

Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives
serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

Bedford REC

P.O. Box 335
Bedford, PA 15522
814-623-5101

Email: support@bedfordrec.com

Website: www.bedfordrec.com

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Office Hours

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

From the General Manager



We love our community

By Brooks Shoemaker

WITH Valentine's Day approaching, I can't think of a better time to express how much we love this community and serving you, the members of the Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative.

Over 81 years ago, we all banded together and helped to bring electricity to rural Bedford County. It was a quality-of-life improvement that may never be matched. Through the years, other issues have needed to be addressed, and we have been at the forefront of helping to address some of those issues. We want to help meet the long-term needs of our community to ensure it continues to thrive — because just like you, we live here, too.

While our top priority is to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to you, equally important is our mission to enrich the lives of our members (that's you!). Our focus — to benefit the larger community — is central to the way we operate as a cooperative. We know electricity is a critical need for modern-day life, but it takes more than poles and power lines to make a community.

Over time, your co-op has evolved to meet the ever-changing needs of our community. In the process, everyone's quality of life has improved. That means many different things.

We like to focus on programs for our youth. We award scholarships for post-high school education. We provide tuition assistance for high school students so they can get a jump-start on college. We also participate in the National Rural Electric Cooperative Youth

Tour, where we take our community's brightest young people to Washington, D.C., for a weeklong trip to experience democracy in action.

Our community-focused programs have helped build playgrounds, purchase new fire and ambulance equipment, organize food drives, develop programs that help local needy families pay their electric bills, promote economic development initiatives, assist with maintenance and special projects for community and volunteer-dependent organizations, and so much more. And we couldn't do any of this without you, our members.

We all benefit from these programs because of you and your neighbors. You energize the cooperative through your membership and through your participation in and support of these programs. We are a traditional local business with old-fashioned values, and we are proud to power your life and enhance our community.

We want to hear from you

Here at the co-op, we are always listening, trying to understand what is important to our membership. We are always eager to hear from you. Whether you respond to a survey or social media post, send an email, or simply stop by and chat in person, we thrive on your feedback. Connecting with you helps us keep pace with our community's priorities and needs.

The energy landscape is undergoing dramatic change fueled by evolving

(continues on page 12d)

Cell-Con continues to grow in Bedford County

By Linda Williams

MORE than 30 years ago, Bedford County native Joel Cunard was working for Cell-Con, a company that makes battery packs. The main office was located in the eastern part of the state, and Cunard thought it would be good to have a manufacturing plant in Bedford County.

He convinced the powers that be, at that time Mike Mumma and Gene Kylie Sr., to do just that. A brick building on Route 220 South, originally used to launder linens for Bedford Springs Resort, was secured as the location.

Today, a leading U.S. manufacturer of custom and stocked battery packs and power systems, the company is a growing part of the portable device marketplace, and is constantly looking for new markets. They started with three employees; there are now 29 full-time and two part-time employees. Cell-Con headquarters is located in Exton, and Ray LeBlanc shares the leadership responsibility with two other partners. The plant works two shifts with someone there almost constantly from 4 a.m. until midnight.

Plant Manager Dixie Tew has been with the Bedford plant since shortly after it opened, and Kevin Harklerode,



plant engineer, was also on the ground floor of the Bedford operation.

LeBlanc says the plant manufactures approximately 500,000 battery packs

BOXING PACKS: Jeff Loshaw is boxing class 9 battery packs. He is outfitted and specially trained for this job.

annually for various industries such as robotics, medical equipment, lift trucks and flashlights.

“We continue to grow,” he says. “This past year, we added about eight people and hope to add that many next year.”

LeBlanc, who is very impressed with the Bedford area, says, “I had never been here until I was put in charge of this plant. I was so impressed with the beauty just getting here. Then, as I interviewed the employees, I discovered the average time each had spent employed here was 25 years. That is impressive. That means they are dedicated and good employees. Bedford is a great town, very inviting with little restaurants and shops. It’s the kind of place anyone would like to visit.”

Cell-Con in Bedford manufactures



CHECKING VOLTAGE: Linda Hott is a voltage checker on individual cells.



TESTING BATTERIES: Alice Jaber is testing battery packs.



GLUING AND WELDING: Pam Mest glues and welds cells to make a battery pack.



SOLDERING PARTS; Tammy Miller is soldering PC boards.



AT HOME IN BEDFORD COUNTY; Cell-Con is located along Route 220 South in Bedford Valley.

custom battery packs and chargers, UL-approved battery chargers (in stock) power supplies, AC/DC converters and additional value-added services. Cell-Con was incorporated in 1983 and has served as a world-class supplier to original equipment manufacturers in the medical (ISO 13485 2003) industrial, military (ITAR registered), transportation, instrumentation, utility/metering, radio frequency identification, robotic, and data acquisition markets. Cell-Con prides itself on superior customer care.

“Every battery is inspected and tried before being shipped out,” Tew reports.

She also is proud of the the quality of the workers at the plant, most of whom they hire without experience in the field and then train from the ground up.

“Once in a while, we have a mismatch, and that’s fine,” she says. “If someone is doing

something they don’t really like, they should move on.”

Tew moved to the Bedford area from Connecticut when her parents became ill in the early 1990s. Looking for a job, she saw an article in the paper about the start up of Cell-Con and put in an application. Cunard liked her experience and she was quickly hired.

Cunard, who has since left Cell-Con due to health issues, once told Tew his one wish was that the plant would grow and provide local employment in the coming years.

“So far, that is what is happening,” she says. ☀

NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP

Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative will be awarding four scholarships of \$1,000 each to non-traditional students whose primary residence is served by Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative.

For an application, go to our website at bedfordrec.com. Click on the member services tab and choose **scholarship information**. Applications are also available at the office.

All applications and required information must be received no later than March 1, 2020.

Mail application to:
Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative
P. O. Box 335
Bedford, PA 15522

Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc. Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

Brooks R. Shoemaker
General Manager & CEO

Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc. is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

From the General Manager

(continued from page 12a)
technology and consumer desires for more options. Technology, the push toward renewables, electric vehicles, a more balanced energy mix — these are just some of the issues impacting our long-term planning. These are complex and in many ways transformative for the co-op. Today's decisions shape our future. This is why it's so important that we hear from you and other community members as we plot our course for the future. Your perspective is important.

We work to continually learn from our members about their priorities so that we can better serve you — because your cooperative was built by the community, for the community. But we can only improve, adapt and effectively plan for the future if we

have two-way communication.

For our co-op and community to thrive now and in the future, we depend on hearing from you. I hope you will connect with us and let us know your perspective. We are listening!

While the larger environment in which we operate is constantly changing, one thing remains the same. By working together, I'm certain that we can continue to do good things for our community.

Energy efficiency tip of the month

Placing hot food in the refrigerator makes the appliance work harder than necessary, using more energy. Allow food to cool down before you place it in the fridge. ☀

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.



Food drive winner

Congratulations to the winners of this year's drawing for members who contributed to the Bedford REC Food Drive. Robert and Carol Kemerer of New Baltimore will receive a \$50 credit on their electric bill.

HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative will be awarding four scholarships of \$1,000 each to seniors whose parents' or guardians' primary residence is served by Bedford Rural Electric.

For an application, go to our website at bedfordrec.com. Click on the member services tab and choose **scholarship information**. Applications are also available at the office.

All applications and required information must be received no later than March 1, 2020.

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