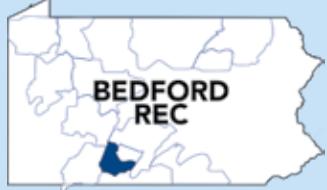


Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives
serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

BEDFORD REC
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Bedford, PA 15522
814-623-5101

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Website: www.bedfordrec.com

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OFFICE HOURS

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

**Season's greetings from all of us at
Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative.**

Board of Directors: Ronald W. Wilkins,
Don E. Hoenstine, Paul L. Rummel Jr.,
Reuben R. Lafferty, Earl W. Garland,
Dale R. Sprigg II, Brian I. Hoover,
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Ryan Young and
Benjamin Zimmerman

Members Reflect on Holiday Memories, Traditions

JENNA REFFNER, OFFICE ASSISTANT

IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK A LOT like Christmas. The trees are up, the lights are twinkling, and the decorations have been lovingly unpacked and displayed. Holiday magic is everywhere.

It's the time of year for family gatherings — and a reminder to spread Christmas cheer to those around us. Step away from your busy schedule to watch a Christmas movie with the family. Drive around and see Christmas lights. Wrack your brain to find the perfect presents and wait with anticipation for the wrapping paper to be torn off those presents Christmas morning.

The holiday season is full of memories and traditions passed down through the years. Some Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative members recently agreed to share a few of their favorites.

Gifts, chuckles and cookies

Tara Miller, a co-op member since 1986, says a happy memory includes her two siblings, who were very close in age to her. The trio wore matching nightgowns, and every Christmas morning they took turns opening gifts.

"There were always triplicates of most of our gifts," Tara remembers. "Usually, once the first person opened their gift, we knew what the other ones were. We still get a chuckle out of it today at family get-togethers."

Tara's daughter, Risa Aaronson of Bedford, recalls making her Great-Grandma Callihan's sugar cookies every Christmas with her mom, her Grandma Dishong and her cousins.



HOLIDAY CHURCH SERVICE: Risa and Steve Aaronson of Bedford pose with their children, Carter and Ella, at the Christmas Eve service at Trinity Lutheran Church.

"Even through college," Risa says, "I made it a point to bake these with my mom every winter."

Risa also recalls picking out Christmas trees, dressing up for candlelight Christmas Eve service and feeling the magic of Christmas mornings as a child. Every year, she says, the family would go to her Grandma Miller's house on Christmas Eve and eat pizza burgers and snacks while they wondered what Santa would bring.

Risa also remembers when her sister picked out a Christmas tree so large, they had to place it in the center of the living room.

"She then ran a battery-operated Barbie Jeep that Santa brought her into it by mistake — true story!" Risa says with a laugh.

Can you keep a secret?

Laura Jackson of Everett recalls her favorite Christmas memory as a youngster. Her father showed her and her younger sisters a present for their mother that he hid in the closet. It was a round metal disc, which he explained was a new lid for the family's washing machine.

"We were thrilled that he trusted us with a secret," Laura says, adding she and her sisters waited with great anticipation for Christmas morning to watch their mother open her present. "Surprise! Surprise! It turned out to be a metal saucer sled for us," she says.

"Many years later," Laura adds, "I still laugh over our gullibility and how excited we were that our mother was

A SPECIAL TIME OF YEAR: Becky and John Lowe of Bedford attend Christmas festivities with their children, Addison and McKenna.





GETTING IN THE SPIRIT: The Aaronsons decorate their home for Christmas.

getting a new lid for her washing machine."

Childhood memories are often recalled fondly. Becky Lowe of Bedford remembers piling into the car with her family to see the Christmas lights. "Every year," she says, "we would drive to see the massive Christmas tree that the Over family in Woodbury would light up."

That love of Christmas lights never went away. Becky still enjoys walking through small towns to see the twinkling displays.

"It's amazing how something so simple can bring so much joy," she says.

Kris Arnold, owner of Live Well Chiropractic in New Paris, remembers getting his first two-wheel bike and a Transformer for Christmas. Now, he enjoys giving back to the community.

"My favorite Christmas memory as an adult is collecting and delivering Christmas gifts for local residents and seeing people's eyes well up with tears to know their kids will have gifts for Christmas," he says.

Nikki Gephart, also of New Paris, remembers going to her aunt's house with her big family. "There were plenty of good eats, laughs, and reflections on the year that had passed," she says.

Making the magic happen

Christmas traditions are an important part of the season, too, and many have been handed down through generations.

Becky Lowe loves making Christmas cookies with her family. Everyone picks a favorite each year and then she and her daughter, McKenna, spend a weekend or two baking. Becky's husband, John, and her son, Addison, are the taste-testers.

"We love hosting Christmas at our house," Becky says. "I thoroughly enjoy being the one to make the magic



CHRISTMAS TREATS: McKenna Lowe, daughter of Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative members Becky and John Lowe, shows off the Christmas cookies she baked.

happen for the season."

Meanwhile, Kris Arnold craves his wife's baking each December. "Tina makes the best cinnamon rolls for Christmas," he says. "It's the only time of the year she makes them."

For Laura Jackson, Christmas hymns are a very important part of celebrating the holiday season. "When I was growing up, my parents always played George Beverly Shea's 'Christmas Hymns' record," she says. "My favorite hymn is 'O come, O come, Emmanuel.'"

Tara Miller loves seeing her family and friends each Christmas season. She notes the joy everyone has during that time of the year.

"Christmas Eve church service is so special," she says. "A little snow that night is icing on the cake."

Most parents of young kids agree they find joy through their children.

"As a mom, I love seeing the magic through my kids' eyes," Risa Aaronson shares. "I love the way they decorate way too early with me, bake with me, and listen to Christmas carols in anticipation of Christmas day."

Each year, Risa, her husband Steve and their two children attend the Trinity Lutheran Church Christmas Eve service. They also have a "Donation Day," where they donate their gently used toys to a good home to make someone else's holiday a bit brighter.

Nikki Gephart says her family starts celebrating Christmas the day after Thanksgiving. "We bake cookies, have hot chocolate, organize movie nights, drive around to see the town lights, have breakfast with Santa, and attend the church Christmas play," she says.

For many folks, it's clear: Christmas is more than presents; it's a time to reflect on the past, enjoy the present and have hope for the future. 

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

If you're planning to purchase electronic gifts this holiday season, look for the ENERGY STAR® label, which indicates higher energy efficiency performance.

Electronics that receive the ENERGY STAR® rating are up to 25% more efficient than standard products. This holiday season, give the gift of energy savings with ENERGY STAR®-rated electronics and equipment.

Source: energystar.gov



Our offices will be closed on Dec. 11 and 12 as we move to our new location at 6 Enterprise Lane, Bedford PA 15522. We will be open for business at our new location on Monday, Dec. 15.

Bedford REC's office will be closed Dec. 25, in observance of Christmas Day, and Jan. 1, 2026, for New Year's Day.

Bedford REC will close at noon on Dec. 24.

DONATIONS FOR LOCAL FOOD BANKS

Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) directors and employees are asking members to join them in donating to area food banks. Those donating items should bring them to the Bedford REC office on Lincoln Highway by Dec. 10.

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. The items will be donated to local food banks throughout the county.

Your help and kindness are appreciated during this holiday season. Those making a donation will have their name entered into a drawing 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, 814-623-7568, or 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**

During widespread power outages, many members call 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.