ cup (122 g) milk (*not fat-free*)
- ▶ 1 cup (220 g) light brown sugar, packed
- ▶ 1 tablespoon butter, unsalted
- ▶ 2 cups powdered sugar, divided and sifted

### To make cookies:

- ▶ Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Weigh or measure the flour and set aside. Using a stand or handheld mixer, beat the butter until light and fluffy. Add the salt, vanilla extract, and maple syrup, mixing thoroughly. Slowly add the flour and mix until incorporated. Finally, add the chopped Black Walnuts.
- ▶ Using a medium cookie scooper, place 12 scoops onto a parchment-lined sheet pan. Take a flat-bottom water glass and gently press it on top of each scoop. Press again, this time a little harder. If the cookie dough sticks to the glass, wipe it with a wet paper towel. You want the cookies to be about a half-inch thick, which makes it easier to ice them.
- ▶ Bake for 11 to 13 minutes. When the cookies are lightly browned around the bottom fringe, take them out of the oven. Leave them on the pan for about 1 minute, then move them to a cooling rack. Let them cool completely before icing.

### To make icing:

- ▶ In a small saucepan, combine the milk and the brown sugar, constantly stirring over medium heat. Bring mixture to a boil. Turn the heat down just a little and boil on low for 3 minutes to thicken the sugar and milk. Remove from heat and add butter, stirring until it melts.
- ▶ Add 1½ cups of the sifted powdered sugar to the brown-sugar mixture and blend until smooth. (You can mix this by hand, but a stand mixer will get out all the lumps.) If the icing is thin, add a little of the reserved ½ cup of powdered sugar. Using a knife, add the icing to the top of each cookie. **Note:** The icing hardens quickly.



BARBARA HALL

(with peaches), and the Last Full Measure (an “everything” cookie dedicated to the final line of The Gettysburg Address), along with others, including seasonal favorites.

During her first year in business at her former retail store, Morley sold more than 33,000 cookies. Now, using the consignment model, she sells about 1,000 cookies per month. Her busiest times are summer and Christmas.

Morley says she always liked to bake and when her daughter was very young, she committed herself to cooking healthy, good-tasting food using high-quality ingredients.

“You can throw healthy ingredients into a basic cookie recipe to make it healthier,” she says. “When I got the idea for a cookie company, I already knew how to modify recipes.”

In her weekly blog, [mycookiejourney.com](http://mycookiejourney.com), Lancaster County resident Barbara Hall takes a more educational approach to cookies.

Designed for bakers of all levels, the blog includes detailed instructions for those who need them along with photos that show how the dough should look at each step. More experienced bakers, she says, can simply print a recipe and be on their way.

All recipes are her own creations, and she says her favorites are those that remind her of food she had as a child. For example, an aunt made a black walnut cake with brown sugar frosting, so she created a cookie using those flavors. (**Note:** See that recipe at left and another of Hall’s favorites on page 11.)

“I take something that is not a cookie and figure out how I can make it into a cookie,” she says.

Her reward is in the creation of new recipes and how readers react to them.

“I have more fun designing and creating cookies than selling them,” she says. “Making the cookies look appealing through photography and writing the posts are what I enjoy most.”

## Cookies and community

In Huntingdon County, Scott McKenzie says he had to make some decisions when the COVID-19 pandemic came along and he was furloughed from his job at Juniata College in 2020. They were: retire early, find something else to do, or be patient and wait for the college to reopen.

“I decided I would wait for Juniata, but I knew I couldn’t just sit around and feel sorry for myself,” McKenzie says, “so I committed to doing something new every week that I was off work.”

His first “something new” was to bake chocolate chip cookies. He followed a recipe he found in a cookbook and was so proud of the result that he posted it on Facebook.



That caught the attention of Jeremy Uhrich, a furloughed Huntingdon middle school teacher.

“[Jeremy] sent me a message saying my cookies looked good, but he bet his were better,” McKenzie recalls. “That was all it took. We are both competitive, so we decided to have a bake-off.”

The Huntingdon mayor served as judge, and the two men gave their cookies to the borough to distribute to police officers and 911 personnel. The pair decided to go a second round, with those cookies going to the local hospital and fire department.

After that, “Cookies for Caregivers” was born, and years later the men are still coordinating the baking and distribution. Backed by a group of around 20 regular volunteer bakers, the pair have distributed thousands of cookies.

The effort brought unexpected national recognition with stories on CNN, “The Today Show,” “The Rachel Ray Show” and in *People* magazine. Soon, their idea blossomed into a national movement, and at its most popular point, 40 to 50 other communities were following their lead.

“People felt helpless during the early days of the pandemic,” McKenzie says, “and this was something they could do in their own house whenever they wanted, and it was for a good cause.”

While early deliveries went to first responders, the pair decided anyone who was still going to work was an “essential worker,” so they expanded their deliveries to



KATHY HACKLEMAN

**GETTING CREATIVE:** Cookie blogger Barbara Hall scoops cookie dough onto a pan for baking. Hall creates all of her own recipes, which you can find at [mycookiejourney.com](http://mycookiejourney.com).

## MY FAVORITE CREAM CHEESE CHOCOLATE COOKIES

Recipe courtesy of Barbara Hall, [mycookiejourney.com](http://mycookiejourney.com)

- ▶ 8 ounces (226.8 g) cream cheese, room temperature
- ▶ ½ cup (113.5 g) butter, unsalted, room temperature
- ▶ 1½ cups (300 g) sugar, white
- ▶ 2 eggs
- ▶ ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- ▶ 1¾ cups (218.75 g) all-purpose flour
- ▶ ¾ cup (64.5 g) cocoa powder (*Guittard Cocoa Rouge recommended*)
- ▶ 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ▶ ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ▶ ¼ cup (30 g) powdered sugar to sprinkle on top
- ▶ In a medium bowl, weigh or measure the flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, and salt and whisk until the cocoa powder is mixed throughout the flour. Set the bowl aside. Weigh or measure the sugar in a small bowl and set aside.
- ▶ Using a stand or handheld mixer, beat the cream cheese and butter on medium-high for 2 to 3 minutes. Turn off and scrape the sides down and add the sugar. Turn the mixer back to medium-high and beat until light and fluffy. This step should take 2 more minutes. Add the eggs one at a time and the vanilla extract and beat for 1 more minute.
- ▶ Turn the mixer off and scrape the sides of the bowl down again. Set the mixer to the lowest setting and gradually add

the flour mixture to the butter/cream cheese mixture. Just blend until incorporated. Take the bowl off the stand and scrape down the sides and across the bottom to incorporate any flour the stand mixer did not blend. Refrigerate the cookie dough for half an hour to firm the butter.

- ▶ Line two cookie pans with parchment paper or silicone mats. Using a medium cookie scooper, place 12 mounds onto a prepared sheet pan. (*You can use a rounded tablespoon, but a scooper is much easier.*)
- ▶ Bake at 350 degrees for 10 to 12 minutes. After you pull the cookies out of the oven, leave them on the pan for at least 2 to 3 minutes. They will be soft to the touch, but leaving them on the pan finishes them, and the outside of the cookie will harden slightly. Then move the cookies to a cooling rack and once cookies completely cool, dust the tops with powdered sugar.



BARBARA HALL





MICHELLE KIMMEL

VALLEY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

include other businesses, including Valley REC.

“Our bakers are allowing us to make our community a better place,” McKenzie says. “We are just trying to make the beneficiaries feel special. The most unexpected response that we get regularly is tears.”

One of McKenzie’s favorite stops is at the local hospital on Christmas Eve, where he typically delivers 30 to 40 dozen cookies on that one night.

“It’s become a habit, and I don’t anticipate stopping anytime soon,” he says of the deliveries. “As long as the bakers bake, we’ll deliver. My parents always taught me to do the right thing for no other reason than it’s the right thing to do. I view this as the right thing to do so there’s no reason to stop.”

**SOMETHING SWEET:** Above – Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) members Michelle Kimmel, left, and Pam Weimer, have baked dozens of sugar cookies for the annual Christmas Cookie Walk at St. Mark Lutheran Church in Shanksville.

Left – Clara Myers, left, and Jenna Bauer, summer interns at Valley REC, bake cookies in the cooperative’s kitchen to support Cookies for Caregivers, a local effort that sends sweet thank-yous to first responders and others.

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# 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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## EMERGENCIES/OUTAGES

1-800-352-0014

## FAX

814-398-8064

## OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Friday  
7 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Amy Wellington, Editor

## Cooperation Across State Lines



**RYAN MELLER**

**IN SEPTEMBER, HURRICANE HELENE RESULTED** in devastating damage across the Southeast, with many co-ops and their communities facing major restoration and rebuilding efforts. As you may be aware, Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) sent four, two-man crews to help cooperatives in the South restore power to their members. Some of those crews were out of town for more than three weeks as they moved from one location to another.

Josie Thompson, daughter of Chief Lineman Alvey Lester, shared the following tribute with her father while he was deployed.

*"To my dad: I'm writing this in what is most likely one of your last big storms out of town. Growing up, I remember hearing your phone ring when the storms were rolling in. As a kid, I learned to hate storms because they always took away my daddy. I remember hearing the thunder and seeing the lightning, and with each strike, hoping my dad was going to be coming home. I remember standing outside with a sign picketing when you were on strike. I remember the (hot-line) demonstrations you would do at my school. Most of all, I remember the pride that still to this day I have for you knowing that my dad is the man who goes outside when everyone else is running in; my dad is the one who helps restore the world, and my dad is my hero. Although to this day I'm still scared of storms because you still go out when duty calls, I could not be more proud of you for sticking with what you love ... Thank you for showing me what hard work is and the value of a dollar. Forever hoping for you to come home safe!"*

The cooperative community has a long-standing tradition of helping in times of need. For example, Cooperative Development Foundation's (CDF) Disaster Recovery Fund helps cooperatives and their members recovering from natural disasters and other crises or emergency hardships.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association has started a fundraising campaign through this fund to ensure electric cooperatives have what they need to restore power to areas affected by Helene.

Interested in helping co-ops in general get back to business? Donate to our general Disaster Recovery Fund via [NorthwesternREC.com](http://NorthwesternREC.com). CDF will direct 100% of your donations to other co-op sectors affected by natural disasters.

CDF does not charge operating or administrative fees on donations made to the Disaster Recovery Fund, so 100% of the funds benefit local recovery efforts. A contribution to CDF's Disaster Recovery Fund supports cooperatives, families and communities when they are most in need of help. In the last five years, the Disaster Recovery Fund has provided more than \$750,000 in grants to cooperatives, families, and communities affected by natural disasters in the United States, Puerto Rico, the Bahamas, Uganda, Dominican Republic, Panama, and Ukraine. Cooperatives are suffering from the effects of hurricane season, and we need your help in getting these co-ops back to business.

You can find the donation link on [NorthwesternREC.com](http://NorthwesternREC.com). Merry Christmas to you all, and Happy New Year. 🎁

Cooperatively yours,

**RYAN MELLER**  
PRESIDENT & CEO

# Need Help? Don't Know Where to Turn?



# DIAL 2-1-1

or visit [PA211NW.org](http://PA211NW.org)

**FIND HELP. GET CONNECTED.**

2-1-1 connects you to information about:  
 Aging Services • Child & Youth Services  
 Counseling • Education/Training • Food/Shelter/Clothing  
 Health Services • Parenting • Support Groups  
 Substance Abuse • and much more!



**PA 2-1-1 NORTHWEST IS PART** of the national 2-1-1 Call Centers initiative that seeks to provide an easy-to-remember telephone number, chat, text, and web resource for finding health and human services — for everyday needs and crisis situations.

PA 2-1-1 Northwest is brought to you through a partnership of local United Way organizations, county government, and human service providers in the Northwest region, along with PA 2-1-1 and United Way of Pennsylvania. United Way of Erie convenes the PA 2-1-1 Northwest Advisory Council, a coalition of local agencies that provides oversight of PA 2-1-1 Northwest. 2-1-1 staff work

closely with government and provider agencies to ensure important local program information is accessible through the helpline when it is most needed.

Every day, highly trained 2-1-1 call specialists provide referrals to:

- ▶ **Basic human needs resources:** food banks, shelters, rent and utility payment assistance
- ▶ **Physical and mental health resources:** crisis intervention services, support groups, counseling
- ▶ **Employment support:** financial assistance, job training, education programs
- ▶ **Support for older adults and persons with disabilities:**

home-delivered meals, transportation, health care

- ▶ **Youth and child care programs:** after-school programs, summer camps, mentoring, protection services

- ▶ **Regional disaster preparation**

Those who contact 2-1-1 gain free, confidential access to thousands of programs and services that can help improve the quality of their lives. Help is available by dialing 2-1-1. TTY and language services are available in more than 170 languages and dialects. 2-1-1 can also be reached by texting your zip code to 898-211 or chatting with a 2-1-1 specialist at [pa211nw.org](http://pa211nw.org).

## Gift Certificates Available for Any Holiday

The gift of electricity is welcomed by anyone with an electric bill. Best of all, you don't have to agonize over colors, sizes or wrapping. You also won't have to stand in line to make an exchange.

An electricity gift certificate makes your gift-giving easy. As with all presents, it truly is the thought that counts.

If you would like to give a gift of electricity to a fellow cooperative member this year, just fill out the coupon below

and return it with your payment enclosed to Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative (REC). We'll either send you the certificate, or if you wish to remain anonymous, we'll send the acknowledgement to the recipient.

If you have any questions, please call consumer services at 800-352-0014. Our address is: Northwestern REC, P.O. Box 207, Cambridge Springs, PA 16403.

To: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to purchase a \$ \_\_\_\_\_ gift of electricity to be credited to the account of the person(s) above.

From: \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to remain anonymous

Please remember to enclose payment. Thank you.



# 'Watt' Do I Need to Know About How Much Electricity My Appliances Use?

AMY WELLINGTON, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

**DETERMINING HOW MUCH ELECTRICITY YOUR** appliances and home electronics use can help you understand how much money you are spending to operate them. Electricity is measured in units of power called watts, and 1 watt is a joule of energy used or produced per second.

The power consumption of small devices is usually measured in watts, while the power use of larger devices is measured in kilowatts (kW) — 1 kW equals 1,000 watts. Knowing how much electricity an appliance uses and how much the electricity costs can help you decide whether to invest in a more energy-efficient appliance or make other cost-saving decisions, such as unplugging appliances when not in use. Becoming watt savvy is also helpful if you are considering purchasing a generator.

There are several ways to estimate how much electricity your appliances and home electronics use.

## See the data plate

Appliances usually have data plates on the back or inside the door. They tell you how many amps, watts and volts are needed to power the appliance. If your appliance does not list watts for some reason, but does list the number of volts and amps, you can multiply them together to get the number of watts.

## Review the EnergyGuide label

The EnergyGuide label, a yellow sticker or tag found on new products, provides an estimate of the average energy consumption and cost to operate the specific model of the appliance you are considering. The Federal Trade Commission requires the label, and the dollar amount is the estimated yearly operating cost based on the national average cost of electricity.



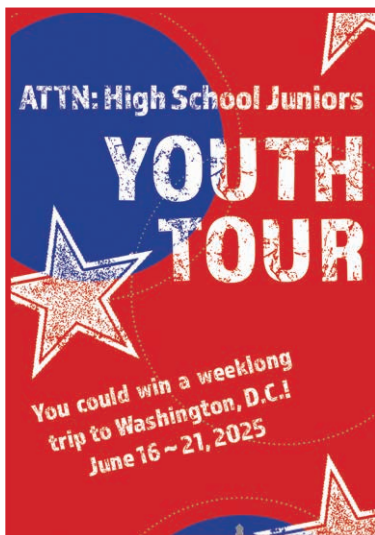
## Use a monitor or meter

Wattage meters are affordable, easy-to-use instruments that can measure the electricity usage of any 120-volt device. Just plug the monitor into the electrical outlet and then plug the device into the monitor. The monitor will display how many watts the device uses. If you want to know how many kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity a device uses over time, just leave everything set up and read the display later. Some monitors even allow you to plug in your utility's cost per kWh rate to determine how much that specific appliance costs you over a certain length of time.

## Install a whole-house system

Whole-house energy monitoring systems provide more detailed data on your home's energy use (as well as the ability to measure the energy use of 240-volt appliances). The features of these systems vary, and the cost and complexity depend on the number of circuits you want to monitor, how detailed the feedback is and the type of features available. The monitors are often installed directly into the main breaker panel of the home, and some require an electrician to install. Some monitors must be connected to your home's wireless network, with data being viewed on a computer or smartphone, while others come with a dedicated display. In addition to providing information on the energy consumption of your appliances, this type of monitoring system helps you understand where and when you use the most energy, allowing you to develop strategies to reduce your energy use and costs.

For more information about electrical safety and energy efficiency, visit [NorthwesternREC.com](http://NorthwesternREC.com).



## WHAT IS YOUTH TOUR?

Each year, Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative sponsors eight to 10 local high school students on an all-inclusive trip to Washington, D.C. We do this because education is important – both about cooperatives and America. The students of today are the cooperative members of tomorrow.

More than 1,600 students from cooperatives across the United States take part in Youth Tour. Students visit elected officials and watch history come alive as they explore the museums, memorials, and monuments with other teens from Pennsylvania and New Jersey. In 2025, Youth Tour will be held June 16 to 21.

In addition to this fun-filled week, Youth Tour participants have two unique college scholarship opportunities available to them only – one through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and one through the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association.

For more information about the Rural Electric Youth Tour or to apply, visit [youthtour.northwesternrec.com](http://youthtour.northwesternrec.com). Applications are accepted online and must be submitted by Jan. 31, 2025.

Questions can also be referred to Amy Wellington at 800-352-0014 or [awellington@northwesternrec.com](mailto:awellington@northwesternrec.com).

# Holiday Gift Guide

Give the gift of safety!



## Portable Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI)

Designed for locations where there is not a permanent GFCI installed, these devices detect an abnormal flow of electricity and shut off the power, preventing shock or electrocution.



## Outdoor Remote Control Outlet Switch

Leaving outdoor lighting on overnight can be costly and pose a potential hazard. With this gadget, any and all devices plugged in to it can be turned off and on remotely.



## Tamper Resistant Outlets (TROs)

Great for families with young children, TROs are wall receptacles that have shutters that stay closed unless a plug with two prongs is inserted into the outlet.

Note: While plastic safety caps are a cheaper alternative, it may be possible for children to remove these.



## Heavy Duty Extension Cord

Power devices safely. Too often the tools or equipment necessary for larger projects are powered by extension cords that are inadequate for the environment or heavier electrical load.

Learn more at





# A CORD IS NOT A CHEW TOY

**Q:** What's the most common type of electrical injury for household pets?

**A:** Electrocution from chewing on an electrical cord



## TAKE ACTION:

Pet proof your home by covering or enclosing electrical cords and taking steps to prevent other electrical hazards.

Although any pet can chew on a cord, puppies are the most likely culprit. Pups are busy and they may chew on an electrical cord without anyone realizing it. If you see burns in or around your pet's mouth, singed hair or whiskers around the mouth, or notice shortness of breath or other respiratory issues, seek immediate medical attention for your pet.

Learn more about pet safety at:

 **Safe  
Electricity.org**

## Local Lore

### Warren Electric Cooperative

#### A True Local Leader

One of the key players of the rural electrification movement, Robert H. Jackson, started his accomplished life in Warren County, home to Youngsville-based Warren Electric Cooperative.

Born Feb. 13, 1892, in Spring Creek, Jackson came from a line of ambitious, perhaps adventurous, men, according to the Warren County Historical Society. His great-grandfather, Elijah, settled Spring Creek Township in 1821; his grandfather, Robert R., successfully panned for gold in California; and his father, William, was always on the go but finally settled down in Frewsburg, N.Y., where Jackson attended school and started practicing law.

Jackson was a legal adviser for much of the New Deal, which led to the creation of the Rural Electrification Administration (REA). Authorized by Congress in 1935, REA



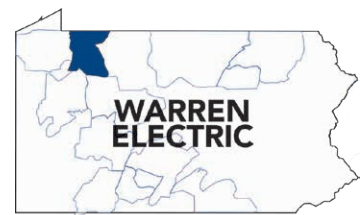
ROBERT H. JACKSON CENTER

**ELECTRIFYING ADVICE:** Warren County's Robert H. Jackson became a legal adviser for much of the New Deal, which led to the creation of the Rural Electrification Administration in 1935 and the growth of rural electric cooperatives in Pennsylvania and nationwide.

provided funds to cooperatives to generate and distribute electricity to areas not served by private utility companies. At the time, 90% of U.S. farms operated without electricity.

Jackson eventually became assistant attorney general in 1936, solicitor general in 1938, attorney general in 1940 and an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court in 1941. After World War II in 1945, President Harry S. Truman appointed Jackson chief counsel to represent the United States at the Nuremberg trials. He died Oct. 9, 1954.

Learn more about Jackson at [roberthjackson.org](http://roberthjackson.org). Also, tell us about the local legends in your community at [communitycorner@prea.com](mailto:communitycorner@prea.com).



**Main Office:** Youngsville, Pa.  
**Consumer-members served:** 8,694  
**Website:** [warrenec.coop](http://warrenec.coop)

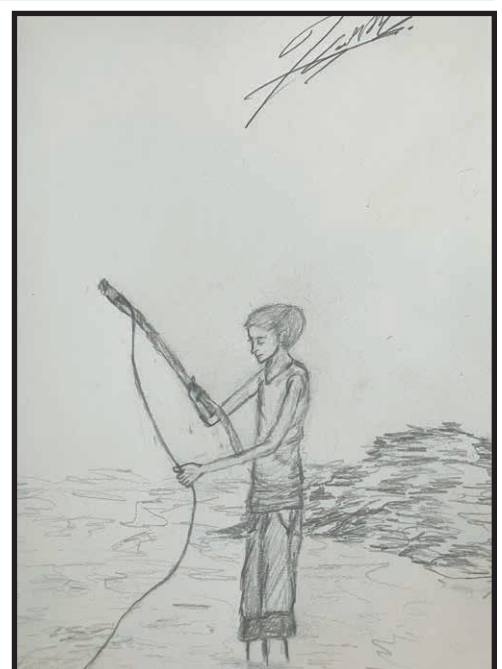
## Artistic Contributions

This month's drawing is by Halle Marcho, age 12, whose parents receive electricity from Wysox-based Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative. Halle's sketch is based on a photo taken by Adams Electric Cooperative member Jen Snediker that appeared on July's Rural Reflections page. Thank you both for your artistic contributions to *Penn Lines!*

**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](mailto: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.





# You Can Create Your Own Efficient Kitchen

**JAMES DULLEY**

**DEAR JIM:** My kitchen needs a complete overhaul and upgrade. Convenience, comfort and efficiency are all important. What tips do you have for a first-time do-it-yourselfer?

— *Kathie H.*

**DEAR KATHIE:** You mentioned the three most important qualities in a kitchen remodel. If you can accomplish any one of these, the other two will likely also be accomplished.

Typically, the most convenient kitchen is also the most efficient. Newer appliances with programmable controls reduce energy consumption. And with a convenient kitchen layout, less time, water, lighting, heating and ventilation are needed.

The refrigerator, stove and sink are the three primary activity areas in most kitchens. This is referred to as the “kitchen triangle.” For convenience, each primary area should be 4 to 9 feet from one another. The total should not be more than 26 feet. In a large kitchen, add a second sink to create a secondary triangle to stay under the 26-foot maximum for each.

You’ll also want to consider the typical traffic patterns through the kitchen while also being mindful that this space often becomes the center of activity when entertaining. Be sure to provide at least 2 feet of traffic space outside the kitchen triangle. If possible, place the refrigerator at the farthest tip of the triangle because it is most often accessed by others not preparing food.

Locating the sink under a window is wise. This provides adequate

brightness from natural light for tasks. It also provides a pleasing view of the outdoors when doing mundane tasks. Sixty inches of counter space, split evenly on each side of the sink, is recommended.

The stove should be placed away from a window and any direct drafts. The efficiency goal is to get as much heat as possible from the appliance to warm pots, pans and food; a cooling draft across the stove would be counterproductive. Counter space of 36 inches around the stove is adequate for a standard four-burner/element range.

A refrigerator needs adequate air flow through the condenser coils for efficiency, so don’t tuck it away in a corner or surround it with tall cabinets or closets. Also, select a location that doesn’t get direct sunlight since stainless steel can get quite warm in the sun.

Install a variety of lighting fixtures on many switched wiring circuits to provide flexibility. Overhead LED PAR-type bulbs are ideal above the counter, where brightness is critical for cooking. LED strip lighting hidden under cabinets works well for ambient lighting.

A low-cost T8 ceiling fluorescent fixture is still effective and reasonably efficient for overall general lighting, but a couple of 2-by-2-foot LED ceiling panels complement more modern decor. Select lighting with a high CRI (color rendition index) to make food look more natural and appealing.

Choose efficient appliances, too. The top-freezer refrigerator style is still the most efficient. However, efficiency differences between the various refrigerator options aren’t as great as they used to be. Therefore, always compare the yellow energy labels and look for Energy Star® products, too.

Since water usage can be significant, select a dishwasher with an efficient

two-pump design. Also, install a convenient touch-control faucet with a long hose. This allows you to turn the water on and off with just the touch of a hand or elbow without having to waste water readjusting the temperature each time.

Select a multi-speed range hood with LED lighting. Some have variable-speed controls to minimize excessive conditioned air loss from the house. Its size should be 50 cfm (cubic feet per minute) of air flow capacity for each lineal foot of stove top. The hood should be as wide as the stove and about 2 feet above it.

If you are also installing new flooring, adding electric in-floor radiant heat is ideal for zone heating a kitchen. Some companies offer systems designed specifically for laminate, vinyl plank and hardwood floors. Vinyl plank is also resistant to damage from standing water. ❏

**HAVE A QUESTION FOR JIM?** Send inquiries to James Dulley, Penn Lines, 6906 Royalgreen Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45244 or visit [dulley.com](http://dulley.com).



**AVOID DRAFTS:** When coming up with a new kitchen design for your home, make sure your stove isn’t near a window or any other drafty spot in the room. Drafts will impact the stove’s efficiency.

# Cookies for Santa

ANNE M. KIRCHNER

More cookie recipes on page 10

**DID YOU GROW UP LEAVING** a plate of cookies for Santa? Historians suggest the tradition began in the 1930s during the Great Depression. Families who struggled financially used the act of kindness to teach their children the value of gratitude. Leaving cookies for Santa showed appreciation for the gifts he was able to bring.

In my childhood home, we often made traditional sugar cookies with sprinkles. Preparing the cookies was as much fun as discovering gifts under the Christmas tree. Over the years, I have expanded my cookie collection to include Double Chocolate Cookies, No-Bake Pumpkin Cookies and Pistachio Chocolate Chip Cookies. Santa must not be disappointed as he always leaves a gift or two behind! 🍪

**ANNE M. KIRCHNER** focuses her writing on human connections, travel and culinary arts, researching food origins, exploring cooking techniques, and creating new recipes.

PHOTOS BY ANNE M. KIRCHNER



## DOUBLE CHOCOLATE COOKIES

- 2 cups flour
- ¾ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ cup margarine
- ½ cup Crisco
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 1 cup chocolate chips

Combine the flour, cocoa and baking soda in a bowl; set aside. Using a hand or stand mixer, cream together the margarine, Crisco and sugar until smooth. Beat in the eggs one at a time; add the vanilla. Add the flour mixture and stir until blended. Stir in the chocolate chips. Using a 1 tablespoon cookie scoop, drop the dough onto a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 to 12 minutes. Cool the cookies for 5 minutes before removing from the cookie sheet. *Makes 3 dozen.*



## NO-BAKE PUMPKIN COOKIES

- ½ cup butter
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- ¼ cup milk
- ⅓ cup pureed pumpkin
- 2 cups quick oats
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon vanilla

In a medium saucepan, melt together the butter, sugar and milk over medium high heat. Stir often until the ingredients are melted and blended. Boil the mixture for 2 minutes; remove from heat. Stir in the pumpkin, quick oats, cinnamon and vanilla until well combined. Using a 1 tablespoon cookie scoop, drop the cookie mixture onto a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper. Allow the cookies to set in the refrigerator for 10 to 15 minutes. Store the cookies in an airtight container at room temperature. *Makes 2 dozen.*



## PISTACHIO CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

- 1 ¼ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 (3.4 ounce) package pistachio pudding
- 1 cup butter, softened
- 8 ounces cream cheese
- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- ½ cup pistachios, chopped
- ½ cup mini chocolate chips

In a mixing bowl, combine the flour, baking powder, salt and pistachio pudding mix; set aside. Using a hand or stand mixer, cream together the butter, cream cheese and sugar. Add the egg and vanilla. Add the flour mixture and stir until blended. Stir in the pistachios and mini chocolate chips. Using a 1 tablespoon cookie scoop, drop the dough onto a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper. Bake at 350 degrees for 12 to 15 minutes or until the cookies are lightly browned around the edges. Cool the cookies for 5 minutes before removing from the cookie sheet. *Makes 3 dozen.*



# Resolve to Give Yourself Some Grace

**ABIGAIL ZIEGER**

**THE HOLIDAYS ARE UPON US** and before you know it, everyone will be talking about New Year’s resolutions. Some people want to kick a bad habit or achieve a personal health goal. Others want to get ahead in academics or their career. Still others may simply choose a word or principle to serve as a focus for the year ahead. Whatever your aspirations, it seems almost everyone is thinking about a fresh start for the new calendar year.

Unfortunately, our New Year’s promises to ourselves don’t always stick. We may start January with an optimistic fervor, but the daily grind has a way of waning our motivation and commitment. By February or March, most of us have forgotten our goals altogether.

I’m personally not one to take an all-or-nothing approach. I know that life has its ups and downs, and the failure to stick to a resolution or accomplish a task doesn’t mean you are a failure — it just means you’re human.

In our family, we’ve made our own New Year’s tradition that offers a little more grace than the typical resolution. It doesn’t

have an official name, and it isn’t likely to catch on as a trend. However, it’s a simple, realistic way for us to reflect on the past year and look ahead to the future.

Here’s how it works: We divide a blank piece of paper into two columns. One is called, “Things we did this year,” and the other says, “Things we hope to do next year.” We draw a line down the middle.

First, we start with the section for the current calendar year. We write down everything we felt was noteworthy. This can include accomplishments, experiences we enjoyed, vacations we took, people we visited or other important events. Our list often includes things like “played soccer for the first time,” “visited great-grandma,” “made honors band” or “hiked a new trail in another state.”

Then, on the other side of the paper, we write down things we want to do in the new year. Sometimes these are

goals or ambitions more akin to the traditional New Year’s resolution; other times they are simply things we would like to do. Our wish lists in the past have included things like, “run a marathon,” “get better at math,” “go to the beach,” “play board games together” and even “find cool old bottles for my collection.”

There is no accomplishment too small to be celebrated, and no dream too big to be written down. It’s simply an opportunity to think about our intentions for the year, to learn about each other as a family and to support each other.

Next, we pin it up on the bulletin board in our kitchen. That’s it. There’s no pressure to meet every goal or fulfill

every expectation. It’s just there as a visual reminder of the things we have already accomplished, as well as the things we are hoping to do. By keeping it in view, we see it often and make it a point to schedule activities and practices that are important to us.

Sometimes our list gets buried under other papers, and we forget about it

for a bit, but we don’t berate ourselves over this. In fact, when we happen to stumble upon the paper again, we are often surprised by how much we did indeed manage to complete.

This is a fun end-of-year tradition that helps us develop our values, goals and focus for the year ahead without putting undue pressure on ourselves. It’s a relaxed way of both reflecting and looking ahead as a family. But the best part is that it helps us celebrate each other and dream together. And that’s part of what family is all about, isn’t it? 🍵

**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.



# Where Do Garden Bugs Go in Winter?

GEORGE WEIGEL

**FREEZING WEATHER MIGHT END OUR** growing season, but it also ends bug season ... or at least the destructive, annoying and/or most active part of it.

Winter is when gardeners can go outside without worrying about Japanese beetles eating the roses, blackflies flying into eyes or yellow jackets stinging hands. Even the hordes of spotted lanternflies are just a haunting memory.

But where do all these bugs go?

Do they die and somehow magically reincarnate next spring? Hibernates like bears? Winter in Florida?

It turns out our summertime garden bugs have developed a variety of clever techniques to survive northern winters — adaptations that rival our preferred choice of central heating.

And one of those techniques is to take advantage of that central heating.

Lady bugs, boxelder bugs, and the poster child of inside-overwintering bug pests — the brown marmorated

stink bug — look for cracks and openings in our houses when temperatures begin to chill in the fall. The first successful “scouts” leave scent trails that lead the rest of that year’s clan into winter warmth inside our walls.

A few bugs skedaddle to warmer weather altogether.

Best known for that is the monarch butterfly, which orchestrates multi-generational flights to frost-free Mexico, then heads back North the following spring. The armyworms that occasionally chew up our lawns in late summer also fly up from the South each year.

The majority of Pennsylvania bugs, though, stick it out by either burrowing into the soil or seeking shelter in leaf litter, frost-killed plant debris, rotting logs and other protected spots.

Some spend winter in egg form, some spend it in a larval or cocoon stage, and some overwinter as adults. A few even stay active — at least during warmer spells in the winter.

These hardy critters employ several tricks to survive sub-freezing and even sub-zero weather.

One survival technique is the ability to “super cool” and avoid freeze

damage even when temperatures drop below freezing.

Some bugs do this by manufacturing freeze-resistant glycerol to replace some of their body’s water, while others limit damage by emptying their bodies of most food and water over winter.

Another trick, favored by honeybees, is grouping together so they trap and share each other’s body heat — similar to how penguins survive Antarctic winters.

A third trick is compartmentalizing freezing damage. The main way some bugs do that is by allowing freezing to happen between their bodies’ cells as opposed to inside the cells, which is far less destructive.

And a fourth survival technique is called “diapause,” which is similar to hibernating. Bugs or their larvae hunker down in insulated spots and slow their metabolism until warm weather returns.

With anatomical tricks like these, some bugs can even freeze solid in winter, then thaw out in spring with no ill effects.

Like people, though, not all bugs tolerate winter cold as well as others, especially when temperatures dip below normal. That’s one reason you’ll see fluctuating damage from year to year with pests such as, say, the woolly adelgids that suck chlorophyll out of hemlock needles or the corn borer that feeds on the tips of ripening corn.

It’s also one of the few redeeming traits of those Alberta clipper cold fronts.

On the other hand, warmer-than-usual temperatures are good news for bug procreation and can even allow species such as ticks to stay active in winter. ❄️

**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. His website is [georgeweigel.net](http://georgeweigel.net).

## HOW BUGS BRAVE THE COLD

This is how our most common yard and garden bugs survive the winter:

**As eggs outside that hatch the next year:** aphids, bagworms, blackflies, eastern tent caterpillars, four-lined plant bugs, grasshoppers, lace bugs, oyster-shell scale, spongy moths (formerly “gypsy moths”), slugs (also in larvae and adult stages), most spider mites and spotted lanternflies.

**As immature larvae, pupae, or nymphs in leaves, trees, bark, soil, and other protected spots:** black vine weevils, borers (emerald ash, dogwood, oak, peach, birch, etc.), cabbageworms, cicadas, corn earworms, fall webworms, hornworms, Japanese beetles, June beetles, leafminers, magnolia scale, masked chafer beetles, mayflies, sawflies, squash vine borers, thrips, and ticks (and as active adults in their second year).

**As dormant adults sheltered outside in leaf litter, logs and other insulated hiding spots:** chinch bugs, cucumber beetles, earwigs, euonymus scale, flea beetles, harlequin bugs, hemlock woolly adelgids, milkweed bugs, mosquitoes (eggs, too), potato beetles, squash bugs and two-spotted spider mites.

**As adults inside:** boxelder bugs, brown marmorated stinkbugs, lady beetles and sometimes earwigs.

**Migrate from the South each year:** armyworms, leafhoppers, monarch butterfly caterpillars and whiteflies (also in greenhouses in the North).





# Be an Energy Star!

JENNAH DENNEY

AS THE HOLIDAY SEASON APPROACHES and the days grow colder, you may be considering ways to stay cozy while also managing home energy use.

One of the best ways to make your home more energy efficient is by choosing products with the Energy Star® label. But what exactly does that label mean and how can it benefit you?

## How products earn the Energy Star® label

Energy Star is a program by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to help consumers identify energy-efficient products that save money and reduce environmental impact.

Products that earn the Energy Star label must meet strict guidelines for energy efficiency, performance and cost effectiveness. Here's how the process works:

1. The product must be more energy efficient than typical models. This helps you save on energy bills by using less electricity while still providing the same performance.
2. The product must be tested in EPA-recognized labs, following standardized procedures. These tests ensure the product meets all energy-efficiency and performance requirements.
3. Once tested, the product's data is reviewed by a third-party certification body to verify it meets the set standards. This ensures only the best products receive the Energy Star label.

Even after a product is certified, the EPA conducts "off-the-shelf" testing on random samples of Energy Star products to ensure they continue to meet the required standards. If a

product fails to meet the performance requirements during verification testing, it can be disqualified from the Energy Star program. The EPA has clear procedures for handling such disqualifications to maintain the integrity of the label.

## Speaking of labels

Whether you're upgrading your refrigerator, replacing lightbulbs or purchasing new electronics, the blue Energy Star label is your assurance that the product has passed all energy efficiency tests. It's easy to spot and can be found on products ranging from small and major appliances to electronics.

Many large appliances, such as washing machines and clothes dryers, include a yellow Energy Guide label that provides estimated energy use. Comparing these labels can help you determine how much you'll save with an Energy Star model compared to a standard model.

While Energy Star products can cost a little more upfront, their energy savings over time will often cover the

difference. They help reduce your household energy consumption, which could translate to lower utility bills.

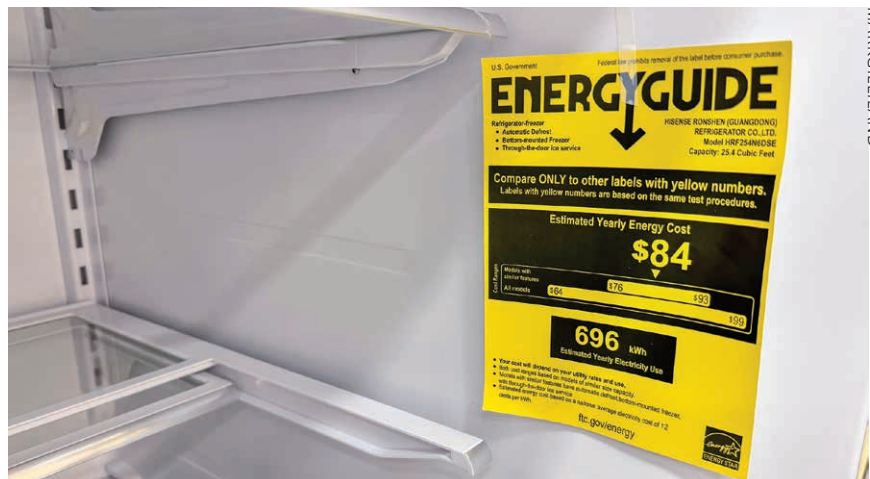
## Why should I care?

As a member of an electric cooperative, choosing energy-efficient products benefits not only you but also your entire community. When co-op members use less energy, it lowers overall electricity demand, helping to stabilize rates and reduce costs for everyone.

As you shop for appliances, electronics or other home equipment this holiday season, look for the Energy Star label. Whether it's a new washing machine or energy-efficient lighting, these products are a simple and effective way to save money and lower energy use.

To browse products that have earned the Energy Star label, visit [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov).

**JENNAH DENNEY** writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.



**LOOK FOR THE LABEL:** Many large appliances include a yellow Energy Guide label that provides estimated energy use. Comparing these labels can help you determine how much you'll save with an Energy Star® model compared to a standard model.

MARKGILLILAND

# CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

## ISSUE MONTH AD DEADLINE

February 2025	December 16
March 2025	January 15
April 2025	February 14

Please note ads must be received by the due date to be included in requested issue month; ads received after the due date will run in next issue. Written notice of changes/cancellations must be received 30 days prior to issue month.

**No ads accepted by phone/email.** For more information, please call 717-233-5704.

## CLASSIFIED AD SUBMISSION/RATES:

### ELECTRIC CO-OP MEMBERS:

\$20 per month for 30 words or less, plus 50¢ for each additional word.

### NON-MEMBERS:

\$70 per month for 30 words or less, plus \$1.50 for each additional word.

### SPECIAL HEADINGS:

\$5 for co-op members, \$10 for non-members. The special heading fee applies to any heading not listed under "FREE HEADINGS," even if the heading is already appearing in *Penn Lines*. For ads running a special heading in consecutive months, the fee is a one-time fee of either \$5 (members) or \$10 (non-members) for all consecutive insertions.

### PAYMENT:

Please make **CHECK/MONEY ORDER payable to: PREA/Penn Lines**. Insertion of classified ad serves as proof of publication; no proofs supplied.

### SEND COMPLETED AD COPY AND PAYMENT TO:

*Penn Lines Classifieds*  
P.O. Box 1266  
Harrisburg, PA 17108-1266

### PLEASE SUBMIT A CLEARLY WRITTEN OR TYPED SHEET WITH THE FOLLOWING REQUIRED INFORMATION:

- Cooperative members should please submit the mailing label from *Penn Lines* as proof of membership.
- Non-members should submit name, address, phone number, and email address, if applicable.
- Month(s) in which the ad is to run.
- Ad copy as it is to appear in the publication.
- Heading ad should appear under, or name of special heading (additional fee). See below for FREE heading options.

### FREE HEADINGS:

- Around the House
- Business Opportunities
- Employment Opportunities
- Events
- Gifts & Collectibles
- Livestock & Pets
- Miscellaneous
- Motor Vehicles & Boats
- Nursery & Garden
- Real Estate
- Recipes & Food
- Tools & Equipment
- Travel & Tourism
- Wanted to Buy

## AA ROOFING

EXPERTS IN HARD-TO-FIND LEAKS! Roof repairs – all types. House, barn roofs painted. Slate work, chimney repairs. Southwestern Pa. for over 40 years. Speedyservice! 814-445-4400.

## AROUND THE HOUSE

CLOCK REPAIR: If you have an antique grandfather clock, mantel clock or old pocket watch that needs restored, we can fix any timepiece. Macks Clock Repair: 814-421-7992.

SPECIAL OFFER – BOTH COOKBOOKS FOR \$12. "Country Cooking" – \$5, including postage. "Recipes Remembered" – \$7, including postage. Both cookbooks are a collection of recipes from men and women of the electric co-ops of Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Payable to: Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association, P.O. Box 1266, Harrisburg, PA 17108. Write Attention: Cookbooks.

## BUILDING SUPPLIES

STEEL ROOFING AND SIDING. Over 30 years in business. Several profiles cut to length. 29- and 26-gauge best quality residential roofing – 40-year warranty. Also, seconds, heavy gauges, accessories, etc. Installation available. Located northwestern Pennsylvania. 814-398-4052.

FACTORY SECONDS of insulation, 4 x 8 sheets, foil back. R-value 6.5 per inch. Great for pole buildings, garages, etc. Many thicknesses available. Also blue board insulation sheets. 814-442-6032.

## BURIAL LOT

FOUR-SPACE BURIAL LOT, Alto-Reste Park, Altoona, Pa. Located in Garden of Prayer, section K, lot 138B. Spaces can be bought individually or in groups. Asking \$850 per space. 814-327-4584.

## COINS & BULLION

KEYSTONE COIN & BULLION is buying and selling gold, silver, U.S. coins and currency. Large inventory for sale. We pay in CASH. Call Matt at 814-631-6914. [www.keystonecoinbullion.com](http://www.keystonecoinbullion.com).

## CONSULTING FORESTRY SERVICES

RAYSTOWN FORESTRY CONSULTING. Timber sales, appraisals, wildlife habitat management. Dedicated to sustainable harvests for present and future generations to enjoy. 45 years experience. 814-448-0040 or 814-448-2405.

## GIFTS & COLLECTIBLES

ELVIS MEMORABILIA. LARGE COLLECTION. Be an Elvis! Ask for Tom: 814-952-8650.

SPECIAL OFFER – BOTH COOKBOOKS FOR \$12. "Country Cooking" – \$5, including postage. "Recipes Remembered" – \$7, including postage. Both cookbooks are a collection of recipes from men and women of the electric co-ops of Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Payable to: Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association, P.O. Box 1266, Harrisburg, PA 17108. Write Attention: Cookbooks.

## HEALTH INSURANCE

DO YOU HAVE THE BLUES regarding your health insurance? We cater to rural America's health insurance needs. For more information, call 800-628-7804. Call us regarding Medicare supplements, too.

## HEATING & COOLING

GARY & SONS, INC. HEATING AND COOLING – Save money on fuel oil, propane, or your electric bill without sacrificing comfort – add a heat pump! It works with your system or alone. Call Gary & Sons, Inc. for a FREE estimate: 814-205-6804 or [garysinc.com](http://garysinc.com). A Lennox Premier Dealer and Mitsubishi Diamond Elite Contractor. Gary & Sons is located in Falls Creek, Pa. PA192811.

## HOME HEATING

RICE COAL STOVE – ALASKAN STOVE COMPANY Channing III. Specifications online. Includes the following accessories: blower to circulate heat, sulfur smell remover that eliminates all odor, hopper vacuum, piping, two bags of rice coal. \$1500 or best offer. Fall's Creek, Pa. Call/text 814-771-7490.

## MEATS

ANGUS FREEZER BEEF. \$2.75/lb. HANGING WEIGHT, plus processing. No antibiotics or hormones, grass-fed, grain-finished, excellent marbling. By the quarter, half or whole – discount for halves and multiple quarters. Allison Farmz, Alexandria, Pa. 814-669-4014.

CALLING ALL MEAT-EATERS! Get ready to fill your freezer with high-quality Black Angus beef. Quarter, half or whole. Our family farm raises all-natural, grass-fed/grain-finished cattle. [www.mcmullenbeef.com](http://www.mcmullenbeef.com), 814-674-2332.

## MISCELLANEOUS

FOR SALE: BUCKETS, FORKS, THUMBS, grapple buckets and pallet forks for skid loaders, backhoes, and excavators. Tires for backhoes, rubber tire loaders and excavators also. Call 814-329-0118.

60" SWISHER MOWER. Like new. Johnson Seahorse 10 hp outboard motor, antique GE refrigerating machine. Best offers. For pictures, text 814-547-1026.

## MOTOR VEHICLES & BOATS

NEW 2024 CAN-AM RYKER 900. Selling due to health concerns. \$13,000. 814-952-8650, ask for Tom.

## NURSERY & GARDEN

TREES AND SHRUBS for all your landscaping needs. Rare, unusual, amazing. Bloomfield Nursery, 167 Sproul Mountain Road, Roaring Spring, PA 16673. 814-224-4508.

TREES FOR WILDLIFE. Chestnut trees for sale. Four different varieties. Call for pricing. 717-891-2735.

## NUTRITION COACHING

NEED HELP WITH THE CLIMB TO A HEALTHIER future? Win the fight with the proper coaching, doing nutrition right. Food is behavior. Success is gratifying. [www.NTRTN.us](http://www.NTRTN.us).



## POWDER COATING

ALMOST ANYTHING METAL can be powder coated: auto parts, lawn furniture, wheels, etc. Restores, protects, preserves. 1,200-degree manifold coating. Arthurs Powder Coating, 263 Sexton Road, Indiana, PA 15701. 724-349-3770.

## REAL ESTATE

VIRGINIA'S EASTERN SHORE. Fishermen and beach lover's paradise. Access Chesapeake Bay or Atlantic Ocean within minutes. Waterside Village 3/4-acre homesites near marina from \$18,000 with fenced and locked RV/camper storage available. Beach access nearby. Waterfront sites available on bayside and seaside. Many free boat ramps within minutes. Low, low taxes. Kirkwoodontheshore.com. 757-678-7631.

LOOKING TO BUY OR SELL? Timberland Realty specializes in land, sporting properties, camps, cabins, farms, waterfront, exquisite second homes and timberland since 1987. Call our office at 716-962-9935 or agents by region - Western Pa.: Craig Wozniak, 412-559-4198, Ron Westover, 724-422-5525. Central Pa.: John Tallman, 717-921-2476. Brian Bullard, Managing Broker, 716-499-5608. www.timberlandrealty.net.

FAYETTE COUNTY - 3.5 acres with 4,768-square-foot building, \$199,000; Cambria County - 18.2 acres, mostly field, \$119,000; Indiana County - 198.3 acres, \$519,000. Clearfield County - 502 acres, wooded, streams, \$1,499,000. www.timberlandrealty.net. Ron Westover: 724-422-5525, 716-962-9935.

## RECIPES & FOOD

SPECIAL OFFER - BOTH COOKBOOKS FOR \$12. "Country Cooking" - \$5, including postage. "Recipes Remembered" - \$7, including postage. Both cookbooks are a collection of recipes from men and women of the electric co-ops of Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Payable to: Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association, P.O. Box 1266, Harrisburg, PA 17108. Write Attention: Cookbooks.

## SKULL CLEANING

BEATLEMANIA SKULL CLEANING & HYDRO DIPPING. Deer \$100, bear \$150, degreased and whitened. Plaques available. Find us on Facebook. 1979 Glencoe Road, Fairhope, PA 15538. Phone 814-267-5061 or 814-701-9206.

## TIMESHARE CANCELLATION

STOP BEING A TIMESHARE VICTIM! TimeShareBeGone will get your timeshare legally cancelled. 100% money-back guarantee. A+ BBB rating, 17 years in business. Low payment plans. Call 800-214-4460, timesharebegone.com.

## TRACTOR PARTS - REPAIR/RESTORATION

ARTHURS TRACTORS. Specializing in vintage Ford tractors, 30 years' experience, online parts catalog/prices, Indiana, PA 15701. Contact us at 877-254-FORD(3673) or www.arthurstractors.com.

## TRAVEL & TOURISM

NEW SMYRNA BEACH, Florida, oceanfront condo rental. Two-bedroom, two-bath, deck overlooking beach and pool. \$895/week or \$3,200/month. No pets. Not available Jan. - Mar. Call 814-635-4332 or 814-979-8058.

## USED BOOK SALE

2025 HUSTONTOWN FIRE HALL USED BOOK SALE. 426 North Clear Ridge Road, Hustontown, PA 17229. January 9, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25. Find us on Facebook! 717-830-0811.

## VAN RENTAL

15-PASSENGER VANS TO MINI-VANS to car rentals. Call Rent-A-Wreck in Erie. Locally owned for the last 37 years. Rent-A-Wreck, 814-833-9941.

## WANTED TO BUY

ANTIQUe AND CLASSIC American and foreign cars, motorcycles, trucks, Broncos, Blazers and Scouts. Any condition. Will buy entire car collections. krmiller1965@yahoo.com. 717-577-8206.

ANTIQUe AND CLASSIC motorcycles wanted. All makes and sizes. BSA, Norton, Triumph, Honda, Yamaha, Suzuki, Kawasaki, etc. krmiller1965@yahoo.com. 717-577-8206.

## WANTED TO BUY

VINTAGE WOMEN'S & MEN'S CLOTHING from the 1900s- 1950s. Dresses, sweaters, blouses, skirts, workwear/denim, shirts, etc. ANY condition. Call or text 814-386-5763 or email: webuyvintageclothing@gmail.com.

LOOKING TO BUY ADVERTISING ITEMS, such as signs, clocks, thermometers, globes and pumps. Gas and oil, soda, and beer. I buy single items, or entire collections. Please call or text 814-952-5449.

JEEP 1940s WILLYS or Ford Army-type jeep. Rusty, broken down in field, any condition considered. 570-395-4127. Email: ironriderIII@yahoo.com.

ATTENTION HUNTERS-PA HUNTING LICENSES WANTED. Collector buying old PA hunting licenses. I buy cloth, metal and paper licenses. Doe licenses wanted. Please call 412-337-3590 or email nickgarrubba@gmail.com.

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# Flocking a Christmas Tree is Like Making Sausage

JOHN KASUN

**MY WIFE IS A REAL** Christmas person. I start getting into the Christmas spirit around Dec. 22, while she hits the ground running three days after Thanksgiving. She would have married Santa Claus if she thought he would let her drive the sleigh. She loves the cooking, the baking, but most of all, the decorating. There is not a nook or cranny in our home that does not have a Christmas touch. Many people have one or two small crystal reindeer as accent pieces. We have a whole herd.

For several years, we had two full-size real trees in the house, and two smaller ones outside on either side of our front door. We also had giant wreaths above the fireplace and outside on the chimney. We had so many lights that the store installed a special parking space for my wife and provided her with an in-store assistant to push the cart and help load the truck. I try hard to help by simply staying out of the way. Most of my decorating assignments involve moving furniture and carrying boxes to and from the attic.

However, last year I became more directly involved when my wife decided she wanted to “flock” our Christmas trees.

We had lived in the desert of West Texas for several years and real pine Christmas trees were not easy to come by. As a matter of fact, a cactus adorned with Christmas lights was quite common. I even have photos of “snowmen” made from tumbleweed. That year, we found some “real” Christmas trees, and they were “flocked” — or sprayed with a mixture of fluffy white powder and water to create the illusion of a snow-covered pine tree. They were beautiful, but very expensive. We bought one at the time just because it reminded us of home. Last year, my wife remembered that tree and decided she wanted the “real snow” accent for an extra special Christmas look. While you can buy flocked artificial trees, she opted for the real thing and found a do-it-yourself flocking kit on the internet that was guaranteed to make the job easy.

I suddenly found myself in our two-car garage with two

floor-to-ceiling pine trees, a vacuum cleaner, a garden hose and a giant bag of what was supposed to be powdered snow. There was also a cheap-looking plastic mixing device that looked like a giant water pistol to which I attached the vacuum cleaner (set to blow), water hose and a flimsy plastic bag of “snow.” The air from the vacuum was supposed to mix with the misting water from the hose while picking up snow particles from the bag, which I suppose I had to keep fluffing with a third hand. I felt like a guy trying to play the bagpipe for the first time. The object was to deliver a fine snow mist that would build up on the tree branches as thick as desired. While I must admit the results

were beautiful as far as the trees were concerned, the process was a real mess.

It did not take me long to realize that whoever flocked the Christmas tree I purchased in Texas years ago did not do it in a garage (or at least not in his garage). Soon, I had a fine snow mist over most of the walls, windows, floor, part of the ceiling and me. The snow mixture floated and drifted everywhere. Thank goodness I had parked the vehicles outside.

The trees were truly beautiful, and everyone who visited our home for Christmas that year was amazed. However, I did not allow anyone in the garage for months. My wife was impressed with the completed trees and told me how much she appreciated the work I had done, but she also told me to remove my clothes and boots before I even thought of entering the house.

Flocking a Christmas tree is a lot like making sausage: You can enjoy it more if you are not part of the process.

A merry and blessed Christmas from our house to yours, and let us all remember to celebrate the true reason for the season. 🎅



**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.

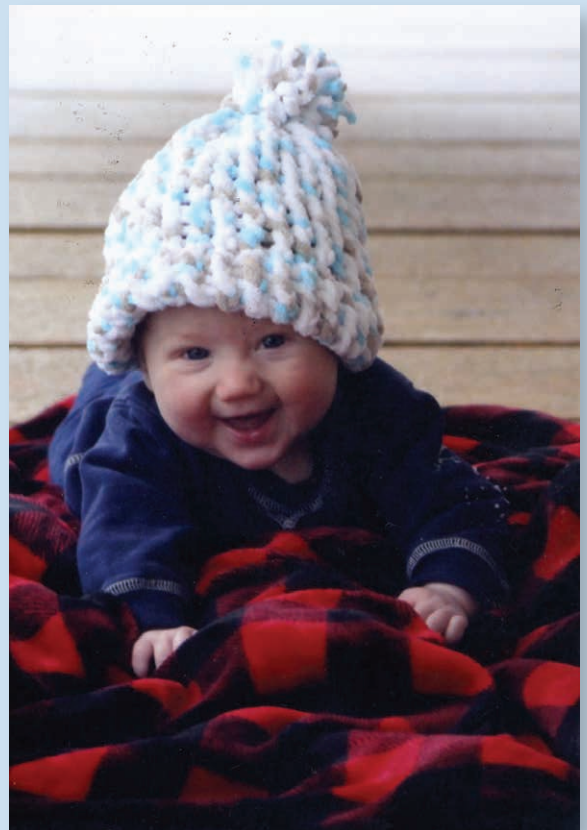


## Smiles are Always in Season

OUR 2024 "RURAL REFLECTIONS" PHOTO contest has ended, and the winning photos in the categories of most artistic, best landscape, best human subject, best animal and editor's choice will be printed in next month's issue of *Penn Lines*. Winners will receive a \$75 prize; runners-up will receive a \$25 prize and appear in the February issue of *Penn Lines*.

As always, thank you for sending in so many fun, interesting and awe-inspiring photos throughout the year. We're looking forward to seeing what you're able to capture next year! 📷

SHARLA HALTEMAN • ADAMS ELECTRIC



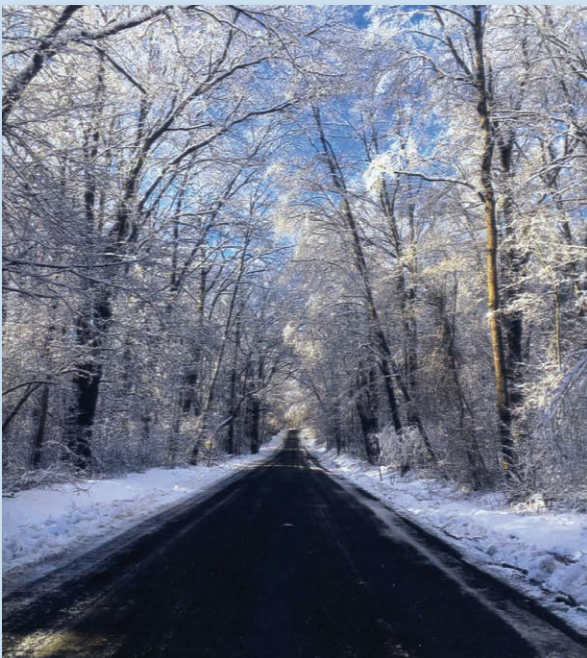
### How to enter

AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHERS are encouraged to send photos for the 2025 Rural Reflections contest (no digital files) to: *Penn Lines* Photos, P.O. Box 1266, Harrisburg, PA 17108-1266. On the back of each photo, include your name, address, phone number and the name of the electric cooperative that serves your home, business or seasonal residence.

Remember: Our publication deadlines require us to work in advance, so send your seasonal photos in early. Photos that do not reflect any specific season may be sent at any time. Photos will be returned one year after receipt if a self-addressed, stamped envelope is included.



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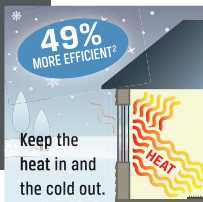


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¹DETAILS OF OFFER: Offer expires 1/31/2025. Not valid with other offers or prior purchases. Get 20% off your entire purchase and 12 months no money down, no monthly payments, no interest when you purchase four (4) or more windows or entry/patio doors between 12/12/2024 and 1/31/2025. Additional \$100 off your purchase, minimum purchase of four (4), taken after initial discount(s), when you purchase by 1/31/2025. Subject to credit approval. 12-month Promo Period: while no payments are due, interest accrues but is waived if the loan is paid in full before the Promo Period expires. Any unpaid balance owed after the Promo Period, plus accrued interest, will be paid in installments based on the terms disclosed in the customer's loan agreement. Financing provided by various equal opportunity lenders. Savings comparison based on purchase of a single unit at list price. Available at participating locations and offer applies throughout the service area. See your local Renewal by Andersen location for details. License numbers available at [renewalbyandersen.com/license](http://renewalbyandersen.com/license). Some Renewal by Andersen locations are independently owned and operated. ²Values are based on comparison of Renewal by Andersen® double-hung window U-Factor to the U-Factor for clear dual-pane glass nonmetal frame default values from the 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015, and 2018 International Energy Conservation Code "Glazed Fenestration" Default Tables. ³Based on testing of 10 double-hung units per ASTM E2068 20 years after installation. ⁴It is the only warranty among top selling window companies that meets all of the following requirements: easy to understand terms, unrestricted transferability, installation coverage, labor coverage, geographically unrestricted, coverage for exterior color, insect screens and hardware, and no maintenance requirement. Visit [renewalbyandersen.com/nationsbest](http://renewalbyandersen.com/nationsbest) for details. ⁵Review aggregator survey of 5-star reviews among leading full service window replacement companies. December 2022 Reputation. "Renewal by Andersen" and all other marks where denoted are trademarks of their respective owners. © 2025 Andersen Corporation. All rights reserved. RBA13747 \*Using U.S. and imported parts.