

# Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

## **BEDFORD REC**

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### **Attorney**

**James R. Cascio**

## **OFFICE HOURS**

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

## EPA's Power Plant Rule Threatens Electric Reliability



**BROOKS SHOEMAKER**

**KEEPING THE LIGHTS ON AT** a cost you, our consumer-members, can afford is the focal point of everything we do at Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative. Transparency is one of our core values, so in addition to sharing co-op successes, we also have a responsibility to tell you about the challenges, too.

In May, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a rule that impacts energy production from power plants. This mandate will undoubtedly threaten access to reliable electricity for our community and communities

across the country.

The power plant rule constrains existing coal and new natural gas plants by requiring them to install carbon capture and storage (CCS) — a technology with potential that isn't widely available yet. In fact, no power plant in North America currently uses CCS at the scale and levels mandated by EPA. And when they are unable to comply with the EPA's CCS requirements, the facilities will be required to shut down, significantly limit operations or switch fuels. These unrealistic standards will force the unnecessary and early shutdown of many power plants that currently provide reliable electricity 24/7.

We are fortunate because more than 60% of our generation mix consists of nuclear and hydroelectric sources. However, our remaining energy needs are purchased on the open market, and the new rules will certainly affect our future costs.

Renewable sources, such as solar and wind, are becoming more important components of everyone's overall generation mix. But given their intermittent nature, we simply cannot depend on them. The need for always-available, power-generating resources is still essential.

The timing of the power plant rule is equally troubling. At the same time the EPA is leading our nation down the path to fewer power plants, utilities are facing a surge in electricity demand, driven by the on-shoring of manufacturing, the growth of the American economy, and the rapid expansion of data centers to support artificial intelligence, e-commerce, and cryptocurrency.

Many states have already experienced rolling outages. Pennsylvania has come dangerously close but has been able to avoid them. If the supply of electricity is further threatened by the EPA's power plant rule, the problem will only get worse. In fact, the nation's electric reliability watchdog, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation, recently forecasted all or parts of 19 states are at high risk of rolling power outages during normal peak electricity demand over the next five years.

It's no secret: When demand is high and supply is low, costs go up. We're concerned about threats to reliability as well as cost increases for our members.

I don't say all of this to worry you. I want our members to understand the challenges that lie ahead. Just as we have always done, we will look for solutions that serve our members' best interests. We are joining electric

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# Local Bird and Nature Club Celebrates 35 Years

**JENNA REFFNER**, OFFICE ASSISTANT

**STARTING IN SEPTEMBER OF EACH** year, local bird and nature enthusiasts meet in the library of Bedford High School. The members of the Bedford County Bird and Nature Club share an interest in and appreciation of wildlife, plants, and all things outdoors. This year marks the club's 35th anniversary.

Mike and Laura Jackson, members of Bedford Rural



MIKE & LAURA JACKSON

**LAKE VIEW:** Treasurer Monique Ridet participates in a Bedford County Bird and Nature Club trip to Presque Isle State Park near Erie.



MIKE & LAURA JACKSON

**HAWK WATCH:** Ruth Davis, left, and Chris Wolfe take a trip to the Allegheny Front Hawk Watch in western Bedford County. Members of the Bedford County Bird and Nature Club visit the Allegheny Front each fall to see the bird migration.

Electric Cooperative (REC) since 1984, are the club's founders. They participated in Pennsylvania's first Breeding Bird Atlas from 1984 to 1989, where they met another Bedford County resident, Janet Shaffer. Janet was a bird bander and environmentalist. The three of them bonded over their love of birds.

"We thought Bedford County residents would be interested in learning more about birds and other nature topics and would enjoy field trips to parks and natural areas," Laura says.

Janet passed away in 2012, and Mike and Laura remain active in the club.

"It's rewarding to know that our club has grown from an idea developed by three birders in the 1980s and a membership of just a few people to 50 members today," Mike says.

The club members approved bylaws and officers in 2016. Mike was elected president; Joanne Murley, vice president; Laura, secretary; and Monique Ridet, treasurer. Mike remained the president until 2023, when Jan Chippendale was elected to the post. Monique and Laura have remained in their positions.

"I had been serving as vice president when Mike decided to step down after many years of leadership with the club," Jan says. "I was happy to step up."

Jan and her husband, Brent, have been a part of the club for at least 15 years.

"I enjoy observing all kinds of wildlife, and I have learned to identify more species of birds through my participation in club activities," she explains. "We have speakers on a variety of wildlife and habitat topics. I enjoy the meetings, the nature walks and just spending time with others who share a love of nature."

## Always learning

The club gatherings start with a brief business meeting. After that, members listen to presentations from various animal, plant, habitat and fungi experts.

Kevin Dodge, program director/professor of natural resources and wildlife technology at Garret College, is a repeat speaker. He has traveled from West Virginia to present programs on mountain peatlands, the Northern saw-whet owl and nighttime sounds. Bedford REC member Mary Jo Casalena, also a longtime club member gave a presentation last year on her wild turkey research for the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC). Most years include a talk from a game warden or researcher from the PGC but new topics are thrown into the mix, too.

The club does not meet in December. Instead, members are encouraged to participate in the Christmas Bird



Count, the longest-running citizen science project in North America. Volunteers record the number of birds found within the Christmas Bird Count Circle, which is centered at Mann's Choice and includes Shawnee State Park, a birding hotspot, according to Laura. Club members meet after the count for a meal and to share data and any interesting wildlife sightings. Mike and Laura coordinate and compile data from the count.

In addition to the monthly meetings, the club takes various field trips throughout the year. Club members gather at Shawnee in the spring for a walk around the Lakeshore Trail. In addition to birds, walk participants discuss other animals, plants and anything else that may cross their path.

Club members also enjoy a February visit to Whitetail Wetlands, which is on Bedford REC lines just outside Pleasantville. The location provides a beautiful habitat for birds, reptiles and mammals. Trails wind throughout the property and provide a tranquil place for all nature lovers.

This past spring club members were treated to a tour of Will's Mountain — State Game Lands (SGL) 048 — by PGC employees. The driving tour took members to areas of the game lands typically closed to vehicles. PGC employees also shared their habitat management plans.

## Giving back to the community

Last year, the staff at Old Bedford Village — the site of a six-acre field with a pavilion that borders Shuster Way Heritage Trail — asked the club to create and maintain a trail through the meadow, which connects to the Heritage Trail in two places. The club is also helping to eliminate invasive plants and cultivate native pollinators there. In addition, members plan to provide benches underneath the pavilion, place blue bird boxes along the meadow and procure signs for the trail.

Over the years, the club has also raised nearly \$4,500 to support local and regional wildlife and environmental organizations. Funds are raised through member dues (\$10 per person or \$20 per family), and the club also hosts a silent auction fundraiser each year at its November meeting. Members donate gently used and new nature-related items as well as baked goods for the event.

Laura encourages others to give the club a try. "The club gives each member an opportunity to enjoy and learn about nature with others who share the same interests," she says. "We've learned a lot from a wide variety of professionals

and amateur naturalists who share their expertise [by giving] presentations, leading field trips or serving as resources, if we have questions. I think the conservation groups we help to fund do important work, especially in terms of wildlife rehabilitation and habitat protection."

The club meets at 7 p.m. on the fourth Thursday of the month (September through May) at Bedford High School. For more information on meeting dates and topics, visit the Bedford County Bird and Nature Club's Facebook page. All nature lovers are welcome and encouraged to attend.

"We have members ranging from experienced birders to folks who just enjoy looking at birds and wildlife," Jan says. "No expertise is necessary, and everyone is very welcome." 🐦



MIKE & LAURA JACKSON

**TRAILBLAZING:** From left, Bedford County Bird and Nature Club members Horace Stillman, Chris Wolfe and Annette Thaler flag the new trail through a wildflower meadow at Old Bedford Village.



MIKE & LAURA JACKSON

**FOND MEMORIES:** Bedford County Bird and Nature Club President Jan Chippendale and Vice President Mike Jackson reminisce over a club scrapbook created by longtime member Dixie Deffibaugh.

**FROM THE  
GENERAL MANAGER & CEO**

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co-ops across the country to fight these regulations, and we are working with our local elected officials to help them understand the consequences this would have on all Pennsylvanians.

Co-ops are no strangers to innovation, and we are taking proactive steps to address today's energy challenges and tomorrow's energy needs. We have led the charge on industry endeavors since the 1930s, and we will continue to explore new technologies and strategies that bolster reliability.

Electric cooperatives deliver power to 42 million Americans. At the end of the day, our top priority is always to meet our members' energy needs, and we must have reliable electricity available to do that.

**Energy Efficiency Tip  
of the Month**

If you recently made or plan to make energy-efficiency improve-

ments to your home, you may be eligible for federal tax credits.

The 2022 Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) empowers homeowners to save money on energy-efficiency improvements and upgrades. A few upgrades covered through the IRA include new exterior doors, windows,

insulation, heating/cooling equipment and other major appliances. If you completed an upgrade this year or you are considering one, visit [energystar.gov/federal-tax-credits](https://energystar.gov/federal-tax-credits) to learn if you qualify for a tax credit. 📌

**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.*

## FARM SAFETY

## FOR A SAFE HARVEST

Take these steps to help keep you and everyone on your farm safe during a busy harvest.

**Meet Daily**

Have morning safety meetings to brief everyone on the day ahead and to discuss potential electrical hazards. Review power line locations, clearance requirements and the proper positioning of extensions for transporting.

**Train Others**

Train anyone working on your farm, including seasonal workers and family members, on potential electrical hazards.

**Use a Spotter**

Use a spotter when operating large machinery near power lines or poles. Always keep equipment and extensions at least 10 feet from power lines.

If your equipment makes contact with a power line, pole or guy wire, **stay in the cab, call 9-1-1 and warn others to stay away.**



**Safe  
Electricity.org®**