

Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

Bedford REC

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Attorney

James R. Cascio

Office Hours

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

From the General Manager



We're thankful for our sister cooperatives

By Brooks Shoemaker

WHEN you think about Bedford Rural Electric, we hope you associate us with the local community. Our leadership team, board of directors, and employees all live and work right here in the community we serve. But you may not realize that we are part of a much larger cooperative network, one that encompasses every electric cooperative and every cooperative employee across the country. We call it “Cooperation among Cooperatives,” and it brings a tremendous amount of additional value, tools and knowledge to our cooperative as we work to overcome big challenges.

When a severe weather event is predicted for our region, we call on our sister co-ops in areas unaffected by the approaching storm. Through this system of mutual aid, we coordinate with other cooperatives to bring additional trucks, equipment and manpower to our area. Then, we all work together and share resources to restore power to our community. On many occasions, we have traveled up and down the east coast, and as far away as Louisiana, assisting other cooperatives when they need help rebuilding their system after a major event.

We also benefit from cooperation among cooperatives when we are battling cybersecurity hazards. Through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) “Rural Cooperative Cybersecurity Capabilities Program” (RC3), we access training, resources and tools to strengthen our efforts to combat cyber threats.

Our ability to tap into the larger electric cooperative network and

access tools, products, resources, and best practices from across the nation ultimately makes our co-op and our community stronger. It's one of the hallmarks of the cooperative program!

November is a time of year for reflection and giving thanks. I am grateful for our sister cooperatives who enable us to better serve you and our broader community. When electric co-ops collaborate, we strengthen each other and the communities we serve — and that is something in which to be truly thankful. Happy Thanksgiving, everyone.

A threat to co-ops' tax-exempt status

Due to an unintended consequence of current federal tax law, many electric co-ops are finding themselves in a precarious position. Federal or state government funding of any kind, including disaster relief aid, energy efficiency grants, economic development support and rural broadband development grants could jeopardize their not-for-profit tax status.

In order to maintain tax-exempt status, an electric cooperative must receive at least 85% of all revenue from its members, no more than 15% from non-members. However, an unintended consequence of a 2017 change to federal tax law resulted in grants and other contributions being considered non-member revenue. It could threaten a co-op's tax-exempt status, resulting in substantial tax consequences. This would have a profound impact on cooperatives, our members and rural America.

For example, West Florida Electric

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Rail cars provide enjoyment to Mattie couple

By Linda Williams

THERE are thousands of ways to spend your spare time having fun. You might read, watch television, hike, bike, boat, or join NARCOA and take a ride on your rail car.

That is exactly what Vic and Paula Booth of Mattie enjoy doing. NARCOA stands for North American Railcar Operators Association. A rail car, originally used for checking railroad tracks, was an accessory car retired in the 1980s. Then, someone got the idea they would be fun to simply enjoy.

Vic has always been a hobbyist. The Booths had their own vintage airplane, a Cessna 170, in which they visited 49 states and five Canadian provinces over a 20-year span. They also have a

1964 firetruck, two antique Jeeps and a 1947 Empire tractor.

The Booths found the land and home they were looking for after Vic's retirement from Hewlett Packard's aerospace division. Paula wasn't at all surprised when her husband spotted a rail car for sale in Oklahoma on the NARCOA website, made a phone call and agreed on a price. Soon, they were off to the Midwest, and they returned towing their purchase on its own small trailer.

In today's world, railroad tracks are inspected by computer automation. The rail cars replaced the gandy dancers (a slang term often used for early railroad workers). People who have purchased the old cars enjoy them on both rail-

roads no longer in use and monitored rails. They follow all of the safety rules and regulations of NARCOA.

If a railroad agrees to an excursion date, the participants must arrive and end exactly on time. At railroad crossings, motorists have the right of way, unlike with trains.

NARCOA is a non-profit group dedicated to the preservation and the safe, legal operation of railroad equipment historically used for maintenance. The members operate their own privately owned railroad motorcars on railroads throughout the United States and Can-

ARRIVED: A railroad sign in the yard of Vic and Paula Booth indicates you have arrived.





READY TO GO: Vic and Paula Booth are shown with their rail car. It's always an adventure with these two.

ada during railroad-sanctioned NARCOA excursions. The members travel through some of the most picturesque areas of the North American continent. The railroad excursion may vary from a one-day, 25-mile trip between two towns to multi-day, 1,000-mile trips covering several states or provinces.

The Booths have done as many as 12 trips a year.

"There are a lot of rules that have to be followed," Vic explains. "You even have to be there at an exact time and that can be as early as 5 in the morning."

There is a fee charged for each excursion. Each car must have \$10 million in insurance, and each driver must take an annual exam.

Vic uses a lawn mower engine in his car and has gotten it up to 40 miles

per hour.

"Each person provides his own motor, and 40 is about the max they travel," he explains. "There is a following distance rule of 1 ½ cars, but this could be too close. The rails do get slippery at times."

When the rails get slippery, a car might start to slide backward, which would require sand or other material to stop the movement. There is no steering involved as the car follows the track.

An excursion timetable is posted online including several local sites on the NARCOA website.

To add to the fun, many of the participants hold cookouts at or near the excursions.

"It is really fun to stay at a motel that allows us to just walk out and board our rail car," Paula says.

Paula, the sidekick adventurer, likes to quilt, collect, and wrote a blog



RAILCAR: Vic Booth shows off his rail car he purchased in Oklahoma.

on some of the off-road adventures the Booths took in one of their Jeeps. The blog can be found at <http://gowestwithvicandpaula.blogspot.com>. It contains many beautiful pictures and stories of the couple's lives before and after moving to Bedford County. 🌞

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.

From the General Manager

(continued from page 14a)

Cooperative Association received \$24 million from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to rebuild its system in the wake of Hurricane Michael in 2018. That is 40% of the co-op's annual revenue, obviously exceeding the 15% limit for non-member revenue. However, it is unfair to classify the FEMA reimbursement as revenue, since it was for expenses to restore service to its members after the Category 5 hurricane pounded the Florida panhandle. Cooperative members had already paid to construct the system once. Losing the co-op's tax-exempt status will result in 21% of the FEMA money — about \$5 million — being used to pay taxes. This puts an unfair burden on the cooperative's members and is definitely not what Congress intended. Undoubtedly, it will result in higher electric rates

Our national trade association, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, is encouraging Congress

to amend the tax code, and exempt government grants (as they always have been) from being defined as member revenue. It is a high priority for rural America.

Legislation called the RURAL Act has been introduced in both the U.S. House and the Senate. Fortunately, it has attracted a large group of bipartisan cosponsors. However, getting it enacted into law will be a struggle, given the political sensitivity of tax issues on Capitol Hill.

Congress must act now to correct this unintended consequence and protect the tax status of electric co-ops. In doing so, Congress preserves the full value of government grants that were designed to support our communities in need.

You can play an important role by encouraging Congress to support the RURAL Act and electric cooperatives across the country by going online to [action.coop\ruralact](http://action.coop/ruralact). Our legislators must know that this issue is important to YOU and Bedford Rural Electric. Our future electric rates depend on it. 🗣️

EMERGENCY POWER NEEDS

As a service to our members, Bedford Rural Electric needs to be aware of situations where special needs exist. Please provide the following details: (Please print clearly)

Account: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____

Cellphone: _____

Email Address: _____

Special Needs: **Medical**

Farming/Livestock

Other _____

Each year, our goal is to provide service with no outages. Unfortunately, that is not a realistic expectation. Outages do occur and during severe storms, service restoration may take several days or longer. Therefore, we strongly recommend our members with special needs install standby backup generation equipment. Please contact our office for more information on this type of equipment.

Residential Generators

WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE YOU BUY

<i>INSTALLATION TYPE</i>	<i>PRICE</i>	<i>OPERATION ¹</i>	<i>CAPACITY</i>	<i>LENGTH OF OPERATION ³</i>
<i>permanent</i>	<i>expensive</i>	<i>automatic</i>	<i>whole house</i>	<i>can be indefinite</i>
<i>portable</i>	<i>more affordable</i>	<i>manual</i>	<i>typically partial ²</i>	<i>depends on fuel tank size</i>



¹ Permanent generators start upon loss of grid power. They also exercise themselves automatically.

² Frequently powered: refrigerator, pumps (well, sump, septic), furnace, some lights, stove.

³ Permanent generators use propane or natural gas, portable use gasoline. Permanent models offer significantly longer operating times.

Image of portable generator provided by SafeElectricity.org

Members should contact Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative before purchasing a generator.