

# Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

## **BEDFORD REC**

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Website: [www.bedfordrec.com](http://www.bedfordrec.com)

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

### **President & Allegheny Director**

Ronald W. Wilkins

Napier and Harrison Twps.,  
New Paris, Manns Choice and  
Schellsburg Boroughs

### **Vice President & PREA Director**

Donald E. Hoenstine

Kimmel and King Twps.

### **Secretary**

Paul L. Rummel Jr.

Bedford and Cumberland Valley Twps.

### **Treasurer**

Reuben R. Lafferty

Juniata Twp., Bedford County, and  
Allegheny Twp., New Baltimore Borough,  
Somerset County

### **Assistant Secretary**

Earl W. Garland

East Providence Twp., Bedford County,  
and Brush Creek Twp., Fulton County

### **Assistant Treasurer**

Dale R. Sprigg II

West St. Clair, Pavia, and Lincoln Twps.,  
Pleasantville Borough

Brian I. Hoover

Monroe and West Providence Twps.,  
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Troy A. Mickle

East St. Clair Twp., Bedford County

Travis L. Wigfield

Colerain, Snake Spring and  
South Woodbury Twps.

### **Attorney**

James R. Cascio

## **OFFICE HOURS**

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

## You Get the Credit



**BROOKS SHOEMAKER**

**BEDFORD RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE (REC)** is not like other utilities, and as a cooperative member, you are not simply a “customer.” Instead, you are a member and an owner of the cooperative. One benefit of that membership is the allocation of net income, or margins, at the end of each year as patronage capital credits. They are proportionally allocated (based on your kilowatt-hour [kWh] usage for the particular year) to all members who received service during that year.

Once capital credits are allocated, the cooperative holds them as equity and uses them as a resource to rebuild aging infrastructure, increase capacity, maintain reliability, and operate the cooperative. This helps to keep your rates low and your service reliable. Those monies are then retired (paid out) at the board of directors’ discretion at some point in the future. A capital credits retirement is based on a number of factors, but most importantly, on the cooperative’s overall financial condition.

In December, Bedford REC returned \$1.6 million in capital credits to current and former members. If you are reading this *Penn Lines* article, and are a cooperative member, you likely received a credit on your bill. While others, who have moved off our system, would have received a capital credits check. This is the 11th consecutive year the retirement exceeded \$1 million. We have returned capital credits annually for more than 40 years, totaling in excess of \$28.7 million. Returning capital credits to members is a practice unique to the cooperative business model and represents one of the seven cooperative principles: members’ economic participation. The board of directors and employees take pride in providing you with the most affordable, reliable, and safe electric service possible.

## Rate change

During the final months and weeks of 2024, Bedford REC employees have been diligently working on budgets and forecasts for 2025. As you know, the cost of living has risen significantly in the past five years. Our primary goal is to minimize the impacts of potential rate increases while maintaining cost-effective, reliable service.

In January 2024, we minimally increased our distribution rates by 4.5%. We hoped that as the year unfolded, the price escalation we have all experienced since 2020 would reverse course. While inflation has slowed, prices remain high. In our industry, energy-related political decisions, the wars in Israel and Ukraine, and ongoing supply chain issues are continuing to drive price increases. In fact, the cooperative’s costs have risen more than 40% since 2021. While we have absorbed a considerable amount of those costs through efficient changes in our business practices, this is no longer sustainable.

Our wholesale energy supplier, Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Allegheny), is also grappling with increased costs as PJM, the region’s transmission operator (think “air traffic controller” but for electrons), is seeing dramatically increased demand related to data centers, electric vehicles and heating systems transitioning away from fossil fuels. This spike in demand, coupled with the retirement of older coal and nuclear plants, is causing wholesale generation prices to rise, which is impacting the cooperative’s bottom line, too. Unfortunately, we have no choice but

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# Behind Every Small Business is a Family

**JENNA REFFNER**, OFFICE ASSISTANT

**THE TRUCKING INDUSTRY IS FACING** more and more challenges. The demand for truckers is growing, while the number of drivers getting into the industry is shrinking. New regulations make it difficult for new drivers to get started.

This is a problem Drew Barefoot knows well, having been in the trucking industry his whole life. Drew, a member of Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) since 2022, grew up outside of Pleasantville with his parents, Rick and Trudy. Drew's parents taught him the value of hard work from a young age.

"If I wanted a car, I had to earn the money," says Drew, a 2003 graduate of Chestnut Ridge Senior High School, where he was involved in football, basketball and track. "If I needed money in college, I had to get a job."

Drew's grandfather started H. Fred Barefoot Trucking, Inc. in the 1960s to haul milk. Drew's father took over in the 1990s. At its largest, the business had 30 trucks; it currently has 12 to 14 operating.

At 10, Drew started working in the garage of the family business. When he was in middle school, Drew remembers going out on service calls with his older brother, Luke.

"We'd get a call in the middle of the night," he recalls. "My dad had to drive truck, so my brother and I would answer the calls."

## Back to business in Bedford

Drew graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown with a degree in communications and business management. At the time, his parents wanted him to get experience outside the family business. Drew agreed.

"I was at that age," he says. "I kind of wanted to do my own thing."

Drew lived in Johnstown for nine years, working for Pepsi.

"It was a good job, and I liked the people I worked with," Drew recalls, noting he left it in 2017 to move back to Bedford and return to the family business. "I called my dad one day and told him I wanted to come back. He asked me if I was sure I wanted to work with him."

The business expanded to hauling cooking oils, apple and orange juice, and agricultural feed.

"My dad sat me down one day, and we had the difficult conversation to stop hauling milk and focus on our other products," Drew says.

Drew is involved in all aspects of running the family business, from daily operations to driving truck. In 2000, his parents built the business complex at 119 Follmar Lane, Pleasantville. They then purchased Fay's Candies from the original owner, who started the business in her home across the street. They moved the candy business

to their new building, but after more than 20 years of operating in that location, it closed after the COVID-19 pandemic.

The location stayed vacant until 2023, when Drew had the idea to open Rise and Grind Coffee Shop. They took out the drop ceilings and created a cozy coffee shop with a large menu of flavored drinks. The coffee comes from La Prima Espresso Co. in Pittsburgh.

In addition to delicious drinks and an inviting atmosphere, Rise and Grind Coffee Shop has games and books and an



**COFFEE AND CHILL:** Rise and Grind Coffee Shop, located at 119 Follmar Lane in Pleasantville, offers a cozy atmosphere and delicious cups of coffee. The shop opened in 2023.



area where kids can play while their parents enjoy a cup of coffee.

The coffee shop also features crocheted creations from Birch Creek Crochet, including stuffed animals, plant holders and coffee cozies. Occasionally, the shop hosts painting classes with Tip of the Brush PA.

If you're not a fan of coffee but are still looking for a caffeine boost, stop in and try the lotus drinks. Each fruit drink contains 80 milligrams of caffeine and is topped with club soda or lemonade.

Rise and Grind Coffee Shop is open from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday. Drew hopes to one day stay open later and offer sandwiches and wraps.

## An entrepreneurial spirit

Also located in the same complex is Chestnut Ridge Wellness and Fitness. The Barefoots wanted to bring a fitness and wellness center back to the Alum Bank area. They started the business with partners, with the understanding Drew would eventually step down from the board of directors.

Chestnut Ridge Wellness and Fitness Center currently offers cardio and strength training equipment. The location also houses Chestnut Ridge Physical Therapy with three physical therapists on staff. The business offers multiple classes for seniors throughout the week. For more information, visit [crwellness.fit](http://crwellness.fit).

Drew had the idea to open a second gym in the same complex to attract a younger crowd interested in such things as CrossFit and power training. The Iron Room, LLC opened in March 2020. Despite its rocky start, opening just days before the country went into lock down, The Iron Room is going strong today.

The gym is open to members 24/7 via key card. It offers personal training and workout classes, including whole-body workouts, high-intensity interval training, "core and restore" classes, and indoor cycling. The weekly schedule is posted on its Facebook page, The Iron Room, LLC, with a link to reserve a space in a class.

Drew has plans for more businesses, stating he's been thinking about opening a tanning salon. "I like being involved in the initial stages of starting the business and handing the day-to-day operations over to someone else," Drew says.

When asked where he gets his entrepreneurial spirit, Drew credits his parents.

"My dad has worked hard his whole life," Drew says. "My parents worked together to grow the trucking business. My mom was a very capable woman. She never asked for help and wanted to learn to do everything herself."

Trudy passed away in 2021. She was well known in the community through her work for H. Fred Barefoot Trucking, Fay's Candies and The Green Harvest Café.

Drew lives with his two children, Evie, 5, and Wyatt, 3. In between parenting, running multiple businesses and managing problems that pop up with each, Drew enjoys playing hockey. He worked for the Johnstown Chiefs in college, which is when he took up playing the sport himself. He currently plays in a hockey league in Ebensburg. The league has a wide age range — the youngest player is 19 and oldest is 63.

Rise and Grind Coffee Shop, The Iron Room, LLC and Chestnut Ridge Wellness and Fitness Center are located at 119 Follmar Lane, Pleasantville. Visit their respective Facebook pages for additional information. 📍



**FRESH BREW:** Drew Barefoot, a member of Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative since 2022, stands in the Rise and Grind Coffee Shop in Pleasantville.



**KID ZONE:** The coffee shop has a corner for kids to read and play while their parents enjoy a cup of coffee.

**FROM THE  
GENERAL MANAGER & CEO**

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to increase our rates. This change took effect Jan. 1, and it will be reflected on the bill you receive in early February. For the average residential member who uses 1,000 kWh per month, the bill will increase from \$141.99 to \$166.74, a 17% increase. Small general service will increase by 15%, and general commercial service by 13%. Outdoor lighting has also increased from \$3 to \$4 per month, depending on your light. As always, we do our best to assign costs to the rate class that creates them.

At Bedford REC, the people who receive electricity are members of our cooperative. Members enjoy certain rights that customers of investor-owned utilities don't have. For instance, you can choose to run for a seat on our board of directors, or you can serve on one of our committees. Since each member has a vote in the annual election of directors, the board is composed of people who live and work in the areas we serve.

However, many people don't understand the various ways their membership in a cooperative affects their rates. Our rates are based on two main components: the actual cost of the wholesale power that we buy (generation), and the cost for us to get that power to you (distribution). Allegheny sets our wholesale power rates. Since we have a seat on its board of directors, we ensure Allegheny works hard to keep those rates low, while guaranteeing a stable supply of electricity.

The distribution component includes our operational costs, such as poles, wires, and substations, the maintenance of trucks and buildings, employee costs, and costs associated with keeping and maintaining our records.

One of the biggest advantages of being served by a cooperative is that we work only for you; there are no stockholders expecting a big quarterly dividend. We are a not-for-profit enterprise, which means our sole focus is on providing you with economical, reliable service. Our rates are simply set to provide enough money to pay our operating expenses, make debt service payments, and provide an emergency reserve. We also collect some money, which is figured into

your rates, to be used for capital improvements. It helps finance many of the expensive capital improvement projects we undertake each year to ensure our system is properly maintained and delivering service reliably. Any profit (or margins) at the end of each year is allocated to each customer account as patronage capital. These capital credits represent your investment in the cooperative and its assets. 📌

**BROOKS SHOEMAKER,**  
GENERAL MANAGER & CEO

## Safety Tip

Heating equipment accounts for 13% of home fires. Place a space heater on a hard surface and make sure clothing, papers and other combustible items are at least 3 feet away from the heater.



**Safe  
Electricity.org**®

## 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.*