

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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Guest Column



District nominating meetings scheduled

By Luanne Eckenrode, *Vice President,
Consumer Services & Public Relations*

OVER the years, we have often used this space in the January edition of *Penn Lines* magazine to ask members to consider attending their upcoming district nominating meetings. More than once we've told you that if it's your district's year for a meeting, you should come out to receive an update on co-op happenings.

Oftentimes we've said that the district meetings (slated this year for Feb. 5, 6, and 8 in Districts 2, 4, and 6, respectively) provide an opportunity for you to ask questions about "your" business. At least once or twice (or a dozen times), we've pointed out that a nominating meeting will give you a chance to catch up with friends and neighbors.

And we're certainly not above bribing you with food. Did we mention that you'll enjoy some good home cooking at a local fire hall? That's a practice we started nearly 30 years ago to increase turnout.

Faced with declining participation at business-only gatherings in the late 1980s, co-op staff members were searching for incentives to bring out busy consumers on cold winter evenings. The best idea can be summed up in just six words: "Feed them and they will come" (to paraphrase a popular saying). Or as a former colleague's father used to say, "Free meal — turn the wheel!"

Sites and menus were selected, invitations were developed and mailed, and employees eagerly waited for response cards in the mail. And come they did ... with capacity crowds of consumers packing firehouses

throughout co-op territory.

So why have we repeated ourselves? And why is it worth it to the co-op to go to the time and trouble of organizing a dinner? It's because nominating meetings are an opportunity for co-op members to exercise the cooperative principle of democratic member control. They are the foundation of the co-op's governing process. Here's how it works:

Valley REC's service territory is comprised of nine director districts. A member from each district serves on the co-op board of directors for a three-year term. Nominating meetings provide members of a district the opportunity to nominate fellow members for election to the board at the annual meeting, held in April.

Nominees are elected by the membership at large — those folks attending the annual meeting. This is to demonstrate that the elected board member serves the co-op, not just his or her district.

But the process begins with you. If you are a member in Districts 2, 4 or 6, you should receive in the mail (if it has not already arrived) an invitation to your district nominating meeting. Please consider returning your response card to us to let us know you plan to participate. You'll get a free meal ... and a whole lot more.


If you'd like more information about Valley REC's director districts, go online to valleyrec.com, click on "Member Info" and then "Directors and Districts" or contact the Member Services Department. 



PHOTO BY ETHAN DEVORE

ON THE HUNT: Denny Kauffman, a participant in the 2017 Wheelin' Sportsmen Hunt, checks the scope of his rifle with assistance from Dan McLucas an event volunteer. The outing makes available to disabled hunters areas of Raystown Lake that are normally restricted from hunting.

'Wheelin' Sportsmen' take to the woods

By Ethan DeVore

Director of Member Services

A GROUP of hunters who otherwise wouldn't be able to get in the woods got their chance to harvest a deer at Raystown Lake, Huntingdon County, thanks to a volunteer habitat improvement group. The annual Chris Bowser Wheelin' Sportsmen Hunt enabled more than two dozen sportsmen to go after deer on the final day of the 2017 rifle season.

Each year, the Terrace Mountain Chapter of the National Wildlife Turkey Federation (NWTf) sponsors the event for disabled hunters at the Raystown Lake Seven Points area. The chapter was formed in Huntingdon County in 1999. Working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the chapter assists with planning and implementation of projects to improve habitat on the

Corps of Engineers' property.

The Wheelin' event features a deer hunt from 6:30 a.m. till 2 p.m., then a lunch for all the people involved. The event was originated in part by Chris Bowser, the son of the Terrace Mountain Chapter's vice president, Pete Bowser. Pete says Chris developed the idea with a friend, Jeff Krause. They decided to pitch the plan to then-Raystown Lake Operations Manager Dwight Beal, who granted the request to help bring the overabundant deer population under control (to help reduce damage caused to native vegetation in the Raystown Lake Complex) while benefiting disabled hunters. The event makes available areas of the lake complex that otherwise are off limits to hunting.

Sixteen years ago, during the inaugural Wheelin' Sportsmen Hunt, the

chapter sponsored three hunters. Since then, the event has brought in over 400 disabled hunters and provided them the opportunity to get back out in the woods. This year's event took place Dec. 9, and 28 hunters participated. The day yielded great results, with a dozen deer being harvested. James Gummo's hunt was his first since he started participating in the event seven years ago. At 8:30 a.m., he shot a doe and couldn't have been more pleased.

"It's the only time I can get in the woods," James says. "Everything is done for you and they treat you so nicely," James says.

James is a Vietnam War veteran who suffered from a mini stroke and major heart attack. He is dealing with neuropathy and various other medical conditions, but that wasn't enough to keep him out of the woods on this

day. His wife, Rea, a volunteer, says she appreciates how convenient it is for participating hunters to come out and have everything taken care of for them.

Tim Clevenger volunteers to help with the deer processing. He works for his family's business, Clevenger's Processing, of Mapleton. The Clevengers take care of processing deer while also ensuring that the remains are properly handled according to chronic wasting

unteers who contribute to the event.

Another hunter who succeeded in harvesting a deer was Terry Frye, a Pennsylvania Game Commission hunter education teacher for over 40 years. Terry, who won the Hunter Education Instructor of the Year Award, has been battling vascular disease over the past several years. Sadly, Terry lost a leg to the disease. His son, Shane, made sure his dad was still able to experience the

few memories formed at this year's Sportsmen hunt. Not only did he get to spend the day in the woods with his dad and watch him harvest a deer, he also had a run-in with a black bear that came within 15 yards. Shane was able to catch the adrenaline-pumping moment on film before the bear fled the scene.

As the morning approached an end, all the hunters and volunteers gathered



PHOTOS BY ETHAN DEVORE

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Terry Frye and son, Shane Frye, pose with Terry's doe. The hunt provides wheelchair-accessible stands. Hunters and volunteers enjoy a hot lunch after the hunt.

disease control efforts, in accordance with executive orders issued by the Pennsylvania Game Commission for Disease Management Areas (DMAs). Along with Tim was a group of volunteers from Michels Pipeline, who played a vital role in the event's deer harvest this year. Jayme Fye, who works with Michels, heard about the event and immediately volunteered to help. He and several of his coworkers spent the afternoon putting on drives in an attempt to move deer to hunters.

"It's people like them that allow this event to happen — we couldn't be more thankful for all the help we receive," Pete says as he speaks about all the vol-

joys of a brisk-morning hunt by getting him a unique wheel chair. The chair runs on a continuous track similar to a tank's tread. The machine allows Terry to make it to areas in the woods that otherwise would be inaccessible.

"It's just so awesome that he can make it out to this event," Shane says. "It means a lot to me to have my dad here."

"This is a dream for us; we look forward to it every year," Bridget Dimond, a family friend, adds.

Shane, who hosts one of the most popular hunting and fishing podcasts this side of the Mississippi, called Rut and River Pursuits (R2), had quite a

at the Raystown Lake maintenance building for lunch.

"The lunch they provide is a perfect bonus after a cold morning in the woods," says Rea, who is happy to have deer for the freezer. "It's a great way to top off the day." 🌞

Valley Rural Electric donated monies toward the event's food costs through the co-op's Community Service Grant Program (CSG). CSG was designed to provide funds to Valley REC members experiencing financial hardship, to service organizations and to educators who need support for educational materials. For more information on who qualifies for the grant monies and how to apply, visit our website at www.valleyrec.com or send us an email at memberservices@valleyrec.com.

Co-op staffer will deploy to Middle East with Guard unit

Valley Rural Electric's vice president of member services will deploy to the Middle East early this year with his Pennsylvania Army National Guard unit. Doug Roles, who is also editor of Valley's local pages in *Penn Lines* magazine, is mobilizing with approximately 500 soldiers from the 28th Infantry Division Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion in Harrisburg.



Doug Roles
Vice President
Member Services

Doug serves as a print journalist in the division's public affairs office. His military orders are expected to cover most of 2018.

"I appreciate the thoughts and prayers of friends and family," Doug says. "Valley has been very supportive. I look forward to serving overseas again, and I'll also be eager to get back home."

The headquarters battalion will provide mission command for several thousand troops conducting security operations throughout the Middle East. Additionally, the battalion will conduct battle staff training directly with partner nation military units.

Doug has served in the Pennsylvania Army National Guard since 2002. He previously deployed to Iraq in 2008-09 with the division's 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team. He has also participated in overseas training in Egypt, France, Lithuania and South Korea.

He and his wife, Jody, have a 16-year-old son, Hunter. They reside in McVeytown, Mifflin County. ☀

Have a story idea for our *Penn Lines* pages?

We'd like to hear about it!

Contact our Member Services department:
800-432-0680 or 814-643-2650
memberservices@valleyrec.com

10 Quick Tips to Avoid High Winter Bills

Looking to lower your bills this winter? Use the 10 tips below to conserve energy.

- 1  Seal air leaks and insulate well to prevent heat from escaping and cold air from entering your home.
- 2  Reduce waste heat by installing a programmable thermostat.
- 3  Turn off lights when not in use.
- 4  Lower your water heater temperature. The Dept. of Energy recommends using the warm setting (120 degrees) during fall and winter months.
- 5  Unplug electronics like kitchen appliances and TVs when you're away.
- 6  Open blinds and curtains during the day to allow sunlight in to warm your home.
- 7  Close blinds and curtains at night to keep cold, drafty air out.
- 8  Use power strips for multiple appliances, and turn off the main switch when you're away from home.
- 9  Wash clothes in cold water, and use cold-water detergent whenever possible.
- 10  Replace incandescent light bulbs with LEDs, which use at least 75 percent less energy.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy

