

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.

2023 rates



2022 HAS PROVEN TO BE a third consecutive challenging year — 2020 and 2021 because of the pandemic — here at Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative. As it winds down, we continue to struggle with increased local distribution costs and supply chain issues.

Historically, our rates have been among the lowest and most stable in the region. We have also been protected from some of the market volatility other utilities have experienced because our wholesale electric supplier, Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Allegheny), owns a significant portion of its generation resources, which stabilizes its rates. However, Allegheny is also experiencing rapidly escalating prices and recently announced a 2023 rate increase.

As a result, we will be raising our rates in February 2023. We are still working diligently on the numbers, but we hope the increase will not exceed 10%. We understand the impact this will have on our members and assure you we only raise rates when absolutely necessary. Again, inflation and rising wholesale power prices are some of the most significant factors necessitating this adjustment.

We understand that any rate increase is a challenge. For the average member who uses 1,000 kilowatt-hours per month, this should amount to an increase of no more than \$12 per month. The January issue of *Penn Lines* will detail the final numbers and break down the exact impact of the increase.

We want to thank you for your continued support as a valued member of Bedford REC. We are a member-owned cooperative, and you are our sole priority. Please know our only objective is to provide you with safe, reliable and affordable energy.

Five ways to fight the winter chill *and* save energy

We all have our favorite season. Some people love crisp, cool weather and bundling up under a favorite blanket, while others — me, included — prefer the warm temperatures summer brings and all the fun outdoor activities that go with it.

But there's one thing we can all agree on: High winter bills are never fun. At Bedford REC, we are here to help you find ways to manage your home energy use and keep winter bills in check.

Here are five tips to help increase your home's energy efficiency this winter:

- 1. Watch the thermostat.** This is one of the easiest ways to manage your home energy use. We recommend setting your thermostat to 68 or 70 degrees (or lower) when you're home. When you're sleeping or away for an extended period of time, try setting it around 60 degrees; there's no need to heat your home when you're away or sleeping and less active.
- 2. Button up your home.** The U.S. Department of Energy estimates air leaks account for 24% to 40% of the energy used for heating and cooling a home. Caulking and weather-stripping around windows and doors is another simple, cost-effective way to increase comfort and save energy. If you can feel drafts while standing near a window or door, it likely needs to be sealed.
- 3. Use window coverings wisely.** Open blinds, drapes or other window

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Local cinematographer ready to capture your venture

LINDA WILLIAMS

BEDFORD CINEMATOGRAPHER Rachel Oaks remembers “once upon a time, when I was an awkward middle schooler, my dad let me borrow the family Sony Handycam, and that’s when my love for film and video began.”

She joined the Altoona High School broadcasting crew.

“I thought I wanted to be a news broadcaster,” Rachel says.

After studying film and video at Pennsylvania State University, she interned at WTAJ and thought that was what she wanted to do until the Beltway Sniper story broke.

“They told me I could photograph blood, but only so much,” Rachel says. “Then they told me that if I filmed bodies, the bodies were to be covered. I soon realized that is not what I wanted to do. I did not want to be an ambulance chaser.”

Leaving the broadcasting field, she took a job in sales, which paid the bills but was not her passion. “I wanted to bring value, entertainment and joy to people’s lives,” she says. “I went back to school and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in cinematography from Full Sail University. I was valedictorian of my class.”

The enterprise, Sunny Oaks Studios, got off the ground in January 2020.

“Not a good year to start a business,” she says, laughing, “but maybe it was because businesses and industries were looking for ways to sell their trades or products without being face-to-face.”

Her first jobs centered on real estate. “I filmed the high-end homes and my husband, Brad, who is a Part 107 certified drone pilot, did the aerial shots,” she says. “Our aim was to specialize in telling stories and in



PICTURE PERFECT: Cinematographer Rachel Oaks sits at her desk at Sunny Oaks Studios, the business she opened in 2020.



PURSUE HER PASSION: Rachel Oaks is passionate about helping small businesses market their products and services. One of her clients is this logging operation, a member of Bedford REC.



PARTNERS: Brad Oaks, Rachel's husband, is a certified drone pilot and took this photo of the swimming pool at the Longer Vue Golf Club in Verona.

helping companies with their video marketing strategies and social media platforms.”

The Oaks team soon expanded. One job was at a golf club in Pittsburgh. Stormy weather, which downed trees and brought dark clouds, interfered with the planned video shoot. “We had to wait until the next week, when we were rewarded with a beautiful blue-sky, puffy-cloud day,” Rachel remembers.

The “coolest” job, she says, was at Fritz Logging, where she rode in a logging truck while filming. Rachel says she loves finding the story to tell. Sunny Oaks Studios also films weddings, anniversaries and even first-birthday parties. Whenever a story needs to be told, she is there to do it. Most recently, she filmed the awards ceremony at the Bedford Chamber of Commerce’s annual banquet.



SMALL-BUSINESS HELP: Another one of Rachel Oaks's clients sells essential oils.

Her husband’s expertise and drone license is a great benefit since some jobs call for aerial photography. Brad currently works full time at Areox, where he is vice president of products and infrastructure.

“Our aim is to specialize in telling your stories and helping with your video marketing journey every step of the way,” Rachel says. “Whether it’s a website, a product or some special

occasion, we want to capture that special moment.”

To date, Sunny Oaks Studios has been marketed by word of mouth. “We get one satisfied person telling another,” she says. For more information, go to Sunnyoaksstudios.com or look for the business on Facebook.

Rachel and Brad are also kept busy with their two children, Elise, 12, and Graham, 9. 📍

FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

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coverings during the day to allow natural sunlight in to warm your home. Close them at night to keep the cold, drafty air out. If you feel cold air around windows, consider hanging curtains or drapes in a thicker material; heavier window coverings can make a significant difference in blocking cold outdoor air.

- 4. Consider your approach to appliance use.** When combined, appliances and electronics account for a significant chunk of our home energy use, so assess how efficiently you're using them. For example, if you're running the dishwasher or clotheswasher, only wash full loads. Look for electronic devices that consume energy even when they're not in use, like phone chargers or game consoles. Every little bit helps, so unplug them to save energy.
- 5. Think outside the box.** If you're still feeling chilly at home, think of other ways to warm up beyond dialing up the thermostat. Add layers of clothing, wear thick socks and bundle up under blankets. You can even add layers to your home. If you have hard-surface flooring, consider purchasing an area rug to block cold air that leaks in through the floor.

If you're taking steps to save energy but continue to see major increases in your bills, give us a call. Our energy experts can help identify areas and other factors impacting your home energy use and recommend next steps for savings.

Winter months often bring some of the highest energy bills of the year. By being proactive, you can increase the comfort of your home and reduce monthly bills.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Blocked air vents force your heating system to work harder than necessary and increase pressure in the ductwork, which can cause cracks and leaks to form.

Make sure all air vents are unob-

structed from furniture, drapes or other items to ensure sufficient circulation throughout your home. If necessary, purchase a vent extender, which can be placed over a vent to redirect air flow from underneath furniture. 📌

BROOKS SHOEMAKER
GENERAL MANAGER

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

DONATIONS FOR LOCAL FOOD BANKS

Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative directors and employees are asking the members to join in and donate to the area food banks. Those wishing to donate items should bring them to the Bedford REC office on Lincoln Highway between now and Dec. 14, 2022.

Items needed include: canned goods, paper products, soap and other hygiene-related items, and 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.

Those making a donation will have their name entered for a \$50 credit toward their electric bill.

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.