

AUGUST 2024

PENNLINES

Wild for Elk

How Pennsylvania's
Herd is Fueling Tourism
in Rural Communities

**A GUIDE TO ELECTRIC
VEHICLE OWNERSHIP**

**WHAT YOUR
WEEDS MIGHT
BE TELLING YOU**

**EVERYTHING IS
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ON THE COVER

The Pennsylvania Wilds is home to the state's elk herd. And each year, nearly a half million tourists visit the region to see the magnificent animals, soak up the scenery – and spend some money.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KEYSTONE ELK COUNTRY ALLIANCE

Reliability Matters And Your Voice Does, Too



**MORGAN
WEBB**

MY JOB AT THE PENNSYLVANIA RURAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION (PREA) involves a lot of talking ... talking to lawmakers ... talking to their aides ... talking to cooperative leaders ... talking to consumers ... and talking about issues that affect rural Pennsylvanians.

And as I talked to many of your directors and chief executives at a recent gathering of cooperative leaders, something occurred to me: As a member of a Pennsylvania rural electric cooperative, your voice has never been more critical.

We're in the midst of a battle — a battle to overturn a burdensome new rule from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that impacts new and existing power plants and poses a direct threat to our energy security and reliability. This rule, if left unchecked, will force critical power plants to shut down early and make new plants exceedingly difficult to build, disrupting your cooperative's ability to keep the lights on.

The North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) has forecast alarming risks to our power grid. In its 2023-2024 Winter Reliability Assessment, NERC warned that over the next five years, parts of 19 states are at high risk of rolling blackouts even under normal weather conditions. When temperatures soar or plummet, the risk is even greater. NERC's Summer Reliability Report further emphasized the danger, highlighting how extreme heat this summer is likely to drive up demand for electricity, potentially causing power outages. This is especially concerning for Texas, California, the Southwest, New England and much of the Northeast.

The EPA's rule is poised to exacerbate these risks by mandating the early closure of power plants or the installation of costly, inadequately demonstrated emissions technology. Consequently, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), which represents your cooperative in Washington, D.C., and others have filed lawsuits challenging the rule.

To support this effort, legions of cooperative members are joining forces under the banner of Voices for Cooperative Power (VCP), a grassroots advocacy network that works to educate lawmakers on rational public policy. Their goal is simple: to let the EPA and Congress know they prioritize reliable, affordable power and oppose the rule, too. Since May, VCP supporters — PREA, its member cooperatives and their leaders are among them — have sent more than 51,000 letters to Congress, urging lawmakers to overturn the EPA rule. We need to keep that momentum going.

Here's how you can help:

- ▶ **Act now:** Visit voicesforcooperativepower.com/epa-act-now to send a letter to Congress, urging lawmakers to oppose the EPA's harmful rule.
- ▶ **Share your story:** Explain why reliable electricity is vital for you and your family. Personal stories can significantly impact lawmakers' perspectives.
- ▶ **Spread the word:** Follow Voices for Cooperative Power on social media and share its messages with your friends and family.

The EPA's new power plant rule is not just an abstract policy — it has real consequences for our communities. And while reducing emissions is a noble goal, this effort must be pursued with practical, proven technologies and achievable timelines — something the EPA's rule does not do.

Together, we all have the power to make a difference. By participating in the VCP campaign, connecting with your lawmakers, and adding your voice to a chorus that includes thousands of cooperative consumers nationwide, you'll be helping your co-op and more than 900 others continue their extremely important mission of providing safe, reliable and affordable electricity. 🗣️

MORGAN WEBB

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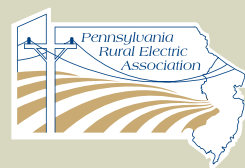
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Fish Oil Failure Shines Grim Light on America's Memory Crisis

America's Top Memory M.D. Reveals Why Fish Oil Doesn't Protect You from Senior Moments – and the #1 Alternative

More than 16 million Americans suffer from age-associated cognitive impairment, and according to nationwide research, these numbers are only rising.

Thankfully, anti-aging specialist and best-selling author Dr. Al Sears says there's an easy way to banish senior moments and brain fog for good.

It's a safe, natural compound called DHA – one of the building blocks of your brain. It helps children grow their brains significantly bigger during development. And in adults, it protects brain cells from dying as they get older.

For years, most people thought fish oil was the best available source of DHA...

But industrial fish farming practices have depleted the nutritional content of nearly every fish oil you can buy.

Today, roughly 20 million Americans are wasting their money on fish oils that hardly do anything at all.

And since they think they are addressing the problem, fish oil's failure has led to America's memory crisis continuing to grow practically unchecked.

Fortunately, Dr. Sears says, "there's still hope for seniors. Getting more DHA can make a life-changing difference for your mental clarity, focus, and memory."

Dr. Sears, a highly-acclaimed, board-certified doctor— who has published more than 500 studies and written four bestselling books — says we should be able to get enough DHA in our diets... but we don't anymore.

"For thousands of years, fish were a great natural source of DHA. But due to industrial fish farming practices, the fish we eat and the fish oils you see at the store are no longer as nutrient-dense as they once were," he explains.

DHA is backed by hundreds of studies for supporting razor-sharp focus, extraordinary mental clarity, and a lightning quick memory... especially in seniors.

So, if you're struggling with focus, mental clarity, or memory as you get older...

Dr. Sears recommends a different approach.

THE SECRET TO A LASTING MEMORY

Research has shown our paleo ancestors were able to grow bigger and smarter brains by eating foods rich in one ingredient — DHA.

"Our hippocampus thrives off DHA, and grows because of it," explains Dr. Sears. "Without DHA, our brains would shrink, and our memories would quickly fade."

A groundbreaking study from the University of Alberta confirmed this. Animals given a diet rich in DHA saw a 29% boost in their hippocampus — the part of the brain responsible for learning and memory. As a result, these animals became smarter.

Another study on more than 1,500 seniors found that those whose brains were deficient in DHA had significantly smaller brains — a characteristic of accelerated aging and a weakened memory.

PEOPLE'S BRAINS ARE SHRINKING AND THEY DON'T EVEN KNOW IT

Dr. Sears uncovered that sometime during the 1990s, fish farmers stopped giving their animals a natural, DHA-rich diet and began feeding them a diet that was 70% vegetarian.

"It became expensive for farmers to feed fish what they'd eat in the wild," explains Dr. Sears. "But in order to produce DHA, fish need to eat a natural, marine diet, like the one they'd eat in the wild."

"Since fish farmers are depriving these animals of their natural diet, DHA is almost nonexistent in the oils they produce."

"And since more than 80% of fish oil comes from farms, it's no wonder the country is experiencing a memory crisis. Most people's brains are shrinking and they don't even know it."

So, what can people do to improve their memory and brain



Why the 'brain fuel' ingredient in fish oil is slowly drying up.

function most effectively.

Dr. Sears says, "Find a quality DHA supplement that doesn't come from a farmed source. That will protect your brain cells and the functions they serve well into old age."

Dr. Sears and his team worked tirelessly for over two years developing a unique brain-boosting formula called **Omega Rejuvenol**.

It's made from the most powerful source of DHA in the ocean, squid and krill — two species that cannot be farmed.

According to Dr. Sears, these are the purest and most potent sources of DHA in the world, because they haven't been tampered with. "**Omega Rejuvenol** is sourced from the most sustainable fishery in Antarctica. You won't find this oil in any stores."

MORE IMPRESSIVE RESULTS

Already, the formula has sold more than 850,000 bottles. And for a good reason, too. Satisfied customers can't stop raving about the memory-boosting benefits of quality-sourced DHA oil.

"The first time I took it, I was amazed. The brain fog I struggled with for years was gone within 24 hours. The next day, I woke up with the energy and mental clarity of a new man," says Owen R.

"I remember what it was like before I started taking **Omega Rejuvenol**... the lack of focus... the dull moods... the slippery memory... but now my mind is as clear as it's ever been," says Estelle H.

"My mood and focus are at an all-time high. I've always had trouble concentrating, and now I think I know why," raves Bernice J. "The difference that **Omega Rejuvenol** makes couldn't be more noticeable."

And 70-year-old Mark K. says, "My focus and memory are back to age-30 levels."

These are just a handful of the thousands of reviews Dr. Sears receives regularly thanks to his breakthrough memory formula, **Omega Rejuvenol**.

WHERE TO FIND OMEGA REJUVENOL

To secure bottles of this brain-booster, buyers should contact the Sears Health Hotline at **1-800-440-5981**. "It takes time to manufacture these bottles," says Dr. Sears. "The Hotline allows us to ship the product directly to customers who need it most."

Dr. Sears feels so strongly about this product he is offering a 100% money-back guarantee on every order. "Send back any used or unused bottles within 90 days and I'll rush you a refund," says Dr. Sears.

The Hotline is taking orders for the next 48 hours. After that, the phone number may be shut down to allow for inventory restocking.

Call **1-800-440-5981** to secure your limited supply of **Omega Rejuvenol**. Readers of this publication immediately qualify for a steep discount, but supplies are limited. To take advantage of this great offer use Promo Code **PLOM824** when you call.

BEAT THE HEAT

The first time I saw a heat injury was during my Army basic training stint at Fort Jackson, S.C. While standing in formation, a fellow recruit crumpled to the ground in front of me, a victim of South Carolina's well-known heat and humidity. The drill sergeant who checked on him didn't seem to have much sympathy, which they were not well-known for.

"You locked your knees didn't you, hero?" was all he said to the dazed recruit.

Sure, locking your knees can cut off circulation and make you dizzy, but it's the intense activity in the heat and humidity that brings you to your knees.



The drill sergeant ordered somebody to get the recruit some "Victory Juice," which seemed to be the cure for everything at Jackson. Victory Juice was just water mixed with electrolytes, like a sports drink. Everything had to do with victory at Fort Jackson, the motto being "Victory starts here."

We joked that if someone fell from the rappelling tower and broke an arm, the drill sergeants would probably just pour Victory Juice on the arm and order them back up the tower (named Victory Tower, of course).

But heat injuries are no joke. In fact, they are the leading cause of weather-related death in the United States. In basic training, any heat-related illness meant your uniform would be tagged with red tape so the drill sergeants could keep an eye on you. The command to "drink water!" was heard throughout the day, and you had to respond: "Beat the heat, drill sergeant! Beat the heat!"

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is seeking to beat heat-related injuries and illnesses with a new proposal. OSHA's proposed standards would require all employers nationwide to develop heat injury plans and precautions.

While the energy sector is following these developments, electric cooperatives have long paid attention to heat as a safety priority. Given the extreme conditions line crews work in, cooperatives maintain robust precautions to protect their employees from the heat. The low incidence of heat-related injuries in the industry is an indication these efforts work.

Some of us don't need to be reminded to stay hydrated. As temperatures reach triple digits this summer, I can still hear those drill sergeants telling me to "drink water!" Beat the heat, drill sergeant. Beat the heat.

PETER A. FITZGERALD
EDITOR



A TRIBUTE TO MAPLEMAKING: Somerset County is the state's largest maple-producing county, and a newly opened museum pays tribute to this long-standing tradition.

SWEET!

Maple museum opens in Somerset County

Something sweet is happening in Somerset: The Pennsylvania Maple Museum has opened its doors at the Somerset Historical Center, 10649 Somerset Pike.

The new 4,400-square-foot museum showcases more than 100 artifacts used for tapping, collecting, boiling sugar water and producing syrup. Photographs of maple camps also line the walls. Many of the exhibits were donated by area maple producers and the Historical and Genealogical Society of Somerset County.

"It's fitting that a state maple museum is located in Somerset," Mark Ware, executive director of the historical and genealogical society, says. "Somerset County has been a huge producer of maple products since the late 1700s due to its climate, high elevation and large farm population."

The museum is open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesdays through Saturdays.

FARM FACTS

Pa. egg production up, Christmas tree production down

The Harrisburg-based Center for

Rural Pennsylvania (Center) has gleaned some interesting findings about farming in the Commonwealth from the 2022 Census of Agriculture. The Center found:

- ▶ 62% of Pennsylvania farms operate on less than 100 acres, and the majority of these smaller operations are in the southeastern part of the state.
- ▶ Egg sales in Pennsylvania increased from \$682 million in 2017 to more than \$1 billion in 2022, due in large part to inflation and an increase in the number of egg-producing operations.
- ▶ During the same five-year period, Pennsylvania experienced a 31% decline in the number of acres where Christmas trees are harvested.
- ▶ The majority of farm operators in Pennsylvania are white males between the ages of 35 and 64, although organic farm producers tend to be younger. The average age of a farm producer in Pennsylvania is 55.4 years.

The Center's full analysis is available on its website, rural.pa.gov.



TALKING TURKEY

Public asked to share wild turkey sightings

Have you seen a wild turkey? The Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) wants to know.

The annual Pennsylvania Wild Turkey Sighting Survey runs through Aug. 31, and the public can report sightings at pgcdatacollection.pa.gov/turkeybroodsurvey.

"The turkey survey enhances our agency's internal survey, which serves as a long-term index of turkey reproduction and is used in our turkey population model," says Mary Jo Casalena, PGC turkey biologist.

Survey participants will be asked to provide the following information: number of wild turkeys seen and the county, township and date of the sighting. Participants may also drop a "pin" on a map, which will automatically populate the location data. (Note: Location information is not shared.)

Spring weather, habitat conditions, previous winter food abundance, predation and last fall's harvest are among things that can affect wild turkey productivity.

ALWAYS REMEMBER

Guided walk commemorates '13 Days in September'

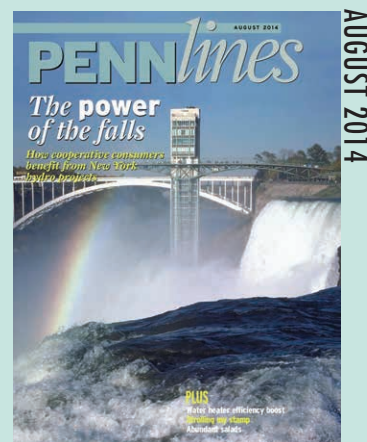
The Flight 93 National Memorial in Somerset County will be hosting a number of events before Sept. 11, the date hijacked Flight 93 crashed into a field near Shanksville where the nearby memorial now stands.

One is a quarter-mile guided walk, "13 Days in September," on the Western Overlook Trail. The walk starts at 2 p.m. Aug. 10, 18, and 31 and Sept. 7, 15, and 21. A park ranger will present a program that looks at how the country, responders, investigators, the community, and families of the passengers and crew members came to understand what happened that day.

On Sept. 11, the 23rd annual Service of Remembrance will begin at 9:45 a.m. at the site's Memorial Plaza. The ceremony is open to the public. Following that, the national wreath-laying ceremony at the Wall of Names will take place at 2 p.m.

For more information about these commemorative events and others, go to nps.gov/flni/planyourvisit/september-11-events-schedule.htm. 📍

TIME LINES



Pennsylvania's rural electric cooperative consumers get their power from a number of sources, and a decade ago, *Penn Lines* featured one of them. Readers learned about the powerful, decades-long relationship between Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc., which supplies wholesale energy to the 14 cooperatives in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, and the New York Power Authority, which oversees hydroelectric projects along the Niagara and St. Lawrence rivers. The partnership – a valuable part of Allegheny's power mix – continues today, providing cooperative members with clean, reliable and affordable power.

AUGUST



BATTER UP!

Gather the kids for a memory-making experience: the Little League World Series, Aug. 14-25, at South Williamsport's Little League International Complex. Admission and parking are free. Learn more at littleleague.org/world-series/2024/llbws/visit.

A DOGGONE GOOD CAUSE

Enjoy a day of golf while raising money to support service dogs Friday, Aug. 16, at the Cross Gates Golf Club in Millersville, Lancaster County. Learn more about the tournament, hosted by United Disabilities Services Foundation, at udservices.org/uds-service-dogs-golf-tournament-2024.



STORYTIME!

A cozy campfire and storytelling await visitors at the Children of Gettysburg 1863 museum Tuesday, Aug. 20. Kids and their families are invited to wear pajamas to the free event from 6:30 to 7 p.m. Learn more at gettysburgfoundation.org (Click on "Exhibits, Tours & Events" and choose "Special Events.")

ARTS AND CRAFTS

If you love the finer things in life, check out the 2024 Pocono State Craft Festival Aug. 24-25 at the Quiet Valley Living Historical Farm, Stroudsburg. More than 60 juried craftspeople and artisans will be featured. Adult admission is \$6, and parking is free. Learn more at poconoarts.org (Click on "Events" then "Festivals.")



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WILD FOR ELK



How Pennsylvania's Herd is Fueling Tourism in Rural Communities

STEVE PIATT

Penn Lines Contributor

CARLA WEHLER HAS THOUSANDS OF photos on her phone, but she still stops her car any time she sees some of Pennsylvania's elk to take a few more.

"It still hasn't lost its luster," she says, "and I'll never take them for granted."

Wehler and her husband, Tom, own and operate Antler Shed Cabins just outside Benezette in Elk County. It's one of many rentals that cater to the thousands of folks who pour into the region known as the "Pennsylvania Wilds" to view the majestic animals.

The elk — a population these days estimated at about 1,500 — are more than a unique addition to the wildlife lineup that includes deer, bear, bald eagles, wild turkeys and coyotes: They are an economic engine in a sparsely populated region of the state where such a boost was sorely needed.

And while Benezette is the epicenter of the elk-viewing activity, the economic impact extends well beyond.

"I would say virtually everybody who comes here for outdoor activity wants to go see the elk," says Peggy Durant, who with husband, Tim, operates Cedarwood Lodge, a rental property outside of Penfield in Clearfield County, as well as the Victorian Loft Bed & Breakfast in Clearfield. "Our lodge is 20 miles from Benezette, but if people are coming here for a couple days, they're definitely going to see the elk."

Quite a crowd

Today, the state's elk herd roams six counties: Cameron, Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Elk and

Potter. The region, serviced by a handful of the state's rural electric cooperatives, covers more than 3,000 square miles. In Benezette, you'll find the sprawling Elk Country Visitor Center, the typical starting point for those looking to catch a glimpse of the animals.

Built in 2010 on 245 acres of prime elk habitat, the center is the product of a unique public-private partnership between the Keystone Elk Country Alliance (KECA), which operates the facility, and the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Nearly a half million people visit the center annually, notably during the September and October breeding season when bull elk are at their bugling best.

In the early days of the Wilds, a state marketing and tourism initiative started a little more than 20 years ago,

FILLED TO CAPACITY: Pennsylvania's elk herd has been attracting visitors to the western part of the state since the 1980s. Over the years, a number of rental properties and businesses have been established to accommodate the region's tourists and hunters.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE KEYSTONE ELK COUNTRY ALLIANCE



the elk's appeal actually outpaced the region's ability to accommodate visitors.

"Even before they built the visitor center, the elk herd was becoming popular and people were coming to see them," says Durant, a longtime United Electric Cooperative member. "There was no place for them to picnic and no restroom facilities. I heard stories of people knocking on doors of homes, asking to use their bathroom."

"There just wasn't enough capacity for people coming into the region," Wehler adds. "The elk brought an influx of traffic before there was an ability to take care of the people coming here."

Not these days, however.

Rentals, rentals everywhere

A quick check of popular short-term rental websites shows a laundry list of accommodations, from cabins to houses, with luring language: "see elk in the front yard," "minutes from the visitor center" and "hear elk bugle from the porch."

Businesses across the region cater to visitors using one word: elk.

There's the Elk Country Inn. Big Elk Lick Horse Campground. Bull Elk Lodge. The Elk Country Loft. Elk Crossing 555 General Store (a Benezette hot spot). Elk View. Elk

Mountain Homestead. Elk Life. Elk Pass Cottage. And on and on.

Several state park and private campgrounds are often filled to capacity, too.

"It's amazing when I see what's available," Durant says. "I'm sometimes surprised how busy we still stay because there's so much available."

Wehler says the elk are almost solely responsible for the booming rental market.

"I think it's safe to say that a majority of the rentals wouldn't exist without the elk. There's always a need [for rental lodging], but not a need for a hundred of them in a small county," she says. "A lot of the lodging providers have the property so they can enjoy it themselves, but then throw in some rentals throughout the year [to offset the cost of the property]."

Nailing down the exact dollar impact of the elk herd in the Pennsylvania Wilds is tough. But the state's "Economic Impact of Travel and Tourism" report supports the anecdotal evidence that elk are an economic driver in the region.

Britt Madera, communications manager for the PA Wilds Center for Entrepreneurship, labels the elk herd as "one of the star assets in the region and one of the major drivers of tourism." She says Elk County's numbers alone are telling, but notes, "many elk-inspired visitors travel to



WELCOMING VISITORS: The Elk Country Visitor Center in Benezette welcomes hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. Built in 2010 on 245 acres of prime elk habitat, the center is the result of a unique public-private partnership between the Keystone Elk Country Alliance, which operates the facility, and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.



KEYSTONE ELK COUNTRY ALLIANCE

THE MAIN ATTRACTION: The state's elk herd lives in six counties – Cameron, Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Elk and Potter – that are part of the Pennsylvania Wilds. This tourism region was created two decades ago to spur economic development in the area's rural communities. Today, the herd numbers around 1,500.

nearby counties as well when they're on the road."

The state's 2022 tourism report — the most recent available — showed tourism generated \$89.1 million in spending in Elk County, and \$1.9 billion across the entire region. The region's number was up by 13.1% as the state's tourism industry continued its rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Elk County in 2022, visitors spent an estimated \$9.7 million on lodging; \$21.6 million on food and beverages; \$16.8 million on retail; \$17.3 million on recreation; and \$23.6 million on transportation.

Sowing the seeds of capitalism

Ironically, locals gave the elk a lukewarm reception when they first arrived.

"In the late 1970s and early 1980s, elk were seen as little more than a nuisance to local landowners," according to the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Elk Management Plan for 2020-2025. "However, notable changes in the cultural value of elk began in the late 1980s, as an increasing number of people were visiting the area to see them."

Even then, however, the rush of visitors during the fall rut period "was initially unwelcome by many local residents," the report added. "However, as the seasonal tourism became more consistent and regular, local residents began opening a variety of service-oriented businesses to capitalize on the surge of people visiting the area."

In 2001, as the herd grew, the Pennsylvania Game Commission held its first elk hunt in 70 years, with 30 tags

ELK-VIEWING ETIQUETTE

The Pennsylvania Game Commission has implemented an ELK SMART educational effort for those visiting the region. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

GIVE ELK SPACE. Keep a distance of at least 100 yards between you and the elk. Never approach them. Elk are wild animals that are unpredictable and sometimes aggressive, especially during the fall breeding season. Cows are also known to defend their young when they feel threatened.

NEVER FEED ELK. Not only is it illegal to feed elk in Pennsylvania; it teaches them to associate people, cars and/or homes with food. This could cause them to approach people looking for more. Feeding also promotes the spread of infectious diseases by having the elk unnaturally congregate in small areas.

DO YOUR PART. The welfare of the elk herd is a shared responsibility. If you see someone being disruptive or careless, whether intentional or not, kindly ask them to stop or report it to the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Northcentral Region by calling 570-398-4744.



KEYSTONE ELK COUNTRY ALLIANCE

allotted through a lottery drawing. Twenty-seven of the hunters had a successful harvest.

The hunt has been held every year since then, and as the number of permits allotted has increased — 140 were available this year — the flood of applications has poured dollars into the commission's Game Fund (\$6.2 million from 2014 to 2023). Applications for the coveted tags come in from every state. This year's drawing was held in July at the annual Elk Expo at the visitor center.

WHERE TO FIND THE ELK

Here are some of the most popular elk-viewing spots in the Pennsylvania Wilds:

Elk Country Visitor Center: The hub of elk viewing, the visitor center is on Winslow Hill Road in Benezette and is the product of a public-private partnership between the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the Keystone Elk Country Alliance. There are panoramic views, interactive displays, horse-drawn wagon rides, educational programs, and almost always elk to watch. Find out more at elkcountrysitecenter.com.

Winslow Hill Viewing Area: Up the road from the visitor center, there's a large parking area that overlooks a vast meadow frequented by elk.

Woodring Farm: Around the corner from the Winslow Hill Viewing Area, this 80-acre parcel is a prime elk habitat and features an interpretive trail that leads to an overlook.

Dents Run Viewing Area: About 3.5 miles from Route 555 on Winslow Hill Road, this popular elk-viewing spot has off-road parking and a handicapped-accessible walkway that leads to an overlook.

Hicks Run Viewing Area: On Route 555, 8.5 miles south of Benezette, there's a covered, handicapped-accessible viewing blind where elk often feed in a developed food plot.

Miller Run Wildlife Viewing Area: This spot, along Route 555 in Driftwood, overlooks a food plot and offers a panoramic view of the Bennett Branch of Sinnemahoning Creek. It includes a parking lot, picnic table and educational panels.

Quehanna Wild Area: At nearly 50,000 acres, this area offers several elk hot spots, including the fields at Hoover's Farm and near the ponds and wetlands at Beaver Run Dam. Learn more at pawilds.com/asset/quehanna-wild-area.

Elk Scenic Drive: This 127-mile loop takes you through five counties, and although elk don't inhabit the entire length, there are 23 viewing sites along the way that provide parking and a safe place to see the animals. For a map, visit pawilds.com/journey/elk-scenic-drive.



The elk hunt offers another financial bump for the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Permit applications (at \$11.97 each) topped \$1 million in 2023 and will almost assuredly do so again this year. And since 2014, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) and Keystone Elk Country Alliance have received thousands of dollars through the auction of elk tags — \$392,700 to KECA and \$327,000 to RMEF in 2023.

The elk hunt has also sparked a separate industry in the region, with several outfitters guiding hunters through the archery, firearms and late elk seasons.

Larry Guenot of Karthaus and his wife, Vicki, operate Trophy Rack Lodge, perhaps the largest such operation in the region. It's a year-round effort as he works with landowners to secure hunting access, plants food plots to attract elk, scouts throughout the summer to locate the animals, and hires a guide crew that has grown to about three dozen.

"We started out in 2009 with one or two hunters, then went to four or five, to 10 or 12, now 53 hunters last year — 36 with bull tags," says Guenot, another United Electric member. Retired from PennDOT, he operated a hunting preserve before deciding to guide elk hunters.

"I'd be out hunting whitetails and I'd see three or four big bulls laying in the fields, and thought, 'I can do that,'" he recalls.

Hunters typically stay at Trophy Rack's sprawling lodge in northern Centre County, a hub of activity where Vicki Guenot and her friends serve meals and tend to lodging needs. The couple pays the guides, who also receive tips from hunters. Landowners are compensated for both access and any elk harvested. ("And if we kill one, they're gonna get some steaks, too," Larry Guenot says.) There are even a couple draft-horse owners who help remove harvested elk from the field — for a price.

The trouble with elk

Challenges remain in elk country, however.

The Game Commission continues to monitor the herd for the presence of chronic wasting disease, a fatal neurological disease that's been found in deer in areas not far from the typical elk range. Also, there are occasional vehicle collisions with elk — 23 in 2017, according to commission figures. Crop damage remains an issue, too.

But, as the commission's elk management plan notes, "while some of the public will always disapprove of elk in Pennsylvania, an increasing faction is excited and even passionate about elk."

Count Carla Wehler among them. "I never get tired of seeing them," she says, "and once people come here and see them, they're hooked, too."

And, as usual, she keeps her camera handy. 📷

Popular CoQ10 Pills Leave Millions Suffering

Could this newly-discovered brain fuel solve America's worsening memory crisis?

PALM BEACH, FLORIDA — Millions of Americans take the supplement known as CoQ10. It's the coenzyme that supercharges the "energy factories" in your cells known as *mitochondria*. But there's a serious flaw that's leaving millions unsatisfied.

As you age, your mitochondria break down and fail to produce energy. In a revealing study, a team of researchers showed that 95 percent of the mitochondria in a 90-year-old man were damaged, compared to almost no damage in the mitochondria of a 5-year-old.

Taking CoQ10 alone is not enough to solve this problem. Because as powerful as CoQ10 is, there's one critical thing it fails to do: it can't create new mitochondria to replace the ones you lost.

And that's bad news for Americans all over the country. The loss of cellular energy is a problem for the memory concerns people face as they get older.

"We had no way of replacing lost mitochondria until a recent discovery changed everything," says Dr. Al Sears, founder and medical director of the Sears Institute for Anti-Aging Medicine in Palm Beach, Florida. "Researchers discovered the only nutrient known to modern science that has the power to trigger the growth of new mitochondria."

Why Taking CoQ10 is Not Enough

Dr. Sears explains, "This new discovery is so powerful, it can multiply your mitochondria by 55 percent in just a few weeks. That's the equivalent of restoring decades of lost brain power."

This exciting nutrient — called PQQ (*pyrroloquinoline quinone*) — is the driving force behind a revolution in aging. When paired with CoQ10, this dynamic duo has the power to reverse the age-related memory losses you may have thought were beyond your control.

Dr. Sears pioneered a new formula — called **Ultra Accel Q** — that combines both CoQ10 and PQQ to support maximum cellular energy and the normal growth of new mitochondria. **Ultra Accel Q** is the first of its kind to address both problems and is already creating huge demand.

In fact, demand has been so overwhelming that inventories repeatedly sell out. But a closer look at **Ultra Accel Q** reveals there are good reasons why sales are booming.

Science Confirms the Many Benefits of PQQ

The medical journal *Biochemical Pharmacology* reports that PQQ is up to 5,000 times more efficient in sustaining energy production than common antioxidants. With the ability to keep every cell in your body operating at full strength, **Ultra Accel Q** delivers more than just added brain power and a faster memory.

People feel more energetic, more alert, and don't need naps in the afternoon. The boost in cellular energy generates more power to your heart, lungs, muscles, and more.

"With the PQQ in Ultra Accel, I have energy I never thought possible at my age," says Colleen R., one of Dr. Sears's patients. "I'm in my 70s but feel 40 again. I think clearly, move with real energy and sleep like a baby."

The response has been overwhelmingly positive, and Dr. Sears receives countless emails from his patients and readers. "My patients tell me they feel better than they have in years. This is ideal for people who are feeling old and run down, or for those who feel more forgetful. It surprises many that you can add healthy and productive years to your life simply by taking **Ultra Accel Q** every day."

You may have seen Dr. Sears on television or read one of his 12 best-selling books. Or you may have seen him speak at the 2016 WPBF 25 Health and Wellness Festival in South Florida, featuring Dr. Oz and special guest Suzanne Somers. Thousands of people attended Dr. Sears's lecture on anti-aging breakthroughs and waited in line for hours during his book signing at the event.

Will Ultra Accel Q Multiply Your Energy?

Ultra Accel Q is turning everything we thought we knew about youthful energy on its head. Especially for people over age 50. In less than 30 seconds every morning, you can harness the power of this breakthrough discovery to restore peak energy and your "spark for life."

So, if you've noticed less energy as you've gotten older, and you want an easy way to reclaim your youthful edge, this new opportunity will feel like blessed relief.

The secret is the "energy multiplying" molecule that activates a dormant gene in your body that declines with age, which then instructs your cells to pump out fresh energy from the inside-out. This



MEMORY-BUILDING SENSATION: Top doctors are now recommending new **Ultra Accel Q** because it restores decades of lost brain power without a doctor's visit.

growth of new "energy factories" in your cells is called mitochondrial biogenesis.

Instead of falling victim to that afternoon slump, you enjoy sharp-as-a-tack focus, memory, and concentration from sunup to sundown. And you get more done in a day than most do in a week. Regardless of how exhausting the world is now.

Dr. Sears reports, "The most rewarding aspect of practicing medicine is watching my patients get the joy back in their lives. **Ultra Accel Q** sends a wake-up call to every cell in their bodies... And they actually feel young again."

And his patients agree. "I noticed a difference within a few days," says Jerry from Ft. Pierce, Florida. "My endurance has almost doubled, and I feel it mentally, too. There's a clarity and sense of well-being in my life that I've never experienced before."

How To Get Ultra Accel Q

This is the official nationwide release of **Ultra Accel Q** in the United States. And so, the company is offering a special discount supply to anyone who calls during the official launch.

An Order Hotline has been set up for local readers to call. This gives everyone an equal chance to try **Ultra Accel Q**. And your order is backed up by a no-hassle, 90-day money back guarantee. No questions asked.

The discount offer will be available for a limited time only. All you have to do is call TOLL FREE **1-800-997-9854** right now and use promo code **PLUAQ824** to secure your own supply.

Important: Due to **Ultra Accel Q** recent media exposure, phone lines are often busy. If you call and do not immediately get through, please be patient and call back.

Local Lore

Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative

A Ghost, an Ice Man and a Football Legend

The Galloping Ghost. The Wheaton Ice Man. No, this isn't a horror story; instead, these are the nicknames of Harold Edward "Red" Grange, named the best college football player of all time by ESPN, and in 2011, he was named the Greatest Big 10 Icon by the Big Ten Network.

Born June 13, 1903, in Forksville, home of Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative, Red and his father, Lyle, eventually moved to Wheaton, Ind., following the death of his mother, Sadie.

Growing up, Red took a part-time job hauling blocks of ice to help earn extra money and held onto the side gig even as he began playing football professionally. Along the way, he earned the nickname, "Ice Man," and later, a writer dubbed him the



THE ICE MAN: Harold Edward "Red" Grange in 1925 during his early days with the Chicago Bears. Red earned his nickname – the "Ice Man" – while hauling blocks of ice to earn extra money.

"Galloping Ghost" because of his peculiar gait.

Red had a knack for sports, to put it mildly. In high school, he earned 16 varsity letters in football, baseball, basketball, and track — and his prowess on the football field was

astounding. He scored 75 touchdowns and 532 points while still in high school. During his college career, between 1923 and 1925, he scored 33 more touchdowns and 186 points. With all eyes on Red, he signed on with the Chicago Bears, lending his star status to the then-fledgling National Football League.

Aside from a brief stint with the short-lived New York Yankees football team, Red remained with the Bears until 1934, when he became a backfield coach for the team for three seasons. Years later, he helped found both the College and Pro Football Halls of Fame.

Not bad for a kid born in rural Pennsylvania.



Main Office: Forksville, Pa.
Consumer-members served: 6,174
Website: srec.com

This month's work of art is from McKenna Kalaha, 14, whose parents receive electricity from Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative. McKenna drew this picture based on an elk she saw grazing in Benezette while on vacation with her family. Perfect timing for this month's feature!

CALLING ALL KIDS, ages 5 to 17: Show off your artistic skills!

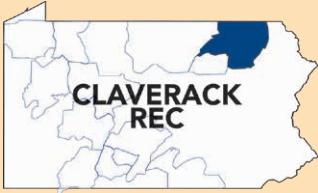
Each month, we'll feature the artwork of our young readers (or our readers' youngsters), inspired by something they've read in *Penn Lines*. Paints, pencils, crayons, clay, sand – any physical medium is OK! You may send digital photos of the creation to CommunityCorner@prea.com, but please: no digital artwork.

Be sure to include the artist's name, age and electric cooperative, plus a 25- to 50-word description of the art.



Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative

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One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

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7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Casey M. Wood, VP, Communications
C&T Enterprises, Inc.



C&T Enterprises, Inc. is a jointly owned subsidiary of Claverack (Wysox, Pa) and Tri-County (Mansfield, Pa) Rural Electric Cooperatives. C&T provides shared management and support services for the two parent electric cooperatives, the cooperatives' telecom affiliates of Revolution Broadband and Tri-Co Connections, and C&T's subsidiary utilities of Wellsboro Electric Co. (Wellsboro, Pa), Citizens' Electric Co. (Lewisburg, Pa), and Valley Energy (Sayre, Pa), a natural gas distribution company.

2023 Executive Report: Making a Difference



STEVEN G. ALLABAUGH

FROM THE FIRST LIGHTBULB we illuminated in the 1930s to the fiber optic cable we lit more than 85 years later, Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) has made a difference in the lives of its members. In 2023, we continued to focus on making this difference for our members by providing the services they depend on — safely, reliably and affordably.

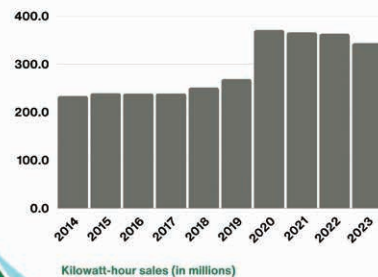
Claverack REC's commitment to advancing technology and infrastructure significantly impacted operations. Our engineering and operations teams' innovative use of leading-edge technologies and proactive maintenance initiatives led to a noteworthy reduction of more than five hours in the average outage duration per member. It also led

to a remarkable 25% decrease in overtime hours spent repairing damage and restoring outages caused by severe weather and the emerald ash borer, an invasive insect with a voracious appetite.

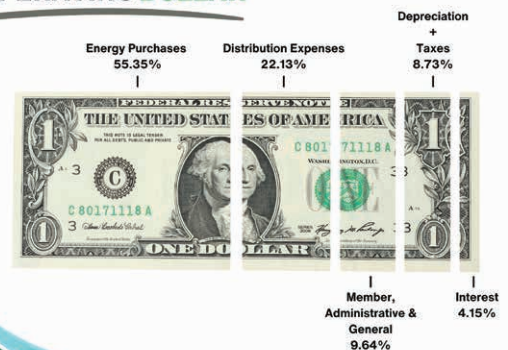
Our maintenance initiatives included the Accelerated Ash Tree Removal Program and, on the technology side, we used advanced tools like drones to perform detailed aerial inspections, covering nearly 450 miles of line. We also inspected and tested more than 5,000 poles to ensure their structural integrity and optimal condition. In addition, the cooperative completed several significant system enhancement projects. This included upgrading 13 miles of primary line and replacing more than 200 poles.

In 2023, Claverack made substantial headway with our fiber-optic network, an initiative that's enabling us to offer a "smarter" electric grid while providing our subsidiary, Claverack Communications LLC, with the necessary infrastructure to offer Revolution Broadband service to unserved and underserved members. By the end of 2023, Claverack Communications successfully provided high-speed internet to more than 700 members. We also began deploying advanced

CLAVERRACK REC ENERGY SALES



CLAVERRACK REC OPERATING DOLLAR



Continued on page 14D

Claverack and Co-Bank Team Up to Support Community

CLAVERACK RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE (REC) recently donated a total of \$11,000 to four community organizations serving Bradford, Susquehanna, Tioga and Wyoming counties. Three of the organizations received matching gifts totaling \$11,000 from CoBank, a national cooperative bank serving vital industries across rural America.

“We are proud to uphold our commitment to supporting the well-being and prosperity of our communities through these donations,” says Claverack REC President & CEO Steve Allabaugh. “We have directed funds to organizations, including Endless Mountains Health Systems, Susquehanna County Interfaith, Interfaith Friends of Wyoming County, and the Bradford, Sullivan, Susquehanna, and Tioga County Area Agency on Aging. Our aim is to make a significant impact on the lives of our neighbors and further strengthen the fabric of our local community.”

Claverack REC funded its share of the donations through the cooperative’s community services grant program. The program uses member donations and unclaimed capital credits to support not-for-profit organizations that work to improve the lives of those in the cooperative’s service territory. The grant program does not affect member electric rates. 🌱

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Placing heat sources, such as lamps, computers or TVs, near your thermostat can result in false temperature readings, increased energy use and inconsistent cooling/heating. Make sure your thermostat is installed in an area clear of obstructions, electronic devices, direct sunlight and drafts.

Ensuring your thermostat is free from these types of interferences optimizes energy efficiency, improves indoor comfort and reduces wear and tear on your cooling/heating system.

Source: energy.gov

Endless Mountains Health Systems



COOPERATIVE SUPPORT: Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) and CoBank donated a total of \$10,000 to the Endless Mountains Health Systems in Susquehanna County. The donation will be used to purchase two wide stretchers for the facility’s operating room. The stretchers provide more room for patients and increase their comfort. Shown, from left, are: Loren Stone, chief executive officer of Endless Mountains Health Systems; Claverack REC board Chair Gary Hennip, Vice Secretary/Treasurer Angela Joines, Director Anthony Ventello, Vice Chair Danise Fairchild and President & CEO Steve Allabaugh.

Interfaith Friends of Wyoming County



SHARING SUCCESS: A \$5,000 donation was presented from CoBank and Claverack REC to Interfaith Friends of Wyoming County to support low-income families in need. Shown, from left, are: Claverack REC board Chair Gary Hennip; Director Anthony Ventello; Vice Secretary/Treasurer Angela Joines; Director Dr. Robert Faux; Carissa Harvey, executive director of Interfaith Friends of Wyoming County; and Claverack REC President & CEO Steve Allabaugh.

Bradford, Sullivan, Susquehanna, and Tioga County Area Agency on Aging



AGENTS OF CHANGE: A \$1,000 donation from Claverack REC was directed to the Bradford, Sullivan, Susquehanna, and Tioga County (B/S/S/T) Area Agency on Aging, Inc., in support of general services to keep older adults in their homes. Shown, from left, are: Claverack REC board Chair Gary Hennip; Tiffani Warner, executive director of B/S/S/T Area Agency on Aging; Claverack REC Director Anthony Ventello; Vice Secretary/Treasurer Angela Joines; Community Service Coordinator Susan Hitchcock; Vice Chair Danise Fairchild; and President & CEO Steve Allabaugh.

Susquehanna County Interfaith



CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY: Susquehanna County Interfaith received a \$5,000 donation in support of its mission and positive community efforts. Shown, from left, are: Claverack REC Director Dr. Robert Faux; Vice Secretary/Treasurer Angela Joines; Chair Gary Hennip; Cynthia Beeman, executive director of Susquehanna County Interfaith; and Claverack REC President & CEO Steve Allabaugh.

INTERNET THAT KEEPS GETTING BETTER

One of our values is *Never Stop Improving*. This means we will always strive to do better – in our business practices, the services we provide and the way we treat our customers.

Recent improvements have focused on:

- **Fiber network improvements**
Building redundancy to minimize outages
- **Customer service**
Enhancing customer communications & outreach
- **Community-first business practices**
Planning service area expansions, increasing local drop & install crews



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**PRESIDENT &
CEO MESSAGE**

Continued from page 14A

reclosers on our electrical grid. This equipment, which is securely connected to the fiber network, enables remote communication and operation of electrical devices, which results in expedited diagnosis and repair and ultimately provides superior and more reliable service to our members.

In tandem with our focus on technology and infrastructure, Claverack REC continued its commitment to supporting members in need through the Helping Others Purchase Electricity (HOPE) program. Throughout 2023, Claverack disbursed more than \$50,000 to help dozens of eligible members pay for electricity, greatly impacting their lives by ensuring access to this essential service. Furthermore, Claverack allocated nearly \$60,000 to over 100 charitable organizations that provide critical services in our communities. These contributions were made possible by unclaimed capital credits, which under state law can be reinvested in our communities. By championing these vital agencies, Claverack reaffirmed its commitment to a fundamental cooperative principle: “concern for community.”

In financial matters, our careful attention to budget and operational efficiency allowed us to finish the year with strong results, despite the continued inflationary environment. As a result, we were able to continue our longstanding practice of returning capital credits to our members, retiring \$1.2 million in 2023.

For further insights into Claverack REC’s accomplishments in 2023, including comprehensive financial statements and departmental reports, please visit our website, claverack.com/2023-annual-report. 📄

STEVEN G. ALLABAUGH
PRESIDENT & CEO



YOU Get the Credit

JENNIFER JONES, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO GET THE CREDIT — capital credits, that is. There's no better tangible benefit of cooperative membership than receiving a return on your investment in the utility.

Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) is pleased to announce our board of directors recently authorized a capital credits retirement of \$916,000. This retirement reflects our commitment to providing reliable and affordable electricity to our membership. Through prudent financial management, we have continued to build a strong financial foundation, enabling the cooperative to return \$16.3 million in capital credits to our membership over the past 10 years.

This year's capital credits retirement was distributed to members who were on the cooperative's lines in 1993, 2008 or 2009. Active members received a credit on their July bill, while inactive members with a valid address and a retirement in excess of \$10 received a check for their portion of the retirement.

It is important for active and inactive members to maintain a current and valid address on file with the cooperative to receive notifications from us. Unfortunately, we do not have current addresses for many inactive members who have moved off the Claverack REC system but are still entitled to capital credits refunds.

A complete list of inactive members who we've been unable to locate can be found at claverack.com/list-unclaimed-capital-credits. If you know any former members whose names appear on this list, please ask them or their families to contact us at mail@claverack.com or 800-326-9799. Members who do not have internet access are welcome to visit our main office in Wysox to view the booklet containing the inactive member information. We are committed to ensuring all members receive the benefits they are entitled to. Your continued support is integral to the success of our cooperative, and we thank each and every one of you for being a part of the Claverack family. 📄





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The Difference Between Baseload and Intermittent Power and Why it Matters

SCOTT FLOOD

IT'S ONE OF THOSE EXCRUCIATING days when the warm air is unbearable. You crank up the car's air conditioner on the way home from work, and the first thing you do when you walk in the door is turn the thermostat down a couple degrees.

Throughout Pennsylvania, thousands of other people are responding the same way, creating a massive surge in demand for electricity. And it's up to the people who oversee North America's power grid to make sure there's an adequate supply.

Sources of power

Our electric grid gathers and distributes power from many sources, including power plants that convert fossil fuels like coal, natural gas and oil into electricity; nuclear plants; and renewable energy sources, such as wind turbines, solar farms,

hydroelectric dams and even landfills. The electricity supplied by these sources is categorized as baseload, peaking or intermediate.

Baseload power accounts for most of the electricity we use. Always available and reliable, these sources are designed to generate large amounts of energy. The most familiar examples are nuclear and fossil-fuel power plants, along with some hydroelectric and geothermal facilities. While baseload plants provide an affordable and dependable source of power, they're not engineered to keep up with sudden changes in electricity demand.

Therefore, when the demand for electricity shifts — either gradually or suddenly — grid operators turn to either intermediate or peaking power plants, which are designed to start up quickly and adapt their power output to meet the varying demand.

Increasingly, renewable power sources, such as solar and wind farms, are being used to supply electricity, too. Both sources provide intermittent power since their output depends on cooperation from an unpredictable resource: nature. For example, solar panels can't generate electricity when there's not enough sunlight, and large wind turbines generally don't produce power until the wind speed reaches at least 13 mph.

Electric co-op members who are concerned about climate change may wonder why power suppliers aren't rushing to replace fuels, such as coal and natural gas, with environmentally friendlier alternatives like wind and solar. If co-ops and other electric utilities switched completely to

intermittent sources, they wouldn't be able to meet consumers' power needs.

It's worth noting, however, that Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc., which supplies energy to the 14 rural electric cooperatives in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, gets the bulk of its baseload power from carbon-free sources, including hydroelectric and nuclear plants.

Advancing and evolving

Currently, the industry is working on solutions to harness intermittent power. For instance, energy storage devices, such as batteries, offer promise since they can store excess power generated by wind and solar and make it available even when the weather isn't cooperating. While that technology is advancing, it's also still evolving, and the large-scale use of such batteries is many years away. Batteries also require large amounts of lithium, which must be mined and create additional environmental concerns.

Co-op members can help manage demand by reducing their own energy use. For example, switching to more efficient lighting and appliances will not only reduce your monthly electric bill, but also reduce demand on the grid. The benefits are obvious: The less power we all use, the less the power producers will have to generate. 🌱

For more than four decades, business writer **SCOTT FLOOD** has worked with electric cooperatives to build knowledge of energy-related issues among directors, staff and members. Scott writes on a variety of energy-related topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing nearly 900 electric co-ops.

ED WHITE, PIXABAY



RENEWABLES AND NATURE: Renewable power sources, such as solar and wind farms, are increasingly used to supply electricity. Both sources provide intermittent power since their output depends on cooperation from nature.

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Cables that cross walkways

Sources: National Safety Council
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

Safe Electricity.org[®]

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Youth Tour 2024: A ROAD PAVED WITH OPPORTUNITIES

IN JUNE, 76 HIGH SCHOOL students from Pennsylvania and New Jersey embarked on the Rural Electric Youth Tour.

The students, along with 20 chaperones, spent a week touring Washington, D.C., learning about the cooperative business model, visiting Capitol Hill to meet with congressional staffers, sightseeing at museums and monuments, and making friends and memories to last a lifetime.

“Our goal is to make this trip something the students will remember for the rest of their lives,” says Stephanie Okuniewski, Youth Tour coordinator and member engagement specialist for the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association (PREA). “We want them to be inspired — and then become inspirational.”

The high schoolers represented 12 cooperatives, who sponsored the trip along with PREA, the statewide advocate for Pennsylvania and New Jersey co-ops. They were among nearly 1,700 students from 44 states at Youth Tour, which is hosted each year by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) to celebrate the best and the brightest students from the nation’s rural regions. Students who participate are eligible for scholarships and other opportunities.

Brandon Hurley of Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) and Fred Ogrinz of Sussex REC were chosen to represent Pennsylvania and New Jersey, respectively, on NRECA’s Youth Leadership Council. This group helps students build leadership and public speaking skills while enhancing their knowledge of the energy industry and cooperatives.

“Youth Tour is something that I genuinely believe everyone should experience,” Hurley says. “The people I met ... the friends I made ... the things I learned ... the memories I developed ... are things that I will never forget. Youth Tour has opened so many doors for me.” 🇺🇸

MONUMENTAL OCCASION: High school juniors representing Pennsylvania’s rural electric cooperatives visit national monuments and memorials throughout Washington, D.C., during the 2024 Rural Electric Youth Tour in June.





TRIP OF A LIFETIME: Students had to apply and make it through their cooperative's Youth Tour process – which can include interviews and essays – to participate in the annual event, hosted by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. Cooperatives in Pennsylvania and New Jersey sent a total of 76 students, shown above, on the all-inclusive trip. During the week, the high schoolers met with legislative staffers representing cooperative congressional districts, connected with other students from across the country, explored history in the nation's capital and learned about the cooperative business model. Students who participate are eligible for scholarships and other opportunities.



What Your Weeds Might Be Telling You

GEORGE WEIGEL

CONTRARY TO HOW IT MIGHT seem at this point in the growing season, nature doesn't put all of those weeds out there just to harass gardeners.

These so-called "plants whose virtues have yet to be discovered" really do have a purpose, if not quite a virtue.

They cover bare soil so it doesn't erode, they provide food for wildlife and they add organic matter to the soil as they die back.

But one of the most overlooked redeeming traits of weeds is that they can tell us much about our growing conditions.

Like any plant, different weeds have preferences for different soils and environments.

Some like it wet, some like it dry. Some grow in rich soil, some do just as well in poor soil. Some seek out sunny, open areas while others prefer the shady dampness of a forest floor.

Gardeners who get to know their

weeds — or "read weeds," as the saying goes — can glean important clues about what action they should (or shouldn't) take.

The first step is to determine exactly which weeds consider your yard to be an ideal breeding ground. Plant-ID phone apps can help with that, or you can match leaves and flowers to photos in books or on websites.

Two good online weed-ID sites with photos are from Rutgers Cooperative Extension and Virginia Tech University, while an excellent book with photos and growth habits of hundreds of weeds is the newly updated "Weeds of the Northeast" by Richard H. Uva, Joseph C. Neal, Joseph M. DiTomaso, and Antonio DiTommaso.

Step two is determining the growing conditions your weeds favor.

"Weeds aren't really enemies," says Tasha Greer, author of "Weed-Free Gardening." "They're problem solvers ... A lot of times in the garden, weeds are coming in to fix mistakes we've made — at least mistakes from nature's perspective. These weeds were picked by nature for their particular virtues."

Once you know your weeds, Greer says, ask: "What do I think it's doing in my garden?"

If you can identify a pattern to the preferences of your weed lineup, you'll come away with information to help you better grow the plants you'd like.

Weeds that tend to colonize acidic soil, for example, might tell you to go with acid-preferring landscape plants, such as azalea, rhododendron, holly, fothergilla, dogwood, and blueberry (or to add lime to the soil before

planting alkaline leaners).

Weeds that tend to show up in damp settings might be a clue to plant shrubs and perennials that prefer damp over dry soil, such as buttonbush, red-twig dogwood, summersweet, Joe Pye weed, bee balm, or sedge.

And weeds that are the most tolerant of poor, compacted soil might be warning you to loosen your soil deeply and amend it with compost before trying to plant anything.

The more weeds you have with similar traits, the more telling the message. In other words, families of weeds are better at giving meaningful patterns than what a weed or two might say.

Two caveats, though.

One is that sometimes a weed is proliferating simply because it beat everything else to the punch. When you dig a bed or disturb soil, the weeds that pop up could well be ones whose seeds happen to be flying around at the time — or that were stirred to the surface, where the improved light, warmth and moisture caused them to sprout.

The second caveat is that weed-reading isn't a hard-and-fast practice backed up with mounds of scientific proof. It's more anecdotal evidence based on observations dating back to the 1950s' work of a German soil scientist named Ehrenfried Pfeiffer.

Even if your weeds aren't a 100%, fool-proof planting guide, at least they can unearth suspicions that a soil test, drainage test or other piece of investigation can nail down. 🌱

GEORGE WEIGEL is a retired horticulturist, author of two books about gardening in Pennsylvania, and garden columnist for *The Patriot-News*/PennLive.com in Harrisburg. His website is georgeweigel.net.



SOIL WHISPERERS: Mullein, left, and plantain, right, are two weeds that indicate your soil might be acidic.

Everything is Looking Peachy

ANNE M. KIRCHNER

PEACHES ARE A DELICIOUS SUMMER treat, and August is the time to start looking for the perfect one. Ripened peaches will be soft to the touch. They will also release a sweet scent. Look for them at the grocery store, farmers market or a roadside stand.

The bittersweet flavor of a ripened peach adds depth to many recipes. Start the morning baking a cinnamon peach coffee cake. Make a refreshing raspberry peach smoothie for an afternoon snack. And for dinner, create a savory peach salad.

ANNE M. KIRCHNER focuses her writing on human connections, travel and culinary arts, researching food origins, exploring cooking techniques, and creating new recipes.

PHOTOS BY ANNE M. KIRCHNER



PEACH COFFEE CAKE

- 1½ cups flour
- ½ cup whole wheat flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 2 sticks margarine
- ¾ cup brown sugar
- 1 cup granulated sugar, divided
- 1 teaspoon almond extract
- 3 large eggs
- 1 cup milk
- 1½ cups diced peaches
- ½ cup graham cracker crumbs
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ cup slivered almonds

Combine the flours and baking powder in a mixing bowl; set aside. Using a mixer, cream together the margarine, brown sugar, ¾ cup granulated sugar and almond extract until fluffy. Add the eggs one at a time, scraping down the bowl as needed. Alternately add the flour mixture and milk until well blended. Fold the diced peaches into the batter. Pour the batter into a 9-by-13-inch greased baking pan. In a small bowl, mix ¼ cup granulated sugar, the graham cracker crumbs, cinnamon and almonds. Sprinkle the mixture over the coffee cake. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 to 40 minutes. *Makes 12 servings.*



RASPBERRY PEACH SMOOTHIE

- 1 cup almond milk
- ½ cup Greek yogurt
- 1½ cups frozen peach slices
- 1 cup frozen raspberries
- ¼ cup oatmeal
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 teaspoon almond extract

Add all ingredients to a high-powered blender in the order listed. Blend until smooth, adding more almond milk to thin if needed. Pour smoothie into a glass and enjoy. *Makes 2 to 3 servings.*



CAPRESE PEACH SALAD

- 2 peaches, sliced
- 8 ounces fresh mozzarella, sliced
- ½ cup grape tomatoes, halved
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 2 tablespoons sliced almonds
- 6 basil leaves, chiffonnade cut
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper

Arrange the peaches and mozzarella on a platter, alternating the slices. Add the tomatoes. Season the salad by drizzling the olive oil and balsamic vinegar on top. Finish the salad by adding the almond slices, basil, salt and black pepper. *Makes 4 to 6 servings.*

A Guide to Electric Vehicle Ownership

JENNAH DENNEY

THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY IS undergoing a transformative shift as consumers make the switch to electric vehicles, or EVs.

Transitioning to an EV, however, requires careful consideration of multiple factors. The following list highlights key aspects of EV ownership and can help you make an informed decision based on your specific needs.

EV knowledge: Familiarize yourself with EV basics. Understand the differences between battery electric vehicles (BEV), plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEV) and fuel cell electric vehicles (FCEV). Evaluate each option based on your daily, monthly and annual driving needs.

Driving range: Evaluate the EV's driving range when fully charged to ensure it aligns with your daily commute. We often think about a summer road trip for our driving needs, but it's important to remember there are other options for infrequent, long-distance travel.

Home charging: Determine if you will need to install a Level 2 charger and if your home's electrical system is compatible. By evaluating your whole home energy use, you can determine if electrical panel upgrades are necessary for a Level 2 system. Level 1 chargers typically do not require upgrades.

Public charging options: Research the availability of public charging stations along your typical routes.

Cost comparisons: Compare EV prices from multiple dealerships. Sticker prices are higher upfront, but EVs have proven to be cost-effective due to reduced maintenance and fuel costs.

Financial incentives: Explore federal, state and local incentives available for EV purchases. Check with your electric co-op to see if it offers incentives or special rates for EVs.

Maintenance: EVs typically require less maintenance than conventional vehicles, which can lead to long-term savings. EVs have far fewer moving parts than combustion-engine vehicles, resulting in a streamlined maintenance experience.

Battery warranty: Ensure the EV battery includes a substantial warranty. Most manufacturers offer eight-year warranties (or up to 100,000 miles). If you're considering managed charging or bi-directional power flow (V2X)

programs, take these warranties into account. V2X programs facilitate a bi-directional power flow between EVs and the power grid, which is highly beneficial for co-op members who own an EV. These programs allow EV owners to sell power back to the grid during periods of high electricity demand. Participation in these programs may impact your vehicle's warranty, so it's recommended to read the fine print carefully before participating in a V2X program.

Insurance implications: Consult with your insurance provider to review potential changes to your policy when owning an EV.

Fees: Some plug-in electric vehicles are subject to additional state fees to compensate for lost gas-tax revenue. Additionally, you may have to pay a registration fee for EVs and hybrid vehicles. (Note: Pennsylvania lawmakers recently passed a new \$200 registration fee for these vehicles, which will go into effect in 2025.) It's important to be aware of these potential fees when considering the total cost of ownership.

EV ownership offers many benefits. EVs often have fewer restrictions in high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, allowing for quicker commutes. EVs are also exempt from certain inspections and do not require oil changes, leading to lower maintenance costs. And owning an EV is fun — drivers can enjoy a fast-accelerating, quieter ride.

If you're interested in an EV, reach out to your electric co-op. Some own their own EVs and offer "ride-and-drive" events. Others offer home-charging programs and more, allowing members to gain firsthand experience and determine if an EV is right for them. 🚗

JENNAH DENNEY writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.



CHARGED UP: If you're thinking about buying an electric vehicle, determine if you will need to install a Level 2 charger and if your home's electrical system is compatible.

Take Time to Fill Your Cup

ABIGAIL ZIEGER

BUSY PARENTS NEED SOME TIME for themselves, magazines say, noting: “Be sure to make time for things you enjoy.”

But how in the world do you actually do that when you’ve got children hanging off your legs like wild monkeys, a house that looks like a frat party happened the night before, a job to keep and a to-do list 3 miles long?

I’ve always thought that carving out time for myself as a parent was nearly impossible. I’m a music teacher by trade and love to sing, but it’s hard for me to get focused practiced time. I’ve also taken up running in the past year, but I have to schedule my long runs very early in the mornings before everyone is awake to ensure they actually happen.

Sometimes the extra struggle and effort it takes to squeeze in activities just for me is downright discouraging. However, I believe there are some good reasons that parents should seek a few minutes for themselves every now and again.

They say you can’t pour from an empty cup, and it’s true. If I’m constantly frazzled and stressed, that’s likely to show up in my interactions with my kids. However, if I can take even a few minutes to decompress, I feel more at ease and have more energy to pour back into my children’s lives.

So how can parents find time to pursue their own interests and passions? Some may choose to hire a babysitter periodically, but for many others, it isn’t feasible to pay one on a regular basis. I’ve had some success working out a schedule with my husband, a family member or a friend to trade off childcare. And I’m incredibly grateful to the people who have helped me over my years of motherhood. I’m blessed to have family and friends nearby who can help so that I can go to rehearsal or run a race.

However, that’s not always possible. In that case, another strategy I use is to look for ways to involve the kids in my

interests and relaxation time. For example, when I want to go for a run, I might have the kids bike alongside me down an easy trail. Or I can take a book along to the park and sit on a bench near the playground to read while they play. It may take a little creativity, but there’s often a way to include the kids and still find a few minutes for self-care.

Perhaps your “me time” is not something that your children can easily participate in. Hobbies that involve a potentially dangerous process, such as working with machinery or cooking with high heat, aren’t always suitable for young children. In this case, I like to give the kids special time doing something they enjoy, like

watching a favorite show or playing with a special toy, brought out specifically for these occasions.

While having time to run and sing is important to me, I never want the kids or my spouse to feel pushed out or their needs aren’t important. I always want to make sure they feel loved, cared for and connected. If the things that I enjoy start to monopolize our family time, then it’s time for me to reprioritize and make sure that everyone else is getting what they need, too.

When I take just a little time to do something that energizes me, I am more human, better able to be present and content with my children, and more ready to face the demands of daily life. While expecting hours and hours of time to dedicate to a hobby each week may not be reasonable, even a short amount of time here and there is enough to refresh. So go ahead: Take 10 minutes tonight to do something you love — you’ll be glad you did. 🎶

ABIGAIL ZIEGER is a music teacher and singer by trade, but also enjoys capturing life experiences through writing. When not singing, teaching or typing, she can be found working in her kitchen, helping her kids with school or consuming copious amounts of coffee. A member of Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative, Abigail lives with her husband and four children in northeast Pennsylvania.



ISSUE MONTH

October 2024
November 2024
December 2024

AD DEADLINE

August 15
September 16
October 16

Please note ads must be received by the due date to be included in requested issue month; ads received after the due date will run in next issue. Written notice of changes/cancellations must be received 30 days prior to issue month.

No ads accepted by phone/email. For more information, please call 717-233-5704.

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- ☐ Month(s) in which the ad is to run.
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FREE HEADINGS:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Around the House | <input type="checkbox"/> Motor Vehicles & Boats |
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FREE & EASY ways to save energy

[Spoiler Alert: Your clothes and dishes won't know the difference]

Major home appliances account for approximately 16% of an average home's energy consumption.

16%



1. Run full loads of laundry instead of several smaller ones.
2. Use cold water to wash your clothes.



3. Keep your refrigerator at 35° to 38°F and your freezer at 0°F.
4. Regularly defrost manual-defrost freezers and refrigerators.



5. Skip the heat-dry setting on your dishwasher.
6. Fully load your dishwasher before washing.



7. When buying new appliances, consider Energy Star versions.
8. Unplug appliances you're not using.

Time to replace that old appliance? Replacing older versions with energy-efficient models can save the average household more than \$500 per year.

Sources: National Resources Defense Council,
U.S. Energy Information Administration

Safe
Electricity.org®

Never Turn Your Back on a Zucchini

JOHN KASUN

LIKE MANY RURAL FOLKS, my wife and I plant a small garden each year consisting of a few tomatoes, cucumbers and zucchinis. And each year, we seem to make the same gardening mistakes.

We always plant more tomatoes than we can possibly use. Also, we love zucchini, and my wife prepares it several delicious ways. However, we really should only plant one, and that is because you simply can't buy half of a zucchini plant. Zucchini plants are very prolific. One day I am bringing in our first of the season, and a few weeks later, I am bringing them in by the wheelbarrow load. In the spring, we always remember how good they tasted and forget how many we had to give away.

Zucchini plants remind me of the 1958 horror movie, "The Blob," which was one of the early "space-creatures-invade-Earth" movies. In it, an asteroid strikes the Earth and breaks open, revealing a jelly-like, formless substance that consumes any human it comes into contact with and continually grows in size. Zucchini plants are very similar to the "blob" in terms of growth; fortunately, they don't eat humans — yet.

Last year, my wife tossed our garden waste, which contained a number of zucchinis, onto our compost pile. This spring, I noticed budding zucchini plants all throughout the compost. And as I write this, those small, innocent plants are approaching the size of a two-car garage. While I admit I've been known to exaggerate, this is no joke — those things are huge. They're creeping across the road to my house. and I keep thinking that one day I will look out the window and see an upside-down car in their grasp. This morning, I counted approximately 25 small but growing zucchini and well over 50 blossoms, which are starting to form an additional crop.

At first, I thought this might be a money-making

opportunity, but business and profit are based on supply and demand. I will have entirely too much supply, and as far as I can tell, little-to-no demand. I briefly considered cutting some paths in the zucchini patch and creating a zucchini maze, similar to the corn mazes that are so popular in the fall. While my zucchini patch is huge and comes up almost to my waist, it is not tall enough for an adult maze. I would need to attract a lot of children and very short people; otherwise, it would be too easy to figure the way out. Visitors could simply stand up and look for the exit — so there goes another money-making idea down the drain.

Over the last few days, I have checked the plants

frequently and found more zucchinis maturing and more blossoms popping out. I am not sure what exactly will occur over the next few weeks but I know this is not the time to relax or do anything foolish. One thing I learned from "The Blob" — and remember all too well — is that the people who relaxed at the wrong moment got swallowed up by that huge mess of creepy-crawly goo.

Every time I go to

the compost pile where the zucchinis live, I tell my wife the same thing: "If I don't come back, DO NOT come looking for me. Lock the door, call the police and have them notify the Pennsylvania National Guard. Tell them where the plants are located but warn them not to get out of their vehicles and to bring a tank with a flame-thrower attached.

"Caution them to not take any chances, and if the flame-thrower does not work, tell them to NUKE that sucker. Lives could be at stake here."

Remember: Never turn your back on a zucchini! 🍷

JOHN KASUN, a lifelong Pennsylvanian with more than 30 years of writing experience, looks for the humor in everyday life and then tells a story from that perspective. He is a member of Huntingdon-based Valley Rural Electric Cooperative.



Make Mischief

IT SEEMS LIKE YOU BLINK and summer's over. Routines return as the school year starts poking its head out over the horizon. So don't miss your chance to make a few more memories — even if a little mischief is involved.

Whether you stir up a little mischief or not, we hope you manage to capture your special moments on camera for this year's Rural Reflections contest. The 2024 winners in five categories (artistic, human, landscape, animal and editor's choice) will receive \$75 each, and runners-up will each receive \$25. 📷

SAM EFFLAND • VALLEY REC



How to enter

AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHERS are encouraged to send photos for the 2024 Rural Reflections contest (no digital files) to: **Penn Lines Photos**, P.O. Box 1266, Harrisburg, PA 17108-1266. On the back of each photo, include your name, address, phone number and the name of the electric cooperative that serves your home, business or seasonal residence.

Remember: Our publication deadlines require us to work in advance, so send your seasonal photos in early. Photos that do not reflect any specific season may be sent at any time. Photos will be returned one year after receipt if a self-addressed, stamped envelope is included.



JOY CANTON • REA ENERGY



RUTHANNA BAUMAN • NORTHWESTERN REC



BETH JESTEADT • UNITED ELECTRIC

ADDRESS CHANGES:

For change of address, please contact your local electric cooperative. For cooperative contact information, please visit www.prea.com/member-cooperatives



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*Using U.S. and imported parts.