

NOVEMBER 2025

PENNLINES

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a Difference

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NOVEMBER



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Thank You For Your Entries

Thanks to everyone who submitted photos for our 2025 "Rural Reflections" contest. Now it's time to start snapping away for 2026

Thank you for bringing us into your homes – month after month, year after year – and letting us tell the stories from your communities. From all of us at Penn Lines: Happy Thanksgiving!



ON THE COVER

Eric Henchey, center, coordination engineer at Huntingdon-based Valley Rural Electric Cooperative, inspires the next generation – his sons, Landon, left, and Owen – as assistant Scoutmaster for Scout Troop 25.

PHOTO CREDIT
MICHAEL T. CRAWFORD

A Season of Gratitude, a Year of Resilience



LEROY WALLS

AS WE GATHER AROUND OUR tables this Thanksgiving, many of us will pause to give thanks for family, for health, and for the simple comforts of home. This season also invites reflection — in particular, on the fragility and strength of the communities we serve.

Just over a year ago, crews from our cooperative and others left home to help pick up the pieces after Hurricanes Helene and Milton tore through cooperative territories in several southern states. Entire towns were battered, and thousands of fellow cooperative members endured without electricity for weeks.

The destruction was heartbreaking, but a tried-and-true cooperative principle — “cooperation among cooperatives” — offered hope.

That principle isn’t just a line of words in a list — it’s a way of life. When disaster strikes one corner of the cooperative network, others step in. It’s not charity, and it’s not transactional. It’s the recognition that together, we are stronger than any storm.

In the year since, as communities have rebuilt, we’ve been reminded of the resilience that defines co-ops everywhere: It’s the quiet strength that keeps lineworkers climbing poles in freezing rain or oppressive heat. It’s the persistence of directors and managers who navigate rising costs and regulatory uncertainty without losing sight of the members who count on them. And it’s the commitment of co-ops to keep innovating so rural communities are never left behind.

As important as it is, cooperation among cooperatives is just one of seven co-op principles — and all are fundamental to who we are as member-service organizations. *Voluntary and open membership* ensures everyone has a place. *Democratic member control* means your cooperative’s direction is guided by you and your neighbors, not by distant investors. *Members’ economic participation* builds accountability and fairness. *Autonomy and independence* keep decision-making in the hands of those who best understand the needs of their communities. *Education, training, and information* ensure members, directors and employees alike have the knowledge to meet the challenges ahead. And *concern for community* builds bridges from neighbor to neighbor and shows the importance of compassion. These principles remind us that our mission extends beyond keeping the lights on: It’s about keeping communities safe ... and keeping them strong.

To me, Thanksgiving is not only about gratitude; it’s also about perspective. The past year has tested us in many ways. We’ve seen rising costs put pressure on family budgets and cooperative operations alike. We’ve watched storms grow stronger and more frequent. We’ve faced the realities of a rapidly changing energy landscape. And yet, through all of it, cooperatives have stood steady. Why? Because we draw strength from each other, and from the communities we serve.

This Thanksgiving, as we reflect on the blessings in our own lives, let us also give thanks for the cooperative spirit that unites us.

A year ago, hurricanes tested our resilience, and once again, cooperatives kept going. They pressed on because of principle ... because of people ... and because they know that the true measure of their success is not only in restoring power, but in restoring hope.

Now, that’s something to be grateful for. 🍂

LEROY WALLS

CHAIRMAN, PENNSYLVANIA RURAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS
PRESIDENT, NEW ENTERPRISE RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Peter A. Fitzgerald

EDITOR
Jill M. Ercolino

SENIOR TECHNICAL EDITOR
Michael T. Crawford

LAYOUT & DESIGN
Kaylin E. Acri

ADVERTISING & PRODUCTION
COORDINATOR
Michelle M. Smith

CONTRIBUTING COLUMNISTS
**John Kasun, Anne M. Kirchner,
Yvonne Butts-Mitchell, Steve Piatt**

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THE HEART OF PENN LINES

One of my favorite nights of the year is when we shine a spotlight on local cooperative communicators. The PREA (Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association) Communications Awards program recognizes the writers, editors and photographers who cover your local co-op community in the center pages of *Penn Lines*. They represent the heart of the magazine, and it shows.



Among the entries, this year's winning work highlighted cooperative lineworkers not only responding to storms at home but also helping communities in the South recover from the devastating impacts of Hurricane Helene. This excellent reporting gave color and insight to the events affecting cooperative members, putting a human face on the news and keeping communities connected.

Whether it's co-op employees serving their communities or members engaged in local activities, the stories provide a glimpse of rural life that's often lacking in today's news coverage. As local newspapers have shuttered across America over the past two decades, rural communities have felt the loss most acutely.

According to Northwestern University's Medill Local News Initiative (Medill), more than 3,200 local newspapers have vanished since 2005. This represents a nearly 40% loss of all print newspapers, leaving 50 million Americans with limited or no access to a reliable source of local news.

Medill's 2025 report finds that 213 counties in the U.S. have no news outlets, while more than 1,500 counties, including 16 in Pennsylvania, have only one news outlet. These "news deserts" leave residents disconnected from important information about their towns, counties, and neighbors – the fabric that commonly binds communities together.

In many rural areas, electric cooperative magazines like *Penn Lines* help fill this gap, and local co-op communicators are critical in this process. They are the boots on the ground, helping to feature local businesses, regional history, and the people and places that define the way of life in these areas. In doing so, they provide something invaluable: a consistent, trusted voice telling rural stories when increasingly fewer people are doing so.

It's an honor to recognize the individuals who put those center pages together. It's the heart of the magazine, brought to you by communicators who put their heart into their work. Congratulations, all.

PETER A. FITZGERALD
EXECUTIVE EDITOR



A NEW VIEW: After two years of work, 250 acres of elk habitat have been added near Parker Dam State Park in the Moshannon State Forest. A new, small elk-viewing area will also be completed on the land by late 2027.

CALLING ALL ELK

Elk habitat, new viewing area added to Parker Dam State Park

An additional 250 acres of elk habitat have been added near Parker Dam State Park in the Moshannon State Forest, Clearfield County, and a new viewing area is on its way, too. The projects are a partnership between the Pennsylvania Game Commission, the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and Turkeys for Tomorrow.

Hit by a tornado in 1985, the area had little wildlife value before the project began two years ago. While deer and turkey have already returned to the area, elk are expected to move in soon alongside the other wildlife.

The project includes grassy areas with wildflowers and open areas with islands of trees that will provide a habitat for the elk along with birds, insects and other animals. In addition, a small elk-viewing area, expected to be completed by late 2027, will border the state forest road. For more information, visit facebook.com/PAGameComm.NCR.

'GROWING A NATION'

Theme for 2026 Farm Show a nod to nation's anniversary

In celebration of the nation's 250th anniversary next year and Pennsylvania's pivotal role in the birth of America, the 2026 Pennsylvania Farm Show theme will be "Growing a Nation."

"America was born in Pennsylvania, with its identity deeply rooted in agriculture," state Secretary of Agriculture Russell Redding said while making the announcement. "Two hundred and fifty years later, Pennsylvania agriculture is still leading our nation, supplying the economic power, ingenuity and innovation that is growing our future."

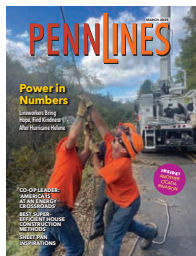
Every year, the Farm Show brings half a million visitors to Harrisburg for eight days of competition and family fun with an educational twist. The 2026 event will run from Saturday, Jan. 10, through Saturday, Jan. 17, at the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex and Expo Center in Harrisburg.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Penn Lines earns four 'Willies'

Penn Lines recently received four awards for writing at the 2025 Willies Awards, hosted by the National Electric Cooperatives Statewide Editors Association (SEA) in Arlington, Va.

Penn Lines won a first-place honor for "Power in Numbers: Pa. Lineworkers Bring Hope, Find Kindness After Hurricane Helene"



in the category of "Best Feature Demonstrating or Exemplifying the Co-op Spirit." The article, published in March 2025, shared the stories of local lineworkers who traveled to the South to help fellow co-ops recover after the devastating storm.

The magazine also received two Awards of Excellence. The first was in the "Best Column" category for "Community is a Team Sport," an Editor's Desk column that appeared in June 2024. The column underscored the importance of community in the cooperative world. The second

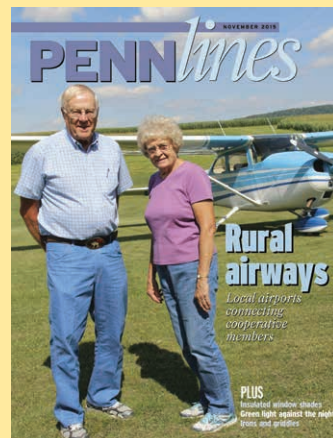
Award of Excellence was earned in the "Best Historical Feature" category for "Ghosts Among Us: The Eerie Allure of Abandoned Towns." Published in October 2024, the article highlighted once-vibrant places that are only memories today.

In the "Best Editorial" category, the magazine won an Award of Merit for "Stronger Together," a First Word column published in November 2024. The column also focused on the aftermath of Hurricane Helene and the kind, giving spirit of co-op employees and members — even in the face of adversity.

The Willies Awards — named for Willie Wiredhand, the rural electric cooperative mascot — were presented during the SEA Summer Business Meeting in August at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's headquarters in Arlington. 📍



TIME LINES



NOVEMBER 2015

A decade ago, *Penn Lines* turned the spotlight on rural aviation facilities and the cooperative members behind them. They included Bedford County's Ed Sell, who built an airstrip on his own land. Also featured were DuBois Regional Airport and Pittsfield's Brokenstraw Airport. If nothing else, the article proved that spending time in the clouds doesn't have to be limited to TSA lines and gigantic airline facilities.

NOVEMBER



SOLVE THE CASE

The year is 1976, and friends and family have gathered to say goodbye to a Warren, Pa., heiress. Before you know it, a man's three wives meet and, suddenly, there's a murder to be solved. That's the premise of a murder mystery dinner, set for Nov. 15 at the Conewango Club, Warren. Tickets are \$35, and proceeds benefit the Warren County Historical Society. Learn more at warrenhistory.org.

EVERGREEN SWAG

Interested in learning how to incorporate evergreens into your winter décor? Penn State Extension is holding a workshop, "Holiday Evergreen Swag Made Simple," Dec. 1 in Gettysburg. All materials will be provided. The fee is \$15, and the registration deadline is Nov. 28. To register, visit extension.psu.edu.



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TEA TIME

The Oldest House in Laceyville, Wyoming County, will host its Annual Christmas Tea Dec. 5 to 7, at 297 Main St. The event will kick off at 4 p.m. Dec. 5 with a performance from Tunkhannock Dulcimers and end at 5 p.m. Dec. 7 after a day of mulled cider, cookies, and conversation. Admission is free. Learn more at the-oldest-house.com.

KICKING OFF CHRISTMAS

Strolling singers, dancers, musicians and street corner thespians will be part of the 41st Dickens of a Christmas Dec. 6, in Wellsboro, Tioga County. Beginning at 9 a.m., the community's streets will be closed to traffic to transform into an early Victorian marketplace. For more information, visit visittopottertioga.com.



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INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION

Cooperative Members Say Mentoring Makes a Difference

MICHAEL T. CRAWFORD

Senior Technical Editor

KING ARTHUR HAD MERLIN. Luke Skywalker had Obi-Wan Kenobi. Peter Parker had Aunt May. The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles had Splinter. In stories old and new across all mediums, mentorship serves as an invaluable element of the hero's journey.

The benefits of mentorship aren't just the stuff of fantasy; decades of data — including a key study released by Big Brothers Big Sisters of America this year — show kids succeed when adults step up.

Look at what's happening with the Everett High School

Rifle Team, which has had seven consecutive, undefeated seasons — a record — and more than 100 victories. Head Coach Coltin Rice, a member of Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative (REC), was part of the school's original rifle team, founded in 2011.

"A lot of the success we've had is because we're always looking to climb the next mountain," explains Rice, a lab supervisor at UPMC Bedford. "We're always trying to better ourselves. I'm always trying to do the same thing — finding ways to be a better coach, be a better person — to be a better role model for our kids."

Just about every rural community has people like Coltin Rice — people committed to inspiring the next generation ... and succeeding.

Opening doors

Rice, who shot on the Bedford team for three seasons before graduating in 2014, says he also benefited from numerous mentors, who taught him the value of teamwork and cooperation. Yet, even as a team member, he was supporting younger students, offering them tips

LEARNING TO LEAD: Clockwise from top left — Alice Polcrack, left, daughter of Erik and Jane Polcrack of Shunk, Sullivan County, and past president of the 4-H State Council, stands with her mentor, Sandy Pardoe, a 4-H educator for the county; Coltin Rice, right, head coach of the undefeated Everett High School Rifle Team, congratulates one of his students, Jesse Chamberlain, for his performance at the 2020 Allegheny Mountain Rifle Conference; Eric Henchey, center, coordination engineer at Valley Rural Electric Cooperative and an assistant Scoutmaster, helps his sons — Owen, left, and Landon — and other Scouts learn to lead with confidence.

and tricks — a role that continued after he left to study at West Virginia University.

“I came home almost every weekend ... so I could coach every chance I could get,” says Rice, who competed on the university’s club team. That extra encouragement has paid off, for the students, in particular. “I have a lot of kids in here getting college scholarships to go shoot at the highest level. We have kids shooting in national championships, getting opportunities to ... travel across the country even before they graduate high school, meeting a lot of people and networking, which will only open up bigger doors for them.”

Motivated to help team members realize their potential, Rice makes himself available any way he can.

“If that means I have to come in [to the Rifle Club] and open up the range so they can practice ... I just want to make sure those opportunities are open to them,” he says. “This program turned a lot of kids around. Kids graduated who might not have graduated had they not been a part of something like this.”

While helping students live up to their potential is important, Rice is just as committed to showing the next generation that Bedford County is a great place to call home.

“Staying local has always been something I valued,” he says. “I want to be somebody who these kids are going to look to — or anybody in the community can look to — as an example of, ‘Hey, this is a good area to be. You don’t have to leave ... you can make a name for yourself here.’”

Rice stays in touch with former students because the way he sees it, once a team member, always a team member: “I just hope the kids know that we were always in it for them.”

‘Smiling from ear to ear’

In their lives, children will have many teachers, but what makes someone a mentor? While mentors often occupy the same space as teachers or coaches — sharing with their protégés the skills and knowledge they’ve accumulated in their lifetimes — the mastery of the subject matter isn’t the most important part.

“You want them to have confidence in their abilities,” explains Eric Henchey, coordination engineer at Huntingdon-based Valley REC and an assistant Scoutmaster. “It’s the confidence to achieve whatever they

set their minds to. Whether it’s getting up in front of other people or digging in to get the work done, whatever that thing is, they know that they can do it. It’s really rewarding to see that confidence grow.”

Henchey, an Eagle Scout, began growing his confidence when he became a Cub Scout at 6 years old. Little by little, his mentors gave him tasks that not only taught him valuable skills, but also helped him see that he was dependable and competent. Now with children of his own, Henchey wants to help others learn and have pride in their accomplishments.

“I felt that I could really help in the troop by sharing my knowledge, sharing that experience I had when I was a kid, and giving back to other kids and the community,” says Henchey, who estimates he’s worked with about two dozen kids as a den leader and Cubmaster. “When they do complete something, and they look over at you and you give them a thumbs up, they’re usually smiling from ear to ear.”

Giving kids the opportunity to expand their skills and confidence requires some behind-the-scenes coordination, and Sandy Pardoe, a member of Forksville-based Sullivan County REC and a 4-H educator, has turned that need into a career.

4-H — short for the organization’s original motto, “Head, Heart, Hands and Health” — has more than 500,000 volunteers and 3,000 professionals who mentor more than 6 million children in the U.S. In 4-H programs, children complete hands-on projects in areas such as health, science, agriculture and civic engagement. They receive guidance from adult mentors like Pardoe and are encouraged to take on leadership roles. Every county in the state offers 4-H opportunities through in-school and after-school programs, clubs, and 4-H camps.

Pardoe is a retired Navy veteran, whose parents enrolled her in 4-H when she was 6 thanks to the encouragement of her neighbors, Mary Lambert and Mary Vough. She says the “two Marys” constantly cheered her on, both as a child and when she began working for 4-H a little more than a decade ago.

Continued on page 12

“You want them to have confidence in their abilities. Whether it’s getting up in front of other people or digging in to get the work done ... It’s really rewarding to see that confidence grow.” – Eric Henchey

"We're always trying to better ourselves. I'm always trying to do the same thing – finding ways to be a better coach, be a better person – to be a better role model for our kids."
– *Coltin Rice*



STUDENT TO TEACHER: Above – Coltin Rice, as a senior on the Everett High School Rifle Team, coaches then-teammate Noelle Hendershot. Below – Rice, now the team's head coach, advises student Matt Semanek during practice at the Everett Sportsman's Club.

Continued from page 10

"I just wanted to do my best to give back to the program that gave me so much," she says. "And now I have their grandkids in my program!"

Seeing the potential

While many children's first mentors are their parents, Pardoe says having another adult they can connect with is vital to learning new skills and developing confidence.

"Growing up, you don't always see eye to eye with your parents," Pardoe quips. "Sometimes, children listen better to other adults than they do to their own parents ... and they might teach you in a different way than your parents because 4-H is all about hands-on learning."

One of the students Pardoe had a significant influence on is Alice Polcrack, daughter of Sullivan County REC members Erik and Jane Polcrack of Shunk. She began participating in a cooking club offered by Sullivan County 4-H when she was 9. After a few years, Polcrack expanded her horizons with riflery, archery and rabbit agility (imagine rabbits running obstacle courses at the direction of their handlers).

She also took a special interest in leadership opportunities and becoming a mentor herself.

"A lot of people encouraged me, but my biggest supporter was Sandy Pardoe," Polcrack says. "She knew from a very young age that I had potential in 4-H. I joined our county council. I picked up leadership positions in other clubs as well and was heavily encouraged to join the Pennsylvania 4-H Council. It was a big culmination of my 4-H experience."

As a past president of the 4-H State Council, Polcrack served as the face of the organization in Pennsylvania. She was also the first person from Sullivan County to be named to the council. In that role, Polcrack met with students who, like her, joined 4-H not knowing what the program entailed. She used the opportunity to show them that 4-H had something for everyone.

Now a junior double majoring in bio-medical sciences and public policy at Susquehanna University in Selinsgrove, Polcrack reflects fondly on her time in 4-H.

"There were just so many great people I met along the way," she says, "and I feel good knowing that I made a positive impact on people's lives in that role, too." 🍷



FACE OF 4-H: Above – Alice Polcrack, front row, second from left, of Shunk and past president of the 4-H State Council, cuts the ribbon during the opening ceremony of the 2023 Pennsylvania Farm Show. Left – Polcrack, back row, left, poses with other members of the 4-H State Council. A junior in college now, Polcrack began participating in 4-H when she was 9 and credits 4-H Educator Sandy Pardoe with being a major influence in her young life.

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Local Lore

Valley Rural Electric Cooperative

Going Big

"If we are going bust, we will go bust big."

Those were the infamous words of Charles M. Schwab, one of America's most accomplished and controversial steel magnates — and a native of Williamsburg, Blair County, an area served by Valley Rural Electric Cooperative.

Schwab reportedly made the statement to his secretary after deciding to invest in the wide-flange steel beam, a risky move at the time that eventually paid off. His company, Bethlehem Steel, began producing the beam in 1908, and before long, it revolutionized the construction industry, helping usher in the era of skyscrapers in America.

As the decades unfolded, Schwab's legacy as a steel pioneer was both complicated and celebrated. In 1918, President Woodrow Wilson asked Schwab to serve as director general of Emergency Fleet Corp., which Congress authorized to oversee all

shipbuilding in the United States. This came after the first years of World War I, when Schwab's Bethlehem Steel held nearly all the munitions contracts for the United States' allies.

His success ultimately gave way to criticism. Schwab was accused of profiteering due to his political and business ties. The allegations became so vehement that Bethlehem Steel and Schwab were at one point referred to as the "merchants of death." Even so, when brought to court, the business and the businessman were acquitted of all charges.

While Schwab reveled in success for the next few years, building what was once referred to as "the most ambitious private house in New York City" and flaunting his wealth, the Great Depression ultimately brought him back to Earth. The stock market crash of 1929, his lavish lifestyle and a few bad business decisions led to the extinction of his fortune, which, when adjusted for inflation, would clock in around \$200 million today.

In the end, from Blair County to the Big Apple, Schwab's assertion about going "bust big" turned out to



GOING BIG: Charles M. Schwab, a native of Blair County, became one of the most important people in the history of America's steel industry, investing in such revolutionary tools as the wide-flange steel beam.

be one of the grandest self-fulfilling prophecies ever uttered — even if it took him decades to see it through. 🍷



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Consumer-members served: 22,514
Website: valleyrec.com

'A Deer, an Alien, a Dog and a Monster ...'

This month's artwork comes from Aleah Scott, age 8 and daughter of Jacob and Jessica Scott, members of Valley Rural Electric Cooperative. As we head into the holiday season, Aleah depicted a moment where friends come together to celebrate and have fun. "I drew a deer, an alien, a dog and a monster because I like them," Aleah says. "They live on Planet White, and they are friends. They also like to play Spaceball." Thank you, Aleah, for sharing your artwork with us!

Aleah Scott, age 8, Valley Rural Electric Cooperative



CALLING ALL KIDS, ages 5 to 17:

Show off your artistic skills!

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

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

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COOPERATIVE CONNECTION

Guest Column

The Season of Giving



STACY HILLIARD

AS THE HOLIDAY SEASON APPROACHES and the air turns crisp, we are reminded that this truly is the season of giving. It is a time for gratitude, generosity and looking out for one another. At REA Energy Cooperative, that's something we take to heart year-round.

You have probably heard us talk about our concern for community. It's not just a nice phrase; it's one of the core principles that makes electric cooperatives different from other utilities. We are here to keep the lights on and make life better for the people we serve: our members, our neighbors, and our friends.

Over the years, we've faced challenges together, and every time, our cooperative family has stepped up. We've come together to support those in need, keep our community strong and build something better for the future. That spirit of generosity is never more evident than during the holiday season.

This year, in the spirit of generosity, the cooperative is conducting a coat drive. New or gently used coats of all sizes for adults and children — along with new scarves, hats, and gloves — will be accepted through the end of this month at both REA offices: 75 Airport Road, Indiana, Pa., 15701; and 127 Municipal Road, Ebensburg, Pa., 15931. Donations will be given to the Community Action offices in Indiana and Cambria counties for distribution.

Another program we offer is Operation Round-Up. Thanks to the generosity of members who round up their electric bills to the nearest dollar, we are able to help local families who may need assistance in paying their electric bill. Every little bit adds up, and it makes a big difference.

REA Energy is also proud to support local students through the Youth Tour program, where we send some of our community's brightest young people to Washington, D.C., to see democracy in action. Youth Tour represents giving in the most meaningful way by investing in tomorrow's leaders.

Also, because we care deeply about safety, we present our hot line safety demonstrations in the community and at local schools, teaching folks of all ages how to stay safe around electricity.

You may also find our employees out in the community, coaching youth sports, volunteering at local events, serving on nonprofit boards and partnering with the Chamber of Commerce to help keep our local economy strong.

While the holiday season is a festive time, we understand these can be tough times for many. If you need advice on saving energy to reduce energy bills or if you have questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to our employees by calling 800-211-5667. We are here to help — not just during the holiday season, but all year long.

At REA Energy, we believe concern for community is more than a value, it is the heart of who we are. And during this season of giving, we are especially grateful to be part of such a caring, generous community.

From all of us at REA Energy Cooperative, Inc., we wish you and your loved ones a joyful, safe, and bright holiday season. 🎁

STACY HILLIARD, CCC, CKAE
COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING MANAGER

Annual Meeting Wrapup

KAYLA KING, CCC, MARKETING AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST

REA ENERGY COOPERATIVE, INC. held its 88th annual meeting Thursday, Sept. 18, at the Kovalchick Complex in Indiana, Pa. There were 356 members who attended in-person and virtually.

The Credentials & Elections Committee members who witnessed the annual meeting were: Robert Fairman, John Shrift, Dennis Gillespie, R. Michael Keith, John T. “Tom” Brady, Chair Virginia Farabaugh, Shelby Miller and Paula Hencel.

Election results

This year, board Districts 5 and 6 were up for regular election. In District 5, incumbent Robert Neese ran unopposed and was re-elected. In District 6, incumbent John Learn also ran unopposed and was re-elected.

Cooperative updates

Board Chairman Michael Bertolino and President & CEO Chad Carrick held a town hall-type presentation for their reports about the cooperative. Communications & Marketing Manager Stacy Hilliard moderated.

Carrick shared questions most frequently asked by members. One of the most popular addressed the broadband rollout through REA’s subsidiary, In The Stix Broadband (ITX). The three main fiber phases, as well as ITX’s existing infrastructure, were discussed.

Upon completion, the REA Energy fiber ring build will have more than 750 miles of connectable fiber, giving those in Indiana and Cambria counties an option for high-speed internet.

“We’re always looking out for what

Your Newly Elected REA Energy Directors



Robert Neese
District 5



John Learn
District 6

our members want and need, and a lot of them were in need of reliable, high-speed internet,” Carrick said. “This fiber ring will also help connect our substations with intelligent devices to make our grid more reliable.”

Carrick also answered questions about the historic outage that occurred when a windstorm swept through REA’s service territory April 29.

“We had the biggest storm we have ever experienced at the co-op,” Carrick said. “Upward of 90% of our system was affected at the peak of the outages. We essentially tripled our outside workforce to get power restored, while dealing with subsequent storms and additional outages. We were able

to restore the majority of members in five-and-a-half days, which is a testimony to the hard work that was done.”

When asked about his thoughts on the storm restoration, Bertolino praised the workforce’s efforts.

“We are reminded how fortunate we are to have a dedicated team to serve our members,” he said. “As board chairman, I want to thank our staff for their continuous and tireless hard work to get the power restored.”

Carrick’s final topic focused on the rising cost of electric service.

“REA Energy does not generate or transmit electricity. We can only control the costs from our substations to your homes,” Carrick said. “The cost of generation and transmission (G&T) is a pass-through rate from our G&T supplier to REA Energy members. Back in 2019, it took \$72,000 to build a mile of single-phase electric line. Today, it costs upward of \$91,000 to build the same mile of line. Those are the costs we’re up against.”

Other business

Immediately following the business meeting, the board held a reorganization meeting and elected officers for 2025-2026. They are: Bertolino, chairman; Wayne Farabaugh, vice chairman; and Neese, secretary/treasurer. Neese was elected to represent the cooperative on the Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Allegheny) board for a two-year term, and Farabaugh will serve as the alternate Allegheny director. Allegheny is the cooperative’s wholesale energy supplier. 🗣️

REA ENERGY COOPERATIVE, INC., BOARD OF DIRECTORS

District 1 Tom Beresnyak	District 4 Thomas Aurandt	District 7 Anthony Enciso
District 2 Rick Shope	District 5 Robert Neese	District 8 Wayne Farabaugh
District 3 Michael Bertolino	District 6 John Learn	District 9 Sandra Dill

Serving up Compassion: How Community Action Agencies Bring Hope and Warmth

KAYLA KING, CCC, MARKETING AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST

AS THE HOLIDAY SEASON NEARS, Community Action agencies in western Pennsylvania are working diligently to ensure that families in need are provided with nourishing meals and support. Two local agencies, the Indiana County Community Action Program (ICCAP) and the Community Action Partnership of Cambria County (CAPCC), are gearing up to offer much-needed services.

At the heart of both organizations is a mission to advance stability and self-sufficiency for local families in need. This is especially important during the holiday season when food and warmth are essential. These agencies collaborate with volunteers and local partners (e.g. faith-based organizations, local fundraisers and United Way-led coalitions) to fill the gaps.

ICCAP's long-standing food assistance infrastructure includes 17 food pantries, emergency food boxes, power packs for K-6 students, and the Pa. Senior Food Box Program. These resources are the backbone of relief efforts. In past years, ICCAP operated pop-up distributions to hand out turkeys, hams, and other staples — and that work will be repeated this year.

"United Way provides ICCAP with gift cards and food staples from the Turkeython fundraising to supplement our pantries during the holidays," Executive Director Brandi Fleming says. "Businesses, such as Tates, Walmart Distribution, Martins, and Giant Eagle, also donate ham, turkey, chicken, and more for the holidays."

Meanwhile, CAPCC's Women, Infants and Children

(WIC) partnership provides meals through the Early Childhood Nutrition Program. CAPCC also helps struggling mothers and families navigate the WIC program with on-site assistance from case managers at their locations in Johnstown, Carrolltown, and Ebensburg. In addition, CAPCC hosts drives to collect essential baby items for families in need.

Both agencies' support extends far beyond the dinner table. ICCAP hosts the Angels' Wings program, which spreads joy and hope by providing gifts to children in need during the holiday season. CAPCC's Coats for Kids and utility assistance programs bring additional relief and warmth to households as temperatures drop.

ICCAP's latest community-driven initiative is a new homeless shelter in White Township.

"Fifty percent of those needing shelter in Indiana County are families," Fleming says. "Our shelter waiting list averages 400 to 500 applicants. The new facility will have the ability to house larger families and includes offices for social services, job recruitment, and case management.

"These services are not a hand-out; they're a hand-up," she adds. "Our goal is to be known in the community as a place you can turn to in dire need and feel heard, welcomed, and comfortable."

You can join their mission by volunteering at food pantries, donating turkeys or non-perishables, or giving coats, diapers, or other essential hygiene items. For details, visit iccap.net or capcc.us, or contact the organizations directly. 📞



WINTER COAT Drive

This season, let's make a difference by participating in the REA Energy Winter Coat Drive. Donate new or gently used coats and new scarves, gloves and hats to help someone stay warm during the cold winter months.

Both children and adult sizes are needed.

SCARVES | GLOVES | HATS | COATS

 **Items collected through Nov. 30**



REA Energy Indiana Office
M-F 7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

REA Energy Ebensburg Office
M-W-F 7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.



Recent Changes to REA Energy's Bylaws

At a recent meeting of the board of directors, changes were made to REA Energy's bylaws – Article III, Section III regarding nominations. The petition submission period will now start 135 days prior to the annual meeting of members, instead of the previously established 180 days. The submission period will end at 3 p.m. 45 days later, or 90 days prior to the annual meeting. In addition, primary members, or those whose names are listed on the account, are the persons authorized to sign a nomination petition.

Article III, Section III, Nominations

The directors of the Cooperative shall be nominated by a written petition provided by the Cooperative, bearing the signatures of any 15 or more primary members residing in the electing district. All such petitions shall state the residence and directorate district of the nominee and shall be filed no sooner than 135 days and no later than 3 p.m., local time, of the day which is 90 days prior to the date of a meeting at which directors are to be elected. The secretary, or secretary's delegate, shall promptly post the same at the principal office of the Cooperative. The random selection of ballot position shall be performed by the Cooperative's solicitor, or by a member of his or her law firm, at the office of the Cooperative at 3 p.m., local time, of the day which is two business days after 90 days prior to the election of directors meeting. Each nominee shall be entitled to attend the selection of ballot position. The provisions of this section shall be exclusive, except in the case of a recall of one or more directors as provided in Article III, Section 12 of these Bylaws.

OFFICE CLOSINGS

REA Energy offices will be closed Tuesday, Nov. 11, in observance of Veterans Day and Thursday, Nov. 27, in observance of Thanksgiving. Please call 844-920-3395 to report any power outages. Payments can be placed in the drop box at both locations, by calling our payment system at 844-920-3395, or via SmartHub at reaenergy.com.

DO NOT TAMPER WITH YOUR ELECTRIC METER.

- ⊘ Never break a meter seal.
- ⊘ Never open a meter base.
- ⊘ Never remove a meter or alter an entrance cable in any manner.
- ✓ Have your electrician call REA Energy before performing any work!



Only REA Energy and our contractors are authorized to remove or alter a meter. Tampering with a meter may result in a \$500 fine. Call REA Energy before any work that involves removing a meter.

724-349-4800

REA energy
Cooperative Inc.

Right-of-way management/facility construction news

REA Energy contractors will be completing tree-trimming work in the following areas during November: Contractor crews from Penn Line Tree Service will be trimming the rights of way of the Laurel substation area, in addition to emergency maintenance areas.

Members in the areas affected will be notified. Contractors will perform all right-of-way work per REA Energy specifications. All contractor employees carry employee identification cards and their vehicles display their company name.

If you have any questions, call 724-349-4800, or view the specifications at reaenergy.com.

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.

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**

'Not-for-Profit' Means 'All for You'

SCOTT FLOOD

IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE OUR DAILY lives without electricity. Every year, our dependence on what travels across poles and wires to our homes and businesses grows. Even the shortest power outage manages to turn our world upside down.

But 90 years ago, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the executive order that created the Rural Electrification Administration (REA), nobody in America's small towns and wide-open spaces took electricity for granted.

As the 19th century drew to a close, wealthy investors were starting electric utility companies in cities from coast to coast. Building

power plants and power lines was costly, so few gave any thought to rural America. Cities offered more customers in smaller spaces, which helped those utilities become highly profitable. Running power lines to serve a handful of rural consumers spread across so many thousands of acres just didn't make economic sense, so most utilities ignored them.

Long after cities grew accustomed to the wonders of electricity, the REA provided a source of expertise and financing for a new concept in energy: the rural electric cooperative.

As the name implies, investor-owned utilities are owned by people who buy stock in the utilities. The primary goal of those utilities is to make money for investors.

Rural electric cooperatives distinguished themselves from those big utilities by their purpose and devotion to their members. Built and owned by the very people they serve, cooperatives are led by boards made up of local residents who are elected by their neighbors to represent them and act in the members' best interests.

A cooperative's mission is to provide safe and reliable electricity at a cost the community can afford. As not-for-profit organizations, they use most of their revenue to purchase and deliver electricity and set some aside for the future.

Pennsylvania is home to 13 electric cooperatives. These cooperatives, along with one in New Jersey, own Allegheny Electric

Cooperative, Inc., which provides its member cooperatives with electricity at wholesale cost. Cooperatives then distribute the electricity to members at a slight markup designed to cover their operational and maintenance costs. Unlike their investor-owned counterparts, co-ops aren't motivated by profit. Instead, they're dedicated to serving their members while helping them reduce energy consumption and lower their power bills.

And when cooperatives do earn more than they pay out in wholesale energy and other costs, they keep some of the extra revenues — known as margins — in reserves or return it to their members through capital credits.

Even unclaimed capital credits benefit the community, often through programs that provide scholarships and financial assistance and support local organizations.

When cooperative leaders make decisions, they're focused on doing the best thing for their members. They want to make sure they're meeting your needs for electricity at the best price possible. That's because they're not for profit — they're for you. 🌱

For more than four decades, business writer **SCOTT FLOOD** has worked with electric cooperatives to build knowledge of energy-related issues among directors, staff and members. Scott writes on a variety of energy-related topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 electric co-ops.

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

NATIONAL ARCHIVES



FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT: In 1935, the Rural Electrification Administration was created to help bring electricity to rural communities, providing a source of expertise and financing for a new concept in energy.

Spirituality Meets Artistry



"I never expected it to be so beautiful that it takes your breath away."

— Kaya C., on Stauer Opals



In a quaint village, nestled between rolling hills, lived a young woman with a deep appreciation for gemstones. Her grandmother gifted her a delicate cross pendant adorned with opals. The opals shimmered with a mesmerizing play of colors, reflecting hues of blues, greens, and fiery oranges. Her grandmother shared the legend of the opals, believed to bring hope, purity, and luck to those who wore them.

Using this story as inspiration, Stauer brings you the **Opal Spirit Cross Pendant**. With over 2 total carats of Kyocera lab-created opals set in .925 sterling silver encased in yellow gold, this pendant is a radiant celebration of beauty and craftsmanship. Each opal captivates with a kaleidoscopic dance of fiery oranges blending into oceanic blues, streaked with flashes of vibrant green that seem to come alive with every movement. The shimmering opals are skillfully arranged to create an enchanting, otherworldly glow, embodying the spirit of hope and harmony.

This breathtaking combination of color and craftsmanship is available as a limited availability of only 930 pieces, making it a rare and treasured addition

to your jewelry collection. Plus, when you order today, you'll receive the **Opal Spirit Cross Pendant** at an impossible price of just \$59 normally \$149!

Don't miss your chance to own this exclusive tribute to timeless elegance and meaningful symbolism.

Jewelry Specifications:

- Pendant: 2 1/2 ctw. Kyocera lab opals and DiamondAura® accents. Yellow gold-finished .925 sterling silver setting
- Chain: 18" gold-clad .925 sterling silver chain

Opal Spirit Cross Collection

- A. Pendant (2 1/2 ctw) ~~\$149~~ \$59* + S&P **Save \$90**
 B. 18" Gold Clad Chain \$59* + S&P
 Pendant and Chain ~~\$208~~ \$79* + S&P **Best Offer!**

*Special price only for customers using the offer code.

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Reading, Dreaming, Experiencing

STEVE PIATT

I COULDN'T BELIEVE WHAT I was reading. Three books for \$1.

As I flipped through an issue of *Outdoor Life* magazine, one my thoughtful mother brought back from the grocery store, the advertisement for the "Outdoor Life Book Club" had me mesmerized as I reviewed the hunting and fishing titles and attempted to boil them down to three of my choosing.

I was a 12-year-old dreamer who disregarded the fact that even buying the magazine was probably a stretch for my mom, who was raising two boys on her own with two grown daughters already on their way in life.

But, hey, this was only a dollar. For three books.

Somehow, I coerced mom into giving me the money. I found a stamp and envelope, and after a difficult time trimming the selections down to three — a book on whitetails, one on bear attacks, and a collection of fishing stories — I mailed in my membership form. And waited.

A few weeks later, my books arrived along with a bill and some fine print I had apparently — maybe conveniently — ignored. The "club" required I purchase three additional books over the next year — at full price.

Mom wasn't happy, and if I recall correctly, she chose the next three books (based on price, obviously).

It didn't matter. There was no book on the list I wouldn't have devoured, and it began a lifelong love of reading. Not necessarily the titles required through my school years, but books of my choosing, with stories from the field and on the water, from far-away places where adventure



WORTHWHILE INVESTMENT: With a single dollar, a young boy started a journey that expanded his horizons to the possibilities of the great outdoors — of Pennsylvania and beyond.

awaited. I labored through "Treasure Island," but was mesmerized by Jack O'Connor, deciding early on I would tote a .270 Winchester rifle afield if I was ever fortunate enough to own one. Equally awe-inspiring to my young self was Theodore Roosevelt. Yes, he was our 26th president, but to a youngster pining for something beyond my Susquehanna River world, he ranked above Mickey Mantle, Johnny Unitas, and Arnold Palmer — a godlike sportsman and conservationist before I even knew what conservation was.

And there were others: Archibald Rutledge, whose writings on the wild turkey helped trigger a lifelong passion centered on that grand bird; Gene Hill and John Taintor Foote; Lee Wulff, the ultimate fly-fishing adventurer; and one of my favorites, Jim Kjelgaard, whose riveting works geared toward youngsters — "Forest Patrol," "Big Red," "Haunt Fox," and many others — often carried a Pennsylvania feel to the setting. Perhaps that's no surprise: Kjelgaard

and his family lived for a time in the Galetton area of Potter County.

At times, I jumped at a book title before giving it a closer look, learning a couple lessons along the way. Richard Brautigan's "Trout Fishing in America," wasn't at all about trout fishing. Nor was "Catcher in the Rye" an autobiography by Yogi Berra.

Still, I continued to read and dream. Gradually, some of those dreams became reality. It started slowly, with a Remington Model 700 in, obviously, .270. An L.L.

Bean fiberglass fly rod was eventually shelved in favor of an Orvis, and later a Scott, a Sage, a Winston, and several others. The Harrington & Richardson 20-gauge, single-shot Topper Junior is now a Browning Citori, something I could never have imagined as an impatient kid begging a brother-in-law and uncle to take me hunting.

Thankfully, Don and Uncle Cecil did, and like so many other youngsters in the Keystone State, there was a first squirrel, a first rabbit, a first pheasant, and eventually a first deer and first buck. And later, a first longbeard, which ruined me for life, sending me — and later Paula — across the country in pursuit of a grand slam and more memories. My outdoor world expanded across North America with adventures I had read about but never expected to experience.

It's been quite a return on a \$1 investment. 🐾

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.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

The Amish "Secret" to Prostate Woes?

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

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

- Too many bathroom trips, which disrupt a good night's sleep
- When it can seemingly take forever for our flow to start
- And when our flow does start, it's a weak stream, which causes us to have to stand seemingly forever to go
- When it feels our bladders are not emptying, which makes us very uncomfortable

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

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

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

30 INGREDIENTS IN ONE SMALL CAPSULE!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Quercetin: Helps fight prostate problems within cells.

Pumpkin Seed Extract: Helps maintain a healthy flow.

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

Vitamin B6: Helps boost your immune system.

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



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

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

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

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

GET A FREE BOTTLE!

One bottle of Prost-Fix is \$29.95 and if you order two bottles you'll get a third bottle absolutely FREE! You'll also receive free shipping & handling no matter how many bottles you order. For credit/debit card orders, you can call: **1-855-287-1800**. Or go to: **TopValueSupplements.com**.

Or you can send payment to: MWSB Inc., 834 South Union Street, Olean, NY 14760-3917.

Prost-Fix comes with a 30-day money back guarantee.

These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration.
This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. Results may vary.

Prep Now for Winter Savings

MIRANDA BOUTELLE

Q: What can I do now to manage my winter energy bills?

A: You'll be thankful you prepared in the fall for colder weather when you receive your first winter bill. Just as you pull out your winter gear before you need it, prepping your home for the coming season is a great idea.

The following steps can be taken now to use less energy at home before the winter chill sets in. They also help lower strain on the electric grid during extreme winter weather when energy use is at its peak in your community.

First, consider your home's layers. Just like layering up those winter flannels, fleeces, and down jackets with waterproof, wind-stopping shells, gloves, and hats, your home needs layers, too. Air sealing and insulation protect your home from the elements while locking in the warm air to keep you cozy. The same

applies to hot weather, making air sealing and insulation a year-round efficiency upgrade.

To offset the costs, federal tax credits for energy efficiency upgrades are available through Dec. 31, 2025. Homeowners can claim a total of 30% of the cost of installation, up to \$3,200. Tax credits are available for insulation, heat pumps, air conditioning systems and more. There's even a tax credit for electrical panel upgrades, which might be needed to accommodate new energy-efficient equipment.

There's also a \$150 tax credit for an energy audit, which allows a pro to determine what your home needs and how to prioritize potential projects. Visit energystar.gov for more information.

Do it yourself

There are a few upgrades you can take care of yourself. Lock in savings with window cleaning and maintenance. Make sure sash locks and window cranks are in good working order and remove any dirt and leaves. Debris can keep them from closing snugly. I find the crevice tool attachment on my vacuum cleaner, combined with a small, dry

scrub brush or an old toothbrush, works great. The locks should pull the top and bottom window sashes together tightly. For casement windows, the locks should pull the window tightly to the frame.

Reducing airflow through and around windows can make your home significantly more comfortable in the winter. Replacing broken or nonfunctional sash locks can be a reasonable DIY project, but it's best to avoid doing it when the winter winds are blowing. Use caulk to seal all gaps around the window trim. If you have operable storm windows, make sure they close.

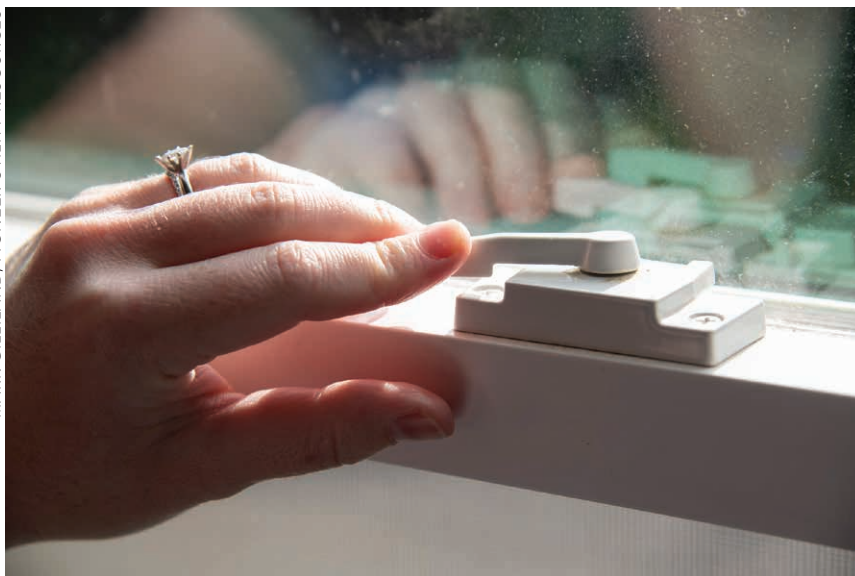
If you have a forced-air heating or air conditioning system, replace the filter. First, turn the system off to check it. If your filter is dirty, leave it in place until you have a replacement. Running your system without a filter can send dust or dirt in the ductwork directly into the components and damage your equipment. Make a note of the filter's size on your shopping list or take a picture of the filter with your phone so you can reference it when running errands.

Also, stocking up on filters can save you money. I bought a 12-pack of filters for \$72 — \$6 each. A similar filter sold separately was \$10. If you don't see a bulk pack at your local hardware store, look for the customer service desk and ask if they can order them for you.

This fall, look for opportunities to protect your home from the elements and maintain your equipment *before* the cold of winter. ❄️

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

MARK GILLILAND, PIONEER UTILITY RESOURCES



LOCK IN SAVINGS: Check all windows to ensure a tight lock and seal to reduce outdoor air from seeping into your home.



Farms are part
of our electric
cooperative.

Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation required by

39 USC 3685

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TOTAL PAID DISTRIBUTION: Average, 169,161 (September 167,843).

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Average In-County, 0 (September 0).

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TOTAL DISTRIBUTION: Average, 169,621 (September 168,315).

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Peter A. Fitzgerald

Publisher

DATE: 9-22-2025

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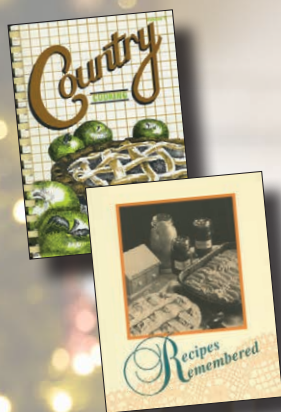
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Cook with a Thankful Heart

ANNE M. KIRCHNER

FOR MOST AMERICANS, turkey is the main attraction on Thanksgiving Day. But there are many other dishes to showcase when hosting family and friends. Let your culinary imagination lead the way as you plan your meal from beginning to end.

Offer sausage-stuffed mushrooms for a warm, savory appetizer. Pair your main attraction with skillet sweet potatoes. Complete your feast with a cranberry apple pie. No matter what dishes you place on your table, remember to celebrate the season with a thankful heart. 🍂

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



SAUSAGE-STUFFED MUSHROOMS

- 1 pound baby bella mushrooms
- ½ pound ground sausage
- ½ cup shredded Parmesan
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 1 egg, beaten
- ¼ cup breadcrumbs
- Parsley for garnish

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees. Remove and chop the mushroom stems; set aside. Place mushroom caps in a baking pan. Cook the sausage in a skillet over medium heat until well browned. Drain the sausage, reserving the grease drippings. Cook the chopped mushroom stems in the grease for 5 to 10 minutes, stirring often. Turn off the heat and stir in the sausage, parmesan, oregano, egg and breadcrumbs. Fill the mushroom caps with the sausage mixture. Bake for 15 minutes. Garnish with parsley. *Makes 6 to 8 servings.*



SKILLET SWEET POTATOES

- 2 teaspoons chili powder
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 2 pounds sweet potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced
- 4 tablespoons butter, divided

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. In a small bowl, combine the chili powder, garlic powder, cumin and salt. In a large bowl, toss the sweet potatoes with 3 tablespoons melted butter and the combined spices. Brush a cast iron skillet with 1 tablespoon butter. Layer the potatoes in a circular pattern, overlapping the slices. Cover the skillet with foil and bake for 30 to 45 minutes. *Makes 6 to 8 servings.*



CRANBERRY APPLE PIE

- 1 recipe homemade pie crust
- 4 cups apples, diced
- Zest of 1 orange
- 1 tablespoon orange juice
- 2 cups fresh cranberries
- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 tablespoon milk
- 1 tablespoon raw sugar

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. In a large bowl, toss the apples with the orange juice and zest, cranberries, granulated sugar, flour, cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves. Divide the pie dough in half. Roll out one half to 1/8-inch thickness. Place the dough in a deep, 9-inch pie pan, allowing excess dough to hang over the edges. Add the pie filling to the pan, discarding excess juices. Roll out the second half of the dough and lay over the filling. Trim the excess dough with a knife and crimp the pie crust edges. Cut slits in the top dough to form steam vents. Combine the egg with milk and brush the top of the pie. Sprinkle with raw sugar. Bake for 20 minutes. Reduce the heat to 350 degrees and bake another 40 to 50 minutes. Cool the pie for 3 hours before serving. *Makes 8 servings.*

When Blessings Overflow

MITCHELL KYD

AH, THE HOLIDAYS. FAMILY AND friends gathered. Good food spread out in bountiful proportions. Frosty mornings and chilly evenings warmed by candles and twinkling lights. And, of course, there are visions of holidays past and plumbing surprises.

What is it about the holidays that make them peak season for leaks, backups and overflows? Perhaps it's because the demand on your plumbing is greater when friends and family descend for extended stays or simply show up for a long, lazy day of parades, football, and feasting. Or maybe the overwhelming length of our holiday to-do lists makes us forget mundane tasks like drain maintenance. Whatever it is, buckets, towels and drain snakes are as integral to some of my family's holiday stories as sweet potato casserole. After all, what is a holiday without stories?

Our most recounted incident is at least 25 years old, and some of the major players are gone. In tribute, my kids and I feel we honor their memories when we regale guests with tales of that particular Thanksgiving — the year our blessings overflowed.

Back then, I started Thanksgiving mornings unapologetically clanging around downstairs while everyone else dreamed of their turkey-induced naps to come. When I finished everything best done in solitude, I'd pop in my "Alvin and the Chipmunks Christmas" CD and crank the stereo up to the volume marked "Rattle the Windows." That was the signal for all to rise and shine, clear the coat rack, stow errant shoes, run the vacuum, sweep the porch, set the table, and complete all the other last-minute tasks in the "lived-in" house of a busy family. The final task was always for us to get showers in sequence before company arrived.

My daughter was a teen at that time, with beautiful, long hair and extensive shampooing rituals involving multiple potions; she showered first. By the time my son got his shower, my dad was already at the kitchen counter carving the turkey.



Dad had barely moved the roaster and platter off to the stove top when the first drops of water came down through my cupboard and plopped onto the counter where our Thanksgiving turkey had been resting just moments earlier. The plop became a drip and then a steady flow before my husband could yell: "Turn off the shower!"

Through some mysterious feat of physics, a clog in the shower drain dislodged and backed up to the upstairs sink. It was all too much for the poor thing, which was already stressed from a former repair. Water spouted from under the sink, proceeded through the kitchen ceiling, then down through the cupboard.

A disaster, you may be thinking. Not at all. We took a moment to count our blessings. The turkey had been whisked out of range at just the right moment. There was nothing in the cupboard that couldn't be washed. We caught the gusher as it was happening and stopped it in time to prevent the ceiling from coming down with it.

My husband and son spent time after lunch assessing the damage while a relatively small clean-up job proceeded downstairs. The adventure with the drain snake captured a clog the size of a small raccoon. A bucket under the sink provided a

temporary fix for the broken pipe.

A big plumbing issue in the kitchen on a holiday — when it rains, it pours, as the saying goes. But life's little interruptions are a good reminder that sometimes we need to stop and take a 360-degree look at what's happening. Chances are a pause will remind us that our blessings can overflow, too.

Wishing you all warm and wonderful holidays. May your blessings overflow — and not your plumbing! 🦃

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

January
February
March

AD DEADLINE

November 14
December 15
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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.

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- ☐ Ad copy as it is to appear in the publication.
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Men, Women and Instructions

JOHN KASUN

NOTHING ILLUSTRATES THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN men and women more clearly than when faced with a set of instructions. Women believe not only in reading instructions but in following them, too. Men, on the other hand, believe instructions are written for people who lack their naturally superior mechanical skills. Men are confident they can do it faster with just a glance at the picture on the front of the box.

When a woman has something requiring assembly, she first separates the parts and checks them against the parts list and/or any available photographs or illustrations. A man, meanwhile, glances at the directions and quickly tosses them aside. Next, he will put all the parts in a pile and, with a quick scan of the picture on the box, immediately start assembly.

While women seem to work slower, they make steady progress. Men tend to put things together quicker but often must disassemble them several times because they put part “C” where part “F” should have been or learn that by bolting part “A” to part “K,” part “L” can no longer be installed. Also, it seems as if men always use the wrong screw in the wrong place and need to make at least two trips to the store for additional hardware.

On a business trip last winter with a friend, I witnessed firsthand how men are even worse at giving instructions. This story involves a couple — I will call them Mike and Mary Lou. Normally, I’d say something like, “I didn’t use their real names to protect their privacy,” but I am using their real names because I never pass up an opportunity to embarrass Mike.

Mike is a friend and a fellow outdoor writer. We were on assignment in the sunny South for a magazine and we shared a room at the event. We would check in with our wives daily, and I overheard Mike talking to his wife back in New York one evening. She was concerned about a predicted snowstorm, and Mike was instructing her on how to start the snowblower.

I could only hear Mike’s side of the conversation, of course, but it went something like this:

“First prime the gas, close the choke and then plug in the electric start — what? Prime the gas? Use the button — the little button on the right-hand side of the carburetor. What do you mean, ‘Where is the carburetor?’ Mary Lou, it’s not that hard; now listen to me. OK, OK; get a piece of paper. Now, prime the gas by pushing the little button and then — what do you mean, ‘How many times?’ I don’t know. OK, OK; three or four times. OK, OK; three times. Gee whiz, Mary Lou, it’s not that hard.”

After what seemed like forever, Mike relayed detailed, but admittedly confusing, directions and finally hung up the phone.

“Can you believe it?” he asked turning toward me. “She wrote every step down and then said, ‘That’s eight steps,’ and that seemed like a lot just to start a snowblower. Women!”

The next day, right after we returned to our room, Mike called his wife. It went something like this:

“Hi, darling,” he said in a loving voice. “What are you doing? Shoveling the walk! Why? Oh, you did everything I

told you and got the snowblower running, but it would not throw the snow. Did you pull down the big black handle? Why not? Oh, because I didn’t tell you to. OK, OK; yes, I know it would have been step nine — but Mary Lou, it’s not that hard. Honey, wait. I’m sorry, honey. Honey —”

I could tell from this side of the conversation that Mike’s ship was sinking fast. He was learning the hard way about instructions and the difference between men and women. I have made the same mistakes and know it is true. All men are the same, and don’t believe them if they say they are not — it’s in our DNA. 🐼



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.

Thank You For Your Entries

IN NOVEMBER, GRATITUDE OFTEN SHOWS up in small, everyday moments — like a quiet morning or a shared meal. It's a time when people pause to reflect, much like framing a photo to preserve what matters. At *Penn Lines*, we're grateful for you and the many photos you've sent us all year long.

Our 2025 contest is now closed, and the winning entries, chosen by an independent panel of judges, will be featured in the January and February issues of *Penn Lines*. But keep your best shots coming for next year's Rural Reflections contest. If your photo wins top honors, you could receive a \$75 prize in one of our five contest categories: artistic, human, landscape, animal and editor's choice. See the *new* 2026 contest submission information below. 📷

BILL BARLOW • SOMERSET REC



New for 2026: We're now accepting digital images!

STARTING IN JANUARY 2026, Rural Reflections is going digital. What does that mean? Well, you can now enter digital images — those special ones you have on your phone or tablet — in the Rural Reflections contest via email at photos@prea.com. We will accept up to five entries per person per year (amateur photographers only please). Include your name, address, phone number, and the name of the electric cooperative that serves your home, business or seasonal residence.

For those who prefer to send their photos by traditional mail, that's OK, too. Submit those 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.

Note: If you opt to use traditional mail, your photos will not be returned. If it's a photo you treasure, please send us a reprint, not the original.



LINDA KITCHEN • UNITED ELECTRIC



AMBER MARTIN • CLAVERACK REC



KEVIN DIEHL • VALLEY REC

ADDRESS CHANGES:

For change of address, please contact your local electric cooperative. For cooperative contact information, please visit www.prea.com/member-cooperatives



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¹DETAILS OF OFFER: Offer expires 12/1/2025. Not valid with other offers or prior purchases. Get 24 months no money down, no monthly payments, no interest when you purchase six (6) or more windows or entry/patio doors between 11/12/2025 and 12/1/2025. Subject to credit approval. 24-month Promo Period: when 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 is provided by various financial institutions without regard to age, race, color, religion, national origin, gender, or familial status. 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. Some Renewal by Andersen locations are independently owned and operated. ²Based on testing of 10 double-hung units per ASTM E2068 20 years after installation. ³It 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 for details. ⁴Review aggregator survey of 5-star reviews among leading national full-service window replacement companies. January 2024 Reputation.com. "Renewal by Andersen" and all other marks where denoted are trademarks Andersen Corporation. ©2025 Andersen Corporation. All rights reserved. RBA14201