

Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



One of 14 electric cooperatives
serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

BEDFORD REC

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Monday through Friday
7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Factors Driving the Rising Demand for Electricity



**BROOKS
SHOEMAKER**

ACROSS THE UNITED STATES, the demand for power is climbing at one of the fastest rates in decades. As the economy becomes more reliant on electricity and data centers sprout up in many parts of the country, Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) is preparing to meet these challenges.

Before we talk about them, though, it is important to understand a couple factors that created today's generation shortages. Pennsylvania's Electricity Generation Customer Choice and Competition Act, instituted in 1997, restructured

the industry by allowing ratepayers to shop for the generation component of their bill. As a result, many investor-owned utilities (Penelec, West Penn, etc.) sold or transferred generation assets to unregulated owners so they could effectively operate in the new competitive, deregulated wholesale market.

The result was that responsibility for building and maintaining generation capacity shifted away from traditional utilities. Historically, regulated utilities had an obligation to build power plants to meet peak demand and maintain a comfortable surplus of capacity to ensure reliability.

Deregulation caused generation owners to respond only to market price signals. As a result, they have no interest in building excess capacity because they may never recover those costs. To put it another way, before 1997, new plants were planned around expected future growth and excess capacity was built into them.

This is no longer the case.

From there, the forced accelerated closure of coal-fired generating plants — driven significantly by environmental regulations, emissions-reduction mandates, and multi-year regulatory uncertainty related to carbon-pricing schemes, such as the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative — has substantially reduced the state's reliable generation capacity. These policy pressures, layered on top of market economics, removed thousands of megawatts of baseload and intermediate capacity generation — resources like coal and natural gas power plants — without any new, reliable options to replace them.

When electricity demand surged, particularly from data centers, the combination of accelerated plant closures and slowly developing new-build investments contributed directly to tightening reserve margins, capacity shortfalls, and elevated prices. These conditions are now evident across our multi-state regional grid, operated by PJM Interconnection.

Today, we are faced with many generation challenges. The North American Electric Reliability Corporation, the watchdog for the U.S. electric grid, recently released the 2026-2027 winter reliability assessment, which warns of potential supply shortfalls and outages during more severe weather conditions.

Beyond weather, several other key factors are driving increased demand. One of the most significant is increased electrification. More homes and businesses are transitioning to electricity for home heating and water heating. Electric vehicles are becoming more common on the road, too. Electric heat pumps are

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Local Students Travel to Washington, D.C., for Youth Tour

JENNA REFFNER, OFFICE ASSISTANT

IN 1957, THEN-SEN. LYNDON JOHNSON stood before members of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) in Chicago and said, “If one thing comes out of this meeting, it will be sending youngsters to the national capital, where they can actually see what the flag stands for and represents.”

In the years that followed, the Rural Electric Youth Tour started taking shape.

Early on, Texas electric cooperatives sent groups of young people to Washington, D.C., to work in Johnson’s office during the summer. Little did they know that they were actually working for a future president of the United States.

In 1958, Iowa cooperatives sponsored a group of 34 young people to tour the nation’s capital for a week, and Illinois followed in their footsteps that same year.

The idea continued to blossom, and by 1959, 130 students participated in what is now known as Youth Tour. A few years later, in 1964, NRECA turned Youth Tour into a coordinated, nationwide program that brought about 400 students from 12 states to Washington for a week of education and exploration.

Still going strong

It’s been nearly 70 years since Lyndon Johnson spoke to the NRECA. Since then, Youth Tour has continued to grow

and become a major event. Those who attend meet with lawmakers from their state, tour national monuments and memorials, and visit the National Zoo and Smithsonian museums.

In addition to this packed schedule, students also spend time with participants from across the United States. In 2026, nearly 1,800 students and 250 chaperones from 44 states attended Youth Tour.

Elivia Weyant and Ben Thompson represented Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) this year.

“Youth Tour was an amazing experience, and I felt so honored to be a part of it,” Elivia says. “It was so much fun learning about Capitol Hill and making friends from all over the United States.”

Local Youth Tour participants must be juniors at Bedford, Chestnut Ridge, Claysburg or Everett high schools. Their parents’ or legal guardian’s primary residence must also be served by Bedford REC.

For more information, talk to your school guidance counselor or visit bedfordrec.com. 📍



TRICK OF THE LIGHT: Local students Ben Thompson and Elivia Weyant visit the Museum of Illusions during Youth Tour 2026.



READY FOR YOUTH TOUR: Elivia Weyant and Ben Thompson represented Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative on this year's Youth Tour in Washington, D.C.



FROM D.C., WITH LOVE: Pennsylvania and New Jersey Youth Tour participants gather for a photo in front of the U.S. Capitol.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2026 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS!

Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) recently selected four students as its 2026 scholarship recipients. Top photo, from left, Grady McDonald, Kasey Shuke and Hannah Keebaugh are shown with Cory Wilson, Bedford REC's member services manager. Bottom photo, Wilson poses with scholarship recipient Addy Wood.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

September kicks off the fall shoulder season, when cooler mornings and milder evenings often mean you can give your heating and cooling system a break. Open windows, use ceiling fans and enjoy the fresh air whenever temperatures allow. It's also the perfect time to schedule annual HVAC maintenance before colder weather arrives. Because demand is typically lower during the fall, heating and cooling professionals often have greater availability, making it easier to book an appointment. Regular maintenance can improve your system's efficiency, help prevent unexpected breakdowns and keep your home comfortable all year long.

Source: Department of Energy



**FROM THE GENERAL
MANAGER & CEO**

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also replacing traditional furnaces in many homes due to their efficiency. These transitions mean more energy use and more pressure on our electric grid.

Data centers are another major contributor to rising demand. As artificial intelligence, cryptocurrency, and cloud computing technologies grow, the need for data processing and storage has skyrocketed. Data centers require huge amounts of power to

operate servers and cooling systems 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

As businesses expand, the demand for reliable, high-capacity power is increasing. The resurgence of domestic manufacturing has led to major construction. These facilities often require substantial energy loads, and many operate continuously to keep production moving.

Population growth and housing development also contribute to rising demand in many regions, while everyday life is becoming more energy dependent, too. Smart appliances, connected devices, home

offices and entertainment systems are adding to overall consumption, even as efficiency improves.

Electricity powers nearly every aspect of today's economy, and its role will only grow stronger. As electrification accelerates, long-term planning becomes more important than ever. The good news is Bedford REC is ready to meet rising demand in our community. Through innovation, investment, and collaboration, we are preparing for a more reliable and resilient energy future. 🌱

BROOKS SHOEMAKER
GENERAL MANAGER & CEO

DOWNED POWER LINE and Large Equipment Safety

Wait to fold/unfold or raise/lower equipment until you are well into the field, and away from the field's edge.

In an accident or contact with a power line:

1. **Stay Inside the Cab:** The ground may be energized.
2. **Call 9-1-1:** Report downed or damaged lines.
3. **Warn Others:** Tell bystanders to stay away.
4. **Wait for Utility Crew:** Do not exit until it's safe.



If you notice smoke or fire:

5. **Exit Safely:** Cross arms over your chest and jump out with feet together. Do not touch the vehicle and the ground at the same time.
6. **Move Away:** Shuffle or bunny hop with feet together. Get as far away as you can.



Learn more:



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, 814-623-7568, OR call 814-623-5101 during office hours.

Please have the account holder's name, phone number, physical address or account number available. Any specific information about the outage will also be helpful in pinpointing the problem.

**To report an outage, call:
814-623-7568**