

Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

Bedford REC
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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President & PREA Director
Owen L. Miller
East St. Clair Twp.

Vice President & Allegheny Director
C. Robert Koontz
Colerain, Snake Spring and South Woodbury Twps.

Secretary
Donald Hoenstine
Kimmel and King Twps.

Treasurer
Reuben R. Lafferty
Juniata Twp., Bedford County, and Allegheny Twp., Somerset County, New Baltimore Boro

Assistant Secretary
Earl W. Garland
East Providence Twp., Bedford County, and Brush Creek Twp., Fulton County

Assistant Treasurer
William Howard Atkinson
Monroe and West Providence Twps., Everett Boro

Wayne M. Hillegass
Napier and Harrison Twps.
Ned H. McDonald
West St. Clair, Pavia, and Lincoln Twps.
Paul L. Rummel Jr.
Bedford and Cumberland Valley Twps.

John J. Dirienzo Jr.
Attorney

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

FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

Cooperative's 76th annual meeting



by Brooks Shoemaker
General Manager

THE COOPERATIVE'S 76th annual meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 8, 2015, at the Crossroads Bible Church, which is located 2.5 miles north of the Bedford Turnpike Interchange on Business Route 220 near Cessna. Registration starts at 12:30 p.m., and the meeting begins at 1:30 p.m.

During the registration hour, attendees may take advantage of free blood pressure screenings. Light refreshments will be served, and every registered member will receive a gift. Be sure to visit the display area, which will be devoted to new trends in the electric business.

"True Heart," featuring Joe Kantz and Scott Bordner, will provide the entertainment this year. Their Christian, country music ministry is based in Milton, Pa. They have been sharing gospel-infused entertainment for over 20 years throughout central Pennsylvania. Their music speaks to people of all ages, in every different stage of life.

Each year, the annual meeting is the defining moment for all cooperatives across the United States. Why? Because it presents the opportunity for voting members to democratically control the future of their cooperative. Each member, young or old, large or small user of electricity, has an equal voice by voting for their member-representatives, the board of directors. What better way of mapping the future of the organization than by helping to decide who sits on the nine-member board of directors?

Directors are elected for three-year terms, with three of the nine seats up for election each year. Despite the Nominating Committee's best efforts, a *Penn Lines* article and a billing insert, all aimed at attracting interested candidates, only four members were interested in being

on the ballot. The following pages contain their profiles. This year, we did not receive any petitions from members requesting that they be added to the ballot. However, as always, additional nominations may be made from the floor during the meeting.

Mark your calendars now and plan to join us on April 8. The official notice of the meeting will be mailed to you in late March. To simplify registration, please tear off the bottom section of the notice and bring it with you to the meeting. Remember, every vote counts!

Not letting you get lost in the shuffle

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently proposed an amendment to the Clean Air Act. It is 600 pages long, plus 1,000 more pages of supporting documents. (The original act was only 465 pages.) The amendment limits carbon dioxide emissions from power plants — plants that power rural America.

A lot has been written about the rule's legality, affordability, reliability and complexity. Lost in the shuffle of thousands of pages is its impact on rural America. How much will this arbitrary emission reduction increase electric bills? How will it affect manufacturers? Will they relocate? How many rural Americans will lose their jobs? How many power plants that keep our electricity plentiful and affordable will be forced to shut down? Will there be enough plants left to adequately supply the electric grid with power? These are very important, yet difficult questions and we take them very seriously. As a not-for-profit cooperative, we are in the business of providing affordable, reliable power to our members — the folks who pay the bills.

We put you first. That's why we're asking the EPA for answers to these and many other questions. We know times are *(continues on page 14d)*

Director Nominees

THE FOLLOWING ARE PROFILES OF COOPERATIVE MEMBERS NOMINATED FOR THE THREE SEATS UP FOR ELECTION THIS YEAR ON THE BEDFORD REC BOARD OF DIRECTORS. ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD AT THE BEDFORD REC ANNUAL MEETING, SET FOR APRIL 8, 2015, AT CROSSROADS BIBLE CHURCH, BEDFORD, PA.



DISTRICT 2: WAYNE M. HILLEGASS

Wayne M. Hillegass currently represents District 2 on the Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative Board of Directors. In September 1999, he achieved Credentialed Cooperative Director status from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. He previously served on the boards of Continental Cooperative Services and Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc., the wholesale power supplier to Bedford REC.

For 19 years, Hillegass worked as a millwright for PPG Industries and later for 16 years with Hercules, Inc., the company he retired from in 1993.

A graduate of Schellsburg Napier High School, Hillegass and his wife, Irene, reside at 822 Holler Road, Buffalo Mills. They have three children and four grandchildren.

Hillegass served in the U.S. Navy from 1948-52. He is a member and past commander of Hyndman VFW Post 7375; a member and past master of Hyndman Lodge F&AM; and past patron of the Eastern Star. In his spare time, he enjoys listening to bluegrass music.

Candidate's Comments: *"My objectives are to hold rates as stable as possible."*



DISTRICT 2: THOMAS A. BULLINGTON

Thomas A. Bullington, a director candidate for District 2, is the owner/manager of Central PA Settlement Services in Bedford. Thomas and his wife, Linda, reside at 246 Spring Lake Road, Manns Choice. The couple has two children, Christopher and Matthew.

A 1972 graduate of Bedford High School, Bullington received a bachelor's degree in safety management from Indiana University of Pennsylvania in 1976. Thomas is a member of the Bedford Area School District Board of Directors and is currently serving as the president of the board. He is a member of the Bedford Elks and Buffalo Run Rod and Gun Club. His hobbies include golfing and woodworking.

Candidate's Comments: *"I would like to see the cooperative continue and improve on the excellent customer service."*



DISTRICT 4: DONALD E. HOENSTINE

Donald E. Hoenstine represents District 4 on the Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative Board of Directors, a position he has held since 2003. He currently holds the post of board secretary.

A 1967 graduate of Claysburg Kimmel High School, Hoenstine and his wife, Sandra, reside at 207 Baughnan Lane in Imler. They have two daughters, Julie and Faith.

Hoenstine retired from Conrail as a car repairman in 2000; he served in the U.S. Army from 1969-71. He attends Claysburg Bible Church, where he has served on its board of trustees, as assistant treasurer and as a member of the church's visitation group.

In his spare time, Hoenstine enjoys gardening and spending time with his three grandchildren, Sadie, Grey and Harper.

Candidate's Comments: *"I thank the cooperative members for giving me the opportunity to serve them and would consider it a privilege to continue serving as director."*



DISTRICT 8: WILLIAM "HOWARD" ATKINSON

William "Howard" Atkinson represents District 8 on the Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative Board of Directors, a position he has held since 2003. He currently holds the office of board assistant treasurer.

A graduate of Triadelphia High School in Wheeling, WVa., Atkinson received a bachelor's degree in agriculture from West Virginia University. He served with the U.S. Navy in China from 1945-46, and retired as a fieldman for Atlantic Dairy Cooperative in 1992.

Atkinson is a member of the Trinity Lutheran Church, Bedford; a 50-year member of the AF&AM Ohio Lodge No. 1 and the Scottish Rite Lodge, Wheeling, WVa.; a 50-year member of B.P.O. Elks Lodge 28; a member of American Legion Post 1 in Wheeling, WVa.; VFW Post 2088, Everett, and the Tri-State Sanitarians Association; past president of the Tri-State Dairy Tech Society, Pittsburgh; and awards committee chairman with the Pennsylvania Fieldman's Association. In his free time, he enjoys golfing.

Atkinson and his wife, Linda, reside at 10671 Clear Ridge Road, Everett. The couple has five children and 11 grandchildren.

Candidate's Comments: *"As a director, I will promote the continuation of good service at a reasonable cost."*

Fresh hydroponic veggies make winter tasty

BY LINDA WILLIAMS

IF YOU are shopping at Wholesome Living, Fisher's Country Store, or Little Barn on the right day, you may see "hydroponic lettuce."

Bright green in color, it is an attention-getter in mid-winter when lettuce usually only comes from the warmer states and is not always so appealing in color. This bright green, fresh salad material is a product of Bob and Jean Benna's Lone Oak Farm on Orchard Hollow Road in Manns Choice. The lettuce is sold in local stores and to a few restaurants that provide salads featuring the Benna lettuce.

The Bennas also grow tomatoes and are presently experimenting with cucumbers and a few other greens not commonly grown locally in the winter.

Bob says he first tried aeroponics, which is the process of growing plants in an air or mist environment. That was not easy in Pennsylvania, so the Bennas decided to give hydroponics — the process of growing plants using mineral nutrient solutions in water, without soil — a try.

They start their lettuce in trays that hold 276 plants. When the plants are big



GROWING SALAD: Tiny radish, kale and other vegetable seeds are started in the Benna greenhouse. These will mature quickly into salad material.



UNDERNEATH THE LETTUCE: Bob Benna shows the roots from the floating lettuce rafts.

enough, the Bennas transplant them into separate pots and set them adrift in floating rafts nourished with the warm mineral water.

"We feel we are having success, but are still learning," Bob explains. "Growing vegetables with these new methods has a pretty steep learning curve. ... Penn State has been very helpful when I need advice."

Walking into the Benna greenhouses on a drab, cold, winter day and being greeted by the bright green lettuce in various shades is eye candy. They also have vines of cherry red tomatoes, although these are grown primarily for their own use.

"Our cucumbers are still pretty much experimental," Bob continues. "Sometimes we use plants that have been developed for hydroponic farming, and we also experiment with regular plants to see what might happen."

All three of the Benna greenhouses are heated with wood and coal in an outdoor furnace. It keeps both the greenhouses and the water warm.

Nutrients are provided through a special solution. When the Bennas recently had a problem with dying plants, they contacted Penn State and discovered the computer system that told them the nutrients were being administered was not working. Once that problem was resolved, the lettuce again flourished.

At present, the Bennas have six kinds of lettuce, plus six species of tomatoes. They also have a few kale and radish plants for their own personal salads.

Bob says they are not operating an organic farm, nor do they want to. They

are not bothered by droughts, frosts or bugs; however, should an outbreak of insects occur, they want to be able to stop them. If they were strictly organic, the solution for an insect-outbreak would be more difficult. They have no weeds to pull and the shelf life of the lettuce is much longer than anything else they can get at the store. Hydroponic vegetables are consistent in quality, and the Bennas never have to bother with manure to fertilize their plants.

The operation presently encompasses three greenhouses.

"As we grow, we hope to be able to invite chefs from restaurants to come and pick their own vegetables," Bob says.



FIELD OF DREAMS: Bob Benna works in his indoor field of lettuce.

The Bennas also have a soft pretzel and chicken barbecue business they set up at various local events, including Fall Foliage.

During the summer, Jean is a familiar figure at the Bedford Farmer's Market as she sells fresh lettuce and other in-season vegetables, along with jams and jellies made from the fruits of their farm. 🌱

FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

(continued from page 14a)

still tough, and we don't want our members to get lost in Washington's bureaucratic shuffle. Federal mandates that arbitrarily increase rates for electricity do not make sense. We cannot afford the related job losses and rising consumer prices that accompany escalating electricity prices.

Do the bureaucrats in Washington understand what it's like to live in rural America? I doubt it. That's why we keep reminding them that the rules they write have a disproportionate impact in rural America — where *we* live.

We continue to tell the EPA that support for the environment and a true "all-of-the-above" energy policy are not mutually exclusive. We can talk about our energy-efficiency programs. Most importantly, we remind regulators and lawmakers that the impact that new rules and laws have on people should be their **first** thought, not their **last**.

The electric cooperative program has a great, positive, member-driven story to tell. Best of all, it won't take 1,600 pages to share the message! ☀

OFFICE CLOSING
 Bedford REC's office will be closed on Friday, April 3, 2015, in observance of Good Friday.
 The office will also be closing at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, April 8, 2015, for our annual meeting.

STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc. is the recipient of federal financial assistance from the Rural Utilities Service, (formerly Rural Electrification Administration), an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and is subject to the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended. In accordance with federal law and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, or disability (not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). No person shall be excluded from participation in, admission or access to, denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any of this organization's programs or activities.

The person responsible for coordinating this organization's nondiscrimination compliance efforts is the human resources manager. Any individual, or specific class of individuals, who feels that this organization has subjected them to discrimination, may obtain further information about the statutes and regulations listed above and/or file a written complaint. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call 202-720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Complaints must be filed within 180 days after the alleged discrimination. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible.

Brooks R. Shoemaker
 General Manager

TROUBLE CALL SCHEDULE

In case of trouble ...

- First Check your fuses or circuit breakers.
- Second Check with your neighbors, if convenient, to see if they have been affected by the power failure.
- Third **Call 24-hour number, 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 person receiving 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.

Alternate numbers ...

Gary Lafferty	Week of March 2	842-9925
Troy Mock	Week of March 9	276-9759
Greg Miller	Week of March 16	839-0037
Al Hileman	Week of March 23	766-9971
Jim Seymour.....	Week of March 30	839-2848

In case you cannot reach any of the above ... Call:

Jim Wood	Bedford	623-6121
James Clark	Everett	652-9791
Mark Rowan	Bedford	623-7890

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.