

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 p.m.

New Building, New Chapter for Bedford REC



**BROOKS
SHOEMAKER**

THE NEW OFFICE FACILITY IS nearing completion. We are excited to begin the new chapter in Bedford Rural Electric history. By the time you read this, the contractor will be wrapping up the final details.

We expect to take possession of the building around Nov. 15 and have tentatively scheduled the ribbon-cutting for Nov. 21. We also plan to host an open house Nov. 24 so the membership can tour the facility. Finally, our goal is to begin operating in the new building by Dec. 15.

Visit bedfordrec.com and our Facebook page for announcements as these proposed dates are finalized.

Proactive planning lessens impact of rising prices

Let's face it: We're a power-hungry generation. While we're talking on our smart-phones, asking human-like computers for advice and puttering around the yard with electric lawn mowers and weed eaters, dark clouds are gathering over the grid.

Will we have enough energy to power our growing needs? Some experts don't think so. They point to our voracious appetites for all kinds of watts — kilowatts, megawatts, you name it — and to head-scratching energy policies that are driving traditional resources like coal and natural gas plants off the grid faster than new, reliable resources can come on-line.

While steps are being taken to address the imbalance of supply and demand at state and national levels, some damage has already been done. That damage has resulted in higher costs to deliver electricity. Lots of factors are in play, but for members wondering what this means for their household budgets, it's important to understand PJM Interconnection (PJM), its recent capacity auctions and the anticipated impact on our rates.

PJM oversees the multi-state power grid that Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) is plugged into. It also coordinates the flow of electricity from generators to local utilities, operates wholesale markets and plans for future grid needs. Each year, PJM hosts a capacity auction to ensure it has enough electricity in the coming year to meet peak demand — primarily when it's really hot and humid or bone-chillingly cold.

Recently, in reaction to increased demand and tightened supply, capacity market prices haven't just increased, they've skyrocketed. For the 2025-2026 delivery year, they increased by more than 800%, and at the most recent auction in July, which set numbers for 2026-2027, they jumped another 22% over last year. Why? It's simple: We have closed many of our legacy generation workhorses — coal and nuclear plants.

Those plants were online 24 hours a day, seven days a week, cranking out an abundance of relatively cheap power. Attempting to replace them with resources like wind and solar — two things not available every hour of every day — has proven to be problematic. Unfortunately, for consumers, that means one thing: higher electric bills.

The good news is that we buy our wholesale power from Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc., which we own and operate along with 13 other rural electric cooperatives in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Over the decades, the Allegheny

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Age-Defying Driver Has a Need for Speed

GARY DIEHL, MEMBER SERVICES MANAGER

TRAVIS WIGFIELD, A BEDFORD RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE (REC) board member, grew up on Upper Snake Spring Road, just a hop, skip and a jump from our current office. Across the road from Travis's old home lives a gentleman who has raced cars most of his life. Travis thought it would be a good idea to do a story about him, but I wasn't sure at first.

Still, because we are always looking for interesting story ideas, I said, "OK, give me some details." When he told me the driver in question was 91 years old and still racing, I responded with something comedian Jeff Foxworthy once said: "Now you have my attention."

Jim Kennedy's moniker in the racing world is "The Flyin' Cowboy." Jim is a character, to say the least, and his smile and laugh are infectious. His storytelling immediately draws you in and makes you like him even more. He makes you feel like you've been friends forever, even if you just met.



A TRUE WINNER: Above, left, Jim Kennedy proudly poses with some of the many awards he has won during his racing career. Above, right, Kennedy, left, and son Mike, background, work to remove fiberglass so Jim can fix an engine while Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative board member Travis Wigfield looks on.

If I didn't know better, I'd say some of his recollections were nothing more than embellished yarns, but his son Mike, along with Travis, were with us during every discussion we had, and they verified every last word.

A wall of trophies

Jim was born in Curryville, but he has lived in the Bedford REC area for the past 52 years. He has been retired for more than 29 years, but his racing hobby keeps him busy. In his working days, he was a union carpenter. At one point, he worked on the Pennsylvania Turnpike tunnels as well as another project that all Pennsylvania cooperatives are very familiar with: the hydroelectric plant at Raystown Dam in Huntingdon County.

Jim began his racing career in 1958 at the ripe old age of 24 at the South Penn Speedway in Everett. In that first race, he drove a 1937 Chevy that he salvaged out of a junkyard. Since that historic day back in the late '50s, Jim has competed at 31 different tracks, some of which no longer exist — including South Penn.

After about an hour in his garage discussing engines, chassis, tires, horsepower, RPMs, weight restrictions, safety equipment, numerous spinouts, turnovers, and crashes, he invited me into his house to look at some of his many awards and peruse articles in numerous racing magazines. He has an entire wall covered with trophies he won during his illustrious racing career.

Despite all of his accomplishments, Jim is not boastful in the least; in fact, he is very humble. At the same time, he is quite proud of having accomplished so much in the world of motorsports.

NEVER GIVING UP: It appears the shirt Jim Kennedy of Bedford is wearing pretty much says it all. Kennedy, 91, who's known as The Flyin' Cowboy, has been racing cars since he was 24 – and doesn't plan to stop anytime soon.



Throughout his racing career, Jim competed in various classes, but these days, he only races in the 305 sprint car class, which features vehicles that have a 305 cubic-inch engine. These powerful machines idle between 1,200 and 1,300 RPM and when they accelerate at full throttle, they rev at more than 7,600 RPM.

Depending on the length of the track, the cars can travel very fast on straight stretches. Per Jim, at a small track like the one in Clinton County, drivers will reach speeds between 75 and 80 miles per hour. Meanwhile, at a larger track like the one in Bedford, they can travel in excess of 100 mph. The cars run on alcohol, so fuel costs are not cheap, and by rule, the car must not weigh less than 1,750 pounds with the driver in it.

Danger at every turn

As one can imagine, when traveling at high rates of speed on a dirt track, there's the possibility of danger. Jim recalled some rather serious crashes in which he was involved. The most recent one was just a week before our conversation.

Jim was racing at Clinton County Speedway when a driver who was multiple car lengths ahead of him spun out; Jim had nowhere to go. As a result, Jim T-boned the driver while going approximately 65 mph. Jim said it jolted him, and if it wasn't for the safety restraints and the cage around the car, he may have been more than just a little shaken up.

Then, there was the accident he had about 10 years ago at Path Valley Speedway in Spring Run. The accident left him unconscious, and he had to be life-flighted from the racing venue to a hospital in Altoona. Fortunately, he made a full recovery.

Jim also talked about another incident at a track in Ebensburg in 1964. He was launched off the track and into a fence post before winding up on the protective screen that keeps debris from hitting the crowd.

Jim laughs pretty hard when he tells the story of a rollover in Huntingdon in 1961. He tried to enter a car with no floorboards in a race, but the officials declined the vehicle. Jim insisted he'd stay back and not pass anyone. They let him compete, and he ended up flipping the car.

People who race on ovals do it for the love of the sport — not fame or fortune. And most who do it enlist the help of a crew, whether it's friends or family. When Jim was asked about the members of his crew, he said, "You're looking at him." Sure, when he gets to the venue, there are people who help him, but by and large, he's a one-man show.

"Imagine being 91 years old: You are your own mechanic, you load and unload the car by yourself, you make multiple adjustments during the prep, and on race nights, you change tires during an evening of racing, you crawl into the cockpit, you strap in, and then you exit numerous times," his son Mike says. "It's not easy."

'Mario who?'

Bedford REC member Eric Zembower is employed at a local HVAC outfit that often works with the cooperative. He also happens to be a former driver and racing historian. If you want to know anything about the area's racing history, Eric is your guy.

He once interviewed Mario Andretti at his house in Nazareth, Pa.

"Mario is considered one of the greatest drivers ever," Eric says. "I told Mario about Jim Kennedy and that he was still racing, and Mario said, 'That's unbelievable. Good for him [that] he's still competing.'"

When Eric saw Jim a few weeks later and told him about the conversation, Jim, in his dry cowboy humor, said, "Mario who?"

Jim isn't slowing down. He has two cars and an extra chassis sitting in his garage, but he hasn't had time to tinker with the chassis quite yet. He was also very eager to share his knowledge and racing stories, so it appears he'll be involved with the sport for years to come. And, by the way, he has also been busy cutting and splitting wood as he gets ready for winter.

For The Flyin' Cowboy, age is nothing more than a number. 🤠



RACES TO REMEMBER: Clockwise from top left – Jim Kennedy takes his car, No. 7, on some hot laps to get ready for racing action; Kennedy is all fixed up and on the track at Jennerstown shortly after a flip at a race in Hagerstown, Md.; The Flyin' Cowboy poses with his late model car at Bedford in 1980.

FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER & CEO

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board, overseen by directors from each of the cooperatives, has made forward-thinking investments in energy resources, including nuclear and hydropower plants, that today provide nearly 67% of the electricity we distribute to our members.

These assets are important because they shield us from the energy market's volatility, including the extremes we've seen and will likely continue to see on capacity pricing. Neighboring investor-owned utilities buy 100% of their energy on the open energy market, making them and their rates vulnerable to that volatility.

Our own exposure, however, is limited because Allegheny only needs to buy about one-third — or about 33% — of our energy needs from outside sources. And with long-term power-purchase contracts in place to further manage risk, we've set the stage for additional price stability.

As a result, Allegheny offers some

of the lowest, least-volatile generation rates in the PJM region. Furthermore, Allegheny continues to find ways to reduce costs and maintain stability. It recently secured millions in federal grant funding to boost its supply of affordable, carbon-free energy and add to its nuclear resources. That funding will help stabilize overall energy costs for consumers, too.

We never take cost increases lightly, and they are only ever considered as

a last resort. Our board of directors is made up of cooperative members just like you, so they understand the impact rate changes have on local families and the rural communities they serve. That's why we continue to work with partners like Allegheny to keep the safe delivery of electricity as affordable as possible. 📞

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 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.

OFFICE CLOSINGS

The Bedford REC office
will be closed **Nov. 11** in
observance of **Veterans Day** and
Nov. 27 & 28 for **Thanksgiving**.

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. 12.

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.

