

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



Make time to recharge and reconnect this summer

By Doug Roles, Vice President, Member Services

THERE'S nothing like the high school graduation season to remind you how quickly time passes. Through the first week of June, I had the opportunity to attend awards day events and graduation ceremonies at several local high schools, to present Brighter Future scholarship certificates to Valley REC's recipients. (We'll publish the list of 2019 recipients in next month's issue of *Penn Lines*.) Something I notice each year is that presenters who are alumni at a particular school district, me included, will congratulate the graduating class and then say something like: "It doesn't seem so long ago that I was sitting in one of these chairs on this stage."

At least two of the presenters remarked that they were just five years removed from the graduation stage. Most others were a bit older, and one noted that she wore the mortarboard and gown in her school's colors 40 years ago.

Faculty, staff and presenters aren't the only ones who lament how fast it all goes. Class presidents and valedictorians point out in their speeches how the long-awaited day — the one the class thought would never get here — has finally arrived, and sooner than expected.

One presenter asked the audience to take a good look at the last gathering of a senior class, saying the students would soon separate, going off to become our area's next crop of nurses,

bankers, soldiers, laborers and teachers. It struck me this year as it does every season, that once those seniors flip their tassels to the left side of their mortarboards, they're graduates! When the recessional music plays, the inexorable flow of time moves them off the stage and on to the next chapters of their lives. And it only gets busier from there.

As exciting as the commencement season is for students, parents and educators alike, it's short-lived. And if we're not careful, it can be followed by what can be a too-short, short summer, if you don't make time for rest and relaxation. Anne Prince, a columnist with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, wrote last month that summer is a great time to reconnect with the people who are important to us "by disconnecting for a while from the cares of today's device-driven, multi-tasking world."

Those are some wise words. But they're just words if we don't take them to heart. Summer is a great time to take a family vacation, enjoy a "staycation" or take in some of the natural beauty of our area. Maybe you have friends or relatives you haven't seen in months — or years. I know I do. Enjoying some peaceful hours away from technology, with the people who matter most, is time well spent. Let's all take some much-needed reacquaint and recharge time this summer. ☺

Crampton Manor's rustic hospitality to continue under new name, ownership in Fulton County

By Doug Roles
Vice President, Member Services

FULTON County has a hidden gem in Crampton Manor, a 100-acre property near McConnellsburg that offers rustic lodging within easy driving distance of numerous attractions. Visitors to the property will soon see a new name at the end of the gravel driveway, but the offering of two quiet apartments, two bed-and-breakfast rooms, and an 1800s-era farmhouse and event barn will continue under new ownership.

Valley REC members Mike and Linda Crampton spent much of the past decade creating the event and lodging business, off Route 522 in Todd Township. They say the venture has been a blessing but it's time for a change.

"We've done everything we wanted to do here," says Linda. "We've had the best time. We'll probably miss it in lots of ways."

"We've met the nicest people, but we're ready to embark on another project," agrees Mike, adding that they plan to build a home near Waterfall, about 20 minutes from their current location.

Linda is a Shippensburg native while Mike is from Hagerstown, Md. Linda worked for the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Health. Mike works for Everett Marble & Granite Works, a monument and marker company with offices in Everett, McConnellsburg, Newville, and Saxton.

The Crampton Manor story dates back to 1989, when Mike and his father bought the acreage. Mike wanted a place to hunt and didn't want to end up later in life wishing he'd bought ground when prices were lower. Mike and his dad used the 1897 farmhouse as a hunting cabin until Mike built a house in 2004. Single at the time, Mike planned to move into the house in January 2005.

"I figured it would just be me and the dog, but a year later, God said to me, 'I have other plans,' and I met



SAYING GOODBYE: Valley REC members Mike and Linda Crampton pause for a photo on the porch of The Farmhouse, an 1800s-era building they restored to rent to visitors to northern Fulton County. The Cramptons recently sold their 100-acre Crampton Manor property. The new owners, Adams Electric Cooperative members Robert and Rose Martin, Adams County, plan to continue rental of the property's five units and event barn.

Linda," Mike says.

The couple married in 2005 and merged their belongings into the new house. Soon they were discussing additional improvements to the property. First on the list was a woodshed. But that idea blossomed into a garage with the Carriage House apartment above it being completed in 2008. The Carriage House, adjacent to the main house, is a two-bedroom unit with full bath, full kitchen and wraparound deck.

A family member, Mike's aunt, wanted to be their first guest to stay at the Carriage House. The next week, a group of five women from Texas who travel the U.S. staying in a variety of places rented the Carriage House as the first non-family guests. From there, the building projects continued and things got busier.

In 2009, the Cramptons put in the Hayloft apartment. It's a two-room efficiency unit with private bath and galley kitchen incorporated into the main house, but with a separate entrance.

The Farmhouse project took up 2011. At one point, Mike had thought of burning down the hunting camp, be-

lieving it to be beyond repair. With Linda's encouragement, they instead forged ahead with a year-long effort to replace the chinking between the hand-hewn beams, repair the basement, repaint the



ACORN BARN: The Acorn Barn boasts a beautiful yellow pine floor and a large open space for events.



rooms and build a two-story porch.

The Acorn Barn was next. Constructed in 2013 on a small rise across the yard from The Farmhouse, the board-and-batten structure completes the old farmstead scene at the most remote corner of the property.

The Cramptons hired an Amish crew to get the structure erected and under roof. The lower level of the barn houses maintenance equipment.

Crampton Manor has played a role in promoting tourism. Linda often talks with her guests about local attractions such as Berkley Springs, Cowan's Gap, Whitetail Ski Resort and downtown Bedford. Over the years, she has hosted visitors from near and far.

"I get a few from Baltimore and Philadelphia," Linda says. "We get people from all over the U.S. I had a group from China who came for a wedding in the barn. Mostly they're coming for weddings or to see family."

Some guests have been healthcare workers such as occupational, physical or speech therapists who have stayed long-term while working in the area. The Cramptons say they're amazed at how many people they've hosted over the years.

"We were hoping to at least make enough to pay the electric bill," Mike says. "We way overshot that goal. We've been blessed."

"It's something we enjoy doing, but when I look back, I think, 'How did we do all that?'" Linda adds.

The Cramptons accepted an offer on the property at an auction in May. (The sale was being finalized at the time of this writing.) Robert and Rose Martin,

1800s RESTORATION: Mike and Linda Crampton consider the restoration of this 1897 farmhouse (photos left and right) to have been their most challenging undertaking. Guests will experience off-grid relaxation. Solar panels and a battery array provide electricity, and the house features a gas-powered heater, water heater, stove and refrigerator. The original wood stove is also ready for heating and cooking.

members of Adams Electric Cooperative, Adams County, are the buyers. Robert does maintenance work for mobile home parks while Rose works for the Adams County tax office. They plan to retire in the next eight years and have been thinking about buying a property that would give them something to do after leaving full-time employment.

"This is going to be my wife's and my retirement," Robert says. "You always have to have something to do."

The opportunity was unexpected for the Martins. Robert's parents, Lawrence and Sandy Martin — who are Valley REC members in Dublin Township, Huntingdon County — told him about the upcoming auction and encouraged him to attend.

"It's all new to me," Robert says. "I thought I was just going to a sale."

The Martins plan to name their new property SanLawr Haven, in honor of Sandy and Lawrence. The Martins have done some building of their own.



In 2000, they built their own home in Adams County using materials from a post-and-beam barn and a log house. The couple appreciates the legacy the Cramptons are leaving them.

"They did a wonderful job. I was impressed," Robert says. "The workmanship is very good. We're actually going to continue what they're doing. I would like to step it up a little with more events at the barn, more weddings, and I was thinking about a bluegrass event."

The Martin family has a property in Tioga County served by Tri-County Rural Electric Cooperative. Their new venture will make them members of three electric co-ops, and Robert says he's OK with that.

"I'm very impressed with all the co-ops," Robert says. "Very seldom am I out of power. And I live up in the mountains."

Valley REC wishes the Cramptons many enjoyable years in their new home and welcomes the Martins to Valley Rural Electric Cooperative. ☀



Above, left: The Crampton Manor main house features two bedrooms for bed-and-breakfast lodging as well as The Hayloft, an efficiency unit with its own entrance. Above: The Carriage House offers guests a two-bedroom apartment with a full bath. Left: The Acorn Barn can be rented for weddings or other events. It is one of 202 stops featured on Fulton County's Frontier Barn Quilt Trail.

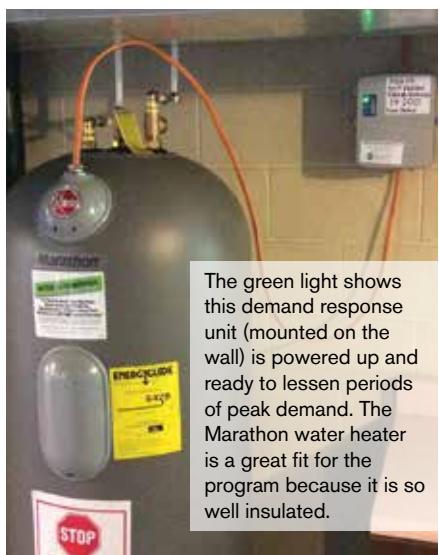
Contractors have important role in co-op's effort to keep load management equipment communicating

By Doug Roles

Vice President, Member Services

VALLEY Rural Electric Cooperative would like to remind local contractors that the co-op appreciates their efforts in helping Valley maintain accountability of demand response units (DRUs) on co-op members' water heaters and heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) equipment.

Making sure this load management equipment is working properly and able to receive electronic signals is a priority for Valley REC. Each operating unit helps lessen electric consumption during periods of peak demand,



when the wholesale price for power is greatest.

"We put a lot of time and effort into promoting our demand response program and getting our members on board," says Travis Kuhstos, Valley's demand response program manager. "When contractors let us know that they are doing, or will be doing, a job that disconnects or moves one of our DRUs, we really appreciate the notification."

The goal of the program, offered to members of the 13 co-ops in Pennsylvania and one in New Jersey, is to stabilize future power costs. The DRUs work by temporarily shutting off power to water heaters, or HVAC equipment, during peak load periods. Members should not be inconvenienced because the duration of control periods can be adjusted depending on family size and lifestyle.

Each of Valley's DRUs has a label on it with Valley's phone number — 800-432-0680. Contractors who find themselves doing a job that warrants disconnecting the wiring of a demand response unit or changing its location are asked to call the 800 number on the label. If a contractor encounters a DRU while on a home-improvement job or doing wiring work, a call to the co-op can answer questions for the contractor and make Valley aware that a DRU may stop communicating with our computer system.

"The worst-case scenario, for us, is to have a DRU show up on our non-communicating unit report and

not know why," Kuhstos says. "When that happens, we have to contact the member and, in many cases, arrange a time to visit the home or business to find out what happened to that equipment."

Valley members who participate in the demand response program receive a one-time \$100 bill credit and are eligible for rebates on the purchase of qualifying water heaters. The water heater must have an energy factor rating of .9 or higher and be at least 50 gallons in size.

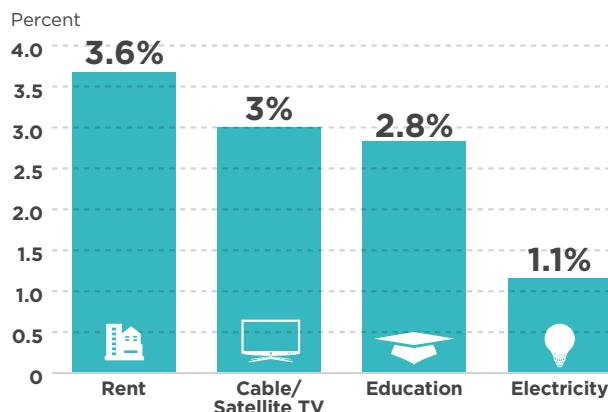
Valley REC carries the Rheem Marathon water heater because it is a great fit for the demand response program. The well-insulated units lose less than 2 degrees of water temperature during a typical load management control period.

"We actually have contractors who are familiar with our rebate program and utilize it to sell water heaters," Kuhstos says. "It benefits our members and builds good relationships with our local contractors trying to do the best for their customers and our members." ☺

ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

The cost of powering your home rises slowly when compared to other common expenses. Looking at price increases over the last five years, it's easy to see electricity remains a good value!

Average Annual Price Increase 2013-2018



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
Consumer Price Index

Have a story idea for Valley REC's Penn Lines pages?

We're always interested in sharing with our readers the stories of co-op members who have a unique hobby or a new business. Think you have an interesting story to tell? Contact our Member Services department at memberservices@valleyrec.com or call us at 800-432-0680.