

JANUARY 2026

PENNLINES

Penn Lines: Still Lighting the Way

**Celebrating 60 Years as the
Trusted Voice of Rural Life,
Power and Progress**



**INSIDE!
2025 PHOTO
CONTEST
WINNERS**

**A MAGAZINE FOR
THE GENERATIONS**

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

**SOME DEAD-END
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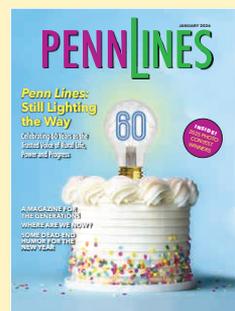
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Penn Lines turns 60 this year, continuing a legacy of telling the cooperative story.

A Sense of Place

Penn Lines Carries on Tradition of Reflecting Rural Life



LEROY WALLS

WHEN I THINK ABOUT *PENN LINES* TURNING 60, I'm reminded of how long this magazine has been part of my own life. Like many of you, I've had plenty of months when an issue arrived and ended up on the kitchen table, waiting for me to take a time-out and take a look.

I'm always glad I did because *Penn Lines* is unlike any other publication I read: It's steady, familiar and genuinely connected to rural life in Pennsylvania.

Something else makes it special, too: The magazine feels like it belongs to the people who read it — the co-op members who flip through the pages, share it with family and friends and fondly recall articles that struck a chord.

This month — the start of our year-long anniversary celebration — you'll be introduced to a few of them. Some are members who, like me, have read the magazine for decades. And then there are the families — generations of them — who see it as a tradition, and newer readers who stumbled onto their first copy and suddenly understood why *Penn Lines* has endured when other publications haven't.

Their stories say a lot about who all of us are as co-op members. We like things that last. We value what's useful. And we have a habit of hanging on to the things that make us feel connected to our communities, our co-ops and each other.

That's part of why this anniversary feels personal to me. I'm not just writing this as a director; I'm writing it as someone who grew up with rural traditions, appreciates things that stand the test of time, and understands how rare it is for a publication to stay relevant for six decades — not by changing what it is, but by being consistent about what matters.

Penn Lines has always been about practical information, stories from real people, glimpses into rural life and updates on the work happening behind the scenes to ensure our electricity is reliable and affordable. But beyond the articles, what keeps people reading is the sense of familiarity. There's comfort in opening something you trust and that mirrors the cooperative values we were raised with: to look out for one another, be honest and straightforward, and keep the community at the center of the work.

And while the energy world continues to shift around us — with new technology, new regulations and new challenges — the magazine remains a steady place to land. It connects past to present while reminding us why rural Pennsylvania is such a great place to live and raise a family.

As we take the opportunity in 2026 to reflect on the magazine's past, present, and future, I'm grateful to everyone who has kept this small-but-mighty publication going, including the co-op leaders, communicators and *Penn Lines* staffers who pour care into every issue. Another group deserves recognition, too, and that's the members who have read the magazine faithfully. You're the reason *Penn Lines* has lasted this long — and this year is as much a celebration of you as it is the magazine.

So, here's to *Penn Lines*, a tradition worth keeping. Thanks for reading, thanks for sharing, and thanks for making our magazine part of your story, too. 🍷

LEROY WALLS

CHAIRMAN, PENNSYLVANIA RURAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS
PRESIDENT, NEW ENTERPRISE RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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Visit with us at *Penn Lines Online*, located at: www.prea.com/penn-lines-magazine.

Penn Lines Online provides an email link to *Penn Lines* editorial staff, information on advertising, and an archive of past issues.



NEWEST FLEET ALONG THE FLORIDA COAST



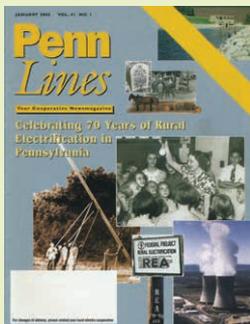
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THE MAGAZINE YOU COME HOME TO

As *Penn Lines* turns 60 this year, it's been fun to look back at the magazine's history – and my own time with it. I joined the staff with the January 2006 issue (see cover here), so I'm marking 20 years with *Penn Lines* this month.



Ten years ago, we celebrated the magazine's 50th anniversary with a new design in the January issue (see page 7). That year, we also added a tagline to the front cover: "The magazine you come home to."

The tagline captured what readers had been telling us for years: that *Penn Lines* was something they grew up with, a kitchen-table constant, and a welcome word from their co-op each month. As we celebrate our 60th anniversary, it's nice to hear some of those same sentiments echoed by readers in this month's issue. For many, it's still the magazine they come home to.

For me, the tagline has always struck a personal note. Although I grew up in central Pennsylvania, our family moved out of state in 1986, the year I graduated from high school. After that, I wasn't sure I'd ever make it back to the Commonwealth. Over the next 20 years, school, work, and the military took me across the country and around the world. But it was *Penn Lines* that brought me back home.

When I learned about the job, I was processing out of my U.S. Army service. My former boss liked to joke that he had to go to Afghanistan to find me. I still remember driving from the National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., to Pennsylvania for my interview – the day after our son was born. After several deployments and all that time away, it was a special feeling to come back to a familiar place.

Today, our son is a 20-year-old Penn State student (and a big *Penn Lines* fan). In many ways, he's also a reminder of my time with *Penn Lines* – the magazine I literally came home to. Not everyone gets to leave and come back home, so I'm forever grateful for that opportunity. Thank you.

PETER A. FITZGERALD
EXECUTIVE EDITOR



AMERICA'S MILKSHAKES: To mark the Commonwealth's America250PA celebration, the Pa. Farm Show will feature a new flavor of milkshake – blue raspberry – to coincide with its typical vanilla and strawberry flavors.

RED, WHITE AND BLUE Pa. Farm Show to feature new milkshake flavor as part of 250 celebration

A new milkshake flavor is coming to the Pennsylvania Farm Show — and it has a patriotic twist.

In observance of the state's America250PA celebration, which is tied to the nation's 250th birthday celebration this year, a blue raspberry milkshake will be on the menu.

Combined with two other farm show staples — vanilla (white) and strawberry (red) — the new flavor is designed to highlight the country's red, white and blue colors.

"Toasting America's 250th birthday will be thrilling with our special new flight of three patriotic flavors, thanks to our partnership with America250PA and Visit PA," Pennsylvania Dairymen's Executive Director Dave Smith said in a statement. "We are proud to commemorate our country's founding right here in its birthplace of Pennsylvania and equally proud to create a unique America250PA milkshake flight for Farm Show fans."

The event, which runs Jan. 10 to 17 at the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex, brings about 500,000 visitors to Harrisburg each year. In a nod to the

250th celebration, this year's theme is "Growing a Nation."

GETTING REAL TSA to charge travelers without REAL ID

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has a message it wants travelers to hear: Get a REAL ID or pay the price.

Beginning Feb. 1, passengers without an acceptable form of ID, such as a REAL ID compliant driver's license or a passport, will be charged a \$45 fee to get through U.S. airport security.

The added fee covers the cost for passengers to use the Confirm ID system. Travelers will be able to fill out the Confirm ID form and pay the fee online before arriving at the airport or they can complete the process there. Once approved, the identity verification will be valid for 10 days.

"This fee ensures the cost to cover verification of an insufficient ID will come from the traveler, not the taxpayer," a TSA official said in a statement. "The security of the traveling public is our top priority, so we urge all travelers to get a REAL ID or other acceptable form of ID as soon as possible to avoid delays and potentially miss flights."

CAUSING CONCERN

Potentially deadly horse disease detected in Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania horse owners are on alert now that at least three horses have tested positive for strains of the highly contagious, sometimes fatal equine herpesvirus (EHV) that's being reported in multiple states.

Pennsylvania's state veterinarians have been working with state and private veterinarians nationwide to trace exposures and locations of potentially affected horses, the state Department of Agriculture reported recently. The disease has respiratory and neurological forms.

Horses have been diagnosed in a handful of counties, including Clinton, Northumberland, York and Lancaster, where one was euthanized in late November. The outbreak has led to the suspension of rodeos and other equine events.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, symptoms of EHV include fever, nasal discharge, lethargy, swollen lower limbs, hind limb

weakness and an inability to maintain balance or rise.

Herpesvirus is easily spread by nose-to-nose or close contact with an infectious horse; sharing contaminated equipment including bits, buckets, and towels; or contact with clothing, hands, or equipment of people who have recently had contact with an infectious horse.

EMS UPGRADES

EMS agencies to receive state funding for training, staff and equipment

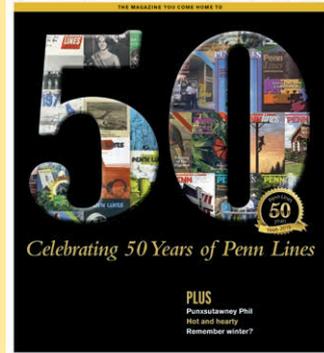
The state Department of Health plans to invest \$6 million in local emergency medical services (EMS) agencies throughout Pennsylvania for training, staff recruitment and new ambulance equipment.

"Our EMS professionals are a lifeline to Pennsylvanians in their most critical health moments," Secretary of Health Dr. Debra Bogen said. "This investment will help ensure responders have the resources to meet the unique circumstances they face in every medical emergency." 📍

TIME LINES

PENNLines

JANUARY 2016



A decade ago, *Penn Lines* turned 50 years old. The magazine celebrated half a century by doing two things – updating its design and looking back at its five decades of existence. Recalling its history in 2016 meant reiterating what the magazine's initial goal was when it first launched in 1966: keeping readers up to date on all the matters that impact rural electric cooperatives. As we celebrate 60 years in 2026, rest assured that goal continues to be our highest priority.

JANUARY

GETTYSBURG DANCE SOCIETY

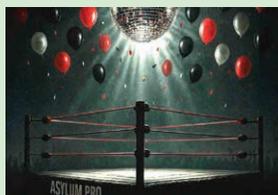


GET DOWN!

Ever wonder what a dance was like during the Civil War? If so, the closest thing to an answer you might get will be at a Jan. 10 event at the Village Hall in Fairfield, Adams County. The dance starts at 7:30 p.m., and the suggested donation is \$10 per person. Email gettysburgdancesociety@gmail.com for details.

BODY SLAMS & BALLOONS

The Clearfield County Fairgrounds will host the Asylum Pro Wrestling and Defiant Order of Wrestling superstars Jan. 17 at the Lunatic's Ball. Doors open at 5 p.m. and the event will feature Asylum's annual prize-filled balloon drop. Learn more at facebook.com/WrestlingAtTheAsylum.



MEATING UP

Beef, pork, chicken and lamb – it will all be up for grabs Jan. 24 at the meat raffle and live music fundraiser at the Troy Sale Barn in Troy, Bradford County. The \$5 entry fee will benefit the barn, which is focused on preserving the county's farming history. For more information, visit troysalebarn.com.

A DOG'S LIFE

The Bayfront Convention Center in Erie, Pa., will go to the dogs Jan. 24 and 25 as the Erie Kennel Club All-Breed Dog Show comes to town. Beginning at 8 a.m. both days, the event will feature competitions, raffles, tours and vendors. Children under 4 are free while tickets are \$9 for adults. Learn more at eriekennelclub.org.





Penn Lines

A MAGAZINE FOR THE GENERATIONS

COLIN P. MCGUIRE

Senior Editor/Writer

From those who have been reading *Penn Lines* for more than half a century to those young enough to pack an issue in their suitcase as they set out to study abroad, there is no denying the impact the magazine has had on generations of readers.

There's also no denying that *Penn Lines* simply wouldn't exist without them.

Now, as the magazine celebrates its 60th anniversary, we caught up with some of those loyal readers, who shared their memories, favorite articles and why *Penn Lines* has become a fixture in their homes.

"It's just always been around," Kristy Bigelow, a third-generation reader, notes. "Growing up, we would read it every month – and even as I grow older, I try and keep that tradition alive."



‘A KEY PART OF OUR LIVES’

Kathy & Leslie Megyeri

While Kathy Megyeri can easily list her top three *Penn Lines* articles, it's the third that she lights up about the most.

“It's the ‘Off the Beaten Path’ story from June 2023,” she says. “We've lived here for 35 years and that set us on a path to explore areas we haven't been to. We went to the history museum in Harrisburg and took other little field trips because of that article.”

Megyeri and her husband Leslie, who live in Fairfield, Pa., and are members of Gettysburg-based Adams Electric Cooperative, estimate they have been

reading the magazine for nearly 30 years. It wasn't until recently, though, that she started giving copies away — a practice that took her to Washington, D.C. There, she visited a senior living facility and shared another favorite article with one of the residents.

“I really loved the story about going to college vs. going to trade schools,” Kathy says. “It really resonates with us because we support trade schools and donate to them. I loved it so much, I had to give it away.”

“I read *Penn Lines* from cover to cover every month,” she adds. “It's a key part of our lives.”





A GOOD HABIT TO HAVE

John & Elizabeth Hoffman

Of all the places on Earth one could hope to find an issue of *Penn Lines*, Japan might be the most far-flung option. Yet, that was the case in 2025, when John and Elizabeth Hoffman's daughter, Julia, posed for a photo with the magazine — part of a 60th anniversary reader contest — while studying abroad.

"She actually first took *Penn Lines* to Senegal," Elizabeth says. "She won a scholarship to Africa. Now, she's on her fourth scholarship in Japan and she thought it would be fun to take an issue with her."

The Hoffmans, members of REA Energy Cooperative in Indiana, Pa., have read the magazine for 33 years — a

habit they picked up when they moved into their home in Mineral Point, Cambria County.

While Elizabeth likes to peruse the classifieds, John says he prefers articles about lineworkers and their families, noting he has a friend who is a retired lineman. Despite these differences, both husband and wife agree on one thing: They would like to see a continued focus on environmentally friendly energy as the power industry expands.

They believe so much in going green that instead of keeping old issues of *Penn Lines*, they recycle them. "My grandma kept every *National Geographic* she ever received," Elizabeth says. "That's not us."



IMPROVING WITH AGE

June & Kristy Bigelow

At least three generations of the Bigelow family have read *Penn Lines*.

“I like the whole book,” says June, the family’s 87-year-old matriarch who lives on a farm in Williamsburg, Blair County. “The magazine keeps changing every year, and it gets better every year.”

But the Bigelows’ connection to their cooperative — in this case, Huntingdon-based Valley Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) — doesn’t stop there. June’s husband, William, served on Valley’s Board of Directors in the late 1970s until he passed away in 1992, at which point, their son, Richard, took his

father’s seat. After Richard died, his wife Cindy joined the board in 2004, and today, serves as its secretary.

June’s granddaughter Kristy, a farmer, also has fond memories of flipping through the pages of the magazine.

“*Penn Lines* was always something that was on our table,” she says.

In fact, June has issues that date back to the 1970s. She also likes to share current copies with family members who don’t receive the magazine.

“They really do get better every year,” she says, “and I can say that — I’ve been reading them for 53 years.”





A PREFERENCE FOR PAPER

Bryan Messick

Of the many regular features in *Penn Lines* each month, Bryan Messick, a seasonal member of Tri-County REC, has grown to appreciate one in particular: the calendar of events.

The only problem? Life keeps getting in the way.

“At some point, I probably will get to some of these events,” he says, laughing. “We don’t have many free weekends right now because of the kids, but just give me 10 more years and I will.”

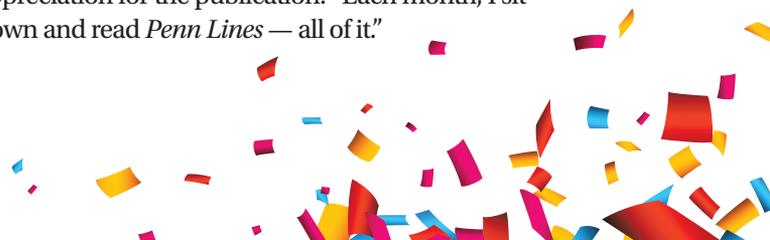
Messick came across *Penn Lines* for the first time four years ago when he became treasurer at his camp in Potter County. Part of the treasurer’s duties, he explains, is paying the bills, so along with receiving the bills in the mail, he receives the magazine, too.

He instantly fell in love, he says, noting he enjoys reading about the inner workings of the power distribution process.

“What fascinates me is how the electricity gets from where it is to the house,” Messick says. “I really like that kind of stuff.”

He also likes that *Penn Lines* hasn’t gone digital (although you can still read past issues at prea.com/penn-lines-magazine). Every month, for six decades, it’s been printed and mailed to co-op members.

“I’m still the person who likes to hold a piece of paper,” Messick says while reflecting on his appreciation for the publication. “Each month, I sit down and read *Penn Lines* — all of it.”



‘PENN LINES IS PERFECT’

Ila Jane Diehl

There are longtime readers of *Penn Lines* — and then there are *longtime* readers of *Penn Lines*. Ila Jane Diehl, a member of New Enterprise REC, is the latter.

“I’m not sure; maybe 70 years?” she speculates when asked how long she’s been reading the publication. Then, after she’s reminded the magazine is celebrating its 60th anniversary, she laughs heartily.

“OK,” she concludes, “that must mean I’ve been reading it for 60 years. I don’t think I’ve ever missed an issue.”

Perhaps more fascinating than her perfect reading record is the way she reads the magazine: from the

last page all the way to the first. It’s a habit she picked up from her mother, who read the daily newspaper the same way.

With a house in both Hopewell and Liberty townships — “I eat in Hopewell Township, and I sleep in Liberty Township,” she quips while pointing to both her kitchen and bedroom — the 87-year-old has been a New Enterprise REC member for much of her life.

And *Penn Lines* has been her publication of choice, mostly because it has just the right amount of advertising — not too much, not too little.

“I don’t buy a lot of stuff,” she explains, “so I could care less about any of that. *Penn Lines* is perfect, though. I’ve always liked the magazine just the way it is.”



The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same

MICHAEL T. CRAWFORD, SENIOR TECHNICAL EDITOR

IN 1966, cooperative consumer-members began receiving *Penn Lines*, sharing news from rural electric cooperatives across Pennsylvania. More a newsletter than a magazine at its start, *Penn Lines* focused on legislation and events that were having significant impacts on rural communities and the cooperatives that served them. It focused heavily on, you might say, energy matters.

In honor of the magazine's 60th anniversary, let's look back at what was going on with cooperatives around that time.

One energy matter reached a critical milestone around the same time the

first issue of *Penn Lines* was published. Working in partnership with their wholesale energy provider, Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Allegheny), cooperatives began receiving electricity through long-term contracts with the New York Power Authority in 1966. With a steady flow of clean, reliable energy generated by hydroelectric plants along the Niagara and St. Lawrence rivers in upstate New York, cooperatives realized savings of \$1,000 per day compared with market purchases. Years later, Allegheny would continue this clean-energy trend with the completion of the Raystown Hydroelectric Plant in Huntingdon County and the purchase of a 10% stake in the Susquehanna Steam Electric Station, a nuclear plant in Luzerne County.

During this era, computers started opening the door for real-time monitoring of electric grids, allowing a faster response to outages. This development would also pave the way for Pennsylvania cooperatives to introduce the Coordinated Load Management System in 1986, which would allow cooperatives to manage energy peaks in partnership with Allegheny and consumer-members.

Lineworkers were also upping their game out in the field. Two-way radios became a common tool in their arsenal, improving coordination and efficiency.

Safety and training continued to expand and become more formalized, too, according to the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), offering better protection to the people keeping the lights on. Insulated buckets mounted onto telescopic arms on the back of trucks, lifting

lineworkers to heights previously only accessible by climbing poles.

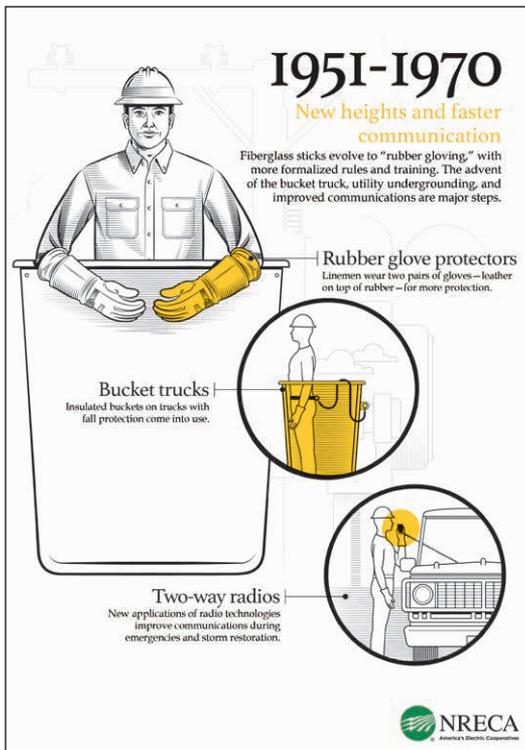
Ironically, as technology made it easier to reach the top of poles, the 1960s saw powerlines moving underground. Utilities serving cities and suburbs had already buried thousands of miles of lines, according to NRECA, but cooperatives were just getting started as more urbanites looked for rural homes.

While cooperative operations, like the pages of *Penn Lines*, have changed their look and feel over the past six decades, their purpose remains centered on consumer-members like you.

Those early issues of *Penn Lines* also focused on what cooperative operations are really about: the communities they serve. They reported on how cooperatives collaborated to better serve all their members. They reported on cooperative efforts to educate their communities about electrical safety. And they reported on how cooperatives were strengthening the economies of rural areas.

Energy matters continue to be in the spotlight as policymakers struggle to keep pace with technological advances, all while balancing the need for reliable, affordable electricity. While cooperative employees may conduct business a bit differently than they did 60 years ago, they remain — and will continue to remain — people you can count on. 📡

ALLEGHENY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC., based in Harrisburg, Pa., is the wholesale energy provider for the 14 rural electric cooperatives in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The cooperative has a proud history of investing in sustainable energy solutions to benefit the communities it serves while providing reliable energy at an affordable price.



BACK IN THE DAY: In the 1960s, safety and communication took major steps forward, both at cooperative offices and on cooperative lines. Safety, training and technology have continued to develop, ensuring cooperative operations remain as safe and efficient as possible.

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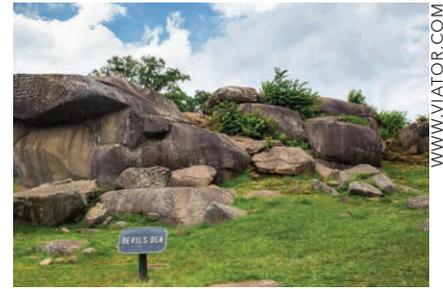
Stepping into the Devil's Den

Gettysburg is famously known for its ghost stories and haunted sites, but there may not be a more intriguing tale than that of Devil's Den, which is now part of the Gettysburg National Military Park. Early settlers in Adams County — where Adams Electric Cooperative is now headquartered — came across the site, which they dubbed “Big Rocks” before the Civil War. And, as legend has it, farmers would organize parties to destroy the snakes that infested the area.

According to those settlers, one large snake would always escape the

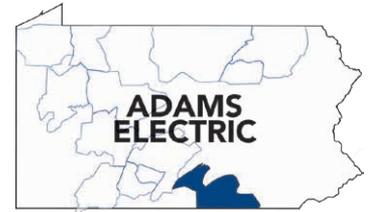
hunt and therefore earned the title of “The Devil,” giving the site its name. Through the years, the land provided the backdrop for a legendary Civil War showdown on July 2, 1863. It was also the setting for the iconic Civil War photograph, “Home of a Rebel Sharpshooter,” and produced a slew of ghost stories. One centers around the “Helpful Hippie,” who approaches visitors, asks them what they are looking for, and points in a direction before disappearing.

Today, Devil's Den is open to visitors and features trails, signs explaining its rich history and nighttime walking tours that lean into the site's many legends. Are they all true? It's impossible to tell. All we know is that the devil is always in the details. 🐍



WWW.VIATOR.COM

DEVIL'S DEN: This is Devil's Den today, now part of the Gettysburg National Military Park and the site of an infamous Civil War battle. According to legend, the area earned its name before the war even started because it was home to a large snake, dubbed “The Devil,” a skilled escape artist.



Main Office: Gettysburg, Pa.
Consumer-members served: 34,545
Website: adamsec.coop

HEY KIDS! EMAIL YOUR ART



A Reminder of Home

This month's artwork comes from Jacob Miller, grandson of Lise Miller, a member of Adams Electric Cooperative. “I drew this elk because I liked his picture I saw in the magazine,” Jacob says. “I drew the mountains and sky and field where he lives because it's like the land where we own with my family.” Thank you, Jacob, for sharing your artwork with us!

Jacob Miller, age 5; Adams Electric Cooperative

CALLING ALL KIDS, ages 5 to 17: Show off your artistic skills!

Each month, we'll feature the artwork of our young readers (or our readers' youngsters), inspired by something they've read in *Penn Lines*. Paints, pencils, crayons, clay, sand – any physical medium is okay! You may send digital photos of the creation to CommunityCorner@prea.com, but please: no digital artwork.

Please include the artist's name, age and electric cooperative, plus a 25- to 50-word description of the art.

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Celebrating 90 Years of Cooperation



RYAN MELLER

IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE LIFE WITHOUT ELECTRICITY. In 2026, power is an essential part of our lives, interwoven into nearly every aspect of modern life. But 90 years ago, large portions of northwestern Pennsylvania were without power.

In the 1920s, only about half of the people living in the Commonwealth had electric service. Power lines were placed where they were the most profitable: in and around population centers. By the 1930s, electricity had reached only 6% of Pennsylvania farmers. This imbalance of modern convenience created a stark contrast between life in town and life in rural Pennsylvania.

In the 1920s, Morris Llewellyn Cooke was hired to study high rates and the lack of service to rural areas in Pennsylvania. Cooke later moved to New York to work with then-Gov. Franklin Delano Roosevelt. After FDR was elected president, Cooke went with him to Washington, D.C., in 1933, where they worked together on the New Deal.

Cooke presented a national rural electrification proposal to the president. The proposal, called the "12-Minute Memo," was designed to stand out amid a sea of government paperwork. In that document adorned with watercolor illustrations of bright red barns, Cooke noted that more than 5 million of the nation's 6 million farms were "entirely without electric service," and private utilities weren't willing to take on the problem.

"Only under government leadership and control is any considerable electrification of 'dirt farms' possible," Cooke said.

That memo detailing Cooke's plan paved the way for rural electrification throughout the nation, including right here in northwestern Pennsylvania. It led directly to the executive order signed by FDR on May 11, 1935, creating the Rural Electrification Administration.

From that executive order, the idea grew into the Rural Electrification Act, enacted on May 20, 1936. The law provided federal loans for the installation of electrical distribution systems to serve isolated rural areas of the United States.

In the meantime, a group of local folks were gathering to bring electricity to northwestern Pennsylvania. Mrs. Georgia Haepli wrote to the Rural Electrification Administration on behalf of the group. Meanwhile, C.H. Smith took over the promotional work, meeting with local folks to discuss how electrification was possible.

By February 1936, 13 separate groups had organized in Crawford and Erie counties.

They gathered on Feb. 13 to name the officers and directors of Steamburg Electric Cooperative, which was later renamed Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative (REC). Just three months later, on May 13, 1936, the new cooperative's first loan — and the first in the state — was approved. It totaled \$101,000.

The first pole belonging to the co-op — in fact, the first cooperative-set pole in Pennsylvania — was set in

Continued on page 16D



LOOKING BACK: The first lineworkers at Northwestern REC faced significant challenges. From setting that first pole in 1936 to overseeing 2,650 miles of line in 2026, your cooperative has come a long way thanks to the hard work of these community members who built the system.

Working Together to Lower Demand

AMBER TILL, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

WHEN OUTDOOR TEMPERATURES DROP, electricity use naturally rises. Colder weather drives us indoors, where we rely more heavily on home heating systems, lighting and household appliances. Heating systems run longer and more frequently to maintain comfortable indoor temperatures. Combine that with the fact that most people use electricity at the same times — typically in the mornings and early evenings — and the result is significant pressure on our electric grid.

Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) works closely with Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Allegheny), our local generation and transmission (G&T) cooperative, to plan for these seasonal weather patterns and changes to ensure you have reliable power every day of the year. This partnership involves detailed resource and infrastructure planning to ensure electricity is available whenever you need it. However, it's important to remember that our local system is part of a much larger regional and national electric grid.

During winter, when homes and businesses across the country are using more electricity simultaneously, overall demand can approach — and occasionally exceed — available supply. This is especially true during severe weather, such as ice storms and sudden temperature drops, or when equipment malfunctions and reduces generation capacity. In rare cases when demand threatens to outpace supply, the regional grid operator may call for temporary, controlled outages — often referred to as rolling blackouts — to prevent broader system failures. If such a situation arises, Northwestern REC will provide timely updates and information to members.

To prepare for these scenarios and minimize risks,

Northwestern REC and our G&T partner take proactive measures to strengthen reliability year-round. These actions include routine system maintenance, investments in grid modernization and comprehensive disaster response planning.

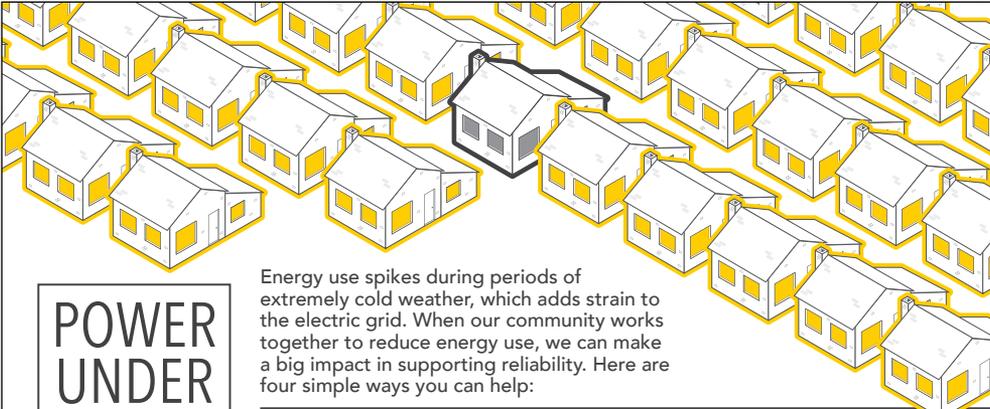
The Grid Resiliency Grant-funded project in Centerville and Oil Creek is just one example of the steps Northwestern REC is taking to improve reliability and modernize the grid. Your co-op also continually invests in right-of-way maintenance by trimming trees and removing other vegetation that can cause outages or damage the system. These proactive steps are designed to ensure our portion of the grid remains resilient even under extreme conditions. Yet, maintaining a reliable electric system requires a collective effort — and every member plays an important role in lowering demand when the grid is under stress.

You can help by taking simple actions during periods of high electricity use, especially on the coldest days of winter:

- 1. Lower your thermostat slightly.** Even reducing the temperature by a few degrees can help.
- 2. Delay using large appliances during peak hours, which typically occur when heating or cooling is taking place.** Run dishwashers, washing machines and dryers during off-peak hours, using timers to schedule when other appliances are not running, if possible.
- 3. Adjust your water heater.** Setting it to 120 degrees and spacing out showers helps conserve both energy and hot water.
- 4. Unplug unnecessary devices.** Power used for lighting and electronics adds up and accounts for a significant portion of home energy use. Disconnect unused items to reduce energy waste.

to reduce energy waste.

Understanding how winter weather impacts electricity demand is key to maintaining system reliability. By practicing simple energy conservation habits at home, you not only save money on your monthly bill, but you also help strengthen the resilience of the grid that powers our community. Together, through small actions and shared awareness, we can ensure that our homes remain warm, our lights stay on and our local grid continues to serve us reliably throughout the season. 🏠



POWER UNDER PRESSURE

Four Ways to Ease Grid Strain This Winter

Energy use spikes during periods of extremely cold weather, which adds strain to the electric grid. When our community works together to reduce energy use, we can make a big impact in supporting reliability. Here are four simple ways you can help:

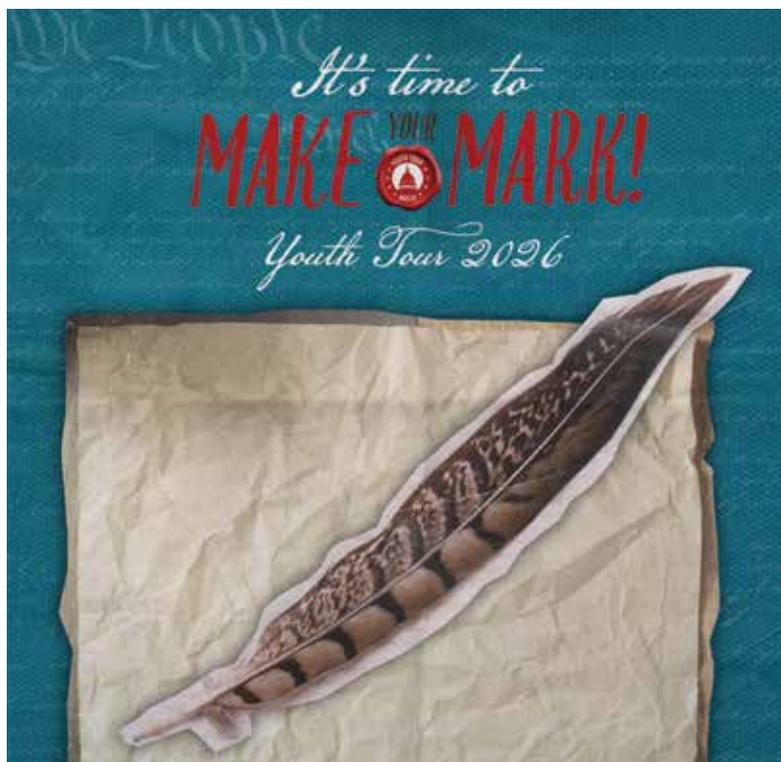
1. Lower your thermostat. Even a difference of a few degrees can help.
2. Delay using large appliances. Run them in the evenings or midday when demand is lower.
3. Lower your water heater to 120 degrees and avoid back-to-back showers.
4. Unplug unnecessary devices. Electronics and lighting add up. Unplug any unused items.

Local High School Juniors: Make Your Mark at Youth Tour 2026!

EMILY SONNTAG, COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING SPECIALIST

NEARLY 250 YEARS AGO, America's Founding Fathers signed the Declaration of Independence, setting in motion a legacy of leadership that has shaped our nation. Today, the Rural Electric Cooperative Youth Tour continues that story by equipping young leaders with the skills, confidence and cooperative values to lead the next generation. That's why the theme for Youth Tour 2026 is "Make Your Mark." It's a call to action for students to step forward, leave their imprint and carry on the cooperative legacy in their own communities. This exciting opportunity will be held from **June 15 to 20**.

Youth Tour is an unforgettable, all-inclusive once-in-a-lifetime trip to Washington, D.C. Each year, more than 1,800 students from all over the country gather to explore our nation's capital, discover monuments and museums, and connect with elected officials. Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) proudly sponsors between 10 and 12 local high school juniors for this ultimate youth leadership experience. We truly value education, both in understanding the cooperative's story and American history. Today's students are the vibrant members of our cooperative community of tomorrow, and we are thrilled to support these future leaders on their adventure.



What to expect

Throughout the week, students will dive into the exciting world of the cooperative business model and explore energy-related issues, all while building vital leadership skills. They'll have the chance to engage with elected officials, discover inspiring museums, visit iconic monuments and forge friendships that will last a lifetime. Since the 1960s, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and Northwestern REC have proudly sponsored the Youth Tour Program, empowering countless local students to shine in Washington, D.C.



Cooperation is our purpose

At Northwestern REC, we're dedicated to empowering our members and cultivating tomorrow's leaders to enhance the quality of life in our communities. We embrace a spirit of collaboration through the exciting Rural Electric Youth Tour, inspiring the next generation to shine!

History is our guide

From the Civil War to civil rights and the challenges we face today, Youth Tour follows in the footsteps of great leaders, exploring our nation's future through the lens of its history.

What are the benefits of Youth Tour?

- ▶ Tour the U.S. Capitol
- ▶ Participate at no cost to your family
- ▶ Become eligible for scholarship opportunities
- ▶ Meet students from around the country
- ▶ Make lifelong friendships and memories
- ▶ Gain interviewing experience

For more information about Youth Tour or to apply, visit youthtour.northwesternrec.com. Applications are being accepted online and must be submitted by **Feb. 11**.

Celebrating 90 Years of Cooperation

Sign up to receive email and text notifications about upcoming events:



bit.ly/nrecevents



COFFEE & CONVERSATION 2026 DATES:

JAN. 20: RUTH'S RESTAURANT,
1005 MAIN ST., CONNEAUTVILLE
RSVP BY JAN. 12

FEB. 25: AUNT BEE'S
17408 SMOCK DR., COCHRANTON
RSVP BY FEB. 17

MARCH 18: MANDY'S DUTCH TREAT
339 MAIN ST., SPARTANSBURG
RSVP BY MARCH 10

APRIL 22: ENLISTED COFFEE
207 HIGH ST., WATERFORD
RSVP BY APRIL 14

MAY 28: PARKSIDE RESTAURANT
118 N. FRANKLIN ST., COCHRANTON
RSVP BY MAY 20

JUNE 24: VACAVI CAFE
100 WATER ST., CONNEAUT LAKE
RSVP BY JUNE 16

JULY 22: BEAN & BEAR CAFE
222 W. PLUM ST. #500, EDINBORO
RSVP BY JULY 14

AUG. 19: COUNTRYSIDE GRILLE
10 S. MAIN ST., UNION CITY
RSVP BY AUG. 11

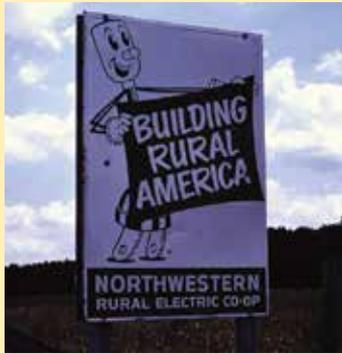
SEPT. 17: FACTORY RESTAURANT
201 MAIN ST., SAEGERTOWN
RSVP BY SEPT. 9

DATES ARE STILL BEING ADDED

MORE INFO:
[BIT.LY/NRECEVENTS](https://bit.ly/nrecevents)
OR SCAN



RSVP: 814-398-5364



DIFFERENT BUT THE SAME: Northwestern REC has had many different looks in 90 years, including this vintage sign featuring NRECA mascot Willie Wiredhand.

FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Continued from page 16A

Woodcock, in the area that has since been flooded to make Woodcock Lake. It was dedicated in a ceremony held Aug. 5, 1936, with 91 directors of the smaller units making up the cooperative among the 3,000 attendees.

“Here in Crawford County, you have a great opportunity to provide a signal service for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania,” Cooke said during his remarks. “Your project presents a challenge, and if you rise to that

challenge and make an outstanding success of this project, you will have provided an inspiring example to the farmers elsewhere in our Commonwealth. The torch of progress is yours to carry forward.”

This year, Northwestern REC marks 90 years of cooperative success, carrying forward that torch of progress from 1936. Each member of the cooperative has a part in that success and progress today, just as each member was essential to the project’s start in 1936.

Celebrations are planned throughout the year, and members are invited to take part in commemorating this landmark anniversary. Keep an eye on this and future issues of *Penn Lines* to learn more about the history of our cooperative — built by members like you — and to learn more about upcoming member appreciation and community engagement events. 📍

Cooperatively yours,
RYAN MELLER
PRESIDENT & CEO

Stay Safe on Winter Roads



Winter months can bring snow, ice and windy conditions, creating hazards for drivers. It is important to be prepared in case there is an accident.



Safe
Electricity.org®

Before a winter storm

Perform seasonal maintenance on your car to ensure:

- Batteries are charged.
- Tires have sufficient tread.
- Spare tire is inflated.
- Jumper cables are in good condition.
- A winterized car emergency kit.
- Windshield wipers work.
- Headlights, brake lights and turn signals work.
- At least a half-full tank of gas.

Prevent frostbite and hypothermia

If you are stranded in your car after an accident, observe the following precautions:

- Do not stay in one position for too long.
- Stay awake.
- Do not overexert yourself to avoid strain on your heart.
- Watch for signs such as a change in skin color, numbness, shivering, slurred speech, loss of coordination or confusion.

Winter storms and power lines

Always treat sagging and downed power lines as energized and dangerous. Keep at least 50 feet away from the area.

- If your vehicle hits a power pole, stay inside.
- Contact 9-1-1 and wait for the power to be shut off by utility workers.
- If your vehicle is on fire, jump clear with feet together, avoiding contact with both the vehicle and ground simultaneously.
- Shuffle or "bunny hop" away from the vehicle, keeping feet together to prevent different electric currents through your body.
- Never drive over a downed power line, which can cause additional hazards.



(Surge) Protect Your Electronic Devices

JAMES DULLEY

DEAR JIM: Some of my electronic devices seem to burn out prematurely and not always during a thunderstorm. Would installing a whole-house surge suppressor increase their lifespan? —*Randy T.*

DEAR RANDY: The highest-voltage electrical surge your house wiring will ever experience is from a direct lightning strike, but that is a rare event. Smaller surges cause most of the damage to electrical items.

People often think of computers, televisions, etc., as most susceptible to damage from a voltage surge, but many more items in a typical house

are also at risk. Almost every modern electric appliance — clothes washer, dishwasher, range, even my electric blanket — is full of components that high-voltage electric surges may damage.

While a direct lightning strike can bypass most defenses, a whole-house suppressor can protect your electronic items from the majority of surges, which are often created when an electric motor switches off. These inductive-induced surges may come from a commercial business nearby or even from your own refrigerator or vacuum cleaner motor switching off. They slowly degrade the wire insulation or electronic components until they fail.

There are many types of whole-house surge suppressors available with residential wiring that can absorb the surge and leak it off to ground. They are wired directly into the electrical system and automatically detect and dissipate a surge before it reaches a high enough level for damage. The best ones react to a voltage surge in less than 1 nanosecond. Some surge suppressors include a \$10,000 to \$250,000 warranty to cover any electronic equipment damaged by a surge that gets through.

One very effective type of surge suppressor mounts under the electric meter. Designed to handle large surges, this type must be installed professionally and is often sold or leased by the utility company because the electric meter is removed during installation.

Another type, which I use in my house, mounts under the circuit breaker box. This connects to the house wiring and will protect one entire circuit. A whole-house surge suppressor that fits in a standard breaker panel is also available for simpler installation (but you should

still have it professionally installed).

Various surge suppressors provide different levels of protection. Most use the same technology of metal oxide varistors (MOV) to absorb a voltage surge and rapidly dissipate it. A physically larger MOV can handle a larger surge without burning out. If the MOV gets fried, it just becomes ineffective and will not affect your electric power. It must be replaced to provide protection.

A key performance specification to consider when selecting a whole-house surge suppressor is the maximum surge current energy dissipation in joules. A joules rating above 1,000 should be adequate and provide a long life for a residence. A surge above this will burn out the MOV.

Clamping or let-through voltage is the voltage level where the surge suppressor begins to block and dissipate the surge. The UL-rating levels range from 330 volts to 600 volts. A lower clamping voltage should provide better surge protection.

Surge protectors often include an LED indicator if a surge has burned out the MOV, and some also include an audible alarm. Even though the unit looks the same and the electricity still flows, there is no surge protection when the MOV is damaged.

The most effective way to protect your electrical equipment is to unplug everything during a thunderstorm. A strong voltage surge can jump across an open switch, so don't just switch things off. For sensitive or expensive electronic equipment, use separate point-of-use surge suppressors for each one. 📧

HAVE A QUESTION FOR JIM? Send inquiries to James Dulley, Penn Lines, 6906 Royalgreen Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45244 or visit dulley.com.



SURGE PROTECTION: This whole-house surge suppressor is mounted beneath the circuit breaker panel in Jim Dulley's house.

JAMES DULLEY

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Policy Form #SRTCV/SRTCVR13 or R17 or #SRTCV90MA in MA

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- Give your children a financial head start right now. Your policy builds CASH VALUE for your family's needs.

Policy Form #GWL2001 or GWLA001

(Offer may vary, \$100,000 coverage not available in all states.)
CHOOSE \$5,000, \$10,000, \$20,000, \$30,000 OR UP TO \$100,000 COVERAGE

Snowmen, Ball Caps and a Spoonful of Sand

MITCHELL KYD

GUILTY PLEASURES, LITTLE DELIGHTS OR MISSIONS accomplished? Whether it's coins, comics, Zippos, bone China tea cups or fridge magnets from all 50 states, most of us have a confession: We've been bitten by the collector bug. A 2022 survey by MagnifyMoney.com reported 61% of Americans admit to collecting something. To an outsider, your themed knickknacks are dust collectors, but they're treasures to you. That peek inside our personal space tells quiet stories about us that may be tough to articulate.

My mom collected matchbooks as a kid; peculiar, considering no one in her family ever smoked, including her. I'm not sure when or how they all disappeared, but they were from the 1930s and '40s, and now I wish I knew. Sometimes the thrilling difference between your box of junk and your cache of valuable ephemera comes down to how long you've had it stashed.

Sociologists tell us that collecting is deeply rooted in human evolution, stemming from the days when we had to search, gather and store to survive. In these more abundant times, psychologists have determined we like the sense of control, comfort

and accomplishment collecting gives us. It also gives us social connection and, depending on the research and documentation we invest, stimulates our intellect.

I'm not sure if my intellect was poked when I was collecting antique egg scales, but it was certainly satisfying and definitely fun. It started after we moved onto a property that had once been a thriving chicken hatchery. I never bought scales at antique stores; instead, I scoured the auction ads. It was the thrill of the hunt, baby! Nothing kept me from my mission if there was an egg-scale brand, color or style I didn't have. Each purchase declared my victory in a buy-or-cry bidding war, and I displayed them all as trophies. Overhead shelves bordering my kitchen became a chicken-themed museum until we repainted. When the shelves came down, the scales were exiled to boxes. They're still there.

"Nobody Wants Your Stuff" is a milder, edited version

of a popular book titled, "A Guide to Decluttering." It has great advice, particularly for parents, reminding us our kids would prefer we clear out our crap in advance and not make them inherit it. Chances are good that if we don't handle it, our snowman collection or rack of NFL ballcaps will end up at Goodwill. But does it matter? We got our endorphin bump in gathering and displaying our treasures and made new stories along the way. That's really what it's all about.

These days, thrift stores are overflowing with abandoned collections, even though that survey also noted 83% of collectors think their items will eventually have value.

When I turn a store corner and come face to face with a shelf full of clown statues, I'll admit it gives me the creeps, but I can appreciate they provided happiness to someone else.

Excavating odd treasures in thrift stores is one of my daughter's superpowers. She investigates packaged assortments most overlook and sees their value. A zippered baggie filled with plastic pill bottles and film canisters was a recent reward — 18 pieces total. Each container had a

label, all with different handwriting, and held a distinctive spoonful of sand. The labels noted where the sand had been gathered and locations included Reykjavik, Iceland; Daraudi River, Nepal; and the Galapagos. She has since transferred each to a beautiful glass bottle and has them displayed with the other nature-made miracles she collects.

The story gatherer in me would love to know something about the person who kept them. A world traveler? A professor who inspired students? An armchair traveler who never left home but had a grand network of friends? Whoever it was, I hope they'd be happy to know their collection lives on. It has a place of honor in its new home and inspired this story. 📖

YVONNE BUTTS-MITCHELL celebrates the joys and poignant moments of rural living under the pen name Mitchell Kyd. Her stories from the Path Valley Hotel were hatched by encounters with contractors, critters and creepy crawlies while rehabbing the family cabin after its 17-year stint as a giant closet.



The Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association (PREA) Scholarship
Trust Fund proudly presents the

WILLIAM F. MATSON MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

for the 2026-27 academic year.

ATTENTION HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS:

The Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association Scholarship Trust Fund in Memory of William F. Matson is offering scholarships to high school seniors whose parents or guardians are members or employees of the Pennsylvania and New Jersey electric cooperatives. Scan the QR code below for more information about the scholarship and the application.

REQUIREMENTS & DATES TO REMEMBER:

Applicants are required to furnish necessary aptitude test scores, transcripts (high school or unofficial college, if applicable) and financial aid information. All applications and required documentation must be emailed to Steph Okuniewski (email address below) no later than **May 4, 2026**. Finalists will be sent a follow-up questionnaire that must be returned by **June 8, 2026**. Scholarship recipients, notified in July 2026, will be featured in the October 2026 *Penn Lines* issue.

QUESTIONS:

Steph Okuniewski, *Member Engagement Specialist*
Stephanie_Okuniewski@prea.com
717.982.1455



WHERE ARE WE NOW?

A Look Back and a Look Forward at 60 Years of Penn Lines

JILL ERCOLINO
Editor, Penn Lines

WHEN PENN LINES DEBUTED in October 1966, rural Pennsylvania was already electrified, but the cooperative story was still being written — much like it is today. And as rural electric cooperatives have evolved, so has their monthly magazine.

Some things, however, really haven't changed at all. In fact, that very first issue, despite its age, has set the tone for every Penn Lines since.

“The point was never to talk *at* cooperative members — it was to talk *to* them,” says Steve Brame, president & CEO of the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association (PREA) and Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Allegheny). “Since the beginning, we've been focused on giving consumers the information they need to understand what's happening with their power and why.”

And it's that simple, no-frills mission that has carried Penn Lines forward for six decades.

Building trust

The design of the first Penn Lines echoed its straightforward messaging. More like a newsletter than a magazine, it leaned into its practicality.

Inside were congratulatory messages from leaders who understood the promise of rural electrification, including Gov. William Scranton; Dr. Leland H. Bull of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA); Clyde Ellis, general manager of the Rural Electrification Administration; and PREA President Charles Packard of Valley Rural Electric Cooperative (REC).

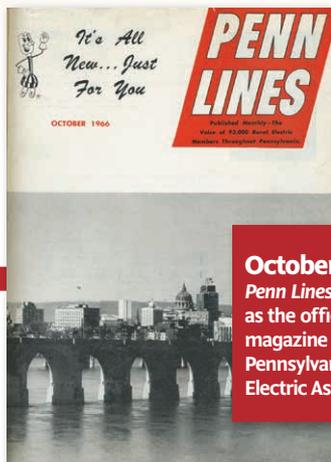
Their remarks underscored a shared belief that strong electric cooperatives depend on informed members.

“That understanding has never gone away,” Brame says. “Communication is not a side function for cooperatives — it's central to how the model works. Penn Lines became one of the ways that trust was built and sustained.”

Beyond those messages, the magazine grounded its mission in everyday cooperative life. One early photograph showed Somerset REC Manager D.W. Smith presenting a Willie Wiredhand doll to the county fair queen — a small moment that captured the magazine's larger intent of reflecting the communities that cooperatives serve.

Early issues devoted significant space to local cooperative news, while also explaining broader issues like energy use, rates and costs, and political action. Lifestyle content also graced the pages. In November 1966, Penn Lines introduced a recipe column, “Woman to Woman.” Today, it's called “Cooperative Kitchen” and remains one of the magazine's most popular features.

Coverage of youth and education followed soon after. In 1967, Penn Lines began covering the Rural Electric Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., by spotlighting local cooperative students on the steps of the U.S. Capitol and reinforcing the cooperative commitment to their leadership development. Photos of scholarship recipients began appearing, too, another tradition that continues today.



October 1966
Penn Lines debuts as the official magazine of the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association.

November 1966

The magazine introduces its first recipe column, “Woman to Woman” — now “Cooperative Kitchen,” one of Penn Lines' most popular features.

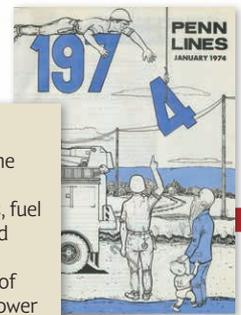


July 1967

Penn Lines starts covering the Rural Electric Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., an event that highlights cooperatives' investments in youth education and leadership.

1970s

The magazine tracks rising energy costs, fuel concerns and the growing importance of long-term power planning for cooperatives.



Politics and power

By the late 1960s, *Penn Lines* was also documenting the political realities facing electric cooperatives.

In April 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson — himself a former electric cooperative director — appeared on the magazine's cover in a photo taken at the NRECA Annual Meeting in Dallas, Texas. Coverage focused on issues like territorial integrity and access to power.

That same year, *Penn Lines* published a special edition responding to private power company encroachment into cooperative territories and encouraging support for the Electric Consumer Protection Act.

"*Penn Lines* has always had a steady voice," Brame says. "It doesn't chase headlines. It explains what's happening, why it matters to cooperative members, and how it connects back to their communities."

As cooperatives strengthened their collective infrastructure, *Penn Lines* followed those developments, too.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the magazine tracked escalating energy costs, federal funding debates and the pursuit of long-term, reliable generation. It reported extensively on the development of the Susquehanna Steam Electric Station, from the early planning to the construction and commercial operation of the Luzerne County nuclear plant. This project was pivotal, marking the first time Pennsylvania and New Jersey cooperatives owned a share of their power supply.

Penn Lines also chronicled Allegheny's decades-long exploration of small hydroelectric projects, culminating in the construction of the plant at Raystown Dam, which came on-line in 1988. Another cooperative-owned power source, Raystown, like Susquehanna, continues to provide clean energy today.

On the load-management front, articles explained how coordinated systems shifted electric use away from peak hours, an initiative that brought cooperatives and consumers together to manage costs and maintain reliability.

"Our job has always been to connect the dots," says Pete Fitzgerald, PREA/Allegheny vice president — public affairs

& member services and executive editor of *Penn Lines*. "We explain what's being built or changed, but more importantly, we explain why it matters to a member and their cooperative."

The heart of the magazine

One reason *Penn Lines* has endured, Fitzgerald says, is that it has never been produced in isolation.

"Every issue begins with listening," he says. "Local cooperatives tell us what their members are asking about, what's changing on the ground and what stories need to be told. The magazine is built from that collaboration."

And as rural Pennsylvania evolved, *Penn Lines* has widened its lens, too — adding more photography, longer features and stories about travel, food, outdoor recreation and local history — while keeping cooperative education at its core.

"Local cooperatives have always been co-creators of the magazine; we call them the heart of the publication because their stories take center stage — right in the middle of the magazine," Fitzgerald adds. "That's intentional and that's how we make sure *Penn Lines* stays relevant month after month, community by community."

By the time *Penn Lines* marked its 50th anniversary in 2016, it had become a constant in cooperative households. That loyalty has only deepened. A 2025 readership study found that four out of five respondents are regular readers, with nearly three-quarters reading every issue.

"Longevity alone doesn't explain that kind of loyalty," Fitzgerald says. "What explains it is credibility. *Penn Lines* has stayed focused on facts and local impact — even when the topics were complicated or uncomfortable."

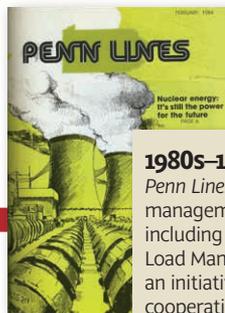
Staying grounded

As *Penn Lines* celebrates its 60th anniversary, the energy environment is more complex than at any point in the magazine's history.

"The stakes are higher now," Brame says. "That makes the magazine's role even more important. Members need a source they can rely on — not for spin, but for clear, grounded information." 🗣️

1980s

Penn Lines features extensive coverage of cooperative power-supply milestones, including the development of the Susquehanna Steam Electric Station, a nuclear power plant in Luzerne County, and the hydroelectric plant at Raystown Dam. Together, these plants continue to provide most of the power distributed to Pennsylvania and New Jersey cooperatives.



1980s–1990s

Penn Lines reports on load-management innovations, including the Coordinated Load Management System, an initiative that brings cooperatives and members together to control costs and maintain reliability.



2000s

Penn Lines goes through a series of redesigns, including one to mark its 50th anniversary in 2016. The most recent redesign was introduced in 2022.

2026

Penn Lines marks 60 years of publication, continuing its mission to inform, explain and connect consumers with their co-ops and communities.

Follow the Mediterranean Way

ANNE M. KIRCHNER

PHOTOS BY ANNE M. KIRCHNER



MUSHROOMS WITH GARLIC

- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- ½ cup pine nuts
- 1 pound cremini mushrooms, quartered
- ¼ cup white wine or vegetable broth
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped

In a large skillet, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat. Add the garlic and pine nuts and cook for 3 to 4 minutes or until both ingredients begin to brown. Add the mushrooms and white wine or vegetable broth. Cook until the liquid evaporates. Add the lemon juice, salt and pepper. Stir in the parsley and serve. *Makes 5 to 6 servings.*



POMEGRANATE LENTIL SALAD

- 1 cup brown lentils
- 3 cups water
- 1 pomegranate
- 1 English cucumber, diced
- 3 green onions, chopped
- 3 tablespoons orange juice
- 6 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon honey
- ½ teaspoon cardamom
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ½ cup feta cheese
- Baby spinach, optional

In a saucepan, bring the lentils and water to a boil. Reduce the heat to simmer and cook for 30 to 45 minutes or until the lentils are soft. Drain any excess water; set aside to cool. Remove the seeds from the pomegranate and place in a serving bowl with the cooled lentils, cucumber, and green onions. In a small bowl, whisk together the orange juice, olive oil, honey, cardamom, salt and pepper. Pour the dressing over the salad ingredients and stir to combine. Top the salad with feta cheese. If desired, serve the salad on a bed of baby spinach. *Makes 6 to 8 servings.*



PISTACHIO CRUSTED FISH

- 4 (6-ounces each) frozen cod fillets, thawed
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon dill weed
- 2 eggs
- 2 tablespoons water
- 1 cup pistachios, crushed
- ½ cup panko breadcrumbs
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Season each piece of cod with salt and dill weed. In a shallow bowl, beat the eggs with the water. In a second shallow bowl, combine the pistachios and panko breadcrumbs. Dip one cod fillet in the beaten eggs, making sure to coat the entire fillet. Then dip the cod in the pistachio mixture, again coating the entire piece of fish. Repeat with all fillets and arrange on a baking sheet. Drizzle the fillets with olive oil and lemon juice. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes or until the crust is golden and the fillets flake easily with a fork. *Makes 4 servings.*

The Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association (PREA)
Scholarship Trust Fund proudly presents the



JODY LOUDENSLAGER SCHOLARSHIP

for the 2026-27 academic year.

ATTENTION FORMER YOUTH TOUR STUDENTS:

The **JODY LOUDENSLAGER SCHOLARSHIP** is available to any college-bound or current college student who was selected to participate in the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association Youth Tour program. Scan the QR code below for more information about the scholarship and the application.

REQUIREMENTS & DATES TO REMEMBER:

Applicants are required to furnish necessary aptitude test scores, transcripts (high school or unofficial college, if applicable) and financial aid information. All applications and required documentation must be emailed to Steph Okuniewski (email address below) no later than **May 4, 2026**. Finalists will be sent a follow-up questionnaire that must be returned by **June 8, 2026**. Scholarship recipients, notified in July 2026, will be featured in the October 2026 *Penn Lines* issue.

QUESTIONS:

Steph Okuniewski
Member Engagement Specialist
Stephanie_Okuniewski@prea.com
717.982.1455



Date Night, Pennsylvania Style

STEVE PIATT

“DATE NIGHT” can take on many forms, especially after 38 years of marriage. It doesn’t have to mean a candlelight dinner in a romantic setting; these days, the candlelight is often replaced by a campfire and a steak, in the company of a pair of Labrador retrievers while camping at a state park.

Sure, there are weekends when we break away — just the two of us, without the dogs nuzzling us for their 5:30 a.m. feeding. But at this stage of our lives, I can push the envelope a bit without worrying about having a clean pickup truck or planning a pricey evening out on the town.

Thankfully, Paula is on the same wavelength. Our date nights can be as simple as a high school football game on a Friday night. We’ll enjoy a pre-game pizza or even dinner at the concession stand, especially if we’re at my alma mater in Athens, Pa., where pierogi are on the menu.

But first, there’s the “drive around the hill.”

It’s a routine that actually begins in late summer, before high school football season. During this simple, 6-mile round trip, Paula and I take a census of the local deer population, including our hunting spots.

We jokingly refer to it as our “There Are No Deer in Pennsylvania Tour,” a reference to hunters convinced the herd is depleted, thanks to alleged mismanagement by the state. That’s just not the case in our slice of Bradford County.

Depending on weather conditions



STEVE PIATT

DEER DATE: When the sun sets, some couples may opt for a bottle of wine and some candles, but for the Piatts, a pair of shared binoculars and a field of deer make for a more fun date night.

and the timing of our departure, our counts range from 50 to more than 100. Our record is 142, even when we dutifully avoid counting the same whitetails twice while making our loop. Depart the house too early, and the whitetails have yet to ease their way into the fields in great numbers. Too late, and darkness settles in before we can scan some of our most productive spots.

Most of the whitetails are does and fawns, but bucks sometimes make an appearance, and they get a closer look through our binoculars — a very close look if they’re near our hunting spots.

As the season approaches, our leisurely tour of the hill takes on a more serious tone. Sure, in many spots we’re watching whitetails we have no intention of hunting. But we know, too, that a roaming buck during the peak of the rut could easily stroll into our parcels and pass one of our tree stands.

It’s not your typical date night conversation.

“Four. Wait, six. Seven. All does.”

“That one’s a buck. Ooh, it’s an ‘11 point.’ ”

“We counted those already.”

“You gotta clean these windows; Molly’s nose prints are all over them.”

“I can’t see. Roll down the back window.”

“There’s a shooter. Looks like a six, but maybe an eight.”

We’ve labeled several sections of the drive with names known only to us: The Curves, The Well Pad, The Coyote Field and Kitty Alley, where we often see as many cats as whitetails.

It was our Lab Finn’s favorite part of the route.

Not all the whitetails are glassed as they casually graze in the fields. Invariably, there’s a close call, sometimes two, as they dart across the road and flirt with our pickup. It’s a byproduct of living in the Keystone State; everyone has their own deer-vehicle story or two.

On evenings when Paula is busy, our supercharged black Lab Molly is always happy to fill in; hence, the smudged windows.

On this night, though, Molly is back at home, and it’s almost time for the opening kickoff. And I need to hit the concession stand before the pierogi are gone.

I’ll clean the truck windows tomorrow. 🍷

STEVE PIATT is a veteran newspaper editor and outdoor writer who along with his wife, Paula, has hunted and fished across North America. He is most at home on the water and in the fields of the Keystone State. He lives in Bradford County.

Some Dead-End Humor

JOHN KASUN

IN MANY WAYS, the stages of life can be easily defined by specific things that occur. As we age, these stages become much more predictable. Because I will soon be as old as dirt, I find these life stages often have less and less personal appeal.

For example, several weeks ago, I received a phone call from a young lady with a very pleasant voice who wanted to make me aware of a special invitation. Years ago, a call of this type might have led to the meeting of exciting new friends and a night of boundless celebration. However, this invitation was to schedule my colonoscopy. As a child, my mother was very strict about regular visits to the dentist to check my teeth. Now, in my twilight years, I find that the medical community's main interest seemed to have switched ends.

Of all outpatient procedures, a colonoscopy is the one that seems to have the most extensive preparation procedure. Having a blood test is pretty simple, as all I have to do is fast for 12 hours and show up the next day. However, for a colonoscopy, I have to fast for 24 hours, which puts me right at my limit for eating carpet lint. As a matter of fact, I think with a little ketchup, carpet lint might have tasted pretty good. While the 24-hour fast is unappealing, it is doable. The other half of the preparation, meanwhile, is much less tasteful.

The preparation not only eliminates your intake of solid food — meaning you can't eat anything — but also demands the complete elimination of any food you have eaten within the last 12 months. This is done by taking a specific medication and drinking a clear, unappealing liquid in a short period of time.

Finally, my appointment time arrived, and I found myself at the doctor's office outfitted in a designer hospital

gown that always reminds me of wearing Superman's cape backward. This fashion garment gives an entirely new meaning to the word "butt-naked."

With the preparations behind me, I was greeted by several of the most pleasant nurses. Karen checked me in and answered all my questions, doing her best to put me at ease as she wheeled me into the procedure room.

As I lay there staring at the ceiling and the bright lights, which I swear were last used in a police interrogation room, two smiling faces belonging to nurses Mary and Sherry suddenly appeared overhead. Their constant friendly chatter almost made me forget my apprehension until Mary said, "We just love your columns. Are you going to write a story about this visit?"

Oh no, I thought. Here are two ladies I never met before and the only thing they will remember of me the next time they read my column is my cheeky smile. Suddenly, the apprehension that had gone away returned with a vengeance.

Soon, however, I was asleep. The next thing I knew, Karen was waking me up, offering me crackers and a drink. The procedure was over, and I felt great; nothing to it.

The report indicated no problems, meaning I wouldn't have to do another "prep" for several years. By that time, I am sure medicine will have advanced so far that the preparation method consists of eating ice cream sundaes and drinking vanilla milkshakes. That may not be true, but that is what I will believe until someone tells me otherwise. 🍷



JOHN KASUN, a lifelong Pennsylvanian with more than 30 years of writing experience, looks for the humor in everyday life and then tells a story from that perspective. He is a member of Huntingdon-based Valley Rural Electric Cooperative.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

ISSUE MONTH AD DEADLINE

March	January 14
April	February 13
May	March 16

Please note ads must be received by the due date to be included in requested issue month; ads received after the due date will run in next issue. Written notice of changes/cancellations must be received 30 days prior to issue month.

No ads accepted by phone/email. For more information, please call 717-233-5704.

CLASSIFIED AD SUBMISSION/RATES:

ELECTRIC CO-OP MEMBERS:

\$20 per month for 30 words or less, plus 50¢ for each additional word.

NON-MEMBERS:

\$70 per month for 30 words or less, plus \$1.50 for each additional word.

SPECIAL HEADINGS:

\$5 for co-op members, \$10 for non-members. The special heading fee applies to any heading not listed under "FREE HEADINGS," even if the heading is already appearing in *Penn Lines*. For ads running a special heading in consecutive months, the fee is a one-time fee of either \$5 (members) or \$10 (non-members) for all consecutive insertions.

PAYMENT:

Please make **CHECK/MONEY ORDER** payable to: **PREA/Penn Lines**. Insertion of classified ad serves as proof of publication; no proofs supplied.

SEND COMPLETED AD COPY AND PAYMENT TO:

Penn Lines Classifieds
P.O. Box 1266
Harrisburg, PA 17108-1266

PLEASE SUBMIT A CLEARLY WRITTEN OR TYPED SHEET WITH THE FOLLOWING REQUIRED INFORMATION:

- Cooperative members should please submit the mailing label from *Penn Lines* as proof of membership.
- Non-members should submit name, address, phone number, and email address, if applicable.
- Month(s) in which the ad is to run.
- Ad copy as it is to appear in the publication.
- Heading ad should appear under, or name of special heading (additional fee). See below for FREE heading options.

FREE HEADINGS:

- Around the House
- Business Opportunities
- Employment Opportunities
- Events
- Gifts & Collectibles
- Livestock & Pets
- Miscellaneous
- Motor Vehicles & Boats
- Nursery & Garden
- Real Estate
- Recipes & Food
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- Wanted to Buy

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SPECIAL OFFER – BOTH COOKBOOKS FOR \$12. "Country Cooking" – \$5, including postage. "Recipes Remembered" – \$7, including postage. Both cookbooks are a collection of recipes from electric co-op members of Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Payable to: Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association, P.O. Box 1266, Harrisburg, PA 17108. Write Attention: Cookbooks.

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AIR-DRIED 40+ YEARS. 5 ft. to 8 ft. long, 2 ft. wide, 2 in. thick. All live edge. Approximately 40 pieces. Have some beautiful crotch pieces. Fair prices. Rockton, Pa. Text 814-603-4561 for photos and information.

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ROLL-OFF DUMPSTER RENTAL SERVICE available in Adams, Cumberland, Franklin, and Fulton counties, Pa., and beyond. Contact us for pricing and scheduling. 717-860-6274 or heckconstruction33853@gmail.com. Heck Construction, based in Orrstown, PA 17244.

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SALE - 13-FT. OVERHEAD LINE SHAFT AND 1-IN. SHAFT. Six pulleys - large 28-inch to small, wood and steel, three hanging brackets. From 1860 mill. Barn kept dry. Sullivan County, Pa. \$275. 570-924-3745.

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CLEARFIELD COUNTY - 25 ACRES, 3,240-sq. ft. office building with living suite, two garages, sawmill, \$489,000. Near Cook Forest - two acres, \$59,000. Cambria County - 18.2 acres, field, gas well, \$99,000. Somerset County - 83 acres with marketable timber, \$359,000. Near Glendale Lake - Newly built cabin with utilities on 2.48 acres, \$238,000. Clearfield County - 502 acres, timber, streams, \$1,399,000. www.timberlandrealty.net. Ron Westover: 724-422-5525, 716-962-9935.

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STOP BEING A TIMESHARE VICTIM! TimeShareBeGone will get your timeshare legally cancelled. 100% money-back guarantee. A+ BBB rating, 17 years in business. Low payment plans. Call 800-214-4460, timesharebegone.com.

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ANTIQUE AND CLASSIC American and foreign cars, motorcycles, trucks, Broncos, Blazers and Scouts. Any condition. Will buy entire car collections. krmiller1965@yahoo.com. 717-577-8206.

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FARM SIGNS - ANYTYPE OF METAL (some are cardboard) advertising pieces, which include equipment dealers, tractors, machinery, fertilizer, seed, barn equipment, gas, oil, etc. Call 570-836-4199. Please leave a message.

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The thermostat is one of the best places to lower your energy use because heating and cooling account for a significant portion of home energy consumption. During winter months, adjust your thermostat to the lowest comfortable setting to reduce energy use. The Dept. of Energy recommends 68 degrees or lower.



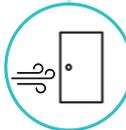
Utilize Off-Peak Energy Times

Plan energy-intensive chores and tasks, such as running the dishwasher or washing clothing, during off-peak energy hours, when the demand for electricity is lower. Off-peak times are early in the morning or late evenings. By scheduling these activities during off-peak periods, you can help keep rates lower, reduce demand and relieve pressure on the grid.



Seal Your Home

According to ENERGY STAR®, about 20% of heated or cooled air that moves through a home is lost due to lack of proper insulation and air leaks. Ensure your home has sufficient insulation levels and seal air leaks around windows and doors with caulk and weatherstripping. This is a simple, effective way to lower energy use and improve indoor comfort.



Maintain Equipment

The health of your heating and cooling system is essential for comfort and can greatly impact energy bills. Maintain your system by regularly replacing dirty filters and scheduling annual inspections for maintenance and necessary repairs.



Congratulations 2025 WINNERS

HUNDREDS OF PENN LINES READERS submitted photos for the 2025 Rural Reflections contest, and a panel of independent judges selected the year's winning entries. Each winner in the categories of most artistic, best landscape, best human subject, best animal subject and editor's choice will receive a \$75 prize.

Next month, *Penn Lines* will publish the judges' other favorite photos. These runners-up will receive \$25.

In March, we'll kick off the 2026 Rural Reflections Contest with something new: We'll be accepting digital images — those special ones you have on your phone or tablet — in the Rural Reflections Contest. We will accept up to five entries per person, per year. To submit entries for 2026, email your photos to photos@prea.com or send your snapshots (no professional photos, please) to *Penn Lines* Photos, P.O. Box 1266, Harrisburg, PA, 17108-1266. Include your name, address, daytime phone number and the name of the electric cooperative that serves your residence, business or seasonal home.

Remember, our publication deadlines require that we work ahead, so send your seasonal photos to us early. We need spring photos before mid-March, summer photos before mid-May, fall photos before mid-July and winter photos before mid-September. Please note: Starting in 2026, we will not be returning any physical photos that are sent to our offices. 📧

MOST ARTISTIC



CAROLYN BLEDSOE • ADAMS ELECTRIC

EDITOR'S CHOICE



LUKE FISHER • BEDFORD REC

BEST LANDSCAPE



JANET SADY • UNITED ELECTRIC



CTRIC

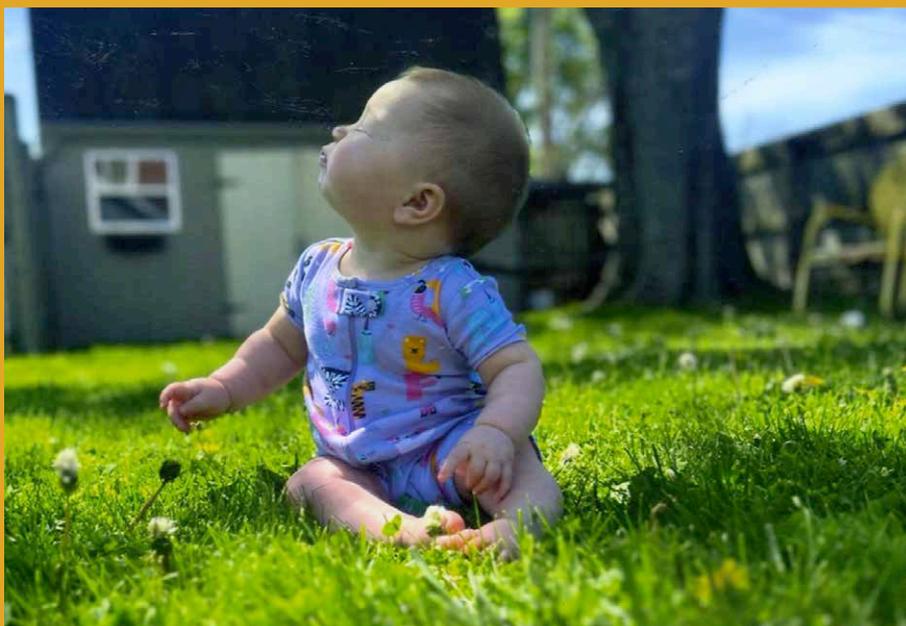
BEST ANIMAL SUBJECT



REBECCA MITCHELL • SOMERSET REC



BEST HUMAN SUBJECT



VERONIQUE STERN • VALLEY REC

ADDRESS CHANGES:

For change of address, please contact your local electric cooperative. For cooperative contact information, please visit www.prea.com/member-cooperatives



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