

JANUARY 2025

PENN LIVES

Ice Fishing: The Hole Story

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MEMORIES**

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JANUARY



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A favorite winter pastime, ice fishing is a sure cure for cabin fever and the season's doldrums.



ON THE COVER
Hard-water angler Don Kelly, owner of the Tackle Shack outside of Wellsboro in Tioga County, likes nothing better than sitting on a frosty Pennsylvania lake waiting for fish to bite. January and February are the prime times for the sport here.

PHOTO BY AMIDEA DANIEL

2025 Pennsylvania Farm Show

Meet the People Who are Powering Pennsylvania



RUSSELL REDDING

AGRICULTURE IS THE DRIVING FORCE behind Pennsylvania's economy and a pillar of Gov. Josh Shapiro's economic development strategy. Its people keep our communities thriving, and the food they produce powers our daily lives.

Increasingly, agriculture is a source of renewable energy powering our businesses and homes. It's also the source of green solutions in product packaging, construction, manufacturing and biosciences — solutions that help ensure the industry thrives in the future.

For those reasons and more, we chose "Powering Pennsylvania" for the 2025 Farm Show theme.

The Farm Show, slated Jan. 4 to 11, is about the people of Pennsylvania agriculture — the more than 49,000 farm families, many of them rural electric cooperative members like you, who support 593,000-plus jobs and pour more than \$132.5 billion into our communities each year. The Shapiro Administration proudly supports these innovative Pennsylvanians who make us a national leader and the envy of countries around the world. They are the people who are getting stuff done in Pennsylvania.

Their innovation, which powers progress, prosperity, and success, springs from the fresh ideas and new perspectives that flow when there's a seat at the table — and a voice in the conversation — for everyone.

The Farm Show is Pennsylvania's State Fair™, the only one in the nation held in January, and the absolute best way to kick off every year. That's largely because everyone who is part of the conversation that's moving agriculture forward comes together under one roof in those eight days to celebrate, learn, and lend their voices in support of Pennsylvania agriculture.

The Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association (PREA), which represents the 14 rural electric cooperatives in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, is one of those voices. Its representatives sit on the Pa. Rural Development Council to ensure rural voices are heard not only in January, but also year-round. PREA is a critical partner with the Shapiro Administration, too, by ensuring that increased broadband access and clean, renewable energy in our rural communities are high priorities in powering Pennsylvania's economic future.

These rural voices, for instance, are helping to craft the administration's strategy to invest \$1.16 billion in federal funds to make sure everyone in Pennsylvania has access to reliable, affordable high-speed internet. From remote learning to telemedicine and virtual veterinary consultations to servicing high-tech farm equipment, accessible broadband is a prerequisite for powering rural Pennsylvania.

PREA is also a generous sponsor of the PA Preferred® reception that kicks off the Farm Show. The annual event features the finest locally produced food and beverages and celebrates the producers who bring them to your tables, restaurants, and grocers' shelves.

We hope you'll join us to cheer on the thousands of inspirational young Pennsylvanians competing in arenas and on stage, showing off their hard-won leadership skills that will empower all our futures. We also hope you're among the hundreds of thousands of consumers from every walk of life who attend to eat, learn, have fun and power their own imaginations.

And we hope you'll help us recognize the 4,000 volunteers and more than 300 Farm Show Complex staff members, who are the beating heart that powers our annual event around the clock, all year. They plan every detail and make sure your visit is as safe and enjoyable as it is entertaining and educational.

Thank you, co-op members and PREA, for your role in "Powering Pennsylvania." See you at the 2025 Farm Show! 📍

RUSSELL REDDING
PENNSYLVANIA SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

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Penn Lines (USPS 929-700), the newsmagazine of Pennsylvania's electric cooperatives, is published monthly by the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association, 212 Locust Street, P.O. Box 1266, Harrisburg, PA 17108-1266. *Penn Lines* helps 168,000 households of co-op consumer-members understand issues that affect the electric cooperative program, their local co-ops, and their quality of life. Electric co-ops are not-for-profit, consumer-owned, locally directed, and taxpaying electric utilities. *Penn Lines* is not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts. The opinions expressed in *Penn Lines* do not necessarily reflect those of the editors, the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association, or local electric distribution cooperatives.

Subscriptions: Electric co-op members, \$8.52 per year through their local electric distribution cooperative. Preferred Periodicals postage paid at Harrisburg, PA 17107 and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes with mailing label to *Penn Lines*, 212 Locust Street, P.O. Box 1266, Harrisburg, PA 17108-1266.

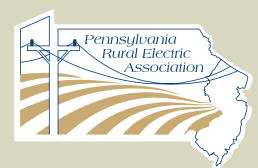
Advertising: Display ad deadline is six weeks prior to month of issue. Ad rates upon request. Acceptance of advertising by *Penn Lines* does not imply endorsement of the product or services by the publisher or any electric cooperative. If you encounter a problem with any product or service advertised in *Penn Lines*, please contact: Advertising, *Penn Lines*, P.O. Box 1266, Harrisburg, PA 17108. *Penn Lines* reserves the right to refuse any advertising.

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IN THE YEAR 2025

Janus, the Roman god of new beginnings, gave us January. Often depicted with two faces, Janus had the ability to see both the past and the future, making him the perfect symbol to mark the new year.

So, what does 2025 have in store for us? For one, the United Nations General Assembly has declared 2025 as the International Year of Cooperatives. With the theme "Cooperatives Build a Better World," the proclamation highlights the ability of cooperatives to foster inclusive growth and strengthen communities.



Your electric cooperative magazine welcomes this initiative. For more than 80 years, electric cooperatives have been solving energy challenges in rural areas and improving the quality of life along the way. We look forward to celebrating that legacy throughout 2025.

Another effort we have underway this year is our magazine readership study. This is something we do roughly every three years to get a better understanding of our readers and their interests. A random survey will be sent out later this year to about 1,000 *Penn Lines* readers. If you happen to receive one, we encourage you to take the time to fill it out. The results help us shape the future direction of your magazine.

Speaking of the future of *Penn Lines*, your magazine is very much alive in the year 2025. To prepare for our 60th anniversary in 2026, we'll be holding some fun contests (see next page). We hope you'll participate in these contests to help us mark the occasion.

You'll also be hearing more about Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Allegheny) in 2025. Owned by the cooperatives it serves, Allegheny has been the power provider for 13 electric cooperatives in Pennsylvania (and one in New Jersey) since 1946. Teaming up with its sister organization, the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association (PREA), Allegheny will be helping to provide energy-related content in *Penn Lines*, including our "Energy Matters" column.

PREA and Allegheny will also join the Commonwealth in kicking off the year at the Pennsylvania Farm Show this month, partnering with our friends at the state Department of Agriculture to celebrate the theme "Powering Pennsylvania" (see page 4).

As one of the ancient gods of agriculture, Janus would appreciate starting the year with the Farm Show. After all, he knew a good beginning when he saw one. Happy New Year.

PETER A. FITZGERALD
EDITOR



MINT IN THE MIX: Farm Show visitors will be able to try the new mint milkshakes at this year's event.

SHAKE IT UP! New milkshake flavor debuts at Pa. Farm Show

The Pennsylvania Dairymen's Association will be introducing a new flavor of milkshake in 2025 — mint — at the Pennsylvania Farm Show, Jan. 4 to 11, at the Farm Show Complex in Harrisburg.

The original flavors of vanilla, chocolate and chocolate-vanilla will also continue to be available in the food court, which opens at noon Friday, Jan. 3.

The food court will feature a number of other Pennsylvania-grown and -made products, including corn

dogs, which are new this year.

The theme for 2025 is "Powering Pennsylvania," and because of the vital role they play in powering rural Pennsylvania, rural electric cooperatives have been collaborating with the state Department of Agriculture on related events. Steve Brame, president & CEO of the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association (PREA) in Harrisburg, will be among the guest speakers at the Farm Show's opening ceremony. PREA serves as the unified voice for the cooperatives here and in New Jersey.

Farm Show admission is free, and parking is \$15 per vehicle. 🚗

WANTED: PAMPERED PETS FOR PENN LINES FEATURE



How pampered is your pet? Do they have their own bed? Their own room? Social media presence? Don't be ashamed — brag about it. Better yet, brag about it in *Penn Lines*.

We're looking for pet moms and dads to show the rest of us how it's done. Tell us — in 100 words or less — how you pamper your pet for an opportunity to be featured with your best furry friend in an upcoming issue of *Penn Lines*.

Send your essay and a photo of your pet to PennLines@prea.com or *Penn Lines*, P.O. Box 1266, Harrisburg, PA 17108. All essays must be received by **Friday, March 21**. Please be sure to include your name, address, daytime telephone number, and the name of the cooperative that serves your home, business or seasonal residence.

CONTEST TIME!

Help us celebrate *Penn Lines*' 60th anniversary

Guess who's got a big birthday coming up? It's *Penn Lines*, and we want you to be a part of our 60th anniversary celebration. Before we let the confetti fly in 2026, we're inviting readers to share their thoughts about the magazine, including what it's meant to you and your favorite articles or photographs.

Also, to make it more exciting, **we're kicking off a handful of photo contests this year**; enter one – or all three. Winning photos will be featured in *Penn Lines* in 2026, and each lucky winner will receive a \$50 gift card.

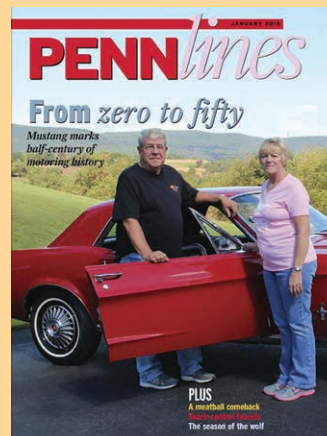
First up, we want to document the oldest copy of *Penn Lines*. If you have an oldie but a goodie around the house, take a photo of you with it. Please make sure the publication date is visible and provide the following: your name, address, daytime telephone number, the month and year of the magazine, and the name of the cooperative that serves your home, business, or seasonal residence. The reader who submits a photo of themselves with the oldest magazine will receive a \$50 gift card.

The deadline is Friday, Oct. 31.

Please send your photo along with your *Penn Lines* memories to PennLines@prea.com (put "Oldest PL Issue" in the subject line) or *Penn Lines* Editor/Oldest Issue, P.O. Box 1266, Harrisburg, PA 17108-1266.



TIME LINES



JANUARY 2015

A decade ago, *Penn Lines* was celebrating the Ford Mustang, which at the time had been in continuous production for 50 years. The iconic car continues to have a loyal fan base, including a number of folks who call cooperative territories home and were featured in our 2015 article. Like it did 10 years ago, Ford is marking the Mustang's 60th anniversary in 2025 with a limited edition model – and only 1,965 are available. The cost for the retro Brittany Blue package: \$65,245.

JANUARY



GET LECTURED

The Winter Lecture Series at Gettysburg National Military Park runs every Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 4 through Feb. 23, at the museum and visitor center. The hour-long lectures will feature rangers and historians discussing the Civil War and Gettysburg history. Admission is free, but seating is limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis. Learn more at nps.gov/gett/planyourvisit/calendar.htm.

TAKE A NIGHT HIKE

It may be winter, but you can still enjoy the outdoors. And why not try a night hike? The Friends of Shawnee & Blue Knob will be hosting one of their monthly outings on Jan. 15 at Blue Knob State Park in Bedford County. The hikes alternate between Blue Knob and Shawnee State Park on the third Wednesday of the month. Learn more on the Friends' Facebook page.



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HAVE FUN AT A FESTIVAL

Somerset is the place to be Jan. 17 to 19 for the 30th Annual Fire and Ice Festival. The event will feature fireworks, live ice carvings, more than 40 ice sculptures, a marketplace, music, food and more. For more information, call 814-443-1748 or visit somersetinc.org.

CELEBRATE CHESTNUTS

The first-ever Pennsylvania Chestnut Festival will be held Saturday, Jan. 25, at the Castanea Picnic Grounds in Lock Haven. The family-friendly event will – of course – feature chestnuts roasting on an open fire, chestnut-inspired food and drinks, local artisans and vendors, and live entertainment. Learn more at castaneatownshippa.gov.



ICE

Fishing:

The Hole Story



STEVE PIATT

Penn Lines Contributor

Don Kelly hasn't walked on water much in the past two years. Neither has Gary Heubel Jr., nor Walt Tubach.

They're hoping that changes this year, but it's up to Mother Nature.

The trio is part of a loyal legion of ice anglers in Pennsylvania, a tight-knit circle that for the past two winters has largely been kept shorebound by warm temperatures not conducive to making ice — or at least safe ice.

"Last year we didn't have anything really good as far as safe ice," says Heubel, whose family owns Poor Richards' Bait & Tackle in Erie County, which is part of Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative's (REC) service territory. "A couple inland lakes had some ice that was pretty sketchy, and guys were trying it ... and we had a few inches on Presque Isle Bay for a while, but not enough for me."

A cure for cabin fever

However, when conditions permit — and safety is paramount in the hard-water game — ice fishing can offer a superb break from cabin fever, an enjoyable day outside with friends and family. And bringing home a bunch of filets is an added bonus. Pennsylvania is particularly attractive to anglers thanks to its variety of lakes, reservoirs and, most important, fish, which include walleye, crappie,

northern pike, and trout.

"It's a completely different form of fishing," says Kelly, owner of the popular Tackle Shack on Route 287 outside Wellsboro in Tioga County, an area served by Tri-County REC. "And when you get out there, the camaraderie aspect is much bigger in the wintertime.

"You'll see families out there ... kids running around playing ice hockey or skating, just having a good time and waiting for a tip-up flag to pop (which signals a fish has hit the bait)."

Tubach, who lives in Forksville and is the retired manager of operations for Sullivan County REC, can relate. Introduced to hard-water angling by his father at a young age, he says a day on the ice then typically involved his sisters, brother and cousins.

"They would come up from Montoursville and we would fish, ice skate, and cook hot dogs and hamburgers over an open fire," he says. "It brings back a lot of memories."

His older brother, Gary, remains his ice-fishing partner today. The pair have access to some private ponds and other nearby waters, like Sones Pond, where they will set a few tip-ups and handle jigging rods, pulling their share of perch, bluegill, largemouth bass, and chain pickerel through the holes.

When it comes to ice fishing, gear can be as simple



as a hand-powered auger to cut a hole through the ice, standard fishing rods and weighted lures, known as jigs, and a bucket to sit on. Other anglers, however, may choose to make a more significant investment, buying powerful battery-operated augers and underwater cameras and monitors.

“You see a lot of different things out there,” Heubel says, “from the basic gear all the way to the live scopes and hub-style shelters. You have the guy

with all kinds of gear on a four-wheeler and you have the guy sitting on a bucket right next to him.”

A matter of preference

The Tubachs go the spartan route, sitting on camp stools and dealing with the elements without benefit of the shelters and portable heaters so popular today. And they don't use the high-tech fish finders that have revolutionized ice fishing, either.

Today there are digital flashers for real-time sonar data, graphical sonar units for detailed underwater views, GPS combo units for mapping and navigation, portable fish finders for mobility, wireless fish finders that connect to smartphones or tablets, and underwater cameras for live video feeds.

“Vexilars (a flasher unit) were the best sellers,” Heubel says. “The thing now is the live scope, either Garmin or Humminbird, that lets you see a little bit more compared to the straight up-and-down flasher.”

Kelly adds the technology “just keeps getting better and better. We're seeing more [people] go to the live sonars and live scopes. They're absolutely incredible [but] whether you can get the fish to bite or not is up to you.”

The technology has also extended into clothing designed for the coldest of weather. And while you can continue to drill holes using pure muscle, power augers — both gas and electric — can make things easier in your search for fish. That's especially true if you have to run and gun a bit to locate schools of perch and other species.

For the novice ice angler, the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission offers a variety of fishing classes, including those focused on the hard-water experience. Some are even virtual. For a complete list, go to pa.gov/agencies/fishandboat/education.html.

STEVE PIATT



PLENTY OF FISH: When conditions are right, Pennsylvania's lakes and reservoirs offer up good ice fishing and quite a variety of fish, including bluegill, shown above, yellow perch, walleye, crappie, northern pike, and trout.

BEYOND THE BASICS: When it comes to ice fishing, some anglers keep it simple with a hand-powered auger, fishing rod and a bucket to sit on. Others, however, prefer to go beyond the basics with powerful battery-operated augers and underwater cameras and monitors to find the fish.

Once safe ice arrives, Heubel concentrates his hole-drilling efforts on underwater structure, such as logs or rocks. Fish tend to congregate around this terrain because it provides shelter and access to food.

“If you’re fishing a piece of structure, it might take a couple hours, but there’s going to be fish coming eventually,” he says, “so I’ve learned the structure on the waters I fish.”

Kelly is a fan of using Tungsten jigs as his go-to lures, which “seem to be what most people are buying these days. They get down fast and there’s a million different colors available.”

He also prefers jigging, a technique using the weighted lures, to setting tip-ups, which he says “really confine you to one area once you set them. It’s great if you’re going to spend the day and hang out with your buddies, but if I want to cover some water it’s just tough to do.”

Walt Tubach keeps it simple.

“If the wind is blowing hard we usually don’t go,” he says. “The wind triggers a tip-up flag when there’s really nothing there, it fills the holes with ice and it’s not really pleasant. But if it’s a sunny day, even if it’s cold, we’re out there.”

And this winter, after a two-year hiatus thanks to Mother Nature, hard-water anglers just want to go.

“I’m just hoping we can get to do some this year,” Tubach says.

‘Every year is different’

According to Kelly, the 2023-2024 ice-fishing season was the shortest he could remember in Pennsylvania. “And two years ago,” he adds, “it was short for most of Pennsylvania, but we did fish for about a month and a half.”

Clearly, ice anglers are an optimistic lot, and an early December cold snap had many checking their equipment — even though long-range forecasts for the winter are generally calling for warmer-than-average temps.

“Every year is different,” Kelly says. “I’ve seen years of the El Nino weather pattern forecast that were supposed to be warm, then we ended up having these big cold snaps. And looking through my old reports, at the end of February and into March of 2022, we were fishing on 12 inches of ice. So hopefully we’ll have good ice again.” 🐾

(Turn the page to learn more about Pennsylvania’s ice fishing hotspots.)



SAFETY FIRST, FISH SECOND

There’s no fish in Pennsylvania or anywhere else that’s worth risking your life for, and “safety first” is the key thing to keep in mind when you head out this winter.

First, be sure to test ice thickness with an auger. Four inches of solid ice is the minimum recommended thickness for a single person. Seven inches of solid ice is the minimum recommended thickness for a small group.

Check the weather and plan accordingly, too. Several days with temperatures above freezing will weaken the ice.

The Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission offers a few more important tips for hard-water anglers:

- ▶ **Never fish alone:** A buddy can save your life in an emergency and help you get warm and dry in the event of a dunking.
- ▶ **Wear a life jacket:** A life jacket is as important when ice fishing as it is when fishing from a boat in summer. It will keep you afloat if you break through the ice and can help insulate you from cold water.
- ▶ **Wear ice picks:** Ice picks are handheld, spiked tools you can use to dig into the ice and pull yourself out of the water should you break through. The paired picks are linked by a rope or coil and worn around the neck for quick access if needed.
- ▶ **Carry rope:** Spread the rope on the ice so that it’s near your fishing locations and can be grabbed quickly. If it’s too far from shore to tie off, carry rope that can be thrown to someone in trouble.
- ▶ **Be aware of changing conditions:** Underwater springs, entering streams, current, wind, and snow cover can all erode ice thickness across short distances or during the intervening time between trips. Be careful after new snow-fall. Snow can hide thin ice and pre-existing holes and inhibit freezing.
- ▶ **Stay away from structure:** Snags, logs, stumps, and rocks absorb sunlight and emit heat. Stay a respectful distance from any natural or manmade material and be careful around or over weedbeds. Decomposing plant matter releases heat and can melt the ice from underneath.

Follow these simple rules, and you can safely enjoy a day of fishing on the hard water.

HARD-WATER HOTSPOTS

Here are some of Pennsylvania's top waters, where cold weather often means hot fishing on ice:

- ▶ **Presque Isle Bay** – When the bay locks up, ice anglers flock to this northwestern water outside Erie, where they run and gun for perch, bluegill, walleye, northern pike, and even the occasional steelhead. Presque Isle Bay State Park provides superb access, with protected areas like Misery Bay and Horseshoe Pond typically drawing a crowd.
- ▶ **Lake Wallenpaupack** – It's big, at over 5,700 acres, so don't expect the entire lake to freeze over. Located along the Pike-Wayne county border in the Pocono Mountains, the "big-water, big-fish" philosophy often holds true here, with solid crappie, chain pickerel, walleye, yellow perch, pike, sunfish and pickerel in the mix.
- ▶ **Hills Creek Lake** – Located at Hills Creek State Park outside of Wellsboro in Tioga County, the 137-acre water is hugely popular when it offers safe ice. Anglers jig or set tip-ups for perch, crappie, bluegill and the occasional walleye. Superb access is a bonus.
- ▶ **Tioga-Hammond and Cowanesque lakes** – The massive Army Corps of Engineers flood-mitigation project that followed the Hurricane Agnes flood in 1972 produced these waters in Tioga County. They may not freeze quite as quickly as nearby Hills Creek Lake, but when and if they do, some fishing for warm-water species can be had. Hammond Lake is 680 acres, Tioga is 470, and Cowanesque is the biggest at nearly 1,100.
- ▶ **Lyman Run Lake** – Just west of Galeton in Potter County, Lyman Run Lake's popularity stems from its location in a cold-weather pocket and for the fall trout-stocking done by the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission. Rainbow trout are often the primary target, but the lake also holds warm-water species, such as perch and panfish.



- ▶ **Yellow Creek Lake** – This 720-acre Indiana County water offers great access for fishing, given its location in Yellow Creek State Park. The lake is known for its fine crappie fishing, and the facilities include winter picnicking and warming areas, and even a designated area for ice skating – provided Mother Nature cooperates.
- ▶ **Bald Eagle State Park** – This Centre County body of water of about 630 acres has warm-water species topped by crappie, perch, bass (both smallmouth and largemouth), channel catfish, and the chance for a feisty tiger muskellunge.
- ▶ **Parker Lake** – It's not big, at just 20 acres, but it's located at Parker Dam State Park in Clearfield County and offers good access and, when the weather cooperates, some fine ice fishing. The state Fish & Boat Commission stocks the lake with rainbow trout in the fall, which adds to its popularity.
- ▶ **Sones Pond and Bear Wallow Pond** – There's usually a good chance these waters will lock up and offer safe ice: They're located in the mountains of tiny Sullivan County in northcentral Pennsylvania. When they do, anglers target perch, bluegill, pickerel, and largemouth bass. Access can, however, be a challenge depending on snowfall totals that clog the rural roads.
- ▶ **High Point Lake** – It's located downstate in Somerset County, but does, on occasion, offer safe ice given that it's not far from Mount Davis, the highest point in Pennsylvania. The 338-acre impoundment holds walleye, pike, bass, perch, black crappie, and bluegill.
- ▶ **Tionesta Lake** – The Army Corps of Engineers impoundment in Forest County is just short of 500 acres, and when it freezes over, can offer some fine fishing for crappie, perch, and if you're rigged up for them, muskellunge. There's also some big channel catfish cruising the water.
- ▶ **Canoe Creek Lake** – Its location within Canoe Creek State Park pretty much guarantees good access, and when this 155-acre water east of Altoona locks up, it's popular for anglers pursuing trout. The Fish & Boat Commission does a fall stocking of rainbows, and the lake also holds good numbers of panfish.
- ▶ **Beltzville Lake** – Located in the foothills of the Pocono Mountains in the state park of the same name, Beltzville Lake can offer good ice fishing for walleye, pickerel, trout, perch, bluegill, sunfish, and even muskellunge. There's also good access along its 949 acres thanks to being within state park property.
- ▶ **Lake Arthur** – This big (3,225 acres) lake is part of Moraine State Park in northwestern Pennsylvania, and is capable of producing good-sized bluegill, crappie, and perch through the ice. There's also the possibility of tying into a muskellunge, walleye or channel catfish. Ice fishing is allowed in the Game Propagation Area from Jan. 1-March 15, when conditions permit.
- ▶ **Pymatuning Reservoir** – It's huge, at more than 17,000 acres, so it's no surprise this Mercer County water draws some serious attention from the hard-water hordes. But there's plenty of room for everyone, and the species lineup includes perch, bluegill, crappie, walleye, and even white bass. Access is best through Pymatuning State Park.
- ▶ **Conneaut Lake** – This Crawford County water of about 900 acres offers solid – if the ice is solid – fishing for panfish (notably bluegill, crappie, and perch), walleye, and a chance for a big pike or muskie.

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A Stiltz Homelift can fit just about anywhere in your house. It has a compact footprint, similar in size to a small armchair. A Stiltz Homelift plugs into a standard home electrical outlet, using less power than a coffee maker.

Your Forever Home

Avoid the expense and distress of relocating, or the disruption of adapting your home for downstairs living. A Stiltz Homelift helps you live safely and independently in the home you love.

It's Never Too Soon

Some Stiltz customers need a Homelift immediately. But others want to "future-proof" their homes for when the stairs become a challenge.

Homelift Specialists

Stiltz is a world leading Homelift manufacturer, so you'll be in good hands. Your elevator will be installed and maintained by Stiltz trained professionals - who truly care about your freedom.



"I can't imagine what we'd do without it. I wish we had installed our Stiltz Homelift several years ago!"

- Mr. James, Villanova, PA



Fit in any home



No hassle 1 day install



Quiet as a whisper




Low energy use

Locally owned and operated

Free, no obligation home survey

Have a chat with our friendly team about our Homelifts. They'll answer all your questions.

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 stiltzlifts.com



Local Lore

Adams Electric Cooperative

Teacher, Author and Activist

ELAINE K. GILBERT
PENN LINES CONTRIBUTOR

Born in Millersville in 1878, Miss Edna Albert was a fixture in York Springs, a part of southeastern Pennsylvania that receives electricity from Gettysburg-based Adams Electric Cooperative. She was a suffragette, owned a car she affectionately called “Peter,” taught school and wrote books.



EDNA ALBERT

She graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Dickinson College in 1905 and taught at Adams County’s Pike School from 1922 to 1925.

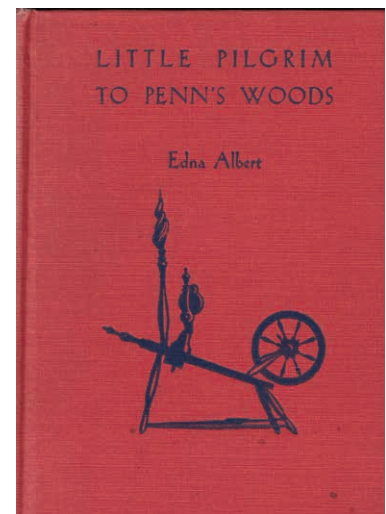
In 1930, Edna wrote a best-selling children’s book loosely based on her family’s history, “Little Pilgrim to Penn’s Woods.” This Book-of-the-Month Club selection told the

fictional story of little Selinda and her family, who left their homeland to find religious freedom in the New World. She would follow up this work with two others, “The Shawl with the Yellow Bells” and “Peter Smithfield,” which was about her car.

In 1950, the Mademoiselle Club, which founded and ran the York Springs library, nominated Edna for Pennsylvania’s Distinguished Daughters Award, which honors women for extraordinary service and contributions to the Commonwealth. The award that year, however, went to Pearl Buck, a long-time advocate of cross-cultural understanding and racial harmony.

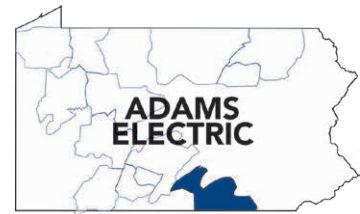
Edna died in 1960 at the age of 81 and is buried at the Chestnut Grove Lutheran Church cemetery. She was also president of the Adams County Women’s Christian Temperance Union and a member of the Adams County Historical Society and the YWCA.

Her books can still be found today. The Ye Olde Sulphur Spa Historical Society in York Springs has several copies, and “Little Pilgrim to Penn’s Woods” is available on Amazon.com.



ALL IN THE FAMILY: Edna Albert’s best-selling children’s book, “Little Pilgrim to Penn’s Woods,” was written in 1930 and is based on her family’s history.

About the author: **ELAINE K. GILBERT** and her husband have been Adams Electric Cooperative members since 1983. Her grandfather was one of the co-op’s first members, and her parents were members, too. A retired social studies teacher, Elaine is a member of Ye Olde Sulphur Spa Historical Society in York Springs and the Adams County Historical Society.



Main Office: Gettysburg, Pa.
Consumer-members served: 34,157
Website: adamsec.coop

The Beauty of Butterflies

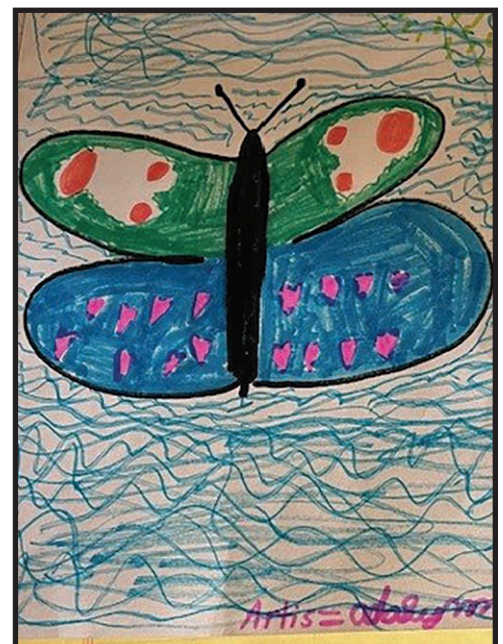
“I drew a butterfly with lots of color because I love butterflies at recess at school a lot. My favorite butterflies are the monarch butterflies. Butterflies are a good sign for spring.”

Adalynn Garland, age 9, Adams Electric Cooperative

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

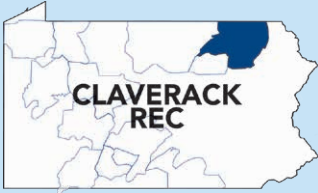
Each month, we’ll feature the artwork of our young readers (or our readers’ youngsters), inspired by something they’ve read in *Penn Lines*. Paints, pencils, crayons, clay, sand – any physical medium is OK! You may send digital photos of the creation to CommunityCorner@prea.com, but please: no digital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

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



Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

CLAVERRACK REC

32750 Route 6
Wysox, PA 18854
570-265-2167
800-326-9799
Email: mail@claverack.com
Website: https://claverack.com

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- Annette L. Koder, *Executive Assistant*
Nicholas J. Berger, Sr. *Director, Engineering and Operations*
Jennifer W. Jones, *Chief Financial Officer*
Brian F. Zeidner, *Director, Member Services*

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Monday through Friday
7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Casey M. Wood, *VP, Communications*
C&T Enterprises, Inc.



ENTERPRISES, INC.

C&T Enterprises, Inc. is a jointly owned subsidiary of Claverack (Wysox, Pa) and Tri-County (Mansfield, Pa) Rural Electric Cooperatives. C&T provides shared management and support services for the two parent electric cooperatives, the cooperatives' telecom affiliates of Revolution Broadband and Tri-Co Connections, and C&T's subsidiary utilities of Wellsboro Electric Co. (Wellsboro, Pa), Citizens' Electric Co. (Lewisburg, Pa), and Valley Energy (Sayre, Pa), a natural gas distribution company.

Looking Forward to 2025



STEVEN G. ALLABAUGH

I'M CONVINCED THERE ARE FEWER days in each passing year. It seems like just yesterday I was writing about our plans for 2024, and now we are looking forward to 2025. It couldn't possibly have been 365 days ago! They say time goes faster as you get older, but being busy also makes time fly. And at Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative (REC), we are busy. We have big plans for our members this year that focus on strengthening our infrastructure, reducing outages, expanding services and improving communications while keeping our rates affordable.

In 2025, Claverack REC will continue its commitment to investing in electric infrastructure to ensure reliable service now and in the future.

This includes upgrading more than 10 miles of three-phase power lines and focusing on lines that interconnect our substations to improve redundancy and backup capabilities. We are also adding at least 10 more SCADA-enabled line devices across our system. These devices, integrated into our fiber-optic network, will allow us to monitor and control parts of the system in real-time, leading to quicker response times and faster restoration during power outages. This effort is supported by the Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnership and the Grid Resilience Grants (GRG) we received in 2024, totaling nearly \$9 million.

We will also continue our work to ensure the reliability and safety of our system by conducting more than 7,300 drone pole inspections. These inspections help us spot potential issues before they become bigger problems. Additionally, we will perform structural tests on more than 6,000 poles to safeguard they can safely deliver power to our members.

Vegetation management is a fundamental challenge for any rural electric distribution system. Claverack is concluding a major effort to combat the devastation caused by the emerald ash borer, resulting in the removal of nearly 50,000 dead trees that threatened our electric grid. With the support of our members, we completed this work in less than three years. In 2025, we will expand this effort with a key project supported by the GRGs. We'll be performing a systemwide vegetation assessment using satellite technology to reduce the risk of tree-related outages by identifying at-risk locations.

Our fiber-optic buildout is another priority this year. We will be expanding into Susquehanna and Wyoming counties with more than 300 miles of fiber planned for installation. This will give approximately 2,974 additional members access to Revolution Broadband service through our subsidiary, Claverack Communications LLC. This initiative is helping to bring high-speed internet to more members who have been left in the "digital darkness." Reliable internet access is as essential as reliable electricity, and we are proud to help close the digital divide.

As we move forward with our plans, our top priority is safety. We will again participate in the NRECA Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program. A team of safety and industry experts will evaluate our facilities, work procedures and processes, and provide improvement recommendations. Everyone at the cooperative is involved in this program because our employees not only take care of our members but we also take care of each other.

We know how important it is to keep you informed, so we will focus on improving our member communications this year, too. We expect to launch a new, more user-friendly website to make finding the information you need easier. Based on feedback from our member survey, we will also refine our use of email, text messaging, social media, and written communications, including *Penn Lines*, to keep you updated on outages, news, and anything that affects you.

Also, as we look forward to the coming months, I want to address concerns about rising electric generation costs in our region. Although we are living in a time of high prices for nearly all goods and services, we have good news. Claverack's rate impact will

Continued on page 14D

The Pulse

CASEY WOOD, C&T VICE PRESIDENT OF COMMUNICATIONS

Welcome to “The Pulse,” where we bring you an inside look at the heart and soul of our cooperative. Throughout 2025, we’ll spotlight different departments, showcasing the dedicated teams and individuals who keep our operations running smoothly. From executive leadership to frontline workers, discover the stories, challenges and triumphs that drive our mission forward. Along the way, we’ll also share interesting personal insights about the people on these teams, giving you a glimpse into their lives beyond the co-op. Stay tuned and stay connected with “The Pulse” of our co-op.

IN OUR INAUGURAL “PULSE” ARTICLE, we are excited to spotlight the heart of our cooperative’s leadership: the executive team. This month, we feature President & CEO Steve Allabaugh and Executive Assistant Annette Koder, who are pivotal in maintaining and enhancing our cooperative’s success, ensuring we continue to grow stronger and more resilient.

Leading with vision: Steve Allabaugh, president & CEO

At the helm of our cooperative, Steve Allabaugh is a driving force behind our strategic direction and operations. As president and CEO, Steve’s role involves high-level



THEN AND NOW: Above, Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) President & CEO Steve Allabaugh, circa 1989, stands next to his Colt alongside his high school sweetheart and now wife, Angie. Below, Allabaugh and Executive Assistant Annette Koder assess fiber construction progress, enhancing electric grid reliability and bridging the rural digital divide.



oversight of the cooperative’s operations. He ensures bylaws, policies, strategic plans, and goals set forth by the board of directors are meticulously implemented and adhered to by all department leaders. His role is not just about governance; it’s about making sound, strategic decisions that align with our cooperative’s mission to serve our membership effectively.

Steve holds a bachelor’s degree from Penn State University and is a registered Professional Engineer. He joined Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) in December 2005 as the manager of technical services and was promoted to director of engineering in 2008. In January 2021, he became the president and CEO of Claverack REC. Since then, he has focused on several key initiatives, including deploying high-speed fiber internet service to unserved and underserved members and enhancing the cooperative’s infrastructure and vegetation management to improve reliability.

Before joining Claverack, Steve spent nearly 20 years in engineering, consulting, and management roles for municipal electric utilities, federal military installations, and investor-owned utilities. Steve believes the cooperative model stands out because it prioritizes consumer-members over profit.

“When you have a direct connection to the consumer through your business model and cooperative principles, you can immediately effect change and capitalize on efficiencies and innovations that directly impact our membership,” he says. “Cooperatives are people-driven, and that matters the most.”

Steve is also the face of our cooperative in the broader community. He engages with members, political influencers, and elected officials, advocating for policies and legislation that support our goals and mission. His communication and advocacy efforts are vital to ensuring our cooperative remains a solid and influential voice in the industry.

When asked about his leadership philosophy, Steve says, “Trust in your people to do their jobs. Empower your people to do what they do best because they are the experts. If you can do that, being a part of the successes and watching people achieve is incredibly rewarding.”

In his spare time, Steve enjoys riding his Harley Davidson and camping with his wife, Angie, his high school sweetheart. The pair met on the bus on the way to Lake Lehman High School. This year, Steve and Angie will celebrate their

32nd anniversary. Steve also enjoys playing acoustic and electric guitar with his son, Derek, a civil engineer. “We enjoy jamming out together,” Steve says.

Steve proudly shares that Derek and his daughter — Megan, a registered nurse — have bought homes within the Claverack REC service territory and are excited about getting Revolution Broadband service when it is available in their neighborhood next year. With a chuckle, Steve adds, “It’s a family affair.”

Steve and Angie’s youngest daughter, Amanda, is a junior at Northeast Bradford High School. The family enjoys listening to and playing music together and attending concerts. Recently, they went to an Iron Maiden concert in Newark, N.J., one of Steve’s favorite bands.

The backbone of the executive office: Annette Koder, executive assistant

Annette Koder, our executive assistant, supports Steve and the entire executive operation. Annette is programmed to make things happen. She takes great pride in flawless execution and can pivot at any moment. “You have to complete the task well in a timely manner and do whatever it takes to do it properly,” she says.

Annette’s role is crucial in the seamless coordination of executive activities. She ensures the executive office runs smoothly, managing schedules, communications, and the myriad of details that keep our board and leadership team focused and effective.

Annette and her husband, Marc, share an “attention to detail.” As Annette’s next-door neighbor says: “What

Annette doesn’t think of, Marc does.”

Annette, a paralegal, has worked at Claverack REC for nearly 27 years after working for Bradford County and the Central Bradford County Progress Authority. Annette enjoys design and “all things creative” from canning and baking to interior and exterior design; anything she touches becomes extraordinarily special and beautiful. She decorates more than 20 Christmas trees in her home each year and participates in several community events, developing unique and remarkable homemade props. She adores her nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews.

Annette’s organizational skills and attention to detail are indispensable. They allow the executive team to operate efficiently and align with our strategic objectives. Her behind-the-scenes work is a testament to her commitment and the vital support she provides to our cooperative.

“Annette is, without a doubt, the glue that binds it all together and makes it work,” Allabaugh says.

The heart of Claverack

Steve and Annette exemplify the dedication and expertise that is



PART OF THE COMMUNITY: Annette Koder “Dubble Bubble” is shown at the Windham Township Volunteer Koder Fire Company Trunk or Treat event with her great-nephews Nash and Kincaid.

driving our cooperative forward. Their leadership and support are a key part of our continued success, ensuring we serve our members with integrity and excellence. While the heart of the operation may lie within the executive team, Allabaugh says, “We are here to represent the real soul of Claverack, and that’s our members.”

Stay tuned for more insights and stories from “The Pulse” as we continue to highlight the teams and individuals who make our cooperative unique. 📡

MAXIMIZE YOUR WI-FI

GET THE SPEEDS YOU’RE PAYING FOR

Revolution’s fiber-optic internet provides the fastest and most reliable speeds available. But if your devices aren’t as fast* as you think they should be, **consider these factors:**



How old are your connected devices?
Older devices with slower processors may not be able to handle the speed Revolution provides. It’s best to upgrade your hardware every few years.



How many devices are using your internet connection at once?

The more devices connected to your network, the lower the speeds and bandwidth available for each device. Additionally, the Wi-Fi signal weakens the further your device is from the router. For devices like smart TVs, gaming consoles, or work computers, use an Ethernet cable to connect directly to the GigaSpire (modem/router) or use Experience IQ to prioritize bandwidth.



Are you using the equipment provided by Revolution?

Equipment added to your network or moved within your home after installation can sometimes cause issues. This is because new devices or changes in the placement of existing devices can interfere with the network’s configuration and signal strength. Additionally, we cannot troubleshoot effectively if our equipment is not in use, as we need to ensure that all components are functioning correctly within the original setup.

At Revolution, we want our customers to have the best experience possible. If you have any questions or feel that your Wi-Fi is not performing optimally, please contact us.

* For the most accurate speed test, use the Revolution WiFi app. See revolutionbroadband.net/wi-fi for details.

REVOLUTION

705-268-1349 • REVOLUTIONBROADBAND.NET

FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Continued from page 14A

be much smaller than many investor-owned utilities in the region, which are anticipating double-digit generation rate increases in 2025. Our partnership with Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc., our wholesale energy supplier in Harrisburg, and their combination of owned generation resources and prudent market purchases has kept our generation costs low.

We anticipate a modest rate increase on the distribution side, but we will also remove the \$5 accelerated ash removal charge (AARC) on the January billing (**this is the bill members will receive in February**). This will offset much of the increase. For the average residential customer using 960 kilowatt-hours per month, we anticipate the overall rate change, including both generation and distribution, to be less than a 5% increase. We are still finalizing budgets and rates, but once approved, updated rates will be available on our website and included in the message on the front of your bill.


We are excited about our plans for 2025 and beyond, and we deeply appreciate your support as we work to improve reliability and expand access to the services you depend on while keeping rates affordable.

Thanks for being part of our cooperative family. Here's to 2025! 🍷



STEVEN G. ALLABAUGH
PRESIDENT & CEO

Attention!





**Update to
Pay-by-Phone
Number**

Effective Nov. 1, our
pay-by-phone number has changed.

**The new phone number is
855-940-3871**

This change will provide our members with a better experience when securely paying their Claverack or Revolution bill by phone. Easily store payment information, change credit card expiration dates and manage other details at your convenience!

 Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc. 

CO-OP OFFERS SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES TO STUDENTS AT THE COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA - MANSFIELD

Students attending the Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania - Mansfield (CU - Mansfield) are invited to apply for a scholarship available for the 2025-2026 academic year from Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative (REC).

To be eligible for consideration, students must meet the following criteria:

- ▶ They must be enrolled full-time at CU - Mansfield.
- ▶ They must demonstrate financial need.
- ▶ They must be a Claverack REC member or a dependent of a member.
- ▶ They must demonstrate leadership, citizenship and positive character traits.

Students may apply at claverack.com/mansfield-foundation-scholarship.

Claverack REC endowed the scholarship fund at Mansfield University, now part of the state's Commonwealth University system, in 2000. The goal is to provide financial assistance to Claverack REC members or their dependents who are pursuing higher education goals.

A member of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education, CU - Mansfield has a long-standing tradition of enrolling students from the cooperative's service territory.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND BILL-PAY OPTIONS

Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) offers a variety of financial assistance and bill-payment options for members experiencing difficulties keeping up with rising energy costs.

Levelized billing. Participants in this program receive a monthly bill based on the average of the previous 12 month's billing history. The billed amounts will vary each month, but the high and low bill amounts experienced throughout the year are "levelized" so members can better budget electric bill costs.

Payment arrangement plans. Members who are behind on their electric bills can catch up on past-due bills over a specific timeframe that has been agreed upon with the cooperative.

Claverack H.O.P.E. This program assists eligible members struggling to pay their electric bills. Donations from Operation Round-Up, our member-to-member program, and escheats monies from unclaimed capital credits comprise this fund. Claverack partners with Trehab Community Services to administer this program.

Emergency financial assistance. Claverack REC can direct members to outside sources to assist with energy costs. Assistance may be available through the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), as well as various agencies and organizations based in the county where a member resides.

Please contact our office at 800-326-9799 so we can help you determine the best way to keep up with energy costs. We also offer a variety of energy conservation and efficiency tips on our website, claverack.com to help you save on energy expenses, so be sure to check them out as well.

PAiD Plan

As a Claverack REC member, you can sign up for our automatic payment option and have your payment taken directly from your checking or savings account or charged to your Visa/MasterCard on your payment due date.

The Payment Automatically Drafted (PAiD) Plan is a great way to pay your bill. It saves you time, checks, and stamps and ensures your payment is never late.

If you would like to sign up for this program, visit SmartHub and click on the following: Bill & Pay/Auto Pay Program (accessible from our website or via the mobile app). Follow the instructions to enter the account information you want to use to automatically pay your bill on the due date each month.

Compete for an All-Inclusive Experience in the Nation's Capital

CALLING ALL HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS! The National Rural Electric Youth Tour is approaching and offers an incredible opportunity for up to four lucky students whose parents or legal guardians are Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) members. Get ready to embark on a weeklong trip to our nation's capital!

If you know a high school junior who loves sightseeing, history, politics and making new friends, the Youth Tour could be the experience of a lifetime for them.

During the 2025 Rural Electric Youth Tour, selected students will join peers from across the country to explore Washington, D.C., for six exciting days. This adventure is a perfect blend of fun and education.

From June 16-21, participants will have a chance to:

- ▶ Discover the historic sites of Washington, D.C.
- ▶ Visit world-famous museums
- ▶ Learn about electric cooperatives and the cooperative movement
- ▶ Make lifelong friends

In addition to this incredible experience, students selected for Youth Tour may also be eligible for special scholarship opportunities.

To apply for Youth Tour, here's what you need to know:

- ▶ Youth Tour is open to any high school junior (2024-25 school year) with parents or legal guardians who are Claverack REC members. The cooperative will select and sponsor up to four students.
- ▶ Applications must be submitted by 4 p.m. Monday, Feb. 10.
- ▶ Finalists will be chosen by Claverack REC based on their submitted application and video.
- ▶ One of the four selected students may be chosen as Claverack's Youth Leadership Council (YLC) candidate. The YLC candidate will compete with others to be Pennsylvania's YLC representative. More details can be found in the online application. All decisions are final.
- ▶ Claverack REC will notify applicants of the selection results by mail Thursday, Feb. 13.

To apply for Youth Tour, please complete the application at claverack.com/youth-tour.

Remember to attach a high-resolution 4-by-6 or 5-by-7-inch school photo (in .jpg format) or a scanned photo with a resolution of 300 dpi or higher.

Additionally, all applicants must create a 3- to 5-minute video that includes:

- ▶ Introduction of yourself and what cooperative you are from
- ▶ Highlights of your extracurricular activities in high school



High school juniors representing Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative visit the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., during the 2024 Rural Electric Youth Tour. Shown, from left, are: Ryan Jones, Northeast Bradford Jr./Sr. High School; Laina Beebe, Wyalusing Valley Jr./Sr. High School and Marisa Wise, Achievement House Cyber Charter School.

- ▶ Description of your non-school activities, such as work, hobbies or community service
- ▶ Discussion of your plans after high school graduation
- ▶ Answer to the question: "If you could have lunch with anyone — dead, alive, or fictional — who would it be and why?"

Please remember to include the link to your video as instructed in the application.

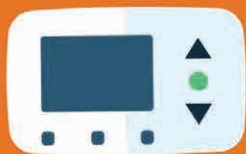
If you have any questions or need assistance, please don't hesitate to reach out to Karen Evangelisti at karene@ctenterprises.org or 570-268-1332.

Don't miss this incredible opportunity to compete for an all-inclusive experience in the nation's capital with the Rural Electric Youth Tour! Start your application and video planning now! 📸

KEEP SAFE AND WARM THIS WINTER



When the chill of fall and winter set in, be aware of **potential fire hazards that are lurking in your home**. Whether keeping warm with heat from your furnace, space heater, fireplace, or electric blanket, **Safe Electricity offers these tips to prevent a fire in your home:**



Have your furnace inspected annually.

Always place your space heater on a **steady surface** and away from curtains, tablecloths or other flapping fabrics. Use a space heater with an automatic shut-off switch.



Be sure your **chimney is clear** before each use, and cover your fireplace with a screen to keep children and pets away from flames.



Inspect electric blankets for scorch marks or visible damage regularly.

For more **tips on fire prevention**, visit

Safe Electricity.org[®]

The Ever-Changing, Fast-Growing Demand for Electricity

How the increasing need for power affects electric co-ops and their members

SCOTT FLOOD

WHEN RURAL ELECTRIC cooperatives first strung power lines from farm to farm and through remote forests less than a century ago, most members had but a handful of lightbulbs to power. With time, they added appliances like refrigerators, but we're sure they couldn't begin to imagine the number and variety of electrical devices in today's homes and garages.

Across the U.S., people are using an increasing amount of electricity at work, at home and, with the growth of electric vehicles, even on the road.

The demand for electricity increased by 2.5% in 2024 and is expected to grow by 3.2% this year. That was after co-ops saw a 4.8% increase in 2022. Through 2029, the nation's peak demand is projected to grow by 38 gigawatts (GW). That would be like adding another California-sized state to our nation's power grid.

The rapid growth of artificial intelligence is driving the development of massive data centers, often placed in electric co-op service territories to take advantage of inexpensive land and fewer neighbors to complain. By 2022, these facilities accounted for 2.5% of the nation's consumption of electricity — and by 2030, they'll use 7.5% of all electric power.

Data centers and facilities like warehouses require a large, steady supply of electricity 24 hours a day. That means the electric co-ops supplying them can't rely on intermittent sources of electricity, such as solar or wind energy, to handle the additional load. Instead, they need more baseload, or always-available power, much of which is currently generated by burning

fossil fuels. The more we depend on technology, the more we'll need reliable baseload generation.

Yet that's a problem, because at the same time Americans are using more electricity, power providers are being forced to shut down these reliable sources of power, such as coal and nuclear power plants. Many large coal plants have been converted to use cleaner-burning natural gas, but others have been deemed too costly to convert and are prematurely being shut down. More than 110 GW of always-available generation — enough to power about 35 million homes — is forecast to retire by 2033.

In other words, at the same time everyone is using more electricity than ever, the supply of the most reliable source is drying up. Add in the uncertainty created by public policy debates around energy and climate change, and you can begin to understand why some states are facing a high risk of rolling blackouts between now and 2028.

One more factor plays a key role

in the ability of co-ops and the rest of the nation's power industry to keep up with demand. That's the supply chain. The limited number of U.S. suppliers simply can't keep up with the nation's need for power equipment. When a co-op orders new transformers, it may have to wait several months for delivery and pay a significantly higher price.

So, expect to hear more about the challenges created by record demand for electricity in the coming years. 📡

About the author: 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.

About Allegheny: **ALLEGHENY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.**, based in Harrisburg, Pa., is a generation and transmission supplier serving 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.



ANDERSEN EV, PEXELS

MORE AND MORE: Across the U.S., people use a growing amount of electricity at work, at home and, with the growth of electric vehicles, even on the road.

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A future for generations to come



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GENERATIONAL WEALTH is of paramount significance as it represents a beacon of financial stability. It serves as **a tangible testament to the hard work, diligence, and financial acumen** of previous generations, offering a solid foundation upon which future generations can build their dreams and aspirations.

American Gold Reserve is releasing Government issued **\$5 Gold American Eagles** completely free of dealer mark-up for only \$299 each. These beautiful \$5 Gold American Eagles are a perfect way to enter the gold market. They are set for immediate public release and **will sell out fast**.

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Special arrangements on orders over \$50,000

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- Gold offers financial cover during geopolitical uncertainty.
- Good portfolio diversifier.

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Wall-to-Wall Memories

STEVE PIATT

BILLY WILL BE COMING HOME SOON.

My Alaskan mountain goat made the long trip back to Pennsylvania where, for the past year, he's been in line at Kanati Elite Taxidermy in Myerstown, awaiting the artistic magic of its staff to create a lasting memory for our wall.

It will be a half mount on a rock base, a decision based largely on available space in our home, which is already bulging with moose antlers, whitetail mounts and antler plaques, Paula's double-bearded turkey, a black bear, smallmouth bass, and numerous photos we've taken during our adventures across North America.

It's a common misconception, particularly among the non-hunting community, that these "trophy" are there so we can show off to anyone entering our home. Certainly, we're happy to have anyone admire our mounts and photos, and are willing to share the stories behind them. But at the same time, if no one but us ever sees them, that would be just fine, too.

They are for Paula and me, representing shared memories to re-live, stories only we can truly understand, and successes afield and on the water but also adversities, challenges, and in many cases, a certain level of pain.

It's just that way in the outdoors. Obviously, my mountain goat hunt was an exhaustive effort, both in preparation and in actuality. But so, too, have other adventures been. There was a South Dakota turkey hunt, captured in a photo collage, where we logged double-digit miles before both connecting on beautiful Merriam's gobblers. Also, we took several



STEVE PIATT

MEMORIES MADE: Mounts, plaques and photos line the walls of the Piatts' home, evoking memories of past hunts and adventures.

grueling backcountry canoe trips in Canada's Algonquin Provincial Park. A detailed map on our stairway wall still stops me in my tracks almost daily as I recall the canoe carries between lakes as well as the encounters with moose, wolves and black bears. We have several images of polar bears and an Arctic fox, courtesy of a once-in-a-lifetime trip to Churchill, Manitoba, along the shores of Hudson Bay. There, we toured the tundra and photographed the bears as they lounged around, waiting for the pack ice to form so they could resume their winter ways.

Occasionally, a harvest or catch sets off a chain reaction of sorts. When, in 2018, Paula downed a beautiful bull moose, her antler mount dwarfed mine and took over space in our living room. My moose, also taken in Newfoundland but some 25 years earlier, was relegated to the dining room.

That will again be the case upon Billy's arrival. Measurements have been taken, and my mountain goat will replace a pronghorn antelope I arrowed in Wyoming a decade or so ago. The antelope is destined for my office. I think.

Paula, too, recently added to the mix with a spectacular canvas image of the northern lights she captured

during the displays that reached into the Northeast. There should be an asterisk next to this pic, however: taken with her cellphone, what could be seen with the naked eye was not nearly as breathtaking (which is why I remained in bed).

And, obviously, the walls are lined with photos of dogs. Our Labrador retrievers have been a major slice of our lives, so it's not surprising there are photos of dogs swimming, dogs sleeping, dogs with pheasants, puppies and old dogs. Even today, stopping to eye a particular image can lead to tears.

To their credit over the years, the dogs have seemingly taken the mounts of turkeys, deer, bear and fish for granted. But we're not going to push our luck by putting a cockbird on our mantle.

Billy will probably get a few curious glances from Riley and Molly, but then they'll go back to chewing on a deer antler — or each other.

After that arrival, we'll look around for more space on our walls.

For memories. Our memories. 🐾

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.

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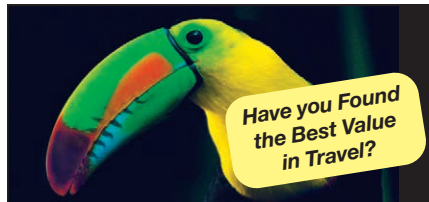
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Baking with Self-Rising Flour

ANNE M. KIRCHNER

HAVE YOU EVER DABBLED WITH SELF-RISING FLOUR? The blend of all-purpose flour, baking powder and salt offers a convenient option for many baked goods. Baking powder, which is distributed evenly in the flour, functions as the leavening agent. Baked items made with self-rising flour tend to rise evenly and have a light, soft texture.

Self-rising flour is in the baking section at most grocery stores. Or you can make your own blend by sifting together 4 cups all-purpose flour, 2 tablespoons baking powder and 2 teaspoons salt. Store the homemade self-rising flour in an airtight container for six to nine months. 🍪

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



PARMESAN BISCUITS

- 2 cups self-rising flour
- ½ stick butter
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- ¾ cup whole milk

Place the self-rising flour in a large mixing bowl. Use a hand-held cheese grater to shred the butter into the flour. Add the grated Parmesan cheese. Stir with a dough whisk to blend the ingredients. Add the whole milk and continue stirring until a soft dough forms. On a lightly floured surface, knead the dough until smooth. Roll out the dough to a half-inch thickness. Cut dough with a 2-inch round biscuit cutter and place on a cookie sheet with sides touching. Bake at 450 degrees for 12 minutes. *Makes 8 biscuits.*



GINGER BEER BATTER BREAD

- 3 cups self-rising flour
- ¼ cup honey, warmed
- 12 ounces ginger beer*
- ¼ cup butter, melted

Place the self-rising flour in a large mixing bowl. Slowly pour the honey and ginger beer into the flour and gently stir until combined. Pour half the melted butter into a 9-by-5-inch loaf pan. Use a pastry brush to grease the bottom and sides of the pan. Scoop the bread batter into the pan and spread evenly. Brush the remaining butter on top of the batter. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 to 55 minutes. Cool the bread for 15 to 20 minutes before removing from the pan. *Makes one loaf (10 to 12 slices).*

***Note:** *Ginger beer is a non-alcoholic, carbonated, sweetened beverage with a strong ginger taste.*



PEANUT BUTTER & CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

- ½ cup margarine, softened
- ½ cup shortening
- 1 cup brown sugar
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 2½ cups self-rising flour
- 1 cup chocolate chips
- 1 cup peanut butter chips

In a large mixing bowl, cream together the margarine, shortening, brown sugar and granulated sugar. Add the eggs and vanilla; mix until fluffy. Add the self-rising flour; stir until dough forms. Add and stir in the chocolate and peanut butter chips. Using a cookie scoop, drop the dough on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper. Bake at 375 degrees for 12 to 14 minutes. *Makes three dozen cookies.*

Close Encounters of the Small World Kind

MITCHELL KYD

I WAS PUMPING GAS WHEN a fellow Jeep driver smiled and gave me a wave across the lanes. A few quick sentences were traded between strangers as we waited to fill our tanks. Receipts were printing when I added that I wished my Wrangler got better mileage.

He chuckled. “With a Jeep, it’s about the *smiles* per gallon, not the miles,” he quipped before pulling away. Spoken like a true Jeep fan. He made me laugh out loud, and those endorphins carried me through my entire afternoon.

Is it me or are you having happy encounters with strangers these days, too? Despite all the negativity on social media and what news headlines want us to believe, I find there are a lot of really grand people “out there” who are looking for moments of connection, however fleeting. It happens all the time — at the post office, in a parking lot and in line at the checkout. A smile or small courtesy leads to a few friendly words that evolve into something genuine, the kind of spontaneous, happy moment my friend Lynn calls a “joylette.” Everyone involved leaves feeling lighter and delighted that it happened.



At the butcher shop, the customer in line ahead of me was wearing a beautiful wrap, and I told her she looked fabulous in it. That was the start. In the time it took to get to the checkout, we discovered we both loved dogs, had a vacation spot in common and had definitely gotten smarter about our clothing choices as we aged. Small world. I told her I had once written a story called “Every Closet Tells a Story,” and we laughed together about the years we battled pantyhose, endured ridiculous, pinching shoes because they were in style, and had our dry cleaners on speed dial. We agreed we had the experience now to recognize that funny lady Gilda Radner was on to something when she said: “I base most of my fashion taste on what doesn’t itch.”

When we parted at the register, the cashier asked if the

stranger ahead of me was an old friend. Hmm. Actor and folksy philosopher Will Rogers put it this way: “A stranger is just a friend I haven’t met yet.”

Waiting anywhere can be a problem or an opportunity. We get to decide. While in queue for my chiropractic tune-ups, I’ve met a friend’s new brother-in-law, the brother of a classmate and best of all, a woman who knew my son-in-law when he was a kid. Because it’s always important to know more than your kids think you know (including the grown kids you’ve welcomed into your tribe as in-laws), it was too much fun to get the dish on some of his old stories, too.

Waiting rooms can be scary places. They’re always a source of anxiety, especially the dental and medical ones.

Maybe if we got brave and took the first step to smile and make eye contact with another anxious waiter, the waiting would be much easier. Instead of having to turtle-up in solitude, fake interest in an outdated magazine or scroll mindlessly through screens, we could all help each other change gears and derail our stress for just a few moments.

Because I can only write about what I know, I used to think my close encounters happened to me so I would always have more story fodder. I finally realized these connections happen *for* me, not *to* me; they are gifts. My life is richer for being a participant in my little world, not simply an observer.

I’ve always loved that adage that people will forget what you said, and they will even forget what you did. What they will never forget is how you made them feel. It’s wonderful to be the recipient of a feel-good moment. It’s even better to be the one who can make that happen for someone else. Be brave and be the one. It’s a small world, after all. 🍷

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.

Return of the Ottoman Lady

JOHN KASUN

RECENTLY, I WAS CONTACTED BY “The Ottoman Lady,” who was the subject of my October 2024 *Penn Lines* column. In it, I described her attempt to stuff a 4-foot-round ottoman she had just purchased through her 2-foot car door and was positive it would fit — if she could just turn it a little bit.

After the column appeared, she recognized herself as the subject in that humorous depiction and my cover as a helpful stranger was blown when she tracked me down.

I might have been in real trouble, except her lawyer only has a mail-order law degree and does not have a license to practice in Pennsylvania.

I am sure I would have won the case had it gone to court, however, because I soon learned the “ottoman-stuffing episode” was not her first encounter with a mind-bogglingly unbelievable situation.

She laughed as she told me random stories of her past adventures, and it reminded me of the old-time movie serials, where each adventure was surpassed by something even more unbelievable. The following is one of her stories, which has to be true because even I would not dare make it up.

She explained that when she was younger, her father attempted to broaden her commonsense education on a variety of subjects, one of which was the care of her automobile. He taught her, for example, how to check the oil and tire pressure.

While attending college, she shared her knowledge with her roommate, demonstrating the proper way to check the oil in her car. Much to her surprise, she found the oil was low. Her father had placed some extra quarts of oil in the trunk for emergencies so all she had to do was add it. It seemed simple enough until she and her roommate struggled to add oil through the tiny hole that housed the oil dipstick. They quickly realized it would take forever to

get the oil into the engine a drop at a time.

Undiscouraged, they checked their apartment for something they could use to increase the flow. After much searching, they came up with the perfect solution: a turkey baster. Filling the baster with oil was easy, but when they tried to force-feed the oil into the small dipstick hole, things changed dramatically. With each squeeze of the baster, they succeeded in getting oil everywhere except inside the engine. Undaunted, they repeatedly filled the baster only to have the same results. Shortly, the car and the surrounding area qualified as a hazardous waste site.

Eventually, a young man stopped to offer assistance. It only took him a minute to grasp the “sticky” situation. He removed the oil-fill cap and added a new quart in less than a minute. The then-young and future Ottoman Lady admitted she was shocked to learn that while you check the oil with the dipstick, you add it through a large hole just a few inches away — a lesson she would never forget.

After our laugh-filled reunion conversation ended, I had a feeling if I could just follow Ottoman Lady around for a month, I would have enough humor material for a book.

Unfortunately, no one would believe any of it.

I wonder now if maybe she had put a little oil on that ottoman, she might have been able to squeeze it into her car the day our paths crossed. However, then we would have never actually met, and I would never have had the opportunity to spend time with such a lovely person with a great sense of humor. Things don’t happen by accident; some are meant to be. 🍷

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.



Uncover Savings With a DIY Energy Audit

MIRANDA BOUTELLE

DEAR MIRANDA: How do I perform an energy audit on my home?

A: A home energy audit may sound daunting, but it can be as easy as creating a checklist of improvements based on what you see around your home.

Here's what you'll need to find opportunities to save energy and money: a flashlight, a dust mask, a tape measure and a cooking thermometer. I recommend taking notes on your phone or a notepad.

First, check the heating and cooling equipment. Determine the age and efficiency of the equipment by looking up the model number on the nameplate. The average lifespan of HVAC equipment is 10 to 30 years, depending on the type and how well it's maintained. If your equipment is older, it may be time to budget for an upgrade. Check the filter and replace it, if needed.

Then, check the envelope of your home — the area that separates the heated or cooled areas from the exterior — for drafts and air leakage. Feel around windows and trim for any drafts. Pay special attention to spots where different building materials come together. Check under sinks for gaps around pipes. Seal with weatherstripping, caulk or expanding foam, as needed.

Make sure to replace incandescent or compact fluorescent bulbs with LEDs, which use significantly less energy and last longer than traditional bulbs.

Next, put on the dust mask and

look in the attic to make sure it's insulated. You may be able to see enough from the access area by using a cellphone to take photos. Use the tape measure to check the depth of the insulation. It should be a minimum of 12 inches deep.

Insulation can become compacted over time, but it should be evenly distributed throughout the attic. Loose fill or blown-in insulation should be fluffy and evenly dispersed. Rolled batt insulation should fit tightly together without gaps.

Also, exterior walls should be insulated. If your home was built before the 1960s, the walls are probably not insulated. Homes built in the 1960s or 1970s likely need more insulation. Sometimes, you can see wall insulation by removing an outlet cover or switch plate and using a flashlight to look inside the wall cavity. When doing this, turn off the power at the electrical panel to avoid the risk of electric shock. Wall insulation can be blown in from inside or outside the home. This is a job for a professional.

If you have a basement or crawlspace, head there next. Unfinished basements should have insulation on the rim joists, at minimum. This is the area between the top of the foundation and the underside of the home's first-story floor. Use closed-cell spray foam or a combination of rigid foam and spray foam to insulate rim joists. Crawlspace should have insulation on the underside of the floor between the floor joists. Insulation should be properly supported in contact with the floor with no air gaps. Water pipes and ductwork should also be insulated.

Lastly, check the temperature of your water by running it for 3 minutes at the faucet closest to your water heater. Then fill a cup and test the temperature with a cooking thermometer. Hot water should be between 120 and 140 degrees. You can reduce the

temperature on your water heater to reduce energy waste and prevent scalding.

Once your home energy audit is finished, review your findings and start prioritizing home energy-efficiency projects. For step-by-step instructions, visit energy.gov/save. 📄

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.

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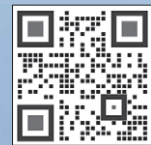
JEEP 1940s WILLYS or Ford Army-type jeep. Rusty, broken down in field, any condition considered. 570-395-4127. Email: ironrider111@yahoo.com.

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

The Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association (PREA) Scholarship Trust Fund offers a range of educational scholarships and is accepting applications for the 2025-26 college year.

ATTENTION HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS:

The Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association Scholarship Trust Fund in Memory of William F. Matson is offering scholarships to high school seniors whose parents/guardians are members or employees of Pennsylvania and New Jersey electric cooperatives. Scan this QR code for more information about the scholarship and the application.



ATTENTION FORMER YOUTH TOUR STUDENTS:



The Jody Loudenslager Scholarship is available to any college-bound or current college student who was selected to participate in the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association Youth Tour program. Scan this QR code for more information about the scholarship and the application.

REQUIREMENTS & DATES TO REMEMBER:

Applicants are required to furnish necessary aptitude test scores, transcripts (high school or unofficial college, if applicable). All applications and required documentation must be emailed to Steph Okuniewski (email address below) no later than **May 5, 2025**. Finalists will be sent a follow-up questionnaire that must be returned by **June 6, 2025**. Scholarship recipients will be notified in July 2025 and will be featured in the October 2025 *Penn Lines* issue.



QUESTIONS:

Steph Okuniewski, *Member Engagement Specialist*
Stephanie_Okuniewski@prea.com
717.982.1455

Congratulations, 2024 Winners

HUNDREDS OF *Penn Lines* readers submitted photos for the 2024 Rural Reflections contest, and a panel of independent judges selected the year's winning entries. Each winner in the categories of most artistic, best landscape, best human subject, best animal subject and editor's choice will receive a \$75 prize. However, all of the readers who submitted photos during the past year deserve our appreciation. In February, *Penn Lines* will publish the judges' other favorite photos. These runners-up will each receive \$25.

In March, we will begin publishing the 2025 photos, so please start sending your snapshots (no professional photos, please) to *Penn Lines* Photos, P.O. Box 1266, Harrisburg, PA 17108-1266. Include your name, address, daytime phone number and the name of the electric cooperative that serves your residence, business or seasonal home.

Remember, our publication deadlines require that we work ahead, so send your seasonal photos in early. We need spring photos before mid-March, summer photos before mid-May, fall photos before mid-July and winter photos before mid-September. Please note: 2024 photos that were accompanied by self-addressed, stamped envelopes will be returned one year after receipt. Photos received in 2025 — if accompanied by self-addressed, stamped envelopes — will also be returned one year after receipt. 📧

MOST ARTISTIC



EUNICE MCCOY • BEDFORD REC

EDITOR'S CHOICE



COHEN MILLER • VALLEY REC

BEST LANDSCAPE



FAY SERBIAN • REA ENERGY COOPERATIVE

BEST ANIMAL SUBJECT



STEPHANIE RAMSDORFER • NEW ENTERPRISE REC

BEST HUMAN SUBJECT



JEN SNEDIKER • ADAMS EC

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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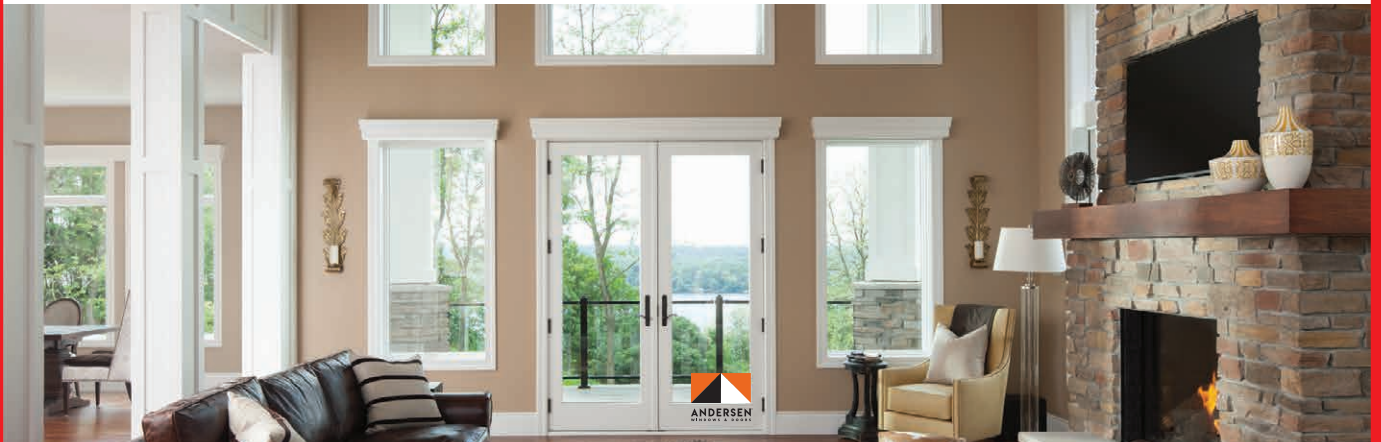
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