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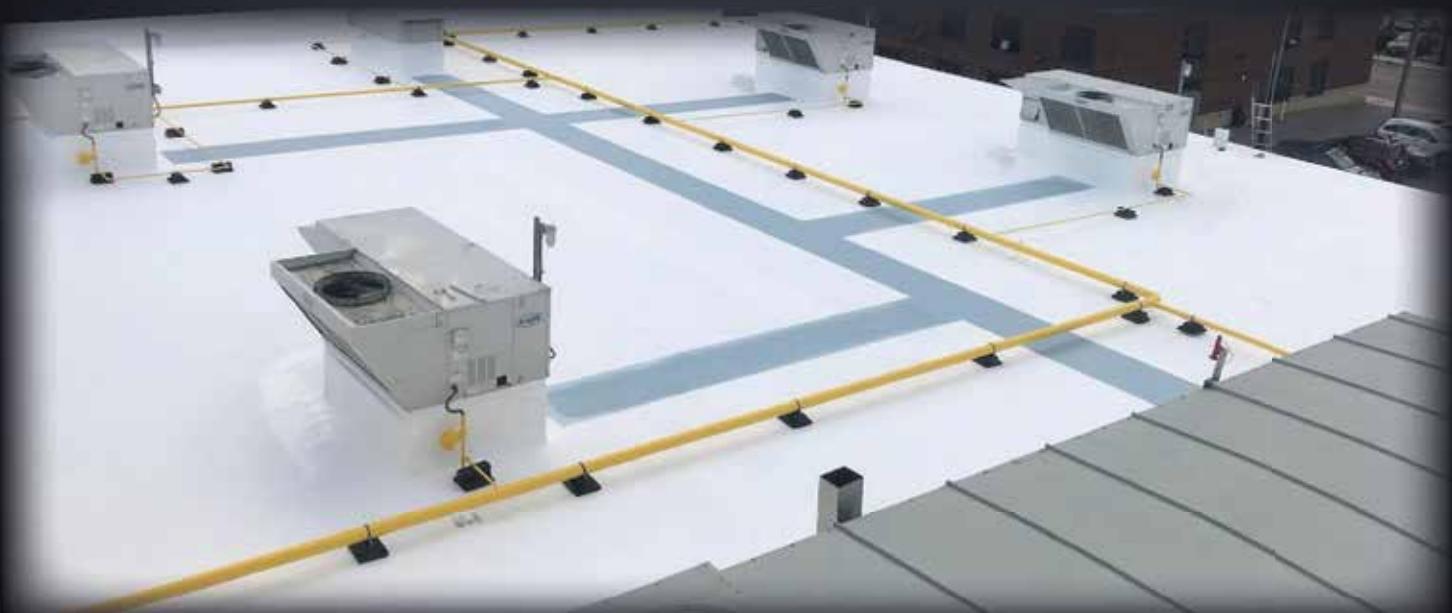
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Vol. 55 • No. 6

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*Penn Lines* (USPS 929-700), the newsmagazine of Pennsylvania's electric cooperatives, is published monthly by the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association, 212 Locust Street, P.O. Box 1266, Harrisburg, PA 17108-1266. *Penn Lines* helps 166,000 households of co-op consumer-members understand issues that affect the electric cooperative program, their local co-ops, and their quality of life. Electric co-ops are not-for-profit, consumer-owned, locally directed, and tax-paying electric utilities. *Penn Lines* is not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts. The opinions expressed in *Penn Lines* do not necessarily reflect those of the editors, the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association, or local electric distribution cooperatives.

Subscriptions: Electric co-op members, \$5.39 per year through their local electric distribution cooperative. Preferred Periodicals postage paid at Harrisburg, PA 17107 and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes with mailing label to *Penn Lines*, 212 Locust Street, P.O. Box 1266, Harrisburg, PA 17108-1266.

Advertising: Display ad deadline is six weeks prior to month of issue. Ad rates upon request. Acceptance of advertising by *Penn Lines* does not imply endorsement of the product or services by the publisher or any electric cooperative. If you encounter a problem with any product or service advertised in *Penn Lines*, please contact: Advertising, *Penn Lines*, P.O. Box 1266, Harrisburg, PA 17108. *Penn Lines* reserves the right to refuse any advertising.



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There's likely to be a pollinator wherever there is a flower – in this case a bee and a dahlia. Photo by George Weigel



# *News from across the Commonwealth*

## **Pennsylvanians lagging behind in census response**

Pennsylvanians are lagging behind in completing their 2020 census surveys. Of the 50 states, Pennsylvania ranks No. 17 in the percentage of surveys completed with 61.4% (3.7 million households) responding before May 10, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

The top counties in terms of response rate were Lancaster, Bucks, Chester, Montgomery, Cumberland, Northampton, Adams, Lehigh, Butler and York, ranging from 71.1% in Lancaster County down to 68.1% for York County.

The bottom counties were Wyoming, Philadelphia, Potter, Susquehanna,



Wayne, Monroe, Cameron, Pike, Sullivan and Forrest, ranging from 48.6% in Wyoming County to 17% in Forest County.

Nationally, 86.6 million households responded to the census survey by May 10, with Minnesota ranking first at 68.8%, followed by Wisconsin at 66.3%, Iowa at 65.8%, and Nebraska and Michigan tied at 65.3%.

An accurate census account is important for several reasons, including the allocation of congressional seats. Pennsylvania is already expected to lose one U.S. House seat after the 2020 census. The census is also how federal funds are distributed. An undercount would lead to fewer federal dollars for local agencies across the state for the next 10 years.

Residents who have not already replied to the census survey form that should have arrived by mail in mid-March are encouraged to respond online, by mail or by phone. For more information, go to [2020census.gov](http://2020census.gov).

## **No need to panic over ‘murder hornets’**

In recent weeks, there have been several news articles about the potential entrance into the United States of the Vespa mandarinia (more colorfully known as the “murder hornet”); however, only a few of the giant, invasive bugs from Asia have been reported in North America. In addition, those West Coast sightings have not been officially confirmed, according to a spokesperson from Rutgers University. University officials have tested a number of specimens sent to its labs, but none have turned out to be the giant hornet.

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture officials report there have been no sightings in the state. It is important, they say, to not overreact and kill other flying insects that are beneficial pollinators of crops and flowers.

## **Wolf Administration: food assistance is available**

State officials report there are several food assistance programs available for Pennsylvanians who are facing tough times due to the coronavirus.

While most eligibility verifications for food assistance have been waived to reduce barriers to access during COVID-19 mitigation in Pennsylvania, there are several state programs that require individuals to enroll to qualify and receive benefits. They include:

**Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP):** SNAP provides assistance to low-income and working Pennsylvanians. Benefits are based on income and household size. Apply online at [compass.state.pa.us](http://compass.state.pa.us).

**Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program:** Seniors must be 60 or older



by Dec. 31 of the program year and have income at or below 185% of the U.S. poverty level. Call your county aging office for information.

**Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC):** Women who are pregnant or have had a baby in the past 6 months, or 12 if breastfeeding; infants and children under the age of 5; and legal guardians of a child under age 5, may apply if they reside in Pennsylvania, have a medical or nutritional risk, and have a gross household income that does not exceed 185% of the U.S. poverty level.

**WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program:** Recipients must be on the WIC program. Children over 1 year and pregnant/post-partum women can receive vouchers during a WIC visit.

**Commodity Supplemental Food Program:** Eligible participants include individuals who are at least 60 years old and whose household income is at or below 130% of the U.S. poverty level. Direct questions to the Department of Agriculture at 800-468-2433 or [ra-fooddist@pa.gov](mailto:ra-fooddist@pa.gov).

Pennsylvanians out of work and without pay as a result of COVID-19 are eligible to receive state and federally sourced foods from food banks and pantries.

For more information, visit [agriculture.pa.gov/foodsecurity](http://agriculture.pa.gov/foodsecurity).

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# The new notion of electricity

*Utilities, environmental groups join forces on innovative energy future*

By Paul Wesslund

**W**hen it comes to electricity, it's time to think bigger. By looking at electricity in a new light, we can reveal surprising ways to make our lives better — from saving money to helping the environment.

Keith Dennis agrees with this approach. He works as vice president of consumer-member engagement for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). Over the past four years, he has been part of a group promoting an approach to electricity that unites utilities and environmental advocates; redefines the meaning of energy efficiency; and reduces costs. That new way of thinking is catching on, and he says, "It's become a bit of a movement."

It's called "beneficial electrification," a tongue twister that refashions our notion that electricity is something we buy to run our refrigerators and charge our phones. Instead, it's a concept that reveals new ways that energy can improve our quality of life from our everyday lives at home, to the more effective operation of the nation's electric grid.

## Electricity and environmental goals

Dennis explains beneficial electrification this way: think about your gasoline-powered lawnmower. Maybe you love it. Maybe the size of your mowing job takes longer than a battery lasts. On the other hand, thinking through the advantages of an electric mower could uncover surprising reasons for a change. No more gas cans to fill and store in a garage. You don't have

to worry about gas fumes or yank a cord hoping the motor will start up this time. An electric mower is quieter and less intrusive. From there, the benefits go global. An idle mower plugged in for recharging becomes part of the electric grid. In the future, with enough mowers plugged in, timing could be coordinated so the charging happens when people are using the least amount of electricity, maybe in the middle of the night. That would allow electric utilities to operate more efficiently, evening out electricity use over a 24-hour period. More immediately, and if you're concerned about the environmental effects of your energy use, more and more of your electricity is being generated by wind and solar energy.

That renewable energy trend is part of what led to one of the nation's leading environmental groups to become part of the beneficial electrification movement. The National Resources Defense Council (NRDC) has worked with NRECA to form the Beneficial Electrification League.

In 2018, the NRDC published a report outlining a broad plan to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions over the next 30 years. A key part of that plan calls for using electricity for a bigger share of our energy consumption. The NRDC plan calls for increasing the electricity's contribution to all end-use energy from about 20% today to 45% in 2050.

The NRDC sees four main ways beneficial electrification can help reduce greenhouse gases:



ELECTRIC MOWER: An electric mower is quieter and less intrusive.

FRED BARR

1. Renewable fuels are generating a rapidly growing share of electricity, which means using more electricity emits less greenhouse gases;

2. Electric cars are more efficient at converting energy into motion, plus the increase of renewable energy to generate electricity means a rise in the share of electric cars would lead to a drop in greenhouse gas emissions;

3. Heat pumps are far more efficient than natural gas or oil furnaces, and other electric technologies in industry and new buildings can create more efficiencies;

4. The smart grid is a way of using digital technology to coordinate electricity use across the nation's power lines. Smart thermostats, electric water heaters and even electric vehicle batteries could be linked to make the most effective use of energy.

NRDC data shows that a more aggressive pursuit of energy efficiency, renewable energy, electrification of end uses and an enhanced power grid can indeed put the U.S. on the path to cutting its greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050.

(continues on page 17)



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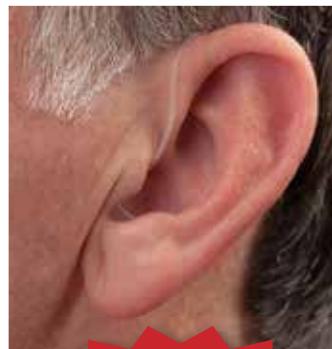
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# Powerful pollinators

*Bees vital to agricultural, economic health*

Pennsylvania has long been, and continues to be, an agricultural state, and while technological and procedural advances have radically changed how (and how efficiently) crops travel from farm to table, it all still largely hinges on a few fuzzy and frightfully fragile fliers.

Nearly 75% of major food crops — including fruits, vegetables and nuts — depend on pollinators. Scientists estimate between 200,000 and 350,000 different animal species help with pollination, including some bird and marsupial species. But when people think of pollination, bees and butterflies come to mind.

"People think of bees and butterflies because they're charismatic and large," says Carolyn Mahan, Ph.D., professor of biology and environmental studies at Penn State University. "They have

By Michael T. Crawford  
*Associate Editor*

bright colors and they fly slowly, so they are much more visible. People learn to recognize bees, especially honeybees, from a young age."

These critters offer more than just good looks and charm. Butterflies and bees act as important indicators of environmental changes and of healthy ecosystems. Monarch butterflies specifically complete round-trip migrations, pollinating plants along their long trek as far south as Mexico and as far north as Canada. But even with this long trek, when it comes to the majority of crops around the globe, bees remain the heavy lifters.

## Busy bees

"Bees collect pollen in large quantities to feed to their developing larvae,"

**BEES GALORE:** In Pennsylvania, there are more than 430 different species of bees. Some live in hives, while others live underground or in the case of carpenter bees, inside wooden structures such as decks. All keep busy with their pollination duties, including this bee that lighted on a sunflower.

explains Christina M. Grozinger, distinguished professor of entomology at Penn State University. "This means they move a lot of pollen around between flowers and, as a result, they are really great pollinators. Other species — such as flies, butterflies, moths, or hummingbirds — are not actively collecting pollen, and so while they are important pollinators, they are usually important for specific types of flowering plants."

Honeybees contribute nearly \$20 billion to the agriculture industry annually, according to the American Beekeeping Federation. In Pennsylvania alone, these pollinator-dependent crops

contribute \$260 million to the economy annually, according to the Center for Pollinator Research at Penn State University.

"Honeybees are especially important pollinators for agricultural crops because they can be moved easily into agricultural areas when crops need to be pollinated," notes Grozinger, who also serves as director of the Center for Pollinator Research. "One colony has thousands of bees that can help with pollination."

J. Aaron Fisher, a member of Huntingdon-based Valley Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) and general manager of W. Fisher Bee Farm in Lewistown, Pa., deploys his colonies of bees to hundreds of acres across farms in both Pennsylvania and New York. Farmers looking to ensure thorough pollination typically pay for two colonies per acre, he says.

"It's definitely profitable as long as you have quality bees and good workers," says Fisher, a third-generation beekeeper. "It's not lucrative enough to get rich overnight by any means, but it can make for a comfortable living with a lot of hard work involved."

## Economic powerhouse

In addition to their service as pollinators, honeybees also contribute their own product line to the economy — honey. Used commercially for food, skin creams, anti-aging lotions and medical wound dressings, over 160 million pounds of honey are produced each year in the U.S. alone. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the 2013 honey crop (the latest date for which verified numbers are available) was valued at over \$317 million.

"Last year, even with the excess rain, the honey crop was very high across the board in 2019," notes Fisher, who also has a branch of operations in Florida. "It had been very stagnant for a few years — crops were significantly lower than expected in 2017 and 2018 — but 2019 got enough rain and sun balanced out just about everywhere that bees were able to make honey."

Of the approximately 4,000 bee species in North America, honeybees

aren't natives. *Apis mellifera* — the scientific name for the famous European honeybee — was imported somewhere in the early 1600s, and exists in the United States largely as a domesticated farm animal. According to Fisher, that means the hours as a beekeeper are the same as any farmer.

"I work a lot of nights, weekends, holidays," explains Fisher. "It's agriculture — whenever the needs are there, you have to be there to support your animals and get your bees delivered to crops in time for bloom."

While Fisher's bee colonies have

lost approximately 30% of their colonies every year since 2006, according to the Bee Informed Partnership, a national collaboration of research labs and universities in agricultural science. In 2019, Pennsylvania beekeepers lost more than 43% of their colonies, and about 40% of colonies managed by Pennsylvania beekeepers die every winter.

"The main causes for bee decline are loss of flowering plant diversity and abundance — since bees depend entirely on flowering plants for their food — loss of nesting habitat for wild



PHOTO BY GEORGE WEIGEL

POLLEN-COLLECTOR: A close look reveals how pollen is transferred by attaching itself on a bee's body. The pollen is then spread as the bee makes its circuit to other plants.

stayed strong over the years, there have been hiccups with losses. Moving bees for pollinator services puts them under significant stress, which can increase mortality rates. Fortunately, he's been able to consistently raise enough bees that he can sell extra to other beekeepers. Doubly fortunate, in fact, as surveys show our agricultural air support as a whole has suffered.

## Colony decline

In the United States, beekeepers have

bees, exposure to pesticides, pathogens and parasites, and climate change," Grozinger explains. "Changes in weather patterns can affect both the flowering plants that bees depend upon and make it more difficult for bees to overwinter or forage."

A lack of diverse plants means that bees, like any creature, can become malnourished, making them more susceptible to the myriad of dangers to their health that they already face.

"Bees need a spectrum of food, just



PHOTO BY GEORGE WEIGEL

**HOME SWEET HOME:** Structures such as these are typically used to house bees in commercial settings.

like we do,” Fisher says. “They don’t need pollen from just one plant. Each plant’s pollen has a different (nutritional value) to it, and they need a little bit of everything to get a well-balanced diet.”

In Pennsylvania, the majority of crops are pollinated by more than 430 different species of the honeybee’s wild cousins. Unlike their European cousins, most wild bees don’t make honey or even live in hives — they’re solitary critters that make their homes in the ground (or your deck, in the case of carpenter bees). That also makes their populations much more difficult to track.

“It is hard to get data on wild bee species, since it requires long-term monitoring across large regions and many years,” Grozinger admits. “However, from the data that we have, it is clear that there are declines in some species. For example, about half of the wild bumblebee species that have been studied in the U.S. are showing declines, and some species are now considered endangered. There is also evidence for long-term declines in butterfly populations — approximately 80% over the last 20 years.”

Monarch butterflies may also find themselves on the endangered species list due to the eradication of milkweed, the perennial flowering plant where

monarchs lay eggs, feed as caterpillars, and transform into adult butterflies. Milkweed is toxic and often considered a nuisance plant.

“If wild species decline, the growers will become more dependent on managed bees, such as honeybees, for their pollination services,” Grozinger continues. “This means they need to pay beekeepers to bring their colonies to their farms for pollination. In several parts of the country, growers already need to do this. In Pennsylvania, most farms have enough natural habitat and wild bees that growers do not need to rent bees for pollination services. If growers need to pay for pollination, this could mean that prices for these crops could increase.”

### Cooperative support

Fortunately, wild bees and butterflies have help from unlikely allies — electric cooperatives. Right-of-way corridors must be regularly maintained to ensure safe, reliable electricity to rural Pennsylvanians, and that maintenance isn’t limited to trimming tree branches near power lines.

“Pollinator plots are perfect to put into a utility right-of-way because you don’t want any woody debris and you have a field with low-lying plants,” explains Alicia Palmer, natural resource specialist for the Environmental Stew-

ardship Program at Raystown Lake, home to the Raystown Hydroelectric Project that provides 100% of its clean energy to cooperatives in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. “You’re not only establishing quality habitat for pollinators, but you’re helping other wildlife species as well.”

Bob McDermott, forestry supervisor for DuBois-based United Electric Cooperative (EC), says the cooperative takes a targeted approach — identifying and removing non-native plant species so native species can thrive.

“We use a combination of hand cutting, mowing and very selective herbicide on species that could hinder our personnel’s ability to access or climb poles,” McDermott explains.

This isn’t a happy accident — electric cooperatives, built on the principle of concern for community, consciously try to preserve and promote pollinators species within their rights-of-way. In April, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) finalized a voluntary agreement for conservation action on energy and transportation lands. The agreement — the final Candidate Con-



PHOTO BY GEORGE WEIGEL

**EASY TO SPOT:** Monarch butterflies are among the most recognized and showiest of the Pennsylvania pollinators that are responsible for production of agricultural crops and flowers across the Commonwealth. Monarch butterflies are found from Mexico to Canada.

servation Agreement with Assurances — calls for participants to create and maintain monarch habitat in rights-of-way and other properties.

While McDermott says United EC isn't likely to participate — they don't have the size of land the USFWS out-



PHOTO BY GEORGE WEIGEL

KEEP AN EYE OUT: The larval stage of the spicebush swallowtail butterfly has what looks like big eyes. This caterpillar will eventually turn into a full-grown butterfly that will help pollinate several types of trees and shrubs.

lines — the cooperative has taken its own steps to keep pollinators prosperous.

"We are aware of how precious pollinators are and have hand-removed competitive species," McDermott explains. "Milkweed, for example, is a critical food source for monarch butterflies, so we take extreme caution not to disturb it — no herbicides, removing competitive species — and enhance it with artificial seeding. ... We try to time our right-of-way maintenance with the lowest bee activity. ... By doing this on our own, we're doing our part by being good stewards of the environment while keeping our rights-of-way safe and accessible."

According to research by Penn State University on transmission line ecology — funded in part by Asplundh Tree Expert, LLC, a right-of-way contractor used by cooperatives throughout Pennsylvania and a Premier-level associate member of the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association — the cooperative's approach has helped to foster robust natural habitats for bees and butterflies. It also makes the job less time consuming and less expensive in the long run, ultimately decreasing the

amount of herbicide needed.

"Selective use of herbicides we found is actually more effective at promoting stable, compatible habitats than strict hand-cutting," Mahan explains. "It may take a little extra time in the beginning, as well as some expertise to identify the different types of wood — dogwood is a compatible species, for example, while redwood is not."

## Working together

According to the Center for Pollinator Research, pollinators are responsible for seed and fruit production from nearly 90% of flowering plant species, which in turn supports local animal populations.

"In natural areas, pollinators are really the core of the food web," Grozinger says. "We have a lot of natural and wild habitat that can support bees. So we are in a very good position to support — and enjoy — our bee species."

At Raystown Lake in Huntingdon County, Valley REC has done just that, devoting a section of its right-of-way for native flowers to support honeybee populations. Working in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Valley REC cleared three acres of land near the Seven Points Recreation Area and

donated seeds for the Corps to plant.

"You're starting to see more of this pop up all across the country," Palmer says. "I think the push for pollinators and important species has been very good. National Pollinator Week (June 22-28) draws attention to the importance of pollinators, and a lot of different federal and state agencies and private landowners are starting to improve their wildlife management techniques. Any way we can help out nature in any sort of way is beneficial for nature and us."

Even a small corner of a homeowner's lawn can be made into wild pollinator habitat with some time and effort. And lots of patience.

"We have a culture of mowing, especially in public spaces, because we want it to look nice," Mahan explains. "Don't mow — get a native plant field guide, watch what comes naturally and remove non-native plants. People can plant things, but they should focus on native species — most garden centers can help with this — and be patient. It can take a few years."

If Pennsylvanians can dig down deep to help pollinator populations bounce back, these little fliers just may save us in return. ☀



PHOTO BY GEORGE WEIGEL

HARD AT WORK: While pollinators are often observed on flowers, spreading pollen to ensure yard and roadside beauty, they are also essential for the growth of various crops. Here, a bee lands on a blueberry blossom.

## TIMELINES

Your Newsmagazine Through the Years

JUNE 1990

**PENN LINES**  
Your Cooperative Newsmagazine

Will new technology make satellite TV more accessible?

- It's Lyme time
- Fuels of the future

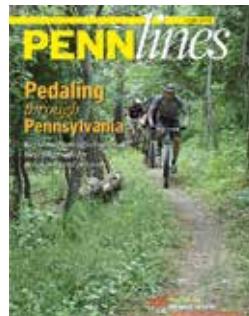
**B**ack in 1990, it was anticipated that powerful telecommunications satellites would soon offer new possibilities for rural television viewers as a new generation of "dishes" was being developed.

The move toward good television reception and more than 100 channels of entertainment for rural Americans advanced in 1986 when the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) and the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC) jointly formed the National Rural Telecommunications Cooperative (NRTC).

The goal was simple: to provide entertainment and information services to rural residents through NRECA's network of rural electric cooperatives, and finance the equipment with low-interest CFC loans.

Today, NRTC represents the advanced telecommunications and information technology interests of rural utilities and affiliates across the United States.

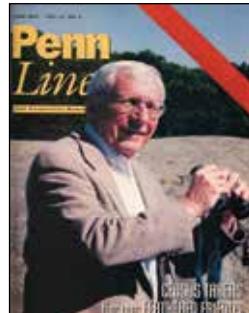
**1990**



**2010**

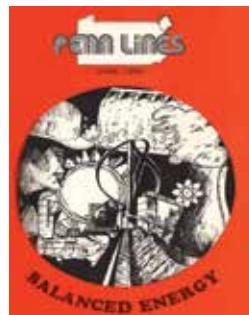
Bicyclists take to the new Allegrrippis Trail, a 32-mile-long system of bike paths near Raystown Lake in Huntingdon County.

**2000**



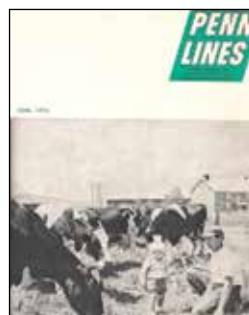
David Cowan, a director at Adams Electric Cooperative and Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc., helps researchers track trends and patterns in Pennsylvania bird life.

**1980**



Cooperative representatives visit Washington, D.C., to support a program to ensure energy continues to be available in adequate amounts at the lowest possible cost.

**1970**



In a salute to National Dairy Month and Pennsylvania's dairy industry, Stanley McKee, McVeytown, a member of Valley Rural Electric Cooperative, is profiled.

# Tri-County Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

**Tri-County REC**  
22 North Main Street • P.O. Box 526  
Mansfield, PA 16933  
570-662-2175  
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**Office Hours**  
Monday through Friday  
7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

**Jeff Fetzer**, Local Pages Editor

## From the President & CEO



## Annual meeting plans pending

By Craig Eccher

AT THE TIME of this writing in early May, we continue working to determine if we will be able to hold our 2020 Annual Meeting and Member Appreciation Day at the Troy Fair in July as planned.

Your co-op board and management team remain hopeful that the annual meeting can take place as scheduled. However, with all of the uncertainty surrounding future public events due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have begun working on contingency plans in the event the fair is canceled or it is otherwise determined that we cannot safely host a large public gathering at that time.

As alternatives to the traditional annual meeting, we are considering options including conducting a virtual annual meeting, which could be hosted via a combination of internet and telephone town-hall technology, or rescheduling the annual meeting for a date later in the year, provided it is determined to be safe to do so. We are also considering holding a Member Appreciation Day, minus the annual meeting, for our members at this year's Troy Fair, if the fair takes place as scheduled.

We will inform you of the decisions we make concerning this year's annual meeting and member appreciation day through our website, social media posts and a letter we will mail to all members, so please stay tuned.

Also note that regardless of what direction we go with the annual meeting,

we will still be conducting director elections as planned.

Board seats are up for election this year in Districts 3, 5 and 9, and profiles of the candidates for those districts appear in this edition of *Penn Lines*.

If you reside in one of this year's election districts, you will be receiving a mail-in ballot in the mail this month. Please be sure to review the ballot, cast your vote and mail it back to Tri-County in the stamped envelope that is provided.

While we certainly don't like the prospect of missing out on the opportunity to gather with our members at the fair and telling you about all the great things taking place at your electric co-op, we also want to make sure we act responsibly to ensure the well-being of our members to the best of our ability.

Regardless of the path this virus takes, rest assured that your electric cooperative will always be here for you, and our top priority will continue to be the safe and reliable delivery of electricity to your homes, farms and businesses.

Stay safe and have a great summer! ☀

**Office Closing**  
Tri-County will be closed Friday, July 3, in observance of Independence Day

## Tri-Co Connections begins connecting customers

By Jeff Fetzer

AFTER years of planning and months of construction, Tri-Co Connections began connecting customers to its high-speed fiber internet service in Potter County in April.

The family of Dave and Katie Taylor on Niles Hill Road northwest of Coudersport became the first official customers to begin receiving 100-megabit-per-second (Mbps) fiber-to-the-home internet service from Tri-Co Connections on Tuesday, April 7. The milestone marked the beginning of the installation phase for Tri-County Rural Electric Cooperative's broadband internet subsidiary.

Throughout the spring and summer, hundreds of internet service installations will be taking place in the Coudersport area as part of the co-op's ambitious project to make broadband available to all of its 16,600 members over the next five to six years.

"We are so excited," said Tri-County member Katie Taylor on the day of the installation at her Eulalia Township home. "Having reliable internet will be a huge plus. We look forward to having internet that works normally so the kids can watch TV without it going off every five minutes, my husband can play video games, and I can work on my computer at the same time."

Katie, a drug and alcohol prevention specialist for Potter County who works in all of the county schools, said she had been struggling to work from home during the COVID-19 pandemic because of poor internet service.

"We are at the end of the line and our service has not worked very well," she said. "We have very slow speeds, and most of the time it doesn't work at all."

A speed test performed on the family's DSL internet service before it was connected to Tri-Co Connections fiber lines showed speeds of about 2 Mbps. With the new fiber service in place, the speed has ramped up to 100 Mbps, giving Katie the ability to conduct



**FIRST FAMILY:** Dave and Katie Taylor of Coudersport and their children, Jude and Mary Kate, became the first official customers of Tri-Co Connections Tuesday, April 7, when their Niles Hill Road home was connected to 100 megabit-per-second fiber internet service. Tri-Co Connections, a subsidiary of Tri-County Rural Electric Cooperative, has entered the installation and service-connection phase of its multi-year project to bring broadband to rural north-central Pennsylvania. Installers are actively connecting customers in the Dingman Run area outside of Coudersport. Fiber installation is considered an essential service by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

individual online counseling sessions with students while schools remain closed, while her children, Jude, 3, and Mary Kate, 7, are playing educational programs or reading on their Kindles.

Katie's husband, Dave, a retired U.S. Marine Corps veteran who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, said he is looking forward to being able to utilize high-speed internet for things like telemedicine, downloading video games and looking up parts for projects he is working on at home.

"My biggest thing is being able to look up parts for a truck that I'm rebuilding and guns that I'm working on — and keeping the kids occupied," he said.

Dave, who drives truck for Praxair Distribution based in Bradford, said having reliable internet service will also enable him to take part in telemedicine appointments with Veterans Administration physicians from the comfort of his home.

"A lot of my appointments with my

primary care providers at the Erie VA are actually over the internet," said Dave, who experienced medical problems stemming from an IED explosion during his last deployment to Afghanistan. "I'll take my 30-minute DOT break and do my appointment over the phone while I'm in my truck, but, with having better internet, that will help a lot because I can actually have a wider range of when my appointments can be. It will definitely help our situation a lot."

Dave said he also looks forward to being able to download video games online, something he has been unable to do since the Taylor family moved to their home on Niles Hill Road in 2018.

"When we first moved here, I went to download a new game and it took almost four days to download onto my XBox," he said. "After that, I gave up on buying new games."

With 100 Mbps internet service, downloading a 500 MB video will take about 41 seconds, and a two-hour,

high-definition movie, about 4 minutes.

With the Taylor family's home installation complete, Tri-County becomes the first electric cooperative in Pennsylvania to deliver affordable fiber-optic internet service to its membership. Over the next five to six years, Tri-County will make broadband internet service available to all of its members across the cooperative's 5,000-square-mile service territory in north-central Pennsylvania.

"I am excited for the Taylor family and all of our cooperative members who we will be connecting to high-speed internet service through Tri-Co Connections in the Coudersport area

in the weeks ahead," said Tri-County President & CEO Craig Eccher.

"During a time when the coronavirus pandemic is forcing parents and children to work and learn from home, the need for access to high-speed internet has become more apparent than ever. We are pleased to be able to provide a great broadband experience in our region and help bridge the digital divide in our rural communities."

The Tri-Co Connections fiber build-out officially kicked off Nov. 18, 2019, when crews began work along Dingman Run Road outside of Coudersport. Since then, crews have completed about 60 miles of fiber-optic cable construc-

tion in Tri-County service territory north of Coudersport.

Phase one of the build-out entails construction of about 110 miles of fiber in western portions of Tri-County's service area that will make broadband service available to approximately 1,135 Tri-County residential, seasonal and commercial members in Potter County.

After phase one construction concludes this spring, the project will shift to phase two: building a 464-mile fiber backbone that will connect all of Tri-County's substations. The fiber backbone will improve electric system communications and expand the cooperative's smart grid capabilities. ☀

## Director elections slated for Districts 3, 5 and 9

DEMOCRACY will take center stage at Tri-County's 2020 annual meeting, with director election results highlighting the agenda.

Board seats are up for election this year in Districts 3, 5 and 9. Only members with accounts in those three districts may vote in this year's election.

In accordance with Tri-County's by-laws, director elections take place on a rotating basis, with three of the cooperative's nine districts electing directors each year.

If your account is located in one of this year's voting districts, you will receive a mail-in ballot in addition to the annual meeting notification that Tri-County mails to members this month. Please review the ballot, cast your vote and mail it back to Tri-County in the stamped envelope that is provided.

Election results will be announced on Tuesday, July 28.

Directors serve three-year terms and are responsible for representing the needs and concerns of members in their districts. They also establish co-op policies and oversee business operations.

The three candidates who have filed election petitions this year are incumbents and are running unopposed. They are: Nicholas Reitter, District 3;

Matthew Whiting, District 5; and Lowell Geiser, District 9. A profile of each candidate follows.

### District 3

*District 3 serves members in Bingham, Genesee, Harrison, Oswayo and Sharon townships in Potter County; Brookfield and Westfield townships in Tioga County; and Ceres Township in McKean County.*



Nicholas Reitter

#### Nicholas Reitter

Nick Reitter is a retired professor from Alfred State College, where he taught electrical engineering and robotic engineering technology. He holds a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from Drexel University and a master's degree from Binghamton University.

In addition to teaching, he has work experience as an electrician and was a project engineer for the control systems in electric power generating plants.

Reitter serves on the board of directors of Valley Energy and Citizens' Electric Co.

His community involvement has included serving as church treasurer and Sunday school teacher, treasurer of the Wellsville radio control model airplane club, past member of the Genesee

Grange, past assistant Scoutmaster, member of the Ulysses Masonic Lodge No. 556, and former teacher with the Potter County Educational Council.

His hobbies include astronomy, photography, reading, flying radio-control electric model planes, automating model trains, genealogy, gardening and being in the outdoors.

A Tri-County member since 1978, Reitter and his wife, Ann, reside in Genesee. They have seven grown children and 10 grandchildren.

### District 5

*District 5 serves Jackson, Lawrence, Richmond, Rutland and Tioga townships in Tioga County; and Wells Township in Bradford County.*



Matthew Whiting

#### Matthew S. Whiting

Matthew Whiting of Lawrence Township was elected to the Tri-County board of directors during the cooperative's 2014 annual meeting. He serves as the cooperative's chairman of the board, a post he was elected to in 2016.

Whiting is a licensed professional engineer in Pennsylvania and New York. He retired from Corning Inc. in (continues on page 12d)

## Director Elections

(continued from page 12c)

2015 after a 32-year career that included senior leadership roles in research and development, software, electrical and systems engineering, and project management.

Whiting holds bachelor's degrees from Mansfield University and Alfred University, and a master's degree in civil engineering from Norwich University.

He serves as Tri-County's representative on the Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc. Board of Directors and is a member of the board of directors of Citizens' Electric Co. of Lewisburg.

Whiting is a deacon and treasurer of the East Lawrence Baptist Church.

He has been a member of Tri-County since 2000.

Whiting and his wife, Linda, have three children, April Parker, Sarah Whiting and Jason Whiting.

## District 9

*District 9 serves Abbott, Stewardson and West Branch townships in Potter County; East Keating and Leidy townships in Clinton County; and Elk Township in Tioga County.*

### Lowell W. Geiser

Lowell W. Geiser of Galeton was appointed to the Tri-County Rural Electric Cooperative Board of Directors in 2007. He served as the cooperative's chairman of the board from 2012-2016.

A lifelong resident of Potter County,



Lowell Geiser

Geiser and his wife, Virginia, own and operate Forest View Evergreen Tree Farms, a business started by his grandfather in 1925.

A graduate of

Galeton Area High School, Geiser was a volunteer with the Germania Fire Co. as a firefighter and EMT, and served as an Abbott Township supervisor in past years.

He is a member of the First Baptist Church of Galeton and has been a member of Tri-County since 1985.

Geiser serves on the C&T Enterprises and Wellsboro Electric boards of directors. ☀

## Event canceled due to coronavirus

## Tri-County recognizes students selected for Youth Tour

DUE TO the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 National Rural Electric Youth Tour scheduled to take place this month was canceled for the first time in the history of the event.

Tri-County had selected 12 high school juniors to participate in this year's Youth Tour, a weeklong tour of the nation's capital that had been held annually for more than 50 years.

The cooperative wishes to acknowledge the students who were selected to participate and let you know a little bit about each of them.

Selected on the basis of an application, essay and extracurricular activities, the following high school students had been chosen as Tri-County's Youth Tour representatives:

**Colton Litzelman**, a junior at North



Colton Litzelman

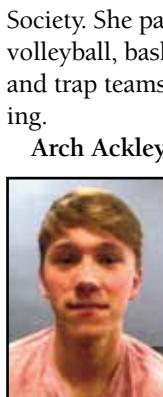
Penn-Liberty High School, is the son of Brian and Erin Litzelman. Colton serves as class vice president and is a member of Key Club, Southern Tioga Area Bow-hunters and Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA). He plays on his school's basketball and

football teams and enjoys hunting and fishing.

**Kylie Welsh**, daughter of Dawn and Steve Welsh, is a junior at Austin Area High School. She is vice president of her high school class and a member of National Honor Society, student council, and the National Art Honor Society. She participates on her school's volleyball, basketball, track and field, and trap teams, and enjoys scrapbooking.

**Arch Ackley**, a junior at Cowanesque Valley High School, is the son of Michael Ackley and Angela Duell. He serves as student council president and had served as president of his sophomore class. He is active in school plays and musicals and plays on his school's tennis team. A member of the National Honor Society, Arch has an interest in horses and historical landmarks.

Noah Shutt, son of Crystal and



Arch Ackley



Noah Shutt

Dustin Shutt, is a junior at Galeton Area High School. Noah plays soccer and serves as treasurer for the Drama Club. He participates on his school's basketball team, and has been involved with the school yearbook, as well as Travel Club. He enjoys hunting, fishing, painting and sports.

**Zachary Wright**, a junior at Northern Potter High School, is the son of Jen and Tom Thompson. He plays soccer, is a member of the marching band, jazz band and rock band, has performed in school musicals and participated in Model UN. Zachary enjoys science fiction movies and books, building models and music.

**Kelsey Turk**, daughter of Matthew Turk, attends Owayo Valley High School.



Zachary Wright



Kelsey Turk

She is junior class treasurer, student council secretary and is a member of the National Honor Society and the trap team. Kelsey served as a volunteer for the Seniors 2 Seniors program. She enjoys hunting, fishing, softball and trap shooting.

**Macy West**, a junior at Oswayo Valley High School, is the daughter of Scott and Diane West. She serves as class president, vice president of student council and is a member of the National Honor Society. Macy was selected as the 2019 Potter County Fair Queen. She enjoys playing beach volleyball, scrapbooking, sewing, and exhibiting market swine and volunteering at the Potter County Fair.

**Bridgette Russell**, a junior at North Penn-Liberty High School, is the daughter of Matthew Russell and Kelli Russell. She has participated in Key Club, Culture Club, Unified Club, basketball and softball. Bridgette volunteers as a junior firefighter with the Liberty Fire Department and enjoys photography, kayaking and camping.

**Audrianna Torrey**, daughter of Josh



A man and a woman are dancing joyfully in front of a large American flag. The man is wearing a blue polo shirt and has a white beard. The woman is wearing a light-colored top. In the bottom left corner, there is a logo for "smart hub" with a stylized globe icon.

**Declare your Independence. Free up your time with Auto Pay!**

Sign up for Auto Pay and be entered for a chance to win a \$200 bill credit.\*

\*All new and current members signed up for Auto Pay, formerly known as the PAiD program, are eligible to win. If you are already signed up for automatic payment from your checking/savings account or credit card, you will be automatically entered into the drawing. Only Tri-County Rural Electric Cooperative members are eligible. One lucky member will be randomly selected in a drawing to be held on July 1, 2020.



**Audrianna Torrey**

and Mistey Torrey, is a student at Northern Potter High School, where she serves as junior class secretary. She is a member of the National Honor Society, student council and is a cheerleading captain. Audrianna participates in the school's choir, select choir, a capella choir, band and jazz band. She also participates in non-scholastic trap shooting, ballet and tap dancing. Audrianna enjoys reading, writing, hiking, art, aviation, boating, hunting and fishing.

**Ryann Upham**, daughter of Brett Upham and Angela Upham, is a junior at North Penn-Liberty High School. She participates in basketball, soccer, and track and field. She serves as vice president of stu-

dent council and participates in chorus and band, the Big Buddy program, Key Club and drone/STEAM team. She enjoys basketball, soccer, hunting and fishing.

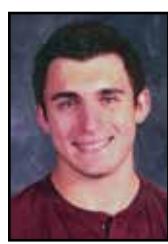


**Nicholas Smith**

**Nicholas Smith**, son of James and Linda Smith, is a home-school student. He participates in 4-H and Sojourners. He enjoys remote-control cars, drones and biking.

**Hunter Crowell**, son of Wesley and Penny Crowell, is a junior at Galeton Area High School.

He participates in baseball, basketball and soccer. He umpires Little League baseball games and enjoys hunting, fishing, shooting guns, being outdoors and traveling. ☺



**Hunter Crowell**

## Member Appreciation Day set for Potter County Fair

Tri-County will host a Member Appreciation Day during the Potter County Fair in Millport on Thursday, July 30.

To show its appreciation to co-op members, the cooperative will provide \$25 in food coupons to each voting member of the cooperative who registers at the Tri-County booth between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. that day. The coupons can be used at any of the fair's food vendors during the week of the fair.

Tri-County's member services department staff will be on hand to answer questions throughout the day, and a representative of Tri-Co Connections, Tri-County's broadband internet subsidiary, will also be available to talk to members about the co-op's fiber-to-the-home internet project.

## Signing up is EASY!

- Go to [tri-countyrec.com](http://tri-countyrec.com)
- Log into your SmartHub account
- Select the billing and payments tab and click on [Auto Pay Program](#)
- Click on the link to the right [Sign Up For Auto Pay](#)

For assistance, please call  
**1-800-343-2559**

# ELECTRICITY

## MYTH vs. FACT

**MYTH** A downed power line will be arcing and smoking if it still has power.

**FACT** Power lines do not automatically shut off when they fall and do not necessarily arc, flash, pop, or smoke when they hit the ground. There is no way to know for sure if a line has potentially deadly current running through it unless it has been properly discharged by a utility crew, so stay away from all downed power lines and keep others away.

CAUTION CAU

**MYTH** Power lines are insulated.

**FACT** The majority of outside power lines are not insulated and are indistinguishable from the guy-wires that hold the pole steady. The coating you might see on the lines is just weatherproofing that will offer no protection from the electricity flowing through the lines.

NING WARNING WARNING WARNING WARNING WARNING WARNING WAR

**MYTH** Tires insulate my car from electrical dangers.

**FACT** If a wire falls on your car while you are in it, the tires are not keeping you from being injured by the electricity. You are not being hurt because you are not a path to ground for the electricity—as long as you stay in the car. Once you step out of the car, you become that path to ground and can be seriously injured or killed. If you find yourself in a situation where your car has hit a utility pole or has a power line come down on it, the best place for you to be is in the car. Call for help, and keep others away until a utility crew can kill the wires. If you must exit the car, it is critical for you to make sure not to touch the ground and the car at the same time. Jump out of the car, keeping your feet together. Then bunny-hop away. Find out more by watching Safety Expert Kyle Finley's Live Line Demonstration at: [www.youtube.com/SafeElectricity](http://www.youtube.com/SafeElectricity).

# Select ceiling fans for comfort, savings

By James Dulley

**D**ear Jim: I need to get two new ceiling fans, but all the options and models are confusing. Can you give me some tips? — Ron F.

**Dear Ron:** In addition to improved comfort during summer, running a ceiling fan also reduces your heating bills during winter. This is why almost every ceiling fan made has a switch to reverse the direction of the blade rotation.

A ceiling fan is not actually a cooling device like an air conditioner. You only feel more comfortable under a ceiling fan because of the wind-chill effect of room air moving over your skin.

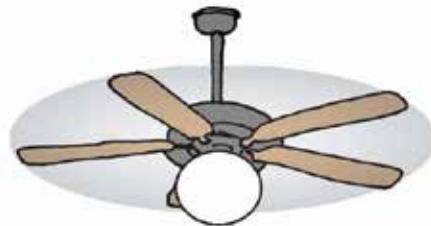
Running a ceiling fan actually increases the room air temperature. All of the electricity used by the fan motor ends up as heat, so you should switch the fan off whenever the room is not being used.

The overall energy savings comes from being able to set your air-conditioning thermostat a few degrees higher. For each degree the thermostat is set higher, the electricity savings can be up to 5% for each eight-hour period. The actual percentage savings depends on many factors, including your local climate and outdoor temperature.

During winter, flip the switch and reverse the rotation of the fan blades to blow air upward. The goal here is to gently move the warmest air, which stagnates up near the ceiling, out and down the walls where people are. Run it on the lowest speed.

If energy savings is your primary concern, the simplest way to select a ceiling fan is to pick one that is Energy Star-certified ([energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov)).

It is important to size the ceiling fan properly. If it is too small, it won't create enough of a breeze, even on high



speed, to make you feel comfortably cool. If it is too big, it will flow too much air, even on low speed, to gently move the air when rotation is reversed during winter.

A rule-of-thumb for sizing is (room size vs. diameter of blades): up to 75 sq. ft. - 36 in.; 75 to 144 sq. ft. - 36 to 42 in.; 144 to 225 sq. ft. - 44 to 50 in.; and 225 to 400 sq. ft. - 50 to 54 in.

Most people are also interested in the styling of the fan. The typical, lower-cost fans have five relatively narrow blades. Fans with just three wide decorative blades are becoming much more popular. Always check the air flow specification for the fan. The size and number of blades is not the best air flow indicator. The speed and the pitch (angle) of the blades have a greater impact on air flow.

The best ceiling fans use very efficient motors and use as little as 33 watts of electricity. These types of fan motors provide more speed settings and are quiet. Generally though, three speeds are more than adequate for com-

fort and saving and are less expensive.

There are many options for lighting kits for ceiling fans. Some stylish ones have an integrated circular LED light mounted inside a glass globe. Most are dimmable and provide a moderate amount of brightness on high.

Lighting kits with three- or four-bulb medium base fixtures allow you to select the type of dimmable LEDs you want to install. You may prefer warm white (3000 Kelvin) or daylight (5000 Kelvin) bulbs.

When installing a fan, the blades should not be lower than seven feet from the floor for safety. For a high ceiling, select a long downrod length so the blades are eight feet above the floor. For lower ceilings, select a ceiling hugger model. ☺



Have a question for Jim? Send inquiries to **James Dulley**, Penn Lines, 6906 Royalgreen Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45244 or visit [www.dulley.com](http://www.dulley.com).



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# E-transportation becoming more popular

By Maria Kanevsky

Ten years ago, electric vehicles were a rare sight, but today, you see them on roadways all across the country. Advancements in battery technology have led to smaller, even more efficient batteries, which has opened the door to new forms of electric transportation, or e-transportation. Let's take a look at some of today's novel modes of e-transportation.

One of the newer forms of electric transportation is the electric scooter. They're relatively easy to use, inexpensive and some versions are even foldable, making it compact and easy to carry and store. There are also several electric scooter rental companies that offer their services in many major cities, making it especially easy to find a nearby scooter to use for a limited time. However, something to consider is that electric scooters' small wheels are only meant to be ridden on paved surfaces like sidewalks. Electric scooters' limited range and speed also make them unsuitable for long-distance travel.

Another newer form of electric transportation is the electric bicycle. These modern versions of the familiar bicycle offer the same ease of use while requiring much less physical exertion. Travelers can ride longer distances without being as fatigued and they can be parked easily at bike racks.

Some of these electric forms of transportation can be used for recreation in addition to everyday use. For example, the electric skateboard has additional power that a normal skateboard does not have, and the user can still perform tricks while riding it. Another example is electric roller skates that are just as entertaining as normal roller skates, and users can maintain fast speeds



**ELECTRIC SCOOTERS:** Electric scooters are relatively easy to use, inexpensive, and some versions are even foldable, making them compact and easy to carry and store.

without the effort. While these electric modes of transportation are fun, their faster speeds can also make them more dangerous, which makes wearing helmets and knee pads especially important.

For those looking for more exciting forms of e-transportation, there are many innovative options being developed. One of these is the electric unicycle, which is a self-balancing device. You can speed up and slow down the device by simply leaning forward or backward. The electric unicycle is easy to store or carry around, and because of its large wheel, it can drive on a variety of terrains like grass, gravel, curbs, and potholes. The major drawback is that it's relatively difficult to learn how to ride the electric unicycle, so be prepared to spend a few hours just to learn how it works.

For even faster speeds, there is the electric motorcycle. This mode of transportation has many benefits when compared to gas-powered motorcycles, such as increased performance, less mainte-

nance and lower fuel costs. Although, a couple of major differences between the electric motorcycle and gas-powered motorcycles is that electric motorcycles cannot drive as far and are much quieter, which may be less appealing for long-distance road trips.

Since these technologies are relatively new and more complex, price tags for all of these modes of transportation will be higher than their conventional counterparts. Each mode includes a variety of features, so it's important to consider all options. Before purchasing any of these newer forms of e-transportation, make sure you do the research to find the mode of transportation that best matches your needs. ☀

Maria Kanevsky is a program analyst for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56% of the nation's landscape.

## ENERGY MATTERS

(continued from page 6)

### Conservation is not efficiency

Dennis describes the NRDC's support of beneficial electrification, saying, "When they do the math, they find out that electrification of more things is the answer. It's one of the only pathways to a low-carbon future."

Dennis says that beneficial electrification shows the need to rethink what energy efficiency means. It's not conservation, he says. As initiatives like the federal government's Energy Star® program help consumers save money on the most efficient electric products, and the advantages of beneficial electrification become more well-known, he says energy efficiency can actually mean using more electricity.

"When people talk about energy efficiency, they don't necessarily take into account the system-wide benefits of electricity," he says. "There's a big opportunity for electrification to meet many objectives: saving folks money, reducing environmental impact, increasing the quality of life and helping the electric grid."

Electric co-ops, Dennis says, are especially well-suited to rethink the role of electricity. When electric co-ops were first formed in the 1930s, it wasn't to deliver electricity to areas without the service, but to improve the quality of life with the benefits electricity could bring.

"The idea of beneficial electrification is really in the DNA of electric co-ops," says Dennis. "Just like 80 years ago when they saw the chance to improve people's quality of life, today they're continuing to find ways to help people. It's second nature to the co-ops." 

Paul Wesslund writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56% of the nation's landscape.



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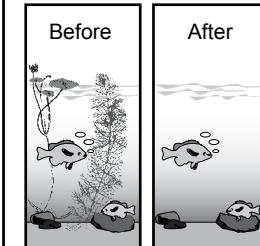
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### Safe Generator Operation

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**Stationary Generator:** An approved generator transfer switch, which keeps your house circuits separate from the electric co-op, should be installed by a professional.

**Portable Generator:** Plug appliances directly into the outlet provided on the generator.

- Set up and run your generator in a well-ventilated area outside the home. Make sure it's out and away from your garage, doors, windows, and vents. The carbon monoxide generated is DEADLY.**

**Use a heavy-duty extension cord to connect electric appliances to the outlet on the generator.**

**Start the generator first BEFORE connecting appliances.**

*Source: SafeElectricity.org*



*Developed jointly by the Energy Education Council & Rural Electricity Resource Council*

# Chicken on demand

By Janette Hess

**W**hen mealtime nears, isn't it nice to open the refrigerator and find that the work is half done?

This summer, a perfectly seasoned, slow-cooked whole chicken could be the basis for your lightened cooking load. Once the meat has been separated from the bones and safely stowed in the refrigerator, multiple meals can come together in minutes.

Start the process by allowing a dry-brined chicken to absorb flavors overnight. Then, in the morning, transfer the whole chicken to a slow cooker. By late afternoon, after just 10 or 15 minutes of hands-on work, you'll have a mound of perfectly seasoned chicken ready for use in a multitude of recipes.

The recipes could be as simple as Savory Chicken Salad, or as satisfyingly low-carb as Chicken Taco Peppers. They also could be your own tried-and-true casseroles, soups and salads. When summer activities beckon, pre-cooked chicken truly is a time-saver. ☺



A trained journalist, **Janette Hess** focuses her writing on interesting people and interesting foods. She is a Master Food Volunteer with her local extension service and enjoys collecting, testing and sharing recipes.

## Dry-Brined Chicken

### Dry brine:

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>2 1/2</b> teaspoons kosher salt  | <b>1/2</b> teaspoon garlic powder        |
| <b>2</b> teaspoons paprika          | <b>1 4 1/2-</b> to 5-pound whole chicken |
| <b>1</b> teaspoon celery salt       | <b>1</b> stalk celery, roughly chopped   |
| <b>1</b> teaspoon poultry seasoning | <b>1/4</b> onion, roughly chopped        |
| <b>1</b> teaspoon onion powder      | Freshly ground pepper                    |
| <b>1</b> teaspoon lemon pepper      |  |

## Savory Chicken Salad

- 2** cups chopped chicken
- 2** tablespoons dill relish
- 2** tablespoons finely diced red or yellow onion
- 1/4** cup finely diced celery

- 5** tablespoons mayonnaise
- 1** tablespoon grainy mustard
- Freshly ground pepper to taste

The night before chicken is needed, combine dry brine ingredients and apply to all interior and exterior surfaces. Pull breast skin back and tuck seasonings underneath. Tightly cover chicken and refrigerate overnight. In the morning, place onion and celery in slow cooker. Top with chicken, breast side down. Sprinkle with freshly ground pepper. Cook on low for 7 hours. Carefully transfer chicken to cutting board or rimmed cooking sheet. (Chicken may fall apart.) When cooled just enough to handle, pull meat from bones. Store in refrigerator for use within 3 days, or divide chopped chicken into 1 cup portions and freeze. Makes approximately 5 cups chopped chicken.

(If desired, toss bones and skin back into cooker. Add 2 1/2 cups water. Cover and turn to high. Cook 1 hour. Pour broth through fine strainer; discard all else. Refrigerate broth. When fat has solidified, skim fat and discard. Makes approximately 3 cups chicken broth. May be frozen for later use.)

In medium bowl, toss chicken with relish, onion and celery. Fold in mayonnaise and mustard. Add freshly ground pepper to taste. Serve on bread, buns, pita bread, tortillas or fresh greens. Makes 5 to 6 servings.

## Chicken Taco Peppers

- 3** bell peppers, any color
- 2** cups cooked, chopped chicken
- 1** generous tablespoon packaged taco seasoning mix
- 1/4** cup water

- 1/3** cup sour cream
- 1** cup (4 ounces) shredded jack, pepper jack or Colby cheese
- Taco condiments, if desired

Halve peppers lengthwise; remove stems, seeds and ribs. Place pepper halves on rimmed baking sheet and bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes. While peppers are baking, combine chicken, taco seasoning and water in small saucepan. Heat briefly until water is absorbed. Stir in sour cream and cheese. Drain any moisture that has collected in cooked peppers. Divide chicken mixture among peppers. Return to oven and bake until cheese is melted, about 10 minutes. Serve with taco condiments such as salsa, sliced black olives, guacamole, sliced green onions and lettuce. Makes 6 "taco" peppers.

# Where did all the smell go?

By George Weigel

**S**niff a flower these days, and you'll probably come away nasally disappointed.

We're conditioned from childhood to expect at least a little reward from a flower sniff, but many of today's plants have no scent at all.

That's because most new plants are hybrids or selections chosen for improvements such as longer bloom time, new colors, compact sizes, pest and disease resistance, and better cold hardiness.

It's hard to find a winner in every trait, so when it comes to picking something to take a back seat, fragrance often is the odd trait out.

A strike against fragrance is that flowers don't smell good for our benefit. Scents are primarily to attract insects to do the pollinating that plants need to procreate themselves.

But when you've bred a plant to avoid unwanted seeding or to bloom non-stop by making it sterile — essentially tricking it to keep trying and trying to produce a mature, viable seed — the plant no longer has a need for fragrance.

That doesn't mean fragrant gardens are a remnant of Grandma's memory. Sweet-smelling plants are still available.

Some, like old-fashioned flowering tobacco, mock oranges and lilacs, spew wonderful scents all over the yard with no prompting.

Others, like scented geraniums and rosemary, have more subtle scents that require you to brush against them or to bend over and take a sniff.

Before running headlong down the scented route, make sure you actually like the fragrances of the plants you're considering. Beauty is in the nose of

the beholder.

Case in point: some gardeners love the scent of English boxwood, while others say it reminds them of a cat litter box.

If you can't get a whiff of a plant at buying time, do some "homework-sniffing" ahead of time in neighbors' yards or at public gardens.

Be aware that not all types or varieties of a particular plant are fragrant. Some viburnums, for example, are much more fragrant than others.

When you find appealing scented plants, resist the urge to pack them all together in one "fragrance garden" — especially when plants bloom at the same time. All of these odors may blend together in one unrecognizable mess.

A better alternative: scatter the fragrant plants and/or choose fragrant plants with differing bloom times so you'll have fragrant surprises all over from spring until frost.

Also, place your "smelly-goods" along walkways, near door entrances, around patios and benches, and next to windows where a breeze will carry favorite plant scents into the house on warm evenings.

Some of the best fragrant choices by season:

**Early spring:** Dutch hyacinth bulbs, daffodils (Jonquilla, Poeticus, and Tazetta types), witch hazel, star magnolia.



**FRAGRANT LILAC:** Lilacs are some of the most fragrant shrubs that grow in Pennsylvania.

PHOTO BY GEORGE WEIGEL

**Mid-spring:** Korean spice and Judd viburnums, lilacs, peonies, daphne, mock orange, apples, some tulips, sweetshrub, sweetbay and Southern magnolias.

**Late spring:** Roses, some bearded irises, some honeysuckles, evening primrose.

**Summer:** Annual flowers (especially flowering tobacco, alyssum, heliotrope, sweet peas, and some petunias), tuberose, Asiatic and Oriental lilies, some agastache, some hostas, carnations, and garden phlox.

Some options if you like scented foliage include: Scented geraniums, lemon thyme, santolina, rosemary, oregano, and some evergreen shrubs, especially cedar, cypress and firs. ☺



**George Weigel** is a Pennsylvania Certified Horticulturist, author of two books geared to gardening in Pennsylvania, and garden columnist for The Patriot-News/Pennlive.com in Harrisburg. His website is <http://georgeweigel.net>.

# Classified Advertisements

ISSUE MONTH	AD DEADLINE
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# Boredom brings challenges for the Pitts household

By Earl Pitts, American

You know what makes me wanna lay in my backyard with ketchup on my face and see if I can trick buzzards? Yep, you'd be right if you said bein' locked down for such a long time has pretty much driven me around the bend.

You know, there will be a day when we look back at these challengin' times and decide if we made the most of the opportunity. Did we come together, fight it together and come out stronger? Or did we cower like little, thumb-sucking, 3-year-olds whinin' for their mommies?

Well, that level of whinin' ain't in what they call the Pitts family DNA. And that's how come we have took this time to turn my son, Earl Pitts Junior the Third, into a full-on Evil Knievel daredevil.

See, what happened was, that boy had been in the back yard for weeks buildin' a homemade ramp for his BMX bike. He ain't been on that bike for two years, but you know that germ jail bein' what it is, you gotta do somethin'.

So, anyways, me and my better half, Pearl, are settin' in chairs out there, watchin' the boy buildin' that ramp, and a brilliant idea come to me.

I says, "Boy, I think it's time we supersize that ramp you got there."

And we go get my old mini-bike out of the shed. Well, it turns into two projects to pass the time. Buildin' a county fair-quality, Dukes of Hazzard jumpin' ramp. And gettin' that mini-bike to fire up again.

Of course, you know there is some science and math involved in daredevil ramp jumpin'. You got to calculate angle and speed. Distance, windage,

the arc of the jump, the landing angle. Or you could just go for it.

Two weeks later, when we were just about done with this project, EJ goes, "Daddy, we don't have any school buses to jump."

Oh. I start thinkin', and the next words out of my mouth are, "Yeah, but we got your mama's Escort."

We could have sold tickets for this thing. That boy went flyin' through the air. Cleared the tennis ball on Pearl's radio antenna by 3 feet and touched down on that landin' ramp like a sleepy head on a pillow. What we didn't crunch the numbers on was the distance he would need to stop. My bad.

Wake up, America! He ended up in a pile of paint cans in our neighbor's garage. We're just gonna let that paint dry on his baseball helmet. A legend is born. I'm Earl Pitts, Makin'-the-Time-Count American.

So it looks like things might be gettin' somewhat better, but they still want us to be cautious and safe as we cootie-proof America. That seems fair. What ain't fair is that I'm bored out of my gourd.

So, here's what Pearl had me doin' Sunday. And I mention this as a warnin' — do not let anybody rope you into doin' a jigsaw puzzle.

Did you know this — jigsaw puzzles have started sellin' out in America because the experts say they're calmin', time consumin' and help distract us from being stuck at home. My take is — no, they're frustratin' as heck and make you feel like an idiot. But I had plenty of time on my hands, so I agreed to her plan for puttin' together a puzzle.

I am not going to lie to you. I got

bored to tears halfway through this thing. And not halfway through puttin' it together. Halfway through turnin' all the pieces right side up.

And once we get all the pieces facin' up, I go, "What is this a picture of? There are so many colors, it looks like a clown threw up on the kitchen table."

Pearl holds up the box, and goes, "It's 1,000 jelly beans on a table."

I mean who come up with this puzzle, some military torture expert? Now, back when I was a kid, my mama loved her some jigsaw puzzles, and I used to help. But when you sat down, you had a choice. You could sit on the side doing the sky. Or, you could sit on the side doing the flowers. Or the old church. Or the tiny Italian village.

Folks said they didn't want the cure bein' worse than the disease. Do they know about jelly bean puzzles? We might already be there. No wonder people are coming apart at the seams.

Wake up, America! I told Pearl that is the dumbest, stupidest, most insane jigsaw puzzle I ever seen. I suggested doing a different one. Bein' nearly always agreeable, she pulled out another puzzle. It was of marbles. Yeah, and I've pretty much lost mine. I'm Earl Pitts, American. ☺



Social commentary from **Earl Pitts** – a.k.a. GARY BURBANK, a nationally syndicated radio personality – can be heard on the following radio stations that cover electric cooperative service territories in Pennsylvania: WANB-FM 103.1 Pittsburgh; WARM-AM 590 Wilkes-Barre/Scranton; WIOO-AM 1000 Carlisle; WEEO-AM 1480 Shippensburg; WMTZ-FM 96.5 Johnstown; WQBR-FM 99.9/92.7 McElhattan; WLMI-FM 103.9 Kane; and WVNW-FM 96.7 Burnham- Lewistown. You can also find him at [earlpittsamerican.com](http://earlpittsamerican.com).



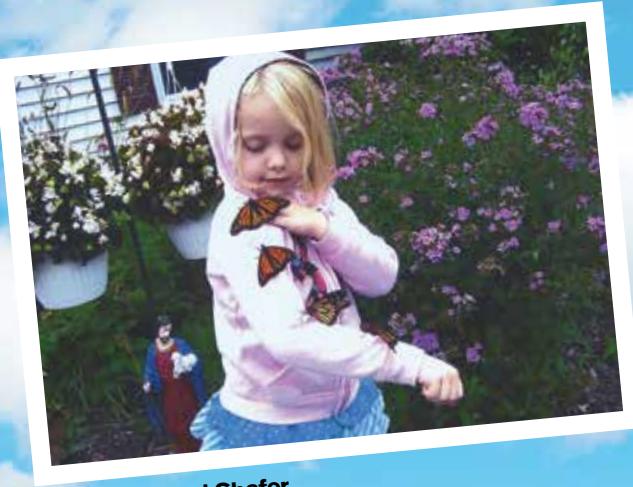
**Jim Buehler**  
**Sullivan County REC**

## Summer is here!

**I**t turned into a very unusual spring, but here's hoping summer is more typical of what we are used to with plenty of outdoor activities to enjoy. While you are out and about, consider taking some photos for our annual photo contest.

Amateur photographers are encouraged to send their photos to *Penn Lines* Photos, P.O. Box 1266, Harrisburg, PA 17108-1266. Include name, address, phone number and the name of your electric cooperative. 2020 winners in each of five categories — artistic, landscape, human, animal and editor's choice — will receive \$75, and runners-up will receive \$25.

We work ahead, so please send fall photos by July and winter photos by September (hint: save your spring and summer photos to submit next year). 2020 photos will be returned in early 2021 if you include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. ☀



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