

Valley Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Valley News

September | October 2009

Volume 66 | Issue 5

NEW GENERATION

Co-op helps bring
green projects on line

Pages 4-5



www.valleyrec.com

Providing safe, reliable electricity

I REMEMBER a banner that used to hang in high school classrooms. It read, "What is right is not always popular ... What is popular is not always right." How true.

Seven years ago, the co-op decided to adopt a formal 5-year right-of-way maintenance cycle in an effort to improve the safety and reliability of our service.

Twenty feet on either side of utility poles is cleared of trees and brush as part of this maintenance program.

Statistics show that our decision to begin this aggressive endeavor has paid off. We have experienced significant reductions in service interruptions and equipment damage. Plus we have saved thousands of dollars in labor costs by avoiding unnecessary trouble calls.

This year, on average, each consumer has experienced a total of only 45 minutes of power outages related to our distribution system. In 2002, the average was over 2 and a half hours.

There is a negative aspect of the program, however. People love their trees and many go to great lengths to keep us from doing our jobs. Our tree-trimming crews report that members have threatened them, cursed at them and even run them off of their properties.

Obviously, our efforts are not always popular, nor are the contracted crews sent out to do the work.

It's really no secret that our goal as your electric utility is to provide reliable and safe electricity. You may not know, however, that the chief obstacle that stands in our way is, well, trees.

We understand that preserving the natural landscape that paints our rural territory is important. In fact, in all our efforts, we work to balance our love of the land with our need to provide the safest, most reliable and most affordable electric service possible.

At the end of the day, our mission is to make sure that your lights come on when you flip the switch, and that means we have to control the growth of vegetation around power lines. So we trim trees and brush away from energized equipment. Blinks are fewer. Outages are reduced. Safety is improved. And members are



Wayne F. Miller
President & Chief Executive Officer

happy with the service reliability.

We are aware that not everyone agrees wholeheartedly with our proactive approach to mitigating problems. And we know that fulfilling our responsibility means upsetting some. But we're not here to win a popularity contest.

We've spoken with a lot of consumers regarding our right-of-way clearing efforts and not once has someone disagreed with the fact that we are trying to boost safety and reliability.

We don't expect a standing ovation for our tree-trimming efforts, but we do hope our members understand the reason behind them.

Here at Valley, we always stand ready to handle the tough and often unpopular decisions and to help you meet the energy challenges of the future. For more than 70 years, we have been your partner in helping to make your community a better, safer and more vibrant place to live.

Cooperatively yours,

Wayne F. Miller
President & CEO

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Valley Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



On the cover ...

The co-op recently helped a farm near Orbisonia, Huntingdon County, become nearly energy self-sufficient. The property has a working windmill, photovoltaic solar panels and battery and generator back-up systems. For more information on these "green" projects, turn to Pages 4-5.

Fall: The season for savings

CONSIDER implementing these seven energy conservation measures to potentially save hundreds of dollars a year on your energy bills. *Background information from the Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star program*

1 Reduce air infiltration by sealing leaks.

All the conspicuous air leaks in your home, when combined, can have the same effect as leaving a window wide open. Seal them with caulk, insulation or weather stripping. Concentrate your efforts on basement and attic spaces and around ductwork, doors and windows.

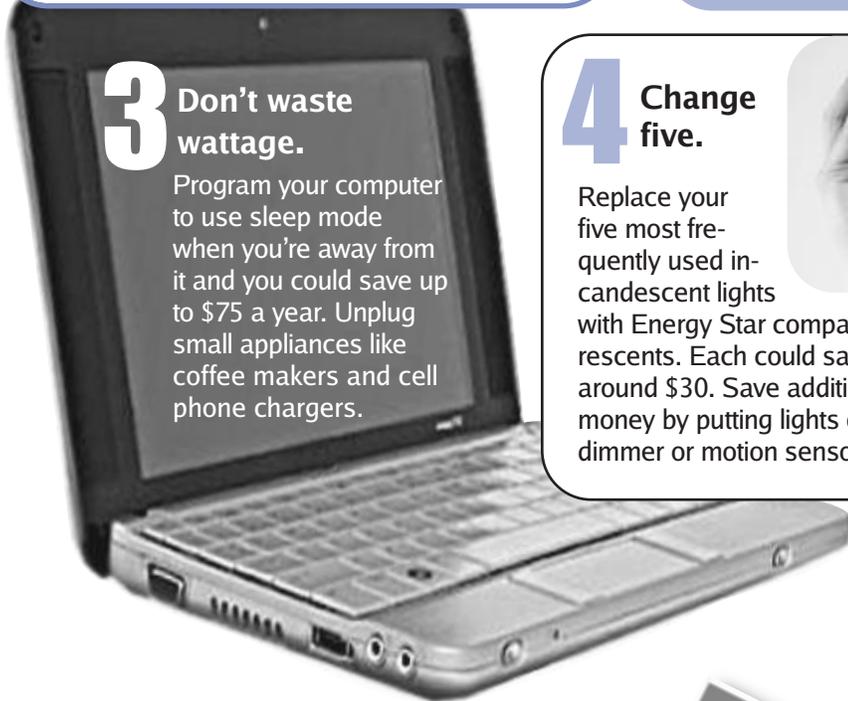
2 Install a programmable thermostat.

Programmable models offer the advantage of allowing you to adjust settings so the thermostat turns up or down at designated times. If you program it properly, you could save up to \$180 per year. Visit www.energystar.gov/pts for purchasing and use guidelines.



3 Don't waste wattage.

Program your computer to use sleep mode when you're away from it and you could save up to \$75 a year. Unplug small appliances like coffee makers and cell phone chargers.



4 Change five.

Replace your five most frequently used incandescent lights with Energy Star compact fluorescents. Each could save you around \$30. Save additional money by putting lights on a dimmer or motion sensor.



5 Become a fan-atic.

Ceiling fans can improve comfort and save energy. In the winter, reverse the motor and operate the fan at low speed in a clockwise direction. This produces a gentle updraft, which forces warm air near the ceiling down into the occupied space.



6 Make energy-smart purchases.

When it comes time to buy a new appliance, look for the Energy Star symbol. Energy Star models offer the same features as other versions, but meet strict efficiency guidelines, saving you money on energy costs.



7 Maintain heat and water systems.

Dirt and neglect are the top causes of system failures. Change the filter every month and have the furnace checked at least once a year. Insulate your water heater to save up to 9 percent in heating costs.

LONG ROAD *to a* SIMPLE LIFE

BY SUSAN R. PENNING
Director of Member Services

Family turns passion for progress into electricity

ON MOST WEEKENDS, Scott and Jennifer Simpson leave their home outside Philadelphia to make the three-hour trip to their family's farm near Orbisonia, Huntingdon County.

As the pavement turns to loose gravel and, eventually, dirt, the couple relaxes, breathes in the fresh rural air and takes in the sights ...

lush green pastures ... a herd of 46 quietly grazing cattle ... majestic mountains on every side ... a massive array of solar panels and a towering wind turbine?!

VISION

When Jennifer's parents, John and Josephine Templeton, bought the 146-acre homestead off Route 475, they had a plan in mind. The retired doctors wanted more than just a place where family and friends could go to get out of town. They longed for a farm that would be self-sustaining -- producing its own food and energy -- and that would offer long-term benefits and

conserve natural resources.

Their passion for progress and preservation stemmed from a long history of philanthropic work. John is the president of the John Templeton Foundation, which supports rigorous scientific research and related scholarships. The foundation provides funding to advance education in science, philosophy, theology and religion, character development, freedom and free enterprise.

John's work with the foundation as well as his other commitments kept him from directly overseeing the energy projects he wanted to complete at the farm. So Scott and



This has become a huge opportunity for education, not only for us, but for everyone involved in the projects and for the community ...

Jennifer Simpson



ABOVE: John and Josephine Templeton purchased their farm away from home with the idea of making it self-sustaining.

LEFT: The farm's windmill and solar panels were linked to Valley's electric distribution system in August.

Jennifer stepped in and assumed the role.

Scott currently manages his own landscaping business; he also has a lot of experience working on a farm. Jennifer is employed at Riverbend Environmental Education Center and is a full-time student in the Master of Environmental Studies program at the University of Pennsylvania.

VIABILITY

After two-and-a-half years of research, the family broke ground on a 7-kilowatt photovoltaic system and a 7.5-kilowatt wind turbine. Solar electric fencing and a solar water heating system were installed at the farm as well.

The solar array consists of 33 panels, with an estimated installation cost of about \$70,000 (roughly \$10 per watt of potential output).

The windmill cost about \$75,000 to install.

In addition, a battery backup system was put in at a cost of approximately \$30,000. Propane generators are on hand as well to supply electricity if the utility's power is out.

LEFT: Scott and Jennifer Simpson check on the array of solar panels that is installed atop a hill at their family's 146-acre farm.

RIGHT: A wall of interconnection equipment takes the direct current generated by the windmill and solar panels and converts it to alternating current. These inverters have built-in protection to respond to voltage spikes and dips, ensuring that no back-feeding or damage to equipment occurs.

In August, the system was linked to Valley Rural Electric's distribution system. The Simpsons agreed that the endeavor was much more complex, took a lot longer and cost a whole lot more than they anticipated (although the 30 percent tax credit helped to whittle down the price tag a little). There are significant benefits, however.

"One of the most important things I've learned is that you must first make sure you're using energy wisely," Scott admits. For example, it doesn't make sense to put in expensive wind and solar systems when a home's insulation is poor and the windows and doors are drafty. It's prudent to take measures to save energy before making the leap to attempt to generate it.

"This has become a huge opportunity for education, not only for us, but for everyone involved in the projects and for the commu-

nity as a whole," Jennifer stresses. "We are producing electricity in a clean, environmentally responsible way, and that's a good thing. Plus we are saving money on electric bills."

The windmill and solar panels have the potential to generate about 50 percent of the farm's current energy needs. Data collected since the systems have come on line indicates that the farm saved about 21 percent in electric costs over that first 30-day period. It will take a year or two to obtain a clear picture of how much the systems are truly generating.

For more information on the feasibility and cost of installing a wind or solar system at a specific location, visit www.chooserenewables.com and use the site's renewable energy estimator tool. Or call the member services department at Valley Rural Electric at 814/643-2650.



THE
**Trading
Post**

Classified Advertising



Co-op members may submit ads via e-mail at valleynewsads@valleyrec.com; by phone at 800/432-0680; by fax at 814/643-1678; or by mail at Valley REC, PO Box 477, Huntingdon, PA 16652-0477. There is no charge for this service. If consumers wish to continue running particular ads, they are required to resubmit the information on a bimonthly basis. The deadline for submission is the 25th day of the month prior to the issue months. Submissions are viewable on the co-op's website at www.valleyrec.com. Items published are printed at the request of our members. The co-op does not endorse, recommend or assume any responsibility for the products or services advertised.

Events/Entertainment

National Alpaca Farm Day - Sept. 26-27, 10 a.m.- 4 p.m. Annual open house - Nov. 7-8, 10 a.m.- 4 p.m. at Terrace Mtn. Alpacas, 7110 John Bum Rd., Calvin. Visit our website at www.terracemountainalpacas.com or call 814/643-2854.

Clem's Barbecue to benefit the Williamsburg Public Library - Oct. 1, 4:30-7 p.m. in the Zion Lutheran Church basement. For more information or to purchase tickets, call 814/832-3367.

Nashville recording artist McKenzie Wilson is now booking for the winter months. Old & new country music at its best. Full band shows. Sound & lights provided, if needed. Affordable & fun family entertainment. Video & audio at www.myspace.com/mckenziewilson or call 814/448-2938 or e-mail mrwsinger@embarqmail.com

Country Music Jam at the Dutch Country Inn Restaurant, Rt. 655 S. just off Exit 22 & 322. Every Saturday from 6-9 p.m. Public is invited. Musicians & singers are invited. For more information, call 717/483-9920. Ask for Martha.

Real Estate

Land for sale - 9.57 acres in Tuscarora Township, Juniata Co.

Property has well, septic and electric, \$79,900 negotiable. 717/348-2251. May need to leave msg.

Frankstown/Scotch Valley - Over 2,800 sq. ft., 4 BR/3.5 BA. Amazing view & lovely landscaping, \$334,900. 814/695-3503.

Sugar Grove Road, Huntingdon - 2005 28x64 Colony double-wide on block foundation. 1.9 acres, stone fireplace, cathedral ceilings throughout, upgraded appliances, whirlpool tub in master bath, front porch, huge yard, partially wooded, 10 mins. from Huntingdon, 30 mins. from State College. 3 BR, 2 BA on main floor & 1 BR, 1 BA in basement. Remainder of basement unfinished, \$150,000 OBO. 814/643-1405. Leave msg.

Office/retail rental - Rt. 22 Ardenheim fronting hwy., 400 sq. ft. office space w/ restroom, \$275 per month plus electric. 814/643-3775 or 814/599-4284.

Mobile home - 2 BR, State College area. 814/237-3476.

Germany Valley, Huntingdon Co. - 65 acres. Wildlife enhancement/forest stewardship. New home w/ 2-1/2 BA & 40' x 24' garage. Will sub-divide, \$450,000/terms. 717/593-9454.

1-acre lot (business or commercial), Rt. 22, Alexandria - Underground utilities, 2 wells, sewage tank & sand mound permit. Also avail.: 2-room, 12'x24' office bldg. w/ occupancy permit. 814/669-9592 or 669-4355.

Wanted

Will do house cleaning and yard work. 814/259-3634.

Cheap pop-up camper. 717/994-4806. Ask for Maxwell.

Used self-serve ice cream machine in good cond., reasonably priced for a church. Email eia@pa.net or call 717/485-4201. Leave msg.

Autos/Trucks

2000 Chevy Malibu LS, 97,000 mi., tan, power windows & locks, AC, runs great, \$1,500 OBO. 814/312-6525.

1996 Western Star tri-axle. Brand new w/ warranty. Cummings N14-500 motor, new hoist & pump, new w/ warranty wrap-around 8-transmission & clutch, de-production, aluminum Tri-Brook bed w/ fly tarp. Other new parts too numerous to list, \$30,000. 814/693-9527.

2000 Pontiac Grand Am, 2 dr., maroon, 86,000 mi., well maintained, runs great. 717/816-3219.

'97 Nissan Sentra, 4 dr. w/ new clutch, front rotors & pads, water pump. AC, regular maintenance, runs good. 34 mpg, \$1,975. 814/667-3828.

1976 Cadillac Coupe DeVille, dark red w/ white vinyl top, red interior in mint condition. Less than 60,000 miles. Three owners, all related. Runs. Comes w/ two mounted spare winter treads, \$3,000 OBO. 814/667-3444.

Recreational

1991 Mariah 21' cuddy w/ trailer, 4.3 V6 motor, 5-seat, \$7,000 OBO. 814/312-6525.

2007 YFZ 450 Yamaha 4-wheeler. After-market pipe & air filter. Very good cond., \$4,000. 814/386-4691 or 643-0809.

2005 Kawasaki Concours ZG 1000. Pearl luster beige, 14,275 mi., saddle bags, tip-over bars, front & back. Extra windshield. 1-1/4 risers on handlebars. Manual, battery tender hook-up, extra running lights, garage kept. Really good cond., \$5,500. 814/695-7237.

1982 Sunline Camper. 20', good cond., \$1,000. 814/447-3774.

1977 Wellcraft Airlot 16-1/2' bow rider boat, excellent cond., less than 60 hours of use, \$2,500 OBO. 814/542-4965.

Vacation Rentals

Upper Room By The Willows - 5758 Old Plank Rd., James Creek. Great location 3 miles from Lake Raystown & Tatman Boat Launch. Newly renovated former church sleeps up to 6 people. 3 BR plus sofa bed. Completely furnished; all you need to bring is your food. Lots of room for boat parking. No pets or smoking inside. Amenities include: air conditioning, fully-equipped kitchen, cable TV, DVD player, washer/dryer, unlimited telephone service, fire ring, bed linens, towels & grill. 814/658-3027.

Blue Knob Mountain Top Chalet - Sleeps 2-16. Ski in, ski out! Easy walk to the summit. Second highest house in the state of PA! Huge deck, great for family & friend reunions. Pools, jacuzzi, golf, tennis, restaurant, all within 1 mi. of the house. Great for hiking, biking, sunning on the deck or relaxing in the shade. Super year-round. Don't forget the Bedford Fall Foliage Festival; we're still available. See website for photos, amenities, location on the trail map, rates, etc. at www.blueknobchalet.com or call the Thompson's at 717/533-3343.

Feel like staying at Grandma's House? Why not stay at the Meyers Guest House? 20 miles south on Route 26 from Huntingdon. Freshened-up, early 1800's, 4 BR farmhouse. Sleeps 8. Completely furnished. Dbl. beds, linens, towels, washer & dryer. Equipped kitchen, cable TV, DVD/VCR, internet, unlimited telephone, grill, plenty of parking for boats. Rent 1 room or whole house. 814/658-2621.

Livestock/Pets

Miniature horses - AMHA, AMHR registered quality. Bred mares, stallions & foals. Cutting back for winter. Discounts on multiple purchases, \$450 & up. 814/643-2806.

Tools/Equipment

1949 8-N Ford tractor, very good cond., runs good, 3-pt. hitch w/ 7' blade, front bucket, new tires, chains, \$3,400. 814/643-3746.

Micrometers - One 0-1" Brown & Sharpe, \$30. One 0-1" Brown & Sharpe digital, \$35. One 0-1" Brown & Sharpe Tri-Mics, \$35. 814/239-2570.

Small, early 9N Ford tractor. Real good cond., 3-speed trans., carry-all, disk, snowplow & 2-pt. plow, \$2,800. 814/667-3668.

Craftsman DR trimmer on wheels. 5 hp, 22" cut, \$165. 814/695-1484 after 1 p.m.

Classified Ads

Craftsman commercial-grade 12" floor model table saw w/ miter gauge. Rip fence, mobile base & blade guard, 14 blades of assorted sizes, \$300 OBO. 814/931-1467.

Round hay feeder, \$95. New Holland hay baler model 68, \$350. Emglo garage-type air compressor, \$950. Rotary twin-post auto & truck lift, electric, \$1,100. Craftsman lawn tractor, 12 hp, 45" cut, \$300. Racing go-cart, B&S 5 hp engine, \$850. Cast-iron coal furnace, good for garage, \$100. 814/943-2192 or 931-7955.

Miscellaneous

A Spiritual Outlet - Online store for hand-crafted & retail metaphysical merchandise including gifts, jewelry & home accents. www.aspiritualoutlet.com or call 814/330-7583.

Car & SUV tires - 2 Kelly navigator platinum tires, 50% tread, P215/50R17, \$50. 2 Continental conti-trac tires, 30% tread, P235/70R16, \$40. 4 Doral SDL 60 tires (nice), 50%+ tread, P205/60R15, \$100. Mark-sipes@yahoo.com or 717/372-7118.

Used clarinet & used sax both in good cond., \$100 each, firm. 814/685-3806.

Excellent quality horse hay, no rain, stored inside. 4x4 round bales or 35-lb. small sq. bales. 814/505-6277 or 224-5499. Evenings after 4 p.m. or weekends.

Exercise bicycle, \$15. Oil burner pump/motor, \$15. Antique hi-fi record changer in nice cabinet, made by Webcor, \$50. Old Singer sewing machine in wood cabinet, good cond., \$100. 814/931-6774 anytime.

Dutchwest wood stove. Heats 1500-2000 sq. ft., used 3 yrs., good shape, \$400. 814/643-2854.

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Stainless steel Esther Williams ladder & automatic pool cleaner for above ground pool, \$35 each. 814/695-1042.

Enterprise cook stove, white. Good cond., \$425. Quilting frame, good cond., \$80. 717/987-3619 after 6 p.m.

PA Game Commission patches. Working Together For Wildlife, complete set. We need wildlife, others. 814/931-3022.

Dining room suite - China closet, 42"x58" oval table w/ 3-12' leaves, 6 chairs, fawn color. 814/832-3578. No answer, leave msg.

Oil hot air furnace/air conditioning unit, 8 yrs. old, \$2,000. 814/832-3661.

Vanity top. Brand new, 1 bowl cultured white marble, 31"wx19"d, \$50. 814/643-5609. Leave msg.

Used Gold Metal cotton candy machine. Save \$1,000 over a new one! 814/447-5446. Ask for John or leave msg.

McCaskey cash register stand. Made in Akron, Ohio. Solid wood, dark stain. Shallow metal-bottom drawer w/ partition, deeper wood-bottom drawer w/ partition, good cond., \$50. 814/667-3444.

2 very old brass & porcelain table lamps. 5'x7' air mattress, 8" thick. 50 lbs. 8-penny galvanized finishing nails. 814/658-2235.

72"x20"x38" wood entertainment center w/ pocket doors, \$300. 814/658-3430.

Service

Buck Hollow Taxidermy - Orbisonia area. Professional taxidermy since 1990. Call Mike at 814/447-3744 or visit www.buckhollowtaxidermy.com

Crossbow trigger tuning - Crossbow owners: Reduce that pull weight & don't miss that next big buck. I'm doing trigger work on certain model crossbows. Over 30 yrs. experience in gun repair, triggers, glass bedding, stock repairs. Shoot me an e-mail at

marksipes@yahoo.com or call 717/372-7118 for details.

Gun repair - Specializing in trigger work, stock glass bedding, stock repairs, barrel floating & general repairs. 30 yrs. experience. Call 717/372-7118 or email marksipes@yahoo.com

Antique clock repair & restoration - Call Richard Port. 814/643-1582.

TLC Powerwash - Residential or commercial. 814/644-1173 or 643-4367.

Kenneth W. Reigh Carpentry & Masonry - Decks, landscaping blocks, siding, additions, kitchen & bath, screened-in porches, natural stone, brick, block & concrete. Fully insured, 35 yrs. experience. For estimates, call 814/658-9998.

Book Construction - Excavation, clearing, roads, ponds, septic systems, foundations, prep. sites for bldg. Check our prices. Fully insured, free estimates. 814/448-0186 or 599-6262.