

Valley Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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Valley Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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Guest Column



Transfer switches make good neighbors

By Doug Roles, *Vice President of Member Services*

PICTURE THIS: You're a lineworker with the local co-op. You leave work for the day knowing you might get called back in because a line of severe thunderstorms is approaching. Sure enough, that evening your phone rings.

Leaving a comfortable couch in the middle of family movie night stinks, but outage restoration is part of the job, and you know members are counting on you to get the lights back on. As you head to the co-op garage, you say a quick prayer, asking that your crew gets power restored safely and everyone gets back home, same as they left.

Thanks to the co-op's digital outage management system, you quickly determine the location of the problem. Arriving, you see that a large tree limb has fallen onto the lines. As you cautiously approach what should be a de-energized wire, the LED lights of the voltage detector clipped to your hard hat begin to flash — and the thing starts beeping like crazy. You freeze. You yell out a warning to the rest of the crew. You radio back to dispatch. Somewhere, somehow this line has become re-energized. Thank God you followed safety procedures!

Now picture this: You're a homeowner in the area. Actually, you live just a few miles from that

lineworker. You don't know him, but in this rural area, you qualify as neighbors. Your son goes to school with that lineworker's daughter. You've even said hello to him at the local convenience store, in the way that small-town folks do.

But right now, what you're thinking is that the power is out, and you're missing the television show you wanted to watch. And your spouse is concerned about being able to reheat the leftover spaghetti for supper.

Mumbling a bit, you go to the garage and grab the portable generator. Using a generator-to-home extension cord, you plug the generator into a wall outlet and fire it up. You never give a thought to your home's main breaker being closed. And you don't realize you nearly electrocuted your neighbor, the lineworker, because an improperly used portable generator can send current back through your service drop and into a transformer, where it becomes high voltage and could energize a "dead" power line.

One such backfeed is one too many. If you want to power home circuits with a portable generator, do so through a properly installed transfer switch. Your friends and neighbors at Valley Rural Electric Cooperative will thank you. ☀

Valley REC's 2022 Benefit Golf Outing to aid area youths, co-op lineman

By Doug Roles

Vice President of Member Services

VALLEY Rural Electric Cooperative's 2022 Benefit Golf Outing will help three families impacted by serious health challenges. Now in its 11th year, the annual event brings together golfers, sponsors and other donors in a show of community support for local residents facing cancer and other diseases or serious injury.

The tournament will be held Thursday, June 23, at the Huntingdon Country Club and will feature a morning and afternoon flight of golfers in a shotgun-start best ball scramble. This year's tournament benefits 9-year-old Karmyn Scott of Huntingdon, who is being treated for a brain tumor; 8-year-old Sylus Fellman of Petersburg, who has a rare disorder that damages nerves; and Curt White, a Valley Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) lineman from Mount Union, who is battling multiple myeloma, a plasma cell cancer.

Severe diseases can leave friends and family of those diagnosed feeling powerless. Organizers of Valley REC's benefit see the co-op's event as a chance for the community to show support and to lessen the financial hardships associated with treatment and travel.

"Valley's golf tournament is truly a team effort by the co-op's employees and our sponsors, golfers and donors," Valley REC President & CEO Rich Bauer says. "Our recipient families have faced some dark days, and we want our event to be a bright spot in their journey."

Karmyn is the daughter of Tony and Jessica Scott. In late November she was diagnosed with a medulloblastoma, a brain tumor that affects the primary nervous system. She immediately had surgery and weeks of radiation treatment to be followed by chemotherapy. As sometimes happens after tumor removal, Karmyn developed a syndrome that impacts speech and motor skills



BENEFITTEE: Curt White, center, pauses for a photo with fellow Valley REC employees Matt Fagan, left, and Rich Sunderland during the co-op's 2021 golf tournament at Huntingdon Country Club. This year, White is one of the tournament beneficiaries. He was diagnosed with multiple myeloma in 2020.



READY TO ROLL: Carts are lined up for the foggy morning start of the co-op's 2021 event at Huntingdon Country Club. Valley REC's Annual Benefit Golf Outing features morning and afternoon flights and follows a best ball format.

and requires occupational and physical therapy. Karmyn has seven siblings, five of whom were adopted by the Scotts, including a special needs child.

Tony works in food services at the Huntingdon State Correctional Institution. Jessica is home with the children much of the time but also drives a bus for Huntingdon Area School District sporting events. Jessica says getting Karmyn diagnosed was a process.

"For the longest time I felt something was not right with her," Jessica recalls. "She would sleep all the time and go to the nurse at school with headaches."

Doctors ruled out Lyme disease

and thyroid problems. Finally, around Thanksgiving and with Karmyn increasingly lethargic, Jessica took her to the emergency room and asked for a computerized tomography (CT) scan, which revealed the tumor.

"She's not doing too bad now. She does her therapy," Jessica says. "She gets very tired, but overall she's been a trooper through all this. She has a long road ahead of her."

Sylus Fellman turns 9 years old this month. He lives in Petersburg with his mother, Heather, who works in the Huntingdon County Board of Commissioners' office.



TROOPER: Nine-year-old Karmyn Scott of Huntingdon was diagnosed with a brain tumor in November 2021, which has been followed by surgery, weeks of radiation and chemotherapy. As sometimes happens after tumor removal, Karmyn has developed a syndrome that impacts speech and motor skills and requires occupational and physical therapy.

Sylus has juvenile metachromatic leukodystrophy (MLD), a rare hereditary disorder that destroys the myelin sheath around nerves, particularly in the brain and spinal cord. Sylus has undergone chemotherapy and a bone marrow transplant and has a difficult road ahead. Treatments have impacted his speech. Sylus was diagnosed in June 2021. Heather says she's grateful that primary care doctors took the symptoms seriously and sent him to a specialist quickly.

"He was tired, and he was falling a lot and having trouble getting himself back up," Heather says. "His motor skills declined very quickly."

Heather adds that since Sylus is autistic the many schedule changes brought on by his disease have him feeling "out of sorts." A student in the Juniata Valley School District, he has also had to adjust

to schooling disruptions associated with COVID-19.

Curt White joined Valley Rural Electric's employee team in 1990, starting on a tree-trimming crew and working his way to journeyman lineman and crew leader. In the spring of 2020, he was diagnosed with multiple myeloma.

"For the first part of the year I was tired, and my sternum and my right hip hurt," Curt recalls. "I couldn't lift anything and had no energy. I lost about 25 to 30 pounds from Christmas into the first months of 2020."

Curt started treatment within two weeks of being diagnosed and was doing really well through the summer of 2021 as he went into remission. The aggressive blood cancer returned at the start of this year, leading to several more months of chemotherapy and immunotherapy. Curt and his wife, Lois, live near Mount Union and have six children. Curt enjoys spending time with family and hunting and is active in his church. Before his illness, he participated in a prison ministry that traveled to several states.

The co-op's golf outing has raised nearly \$240,000 since its inception. Valley's 2021 event was pushed to August as the employee planning committee waited to see what COVID-19 restrictions would look like for summer gatherings. The 2020 event was limited to employee participation and a visit to the country club by the beneficiary families due to the pandemic.

Previous tournaments have benefited two high school classmates battling cancer; an adult who sustained serious injuries in a car accident; infants and toddlers with congenital conditions; a high school senior with a life-altering digestive disorder; a young man who was paralyzed in a swimming accident; and others.

The tournament registration fee is \$100 per player, which includes 18 holes of golf, a cart, lunch, dinner and various prizes. For more information on registering a team, being a sponsor or donating an item for the silent auction, call 800-432-0680 or go online to valleyrec.com and click on the golf outing button. ❁



ON THE MOVE: Sylus Fellman of Petersburg turns 9 this month. He has juvenile metachromatic leukodystrophy (MLD), a rare hereditary disorder that damages nerves in the brain and spinal cord. Sylus is one of three beneficiaries of the co-op's 2022 Benefit Golf Outing.



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Meet your employees

HIGHLIGHTED in this column is a recent addition to the Valley Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) team, Jessica Rosman. She came on board in November as a customer service representative (CSR), working in the co-op's corporate office near Huntingdon. Before joining Valley REC, Jessica worked for more than 20 years in the banking industry.

Jessica is a native of Abington, near Philadelphia, and grew up in Calvin, Huntingdon County. She now lives in Cassville. She is a 1995 graduate of Mount Union Area High School.

After high school, Jessica studied business law for two years at Hagerstown Business College while living in Greencastle and working at the Hoss's Steak and Sea House in Chambersburg.

Jessica began her career in finance with Citibank in Hagerstown, Maryland, working as a fraud analyst. She worked for Citibank for 18 years, moving to Cassville in 2009 and working from home. She capped her Citibank career as a mortgage underwriter. In 2014, Citibank moved the Hagerstown positions to Missouri. In 2015, Jessica accepted a position as a personal banker with Northwest Savings Bank's Huntingdon office. As someone who likes to stay busy, she also took on part-time waitressing work at the Hoss's in Huntingdon.

Jessica worked for Northwest for six years. She says what she enjoyed most about banking work was, "Helping people. Putting somebody into their house for the first time or helping someone get a loan."

"Every day it was just something different," she says. "No day was the same."

Jessica's most recent employment in the local banking arena was with Community State Bank. She worked in Orbisonia as a retail lender, making retail and consumer loans as well as writing mortgages. Jessica enjoyed her work there but submitted her resume to Valley REC when she heard of a vacancy in the co-op's consumer services department due to a retirement.

As a CSR, Jessica puts her financial skills to use processing



ALL SMILES: Jessica Rosman joined the Valley REC team in November. She works as a customer service representative at the co-op's corporate office near Huntingdon.

payments and running daily funding reports. She also serves as a resource for members who call the co-op with questions about billing, payment and starting or closing accounts.

"The people are nice to work with, and I still get to do customer service," says Jessica, a Valley REC member since 2011.

In her free time, Jessica likes to hike with her two springer spaniels, Sidney and Sophia, and hang out with her husband, James. She enjoys yoga, Pilates and distance running.

"I just ran the Bay Bridge Run, across the Bay Bridge in Annapolis, with my husband," Jessica says of the annual 10-kilometer event.

"We boat a lot, too, on Raystown Lake," she says, adding that she is interested in anything related to exercise, dogs and the outdoors. She can often be seen walking on the Glenn Wright track in Cassville.

James works as director of sales and business development for Fiber Plus PA Networks. Jessica has two grown sons, Hunter, 19, who lives in Greencastle; and Austin, 24, of Mount Joy; and a stepson, Easton, 11. Valley REC is glad to have Jessica as a member of the employee team. She's one of the people you can count on. ❁

National Lineworker Appreciation Day – April 11

America's electric co-ops designate the second Monday in April as National Lineworker Appreciation Day. Thank you, Valley REC line crews, for keeping the power flowing day or night, rain or shine.

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|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Adam Atherton | Matthew Fagan | Jonathan Shields |
| William Bogel Jr. | John Fogelsonger II | Robert Shook |
| Logan Booher | Seth Glover | Richard Sunderland |
| Wilmer Bucher Jr. | Joshua Gutshall | Curtis Starr |
| Gregory Dilling | Stephen Gutshall | Curtis White |
| Ryan Dodson | Tyler Lingafelt | Jason Wilson |
| Trevor Eichelberger | Riley Price | Eric Yingling |



Lineworkers go above and beyond.