

Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

Bedford REC

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Office Hours

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

From the General Manager



The future of lighting is here!

By Brooks Shoemaker

HAVE you recently received a free gift in the mail compliments of Bedford Rural Electric? If not, very soon you'll receive a box containing four free, Energy Star-certified, 60-watt equivalent, light-emitting diode (LED) lightbulbs. That's right — the bulbs are free, and the best part is that they only consume 9 watts of energy!

The LED bulbs are part of an electric cooperative energy efficiency program underway across Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Lighting technology has advanced so rapidly that the installation of each of these LED bulbs is expected to save you \$6.22 per year or more than \$140 in electricity costs over the life of the bulb (estimated to be about 23 years at average use). Why? Because an LED bulb improves lighting efficiency by 80 percent over traditional incandescent bulbs.

Eighty percent is a lot — so much of a difference that we are asking you to take an unusual step. As soon as you receive your free LED bulbs, select four of your most-used incandescent bulbs and replace them immediately with the new bulbs. That small step will begin saving you, and in turn, the co-op, money immediately!

Most of us don't spend a lot of time thinking about our lightbulbs, at least until one leaves us in the dark. But you will begin saving money the minute you install your new LED bulbs, and what could be better than installing free

bulbs that shine brighter, last longer, and are less expensive to use than your current incandescent bulbs?

The benefits to the members of this lightbulb initiative are obvious, but you may wonder what benefit the cooperative gains from giving away lightbulbs to all members. The answer is that we purchase the electricity we provide to you — our members — from Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Allegheny), a Harrisburg-based cooperative owned by the 14 distribution cooperatives in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Allegheny owns the Raystown hydroelectric facility and 10 percent of a nuclear power plant in eastern Pennsylvania. Together with some long-term hydropower



contracts, these sources provide about two-thirds of the power needed by our cooperative members. The remainder is purchased from third parties on the open market, where the price is generally higher and can fluctuate significantly.

When cooperative members across the two states install the new LED bulbs, it will reduce the amount of power Allegheny must purchase from the open market, which in turn will ultimately decrease costs for local cooperatives. The savings will help keep our rates lower than normally would be possible.

The LED is one of the most energy-efficient lighting technologies available today. LED bulbs last longer, are more durable, and offer comparable or better light quality than other types

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Dick McConnell volunteers almost every day

By Linda Williams

DICK AND BARBARA McConnell of scenic 110 Indian River Road know what volunteering is all about. They do it almost every day.

A Kennametal Inc. retiree, Dick learned to play the guitar at the age of 12. He says he came from a “poor” family in the Johnstown area, but family members didn’t know they were poor at the time. The family was close and when an uncle stopped in one evening, he brought along a fiddle. It sparked an interest in Dick’s life that kept growing.

Dick did well in school, learning and developing skills in drafting, design and computer programming, eventually becoming a tooling engineer. Sought out and hired by Kennametal, he ended up in Bedford. He and his wife, Barbara, had a son with severe disabilities who was soothed by music and so Dick often played for him.

Eventually, the couple’s son went to live at a group facility, where he still enjoys music. Because of their experience in the soothing effects of music,



VOLUNTEERS: Dick and Barbara McConnell stand on the deck of their home overlooking picturesque Raystown. They are holding two recently rescued senior dachshunds.

Dick and Barbara decided to offer that benefit to others, so they began playing at nursing homes, senior centers, and wherever they are asked to perform.

A date calendar has nearly every block filled with an upcoming engagement. They play regularly at 14 venues in Bedford, Blair, Fulton and Cambria counties.

“In the summer, our schedule fills up with picnics and reunions,” Dick says. “But Christmas is the absolute busiest time of all.”

For all of this, they take not one penny.

“Copyright laws are just too complicated,” he explains. “It would not be worth the hassle and

besides, I just enjoy it.”

Dick has played with many local country bands as well as the Fishtown Community Band. Dick started by playing the guitar, but through the years, he picked up drums and the keyboard. But before the keyboard, it was the organ. St. John’s Church in Everett had a beautiful organ, but no organist so the church asked Dick to play the guitar. Eventually, the priest asked Dick if he thought he could learn the organ, so he taught himself.

“For at least a year, the congregation had to be content with singing four hymns,” he says with a laugh.

His performances at nursing homes and senior centers usually revolve around the keyboard.

“I have a huge collection of DVDs and tapes and volumes of music,” he says. “I don’t play by ear, but I need music in order to perform.”

However, if a resident in a home asks for a particular number, he wants to be able to provide it. Barbara goes along on most visits and keeps track of which home resident likes what music.

“We play Irish waltzes, German polkas, country western and hymns,” he says. “They enjoy all kinds of music, but especially the hymns. Even those with dementia know every word to every verse of a hymn.”

A lady at one facility is disappointed if there is a performance without “There is a Mansion;” another likes “Supertime.” Dick remembers one time he was playing that hymn and the nursing staff asked him to turn it down because a gentleman was near death. However, the dying man’s daughter made the opposite request because her father was enjoying the music. And, just as Dick played the last note, the gentleman passed. It was something Dick never forgot.

No matter where they are playing, the last number is always “The Old Rugged Cross.”

“When the nursing staff hears that,



BRINGING HAPPINESS: Dick McConnell entertains residents at Carol’s Rest Home in Bedford.

they know they can start taking people back to their rooms,” he explains.

Some of the facilities have only a few residents who come out for the performance, while others listen in their rooms.

“But if there is only one person who shows up, it is worthwhile to brighten their day,” Dick says.

Dick recalls a musician once telling him he sang a quarter-tone flat; however, residents persuaded him to sing, so he does.

“If I have the music to follow, I think I do OK,” he adds.

He uses a range of tones or instruments to accommodate the types of hearing limitations of his audiences.

Entrance and set-up are completed within 10 minutes and require a single 110 electrical outlet and a floor space of approximately 4 feet by 4 feet under a roof. Tear-down and exit are complete within 10 minutes.

Audience participation is always encouraged and pedestrian traffic is always expected.

Dick and Barbara’s volunteer efforts don’t stop with humans. They recently adopted two senior dachshunds from a rescue program. The pair is settling in, enjoying the love and accepting the lifestyle of these two very busy and extremely generous people. 🐾



MUSIC FOR ALL: Dick McConnell sings at the Courtyard in Bedford on a recent Saturday afternoon.

GENERATOR SAFETY TIPS



Never connect a standby generator into your home’s electrical system. There are only two safe ways to connect a standby generator to your equipment.

Stationary Generator:

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

Portable Generator:

Plug appliances directly into the outlet provided on the generator.

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

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

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

Source: SafeElectricity.org

From the General Manager

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of lighting. They have the potential to change the future of lighting.

If you haven't already received your gift of light from the cooperative, watch your mailbox and remember, your savings will begin the day you install your new LED lightbulbs.

Energy efficiency tip of the month

Smart home landscaping can lower your electric bills. Trees on the east and west sides of your home provide shade and reduce your cooling costs, during hot summer months. Shade for your air conditioner can save 10 percent of your cooling costs. Vegetation on the north side of your home can reduce winter winds that trigger higher heating costs.

Interesting tidbit

The default temperature setting on most hot water heaters is too high. Surprisingly, few homeowners change this setting, even when it produces tap water hot enough to burn your skin. Most times, cooler hot water temperature is sufficient. The default setting on most water heaters is 140 F, but lowering the temperature setting to 120 F is both safer and far more efficient. Plus, it can cut your hot water costs by 10 percent or more. ☀

OFFICE CLOSING

Bedford REC's office will be closed on Wednesday, July 4, 2018, in observance of Independence Day.

Be Prepared Before the Storm

Here are some basic items you should store in your home in case of emergency:

- **Water:** Three day supply, one gallon per person per day
- **Food:** Three day supply, non-perishable, high-energy
- **Clothing, bedding, and sanitation supplies**
- **Tools:** Can opener, plates, utensils, flashlight, batteries, cash, bleach, hand sanitizer
- **First aid supplies, medicine**
- **Important documents**



OUTAGE REPORTING

In case of an outage...

- 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.

**To report an outage call:
(814) 623-7568**

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.