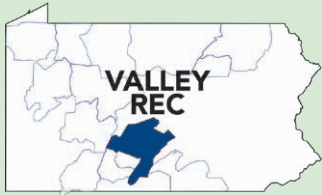


Valley Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

VALLEY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

10700 Fairgrounds Road
P.O. Box 477
Huntingdon, PA 16652-0477
814-643-2650
1-800-432-0680
www.valleyrec.com

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Allegheny Director

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Vice Chairman
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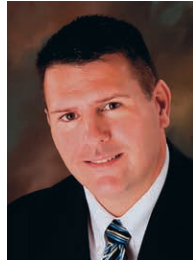
Gregory Henry
Linda McMath
Kenneth Soder
Kevin States
Joanne Whitsel

Corporate Office Hours
Monday - Thursday
7 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Huntingdon/Martinsburg/Shade Gap
Office Hours
Monday - Thursday
7 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Outages & Emergencies
1-800-432-0680

You, Dear Reader, are in Good Company



DOUG ROLES

I APPRECIATE OUR MEMBERS WHO take the time to flip through *Penn Lines* magazine each month. The publication's editors, writers, and contributors strive to provide interesting and relevant content. When you leaf through the magazine, do you ever wonder who else is turning the pages?

Turns out, there's a lot of info about that. The folks at the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association (PREA), our partner in producing the magazine, regularly conduct a readership survey. Reviewing it the other day, I thought, "Why not share some stats

about you with you?"

Would you have guessed 87% of readers are "regulars," meaning they read at least three out of four issues? Seventy-nine percent read every issue, and the average reader has been reading *Penn Lines* for 19 years. Perhaps you're above average? Hopefully, you're a regular.

If you're reading this, there's a good chance there's a dog or cat on the couch with you, or some critters in the barn. About 64% of our readers have animals, either pets, livestock or both.

While Valley Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) serves all kinds of properties — including churches, schools, businesses and government buildings — there's a 96% chance that your co-op account is for a home you own. It's just as likely that you own a vehicle, with 64% of our readers owning a pickup truck.

It's slightly less likely, but still very probable, that you own some type of lawn, garden or farm power equipment. Ninety-five percent of *Penn Lines* readers own a lawn mower, lawn/garden tractor, tiller, chainsaw or farm tractor. I wonder how many readers own at least one of each? The survey doesn't say, but I'd bet it's a fair amount.

There's a 38% chance you work full- or part-time, but a 55% chance you are retired. That stands to reason, since many people approaching retirement determine to spend a bit more quality time with books and magazines.

Nine percent of readers are 44 or under, with 3% being between 18 and 34. I think it would be wonderful if high school students read *Penn Lines*. Surely, some do. The survey just doesn't record it. The median age of readers is 66, though many of you may be thinking, "Ha, I got that one beat!"

One of the statistics I felt was a pleasant surprise is that 41% of readers have shared a *Penn Lines* article with family or friends. That statistic is huge if you're on the *Penn Lines* team (including member-contributors who submit photos to the Rural Reflections page or art for the Community Corner page). It warms the heart to think so many readers found an item of such interest that they passed it on.

The readership survey doesn't quantify the biggest commonality among readers, however. Valley REC members, like those of all electric co-ops, rely on their not-for-profit electric distribution business to provide safe, reliable power as affordably as possible. It's an ongoing story worth writing and worth reading about — for an average of 39 minutes a month, according to the survey.

PREA will be conducting another readership survey in 2025. Please participate and tell us all about you. And don't forget to mark the boxes for dogs, cats and tractors. 🐕

DOUG ROLES

VICE PRESIDENT OF MEMBER SERVICES

Co-op Holds Nominating Meetings in Director Districts 7, 8 & 9

DOUG ROLES, VICE PRESIDENT, MEMBER SERVICES

IN FEBRUARY, NEARLY 250 MEMBERS and guests gathered at nominating meetings to select board candidates for Valley Rural Electric Cooperative's (REC) Districts 7, 8, and 9. The nominees, shown on the following pages, were selected to stand for election to three-year terms on the co-op's nine-member board of directors. The election will take place at the drive-thru annual meeting, which starts at 4 p.m. Friday, April 4, at the Huntingdon County Fairgrounds.

This year's dinner meetings were held at the Hustontown Fire Hall, Fulton County; the Southern Huntingdon County High School cafeteria, Huntingdon County; and the West Loop Missionary Church, Blair County, for Districts 7, 8, and 9, respectively.

Nominating meetings are held annually in three of the co-op's nine director districts. The names of nominated members will appear on the annual meeting ballot. All members attending the annual meeting, regardless of the district in which they live, will vote for candidates for Districts 7, 8 and 9.

Valley REC President & CEO Rich Bauer provided an update about the co-op then held a Q&A session. Rich outlined some of the challenges facing the electric utility industry nationwide. Increasing demand for baseload power, in large part due to data centers, has drastically increased wholesale power costs. Coupled with nuclear power plant closures and regulations impacting coal and natural gas supplies, Pennsylvania has become a net importer of energy for the first time, Rich said.

Valley REC and other co-ops served by Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Allegheny) in Harrisburg have largely been shielded from wholesale power

market volatility due to Allegheny's 10% ownership of the Susquehanna Steam Electric Station, a nuclear plant; its ownership of the hydroelectric plant at Raystown Lake; and long-term contracts for hydropower from the New York Power Authority.

"The co-op is in great shape due to owning 67% of our generation," Rich explained. "If there is fluctuation in the market, it only impacts that 33% purchased on the open market."

Rich told members the co-op has replaced five 1950s-era substations since 2016 and will be upgrading the delivery point for the Puzzletown substation in Blair County this year. He also encouraged members who aren't participating in the demand-response program to consider having a unit installed on their water heater to help stabilize future wholesale energy costs.

Member questions ranged from utility-scale solar projects to the sources of the co-op's wholesale energy supply. Rich thanked members for their ongoing cooperation with the co-op's project to trim trees in rights of way and said the co-op's aggressive approach

to vegetation management increases reliability.

"We average one outage per year per member," he said. "We're pretty proud of that considering the terrain we serve." 📍



NOMINATING MEETINGS: From top – Members stop by the registration table at the Hustontown Fire Hall; Valley REC President & CEO Rich Bauer speaks to District 9 members; the Southern Huntingdon County High School cafeteria was the site of the District 7 meeting.

2025 Board of Directors Candidates

DISTRICT 7: GREGORY HENRY

Greg Henry worked for Valley Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) for 39 years. He joined the cooperative as a laborer in February 1969 and retired in February 2008 as the manager of operations. He also served as a lineworker, crew chief and manager of what was then the Hustontown — Shade Gap District.

A 1965 graduate of Forbes Road High School, Greg served in the U.S. Army from 1966 to 1968, in the USARAL Support Command, Alaska. While stationed there, he attended the USARAL Noncommissioned Officer Academy, where he was an honor graduate. While working for Valley REC, he completed the management internship program.

A native of Fort Littleton, Greg is a member of the Forbes Road Lions Club and has served two terms as president. He is a member of Clear Ridge United Methodist Church, where he serves as treasurer and is a member of the Pastor-Parish Relationship Committee. Additionally, Greg is a trustee for the Clear Ridge Cemetery Association and treasurer of the Clear Ridge Community Association. He is a member of the Fulton County Chapter of Gideons International and also serves on the Bedford Fulton Joint Recreation Authority.

Greg and his late wife, Erma, have three children. Greg enjoys hunting, bicycling and spending time with his grandkids. He is also an avid reader. Greg has been a Valley REC member since 1972 and has served on Valley's board of directors since 2013. Greg has received the Credentialed Cooperative Director certificate, Board Leadership Certificate and Director Gold credential, the highest level for directors. Greg is running unopposed on the ballot for District 7.



Gregory M. Henry
599 Plum Hollow Road
Hustontown, PA 17229

DISTRICT 8: LINDA MCMATH

Linda McMath serves as tipstaff for the Huntingdon County Court of Common Pleas. She also served a four-year term as jury commissioner, an elected position formerly used by county government.

Linda retired in 2004 as a reading specialist at Shade Gap Elementary School in the Southern Huntingdon County School District. She worked in education for 19 years, including 1 ½ years in the Mifflin County School District. For 12 years, she operated McMath School of Gymnastics in Shade Gap and was a Level 7-rated gymnastics judge. Linda and her husband, Tom, own and operate Avalon of Shade Mountain, a guest house and event facility in Blairs Mills, Huntingdon County, which they spent 14 years restoring. They also operated a family farm in Taylor Township, Fulton County, for 25 years, raising beef, crops and Christmas trees. Linda and Tom are hosts and deliver trees for 10 Million Trees for Pennsylvania, a Chesapeake Bay partnership that has a goal of planting 10 million trees in the Commonwealth by the end of this year.

For the past 15 years, Linda has served on the Huntingdon County Children's Services Advisory Board. She has served nine years as a youth counselor at Tuscarora Catholic Summer Camp.

Linda is a 1965 graduate of Southern Huntingdon County High School and received her bachelor's degree in health and physical education from Slippery Rock University in 1970. She holds a master's degree in education (as a reading specialist) from Shippensburg University.

Linda and Tom have been married since 1969. They have four children and eight grandchildren. The McMaths attend St. Mary's Catholic Church, Shade Gap, where Linda has served as secretary of the Pastoral Council for 18 years. She enjoys organic gardening, upholstery, sewing, horseback riding, refinishing furniture, refurbishing old houses and teaching her grandchildren how to sew.

Linda has been a Valley REC member since 1973. She has served four terms on the co-op board of directors. Linda has received the Credentialed Cooperative Director certificate, the Board Leadership Certificate and the Director Gold credential three times. Linda is running unopposed on the ballot for District 8.



Linda J. McMath
12007 Sawmill Road
Shade Gap, PA 17255

Continued on page 14D

2025 ANNUAL MEETING

DRIVE-THRU EVENT

HUNTINGDON COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

4-7 p.m. FRIDAY, APRIL 4

ELECTIONS — DISTRICTS 7, 8 & 9

Valley Rural Electric Cooperative's 2025 Annual Meeting will follow a drive-thru format. Members may arrive at the fairgrounds any time from 4 to 7 p.m.

Participants will receive a ballot, an annual report, a door prize and a \$25 bill credit.

Invitation letters and registration cards are being mailed this month!

2025 Board of Directors Candidates (cont.)

DISTRICT 9: CINDY BIGELOW

Williamsburg native Cindy Bigelow owns a 180-acre dairy farm. She retired in 2015 from Penn England Farms in Williamsburg. Her prior work experience includes six years with Leidy's Greenhouse in Williamsburg and 2 ½ years as a baker with Brumbaugh's Old-Fashioned Delites, also in Williamsburg.

A 1972 graduate of Central High School in Martinsburg, Cindy is a member of several cooperatives, including Land O' Lakes and the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau. She serves on the Farmland Preservation Committee of Blair County and is involved with the Williamsburg Community Farm Show. For the past 12 years, she has served on the Huntingdon/Blair County Farm Service Agency (FSA) Committee and is now an FSA adviser.

Cindy has been a member of the Blair County Conservation District Board for the past four years. Additionally, she has served on the Blair County Dairy Promotion Committee.

Cindy has been a member of Fairview Church of the Brethren in Williamsburg for 55 years, where she has served as a deacon and a member of the church board. Her hobbies include making crafts, baking and collecting milk bottles.

Cindy and her late husband, Richard, were married 20 years. She has three children and six grandchildren. Cindy has been a Valley REC member since 1980. She has served seven terms on the co-op board of directors and currently serves as secretary. Cindy has received the Credentialed Cooperative Director certificate, Board Leadership Certificate and Director Gold credential. Cindy is running unopposed on the ballot for District 9.



Cindy D. Bigelow
2548 William Penn Hwy
Williamsburg, PA 16693

Meet Your Employees: Matt Fish

DOUG ROLES, VICE PRESIDENT, MEMBER SERVICES

Highlighted in this column is a recent addition to the Valley Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) team, Matt Fish. He was hired full time in October 2023 and currently works as a first-year lineman's apprentice in the co-op's Shade Gap District Office.

In his position, Matt climbs utility poles and uses an aerial bucket to work around de-energized lines. His goal is to become qualified to work around energized lines and become a journeyman lineman.

"I was hired as a ground hand," Matt recalls, explaining that his initial job duties included getting materials ready and attaching cross arms and hardware to new poles prior to installation.

Matt grew up in the Shade Gap area of Huntingdon County, in a home served by co-op lines. He is a 2010 graduate of Southern Huntingdon Area High School, where he was on the football, basketball and track teams. He attended Lock Haven University on a track scholarship and competed in throwing events.

"I threw javelin and the hammer," Matt recalls. "The hammer is like a shot put on a cable."

Matt has a bachelor's degree in criminal justice. However, after graduating college, he took a full-time position as a directional driller with Peterson Excavating, LLC. The company, based in Burnt Cabins, Fulton County, provides boring and excavating service for the installation of underground telecommunications lines.

"I worked for Peterson in the summer during college and went full time after graduation," Matt says. "We did drilling under roadways and streams. We worked in Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia and the Carolinas."

Matt spent 13 years with Peterson. During that time, he occasionally encountered electrical lineworkers and found their work interesting. Matt knew several Valley REC employees at

the Shade Gap office, so when he heard the co-op was hiring, he applied. Matt says he enjoys the camaraderie between the district's line crews and office staff.

"It's easy to work with the people here," Matt says. "Being part of a good crew makes it easy. There are a lot of good teachers here."

Matt enjoys meeting the co-op's consumer-members. Part of his job involves knocking on doors and informing members of maintenance work in their area.

"They always seem appreciative," Matt says.

Matt lives in Orbisonia with his wife, Paige, and their two children, Wyatt, 4, and Warren, 2. Paige works as a registered nurse at Fulton County Medical Center in McConnellsburg.

"I actually met her at Lock Haven, even though she grew up in Huntingdon," Matt recalls.

Matt spends his free time with family and says he's "into all kinds of hunting and fishing, and anything outdoors."

We're glad Matt went from launching javelins and hammers to launching a lineworker career. He's one of the people you can count on.



PART OF THE TEAM: Matt Fish works from the co-op's Shade Gap District Office as a first-year apprentice lineman.