

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.

Understanding Factors that Impact Your Energy Bills



BROOKS SHOEMAKER

FEBRUARY BRINGS SOME OF THE coldest weather of the year, and home heating systems work harder and longer to maintain the desired temperature in your home. Naturally, this means higher electric bills.

There are a few key factors that affect electricity prices, as well as a few ways you can make a meaningful impact on home energy savings.

When you receive your monthly bill, you see how many kilowatt-hours you've used. If you track that each month (using our SmartHub app for e-billing makes that easy), you can see there is a pattern to your consumption based on the season and temperature fluctuations. But you might be surprised to learn that, beyond your monthly energy consumption, there are external factors that impact the cost of electricity.

We purchase electricity from our energy generation partner, Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Allegheny), at a wholesale cost. We then deliver that energy to our communities. The cost of generating and transmitting electricity from our generation partner amounts to more than half of the cost to provide electricity to local homes and businesses. Allegheny's partial ownership of a nuclear facility in Berwick, coupled with our hydroelectric resources from the Raystown Hydroelectric Station and long-term contracts with the New York Power Authority, supply nearly 65% our needs. This is stable, always-on, cost-effective electricity. The remainder of our energy mix consists of market-based resources, such as natural gas and coal, and their prices fluctuate based on supply and demand. Because these fluctuations can also impact the cost of electricity, Allegheny works closely with Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) and its 13 other member systems in Pennsylvania and New Jersey to stabilize those prices for our members.

While we can't control the weather, the staff overseeing Allegheny's Coordinated Load Management System (CLMS) is continually monitoring weather patterns and forecasts to prepare for extreme cold or heat. By partnering with CLMS to control water heaters and dual-fuel and electric thermal storage heating systems in our members' homes, we can minimize price spikes.

Federal energy policies and regulations can have a profound impact on electricity costs, too. As energy generation shifts to the use of more renewable sources and stricter regulations are implemented for traditional, always-available baseload fuel sources, such as natural gas and coal plants, costly upgrades and technologies must be constructed and deployed. These costs are ultimately passed to consumers.

U.S. power consumption is expected to double by 2050. Across the country, electric cooperatives are working with members of Congress to advocate smart-energy policies that reliably power our communities. We are urging the Trump Administration to repeal the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's power plant rule to boost the long-term reliability of the nation's grid.

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Utility Lineman: Not Your Run-of-the-Mill Occupation

GARY DIEHL, MEMBER SERVICES MANAGER

OUR STORIES IN PENN LINES typically focus on members and their unique activities, hobbies, pastimes or businesses. Human-interest stories about our members keep readers informed and entertained. And I'm sure people often read a story about someone they know or have heard of and say, "Wow, I didn't realize that."

Articles focusing on our members are a tradition we will continue, but this month we decided to shift gears and share some information about the job of a lineman.

Before starting employment at Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative (REC), I had very little understanding of what went on in the world of electric utilities. And I'm guessing members of the general public are probably in the same boat. When somebody unfamiliar with the industry hears the word lineman, their first thought most likely goes to football. Let's face it: The English language is whacky — and the job of a lineman on the gridiron is worlds apart from that of a lineman working for an electric utility.

Including our line superintendent, who came from the ranks of the linemen, and our meter technician, Bedford

REC has 14 employees who tackle the day-to-day activities of what we refer to as the "outside" operations. And you know what is surprising? I talk to these guys nearly every day, and I think I know them; the conversations usually center around who got called out during last night's wind-storm, Monday Night Football, hunting, kids, and other water-cooler topics. However, as I sat down with each of our guys for a few minutes to research this story, I was shocked to learn the interesting paths they took to land here with the co-op.

Let's start with some simple numbers: Adding up the seniority of all the outside employees, we have more than 152 years of experience. Interestingly, our four most senior guys make up nearly 60% of that figure, with our most tenured lineman having 38 years on the job. We are blessed at Bedford REC to have such a knowledgeable and experienced group of workers.

However, the caveat is that the gap in years of service between our "old guys" and "young guys" is rather large. But the mindset here is that it's a good problem to have because that youth makes for a very bright future. We're confident our younger linemen will be fully trained and ready to pass their knowledge onto the next group of "young guys" by the time their mentors hang up their hard hats for the last time. It's basically succession planning by design.

Our linemen are always anxious after the morning meeting to hop into their vehicles and hit the road. Therefore, in an effort not to tie them up for a long period of time, I asked a few basic questions of each guy: How long have you worked at the co-op? What type of training did you have prior to starting (if any)? What path did you take to get here? And what job did you have right before the co-op or did you come directly here?



OFFICE DUTY: One of Bedford REC's young linemen engages in some training at the co-op office on Lincoln Highway in Bedford.



SETTING THE STAGE: A Bedford REC crew sets poles for what would eventually become the Silver-Lining Drive-In movie screen at the fairgrounds in Bedford.

As it turns out, seven had formal training specific to climbing and/or electric utility work. Four of them attended Global Powerline Academy, a 10-week course right here in our backyard at the Blue Knob All-Season Resort. Two of our guys trained at the Southeast Lineman Training Center (SLTC) in Trenton, Ga., and we had one gent who attended Northwest Lineman College (NLC) in Denton, Texas. The SLTC and NLC programs are 15-week courses.

Our guys also worked various jobs before beginning their careers at Bedford REC. Several worked at line construction outfits, several worked for tree-trimming/right-of-way businesses, and a few worked for phone and/or internet services installing overhead and underground fiber.

A couple of our guys were former members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. One has substation building and highline (helicopter) experience. Another spent six years in the Army, and one took classes at Penn State University. Four of our current linemen did job shadowing here at Bedford REC while they were still attending one of the local high schools in our service territory. Each of our guys has a unique and interesting background, and each has a different story about how they ended up working for the cooperative.

Training is the key to how our guys work safely and efficiently as they progress through the ranks to become a first-class journeyman lineman. No matter how much experience one has, continuing education and training is a must. And although every individual's progression is different, it typically takes four to five years to reach first-class status. Below is a list of the Job Training & Safety schools offered by our statewide partner, the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association (PREA), that our linemen attend as they move through their careers here:

- ▶ Advanced Hot Stick
- ▶ Advanced Rubber Glove
- ▶ Basic Hot Stick
- ▶ Basic Lineman's Climbing
- ▶ Basic Rubber Glove
- ▶ Chainsaw Safety
- ▶ Digger Derrick Operations
- ▶ Intermediate Hot Stick
- ▶ Intermediate Rubber Glove
- ▶ Keyman Supervisory Training
- ▶ Keyman Technical Training
- ▶ Metering
- ▶ Stringing & Sagging
- ▶ Substation / Voltage Regulators
- ▶ Transformer School
- ▶ Underground Residential Distribution (URD)
- ▶ Winch

In addition to the bullet points above, our guys also go through mandatory on-the-job training and pole top rescue training. These classes are conducted annually and facilitated by PREA, which serves as the unified voice for

13 electric cooperatives in Pennsylvania and one in New Jersey.

Being a lineman for an electric utility is not an easy job, but it can be rewarding. Our crews work hard and quite literally put their lives on the line every day to “keep the lights on” for our members. They endure extreme temperatures — both hot and cold — and work through some extremely unfavorable weather events. During outages caused by Mother Nature or perhaps by an auto accident or farm machinery mishap, they may spend many hours restoring the valuable flow of electricity that most of us take for granted. So, if you see a lineman out and about, make sure you thank them for the work they perform.

None of them ask for or demand recognition, but they certainly deserve it. 📌



THE GANG'S ALL HERE: Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative's (REC) linemen gather for a group shot before departing for the field. Shown, from front left, are: Emile Feuillet, Dave Allison and Scott Shook. Shown, from rear left, are: Joey Love, Cole Yingling, Landon Clark, Chase Cessna, Tim Mellot, Gary Lafferty, Josiah Harshberger, Ben Zimmerman and Brad Glessner. Not shown are Mike Sleighter and R.J. Houpp.



ON-THE-JOB TRAINING: A Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) lineman participates in an on-the-job training exercise.

NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP

Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative will award four \$1,500 scholarships to non-traditional students whose primary residence is served by the cooperative.

For an application, go to bedfordrec.com and click on "Scholarship Information" under the "Member Services" tab. Applications are also available at the office, 8846 Lincoln Highway, Bedford.

All applications and required information must be postmarked by April 15.

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

HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative will award four \$1,500 scholarships to seniors whose parents' or guardians' primary residence is served by the cooperative.

For an application, go to bedfordrec.com and click on "Scholarship Information" under the "Member Services" tab. Applications are also available at the office, 8846 Lincoln Highway, Bedford.

All applications and required information must be postmarked by April 15.

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FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER & CEO

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While many of the external factors that impact electricity costs are out of our control, we all have the power to manage our energy use at home. Since heating and cooling account for a major portion of home energy use, adjusting the thermostat to the lowest comfortable setting can help you save energy and money. Also, remember to service your heating and cooling system annually and replace dirty filters as needed.

You can also reduce energy use by taking advantage of off-peak periods, when the demand for electricity is lower. Reserve energy-intensive chores for off-peak times (particularly in the summer when we are doing "The Electric Shift"), such as early in the morning or later in the evening, to save energy. Be sure to seal air leaks around windows, doors and other areas. This will lessen the stress on your heating and cooling system and improve the overall comfort of your home.

Bedford REC is your local energy

partner, and we're here to help. Visit bedfordrec.com to learn about our efficiency programs designed to help you save. As always, we will continue working diligently to provide you with reliable power at an affordable cost.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Helping your home heating system run more efficiently can reduce energy use and lower your winter bills.

Check to see if any air vents around your home are blocked by furniture, curtains or other items. Obstructed vents force your heating system to work harder than necessary and can increase pressure in the ductwork, causing cracks and leaks. If necessary, consider purchasing a vent extender that can be placed over a vent to redirect air flow from underneath furniture or other obstructions. 📌

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.