

# Valley Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

## Valley Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**James Stauffer**  
Chairman

**Kevin States**  
Vice Chairman

**Cindy Bigelow**  
Secretary

**Robert Holmes**  
Treasurer

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PREA Director

**James Stauffer**  
Allegheny Director

**Gregory Henry**  
**Randall Huntsman**  
**Linda McMath**  
**Joanne Whitsel**

**Corporate Office Hours**  
Monday - Thursday  
7 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

**Huntingdon/Martinsburg/Shade Gap Office Hours**  
Monday - Thursday  
7 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

**Outages & Emergencies**  
1-800-432-0680

## Guest Column



# Co-op needs new faces at annual meeting

By Doug Roles, Vice President, Member Services

**DID YOU** know that in Valley Rural Electric's early years the annual meeting was a day-long social event, complete with a boxed lunch and the chance to win what were then new-fangled appliances such as electric stoves and electric frying pans? Members dressed in their Sunday best and turned out in droves to hear how many miles of line their new utility added in the past year or to find out what the co-op was doing to help dairy farmers modernize their milking parlors.

As electric co-ops formed across the country in the late 1930s, they made annual membership meetings a requirement for electing the board of directors, sharing important financial information and, occasionally, voting on matters such as changes to bylaws. Attending the annual meeting was a priority because getting central station electric service was still a recent triumph for rural America.

Today, technology and busier lifestyles have changed the way we do business. Your interaction with the co-op could be as minimal as using the touchscreen of your cellphone to pay your bill. Going to the annual meeting could be thought of as something members used to do.


In reality, annual meetings remain a cornerstone of our business. That's because electric cooperatives serve both an economic and a social purpose, and our members still depend on each other, even if they don't realize it.

For example, the reliability of your service depends in part upon your neighbors working with our tree-trimming crews to minimize the chance of storm-related outages. This keeps

electricity flowing to "downstream" accounts. And whether you participate in our demand response program or not, you benefit by the co-op's wholesale power bill being more stable because of the 4,700 members who do participate. Collectively, they are reducing use during periods of greatest demand.

Every time you turn off an unused light, swap out an incandescent bulb with an LED or replace an aging appliance with a more efficient model, you are joining other co-op members in using electricity more wisely. Our members have done such a good job of this that the co-op's peak kilowatt-hour demand has not grown substantially in recent years.

Despite this level of consumer economic and technological participation, co-ops across the country are struggling to get younger members to participate socially by attending annual meeting. The reason? Younger members see electric service as a given whereas previous generations still remember when the lights "came on."

As times change and electric cooperatives face new challenges, it will be important that new generations of members realize the value of a member gathering where neighbors meet to safeguard the co-op's future. Very few organizations are uniquely positioned like Valley Rural Electric to bring together local communities. The simple act of smiling, saying hello, and shaking someone's hand at annual meeting joins neighbors in the common cause of safe, affordable, and reliable power for rural areas. 

# Co-op holds nominating meetings in Districts 1, 3 & 5

By Doug Roles  
*Vice President, Member Services*

IN FEBRUARY, Valley REC held nominating meetings in co-op Districts 1, 3 and 5. The nominees shown on the following page were selected to stand for election to the co-op board of directors at the annual meeting to be held Friday, April 7, at Huntingdon Area High School.

Nominating meetings are held each year in three of the co-op's nine director districts. This year's meetings were for District 1, held at Morrisons Cove Memorial Park, Blair County; and Districts 3 and 5, held respectively at Marklesburg and Shavers Creek Valley volunteer fire companies in Huntingdon County. Aside from the business portion of the meeting, the gatherings also give members the opportunity to hear an update on the co-op and to ask questions about their business.

Valley REC President & CEO Rich Bauer told members that clearing of rights-of-way is one of the co-op's top priorities. Valley spent \$2.1 million on tree trimming in 2016 and plans to spend \$1.9 million this year.

"The person 'downstream' from you depends on you to have your rights-of-way clear," Rich told members.

He also asked consumers who are not participating in the demand response program to please consider enrolling. The program offers members a \$100 bill credit for having a demand response unit placed on their water heaters. The unit enables co-ops in Pennsylvania to remotely shut off power to electric storage tank water heaters during periods of peak demand. The goal is to lessen the amount of electric use when the cost of power on the open market is at its highest. This stabilizes future capacity charges to co-ops served by Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc., our wholesale generation supplier.

"Half of Valley's wholesale power bill is determined by what we use on the hottest day of the summer, by the capacity charge," Rich explained.

Participants should not be inconvenienced. Since water heaters are well insulated, there is normally little heat loss during control periods.

"You won't even know it's there, but you're helping your fellow members," Rich said.

Questions from members ranged from the future of coal to the reliability of wind power and why electric utility territory boundaries seemingly overlap in some places, a carryover from the state's 1975 Territorial Protection Act.

Rich said Valley REC couldn't accomplish its mission without a team of employees who genuinely care about the co-op. Several members attending nominating meetings also lauded the co-op's employees for their dedication.

"It's nice that when you go to flip a light switch, there are people at the co-op making sure everything works," said Gerald Slick, who served as nominating chairman in District 1. 🌞



Above: District 3 Nominating Chairman Roger Shaffer, left, asks for nominees with assistance from Valley REC President & CEO Rich Bauer and Valley REC Executive Secretary Kim Kane. Gerald Slick, below, left, served as nominating chairman for District 1, while Willis Sneath filled the role for District 5. Bottom: Members from District 5 listen to the evening's program at Shavers Creek Community Building.



Members attending the District 1 meeting at Morrisons Cove Memorial Park enjoy a buffet-style dinner.



# 2017 Valley REC Board Candidates

IN FEBRUARY, Valley REC held nominating meetings in co-op Districts 1, 3 and 5. The members featured on this page were nominated for positions on the board of directors. Their names will be placed on a ballot, and members attending the annual meeting April 7 at 7 p.m. at Huntingdon Area High School can vote for the candidates of their choice.

Entertainment for this year's annual meeting will feature country and Christian music performer Brianna Sheeder. Children may also attend. They will enjoy activities, snacks and a dairy promotion presentation. Each member who attends will receive a \$15 credit on his/her electric bill and a compact flashlight. Those registered will also be eligible to win one \$250 or one of four \$75 co-op gift certificates. In addition, attendees may bring to the meeting any spent compact fluorescent lightbulbs (compact spirals only, please). Co-op staff will properly dispose of them. Please plan to attend the annual meeting, April 7 at 7 p.m., at Huntingdon Area High School.

## District 3



**Kevin R. States**  
12817 Redstone Ridge Road  
Hesston, PA 16647

A 55-year-old native of Hesston, Huntingdon County, Kevin States works on his family's 200-acre dairy farm with 60 milking cows and another 80 head of young stock. The operation utilizes the services of Land O' Lakes, Inc., a cooperative, and Bedford Farm Bureau

Cooperative in addition to Valley Rural Electric.

Kevin is a 1979 graduate of Huntingdon Area High School. He is a member of the National Holstein Association and the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau. He was formerly involved with the Huntingdon County 4-H dairy and beef clubs and was a member of the Rural Electric Youth Tour delegation in 1978.

The States' farm has received electric service from Valley REC since 1952; Kevin has been a member of the cooperative since 1982. He has served on the co-op's board of directors since 1999 and has held the position of vice chairman for the past two years. Additionally, Kevin held the office of secretary for 10 years. He has attained Director Gold certification from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the highest level of national training for electric co-op directors.

Kevin and his wife, Sarah, were married in 1996. Kevin has one son, one daughter, one stepson, three grandsons and two granddaughters. In his free time, he follows NASCAR.

Kevin is running unopposed on the ballot for District 3.

## District 1



**Randall (Randy) Huntsman**  
194 Fair Valley Road  
Martinsburg, PA 16662

Randy works as an animal nutritionist with Renaissance Nutrition in Roaring Spring. Additionally, he is a crops manager with Kulp Family Dairy in Martinsburg and a bookkeeper for Hilecrest Farm, Tyrone.

A 1977 Central High School graduate, Randy and his family owned and operated a dairy farm, PA Fair Valley Farms, for more than 30 years. He also served on the North Woodbury Board of Township Supervisors for 24 years.

Randy has a wealth of co-op experience. He is a member of the following cooperatives: Land O'Lakes, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, Select Sire Power, Ag Choice Farm Credit and Bedford Farm Bureau.

He has also served on various boards of directors, including the boards of Blair County Farm Bureau, Blair County Holstein Club and Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania.

Randy and his wife, Karen, are members of Martinsburg Grace Brethren Church, where he serves as an elder and a deacon.

In his free time, Randy enjoys touring the country on a Harley-Davidson motorcycle, hunting and spending time with family. He and Karen are the parents of three grown children, two sons and a daughter.

Randy is 57 years old. He has been a Valley member since 2007 and has served on the Valley REC board since July 2016. He is running unopposed on the ballot for District 1.

## District 5

**Robert (Bob) Holmes**  
4684 Cold Springs Road  
Huntingdon, PA 16652



Bob Holmes was principal at Huntingdon Area High School for 19 years, and was assistant principal for five years prior. From 1997 through 1999, he served as acting superintendent for the Southern Huntingdon School District and Huntingdon Area School District.

A graduate of Turtle Creek High School, Bob obtained bachelor's and master's degrees in education from Bucknell University. He also earned 40 graduate credits in educational administration at Penn State. During his tenure in the U.S. Army Reserves, Bob attained the rank of captain.

Bob is an active member of Community Chapel of Hesston. He is a past president of the Huntingdon County chapter of the Pennsylvania Association of School Retirees.

Bob is 81 years old. He and his late wife, Barbara, were married for 57 years. They had four children, seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Bob has been a Valley member since 1969. He has served on the co-op board for seven terms and held the office of secretary for one year. He represented Valley REC on the board of Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc., for 13 years.

Bob is running unopposed on the ballot for District 5.

## Co-op grant program aids sign projects in Huntingdon County

By Doug Roles

*Vice President, Member Services*

MOTORISTS driving through southern Huntingdon County on Route 522 may have noticed two attractive new signs, one welcoming travelers to Shade Gap and another marking the entrance to the Shirley Home for the Aged in Shirleysburg. The two projects have something in common — each was funded in part by Valley Rural Electric Cooperative’s Community Service Grant (CSG) Program.

The co-op program, established in April 2015, helps co-op members struggling with electric bills due to financial hardship. Additionally, the program supports civic and community projects and education programs. Valley REC contributed \$1,000 to each of these sign projects. Project applications were submitted in 2016.

The Shade Gap Area Fire Company erected a new 8-by-20-foot sign Jan. 21. Ron Goshorn, company treasurer, created the preliminary design of the new sign, which promotes Harper’s Memorial Park.

“The previous sign didn’t have any information about the fire company,” Ron says. “It’s still a ‘Welcome to Shade Gap’ sign, but now it mentions the fire company and the park.”

The previous sign was put up in 2001 and was a product of the Shade Gap Elementary School third-grade class, which raised money by selling their “Lost History of Shade Gap” book. That project was spearheaded by then-teacher Linda McMath, who now serves on the Valley REC Board of Directors.

The Friends of Shade Gap submitted the CSG application for the fire company. The new sign was made by Swartz Signs & Designs of Mifflintown. The project took many months to complete.

“We had to decide what we wanted on the sign,” says Ed Goshorn, company president.

Once the fire company members decided on the wording, members Carol Book and Keith Book and Flo Fegan visited



PHOTO BY DOUG ROLES

WELCOME: Shade Gap Area Fire Company members are proud of their new welcome sign. Pictured, from left, are: Eric Walters, Stephen Yohn, Carol Book, Ron Peterson, Flo Fegan (financial secretary), Ed Goshorn (president) and Ron Goshorn (treasurer). All are Valley Rural Electric Cooperative members.

Swartz Signs to make the final selection from three options. The total project cost was about \$4,000. An anonymous donor paid the balance.

The new sign at the Shirley Home for the Aged is the result of an Eagle Scout project by Jarred Covert, son of Valley members Roger and Barbara Covert of Cromwell Township. The work was completed Sept. 1, 2016. Scouts from Troop 237 helped with Jarred’s project, along with local masons. The first steps were to design the sign and put a concrete footer in place. Jarred also had to work with the home’s board of

directors and the Huntingdon County Commissioners for final approval on the sign design. Additionally, he contacted 811 (Call Before You Dig) to check for buried utility lines.

“I’m very proud of this project and I appreciate everyone’s help,” Jarred says.

Jarred received his Eagle Scout rank in a ceremony Jan. 21.

In 2016, the CSG program awarded more than \$55,000. Sixty-five members received assistance with electric bills, 17 grants were awarded for civic and community projects, and one education grant was awarded. 🌱



PHOTO BY LISA CARPER

SCOUT PROJECT: Eagle Scout Jarred Covert, center, pauses for a photo at the new Shirley Home for the Aged sign. He is joined by Tracy Byers, the facility’s administrator, and Scoutmaster Gary Booher.