

SEPTEMBER 2023

# PENNLINES

## Take a Hike

Rattlesnakes and Redemption are Just a Few Things Tempting Co-op Members to the Outdoors

**FROM WASTE TO (ENERGY!) WEALTH**

**METAL ROOFS LAST A LIFETIME, REDUCE COOLING COSTS**

**RELAX AND TAKE A BREAK**

**INSIDE!  
'FICKLE' ORCHID  
FOUND  
IN PA**



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JEFF FETZER

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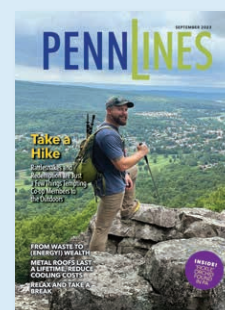
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Gregg Feaster, a member of Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative, enjoys a panoramic view of the Borough of Bedford during a summer hike.

PHOTO BY  
JEFF FETZER



# Working Together to Avoid Grid Disaster



**THEY SAY TIMING IS EVERYTHING.** If that's the case, recent environmental proposals have decidedly missed their mark. At a time when we are being asked to electrify much of our economy, from transportation to home heating, new U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposals are targeting the very resources we need to make this energy transition: our nation's power plants. It's not just bad timing. It's a potential disaster.

We only need to be reminded of what happened last December during Winter Storm Elliott to understand the dire state of grid reliability. Nine states experienced rolling blackouts as the demand for electricity exceeded available supply. Nearly a quarter of the electric generation fleet in our region went offline.

Earlier this year, the EPA proposed sweeping new regulations to reduce emissions at new and existing power plants. Reducing emissions is a worthy goal, but the regulations rely on developing, yet-unproven technologies. While carbon capture and clean hydrogen show some promise, they are not ready or commercially available to the scale needed for power sector adoption. The proposed rules also contain timelines that are unrealistic and unachievable.

If implemented, these regulations would require unworkable standards at coal and natural gas-fired power plants. They will lead to premature plant closures — operators will shut facilities down instead of making expensive improvements — while also making it harder to permit, site, and build critical new facilities. The result would only add greater reliability challenges to an already-stressed electric grid.

Grid instability situations like we experienced last December will become more frequent if these new rules are put into place. According to the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC), the disorderly retirement of existing generating assets across the country, and the insufficient replacement of that power capacity, is directly impacting reliability and increasing the risk of blackouts.

The EPA's proposal is the wrong plan at a critical time for our nation's energy future. It is unrealistic, unachievable, and will reduce key generating resources just as Americans are increasing their reliance on electricity.

Cooperatives want to be a part of the solution. That's why we have been working together to address these concerns. Your local electric cooperative and others in the state, along with the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association, the statewide association that represents your cooperative, and Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc., the power provider for your cooperative, have joined with our national organization, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, to make our concerns known to the EPA.

In letters, we've let the agency know these regulations could undermine the ability of electric cooperatives to provide affordable, reliable power to the communities and consumers we serve.

Working together. That's been the formula for success for electric cooperative organizations for more than 80 years. It comes from a history of having to find solutions that work for the betterment of all.

That's why we're asking the EPA to work with NERC, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, regional transmission operators, and others in the electric industry, including electric cooperatives, to create standards that meet emissions-reduction goals without endangering the reliability of the grid. Working together, we can find solutions for the betterment of all. 🤝

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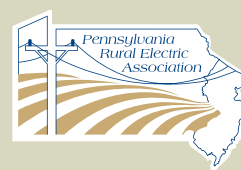
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## GETTING THE WILLIES

Electric cooperative magazine editors gathered last month in Arlington, Va., for the annual business meeting of the National Electric Cooperatives Statewide Editors Association (SEA). The association works to support cooperative publications like *Penn Lines*, addressing various industry matters like printing, advertising and postage. It also helps keep editors up to date on the latest trends in communications, from social media to artificial intelligence. SEA represents 32 publications across the country, reaching 12 million readers.

But it's not all business at the business meeting. Editors put their pens down for an evening to attend the annual Willies Awards program, held at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. Named after Willie Wiredhand, the longtime mascot of rural electric cooperatives, the awards recognize the best in cooperative writing, photography, and design. *Penn Lines* was fortunate enough to earn a few "Willies" during the evening, including the award for Best News Feature. The award went to Paula Piatt for "Seeds of Support," her *Penn Lines* feature story that delved into the topic of depression among farmers. Judges recognized Paula's sensitivity in discussing an important issue. Congratulations, Paula!



## REMEMBERING CAROL

Veteran editors at the SEA meeting in Arlington also took time to remember one of their own. Carol Moczygemba, the former editor of *Texas Co-op Power*, passed away in July after a long battle with Parkinson's disease. Editors recognized Carol, a former SEA president, for her many contributions to cooperative magazines. As editor, she led *Texas Co-op Power* from 2001-2013, setting the example for other publications to follow. She was easy to spot at the Willies: Carol was the one holding all the awards. In 2002, she was featured on the cover of *Rural Electric Magazine* (inset) for a story about the impact of cooperative publications. She certainly had an impact on those around her.

Carol was a kind and curious soul – with a heart as big as Texas. I remember visiting her in Austin after she retired, when she apologized to me for her handwriting in a Christmas card she had sent. Using a pen had become difficult with Parkinson's, but she insisted on writing to a friend. Here's to remembering a friend. Thank you for writing.

*Peter A. Fitzgerald*

PETER A. FITZGERALD  
EDITOR



U.S. FOREST SERVICE

**WINNING THE BOTANICAL LOTTERY:** The extremely rare Three Birds Orchid has been found on state land in northeastern Pennsylvania. One of the men who stumbled across the flower likened the find to winning the botanical lottery.

## A RARE FIND 'Fickle' orchid pops up in Pennsylvania

Two botanists from Luzerne County, Stan Galenty and Rick Koval, have uncovered an extremely rare Three Birds Orchid (*Triphora trianthophora*) in northeast Pennsylvania. A crop of the tiny, highly sought-after orchids is growing on public property, but the exact location is being kept a secret for now as scientists work to study and preserve them.

"They are fickle," Galenty recently told a reporter. "Sometimes they'll pop up for a year and not to be seen again for who knows how long."

The orchid's name is derived from its flower, which resembles three birds in flight. The 3- to 8-inch-high flower is most often found in forests across central and eastern North America.

"Just finding one of these is a botanical lottery," Koval added. "It's like Mega Millions to us."

## SOMETHING'S FISHY

### Snakeheads surface in the Susquehanna

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) is encouraging anglers who catch invasive northern snakehead fish to dispose of them and report their catch to the agency.

Recently, the fish, as well as evidence that they're reproducing, have been



spotted in the Conowingo Reservoir, a section of the Susquehanna River that flows from the Holtwood Dam in Lancaster County to the Conowingo Dam in Maryland. Natural resource agency biologists confirmed the sighting.

The PFBC and partner agencies have been monitoring the lower Susquehanna River for evidence of the northern snakehead since May 2020, when 21 were found near the Conowingo Dam.

Officials say the population is low, but documentation of reproduction is a concern. The fish, native to parts of China, Korea and Russia, is a voracious predator that could cause a decline in sport fish. They were first reported in the Mid-Atlantic region in the early 2000s.

Anglers who catch one are asked to immediately kill the fish by removing its head, gill arches or internal organs because the invasive species can survive outside of water for extended periods. Carcasses should be disposed of properly in the trash or used as garden fertilizer.

For more information and a snakehead identification guide, visit [fishandboat.com](http://fishandboat.com).

## SCENIC AND SCARY

### Route 6 most feared road in the state, survey says

Scenic Route 6, which crosses northern Pennsylvania from its



eastern to western border, has been named the most feared road in the state, according to a Ready.gov survey of 3,000 drivers. The survey asked drivers which route in each state they feared being stranded on the most.

The 403-mile stretch, which crosses territories served by Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative (REC), Tri-County REC, Warren Electric Cooperative and Northwestern REC, has been described by *National Geographic* as “one of America’s most scenic drives.” However, it ranked 42nd in the most-feared survey, where the No. 1 spot went to U.S. Route 285 in New Mexico. The roads named in the survey generally pass through vast swaths of land with few services and are susceptible to weather hazards.

Survey respondents said because the area along Route 6 is sparsely populated, drivers may need to wait for help. Portions of the highway in Wyoming and Pike counties were noted as being especially prone to fatal crashes.

## GRIZZLY DISCOVERY

### Oops! We goofed!

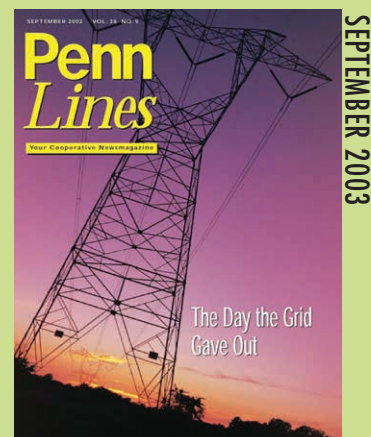
Eagle-eyed reader Randy Akam, a member of Northwestern Rural

Electric Cooperative in Cambridge Springs, made a grizzly discovery in last month’s *Penn Lines*. And while we can’t bear to be wrong, we have to admit it: Randy caught us sleeping — or should we say, hibernating — on the details. Here’s his note:

*“Not to be a nitpicker, but in your August Penn Lines, in “Keeping Current,” you had an article on Pennsylvania adding more wildlife crossings near highways. The accompanying picture shows a grizzly bear crossing the highway. I don’t think we here in the Keystone State have to worry about hitting a griz on our roadways. Maybe use a picture of an established Pennsylvania species [instead] ... like a whitetail deer, coyote, elk or black bear? Or maybe even a disputed species, such as a mountain lion or the ever-elusive Bigfoot?”* 🐼

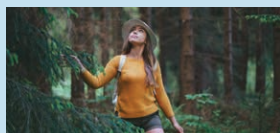


## TIME LINES



Twenty years ago, parts of Pennsylvania were still reeling from “the day the grid gave out.” On Aug. 14, 2003, 50 million people in seven states and Ontario — including cooperative consumers in northwestern Pennsylvania — lost power after a handful of major transmission lines in Ohio went down, raising concerns about the grid and its reliability.

# SEPTEMBER



### LISTEN TO THE TREES

Need to clear your head? Cooksburg’s Cook Forest State Park will be hosting a unique event, Shinnin-Yoku: Forest Bathing, on Sept. 9 for those interested in taking a slow, contemplative guided walk through the trees. Participants, who are being asked to bring water and wear comfortable walking shoes, should meet at 9:45 a.m. at the park office. Pre-registration for the free walk is required by calling 814-744-8407.

### ALWAYS REMEMBER

On the 22nd anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, officials at the Flight 93 National Memorial will be honoring those who died when the hijacked plane crashed in Shanksville, Somerset County. The observance, free and open to the public, will begin at 9:45 a.m. and will also be live-streamed on the Flight 93 National Memorial YouTube Channel. Learn more at [nps.gov/flni](https://nps.gov/flni).



### WANTED: HISTORY BUFFS

History buffs now have another reason to travel to Gettysburg. The Eisenhower National Historic Site will be hosting its 2023 World War II Weekend, Sept. 15-17. This year’s theme is “1943: America at War.” The weekend will include park rangers, guest speakers, living historians and partner organizations bringing the stories of 1943 to life through three days of programming and interactive activities for visitors of all ages. Learn more at [nps.gov/eise.gov](https://nps.gov/eise.gov).

### TWO COUNTIES, 10 COVERED BRIDGES

If you’re a fan of covered bridges, take a trip to southwestern Pennsylvania later this month for the Washington and Greene Counties Covered Bridge Festival, Sept. 16-17. Ten of these historic structures will be featured, along with vendors, local food and live entertainment. Admission and parking are free. Learn more at [visitwashingtoncountypa.com/covered-bridge-festival](https://visitwashingtoncountypa.com/covered-bridge-festival).





# TAKE A HIKE





# Rattlesnakes and Redemption are Just a Few Things Tempting Co-op Members to the Outdoors

**JEFF FETZER**

*Penn Lines Contributor*

**SOME HIKERS HIT THE TRAIL** seeking solitude, scenery and mountain summits. Others go in groups to socialize as they exercise.

When Gregg Feaster, a member of Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative (REC), hikes in the summer, he searches for rattlesnakes.

On the last day of June, the first day in nearly a week the ridges surrounding Bedford were not obscured by the smoky haze from wildfires raging in Canada, Feaster spies a black timber rattler stretched out on a rock outcropping, not far from the Mid State Trail in Bedford County.

“Hey, you guys want to see a rattlesnake?” Feaster calls to his companions, Jeremy Oldham and Colin Milburn, who had remained on the hiking trail while Feaster ventured off in search of serpents.

With feigned enthusiasm, the pair break from the trail and watch from a distance as Feaster, armed with a snake hook, lifts a buzzing rattler from its sunning spot, and begins snapping photos with his cellphone.

“There’s another one coming out about 4 feet to your right,” yells Milburn, also a member of Bedford REC.

“Is there really?” Feaster asks. “Oh, I see it. Actually, there’s two of them!”

By the time the hikers finish surveying the rock field, the group has spotted a half dozen rattlers, including several sporting the striking yellow-phase coloration.

Feaster is ecstatic. He has scouted this area many times since he began hiking regularly about five years ago and came across a rattlesnake only one time, and that one was just a baby.

“You had asked me about my most memorable hikes?” Feaster says to this writer, who was invited to tag along with the group for the day. “Well, this was definitely one of them. You can bet I’m going to be up here a lot more.”

An avid hiker, Feaster likes to hit the local trails about once or twice a week, year round, although he prefers hiking in the fall and winter, when trails are free of brambles and knee-high vegetation, and temperatures are more to his taste.

“The only reason I hike in the summer, and spring is to look for snakes and amphibians, and I enjoy exercising outdoors,” he says. “I am not a fan of hot weather, ticks, spiders or poison ivy.”

## Something for everyone

The universal appeal of hiking is that just about anyone can find some reason to get outside, get some exercise, and behold the Commonwealth’s scenic beauty and wildlife. It’s a low-cost activity that requires neither fancy equipment nor special skills.

Pennsylvania is blessed with an abundance of natural

JEFF FETZER



**SNAKE CHARMER:** Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative member Gregg Feaster photographs a timber rattlesnake he encountered during a late June hike in Bedford County.

**TRAIL TRIBE:** A group of friends takes a photo break while on their annual Jan. 1 “First Day Hike” in Michaux State Forest in south-central Pennsylvania. The group includes, clockwise from left, Matt Cooper, Heather Cusick-Herman, Cathy Fisher, Kim Shaw, Petula Yingling, Heather Holt and Danielle DeFelice. Fisher, Shaw, Yingling and Holt are members of Adams Electric Cooperative.



wonders, from waterfalls and boulder fields to scenic vistas and deep-cut gorges — and about 12,000 miles of hiking trails provide access to many of them. Thousands of miles of those trails traverse territories served by the state's electric cooperatives, and members of those co-ops take to them for a host of reasons.

For Feaster, a dedicated mountain bike rider, hiking provides a way to spend more time outdoors, exploring new places, while getting a workout.

"I wanted to reach new spots that you can't get to on wheels — boulder slides, steep, rocky ridge lines, ponds, etc.," he says. "Plus, it's something friends and family can join me on."

His regular hikes are 5- to 7-mile treks with friends, but he also enjoys taking 15-mile solo hikes on the Mid State Trail and has hiked all 65 miles of it in Bedford County. Feaster has also logged 65 miles on the Appalachian Trail (AT) in Pennsylvania during weekend backpacking excursions with his brother. His bucket list, however, includes hiking a longer stretch of the AT across Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania. Since he works full time and is in the process of opening a distillery in Bedford later this year, he doesn't expect to accomplish that feat for some time.

## Social climber

Like Feaster, Heather Holt, an Adams Electric Cooperative member and employee, enjoys hiking on the AT, which runs through part of the cooperative's territory in Franklin and Cumberland counties.

Unlike Feaster, she has no bucket list of hikes, doesn't travel much more than an hour to hike, and isn't interested

in overnight backpacking excursions or solo hikes. For Holt, the cooperative's risk management coordinator, hiking is primarily a social activity that provides an opportunity to get outdoors and exercise with friends.

Holt took up hiking about five years ago after receiving an invitation on Facebook from a couple, now married, to go on a New Year's Day group hike.

"They were going out to get exercise, see some views, and just spend time together, and asked their friends to join them," she says. "It kind of just blew up from there. Afterward, everyone wanted to know when the next hike was going to be, so they created a Facebook page to let friends know about their next hiking meet-up."

Holt says the group, which ranges in size from four or five people to as many as 20, meets up for day hikes every weekend in the spring and fall.

"New people come ... old people come," she says. "It's kind of cool. I pretty much religiously go with them and have met a lot of people through the group hikes."

After completing the 6- to 8-mile hikes, the group often stops somewhere for food and drinks.

"I would say my reason for hiking is probably opposite of most hikers," Holt says. "I'm looking for that social part of it, catching up with my friends and having a way to celebrate afterward because we actually did some exercise."

The group has hiked sections of the Appalachian Trail in Cumberland County, and some of Holt's favorite hikes intersect with the AT in the area of Pine Grove Furnace State Park, which is the symbolic midway point of the 2,190-mile trail that runs from Georgia to Maine.

"We are very fortunate to live in an area with a lot of trails nearby," Holt says. "Within 30 minutes you can be at a lot of really cool spots."

Her favorite hikes at the park, like the Sunset Rocks Trail and Pole Steeple Loop, offer steep ascents and great views.

"I like a climb," Holt says. "My favorites are trails that just go straight up, so you can get the heartbeat going fast."

## Endurance enthusiast

Warren EC member Jim Penley, a social studies teacher and high school football coach, isn't always looking to socialize or relax when he hits the trails. He views hiking as a sport that provides an opportunity to challenge himself physically.

"I was looking for something that I could do that would give me a good workout and, at the same time, get me out

ALLEGHENY NATIONAL FOREST CHAPTER OF  
THE NORTH COUNTRY TRAIL ASSOCIATION



**SUCCESSFUL CHALLENGE:** Warren Electric Cooperative member Jim Penley shares a weary smile after completing the Allegheny 100 Hiking Challenge. The annual event challenges hikers to traverse the 100-mile section of the North Country Trail through the Allegheny National Forest in 50 hours. Penley has attempted the challenge 10 times and was successful twice.



into nature, which I've always loved," Penley says.

He took his first hike a decade ago — but it was not typical Sunday afternoon stroll. It was a 230-mile journey across the Pennsylvania portion of the North Country Trail. The hike began north of Pittsburgh and ended at the New York border.

"It was a baptism by fire," he says. "I decided that I really wanted to test myself. It forced me to get into shape physically and, when I got out on the trail, to get into shape mentally."

Over the course of 10 days, the first-time hiker averaged 23 miles a day while toting 45 pounds of gear. He loved the experience and soon began entering organized endurance hikes, also known as hiking challenges. For the past 10 years, Penley has participated in the Allegheny 100 Challenge, which requires hikers to traverse the 100-mile section of the North Country Trail in the Allegheny National Forest in 50 hours.

To be successful, hikers must average 2 mph on the trail for 50 consecutive hours, a necessity that leaves little

time for sleep — a 20-minute nap is the longest Penley has allowed himself during his 10 attempts at completing the challenge. He has succeeded twice.

Penley participates in several other timed endurance hikes each year, traveling as far as Michigan to compete.

"I love hikes that are going to give me a nice view, but also take me into different types of forests, from deciduous to coniferous, and with different types of creeks and rivers," he says. "I'm a bigger guy for a competitive hiker, and I actually hate the hills. But I also know the best views are at the top of the hill, and I want to feel like I've earned something."

The North Country Trail, at 4,800 miles, is the longest of 11 National Scenic Trails in the United States and is one of just two that traverse Pennsylvania. The other is the iconic Appalachian Trail. Unlike its famous cousin, the North Country Trail is rarely thru-hiked. The Appalachian Trail, on the other hand, sees several thousand hikers attempt to thru-hike its 2,190 miles each year, with only about a quarter of them finishing the journey.

*Continued on page 12*

## Lots of options to hit the trail in co-op country

With more than 12,000 miles of foot trails criss-crossing the state, Pennsylvania is a hiker's paradise. And many of the state's top trails traverse electric cooperative territory. The following list of National Scenic Trails and designated State Forest Trails in counties served by cooperatives just scratches the surface of options waiting for hikers to explore:

**Appalachian Trail:** The granddaddy of thru-hiking trails in the East, the 2,190-mile National Scenic Trail runs through Adams Electric Cooperative (EC) territory in Franklin and Cumberland counties and is known for its challenging, rocky terrain and breathtaking views.

**Baker Trail:** This 134-mile backpacking trail takes hikers along forest paths, farmland, rivers and creeks in six counties, including counties served by United Electric, REA Energy Cooperative and Warren EC.

**Black Forest Trail:** A challenging 42-mile loop, this backpacking wilderness trail features multiple vistas and steep climbs in an area of northwestern Lycoming County served by Tri-County Rural Electric Cooperative (REC).

**Bucktail Path:** This 34-mile trail, featuring 200 acres of old growth hemlock and hardwood, begins at Sizerville State Park and ends at Sinnemahoning in Potter County, an area covered by Tri-County REC.

**Golden Eagle Trail:** Ranked as one of the best day-hikes in Pennsylvania, this 9-mile loop features challenging terrain, massive pines and an amazing view at the summit. It is located in the Pine Creek Gorge, another area served by Tri-County REC.

**John P. Sailor Trail:** This is a scenic 18-mile trail in Gallitzin State Forest in Somerset County, where Somerset REC is headquartered.

**Lost Turkey Trail:** This 26-mile trail includes a cable bridge

and a monument to two children who got lost and died in the mountains in 1856. It is located in counties served by Bedford REC, New Enterprise REC and Somerset REC.

**Loyalsock Trail:** A 59-mile backpacking trail in Loyalsock State Forest that follows mountain ridges and hills and boasts some serious elevation changes, the trail cuts through Worlds End State Park, served by Sullivan County REC.

**Mid State Trail:** At 320 miles, the Mid State Trail is known as the longest footpath in the state. It runs roughly north-south from the New York to Maryland border and passes through counties served by four electric cooperatives: Bedford REC, New Enterprise REC, Tri-County REC and Valley REC.

**North Country Trail:** One of 11 designated National Scenic Trails, the North Country Trail stretches 4,800 miles, from North Dakota to Vermont. The trail, which runs through Warren EC territory in Warren County, includes a 100-mile stretch through the Allegheny National Forest.

**Old Loggers Path:** This 27-mile trail takes hikers along Rock Run in northeastern Lycoming County, which is often described as the most beautiful stream in Pennsylvania. The trail is in and near areas served by Claverack REC and Sullivan County REC.

**Quehanna Trail:** Located in Moshannon and Elk State Forests, the 73-mile trail takes hikers through vast meadows and some of the most wild and beautiful country in the state. United Electric serves this area.

**Rocky Knob Trail:** The trail offers a short hike in the Mischoux State Forest, which is covered by Adams EC.

**West Rim Trail:** This 30-mile hiking trail on the western rim of the Pennsylvania Grand Canyon in Lycoming and Tioga counties is in the Tri-County REC service territory.



*Continued from page 11*

## Hiking for perspective

Claverack REC member Jeff Mitchell was among that 25% in 2022 when he conquered the summit of Mount Katahdin, Maine, the northern terminus of the AT, on July 29, nearly

JEFF FETZER



**HARDCORE HIKER:** Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative member Jeff Mitchell stands at the base of the High Rock Trail where it intersects with the Loyalsock Trail near Forksville, home of Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative. Mitchell has hiked extensively throughout the state and thru-hiked the 2,190-mile Appalachian Trail last year.

five months after his journey began at Springer Mountain in Georgia.

“It was amazing — one of the best things I’ve ever done,” Mitchell says. “It was also one of the hardest things I’ve ever done. The trail beats you up. The terrain is really tough. It goes up and down relentlessly. It’s like climbing Mount Everest 16 times.”

Mitchell developed a passion for hiking when he was in his 20s while exploring the trails at Worlds End State Park in Sullivan County, home of Sullivan County REC. In the early 2000s, he wrote three books about hiking and backpacking in Pennsylvania and has chronicled more adventures on his “Hiking Mitch” Instagram feed, which has nearly 8,000 followers.

In all those hikes, he says he never experienced anything as transformative as hiking the Appalachian Trail, a journey he took after losing his re-election bid for Wyoming County district attorney in 2021. He had held the post for 12 years.

The defeat forced the 47-year-old to contemplate his future.

“I thought about doing the responsible thing of going back to law practice,” he says. “But then I thought it’s now or never and made the decision to hike the Appalachian Trail.”

He admits the daily grind of living on the trail, missing the comforts of home, and being away from family and friends for such an extended period made him question that decision early on in his trek.

“You’re just wondering, ‘What the hell am I doing out here?’” he says. “You figure that out when you do it.”

By the time he reached the midway point of the trail at Pine Grove Furnace, he knew that hiking the AT had been the correct call. The hike has restored his faith in people.

“As a D.A., I saw some pretty tough things,” he says. “I handled murder cases and often saw the worst side of people. After a while, a level of toxicity and cynicism builds up. The trail cleaned that away.”

He says there is a sense of community along the trail that he never experienced elsewhere, from the generosity of people living in towns along the trail who invited him into their homes and “trail angels” who dropped off food and drinks for hikers to the emotional support and sense of community shared by fellow AT hikers.

“The trail creates bonds and dynamics that don’t occur anywhere else,” he says. “There are people on the trail who are millionaires, and people who are dirt poor, and it makes no difference on the trail. You realize how little you need to live to be happy. You realize the importance of people.” 🍷



# **REA** *energy*

*Cooperative Inc.*

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



## *2022 Annual Report*



# 2022 Executive Report

We are very pleased to report to you, our consumer-members, on the condition of your cooperative. The past year was a good but challenging year for the cooperative due to increasing inflation and inventory shortages. The cooperative's financial performance during the year allowed us to continue improving our system and reliability.

Following are just some of our 2022 accomplishments:

## Finance

Financially, REA Energy Cooperative experienced a slight increase in revenue in 2022. Our revenues of \$45,640,407 were due to a 1.26% increase in residential and commercial use.

Our cost of power totaled \$22,774,316 due to the competitive wholesale rates we received from Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc., power delivery provider, and the benefits provided by our load management system.

This combination of increased kilowatt-hour sales, reasonable power costs, and a \$2.6 million patronage allocation from our wholesale electric power supplier allowed us to record a net margin of \$6,553,607. This met the requirements of our mortgage holders.

Detailed financial statements can be found on subsequent pages of this issue of *Penn Lines*. The cooperative's records were audited by an independent accounting firm, which issued a clean audit opinion.

## Member Services

REA Energy Cooperative continued to expand member services in 2022.

- Purchased In The Stix Broadband, LLC in June 2022, which will operate as a subsidiary of the cooperative.
- Converted to a new bill-payment system. National Information Solutions Cooperative (NISC) is an information technology company that develops and supports software and hardware solutions for utility cooperatives. This leads to a more in-depth online system and additional bill payment options for members.
- Held an in-person and virtual annual meeting, with nearly 400 members attending.
- Held a Member Appreciation Month in October in conjunction with National Cooperative Month.
- Redesigned the look of [reaenergy.com](http://reaenergy.com).
- Conducted high-voltage demonstrations at the Indiana and Cookport fairs. Provided safety demonstrations

with our tabletop high-voltage display.

- Increased the use of mobile devices in field vehicles for up-to-date information flow.
- Continued communication and education with our members via regular posts to the cooperative's social media pages, *Penn Lines* articles and printed material.
- Continued to promote Touchstone Energy®, a national cooperative that provides our members with benefits.
- Promoted the education of our youth by awarding four, one-time scholarships to students who would have been eligible to attend Youth Tour.
- Further promoted and enhanced the "Members Sharing with Members" Fund to help members in need due to unemployment or financial hardship.
- Encouraged large commercial members, known as key accounts, to expand on our system, which may reduce costs for all members.

Adhering to our core principles, REA Energy will continue to enhance existing programs and offer new technology to better serve our members.

## REA Energy Services

REA Energy Services, our for-profit subsidiary, continued to be successful due to an increase in commercial customers. REA Energy Services had solid sales in all four business lines, including heating, ventilation and air-conditioning products (HVAC), electrical contracting, generators, and tree trimming.

REA Energy Services installs most types of HVAC systems, such as electric boilers, and three major heat pumps, including ductless, air-source, and geothermal systems. Through education and emphasizing the cost-saving benefits of these products, we continue to install many of these systems. We anticipate future interest from members due to volatile fossil fuel prices versus low REA Energy electric rates. Since profits from this for-profit subsidiary go back to the cooperative, the subsidiary's success helps to keep rates low for members.

Most of our products, such as heat pumps, provide direct profits to the cooperative and also increase electric sales, which helps to keep rates low. Not only does the cooperative benefit from the subsidiary, but members also benefit from purchasing high-efficiency products, which save money on monthly energy bills.

Our electrical contracting business line continues to provide safe electrical upgrades to our residential consumers and provides solutions for commercial consumers. Our load technicians play a

pivotal role in increasing electric sales by providing services at a competitive price. This service makes it easier for commercial and industrial accounts to locate to cooperative lines, which increases sales.

REA Energy Services recorded approximately \$924,313 in revenue for 2022. The solid sales numbers were due to great customer service, honesty and exceptional value, making REA Energy Services the company of choice for many people.

REA Energy Services will be offering more convenient and energy-efficient products and services in the future. Think of us for any future contracting jobs and tell a friend about our excellent products and services.

## Rights of way

REA Energy constantly monitors the reliability of our power system. Each year, an outage summary report identifies areas that need attention and, based on past history, where future outages are most likely to occur. Tree-related outages accounted for 35.4% of all outage hours in 2022.

Last year, the cooperative spent more than \$3.7 million on cutting trees in rights of way for line extensions to serve new members, as well as on regular cutting and herbicide treatments for existing rights of way. Contributions for rights of way were made by various companies and members in 2022.

Substations we focused on in 2022 were:

- Browns Crossroads — cut 41 miles
- Cherryhill — cut 105 miles
- Tanoma MP — cut 10 miles
- Strongstown — cut 164 miles
- Curry Run — cut 58 miles
- Shadowood — cut 42 miles

Maintaining rights of way remains a very time-consuming and labor-intensive task. If you notice trees that present an immediate threat to the cooperative's power lines, please contact us so we can investigate.

## Reliability/System Improvements

REA Energy strives to provide reliable electric service to members. This past year, the cooperative rebuilt 15.56 miles of line across the system. Rebuilding, relocation and upgrading of electric lines included:

### Overhead line

- Belsano substation, Thompson Road — 0.38 miles
- Cherryhill substation, Helman Road — 0.5 miles
- Georgeville substation, Alabran Road — 1.31 miles
- Georgeville substation, Mahoning



Road — 0.72 miles

- ▶ Latimer substation, State Park Road — 1 mile
- ▶ Laurel substation, Dutch Road — 1.7 miles
- ▶ Laurel substation, Scout Dam Road — 0.57 miles
- ▶ Laurel substation, Cunningham Road — 0.64 miles
- ▶ Parkwood substation, Anthony Run Road — 1.3 miles
- ▶ Smithport substation, Watson Road — 1.4 miles
- ▶ St. Augustine substation, St. Augustine Road — 4.43 miles
- ▶ Uniontown substation, Tippeary Road — 0.5 miles
- ▶ Uniontown substation, Rairigh Road — 1.11 miles

#### **Substation/Metering Point**

- ▶ Georgeville substation — Installed down-line, single-phase voltage regulator on the Trade City circuit.
- ▶ Strongtown substation — Replaced and relocated down-line three-phase voltage regulator bank on the Nolo circuit.

REA Energy is in the second year of its four-year work plan and sixth year of its 10-year work plan. The four-year work plan runs from 2022 through June 2025 and includes approximately 15-30 miles of reconductoring projects each year.

#### **Outages in 2022**

REA Energy had 211,449 total member outage hours for 2022, compared to 244,131 in 2021. REA experienced one major-event storm in 2022, which accounted for 26,624 outage hours, compared to three major-event storms in 2021, totaling 62,814 outage hours. Outages on the transmission system owned by investor-owned utility, FirstEnergy, accounted for 49,713 member hours in 2022, compared to 51,108 member hours in 2021. FirstEnergy is the cooperative's transmission supplier.

Management and staff continue to focus on system improvements and work closely with our transmission and wholesale power suppliers to improve transmission reliability.

## **Annual Meeting**

REA Energy's Annual Meeting is scheduled Thursday, Sept. 14, at the Kovalchick Convention Complex in Indiana, Pa.

With the return to an in-person meeting, your board and management decided to make some changes to the meeting's format to enhance the convenience and experience for everyone:

**Doors open** — 4 p.m.

**Entertainment** — 4:30 to 5:15 p.m.

**Business meeting start** — 5:30 p.m.

In conjunction with the in-person meeting, we will also offer members the ability to log onto a virtual platform to view the meeting.

Information for logging onto the virtual platform will be included in the annual meeting notice.



Michael J. Bertolino,  
Chairman, CCD, BLC, Gold  
*Board of Directors*

Wayne Farabaugh, Vice Chairman,  
CCD, BLC, Gold

Robert Neese, Secretary/Treasurer,  
Allegheny Director, CCD, BLC, Gold

Thomas Aurandt, CCD

Tom Beresnyak, CCD

Sandra Dill, CCD

Anthony Enciso, CCD, BLC

John R. Learn, CCD, BLC

Rick Shope, PREA Director, CCD, BLC, Gold



Chad Carrick, MBA, CFPC  
President and CEO

#### *Staff*

Barry Baker, Indiana Operations Manager  
Erin Bauer, SHRM-CP, ACRE Coordinator

Shane Cribbs, CISSP,  
Network & Systems Manager

Dave Daugherty, CSP  
Safety & Right of Way Manager

Jeff Dishong, Ebensburg Operations Supervisor

Lisa Gardill, CFPC  
Accounting & Finance Manager

Stacy Hilliard, CCC, CKAE  
Communications & Marketing Manager  
Local Pages Editor

Bryon Roland, CPSM, CPM  
Purchasing & Facilities Manager

Renee Spalla, Supervisor of Consumer Services

Chris Weller, Load Management Supervisor



Headquarters Office  
Indiana, Pa.

75 Airport Road

P.O. Box 70,

Indiana, PA 15701-0070

724-349-4800 or 800-211-5667

Office Hours - Monday-Friday  
7 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

District Office  
Ebensburg, Pa.

127 Municipal Road

P.O. Box 273,

Ebensburg, PA 15931-0273

814-472-8570

Office Hours - Monday, Wednesday, Friday  
7 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Closed Tuesday and Thursday

Emergencies/Outages - 844-920-3395

Email - [reaenergy@reaenergy.com](mailto:reaenergy@reaenergy.com)

Home Page - [reaenergy.com](http://reaenergy.com)

Facebook: search for REA Energy Cooperative, Inc.

Instagram: search for REAenergy

#### **2022 Statistics**

Number of Services - 25,222

Est. Gross Load Mgmt. Savings - \$290,310

Miles of Electric Line - 2,901

Water Heaters Controlled - 5,997

System Peak (December) - 79,692 kW

Water Heaters Issued to Date - 4,921

Kilowatt-hours sold - 382,036,781 kWh

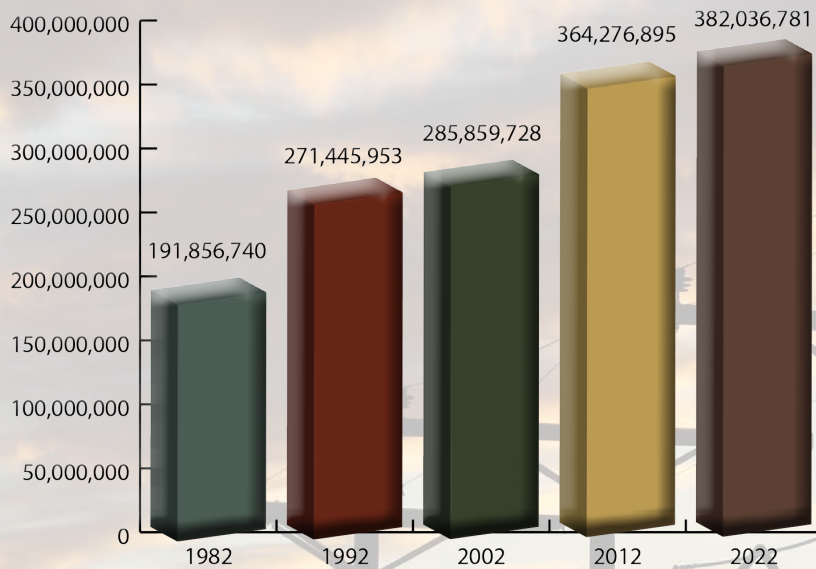
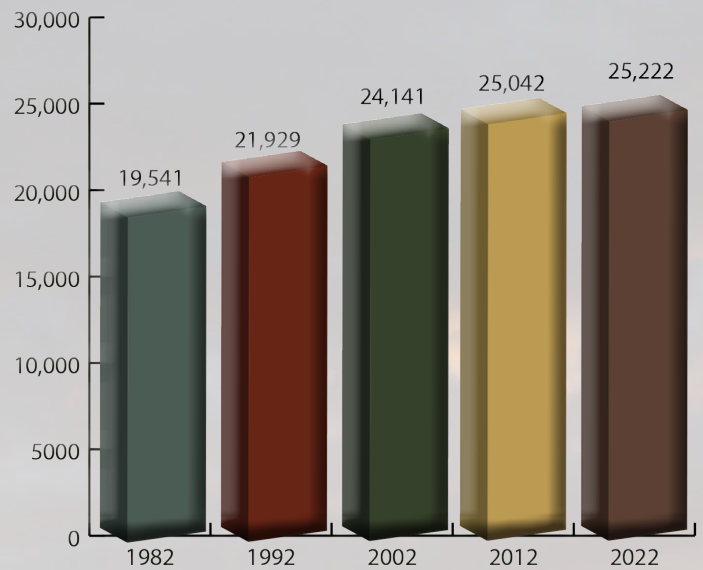
Round-Up Participants - 1,829

Net Plant Value - \$108,327,735

Full-Time Employees - 68



## Number of Accounts



## kWh Sold

## Net Utility Plant

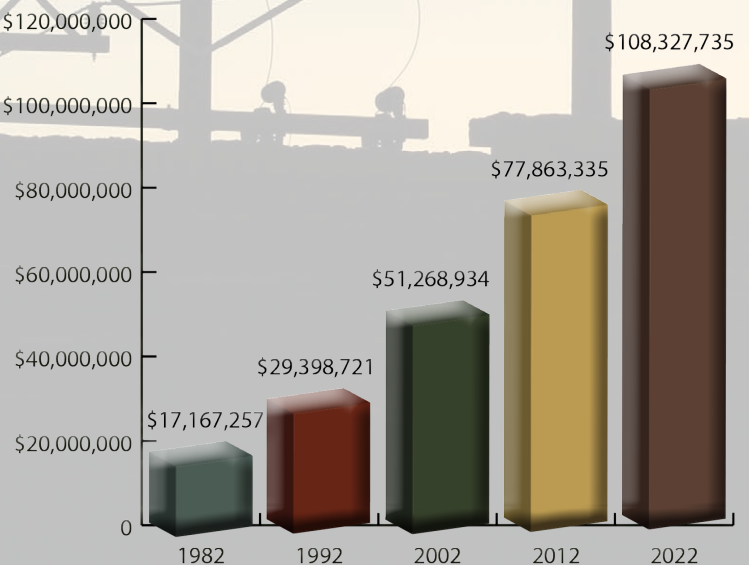


Photo Source: Cooperative.com



Nuclear - partial ownership of the Susquehanna Steam Electric Station (54.3%)

Consumer-Member Interconnections (0.1%)

Hydro - Raystown Hydroelectric Plant and New York Power Authority (9%)

Open Market Purchases - Mix of coal, natural gas, nuclear, and oil (36.6%)

## Wholesale Power Supply Sources

## How the Cooperative's Dollar Was Spent

Purchased Power (53.88%)

Taxes (0.14%)

Sales (1.95%)

Consumer Accounting (2.62%)

Other (4.46%)

Administration & General (9.68%)

Depreciation (9.42%)

Operations & Maintenance (17.85%)

Residential (67.3%)

Public Authorities & Lighting (0.3%)

Other (2.2%)

Commercial (30.2%)

## Sources of the Cooperative's Dollar



# 2022 Financial Report

## Balance Sheets\*

<u>Assets</u>	December 31,	
	2021	2022
<u>Electric Plant</u>		
In Service and Construction in Progress	138,254,598	143,669,563
Less: Accumulated Provisions for Depreciation	<u>33,167,347</u>	<u>35,238,674</u>
TOTAL ELECTRIC PLANT	<u>105,087,251</u>	<u>108,430,889</u>
Investments in Associated Organizations	<u>16,822,310</u>	<u>22,067,748</u>
<u>Current Assets</u>		
Cash	5,923,756	5,284,855
Temporary Investments	4,761,759	12,176,215
Accounts Receivable (less reserves)	2,159,552	2,357,374
Accrued Utility Revenues	2,522,313	2,887,907
Materials and Supplies (at average cost)	1,543,597	1,729,600
Other Assets and Deferred Charges	<u>538,060</u>	<u>504,214</u>
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	<u>17,449,037</u>	<u>24,941,165</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>139,358,598</u>	<u>155,439,802</u>
<u>Equities and Liabilities</u>		
<u>Equities</u>		
Memberships	93,965	93,560
Patronage Capital	72,044,398	78,597,955
Other Equities	<u>149,779</u>	<u>152,816</u>
TOTAL EQUITIES	<u>72,288,142</u>	<u>78,844,331</u>
<u>Liabilities</u>		
Long-Term Debt:		
RUS Mortgage Notes (Less Current Maturities)	49,906,700	58,443,064
CFC Mortgage Notes (Less Current Maturities)	3,198,999	2,593,837
Other		1,642,500
Accumulated Post Retirement Benefit Obligation	1,004,699	616,180
Current Maturities of Long-Term Debt	3,405,471	3,732,113
Accounts Payable:		
Purchased Power	2,067,635	2,107,342
Other	1,224,228	787,945
Consumer Deposits and Prepayments	71,451	75,945
Other Liabilities and Deferred Credits	<u>6,191,273</u>	<u>6,596,545</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>67,070,456</u>	<u>76,595,471</u>
TOTAL EQUITIES AND LIABILITIES	<u>139,358,598</u>	<u>155,439,802</u>

## Statements of Revenue and Patronage Capital\*

	December 31,	
	2021	2022
<u>Operating Revenue</u>	<u>45,882,380</u>	<u>47,494,091</u>
<u>Operating Expenses</u>		
Cost of Power	22,496,352	22,774,316
Distribution - Operations	1,725,587	1,771,433
Distribution - Maintenance	6,234,044	5,775,263
Consumer Accounts	1,007,617	1,109,420
Sales	815,958	822,116
Administrative and General	3,434,506	4,090,014
Depreciation	3,833,743	3,982,965
Other Operating Costs	730,944	1,881,824
Taxes	59,468	59,205
Interest - Other	<u>2,717</u>	<u>1,298</u>
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	<u>40,340,936</u>	<u>42,267,854</u>
<u>Fixed Charges</u>		
Interest on Long-Term Debt	<u>1,850,802</u>	<u>1,972,671</u>
<u>G &amp; T and Other Capital Credits</u>	<u>3,842,593</u>	<u>2,715,407</u>
NET OPERATING MARGINS	<u>7,533,235</u>	<u>5,968,973</u>
<u>Non-Operating Margins</u>		
Interest Income	61,844	182,972
Other Non-Operating Income (Expenses)	<u>123,498</u>	<u>466,294</u>
TOTAL NON-OPERATING MARGINS	<u>185,342</u>	<u>649,266</u>
Provisions for Taxes on Income	(41,061)	(64,632)
NET MARGINS	7,677,516	6,553,607
<u>Patronage Capital</u> , at Beginning of Year	65,040,937	72,044,398
Less: Retirement of Capital Credits	(674,038)	
Other Adjustment	(17)	(50)
<u>Patronage Capital</u> , at End of Year	<u>72,044,398</u>	<u>78,597,955</u>

Note: The capital credits from Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc., and other cooperatives, represent patronage capital credits allocated to us, but not paid.

The accounts of our cooperative for 2021 and 2022 have been audited by Buffamante, Whipple, Buttafaro, P.C., Jamestown, N.Y. The auditors' complete report is on file in the office of the cooperative and is available for inspection by members of the cooperative.

\*Consolidated Financial Statements



# Causes of Outages in 2022

CAUSES OF OUTAGES	TOTAL OUTAGE HOURS (Hours out multiplied by the number of consumers affected)	PERCENTAGE OF ALL OUTAGE HOURS
Trees or Limbs	74,768	35.4%
Power/Transmission Supplier	51,108	24.2%
Distribution Line Equipment	28,080	13.3%
Major Storm	26,624	12.6%
Customer Caused	8,091	3.8%
Pre-Arranged	6,760	3.2%
Unknown	6,481	3.1%
Animals	5,212	2.5%
Lightning	3,412	1.6%
Weather/Other	913	0.4%
TOTALS	211,449	100%

## Important Annual Meeting News!

The Annual Meeting of the members for REA Energy Cooperative, Inc. will be held Thursday, Sept. 14, 2023, at Kovalchick Convention Complex, 711 Pratt Drive, Indiana, Pa. Doors open at 4 p.m. The business meeting will begin at 5:30 p.m. Those who attend the in-person meeting will receive a gift and be eligible for door prizes.

For those unable to attend the meeting in person, there is an option to attend the meeting virtually. To register for the virtual meeting, you will need to go to [www.reaenergy.com](http://www.reaenergy.com) and click on the button that says "Annual Meeting Registration." Please register by noon Sept. 14, 2023.

This admits you to the Virtual Annual Meeting and also entitles the named member(s) to a chance to win a door prize. Members who participate in the online meeting for the entire time will receive a \$10 bill credit. Informational videos, along with a list of Frequently Asked Questions on how to register and log in for the meeting, are posted on our website.

### REA Energy Cooperative, Inc. Annual Meeting Sept. 14, 2023

- *Entertainment — 4:30 p.m.*
- *Call to Order and Statement of a Quorum — 5:30 p.m.*
- *Reading of Notices*
- *Action on 2022 Minutes*
- *Election Results*
- *Chairman's Report*
- *President and CEO's Report*
- *Unfinished Business*
- *New Business*
- *Questions & Answers*
- *Adjournment*
- *Awarding of Prizes*



## October is National Cooperative Month

Being part of a cooperative means being part of something special. REA Energy will celebrate National Cooperative Month in October, along with more than 40,000 other cooperative businesses serving more than 140 million people nationwide.

This year, REA Energy will be celebrating Member Appreciation Month throughout October. Members who were not able to participate in the in-person or online annual meeting will need to present their annual meeting member card (the bottom portion of their annual meeting notice) to receive a gift packet. This will be given on a first-come, first-served basis. Only one gift packet per membership will be given, while quantities last. \*If you received an attendance gift at the in-person meeting or the \$10 bill credit for participating in the online meeting, you will not be eligible for a gift packet.

If you have any questions, please visit [reaenergy.com](http://reaenergy.com) or call 724-349-4800 or 800-211-5667.

# IMPORTANT NOTICE!

**REA Energy's Ebensburg and Indiana offices will be closed on Friday, Oct. 13, 2023. Both offices will reopen at 7 a.m. Monday, Oct. 16, 2023. Please call 724-463-7273 or 800-332-7273 to report any power outages. Payments can be placed in the drop box at both locations or made via SmartHub at [reaenergy.com](http://reaenergy.com).**

### Right-of-way management/facility construction news

REA Energy contractors will be completing tree-trimming work in the following areas in September:

- Contractor crews from Penn Line Tree Service will be trimming the rights of way of the Summerhill and Saint Augustine substation areas, in addition to emergency maintenance areas.

Notification of work will be made via a letter to members in the areas affected. Contractors will perform all right-of-way work per REA Energy specifications. If you have any questions, call 724-349-4800, or you can view the specifications online at [reaenergy.com](http://reaenergy.com). All crews will carry identification.

## Your Board of Directors



Michael J. Bertolino  
Chairman  
District 3



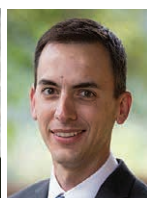
Wayne Farabaugh  
Vice Chairman  
District 8



Robert P. Neese  
Secretary/Treasurer  
District 5



Sandra Dill  
District 9



Tom Beresnyak  
District 1



Anthony Enciso  
District 7



Thomas Aurandt  
District 4



John R. Learn  
District 6



J.R. "Rick" Shope  
District 2

*REA Energy is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

# Dormitory 101:

## Make Room for Safety

The car is loaded up and check-in is about to start on college campuses across the country. While you want to have all the comforts of home at school, there are some **electrical safety tips to keep in mind** as you set up your new space.

- **Do not** overload outlets, extension cords, or power strips.
- Use power strips with **overcurrent protectors**. This will shut off the power if there is too much power being drawn.
- Only purchase and use electrical products tested for safety. Some commonly **approved safety labels** include **UL**, **CSA**, and **MET**.

- **Unplug small appliances** when not in use and all electronics when away for extended periods.
- Keep all electrical appliances and **cords safely away from bedding, curtains, papers**, and other flammable material.

Check with your **university's housing department** on specific housing rules before planning to bring hot plates, coffee makers, toasters, microwaves, and portable heaters.

For more information on dorm safety, visit:

 **Safe  
Electricity.org**





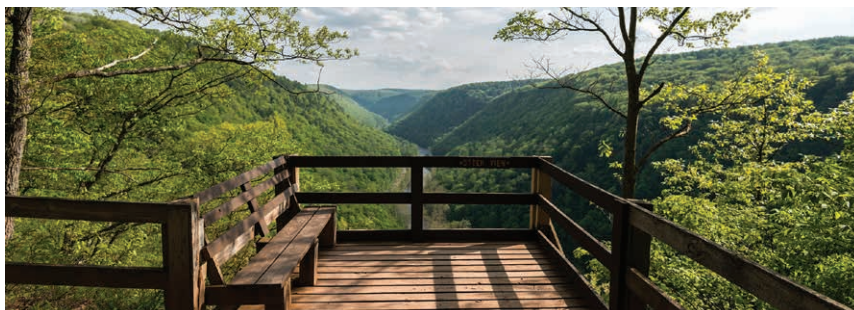
## In & Around

### Tri-County Rural Electric Cooperative

“Getting away from it all” doesn’t have to involve busy airport terminals or day-long drives — serenity, or adventure, awaits in the Pennsylvania Wilds. Much of the eastern reaches of the PA Wilds rests within the service territory of Mansfield-based Tri-County Rural Electric Cooperative, which serves more than 19,500 homes, farms and businesses across 3,300 miles of line spanning seven counties and parts of New York.

As the region’s name implies, travelers to the PA Wilds won’t struggle to find a way back to nature. If you’re looking for a chance to disconnect, a trip to Ole Bull State Park in the Black Forest of Potter County will give you a fine excuse to ignore your phone.

A short drive from Ole Bull, travelers can find Cherry Springs State Park, named for the large stretches

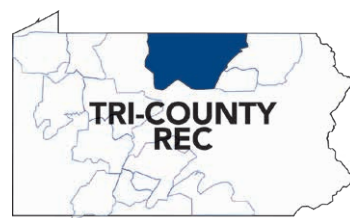


**PA GRAND CANYON:** Set in the Pine Creek Gorge of Tioga State Park, the Pennsylvania Grand Canyon stretches for 50 miles. Leonard Harrison State Park sits on one side of the canyon and Colton Point State Park on the other.

of black cherry trees originally found in the area. Recognized by the International Dark-Sky Association, the park is prime real estate for stargazers.

And, of course, there’s Pine Creek Gorge, perhaps better known as the Pennsylvania Grand Canyon, surrounded by approximately 165,000 acres of the Tioga State Forest. The National Park Service even designated a 12-mile section of the gorge as a National Natural Landmark.

There’s always more to explore. Know of a hidden gem or generally cool place to see in your area? Tell us about it at [CommunityCorner@prea.com](mailto:CommunityCorner@prea.com).



**Main Office:** Mansfield, Pa.  
**Consumer-members served:** 19,560  
**Website:** [tri-countyrec.com](http://tri-countyrec.com)

## Co-op Q&A

PLEASE EMAIL YOUR ANSWER and a photo of yourself to [CommunityCorner@prea.com](mailto:CommunityCorner@prea.com). Include your full name, the name of your cooperative and a daytime telephone number.

### NOVEMBER’S QUESTION

**No matter what life throws at you, there’s always something to be thankful for. What made you grateful in 2023?**

Send your response by **MONDAY, SEPT. 18**, with “November 2023 Q&A” in the subject line.

### DECEMBER’S QUESTION

**Many families have holiday traditions. Tell us about your favorite ones.**

Send your response by **MONDAY, OCT. 23**, with “December 2023 Q&A” in the subject line.

### SEPTEMBER’S RESPONSES

**Getting kids up and out the door for school is a challenge, what’s your go-to parenting trick?**



**“My kids have their own alarms (Alexa) in their bedrooms. If they start getting difficult, I take their phones for the evening, which usually fixes things quickly. I’ve also been known to ‘drop in’ on their Alexas from work and ask why they aren’t up and moving yet. Really freaks them out.”**

– **CHRISTY TOPPER, BEDFORD RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**



**“Talking to them about their upcoming day – any tests, events, after-school activities, etc. – usually helps them mentally prepare and hopefully gets them excited about going. Other than that, it’s the wife running the show, and she is very efficient in maintaining the ‘morning routine.’”**

– **RYAN YOUNG, BEDFORD RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**



**“I’m probably one of the luckiest parents alive because I’ve never had an issue with my kids getting up for school! My daughter sets her own alarm and is running around half of the time before I’m even out of bed. My son gets up when I wake him, and he’s ready to rock!”**

– **BRITTANY HOPKINS, TRI-COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

# One Old Goat Looking for Another

STEVE PIATT

IT WASN'T EASY, IGNORING THIS mountain stream I knew from past experience was teeming with wild brook trout. But on this morning I wasn't toting a fly rod. Instead, I was loaded down with a sand-filled backpack, trudging forward with the help of trekking poles as I crossed the trickle and headed up a steep — very steep — utility right of way in Cameron County.

On many levels, this made no sense. Here I was, well past my hunting prime, enjoying retirement and everything that comes with it, including Medicare. Cancer and back and knee surgeries in my rear-view mirror, I've grown accustomed to dealing with whatever else pops up these days, including glaucoma.

Don't tell me I'm still middle-aged. I haven't seen any 134-year-olds lately, have you?

Still, I put myself through these tests regularly — this time, in preparation for an Alaskan mountain goat hunt. This amazing animal has haunted me since a 2019 British Columbia adventure left me wanting more.

At my age, such a hunt requires a singular focus and months of preparation that includes regular hikes with a load similar in weight to what I'll be taking afield. I seek out vertical challenges — exploring trails in Sullivan County's Worlds End State Park, an area served by Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative; bushwhacking through state forest tracts, often in the heat of the day; accepting challenges that sometimes focus on distance, rather than elevation; and taking quick workouts on hills closer to home.



**TAKING STOCK:** Writer Steve Piatt contemplates — and prepares for — his next hunting adventure, a trip to Prince William Sound to snag an elusive mountain goat.

I try to strike a delicate balance between hikes that lead to sore muscles and those that push me to the point where an injury would stall my preparation or — worse yet — force a devastating decision to cancel the hunt. As long as the aches and pains are in different locations each day, I'm thinking I'm fine.

There are also regular sessions at the shooting range, extending my comfort zone out to 300 yards and beyond with my Browning X-Bolt and 300 Winchester Magnum. It's a two-pronged effort, for it makes no sense to make the climb only to blow the shot or, conversely, to be an expert marksman and then be unable to traverse the rugged landscape where the goats reside.

Out of necessity, the trip planning and preparation have monopolized the summer. In addition to the workouts and range sessions, there are countless details to finetune: flights, hotels, gear purchases, even contacts with taxidermists ahead of the hunt, planning for success that may or may not occur.

But ultimately, it's about being able to make the climb. It's a question that won't be answered until the hunt itself, and while I can exude confidence now, the honest response to that question is, "I don't know."

Fear is a great motivator. Fear of not being able to navigate the rugged, wet, vertical landscape to get to the goats. Fear of surrendering to the mountain and watching the time, effort, and expense end somewhere well below where I need to be. Fear of failure.

So I hike, not for enjoyment but out of necessity, accompanied only by the female voice from the navigational app on my phone, counting out the miles and pace as I progress up and down my route. I'm not able to check the vertical tally until the end of my workout; sometimes I'm happy, other times, I'm disappointed and vow to find a steeper challenge.

I remind myself I've done this before, surprising even my B.C. guide when we made grueling, daily climbs into high elevations that ultimately didn't result in a filled tag.

But that was four years ago. Can I do it again ... this time in the mountains off Prince William Sound, a virtual rain forest that's home to great numbers of goats who live where no one else wants to.

I chuckle at the irony. One old goat looking for another. 🐐

**STEVE PIATT** is a veteran newspaper editor and outdoor writer who along with his wife, Paula, has hunted and fished across North America. He is most at home on the water and in the fields of the Keystone State. He lives in Bradford County.



## Relax and Take a Break

ANNE M. KIRCHNER

**FALL IS A BUSY TIME** of the year. As school and work activities increase, we often find ourselves in a state of tension and frustration. It's important to give ourselves permission to take a break. Hitting the pause button from everyday responsibilities helps us maintain our mental and physical health.

For some people, breaktime includes exercising, napping or browsing social media. I enjoy listening to music while munching on a homemade snack. Brownies and quick breads are my source of happiness, especially when served with a cup of cold — yes, I said cold! — coffee. ☕

**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



### PEANUT BUTTER BANANA BROWNIES

- 2 medium-ripe bananas
- 1 ¼ cups sugar
- ½ cup butter, melted
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ cup whole-wheat flour
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup cocoa powder
- ⅓ cup peanut butter
- 2 tablespoons water

Mash the bananas in a mixing bowl. Add the sugar, butter, vanilla and salt. Stir to combine; set aside. In a separate bowl, combine the whole-wheat flour, all-purpose flour and cocoa powder. Add the flour mixture to the banana mixture; stir gently to avoid overmixing. Pour the batter into an 8-by-8-inch greased baking dish. In a small bowl, blend the peanut butter with the water. Drop small dollops of the thinned peanut butter on top of the batter. Use a butter knife to swirl in the peanut butter. Bake at 350 degrees for 35 to 45 minutes or until firm. Cool completely before serving. *Makes 9 servings.*



### PEACH OATMEAL BREAD

- 3 medium peaches, diced
- 2 cups flour
- ¾ cup brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon cloves
- 1 cup quick-cooking oats
- 1 cup milk
- 2 eggs, beaten
- ¼ cup canola oil

Wash, pit and chop the peaches to equal 2 cups; set aside. In a large mixing bowl, sift together the flour, brown sugar, baking powder, salt and spices. Stir in the oats. In a separate bowl, combine the milk, eggs and canola oil. Add the wet mixture to the dry ingredients, stirring until moistened. Stir in the peaches. Pour the batter into a greased 9-by-5-by-3-inch loaf pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour or until an inserted toothpick comes out clean. Cool for 10 minutes, then turn the bread onto a cooling rack. *Makes 1 loaf.*



### CARAMEL ICED COFFEE

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup water, divided
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- Ice cubes
- 8 ounces coffee, chilled
- ¼ cup almond milk

Make a simple syrup by placing the sugar and a 1/2 cup of water in a medium saucepan. Bring the mixture to a boil, stirring often. After the sugar dissolves, boil the mixture for 7 to 10 minutes without stirring. The syrup will turn a light brown color. Remove from the heat and slowly add the remaining water and the vanilla. Pour the syrup into a heat-proof container and place in the refrigerator to thicken. Fill a glass with ice. Pour the chilled coffee and 1 tablespoon caramel syrup over the ice. Add the almond milk and stir. Store leftover syrup in an airtight container in the refrigerator. *Makes 1 serving.*

# Metal Roofs Last a Lifetime, Reduce Cooling Costs

**JAMES DULLEY**

**DEAR JIM:** My old shingle roof is about 20 years old and the south side has a leak. I might try a metal roof. What are my options and are they really more efficient? — Janet K.

**DEAR JANET:** Metal roofs can keep your house cooler during summer. This can dramatically improve your family's comfort and reduce your electric bills if you air-condition. During the winter, these roofs have a negligible impact on the energy efficiency of your house. I installed an aluminum-simulated shake roof on my own home.

Most metal roofs reflect away more of the sun's heat than asphalt shingle roofs, particularly those that have black or any non-white shingles. This keeps the roofing materials cooler so less heat is radiated down through the ceilings to the living area. Also, the underside of the metal surface has lower emissivity than shingles, so even less heat radiates down to the ceiling below.

The final energy advantage is the metal is relatively thin, and has a contour stamped into it to simulate other shingle styles. This contour creates an air gap between most of the roofing and the roof sheathing below it. With a sloped roof, outdoor air naturally circulates under the metal roof to keep it cooler.

Installing a metal roof can cost significantly more than standard, or even decorative, architectural fiberglass shingles. However, you can expect a metal roof to last at least 50 years, and some have

lifetime warranties. You may also get a reduction in your homeowner's insurance premiums because hot embers from a nearby house fire will not ignite a metal roof like they would shingles or real wood shakes.

There are many residential metal roofing materials from which to select. Aluminum is the most lightweight and much of it is made from recycled beverage cans. This, along with the energy savings and reduced landfill waste from replacing shingles every 20 years, makes it Earth-friendly for decades.

Simulated cedar shake and barrel-tile aluminum roofing styles are particularly attractive and efficient. They are delivered as large panels to hasten installation and eliminate the possibility of single shakes or tiles being blown off during storms. Copper and stainless steel are also very attractive and available in many styles, but their cost is often outside the budgets of most homeowners.

Steel roofing is also becoming more popular on homes. Painted standing-seam or tile-steel roofing is very

durable. Instead of trying to simulate some type of standard roofing material, the bright colors and unique appearance are signatures of upscale homes. Powder-coating with Kynar in a multi-step process enhances durability and is commonly used on both steel and aluminum.

Old asphalt shingles are often cracked with curled edges and have to be torn off before new shingles are installed. Most metal roofs, because of their rigidity, can be installed over existing shingles no matter their condition. This saves the cost of tearing off the old shingles — often about \$1,000.

No matter what type of new roof you select, install an attic ridge vent and make sure there is an adequate soffit vent inlet area. While the new roofing is being installed, it is a relatively quick job for the roofers to install the ridge while they are up there. 🛠️

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).



**STAY COOL:** Although metal roofs may cost significantly more than traditional shingles, they can last a lifetime and will keep your house cool in the summer.



# From Waste to (Energy!) Wealth

The search for renewable energy has led producers to an unlikely resource

JENNAH DENNEY

**BIOMASS ENERGY, WHICH CONVERTS** animal, human and plant waste into energy, is gaining popularity as a renewable energy source. Biomass energy reduces waste and greenhouse gas emissions, generates electricity and provides additional advantages.

enterprises produce animal waste every day, and crop harvesting generates plant waste. Human waste also provides energy-generating organic material.


Electricity generated from waste is environmentally sustainable and reduces landfill waste and greenhouse gas emissions.

Cost savings is another significant advantage of biomass energy. Additionally, biomass energy can be produced locally, which reduces reliance on foreign energy sources, stabilizes energy prices and economic risks, and creates employment opportunities in waste management and energy.

## Disadvantages of biomass energy

Even though there are major advantages to biomass energy, there are a few drawbacks. Not all organic waste can be converted to energy, and certain waste materials are contaminated, therefore unsuited for biomass energy production.

Biomass energy production can also be costly when waste must be transported long distances to a processing facility. To address these issues, the cost and efficiency of biomass energy production are being improved, and new technologies are being developed to enhance anaerobic digestion and other biomass energy production methods.

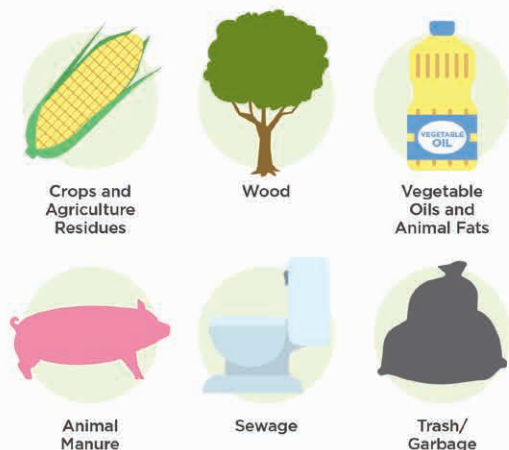
Despite these challenges, biomass energy has the potential to become an important renewable energy source. 

**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.

## ELECTRICITY FROM BIOMASS

Biomass is renewable organic material that comes from plants and animals. It can be burned directly for heat or converted to renewable liquid and gaseous fuels through various processes.

### Types of Biomass Used for Energy



### How do electric utilities use biomass?

The electric power sector uses wood and biomass-derived waste to generate electricity. Most electricity generated from biomass is produced by direct combustion.

1. Biomass is burned in a boiler to produce high-pressure steam.
2. Steam flows over turbine blades, causing them to rotate.
3. The turbine rotation drives a generator, producing electricity.

**One Advantage of Biomass:** Electricity generated from biomass waste is environmentally sustainable and reduces landfill waste and greenhouse gas emissions.

**One Disadvantage of Biomass:** Biomass energy production can be costly, particularly when waste must be transported long distances to a processing facility.

Source: Dept. of Energy

Creating energy from biomass requires several phases. First, the collection and transfer of waste to a processing plant where, after sorting, the waste can be converted to energy through a variety of processes:

- **Anaerobic digestion** — breaking down organic waste without oxygen — is a frequent approach. Bio-gas can be burned to generate power or heat from this method.
- **Incinerating biomass** also generates energy. This involves a controlled burning of organic waste to generate power or heat.
- **Pyrolysis** is a third biomass-to-energy technique. Bio-oil, a liquid fuel used to generate power or heat, is produced by heating biological waste without oxygen.

## Advantages of biomass energy

Since waste is constantly being produced, biomass energy is considered a renewable source. Farms and other agricultural

# Up the Valley, Across the Crick

MITCHELL KYD

I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHY SHE looked so confused, so I repeated my answer with the highway route number as reference. When I told my friend Judy I was going up the valley to the Amish greenhouse for summer flowers, her eyebrows wrinkled again and she tilted her head to ask: *"Up the valley? What does that mean???"*

Sometimes, when you've known a thing forever, it's easy to forget that other people may never understand it that way. Where I live, "up the valley" means any place north of where you are along a beautiful ribbon of road that stretches for miles past farmland and small woods, connecting little dots of towns between two wideset mountain ranges. "Down the valley" means whatever you're discussing is south of you. Everybody from here knows that. If you're new to that drive and don't take in the full picture, the views far right and left, I guess you could miss the fact that our chunk of state road meets the textbook definition.

I suppose I complicated the issue when I told Judy to watch for landmarks. All she needed to do to find my greenhouse was turn right at the only traffic light for miles and then turn left, across the crick.

I know "crick" actually means a painful, stiff feeling, especially in your neck. I also know "crick" is our colloquialism. I'm always hoping the fact that I recognize a colloquialism might validate I also know I'm using one.

I've lived up the valley for a very long time and to pronounce it "creek" simply feels wrong. It betrays my authenticity. Think of it as a choice similar to the soda-versus-pop debate over carbonated drinks, or the southern version where "coke" is often the generic reference to everything sweet, bottled and fizzy. Those words all refer to the same thing, but instantly say something about what part of the country you truly call home.

When the day came to buy hanging baskets and impatiens, my morning excursion checked all the boxes. Sun. Scenery. Wildlife. Happy moments. As I was driving,

a hawk swooped onto a utility line to survey the daily specials for his breakfast to-go. Three does crossed in front of me — after an all-night smorgasbord at a nearby farm or garden, no doubt.

Greenhouse day also turned out to be the last day of school in that part of the valley, and rather than be annoyed at the delays for bus stops and starts, I had to smile as kids flew down the steps for the very last time that school year. Nearly all had someone waiting in the yard, often a mom or dad, but sometimes there were younger siblings, too. For the big kids coming home, the summer lay waiting like a giant book of the best stories ever written. For some littles, summer was the only thing standing

between them and their chance to climb up those same bus steps on their very first day of school.

The last bit of the drive into the greenhouse is a dirt road. There is no flashing signage, no paved parking, and no chance you're going to be able to pay with your plastic. There's also no admission charge to step inside a vibrant piece of living artwork, where the contrast is women in long gray dresses and aprons moving among the tables



with watering cans, tenderly pinching off spent blooms. As I was filling my flats, the distinctive whistle of a bobwhite quail drifted through the open doors.

"Yes, they're starting to come back," my plant whisperer said when I told her I hadn't heard that bob-bob white call in years. It was a perfect day.

It's time for fall flowers now, and I think I'll take Judy with me. She can overload on potted mums and enjoy a beautiful ride. When her friends ask where she got such magnificent flowers, she can also direct them with confidence: up the valley, across the crick. 🍂

**YVONNE BUTTS-MITCHELL** celebrates the joys and poignant moments of rural living under the pen name Mitchell Kyd. Her stories from the Path Valley Hotel were hatched by encounters with contractors, critters and creepy crawlies while rehabbing the family cabin after its 17-year stint as a giant closet.



## ISSUE MONTH AD DEADLINE

November 2023	September 14
December 2023	October 13
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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.

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# Sometimes, Humor Just Finds Me

JOHN KASUN

IF YOU READ THE SHORT bio at the end of each of my columns, you will see it states that I “look for humor in everyday life.” While that is true, it does not tell the whole story. I swear sometimes the humor gods follow me around to see if they can do something that will appear in the next column, and that was just what happened one recent evening.

I was finishing up a “honey-do” project for my wife when I ran short of material. I had just enough time to make it to the building supply center if I rushed. A short time later, I pulled into the store’s parking lot and realized I was not the only one who ran out of something. I grabbed the first available parking space toward the back of the lot and rushed inside. I found everything I needed, but now I was at the back of the checkout line. I finally paid and headed out the door with little time left before closing.

As I left, darkness was falling. The lot was full when I arrived, but now my truck looked pretty stupid sitting all by itself near the edge of the empty lot. As I got closer, something white caught my eye next to the driver’s door.

At first glance, I assumed it was a ball of newspaper or some wrapping paper, but I then realized it had a definite shape — and it was not a bundle of paper. When I was only a few steps away, I knew what I thought it was, but felt that was impossible. Finally, standing over the white object, I realized it was ... a turkey.

It wasn’t a farm-white turkey with feathers. No, this one was naked — and dead. How do I know? Its head was missing, and it had one of those plastic buttons in its chest that pop when the bird is done cooking. And there it was, lying on its back with its legs pointed skyward. Now you might assume it was a store-bought turkey, still in its wrapper, but no; this bird was unwrapped and thawed out.

The only thing this turkey was missing was stuffing and a roasting pan.

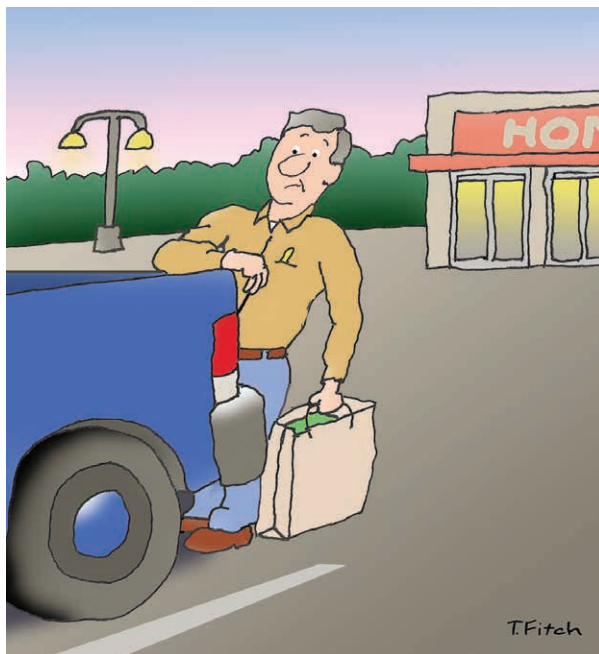
I glanced around the vacant lot for its owner, but no one was in sight. My first reaction was to take it into the store and turn it in to lost-and-found, but how stupid would that announcement be?

*“Attention shoppers, would the person who lost a 20-pound, fully dressed turkey in our parking lot please come to the service desk to identify and claim.”*

My mind raced: “Who was this turkey? What was it mixed up in? Was this a drug deal gone bad or was it gang related?” I even wondered if somehow it was a warning to

me. Maybe one of my columns upset a reader, and this turkey was to warn me to back off or the same would happen to me. I guess if I had a pet turkey that would have made more sense.

It was a cool evening, and for a brief second, I considered taking the bird home, but my wife is really fussy about the food she prepares and germs. She wouldn’t be happy to learn I found this turkey next to my truck in an unsanitized parking lot. No, the best thing to do was wipe my



prints off anything I had touched and avoid looking into the security cameras as I left the lot.

Later that evening, as I related what had occurred to my wife, she laughed and said, “I believe you because I know all the weird stuff that happens to you. But you can’t use this in a column. No one will believe you.”

“I know,” I said, “but it actually happened, and it’s funny. It’s a go!” 🐔

**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.



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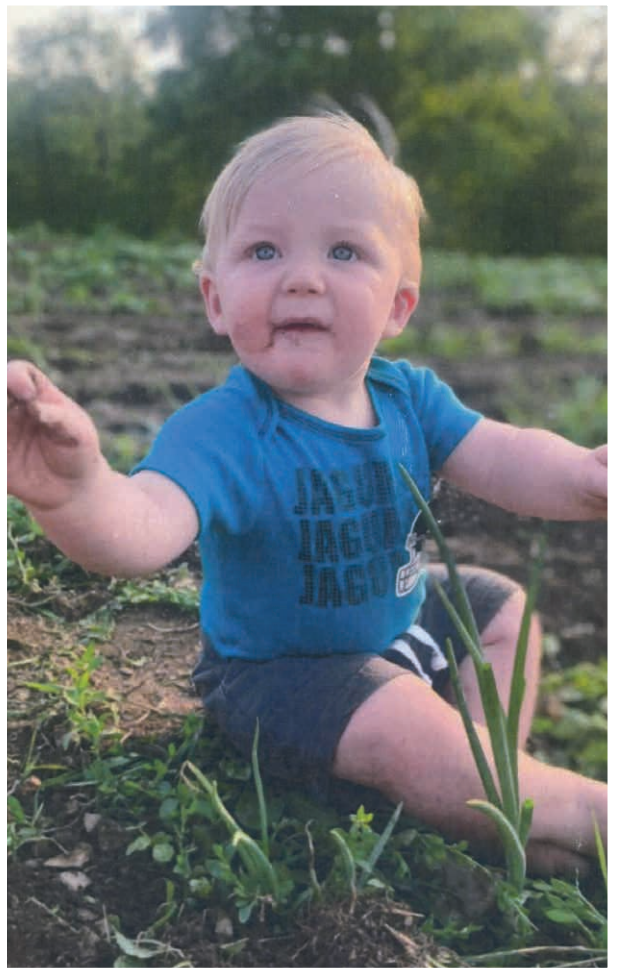
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**AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHERS** are encouraged to send photos for the 2023 "Rural Reflections" contest (no digital files) to: Penn Lines Photos, P.O. Box 1266, Harrisburg, PA 17108-1266. On the back of each photo, include your name, address, phone number 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 at the end of the contest year if a self-addressed, stamped envelope is included.



**ADDRESS CHANGES:**

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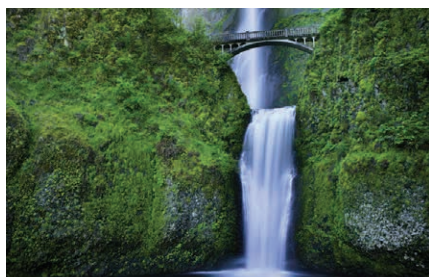
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- OREGON:** Astoria, Hayden Island, Portland, Multnomah Falls, Mt. Hood, Pendleton, and Hells Canyon.
- Landmarks:** Mount St. Helens, Columbia River Gorge, and Snake River.

The background of the map features a scenic view of a river flowing through a lush, forested landscape with a large riverboat cruising on the water.



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