

Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



One of 14 electric cooperatives
serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

BEDFORD REC

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814-623-5101

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OFFICE HOURS

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

Lineworkers are Wired for Service



**BROOKS
SHOEMAKER**

IN THE QUIET HOURS BEFORE dawn breaks, while many of us are still nestled in our beds, lineworkers begin their day. They will put on flame-resistant clothing, heavy toolbelts, hardhats, safety goggles, rubber gloves and thick, heavy boots.

Lineworkers epitomize dedication to service. As we celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Day on April 14, it is important to reflect on the essential role they play in our daily lives.

Spending their days 50 feet in the air on utility poles surrounded by energized power lines, lineworkers exhibit a strength far beyond the physical. They battle the worst weather Mother Nature has to offer, troubleshoot technical problems and travel to the most remote locations on foot. Through it all, they demonstrate resilience and a quiet determination to keep our lights on, our homes comfortable, and our communities connected.

Our crews travel across our service territory, building, maintaining and repairing parts of our system. Their extraordinary skills ensure our homes remain connected to the grid, businesses stay operational and emergency services remain accessible.

In moments of crisis, when the lights go out and we find ourselves in the dark, lineworkers emerge as beacons of hope. Their swift response restores normalcy. Whether repairing storm-damaged poles and power lines or ensuring continuity during emergencies, their commitment illuminates our lives.

Our lineworkers also answer the call beyond Bedford County. Our crews have traveled to help our sister co-ops in Pennsylvania and New Jersey and as far away as Florida, Georgia, and Louisiana. Near or far, when widespread outages occur and additional support is needed, they are there to help.

Cooperation among cooperatives is one of our seven guiding principles, and no one embodies this core commitment better than lineworkers.

This month, as we celebrate the remarkable individuals who ensure we have reliable power, let's recognize their dedication to the communities they serve. The next time you flip a light switch, please take a moment to remember those lineworkers who make it possible. They are wired for service and dedicated to lighting up our lives.

The cooperative's annual meeting

The cooperative's 86th annual meeting is scheduled Wednesday, April 9, at the Bedford County Fairgrounds (729 W. Pitt St., Bedford). The fairgrounds are just west of downtown Bedford on Business Route 30, adjacent to the Bedford exit of Interstate 99.

This drive-thru meeting begins at 10 a.m. and ends at 1:30 p.m. Please do not arrive early — we cannot have traffic backing up onto Route 30. You may arrive at any time during those hours, and we ask that you remain in your vehicle while you register, pick up an annual report, receive a ballot to vote in the election of directors, enjoy free refreshments, pick up an attendance gift, and finally turn in your completed ballot. Registered attendees will also be eligible to win door prizes. Lucky winners will be announced after the meeting.

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A Conversation with a Pennsylvania Game Warden

JENNA REFFNER, OFFICE ASSISTANT

EJAI ROCK ALWAYS HAD AN INTEREST in law enforcement. Growing up, his family raised goats, sheep and pigs. Maybe it's no surprise that Ejai loves his work as a Pennsylvania game warden.

Ejai grew up outside of Breezewood with his parents, Mark and Missy. He had the typical Bedford County childhood, growing up in a rural area between two dairy farms. He remembers spending time with his best friend.

"We spent our days outside, fishing in the creek and riding bikes," Ejai recalls. "We didn't go home until it was dark out."

The pair started hunting when they were 12 and could start driving deer. To this day, Ejai gets out into the woods whenever he can. "My favorite animal to hunt is the white-tailed deer during archery season," he adds.

The life of a cadet

After he graduated from Everett High School, Ejai pursued a criminal justice degree from Slippery Rock

University. He always knew he wanted to go into law enforcement, preferably at a federal agency. When he saw the Pennsylvania Game Commission was accepting applications for new game wardens, Ejai decided to apply. It turned out to be very competitive; there were more than 700 applicants that year, and only 24 were accepted, Ejai included.

He started his training at the Ross Leffler School of Conservation in Harrisburg in 2022. The training lasted 44 weeks. The cadets started their day with fitness training and attended classes from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Classes covered such topics as state hunting laws, biology, forestry and habitat management. They also spent 18 days honing their firearms skills. Cadets, he says, go through a series of practice scenarios, including defensive tactics.

At the beginning of hunting season, Ejai spent 10 weeks in the field, working with three game wardens in three territories, gaining real-world experience. He then returned to the academy for another eight weeks of classroom training.

When Ejai graduated from the academy in February 2023, his wife, Cassandra, was pregnant with baby No. 2. At the time, there were two game warden vacancies in Bedford County, and Ejai was happy to be able to work close to home.

Ejai doesn't have as much time for hunting as he used to. He and Cassandra purchased a new home in October 2024 and are now members of Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative. They're renovating their home and taking care of their three children, the latter of which takes up most of Ejai's days.

His permanent district encompasses Bedford, Cumberland Valley, East and West St. Clair, Harrison, Juniata, Londonderry, and Napier townships. Ejai is also covering the southeastern portion of Bedford County until the vacancy there is filled.

The Game Commission, he says, used to be strict about allowing game wardens to work near their homes. "They've loosened their rules," Ejai adds. "I think they realized they'll have better retention if people are able to return home."

The best part of the job

When asked what his favorite part of being a game warden is, Ejai doesn't hesitate: "I love bear trapping. Not everyone can say they've touched a bear."

The Game Commission traps bears for mark and recapture studies. The agency tracks how many bears it re-traps and how many hunters have harvested. Nuisance



HANG ON: State Game Wardens Ejai Rock, left, and Brandon Pfister respond to a report of abandoned bear cubs. The cubs have since been rehabilitated and returned to the wild.

bears are also trapped. Ejai has a quota of four bears to trap but expects to get 10 this year.

He starts by setting up a culvert trap filled with doughnuts and other sweet treats. When the bear hits the peddle in the trap, it closes. Once the bear is drugged, Ejai places a tag in each ear and a tattoo on the inside of the animal's lip. The tattoo is necessary because the boars (males) are aggressive and will rip the tags out of their ears while fighting each other.

Game Commission staff will also pull the bear's milk tooth, which is not necessary after they are no longer nursing.

"They cut the tooth in half, and it has rings inside," Ejai says. "They count the rings to determine how old the bear is."

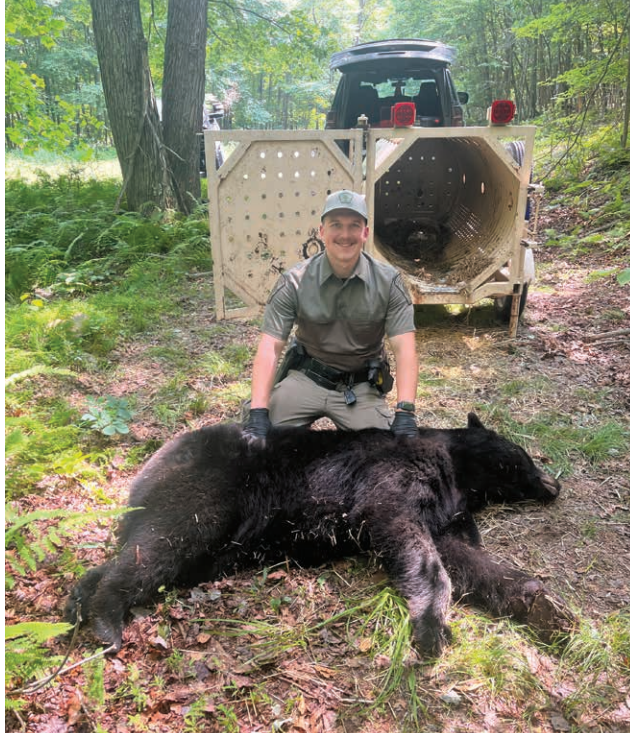
Once their work is done, the warden will give the bear a reversal drug and release it back into the forest.

"It's always a little bittersweet when a hunter harvests a bear that I've trapped," Ejai says, noting the largest bear he's trapped was 400 pounds.

A community service

Being a game warden isn't just about enforcing Pennsylvania hunting and trapping laws. He gives back to the community, too. When he isn't out in the fields and forests, Ejai can be found giving talks at sportsman's clubs, chamber of commerce events, local schools, job fairs and Boy Scout meetings.

If you're interested in becoming a game warden, Ejai



TRAPPED: State Game Warden Ejai Rock poses with a bear he trapped in Bedford County.

suggests volunteering with the commission on a deer-trapping crew or supporting other activities. It's also helpful to have a background in law enforcement, biology or habitat. This is a competitive field, and Ejai suggests doing anything that will set you apart from the other applicants. 🐾



BUCK HUNT: Ejai Rock, a Bedford County game warden, poses with a buck he harvested during hunting season.

**FROM THE
GENERAL MANAGER & CEO**
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Naturally, if you have already voted by mail, you will not be able to vote again at the annual meeting, but you can still enjoy all of the other attendance benefits.

If you haven't returned your ballot by mail by now, it is probably too late for it to be received by the April 5 due date, so please plan to attend the meeting and cast your vote in person. All members should have received the official notice of the meeting in mid-March. To simplify registration, please tear off the top section of the notice and bring it with you to the meeting. Remember, *every* vote counts!

**Energy Efficiency Tip
of the Month**

Turn your suds into savings: Use less energy in the laundry room by

washing clothes with cold water whenever possible. Heating water accounts for most of the energy used in a laundry cycle. Wash full loads to make the most of energy savings and use high-efficiency detergent

designed for cold washes. For drying cycles, clean the lint filter before each load to improve airflow and use dryer balls to reduce drying time. 🔄

BROOKS SHOEMAKER
GENERAL MANAGER & CEO

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 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.

WHAT DOES A LINEWORKER DO?

On any given day or night, in all kinds of weather conditions, lineworkers install and maintain overhead and underground electrical systems.

We entrust our lineworkers with your safety, so they hold a very important job. We also rely on their expertise to power our world.

SAFETY COMES FIRST

Lineworkers must commit to safety above all else for the benefit of those they serve (you!), fellow crew members and themselves. They spend thousands of hours in safety trainings each year and must learn and apply numerous safety regulations.

THEY ARE SPECIALLY TRAINED TO:

- Climb poles to service power lines in areas inaccessible by trucks.
- Stand in an elevated bucket to assess and repair overhead lines.
- Install poles, overhead lines and other equipment.
- Work on both energized and de-energized lines.
- Install and service underground lines.

**Safe
Electricity.org®**

