

# Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives  
serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

## Bedford REC

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John J. Dirienzo Jr.

### Office Hours

Monday through Friday  
7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

## From the General Manager



## This November, let your voice be heard

By Brooks Shoemaker

SINCE the 1960s, voter turnout during presidential elections has steadily declined — with the occasional uptick here and there. In 2012, almost 4 million eligible Pennsylvanians chose not to vote. In the 2016 primary election cycle, voter turnout in most states was less than 30 percent, and this was a record year for primary voter turnout. In Pennsylvania, a “record year” in the primary meant a 45 percent voter turnout. That’s a pretty poor record.

Maybe Americans are no longer as engaged in politics. Who can blame us? Maybe candidates do not speak about the issues we care about. Perhaps we don’t feel like we understand the candidates’ stances on the issues, or even the issues themselves. But we can change this.

We want to see civic engagement in our rural communities increase, by giving you the information to make informed decisions about the candidates. You need to understand the issues that impact our local communities.

We are participating in “Co-op Vote,” a nonpartisan campaign with one simple goal: increase voter turnout at the polls. Visit [vote.coop](http://vote.coop), and you can learn about your candidates and the issues impacting us locally. Let’s work together to improve our communities by increasing voter turnout and changing our country, one vote at a time.

## Busting myths about ‘smart meters’

A key component of the smart (computerized) grid is advanced metering infrastructure (AMI). AMI utilizes digital meters and computer technology to measure electric use more precisely than old analog meters. These advanced meters communicate via the power lines and have been loosely termed as “smart meters.” AMI benefits cooperative members with greater billing accuracy, faster outage restoration and operational savings. It provides detailed data you and your co-op can use to manage electric use much more accurately.

Unfortunately, a number of myths have developed concerning advanced meters. They include privacy concerns, security and health effects. Let’s take a look at each, starting with privacy.

We take great pains to keep your information private — including the details of your electric use. Only you and co-op employees see that data. We do not release this information to anyone without your permission. The myths are that we can tell when you are home, exactly what you are doing, and that this data is being given to the government. Naturally, the data will show when you are home because, for most of us, energy consumption is higher then. However, since we only read the meter once a day, that’s the extent of our information — that you

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# Veterans recall their service

By Linda Williams

AS WE remember all veterans this month, and especially on Veterans Day, there are two women — both residents of Spring House Homewood — who have unique stories to tell about their service to the United States.

## Kate Leach Shimer

The year was 1943 — the height of World War II — and Kate Leach Shimer was employed at the Everett Sewing Factory, but she didn't like to sew. A friend suggested they both join the service, and she quickly agreed. While she says her father didn't like the idea of his daughter going off to be in the military service, he gave her his blessings.

"After all," she says, "my great-grandfather was in the Civil War, a prisoner at Andersonville."

She has a letter of his requesting a \$14 monthly pension after the war.

With those kinds of genes, Kate enlisted in the Army Air Force on Oct. 27, 1943, in Chattanooga, Tenn. Basic training was not particularly difficult for her as she played basketball and softball and was able to skip a lot of the physical work.

"It was more of a school," she remembers.

She was assigned to the Mitchel Field Motor Pool, a part of the 8th Air Force, on Long Island, N.Y.

"It was our job to meet the injured arriving back in the states," she recalls. "Then, we transferred them according to their injuries."



Kate and Bob Shimer



Kate, who enjoyed serving her country, left the service on Dec. 1, 1945, as a corporal. One of her fondest memories is her first commanding officer, a former burlesque queen.

There were all kinds of people in the service," she recalls. "This lady was good and she was fair."

Pay was \$17 a month, but they were also provided room, board, clothing and entertainment. She says on every pay day, a group of the young women would hop a train for the city, where they would get a room for 25 cents and free meals, and have a lot of fun. Her favorite performances included "Porgy and Bess" and the Andrews Sisters.

One time when she was home

**SERVICE:** Kate Shimer remembers her military days. She donated her uniform to the Women's War Memorial in Virginia.

on leave and enjoying an evening at the Everett VFW, she ran into an old high school friend, Bob Shimer. He was part of the 107th Infantry, 27th Division, New York, stationed in the Pacific.

"He never talked much about his experiences," Kate says. "I think it was just too difficult. He saw too much. He saw young Japanese committing suicide by coming at them with sticks or just jumping off cliffs into the ocean."

One of the stories he did share was about a member of his unit, a Navajo scout. At night, he would steal softly from his bed and scout out the Japanese and return to tell them where to



IT'S OFFICIAL: Kate Shimer is holding the American flag at Mitchel Field in Long Island, N.Y.

look the next day.

Kate and Bob were married on April 13, 1947, and raised three sons, Craig, Lynn, and Richard. She has nine grandchildren. She is proud of each and every family member. Each one excels in their individual fields, including her grandson, Adam, a well-known orthopedic surgeon.

### Elaine Anastasiu Brauer

Elaine Anastasiu Brauer was a recent graduate of San Jose State University and working as a lab technician when she was followed by two Air Force recruiters as she walked to her car. They approached her to see if she was



Lieutenant Elaine Brauer

interested in joining the Air Force, offering her a commission.

"No one in my family had ever served in the military," she remembers. "I had no idea what they were talking about, but it sounded good."

Entering the Air Force as a lieutenant in 1959, Elaine went through basic training that included physical endurance tests. After training, she was sent to Lackland Air Force Base in Texas.

Her first few months were rough as she came down with scarlet fever and then learned a few days later her father had passed, which meant going home for the funeral.

She recalls she was in the last Air Force class to get direct commissions.

Her first assignment was Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma, where she was assigned as a supply officer. After two years, she asked for a transfer to the medical field so she could use her past experience.

Her request was granted, but it meant another stint in basic training. She then worked as a hospital registrar and administrator at the Selfridge Air Force hospital in Michigan, where she eventually met her husband, Larry.

"I was his boss," she remembers with a smile.

At that time, a woman could be in the service and be married, but she could not be pregnant. Elaine learned she was pregnant within a few months, which meant leaving active duty in 1966. She went back to school and got a second degree in medical work at Dominican College in Texas. Elaine comments about how times have changed as they now have maternity uniforms for women.

Over the next few years, she became the stepmother to her husband's five children by a former wife and had two more of her own. With eight children to raise, there was little time for a full-time career. After 20 years, Larry retired from the service and got a job at Sacred Heart Hospital in Cumberland, which brought the family to the East.

Larry died in 1986, and eventually Elaine, looking for a retirement home, found Spring House Homewood.

All veterans are honored at Spring House Homewood. 🌻



MEMORIES: Elaine Brauer holds a photo from her military days.

**From the General Manager**

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may, or may not, have been home that day. We cannot, nor do we care to, identify what activities are taking place or what specific appliance is being used. This myth is simply unfounded.

What about the myth that these meters compromise security by providing an avenue for hackers to break into systems? Hacking a meter is unlikely for a variety of reasons. Hackers like to work remotely via the internet, and our meters are only connected to our electric lines. The next generation of meters are radio frequency (RF) based. They require a hacker to be nearby to catch the weak communication signal, break the proprietary communication protocol and then wait to collect a short burst of data sent. This is unlikely and unprofitable.

Finally, there are the myths surrounding these meters and ill effects on health. These are only directed at the RF, the next-generation meter. They claim it is the equivalent of having a cell tower attached to your home. Again, this is unfounded. Why? They communicate intermittently, maybe five minutes a day. They are regulated and approved by the Federal Communications Commission. The radio waves emitted are similar to a cordless phone or wireless router — common household appliances.

We all benefit from the continued development of America's smart grid. You can relax knowing the rumors surrounding the various advanced metering alternatives are just that — rumors. ☀

**Bedford REC's office will be closed on Friday, Nov. 11, in observance of Veterans Day and Thursday, Nov. 24, and Friday, Nov. 25, for Thanksgiving**



**DONATIONS FOR LOCAL FOOD BANKS**

**Bedford Rural Electric directors and employees are asking the members to join in and make donation to area food banks. Those wishing to donate items should bring them to the Bedford Rural Electric office on Lincoln Highway before Dec. 22.**



**Items needed include: canned goods, paper products, soap and other hygiene-related items, food products such as noodles, cake mixes, spaghetti, or boxed foods of any kind. The items will be donated to local food banks throughout the county.**

**Your help and kindness will be appreciated during this holiday season.**

**Anyone making a donation will have their name entered for a \$25 gift certificate toward their electric bill.**

**TROUBLE CALL SCHEDULE**

**In case of trouble...**

- 1** Check your fuses or circuit breakers.
- 2** Check with your neighbors, if convenient, to see if they have been affected by the power failure.
- 3** Call the 24-hour number, 623-7568, OR call 800-808-2732\* during office hours.

*\*(Please help us save money — only use this number if toll charges apply.)*

Please give the person receiving the call your name as it appears on your bill, your telephone number and your map number if known. Any specific information about the outage will also be helpful in pinpointing the problem.

**Alternate numbers ...**

- Ed Hankinson ..... 733-4005 (Week of October 31)
- Scott Bischof ..... 839-4640 (Week of November 7)
- Adam Claycomb ..... 635-3376 (Week of November 14)
- Gary Lafferty ..... 842-9925 (Week of November 21)
- Troy Mock ..... 276-9759 (Week of November 28)

**In case you cannot reach any of the above, call:**

- Jim Wood ..... 623-6121 (Bedford)
- James Clark ..... 652-9791 (Everett)
- Mark Rowan ..... 623-7890 (Bedford)

*During widespread power outages, many members are calling to report power failures. You may receive a busy signal, or in certain cases your call may go unanswered. This occurs in after-hours outages when the office is not fully staffed. Please be patient, and try again in a few minutes.*