

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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From the President & CEO



Nuclear power is co-op power

By Rich Bauer

FROM the time our alarm goes off, we're on the grid. Electricity powers much of our daily lives. And as long as the lights come on, we don't give it much thought. We rarely think about where our electricity comes from.

But as a consumer-member of Valley Rural Electric Cooperative, you have an ownership interest in your power resources. Did you know, most of the energy used in cooperative homes and businesses throughout the Commonwealth is generated by self-owned nuclear power? It's true. In Pennsylvania, nuclear power is co-op power.

Since 1977, Pennsylvania's electric cooperatives have been partners in the ownership of the Susquehanna Steam Electric Station (Susquehanna), a nuclear facility in Berwick, Pa. For decades, this cooperative investment in nuclear power has been a driving force in providing our communities with safe, reliable and affordable electric energy. The plant supplies approximately 60 percent of our energy needs, and is one of the main reasons cooperative consumers enjoy one of the lowest and most stable electric generation rates in the region.

But cooperative members aren't the only ones benefitting from nuclear power. According to a report by the General Assembly's bipartisan Nuclear Energy Caucus, without the state's nuclear plants, Pennsylvanians would pay close to \$800 million more annually for electricity. The plants annually contribute \$2 billion to the state's economy, pay \$69 million in net tax revenues and employ 16,000 Pennsylvanians.


Nuclear power also provides 93

percent of the Commonwealth's carbon-free energy, helping Pennsylvanians avoid billions in health and environmental costs. No other generation resource comes close to having this kind of impact.

The future of our nuclear plants, however, is a matter of serious concern. Recently, two plants — Beaver Valley and Three Mile Island — have announced premature closures if action is not taken to correct current market dynamics. Such closures would have devastating, long-term consequences, because once a nuclear plant closes, it's closed forever.

While our Susquehanna plant is not currently in danger, if this troubling trend continues, it will result in higher energy prices and higher environmental costs for us all — something that will hit our rural communities particularly hard.

To avoid this fate, Pennsylvania needs a market design that recognizes nuclear power's positive contributions. Electric cooperatives are working with legislative leaders on a bipartisan effort to secure the future of nuclear power in Pennsylvania. These lawmakers are introducing legislation to equitably compensate nuclear power for its zero-carbon emissions and grid dependability.

Rural electric cooperatives understand the benefits of nuclear power, and we can help to educate others on its importance. Please take a moment to visit PARuralAction.org and send an email to your local legislators urging them to support efforts to ensure nuclear power remains viable in Pennsylvania. After all, nuclear power is co-op power. 

2019 Valley Rural Electric Annual Golf Outing to benefit local families facing cancer

By Doug Roles

Vice President, Member Services

TWO area families facing cancer and all the challenges the disease entails will be the recipients of Valley Rural Electric Cooperative's eighth annual benefit golf tournament. The day on the links pulls together golfers, donors and Valley REC employees in an effort to lessen the burden the families are facing.

Both recipients, 6-year-old Sawyer Werner and Heather Irvin, 32, were di-

UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh.

Glenn and Megan remember the day it all began as a normal day around the family farm. Before bedtime, Sawyer went to the bathroom and there was blood in his urine. By September 2018, he had completed 10 rounds of chemotherapy and six radiation treatments. Glenn and Megan say there is an initial shock and then the rounds of treatment and hospital visits becomes the new normal.

"Every day is different," says Glenn.

School District and is Sawyer's home-bound instructor. Glenn is a forest and wildlife manager at Raystown Lake and also does logging work.

Megan and Glenn say the community support has been great. Multiple donations have been made to the family and they have received many cards. The family has insurance. But, as other families in this situation know all too well, other expenses such as gas, meals and hotel stays can add up.



IRVIN FAMILY: Heather Irvin and Wayne Irvin are shown with their five children: Reagan, Kyara, Bentley, Ryker, and Brianna. Heather was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia in August 2018.



WERNER FAMILY: Six-year-old Sawyer Werner of Cass Township, Huntingdon County, was diagnosed with Wilms tumor, a kidney cancer, in February 2018. He is shown here with parents Glenn and Megan and sisters Eliza, left, and Millie.

agnosed in 2018. Since their diagnoses, they've logged hospital stays, medical appointments and miles on the road to hospitals in Pittsburgh.

"Cancer has such a huge impact on families and all too many people know someone who has been affected," says Valley REC President & CEO Rich Bauer. "We hope our tournament is a bright spot in the journey of these two families."

Sawyer, nicknamed "Bean," lives in Cass Township, Huntingdon County, with his parents, Glenn and Megan Werner, and younger sisters, Eliza and Millie. He was diagnosed with Wilms tumor, a kidney cancer, in February 2018, when he was midway through kindergarten. Since then, he has been undergoing chemotherapy and radiation treatments at

"It depends on the treatment. Some days he's himself; some days he doesn't get off the couch."

"He has no immune system during these intense treatments," Megan says.

Sawyer has had to be flown by helicopter to Pittsburgh when his condition has deteriorated. Three weeks after the completion of the initial treatments, a scan found a lesion on his left lung and another round of chemo and radiation was started. Sawyer has also received multiple blood transfusions.

Sawyer is a first-grade student at Spring Farms Elementary, but has not been able to attend regular classes since kindergarten. Megan works as a substitute elementary school teacher for the Southern Huntingdon County

Heather and her husband, Wayne, know all about frequent hospital stays and associated expenses. In August 2018, Heather was informed she has acute myeloid leukemia. Her fight against the disease has included chemotherapy treatments and multiple bone marrow biopsies at UPMC Shadyside Hospital in Pittsburgh.

"The month before I got diagnosed, I went to the hospital," she says. "It felt like I was having a heart attack. It changed everything. We had to adjust. It's hard on the kids."

The couple resides in Oneida Township, Huntingdon County, with their five children — Reagan, Kyara, Bentley, Ryker and Brianna, ages 4 to 11. She travels to Pittsburgh once a month for

GenerLink safely powers panel box during outages

IMAGINE this scenario. The power goes out, but you have a portable generator in the garage. With some extension cords, you could power your refrigerator or freezer, or maybe your TV and some plug-in lamps.

With a GenerLink switch, you can use that portable generator to energize your panel box, putting the choice of powering lights and appliances at your fingertips.

“This switch gives you the opportunity to turn on what you want, without overloading,” says Zach Yohn, an electrician with Valley REC Energy

Services. “It gives you the capability to control what you want to run off of your portable generator.”

The switch is mounted on your home’s meter base and features a receptacle for a power cord (provided with the switch) that runs from the GenerLink to the portable generator. GenerLink detects when a generator is operating and automatically disconnects from the utility grid, eliminating dangerous backfeed.

“You save yourself thousands of dollars compared to the cost of a whole-house generator,” Zach says.

Installation does not require the homeowner to be present and can be completed in as little as 30 minutes. Some models of GenerLink are surge-protectant with a 15-year warranty. Some models come with a remote receiver that tells the homeowner when utility power has been restored.



SIMPLE SOLUTION: Martinsburg staking engineer Jason Hey, left, joins Valley REC Energy Services electrician Zach Yohn in demonstrating how a power cord from a portable generator connects to a meter-mounted GenerLink switch.

The units start at about \$700.

While Valley Rural Electric Cooperative does all it can to minimize power outages, the GenerLink switch can provide a way for owners to have lights, television, a hot shower and the use of a microwave until service is restored.

The switch is a great choice for those who already own or are planning to purchase a portable generator, but do not have the budget for a whole-house generator. For those who prefer a backup power source for their entire home, Valley REC Energy Services carries Generac generators that run on propane.

“The Generac basically transfers the whole house load,” Zach says. “They’re great units, too. It just depends on your budget and what you’re looking for in emergency power.”

For more information about the GenerLink switch or the Generac whole-house generator, call Valley REC Energy Services at 800-432-0680. 🌞



Golf

six days of chemotherapy. She has undergone five bone marrow biopsies and has a Hickman catheter in her chest.

“Usually, I’m at the hospital more than I’m home,” says Heather, adding that Wayne stays with her and their family helps with kids.

They, too, have insurance, but it doesn’t cover everything. Heather had worked as a janitor in the summers at Raystown Lake and did babysitting in her home during the school year. She had to give up her last couple of weeks of work at the lake last summer due to her illness. Wayne works as a milling equipment operator for Glenn O. Hawbaker, Inc. in State College.

The golf tournament will be held Thursday, June 27, at the Huntingdon Country Club. Valley REC’s Health

and Wellness Committee organizes the event. The co-op’s four offices close for the golf outing and all co-op employees lend a hand. The committee has raised more than \$150,000 for charities since 2010.

The four-player scramble will feature morning and afternoon flights. Registration for the morning flight will start at 7 a.m. with tee-off at 8 a.m. Registration for the afternoon flight will start at 11:30 a.m. with tee-off at 1 p.m. A putting contest will take place all day. Lunch will be provided from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., and a buffet dinner will start at 5:30 p.m.

The registration fee is \$100 per player, which includes 18 holes of golf, cart, lunch, dinner, entry into all events and various prizes. 🌞

GET SMART ABOUT ENERGY SAVINGS

“Smart” devices and appliances save time and offer convenience – but not all save energy. The guide below shows how several trendy smart home technologies stack up when it comes to energy savings.

Smart Energy Savers

- Thermostats
- Pool pumps
- Washing machines and dryers
- Air conditioners
- Dishwashers
- Light bulbs and fixtures
- EV charging stations
- Power strips



Just Smart

- Virtual assistants (like Amazon’s Alexa or Apple HomeKit)
- Smart alarms
- Smart video security cameras
- Smart locks

Scholarship applications due in mid-April

VALLEY Rural Electric Cooperative will award up to 15 \$1,000 scholarships this year to eligible students who qualify. The money to fund this scholarship program comes from unclaimed capital credits refunds that previously had to be turned over to the state. Thanks to the efforts of our political advocates, we can now keep those funds in our local communities.

Eligibility requirements

The applicant must be:

- ▶ An active Valley REC member or dependent of an active member. (Valley REC directors and employees and their dependents are not eligible.)
- ▶ Attending or planning to attend an accredited post-secondary institution.
- ▶ Enrolled or planning to enroll full time for the 2019-2020 academic year.

Previous Brighter Future Scholarship recipients are not eligible.

How to apply

Applications are available at the co-op's website. Visit valleyrec.com and follow the "Programs and Services" link to the "Scholarships" section.

There are two versions of the application: one for high school students and one for high school graduates.

Applications are also available at all Valley REC offices and in the guidance offices of the following public high schools:

- Altoona Area High School
- Central High School
- Claysburg-Kimmel High School
- Fannett-Metal High School
- Forbes Road Junior/Senior High School
- Hollidaysburg Area Senior High School
- Huntingdon Area High School
- Juniata High School
- Juniata Valley High School
- McConnellsburg High School
- Mifflin County High School
- Mount Union Area High School
- Northern Bedford County High School
- Southern Fulton Junior/Senior High School



- School
- Southern Huntingdon County High School
- Tussey Mountain High School
- Tyrone Area High School
- Williamsburg High School

Application deadline

Applications and all required information must be mailed to Valley Rural Electric Cooperative and postmarked by April 15.

Scholarship selections will be made in May. Award recipients will be notified by the end of June.

Please direct questions to memberservices@valleyrec.com or call 1-800-432-0680. ☀



CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY: Nancy Bucher, above left, Valley REC's billing clerk for the Shade Gap District, and Ethan DeVore, right, Valley's vice president of corporate services, pause for a photo with first-grade teacher Bessie Atherton and three of her Rockhill Elementary School (Huntingdon County) students on March 5 after delivering iPad cases and screen savers, left. Valley REC provided the items through its Community Service Grant (CSG) Program. The cases and screen savers will reduce wear and tear on the school equipment as the students use them for a variety of educational games and activities. The CSG Program provides grants of up to \$1,000 to civic and community organizations and schools. The program also assists members struggling to pay bills due to illnesses or emergencies with grants of up to \$500.