


**Valley
Rural Electric
Cooperative, Inc.**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric
cooperatives serving
Pennsylvania and
New Jersey

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GUEST COLUMN

Let's celebrate our sparkling history



by **Doug Roles**
Director of Member
Services

WHEN I was a kid, a highlight of the summer was running around the yard waving sparklers once it got dark on the Fourth of July. Independence Day meant a day of fun with cousins, aunts and uncles, plenty of picnic food, and fireworks.

A few years have gone by since we tried to write our names in the air with fire wands. And though I'm still

a big fan of picnic food, the holiday now includes more reflection about the actions of our founding fathers. The history of the electric cooperative movement mirrors the nation's founding. In each, a small group of determined individuals banded together to improve their quality of life and the quality of life for all those who would come after them. We truly stand on the shoulders of giants!

In this month of picnics and fireworks, let's be sure to remember both the framers of the U.S. and the founders of the co-op that provides us affordable, dependable electric service. Their legacy of cooperating to accomplish more, while respecting the individual, plays out in our daily lives.

Golf tournament

Summer got off to a great start for the co-op. Valley employees pulled together for a good cause during our third annual charity golf tournament, which raised nearly \$17,000. (See the following pages for details.)

The tournament was a true team effort and the culmination of many hours of work by the co-op's Health and Wellness Committee. Employees helped run the tournament and quite a few opted to also "chip in" (pun intended) by paying to play a round of golf. Teams that ended up a little (or in some cases, a lot) above par went away knowing it was all for a good cause.

"Electric Shift"


We're again asking members to do the "Electric Shift." Making small changes to normal patterns of electric use can mean savings for you and your co-op when the demand for electricity is greatest and the open-market price is highest. Listen for notices on Froggy 98 and HUNNY 106 radio; then run appliances in the early morning or late evening so you avoid piling on to periods of peak demand. Set your air conditioning thermostat to 78 degrees and close curtains and blinds to block solar heat. Shifting helps level out the co-op's wholesale power bill, lessening the frequency and size of rate hikes. It's another example of many members pooling efforts for a result that benefits both the group and the individual.

A co-op for every occasion

Adam Schwartz, founder of The Cooperative Way, a firm that helps co-ops succeed, penned an interesting piece about the myriad types of co-ops and the needs they fill. Schwartz wrote that while rural electric co-ops were being formed in the 1930s, folks in urban areas were also forming co-ops — not electric or farm co-ops, but credit unions and housing co-ops.

Did you know that nearly 23,000 credit unions were formed during the Great Depression? Or that the urban housing co-op model is moving into rural America? A number of mobile home parks have formed co-ops, and there are even co-ops for child care and covering funeral needs.

Co-ops offer goods or services at prices people can afford. Schwartz said what all these businesses have in common "is local people coming together to solve a problem with a solution that answers 'What's in it for me?' while providing a solution that also serves we, the community."

Schwartz hit the nail on the head there. That's a great way to sum up the rich history of our nation as well as your business, Valley Rural Electric Cooperative. 

VREC's third annual golf outing benefits Martinsburg toddler

BY DOUG ROLES

Director of Member Services

THE 2014 Valley Rural Electric Charity Golf Outing put the co-op's employees, friends and business partners on the course for a good cause. Forty teams, of four players each, participated in the event at Iron Masters Golf Course in Roaring Spring, Blair County, June 5.

The third annual event benefitted 2-year-old Brielle Harmon of Martinsburg. She is the daughter of Matt and April Harmon.

"Bri" is fighting Leigh syndrome, a severe neurological disorder that typically arises in the first year of life. The condition is characterized by progressive loss of mental and movement abilities. Leigh syndrome affects at least one in 40,000 newborns. While parents of seriously ill children can at times feel alone in their struggle, the purpose of the tournament was as much to surround the Harmons with friends as it was to raise money.

"April and I were shocked to see how much support there was for us," Matt says.

He says the family initially had mixed feelings about being the beneficiary of such a fundraiser. Matt, who has played in many golf tournaments, praised Valley's event.

"Everyone was so welcoming and made us feel comfortable," he says. "I was impressed at how smoothly the tournament was run."

The Harmons say Brielle has been growing, is getting full nutrition and is trying to walk. Matt says her blood work has been better and she seems to be responding positively as a participant in a new drug study.

"She's doing really well," he says. "We have a lot to be thankful for right now."

The Harmons have made numerous trips to Children's Hospital in Pittsburgh, Matt often staying at a boarding room while April stays with Brielle in the hospital. The family also travels to Akron, Ohio, for Brielle's treatments.

April quit her job to stay home with Brielle. Matt, a local contractor, has kept his business going (and his



VREC Health & Wellness Committee Chairperson Travis Kuhstos, right, meets with the Harmon family, Matt, April and 2-year-old Brielle, during the tournament. Background photo: Judy Post, Valley REC accounting assistant and capital credits clerk, lines up a shot to the green.



LEFT: The winning team in the best-ball tournament includes Rick Walker and Brandon Brown, Three Springs; Larry Brough of Gettysburg; and Larry Steele of Mount Union. Below: VREC employee Max Hetrick trades a day of solving IT problems for the co-op for a day on the course with longtime friend Aaron Knupp, a Huntingdon native who traveled from Maryland to play in the tournament.



employees working) by traveling back and forth.

This year's event raised more than \$16,500. The tournament is planned by the Valley REC Health and Wellness Committee, comprised of employees from all three district offices and the corporate office. Along with planning the event, the committee is responsible for selecting a beneficiary. Travis Kuhstos, committee chairperson, says the sun shone on this year's journey.

"We were truly blessed with this tournament," Kuhstos says. "We had a huge turnout and fantastic support from the community. We had a gorgeous day. The tournament went off without a hitch. This tournament was meant to be. Everybody came together and made this Valley's best tournament yet."

The four-player scramble followed a "best ball" format and included a putting contest and longest-drive contest. Team registration included 18 holes of golf, a cart, a light breakfast, lunch and a buffet-style awards dinner.

Valley's wellness committee has raised more than \$40,000 for charity since its inception in 2010. Last year's golf outing benefited a Mount Union couple injured in a car accident, while the 2012 golf tournament benefited a local cancer patient and her family.

Other committee fundraising events have included a walkathon, a horseshoe tournament, a "Kickin' It For Cans" food drive, two softball tournaments and participation in Relay for Life events in 2011, 2012 and 2013.

One of the softball tournaments benefited a girl who needed a power wheelchair and a ramp at her home. The committee has also organized wellness events for employees, including a Rails to Trails bicycle ride, a picnic outing to Cowans Gap State Park, and "wrap" and "salad" days to help employees focus on having healthy lunches.

The committee will begin planning next year's golf outing this fall. 🌻

2014 Sponsors

Corporate sponsors for this year's golf tournament included: Central Hydraulics Inc., Curryville; B&L Tree Services, Inc., Manns Choice; Power Line Supply, Reed City, Mich.; Pine Bottom Aviation Services, LLC, Martinsburg; Parks Garbage Service, Mount Union; Roaring Spring Water, Roaring Spring; NPC Inc., Claysburg; Bridgwell Resources, LLC, Tigard, Ore.; Pennsylvania Networks, Inc., Orbisonia; Jostens Commercial Printing, State College; First National Bank of Pennsylvania, Somerset; Teeter Group, Altoona; Sheetz, Altoona.

Cart sponsors were: Multicomm, Inc, Hollidaysburg; Wakefield Auto Parts, Neelyton; Brenda Covert & Lester Hawkins, Shade Gap; Clair W. Hawkins, Harrisonville; Ivy & Robert Yohn, Shade Gap; Long's Outpost, Inc., Martinsburg; Ayers Line Construction, Inc., Williamsburg; Fogle's Dog Training, Ashville; Delgrosso's Amusement Park, Tipton; Brown & Walters Insurance Agency, Orbisonia; Gary and Nancy Lewis, Roaring Spring; Burchfields Inc., Martinsburg; Fox's Pizza Den, Martinsburg; Knepper's Mill, Waterfall; J. Porter Enterprises, Petersburg; Strickler's Ice, Water and Cold Beer, Huntingdon.

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Area students learn electrical safety, co-op careers from VREC employees



PHOTO BY LUANNE ECKENRODE



PHOTO BY DOUG ROLES

CO-OP CLASSES: Valley REC employees recently had the chance to visit area school districts. Above: Tink Bucher talks to Fannett-Metal High School students about a career as a line worker. Below: Luanne Eckenrode, vice president of consumer services and public relations, presents a safety demonstration to elementary students at Juniata Valley School District. Below, left: Fannett-Metal students check out gear used by line workers. Left: Lineman Curt White demonstrates the bucket lift at Juniata Valley.



PHOTO BY DOUG ROLES



PHOTO BY CURT WHITE



Our **future electric rates** are partially **based on how much power you use** on hot, humid weekdays **between 1 and 6 p.m.** this summer. When you hear an announcement from your local electric cooperative about doing the “Electric Shift,” try these simple steps:

- ▶ Set air conditioners at 78 degrees or use fans instead.
- ▶ Close curtains and blinds to keep things cooler.
- ▶ Operate washers, dryers, dishwashers, stoves and other major appliances in early morning or evening.
- ▶ Minimize the number of times you open your refrigerator and freezer.
- ▶ Cook with an outdoor grill or a microwave oven.
- ▶ Turn off any non-essential lights.
- ▶ Run pool pumps at night.

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PEOPLE YOU CAN COUNT ON.™

