

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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COOPERATIVE CONNECTION

Keeping Value in Your Power



DOUG ROLES

AUTUMN'S CRISP WEATHER WILL HAVE our thoughts turning to the holidays and winter as you read this column. But at the time of this writing, I'm still recovering from a late summer yard sale.

My wife and I had been putting it off. We still remember the work entailed in the last one — which happened more than a decade ago. It involved setting up tables in the yard, lugging stuff out of the attic and basement, and putting up a makeshift sign, with the arrow pointing to our house and not the neighbor's place.

There were deals to be had and plenty of quality used items — hand tools, several fans, a guitar, clothes, books, some fishing tackle — to be taken. My wife put price tags on some stuff. Other items we sold through the traditional yard sale “make-an-offer” process.

It's interesting to watch people mull over what they'll pay for a second-hand item that they may or may not need. Seeing that got me thinking about necessities and things people will or won't — or can or can't — get second-hand. A used car? Sure. Previously owned homes? Of course. Then there are books and even some clothes that can be used again and again. And that guitar still has some music in it.

But some things you just don't buy used. Medicine would be an example. Toiletries, such as toothbrushes, would be another hard “no.” Energy is in this category, too. You don't buy used gasoline or heating oil. I suppose you could buy them second-hand if someone wanted to sell what they had already purchased — but you certainly don't buy it “used.” You can't. In fact, your electricity is made the moment you need it.

An army of engineers and technicians constantly balances supply with demand in real time across the grid. Although battery technology is advancing, the grid does not currently store large amounts of electricity, so there's very little wiggle room between generation and consumption.

And consumption is increasing, driven largely by data centers, artificial intelligence, and the electrification of vehicles and buildings. This increasing demand, infrastructure investment, operational expenses and maintenance all impact energy costs — as does the weather and government policies. It's a challenging environment, for sure.

As a member-owned, not-for-profit cooperative, Valley Rural Electric Cooperative will continue to do everything in our power to ensure your costs are reasonable and your electricity is still a good value in these challenging times.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association reports the average daily household cost of electricity is about \$5 — about the cost of a large latte or a fast-food sandwich. That's still not a bad deal, considering that, like a take-out coffee or a cheeseburger, when you need electricity, it must be new and it must be now. 🍷

DOUG ROLES

VICE PRESIDENT OF MEMBER SERVICES

Co-op Lineworkers Develop Live-Wire Skills During OJT

DOUG ROLES, VICE PRESIDENT, MEMBER SERVICES

VALLEY RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE (REC) line crews annually practice safe work techniques around energized equipment during on-the-job training (OJT), supervised by instructors with the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association's (PREA) Job Training & Safety program.

In the past, the three-day training included a system-improvement project, such as a pole replacement, that was completed in each of Valley's service districts: Huntingdon, Martinsburg and Shade Gap. Crews performed the job that was scheduled in their assigned district.

A new approach

The co-op changed things up for this year's OJT. Younger linemen from each district spent two days, Sept. 9 and 10, working together on pole-replacement projects near Blue Knob, Blair County, in the Martinsburg service district.

"We're including all three districts, which is good," says Rob Shook, a Martinsburg district crew leader. "This way, all the guys get to work together a bit."

Under the supervision of crew leaders and journeyman linemen, Valley REC's second- and third-year linemen worked from aerial buckets and used fiberglass hot sticks, rubber line blankets, and plastic insulator covers as they moved energized line onto temporary fiberglass arms.

That work created space for two new poles to be set in place next to the old, deteriorating poles. On the ground, linemen mounted fiberglass crossarms and other hardware to the new poles and dug the holes. The final step was to move the still-energized 14,400-volt lines onto the new poles.

The project was a bit more complex than usual for OJT because that section of line in Greenfield Township is a dual circuit. It has 46-kilovolt (kV) lines at pole-top level and 14,400-volt lines several feet lower. Operations personnel saw an opportunity to do OJT work there because the co-op's ongoing improvement project at the nearby Puzzletown substation required crews to cut power to the 46-kV line.

"While the 46-kV is off, we're doing some maintenance," Rob explains. "We wouldn't be able to do this without this 46 being dead. We've rebuilt most of this 46-kV out here. It was getting some age to it."

'Cool and calm'

Day one of the OJT started with Rob and fellow crew leaders Greg Dilling and Bill Bogel explaining the work to be done over the next two days and highlighting potential hazards.



WORKING TOGETHER: From left, Valley Rural Electric Cooperative linemen Owen Winter, Bruce Perow and Matt Fish secure a fiberglass throw-out arm to a pole top. The work was done during annual on-the-job energized line training Sept. 10 in Greenfield Township, Blair County.

Fred Kuzemchak, the PREA Job Training & Safety instructor on-site for the OJT, directed the young lineworkers to take their time and be mindful of cracking and peeling at the top of the pole. OJT is a controlled environment, and crews are not rushed.

"The older guys here do a great job of keeping that atmosphere cool and calm," Fred says. "I think it's good to get all these young guys together. They're going through our schools together, but this work around energized line is not something they do day in and day out."

Stephen Jefferis is a third-year lineman with the co-op's Huntingdon district. He has attended week-long PREA schools — hosted by various Pennsylvania and New Jersey co-ops — with his peers from the other Valley REC districts. Otherwise, their time together has been very limited.

"I always did the OJT at Huntingdon with Huntingdon

crews," he says. "This was different. I think it was a really good experience. It got all the apprentice crews together.

"It highlighted how important communication is," Stephen adds. "There were some small things they did differently. The crew chiefs and journeymen at Martinsburg did a good job explaining the work we'd be doing."



BUSY DAYS: Clockwise from left - Valley Rural Electric Cooperative lineworkers participating in on-the-job training include, from left: Dane Diehl, Curt Wilson, Cody Acord, Stephen Jefferis, Bruce Perow and Logan Bisbing (seated on machine); a new pole is lifted into place between energized lines covered with plastic and rubber line guards; PREA safety instructor Fred Kuzemchak, left, explains the next step to linemen Curt Wilson and Matt Fish (in bucket).



YEARS OF EXPERIENCE: From left, Martinsburg district crew leaders Bill Bogel and Rob Shook, PREA safety instructor Fred Kuzemchak, and crew leader Greg Dilling discuss an issue in the field. Lineman Curt Wilson is shown in the background carrying plastic line covers.



Home Lighting Guide

This information outlines recommendations for home lighting; however, additional options for bulbs, fixtures and spaces in your home may be available. Sources: Home Depot, Alcon Lighting

Room/Area	Recommended Lumens	Fixture Types	Smart Tips
 Living Room	15-30 per sq. ft. 150 sq. ft. room 2,250 - 4,500 lumens	Ceiling fixtures, can lighting, lamps/ accent lighting	Use smart bulbs to adjust color temp and control remotely.
 Kitchen	30-40 per sq. ft. 100 sq. ft. room 3,000 - 4,000 lumens	Recessed ceiling lights or flush mounts	Smart switches can be used to control zones (dining vs. prep); undercabinet motion lights offer late-night illumination.
 Dining Room	10-20 per sq. ft. 100 sq. ft. room 1,000 - 2,000 lumens	Pendant or chandelier fixture	Smart, dimmable bulbs allow various levels of brightness for ambiance.
 Bedroom	10-20 per sq. ft. 120 sq. ft. room 1,200 - 2,400 lumens	Ceiling fixtures or recessed lighting	Motion sensors are great options for nighttime use.
 Bathroom	50-80 per sq. ft. 60 sq. ft. room 3,000 - 4,000 lumens	Over-vanity fixtures and/or recessed lighting	Cool LED bulbs provide brighter light for shaving, applying makeup, etc.
 Porch/ Home Entry	100-200 per sq. ft. 100 sq. ft. entry 10,000 - 20,800 lumens	Wall lanterns, ceiling mount and/or floodlights	Motion-activated flood lights and/or smart outdoor bulbs are energy efficient and boost home security.

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To purchase one, complete the information below. If you'd like to surprise more than one person, please list the names, addresses and amounts for each on a separate sheet. Mail this form with your check or money order for the total amount to: Valley REC, P.O. Box 477, Huntingdon, PA 16652-0477.

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☐ Return certificate to me.

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