

AUGUST 2025

PENN LINES

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ON THE COVER

Patricia Roberts, a
member of Adams Electric
Cooperative, shows some
love for her pampered
pooch, Mr. Nacho. The
Chiweenie went from being
a rescue to a fashionista who
lets everyone know who's in
charge.

PHOTO BY KAYLIN ACRI

Electricity, Excitement and Everlasting Leadership Lessons



BRANDON HURLEY

IT HAS BEEN A JOY of mine over the past year to serve and represent cooperatives across Pennsylvania on the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) Youth Leadership Council (YLC). I think the best way to encapsulate what this program has done for me is to reflect — reflect on the lessons learned, the people I met and the leadership skills I acquired from an amazing group of mentors.

When asked about these experiences, I like to start with the whole reason for my participation in Youth Tour, which eventually led me to the YLC.

Living in a small town, I have the blessing and curse of being around the same people all the time. While it has its upsides, I often found myself wishing I could branch out and broaden my horizons.

When I heard Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) was offering a trip — Youth Tour — to Washington, D.C., you can imagine how excited I was. That led to an application, which led to an interview, which landed me a spot on a motorcoach to D.C. in June 2024. And how fortunate I was; I could have never imagined where this experience would lead me. (*See photos from this year's Youth Tour on page 20.*)

The people I've met have become my closest friends, and I still look back on the memories from time to time. Youth Tour really does stick with you, in the best way imaginable. And while I was making memories, meeting people and trading pins, I was also elected by my peers to serve on the prestigious YLC.

And that was just the beginning. Over the next few months, I met with all the other state YLC representatives on monthly video calls, where we learned more about cooperatives and how to improve as leaders in our communities.

Last October, I had the privilege of addressing cooperative leaders at the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association's (PREA) Annual Meeting with a speech titled, "5 More Minutes." I talked about the trials and joys of life, and how we should embrace what we have. Speaking from experience, sometimes those 5 minutes are all we have.

In November, I helped my cooperative, Somerset REC, document numerous substations thanks to my newly acquired unmanned aerial vehicle license. To finish the year, I addressed the cooperative's board of directors. I concluded my YLC duties this past March at NRECA's PowerXchange in Atlanta, Ga.

From the moment I stepped on that bus in Breezewood to where I am now, I have grown immensely in my personal and professional lives. I've learned how to be a confident leader, a passionate and purposeful public speaker, and an honorable representative of my peers — and all of this has influenced every aspect of my life.

I joke about it, but it's amazing to look back and see how far a high school junior — who truly had no clue what an electric cooperative was — has come. Cooperatives fuel our communities, and knowing what I know now, I am eternally grateful for what they provided me. Cooperatives allow amazing programs like Youth Tour to thrive, and it has shaped me into who I am today.

Once again, thank you, Somerset REC, PREA and NRECA, for all the opportunities I was blessed with. What once was a dream is now my reality. To everyone who supported me, thank you, especially to my mom and dad. My service to and support of cooperatives did not end with my YLC tenure. In fact, they're only just beginning. 📧

BRANDON HURLEY

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2024-2025 PENNSYLVANIA YOUTH LEADERSHIP COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE
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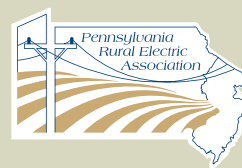
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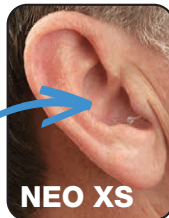
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THE HUNGRY THING

When the kids were little, one of our favorite books to read together was "The Hungry Thing." It told the story of a strange and scaly beast that came to town asking to be fed. The thing was, he mispronounced the foods he wanted, so the townspeople would have to guess what he meant.

When he asked for "shman-cakes," the town Wiseman thought he knew the answer: "Shmancakes, that's plain, are a small kind of chicken that falls with the rain." Of course, it was a clever boy who figured out the Hungry Thing just wanted pancakes.

We enjoyed guessing the foods he wanted. "Boop with a smacker," the kids knew, was soup with a cracker. And so it went.

Today, we're seeing new hungry things creeping into the Commonwealth. They're coming in the form of large-scale data centers, the giant engine rooms powering the rise of artificial intelligence (AI). AI-driven systems already shape much of our daily tech experience, from movie recommendations to online shopping, and their computing power is housed inside these massive data centers.

What makes them true "hungry things" is how much electricity they consume. AI-enhanced internet searches now use 10 times more energy than Google searches from just a few years ago. These systems devour data – and demand ever-increasing amounts of power to run. In fact, the International Energy Agency predicts that by 2026, global data center energy use will match the energy consumption of Japan, a nation of 125 million people.

Closer to home, these energy-hogging beasts are getting some serious attention. President Donald Trump was in Pittsburgh last month for the inaugural Pennsylvania Energy and Innovation Summit, which was hosted by U.S. Sen. Dave McCormick (R-Pa.). They announced more than \$90 billion in investments from private companies in Pennsylvania – funding expected to support AI infrastructure, new data centers, and the electric generation they require. Representatives from Pennsylvania's electric cooperatives were also on hand for the event.

While the high-level event speaks to the rapid growth in AI-driven data centers, it's also a reflection of our demand for the technology they support. At home and at work, data centers power all the streaming, scrolling, and connecting we do online. These facilities are expanding to keep up with our ever-growing appetite for information. In many ways, we are the Hungry Thing. Feed us.

PETER A. FITZGERALD
EDITOR



MAKING HUNTING HISTORY: Earlier this summer, lawmakers passed a bill that allows Sunday hunting. The measure overturns a law that has been in place for more than 150 years.

BAN LIFTED New bill allows hunting on Sundays

After more than 100 years of not legally being able to hunt on Sundays in Pennsylvania, hunters will now be able to do just that after a House bill was signed into law earlier this summer.

The bill, introduced by Rep. Mandy Steele (D-Allegheny), repeals the statewide ban. The Board of Game Commissioners will now determine when Sunday hunting will be implemented.

While the Game Commission has signaled it wants to move forward with the process as soon as this year, it's currently unclear when those dates will be announced.

Pennsylvania has about 850,000 licensed hunters, which is the second most in the nation behind Texas.

STAY ALERT PennDOT warns public about REAL ID text message scam

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) recently alerted the public about a new texting scam involving REAL ID. Officials say fraudulent text messages are being

sent to customers claiming to be from the Department of Motor Vehicles or the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. They're asking people to click on a link and provide personal and payment information.

PennDOT officials report they do not have a process that enables customers to pre-scan and upload REAL ID documents from a home or mobile device. Also, they say, PennDOT will never ask for or accept any identity documents over the internet, via text message or email for any reason.

Bottom line: Customers should not respond to these requests.

THREE TIMES AS NICE Delaware River named Pa.'s 2025 River of the Year

The Delaware River has played a pivotal role in American history, from George Washington's famous crossing during the Revolutionary War to powering the Industrial Revolution. This year, fans of the river are celebrating its recent designation as the 2025 Pennsylvania River of the Year.

Once one of the most polluted

rivers in the nation, the Delaware River has undergone a dramatic recovery. It now boasts more national wild and scenic designations than any other river in the United States. It also supplies drinking water to more than 14 million people.

This is the third time the Delaware River has received this honor, following wins in 2002 and 2011. The designation is based on public voting. This year's contest registered 8,037 total votes, with the Delaware River earning 2,962. The Youghiogheny River and Perkiomen Creek followed with 2,784 and 2,291 votes, respectively.

WALKING THROUGH FIRE

Firefighters undergo wildfire suppression training

Nearly 500 wildland firefighters from 11 states, including Pennsylvania, recently underwent intensive wildfire suppression training through the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) at Shippensburg University. The training is hosted annually by the state Bureau of Forestry.

Pennsylvania has a long history of answering the call to fight wildfires. In 2024, nearly 200 Pennsylvania wildland firefighters deployed to support out-of-state firefighting operations, often as part of 20-person interagency crews.

In January, 40 Pennsylvania firefighters were deployed to California to battle devastating wildfires near Los Angeles. In May, hundreds of firefighters, first responders and local officials worked tirelessly to contain wildfires closer to home in Michaux State Forest.

Since the Commonwealth's wildfire suppression training program began in 1973, DCNR has sent crews to wildfire and hurricane incidents in every region of the country — from Alaska to Hawaii and the western United States. 🌲



TIME LINES



AUGUST 2015

Ten years ago, *Penn Lines* looked at the intersection between wildlife and art by spotlighting photographers, graphic designers, and even a gourd-crafter. The article highlighted a cooperative member who had a passion for macro photography and another who became the owner of the largest gourd-crafting business in the United States. These success stories proved that Pennsylvania is home not only to beautiful wildlife, but also to the beautiful art that it inspires.

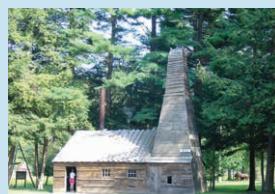


FAIR FUN

For the 59th year, the Tioga County Fair in Wellsboro will take place from Aug. 4 to 9. This year's events include the Bullride Mania Rodeo, truck and tractor pulls, a demolition derby, East Coast Pro Wrestling and a concert headlined by Isaac Cole. Adult admission is \$8, while kids under 36 inches are free. Learn more at tiogacountyfair.com.

DRAKE DAY

It was Aug. 27, 1859, when Edwin L. Drake first struck oil in Titusville, Crawford County. More than 160 years later, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Aug. 10, you can enjoy Drake Day at the Drake Well Museum and Park. Living history presentations are planned. For more information, visit drakewell.org.



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WOMEN WELLNESS

Workshops, vendors, massages and tarot readings will be offered at the Wild Women NEPA Festival Aug. 23 in Tunkhannock, Wyoming County. This year, the event will celebrate the energy of the New Moon. Held at Lazybrook Park from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., admission is \$40. Learn more at wildwomennepa.com.

BRATWURST AND BEER

Say goodbye to August by saying hello to the Erie German Heritage Festival. Beginning at 11 a.m. Aug. 30 at St. Nick's Grove in Erie, the event will offer German food, dancing, vendors, and, naturally, beer. Admission is \$5 per person, or \$8 for a two-day pass, while children under 12 enter for free. For more information, visit dank-erie.org.



DANK-ERIE.ORG

Creature Comforts

Readers' Pets are Living the 'Pawsh' Life

MICHAEL T. CRAWFORD

CHARLES M. SCHULZ, THE CREATOR of the "Peanuts" comic strip, famously said, "Happiness is a warm puppy." Turns out, birds, cats, lizards — you name it — can bring their owners a lot of joy, too. And where there's love, there's lots of pampering: special toys and treats ... one — or several — favorite beds ... calming music ... and even custom accessories.

At *Penn Lines*, we adore our animals, so we hatched an idea: Let's feature our readers' pampered pets. The

response from all of you was overwhelming; we were flooded with photos and stories that were both funny and touching. We wish we could have featured them all, but sadly we ran out of space in the magazine long before we ran out of options.

After hearing our readers' tales (or should we say, tails?), it's no wonder the pets on the following pages live such magnificent lives because, honestly, how could anyone say "no" to these faces? Enjoy.



MR. NACHO

'Small but mighty'

You may have heard of the Beverly Hills Chihuahua, but have you heard of the Gettysburg Chiweenie? Meet Mr. Nacho, a 9-year-old cross between a Chihuahua and dachshund (sometimes referred to as a Choxie) and resident fashionista.

"He struts along like he's in charge," says Patricia Roberts, Mr. Nacho's owner and a member of Gettysburg-based Adams Electric Cooperative. "Any truck, car, person or dog that walks by, he definitely makes himself known. As little as he is — he's less than 10 pounds — he's small but mighty. ... No one is going to get the best of him."

From hand-stitched outfits and themed bandanas — one reads "I'm the boss" — to personalized, matching blankets and toys, Mr. Nacho never lacks for style. Rescued from a local shelter, Mr. Nacho now enjoys regular spa treatments, which include a bath, an oatmeal facial, ear cleanse and nail trim. Afterward, he fills his belly with delicious human-quality meals and treats before belly rubs and a nap on the couch.

"He has all sorts of toys, but he loves his Lamb Chop," Roberts says, referring to the sock puppet voiced by comedian Shari Lewis. "I've bought so many Lamb Chops from the grocery store for him!"

HUMMY



From the streets to the good life

Some pets are born with silver bowls at their feet. Some go from rags and work their way up. In 2013, Katrina Kalicky, a member of Cambridge Springs-based Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative, took pity on a cat roaming the streets of Columbus, Ohio.

Catapulted into a life of luxury, the orphaned cat was given a new name: Hummy — short for Humbucker, which is a device used to cancel out noisy interference on guitars. Instead of hiding under dumpsters, Hummy now has his pick of five different beds and two cardboard boxes for his lounging pleasure. He even has his own blankets for kneading. But, even for cats, there's more to life than snoozing.

Hummy likes to be a part of the family and has his own chair at the table.

"He's one of those cats who has a lot to say," Kalicky says. "He'll ask for food ... but he'll also ask a lot to play. He even has a different meow for cuddles. ... He will play and play until he is out of breath."

Hummy's life of luxury hasn't dulled his instincts. In addition to an array of toys, he enjoys puzzles that hold treats inside. It helps keep his wits about him for the summer months when he brings back "gifts," found while hunting, as a "thank you" for his pampered life.

PONCHO



In a league of his own

We typically speak of pets as our “furry” or “four-legged” friends. As a sun conure — a vibrantly colored parrot native to South America — Poncho fits neither description, but he certainly enjoys plush living and easily qualifies as a pampered pet.

“He’s so funny,” says his owner, Sue Heyler, a member of Mansfield-based Tri-County Rural Electric Cooperative, “[and] he knows what ‘funny’ means! If you say the word ‘funny,’ he starts to laugh!”

Poncho spends most of his time riding on his doting mom’s shoulder or playing in his condo of empty cereal boxes, which he chews into confetti.

“He doesn’t like anybody else. He just wants to be on my shoulder and rubbing up against my chin,” Heyler says. “My husband, John, comes over behind me and puts his arm around me, and Poncho goes ... up onto John’s shoulder, all the way across his back, back down onto my other shoulder and looks John in the face. He is jealous and protective of me.”

Poncho thinks of himself as a tiny, winged person, she says, and prefers the food on her plate (though he will turn up his beak at cooked vegetables). His favorite dishes are mac and cheese, meatloaf, dinner rolls, shrimp, and baby-back ribs.

For a bedtime snack, Poncho enjoys cashews, bananas with peanut butter or cookies with milk. Heyler says he’s become adept at eating while standing on one foot, using his opposite foot to hold his food.

PIPER



A man's best friend

What could be more classic than a farmer and his faithful hound?

Piper, an 8-year-old border collie — referred to as “the Ranch Panda” by her owner Scott Lobaugh, a member of DuBois-based United Electric Cooperative — works hard herding all living things in her home state of Montana and is handsomely compensated for her troubles.

“[Scott] got Piper back when he was going to college ... and she has been by his side 24/7/365 since,” explains Doug Lobaugh, Scott’s father, who refers to Piper as his grand puppy. “In the service bay where he worked on tractors, he completely wired in his work bench so that Piper had a kennel underneath ... and he could have his dog at work every day.”

When she’s working, Piper wears an iconic Stormy Kromer hat for warmth and, if the wind is particularly cold, reflective goggles. Each day begins and ends with a hearty, home-cooked meal, and no matter where Scott’s headed, Piper is along for the ride, having traveled across the country from Montana to the family’s cooperative-serviced cabin in Leeper, Pa., at least seven times.

“She’s a well-traveled dog,” Doug proclaims. “She’s been in 17 states, maybe more.”

Born to slay

Jupiter may not be able to fly or breathe fire, but this 3-year-old bearded dragon manages to warm hearts nonetheless. Despite his scales and spikes, Jupiter is keen to snuggle with his owner Megan Jordan, a member of Huntingdon-based Valley Rural Electric Cooperative who has raised him since he was a 3-month-old hatchling.

After Jupiter has his breakfast, he surveys his kingdom with a quick patrol of the house before rushing back to Jordan for his morning cuddles and TV. Though diminutive, Jupiter lives large, dwelling in a custom-built condo, which includes a blanket and a plush, lizard-patterned bed.

"It takes up an entire room," Jordan says of the structure. "It's heated, so it's usually right around 100 degrees. He likes it hot."

Jupiter has a fetching collection of outfits for any occasion, ranging from biker leather for those rough and tumble outings to simple but elegant bow ties for more sophisticated affairs. He has a variety of harnesses with different colored wings for his daily strolls, and he even has a floral-patterned shirt, cut from a Ken doll and tailored to fit him.

Like any true dragon, Jupiter bristles at anyone who doesn't recognize his magnificence.

"He loves when people fuss over him," Jordan says. "If we go anywhere, and people don't notice him or don't come over and say, 'He's so cute,' or stuff like that, he will get upset and look at me with little sad eyes."

"Jupiter may not be furry," she says, "but he is proof amazing things come in tiny, scaly packages."



JUPITER

U.S. zip codes turn up silver for residents

Sealed Vault Bags full of State Silver Bars are actually being handed over to the first U.S. residents who find their zip code listed in today's publication and call before the 21 day order deadline ends to claim the bags full of pure silver

NATIONWIDE - Operators at the National Silver Hotline are struggling to keep up with all the calls.

That's because Silver Vault Bags loaded with pure .999 State Silver Bars are now being handed over to everyone who beats the order deadline.

"That's why U.S. residents will be hoarding all the silver bars they can get their hands on before the deadline ends. This comes as no surprise after the standard State Minimum set by the Lincoln Treasury was dropped for everyone who gets the Silver Vault Bags making them a real steal," said Mary Ellen Withrow, the Fmr. 40th Treasurer of the United States of America, Emeritus.

"As executive advisor to the private Lincoln Treasury, I get paid to deliver breaking news. And here's the best part. This is great news for U.S. residents because the reduced State Minimum set by the Lincoln Treasury is a real steal," said Withrow.

The only thing residents need to do is find the first 2 digits of their zip code on the Distribution List printed in today's publication. If their zip code is on the list, they just need to call the National Silver Hotline before the deadline ends.

And here's the good news. Residents who do are getting the reduced State Minimum set by the Lincoln Treasury of just \$390 for each State Silver Vault Bag which is just \$39 for each pristine Silver half ounce bar as long as they call the National Silver Hotline at 1-888-415-6109 before the deadline ends.

Phone lines open at precisely 8:30 A.M. this morning and are expected to be flooded by U.S. residents looking to cash in on the reduced State Minimum set by

(Continued on next page)



■ **U.S. RESIDENTS CASH IN:** Calls are pouring in from state residents who are trying to get their hands on the Jumbo Silver Ballistic Bags pictured above before the deadline ends. That's because residents who find the first two digits of their zip code printed in today's publication are cashing in on the reduced State Minimum price set for the next 21 days by the Lincoln Treasury.

► **Who gets the Silver Vault Bags:** Listed below are the zip codes that get to claim the Silver Vault Bags. If you find the first two digits of your zip code below immediately call: **1-888-415-6109 DEPT. SMB201**

Alabama 35, 36	Florida 32, 33, 34	Kentucky 40, 41, 42	Missouri 63, 64, 65	North Carolina 27, 28	South Carolina 29	West Virginia 24, 25, 26
Alaska 99	Georgia 30, 31, 39	Louisiana 70, 71	Montana 59	North Dakota 58	South Dakota 57	Wyoming 82, 83
Arizona 85, 86	Hawaii 96	Maine 03, 04	Nebraska 68, 69	Ohio 41, 43	Tennessee 37, 38	
Arkansas 71, 72	Idaho 83	Maryland 20, 21	Nevada 88, 89	Oklahoma 73, 74	Texas 75, 76, 77	
California 91	Illinois 60, 61	Massachusetts 01, 02, 05	New Hampshire 03	Oregon 97	Utah 78, 79, 88	
Colorado 80, 81	Indiana 46, 47	Michigan 48, 49	New Jersey 07, 08	Pennsylvania 15, 16, 17	Vermont 84	
Connecticut 06	Iowa 50, 51, 52	Minnesota 55, 56	New Mexico 87, 88	Rhode Island 02	Virginia 20, 22, 23, 24	
Delaware 19	Kansas 66, 67	Mississippi 38, 39	New York 00, 10, 11, 12		Washington 98, 99	

(Continued from previous page)

the Lincoln Treasury to date. That's why U.S. residents who find their zip code on the distribution list today are being urged to call.

Since this special advertising announcement can't stop anyone from buying up all the new 2025 Edition U.S. State Silver Bars they can get their hands on, the Lincoln Treasury has not set a limit of how many Jumbo Silver Ballistic Bags residents can get – these are the bags pictured that contain 10 individual Silver Vault Bags each. Everyone who gets these will be glad they did.

"Residents who want to cash in on the reduced State Minimum set by the private Lincoln Treasury better hurry. That's because after the deadline ends, the State Minimum for these pristine half ounce U.S. State Silver Bars set by the Lincoln Treasury will go up to \$68 per bar no matter how many bars people get," Withrow said.

"We're bracing for all the calls and doing the best we can, but with just hours left before the deadline ends, residents who find the first 2 digits of their zip code listed in today's publication need to call the National Silver Hotline," Withrow said.



■ **SILVER IS SOARING:** It's good news for state residents who get the Silver Vault Bags each loaded with 10 solid .999 pure Silver State Bars. That's because residents are getting the State Minimum set by the private Lincoln Treasury as long as they call before the deadline ends.

READ THIS IMPORTANT INFORMATION: If you find your zip code on the distribution list printed in today's publication read below then immediately call: **1-888-415-6109 DEPT. SMB201**

► **I keep calling and can't get through:** Keep trying. Right now everyone's looking to cash in on the reduced State Minimum set by the Lincoln Treasury. In fact, we won't be surprised if thousands of residents order up as many Silver Vault Bags as they can get their hands on before the deadline ends. That's because the State Minimum set by the Lincoln Treasury has been reduced to just \$39 for each silver half ounce bar for everyone who gets the vault bags. And since each Silver Vault Bag contains 10 pristine State Silver Bars for just \$390 we're guessing state residents will be claiming two or more bags while they're up for grabs. But all those who really want to cash in are taking the Jumbo Silver Ballistic Bags containing 100 State Silver Bars before the deadline ends and the State Minimum set by the Lincoln Treasury goes up to \$680 per Vault Bag. In fact the State Minimum set by the Lincoln Treasury is reduced even further for those getting the Jumbo Bags so just be sure to ask the National Silver Hotline operator for your discount. So if lines are busy keep trying.

► **How much are the Silver Vault Bags worth:** It's hard to tell how much these Silver Vault Bags could be worth since they are in pristine condition, but those who get in on this now will be glad they did. That's because the State Minimum set by the Lincoln Treasury goes up to \$680 per bag after the deadline ends. So you better believe that at just \$390 the Silver Vault bags are a real steal for everyone who beats the deadline.

► **Can I buy one State Silver Bar:** Yes. But, the reduced State Minimum set by the Lincoln Treasury of just \$39 per bar applies only to residents who purchase a Silver Vault Bag(s). That means only those residents who order a Silver Vault Bag(s) or a Jumbo Silver Ballistic Bag get the reduced State Minimum set by the Lincoln Treasury. All single bar purchases, orders placed after the deadline and all non-state residents must pay the normal state minimum of \$68 per silver half ounce bar.

► **Why is the State Minimum set by the Lincoln Treasury so low now:** Thousands of U.S. residents stand to miss the deadline to get the silver at the reduced State Minimum set by the private Lincoln Treasury. Now all residents who find their zip code on the Distribution List to the left are getting the Silver Vault Bags for themselves and all the solid .999 pure State Silver Bars found inside. The price for each Silver Vault Bag after the deadline ends is set to the normal state minimum of \$680 which is \$68 per bar. But residents who beat the 21-day deadline only cover the reduced State Minimum set by the Lincoln Treasury of just \$390 for each State Silver Bar Bag which is just \$39 per bar as long as they call the National Silver Hotline before the deadline ends at: **1-888-415-6109 DEPT. SMB201**. Hotlines open at 8:30 A.M.

*** All 49 States listed are available - States not listed are already sold out ***



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PHOTO ENLARGEMENT SHOWS ENGRAVING DETAIL OF SOLID HALF OUNCE STATE SILVER BARS

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Local Lore

Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative

What's in a Name?

These days, there are dozens of things people can enjoy when visiting Worlds End State Park in Sullivan County, home to Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative.

You can experience the charm of the Forksville covered bridge, enjoy the stunning views from Loyalsock Canyon Vista, and for those who equate fun with a challenge, there's the Worlds End Ultramarathon, where participants have to cover 64 miles in 19 hours.

And yet, despite its modern-day reputation as a go-to destination for nature lovers and athletes alike, it wasn't always so inviting. Or, at least, that's according to its history, which dates to 1872, when a map christened the area with the Worlds End moniker.

Take it from W.S. Swingler, assistant district forester of Wyoming State Forest — now known as Loyalsock State Forest — who wrote this in



SARAH PARRISH

REACHING THE END OF THE WORLD: Worlds End State Park in Sullivan County originally got its name from the visual of seven mountain ranges converging to create the sensation that park-goers had reached the end of the world.

1935: “[The name] arose from the topography of the place. Seven mountain ranges converge on the point, and one does receive the sensation of being at the ultimate ends of the Earth.”

The legend of the park's name only grew in time. At one point, “Worlds End” became “Whirl's Glen,” which later became “Whirls End,” before ultimately landing back where it began — and stands today — as Worlds End. Through it all, each name has shared one thing in common: nature.

“The proponents of the second name base their claim upon the whirlpool in the Loyalsock Creek,” Swingler explained nearly a century ago. “The third name was probably a contraction of the other two. Since the whirlpool had largely disappeared, it was decided that the name Worlds End would be the most appropriate.”

Despite the ominous nature of the park's name, the Commonwealth's own website can't help but heap praise on the destination: “The rugged natural beauty coursing through the heart of the Endless Mountains landscape provides many photographic possibilities.”

Proof again that there's more to a name than what typically meets the eye. 🌲



Main Office: Forksville, Pa.
Consumer-members served: 6,199
Website: screc.com

A Little Treasure

This month's artwork, inspired by the April 2024 *Penn Lines* feature on morel mushrooms, comes from Vivian Baumunk, age 5. According to her mother, who receives electricity from Forksville-based Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative, Vivian loves exploring the creek and forest behind their home, catching frogs and crayfish, and gathering little treasures from the woods. Thanks for this little treasure, Vivian!

Vivian Baumunk, age 5

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

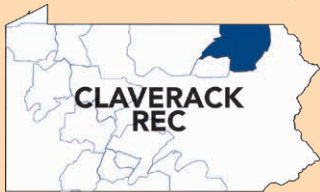
Each month, we'll feature the artwork of our young readers (or our readers' youngsters), inspired by something they've read in *Penn Lines*. Paints, pencils, crayons, clay, sand – any physical medium is OK! You may send digital photos of the creation to CommunityCorner@prea.com, but please: no digital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

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



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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.

A Week I Won't Soon Forget



STEVEN G.
ALLABAUGH

SINCE I STARTED AT CLAVERACK Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) in 2005, I've watched as we've sent young people on the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. Through the years, I've thought, "Someday, I'd like to chaperone that trip." Year after year, it just never happened. That changed this year because of my daughter, Amanda. Amanda is going to be a senior this fall at Northeast Bradford High School, and she told my wife, Angie, and me that she was interested in applying to attend Youth Tour. We were excited. Northeast Bradford is a great but small school, so the opportunity to be with hundreds of other students from around the country sounded like a great experience for her. When she was selected, we were thrilled. And when the opportunity came to finally go as a chaperone — and to share the experience with her — I found my walking sneakers.

I thought I knew what to expect, but I was wrong.

This trip was eye-opening in ways I didn't anticipate. More than 1,700 students from electric cooperatives across the country came together in our nation's capital, and after spending a week with them, I felt something — optimism for our future.

During the week, we toured places rich in history. We visited the World War II Memorial, the Korean and Vietnam War memorials, and the Lincoln, Martin Luther King Jr., and Jefferson memorials. We stood in silence at Arlington National Cemetery, watching the changing of the guard, and we explored the sobering exhibits of the Holocaust Museum.

Each site reminded our Youth Tour student delegates about the values our country was built upon and the sacrifices made to preserve them. They learned about the history of electric cooperatives and why they have been so important to America — especially rural America — since Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal led to the creation of the Rural Electrification Administration in 1936.

There was a day for our students to visit their representatives on Capitol Hill. Thanks to the staff of U.S. Rep. Dan Meuser's (R-9th) office, our group was even given a behind-the-scenes tour of the U.S. Capitol. The students were in awe of the history and significance — and so was I. But what I found most amazing wasn't the buildings or even the history; it was the students themselves.

There were moments that were truly inspiring — like watching Amanda and the other students from Pennsylvania instantly connect with kids from every corner of the country, trading state pins, laughing, and forming friendships.

It was also remarkable to watch 1,700 teenagers at Youth Night sing and dance with pure joy. These weren't cliques. These were kids being kind to one another, celebrating each other.

And then came a wonderful moment I will never forget.

Keynote speaker Mike Schlappi, who was paralyzed in a gun accident as a teenager and went on to become a Paralympic gold medalist in wheelchair basketball, gave a stirring speech about being resilient, appreciative and patriotic. As he rolled to the flag to close with a message about unity and respect, his background music wouldn't play. Without a single word from the stage, 1,700 students rose to their feet and sang the national anthem — together, start to finish. No prompting. No hesitation.

There were smaller moments along the way, too — like watching our Claverack REC students respectfully and emotionally engage with Holocaust survivors during our museum visit. Or watching Amanda and the other Claverack students spontaneously leave their friendship bracelets at the Pentagon Memorial as a gesture of love and remembrance.

Continued on page 16D

Students Travel to Washington, D.C., for Youth Tour

CASEY WOOD, VICE PRESIDENT, COMMUNICATIONS

FIVE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS from Claverack Rural Electric Cooperatives's (REC) service territory were selected to join more than 1,700 students from all over the United States for the National Rural Electric Youth Tour in June, a weeklong trip to Washington, D.C.

During the tour, students visited historical sites, including the Vietnam Veterans and Korean War Veterans memorials, the Smithsonian museums and the National Zoo. They also met with legislative staff from their congressional districts. Selected on the basis of an application, video and extracurricular activities, the following students represented Claverack REC on the 2025 Youth Tour:



Maia Montross, daughter of Shane and Rebecca Montross, attends Tunkhannock Area High School. Maia is a dedicated student with a strong interest in biology and a career goal of becoming a dentist.

At school, Maia serves as class president and has been an active member of the Class Steering Committee for four years. She participates in field hockey, lacrosse, and school musicals and is a member of several academic and service-oriented clubs, including Rotary's Interact Club, Scholastic Scrimmage, and SkillsUSA Quiz Bowl. Her Quiz Bowl team was the district champion in both 10th and 11th grades and the state runner-up in 10th grade. Maia has also received the College Board National Rural and Small-Town Recognition Award and was ranked No. 1 in her class in ninth and 10th grades.

A Girl Scout for 12 years, Maia earned the prestigious Gold Award by designing and installing an educational pollinator garden at her local elementary school. This

project not only beautified the school grounds, but it also served as a hands-on learning space for students. Her passion for public service extends through her involvement in Interact Club, where she helps raise funds for charitable causes.

Maia is also a talented artist, having received recognition in the Rossetti Art Show for her pastel work. She enjoys watercolor painting, visiting art museums, listening to music from her parents' CD collection and caring for her large collection of houseplants. With a love for science and learning, Maia plans to pursue a career in pediatric dentistry and dreams of one day opening her own dental practice.



Everett Leonard, son of Joe and Alyssa Leonard, is a student at Ross Corners Christian Academy. Everett is passionate about working with his hands and plans to pursue a career as a heavy equipment operator or a Claverack REC lineworker.

At school, Everett has served as class vice president and chaplain and is actively involved in the Yearbook Club. He has participated in varsity soccer for five years and has taken part in schoolwide drama productions for three years, where he developed strong public speaking skills. He also completed a debate class, further honing his communication abilities.

Everett is deeply committed to service and hands-on work. He has volunteered for the Special Hockey Tournament in Vestal, N.Y., for three consecutive years and spent weekends and summers performing maintenance and custodial work at Rock Mountain Bible Camp. During the school year, he continues this work as part of his daily schedule. In March, Everett traveled to North Carolina on a mission trip to help build cabins for a Bible camp.

In his free time, Everett plays soccer and ice hockey, operates heavy machinery like bulldozers and excavators, works on his car, and helps remodel his family's basement. Inspired by his father, who taught him everything from mechanics to carpentry, Everett dreams of opening his own excavating and demolition company.

SEEING THE SITES: Youth Tour students from Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative (REC), along with staff and chaperones, enjoy a day of sightseeing in Washington, D.C. They are, from left, chaperone Megan Rought, Ed Eastman, Everett Leonard, Amanda Allabaugh, Bella Clark, chaperone Angie Allabaugh, Maia Montross and Claverack REC President & CEO Steve Allabaugh, who also served as a chaperone.





Bella Clark, daughter of John and Amanda Clark and Miranda Wulff, is a student at Wyalusing Valley Junior/Senior High School. With a strong passion for animal science, Bella aspires to become a veterinarian.

Bella is active in a wide range of school activities, including soccer, indoor soccer, track and field, chorus, drama club, and Early Morning Jazz. She is president of the Agriculture Club and a member of the National Honor Society. Bella has also participated in Student Council, Future Business Leaders of America, and Youth Leadership and was selected as a 2024 Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership Ambassador. She has received the Bobbi Lord Good Citizenship Award in recognition of her character and service.

Her leadership extends beyond the classroom. As Agriculture Club president, Bella regularly gives presentations on agricultural topics and has developed strong public-speaking skills through Future Business Leaders of America and leadership conferences. She volunteers at community carnivals, animal shelters, churches, nursing homes and children's learning centers. Bella is also a 4-H member and spends her summers interning at the Wysox Animal Clinic, where she has gained hands-on experience in veterinary care.

Bella's hobbies include horseback riding, fishing, hunting, gardening, kayaking, hiking, playing guitar, singing and dancing. Inspired by her mentor, Dr. Robyn Terrel, Bella has developed a deep appreciation for the veterinary profession and hopes to open her own practice. Her dedication to animals and her community reflects her compassionate spirit and strong work ethic.



Ed Eastman, son of Amanda and Myron Eastman, is a student at Northeast Bradford High School. With a strong interest in chemical engineering, Ed is passionate about science, problem-solving and innovation.

Ed is involved in a variety of academic and extracurricular activities. He plays soccer, runs track and is a member of the concert band. He also serves as treasurer of the National Honor Society and is captain of the Scholarship Challenge Team, a local academic Quiz Bowl competition. His leadership and academic excellence reflect his dedication to both scholarship and teamwork.

Ed has developed public-speaking skills through school presentations and his involvement in 4-H. He volunteers regularly at church events, through the National Honor Society and independently within his community.

Ed enjoys playing guitar and chess and has a talent for juggling. Inspired by his father, who instilled in him the values of discipline, hard work, and kindness, Ed hopes to



EXPLORING THE HILL: Youth Tour participants, representing Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative, pose in front of the U.S. Capitol during their visit to Washington, D.C.

combine his love of music and craftsmanship into building and selling electric guitars at affordable prices for his community.



Amanda Allabaugh, daughter of Steven and Angie Allabaugh, is a student at Northeast Bradford High School. Amanda plans to pursue a career in occupational therapy, working with children.

Amanda has been actively involved in academics and student leadership. She participated in junior varsity volleyball and later shifted her focus to academic organizations. She has served in the Student Government Association since her freshman year and was inducted into the National Honor Society as a sophomore. Amanda also manages her school's varsity track and field team and consistently maintains High Honor Roll status.

Amanda has developed strong public-speaking skills through a dedicated speech course and real-world experience. In November, she delivered a speech on resilience at her school's Veterans Day assembly, addressing more than 50 veterans, their families, a state representative and the student body.

Her commitment to community service is evident through her involvement in events like Trunk-or-Treat and Hands Across Northeast, which raises funds to provide groceries to families in need. Amanda also volunteers through student government and the National Honor Society, helping to strengthen the bonds within her community.

Amanda's favorite subjects include world history, American history and civics. She enjoys spending quality time with family and friends and is especially inspired by her older sister, who has been a guiding influence in her life. Amanda dreams of opening her own pediatric occupational therapy clinic to help children thrive. She also envisions owning a boutique that celebrates individuality and self-expression through fashion. 🍷

FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Continued from page 16A

Or dancing on the sidewalk with a red-white-and-blue-clad street performer outside the White House — laughing, clapping and living in the moment. It reminded all of us that even in turbulent times, with so much

division, we still have reason to be hopeful.

Maybe best of all was seeing how the group made space for everyone. Some students arrived a little shy or unsure of how to fit in. By the end of the week, they were smiling, talking, and dancing, and they were fully part of the cooperative family they had

built together.

I've heard over the years that people who attend Youth Tour never forget it — and for some, it changes the trajectory of their lives. I sure won't forget this trip. I am grateful I got to see it through the eyes of the incredible young people we serve. Most of all, I am grateful I got to share it with my daughter.

Claverack REC is proud to sponsor students each year on Youth Tour. If you know a high school junior interested in attending next summer, be sure to keep an eye on claverack.com and *Penn Lines* in January for application information. If you can join us at our Member Appreciation Event Aug. 27 at the Wyoming County Fair, we'll have a Youth Tour information table hosted by our PREA Youth Tour coordinator — and maybe even a Youth Tour student or two. 🎉

STEVEN G. ALLABAUGH
PRESIDENT & CEO

NEW EVENTS THIS YEAR

Member Information & Appreciation Day!

Wednesday, Aug. 27
Wyoming County Fairgrounds
9141 US 6, Meshoppen, PA 18630
2 - 8 p.m.

Enjoy:

- \$20 bill credit + \$30 fair food vouchers per voting membership
 - Information, Presentations, and Activities under the Claverack Tent
- 3:30 PM: Unlock the Benefits of SmartHub for Your Membership
PLUS! Learn more about our September SmartHub promotion.
 - 4:30 PM: Learn what Causes Outages and How We Minimize the Impacts
 - 5:30 PM: Experience a LIVE Drone Demonstration
 - 6:30 PM: Q&A with the Claverack Team
 - 7:30 PM: Drawing for the **GRAND PRIZE** of (1) \$500 bill credit!
Members must attend one of the live sessions listed above to be eligible for the grand prize. Presence at the drawing is not required.

Remember to bring your registration card, which was included in the mailing you received in late June. Proper identification must be shown at the time of registration.

BIG JOB OPPORTUNITIES, SMALL TOWN LIFE:

How Rural Fiber Internet Opens New Doors

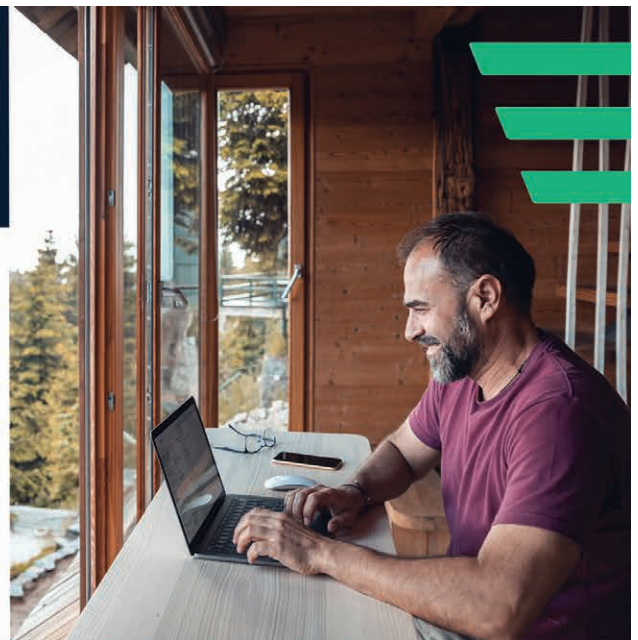
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NEVER ENTER FLOOD WATERS

When floods happen, news reports often show homeowners and reporters standing in or rowing through flood waters.

This is a BAD IDEA. Flood waters can cover downed power lines or other electrical hazards, and the combination of water and electricity can cause shock or electrocution.

Here are some safety reminders:

- Never enter flood waters; this includes on foot or by any other means such as a boat or canoe.
- Electrical hazards such as downed power lines could be lurking underneath the standing water.
- Do not enter a flooded basement if water could be covering outlets, appliances, or electrical cords.
- Do not touch electrical equipment such as wires, switches or fuses if you are wet or standing in water or on a damp surface.

Cleaning up can also be dangerous:

- Downed and deadly power lines can be hiding under branches and debris.
- Do not use electric yard tools if it is raining or the ground is wet.
- Replace water-damaged electronics and equipment.
- Always be aware of power line locations when using or carrying ladders, poles, or any other extendable or long tools.
- Be aware of power line locations each time you are elevated, for example: on a ladder, rooftop, or boom lift.

Learn more at:



Nuclear Energy's Role in Grid Stability Grows Stronger

MICHAEL T. CRAWFORD, SENIOR TECHNICAL EDITOR

IN TODAY'S WORLD, THERE'S ALWAYS a light on somewhere, requiring a steady, stable supply of electricity. Pennsylvania's rural electric cooperatives have long taken advantage of one source in particular: nuclear energy. And now it looks like the rest of the nation will be following suit.

In late May, executive orders from the Oval Office called for a fourfold increase in nuclear generation by 2050, streamlined permitting for new reactors, and enhanced federal coordination to support both large-scale plants and advanced nuclear technologies, such as small modular reactors. Permitting for nuclear projects has historically taken years, but the executive orders direct the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to approve new reactor applications within 18 months.

While the recently passed reconciliation package, signed by President Donald Trump in early July, may have cut funding for some programs, it preserves the Nuclear Production Tax Credit, which supports new and existing nuclear power plants by lowering their operational costs and attracting investment.

'The message is clear'

This renewed focus on nuclear power is reassuring for Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Allegheny), which supplies the majority of your cooperative's wholesale power. Some of that power is generated by the Susquehanna Steam Electric Station (Susquehanna), a nuclear plant in Luzerne County. Allegheny owns a 10% share of the facility, which in 2024, provided cooperative



NEW LIFE FOR NUCLEAR: The Susquehanna Steam Electric Station (Susquehanna) in Luzerne County is a key asset in Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc.'s energy portfolio. Recent Trump Administration executive orders are giving nuclear plants like Susquehanna a larger role in producing the nation's energy.

consumer-members with close to 60% of their energy needs.

"For Pennsylvania's rural electric cooperatives and the consumers we serve, the message is clear: Nuclear power is critical to our nation's energy future," said Steve Brame, president and CEO of Allegheny and the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association, your cooperative's state and federal advocate. "That's something Pennsylvania and New Jersey cooperatives have long understood with a reliable, efficient plant like Susquehanna in our portfolio."

The renewed policy focus comes at a time when electricity demand is surging, driven in part by artificial intelligence and data center growth. Major tech companies are already seeking long-term nuclear contracts to feed their needs.

In Pennsylvania, for instance, Talen Energy, which operates the Susquehanna plant, has inked deals to host a data center campus at the site. Microsoft has also signed a 20-year power-purchase agreement with Constellation Energy to restart a reactor at the Crane Energy Center near Harrisburg. The former Three

Mile Island site has been dormant since 2019.

In addition to propping up nuclear power, the executive orders emphasize energy security, with calls to reduce reliance on foreign fuel sources and reinvest in domestic supply chains. The U.S. Department of Energy is expected to play a key role in coordinating this work, including possible funding opportunities for infrastructure upgrades and next-generation reactor deployment.

The orders explicitly support life extensions for current plants and encourage utilities to consider pairing large reactors with smaller, advanced units on the same site.

The federal government is expected to release more detailed implementation guidance in the coming months, including potential funding mechanisms, partnerships and siting criteria for new reactors. 🗳️

ALLEGHENY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC., based in Harrisburg, Pa., is the wholesale energy provider for the 14 rural electric cooperatives in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The cooperative has a proud history of investing in sustainable energy solutions to benefit the communities it serves while providing reliable energy at an affordable price.

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Youth Tour 2025: A Trip to Remember

EIGHTY STUDENTS FROM PENNSYLVANIA and New Jersey took a once-in-a-lifetime trip in June when they traveled from their electric cooperatives across the two states to Washington, D.C., for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Youth Tour.

While there, they toured monuments and memorials, visited museums and Capitol Hill, and networked with more than 1,600 other students from across the United States.

“Youth Tour gives students a chance to step outside their comfort zone and connect with other teens from across the nation,” says Steph Okuniewski, Youth Tour director for the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association. “In the 19 years I have attended Youth Tour, I have seen students develop lifelong friendships, choose career paths and return to their communities with a better understanding of electric cooperatives and the important role they play in rural areas.” 🇺🇸



TOMORROW'S LEADERS: Delegates from Pennsylvania and New Jersey gather for a photo in front of the White House. The students also had the opportunity to visit one of Washington D.C.'s newest museums, The People's House: A White House Experience.



MOMENTS TO REMEMBER: Youth Tour was a week filled with experiences for cooperative teens. Clockwise from bottom left: Riley McCausland of REA Energy Cooperative shows off her collection of state pins; Nadia McLean of Central Electric Cooperative and Max Gochmour of New Enterprise Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) have a great time at Co-op Connections Night; From left, chaperone Sarah Parrish and students Emily Lewis and Noah Rakestraw, all representing Sullivan County REC, visit the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial; While visiting The People's House: A White House Experience, Amanda Allabaugh of Claverack REC, front, finds a hidden compartment in the resolute desk. Other Claverack representatives, from left, are: Everett Leonard, Bella Clark, Maia Montross, chaperones Steve Allabaugh, the co-op's president and CEO, and Megan Rought, and student Ed Eastman; Brandon Hurley of Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative (REC), Pennsylvania's 2024-2025 Youth Leadership Council (YLC) representative, poses with the 2025-2026 YLC representatives: Pennsylvania's Kendall Woods, center, of Adams Electric Cooperative and New Jersey's Cristina Hatzimihalis of Sussex REC.

Cool Savings: Refrigerator and Freezer Efficiency Tips

MIRANDA BOUTELLE

Q: What are some ways I can improve the efficiency of my refrigerator and freezer?

A: When exploring ways to be more efficient with refrigerators and freezers, we often find ourselves stuck between convenience and conserving energy. While you can upgrade to newer equipment, care and habits can be just as important to saving energy.

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) helps us understand what to

look for in our existing equipment and new appliances. In general, the larger the refrigerator, the more energy it uses. The most efficient models are typically 16 to 20 cubic feet. Models with the freezer on top tend to use less energy than bottom freezers or side-by-side units. A refrigerator 15 years or older uses about 35% more energy than an Energy Star®-certified model.

Here are some tips to keep your refrigerator running efficiently and limit overuse:

Keep it organized. One of the biggest issues with refrigerator energy use is opening the door or keeping it open. An organized fridge makes food items easier to find, minimizing open-door time and keeping cold air inside. Place items in the same spots so they are easier and faster to find. I tell my kids to take a quick look inside at the options and close the door

while they are deciding what to eat.

Keep it clean. Regularly cleaning the gasket — the flexible strip around the perimeter of the fridge door — ensures a tight seal between the door and the unit to keep cold air inside. If the gasket is not sealing tightly, it should be replaced. Removing and cleaning the vent at the bottom of the unit can help airflow. Clean the coils at the back using an extended brush instead of moving the fridge and risking injury.

Keep it safe. The DOE recommends setting your refrigerator temperature between 35 and 38 degrees and freezer at 0 degrees.

If you have a second refrigerator or freezer, here are some things to consider that can help you save energy.

Do you need it to be plugged in year-round? Perhaps you can keep it empty and unplugged for part of the year. Maybe you only really need it during the holiday season. Unplugging it for the months you aren't using it will save energy, and you'll still have it as a backup when you need it.

If you are a hunter or buy meat in bulk, set a goal to empty your freezer before you restock. This allows you to avoid food waste and unplug the extra appliance when it is not needed.

If possible, consider the location. Keeping the second fridge or freezer in a cool basement versus a hot garage requires less energy.

Instilling simple cleaning and food storage habits are easy ways to be more efficient with your in-home refrigeration. 🌱

MIRANDA BOUTELLE is the chief operating officer at Efficiency Services Group in Oregon, a cooperatively owned energy efficiency company. She has more than 20 years of experience helping people save energy at home, and she writes on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, which represents more than 900 local electric cooperatives.

MARK GILLILAND, PIONEER UTILITY RESOURCES



KEEP COOL: If you have a second refrigerator or freezer, consider ways to avoid food waste and unplug the extra appliance when it is not needed.

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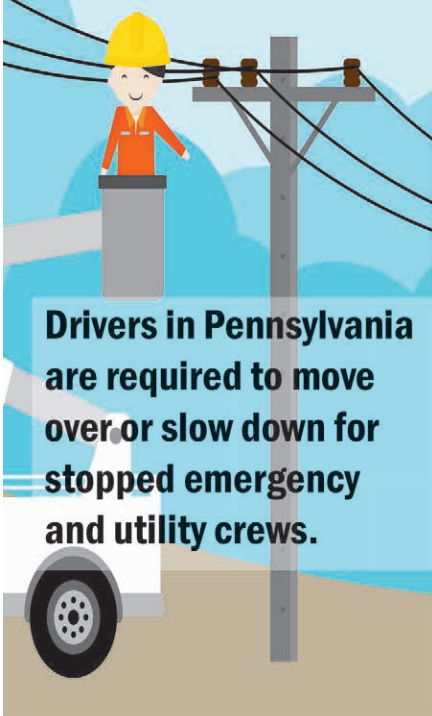
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Love, Grace Guide Growth in Parenting

ABIGAIL ZIEGER

WHEN I WAS PREGNANT with my first child, I wanted to be as prepared as possible and do things “the right way.” I read baby books and parenting books galore. We were given adorable onesie sets, swaddling blankets, baby swings and a maple crib. We prepared a nursery, and I ate, slept, and dreamt all things newborn.

But the early years of parenting were harder for me than I expected. I dealt with postpartum depression, some major life changes, and the challenges that come with having one — then two, and then three — small children in the house. I soon found that I had no idea what the “right” way was to raise children, and I struggled. I second-guessed myself and worried about nearly everything. It was a rough start, to say the least.

After my third child, we knew our family was complete, so we gifted almost all our baby things, except for special keepsakes. It made me feel good to bless someone else with some of the things we received when we were young parents, and I felt ready to move into the next phase.

Imagine my surprise when I discovered I was pregnant again. I thought we were done. I was worried about starting over, dreading the overwhelming feelings that had consumed me as a young mother. Instead of spending hours planning for the baby, I procrastinated on getting what we needed. I scraped through the pregnancy with just a few thrifted maternity items, gathered a small basket of newborn clothes and ordered some diapers online at the eleventh hour.

About a week after my due date, I had a fast labor and gave birth to our fourth. As I held my newborn to my skin, my nerves returned. What if I forgot something important? I turned to my midwife and asked, “OK, remind me: I have to feed her, burp her and change her. Is there anything else I need to do?”

My midwife shrugged with a smile and replied, “Just

give her a bath every once in a while. That’s about it.”

That, I could do.

Once my baby girl arrived, things changed. My older children were more independent and could help by running to grab a diaper or a burp cloth when I needed it. She wore her older siblings’ jammies, slept in a hand-me-down Pack ‘N Play, and was just the easiest baby.

The funny thing was, I was much more relaxed, too. All the worries and indecision I experienced with my older children really didn’t seem to matter so much this

time. I found myself at peace carrying this child in my arms. I didn’t think so much about all the decisions. I just did my best to love all my kids and not be so hard on myself.

When I look back on it, I’m tempted to judge my younger self. Didn’t you realize that you didn’t need all those things for the baby? Didn’t you know you could only learn so much from books? Why couldn’t you have worried less and enjoyed it more? Why did you have to make it so much harder than it was?

But I couldn’t have known all those things when I was a new mom. Parenting is just something you have to bumble through by making mistakes, learning,

finding your own way and trying your best.

In the end, it doesn’t really matter how many baby clothes you have, how cute your nursery looks (or if you have one at all), or how many parenting books you read. You’ll make all the mistakes we all seem to make — and you’ll learn and grow through them. The best thing you can give your child is love, and the best thing you can give yourself is a little grace.

The rest will fall into place on its own. 🧡

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.



IT'S CONTEST TIME!

Penn Lines has a big birthday coming up, and we want you to be a part of our 60th anniversary celebration. Before the confetti flies in 2026, though, **we're kicking off a handful of photo contests this year**; enter one — or all three.

CONTEST NO. 1 – OLDEST ISSUE OF *PENN LINES*! If you have an oldie but a goodie around the house, take a photo of it with you. Please make sure the publication date is visible.

CONTEST NO. 2 – MOST WELL-TRAVELED *PENN LINES*! Take your favorite copy of *Penn Lines* beyond the borders of the Commonwealth. Send us a photo of you holding the magazine at your destination in front of a recognizable landmark or a sign that shows where you are. Also include a 50- to 100-word essay about where you were and why you brought that issue.

CONTEST NO. 3 – A DATE WITH *PENN LINES*! We'll be honest: We like it when we get to go to some place nice. Take your favorite issue of *Penn Lines* to a special place in your community and take a photo of yourself with it.

FOR ALL CONTESTS, WE WILL NEED: your name, address, daytime telephone number, the month and year of the magazine, and the name of the cooperative that serves your home, business, or seasonal residence.

PRIZES: \$50 gift card for each contest winner; the winning photos will be featured in a 2026 *Penn Lines* issue.

DEADLINE: Friday, Oct. 31

SEND ENTRIES TO: PennLines@prea.com
(put "60 Years of PL" in the subject line)
or *Penn Lines* Editor/60 Years of PL,
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Add Melons to Any Meal

ANNE M. KIRCHNER

PHOTOS BY ANNE M. KIRCHNER



AS SUMMER COMES TO AN END, melons are a classic ingredient for any meal. Their versatility can be surprising. Make a cantaloupe salad brightened with lime zest and mint. Serve a spicy watermelon salsa with chips or grilled chicken. Assemble a colorful trifle with honeydew and blueberries.

Let color, touch and sound be your guides when picking the perfect melon. Look for golden yellow cantaloupes and creamy white honeydews. Push the spot at the end of the melons where the stem was attached. If the area depresses and bounces back, you have a winner. To find a sweet, mature watermelon, look for the yellow field spot. Also search for the heaviest watermelon that radiates a hollow sound when tapped. 🍉

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

CANTALOUPE MINT SALAD

- 2 cups cantaloupe, cut into chunks
- 2 cups cucumber, chopped into large pieces
- ½ cup feta cheese, crumbled
- 12 to 15 large fresh mint leaves, chopped
- Zest of 1 lime
- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon coarse black pepper

Place cantaloupe, cucumber, feta, mint and lime zest in a large serving bowl. In a separate bowl, whisk together the lime juice, olive oil, salt and pepper. Pour the dressing over the cantaloupe mixture and toss gently. Chill for 30 minutes before serving. *Makes 6 to 8 servings.*



WATERMELON AVOCADO SALSA

- 3 avocados, diced
- 3 cups watermelon, chopped
- ½ cup red onion, finely chopped
- 1 jalapeno, seeded and finely chopped
- ¼ cup lime juice
- ¼ cup cilantro, chopped
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes

Place avocados, watermelon, red onion and jalapeno in a serving bowl. Add the lime juice, cilantro, salt and red pepper flakes. Toss the ingredients gently. Cover the bowl tightly and refrigerate 2 to 3 hours. Serve the salsa with tortilla chips, grilled chicken, steak or fish. *Makes 4 to 6 servings.*



HONEYDEW BLUEBERRY TRIFLE

- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup Greek yogurt
- ¼ cup maple syrup or honey
- Zest of 1 lemon
- ½ medium honeydew melon, diced
- 1 pint blueberries
- Fresh mint garnish, optional

Beat the cream cheese with a hand mixer until smooth and creamy. Add the Greek yogurt, maple syrup or honey, and lemon zest. Mix until well combined. Create a fruit trifle by layering the honeydew, blueberries and sweetened cream cheese in individual dessert dishes or wine glasses. Garnish with mint and refrigerate until serving. *Makes 4 to 6 servings.*

Grow Your Own Bouquets

GEORGE WEIGEL

YOU COULD GET YOUR FLOWERS for the table or gift bouquets from the florist or even from the grocery store these days — or you could harvest your own for much less.

Cut-flower gardens are trendy again as a new generation discovers the joy (and money-saving nature) of cutting fresh flowers from around the yard.

The trend goes beyond just DIY gardeners. Local cut-flower operations have been popping up like self-seeding daisies all over the U.S. in recent years as farmers and small-scale growers cash in on a trend that bloomed during the COVID-19 pandemic, when cocooners wanted bouquets to add cheer while being isolated at home.

Chances are, an avid home gardener won't have to do anything special to become a home-grown bouquet-maker. Scouting the yard for flowers that are already there — scissors in hand — is all it takes.

In addition to such popular annual cut-flower options as zinnias and marigolds, many perennial flowers and flowering shrubs are fair game for a vase.

Add foliage options like conifers, ferns, ornamental grasses and colorful perennial leaves to the mix, and it's possible to harvest DIY bouquets nearly year-round.

The hard part for some gardeners is getting over the reluctance to cut flowers that they like just fine still on the plants.

As author Dr. Allan Armitage once reminded, "Cutting is not murder. Half the fun of a garden is taking the flowers in with you or taking a bunch along for friends."

If you don't have a ready supply of flowers or need the gentle nudge of flowers specifically earmarked for



HOMEGROWN: This cut-flower garden is filled with cosmos and zinnias ready to be harvested for a vase.

cutting, the solution is a dedicated cut-flower garden.

This is a garden geared to production — similar to a vegetable garden — only in this instance, you're picking posies instead of peppers.

Go with a diverse lineup of flowers, and you'll have a steady stream of blooms to cut throughout the season — and make local pollinators happy at the same time.

Penn State Extension advises that sunny sites are best for cut-flower gardens because most blooming plants produce best with at least six hours of full sun per day.

Good soil is a must, too. Work 2 to 3 inches of compost into compacted or poorly drained soil to create raised beds that are much friendlier to young roots.

A soil test is also a good idea to determine what nutrients your bed might need — as well as how many it will need, too. DIY Penn State soil-test kits are available for \$10 at county Extension offices and some garden centers. To learn more about these tests, go to agsci.psu.edu/aasl/soil-testing/fertility.

To maximize blooming, Penn State Extension recommends three things: 1) fertilizing according to test recommendations; 2) keeping the soil consistently damp; and 3) snipping flowers regularly to encourage continual bloom.

To maximize cut-flower life, take a bucket of lukewarm water into the garden and place the stems in it as you cut. Early in the morning and in the evening are the two best harvest times.

Use sharp scissors or pruners and look for flowers with buds that are just about to open. Exceptions are calendula, dahlias, zinnias, marigolds, black-eyed Susans, coneflowers, sunflowers, gaillardia and coreopsis, which are best cut when the flowers have fully opened.

While harvesting, cut the flower stems back to the main stem — or as long as you can get them, so you'll have plenty to work with when arranging them. Then, strip off the lower leaves before placing the stems in the water pail.

When you're ready to arrange, make fresh cuts at the desired heights while holding the stems underwater to keep the wound from sealing. Then, get the flowers into a vase with water ASAP.

Commercial flower preservatives can help extend flower life in the vase water. Even more important is changing the water every two or three days and making fresh cuts to the stem bottoms each time.

Or just replace the flowers as they go downhill with whatever is blooming at the time. 🌸

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.

ISSUE MONTH AD DEADLINE

October	August 15
November	September 15
December	October 15

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.

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Junk, Stuff and Other Treasures

JOHN KASUN

I REMEMBER WHEN MY WIFE and I moved into the new home we had built in the late 1960s. It was oversized for two people with four bedrooms, a first-floor family room, large living room, formal dining room, two-and-a-half bathrooms, finished basement, and an attached two-car garage. Today, that is nothing special, but at the time, it was not normal. If a home of that era had a garage, it was normally an unattached, small, one-car unit. As a matter of fact, thinking back to the time we moved into our home, we only owned one car. To me, it made sense to do it all while we were building rather than add on later.

Within a year after we moved in, we added a utility shed for the lawn mower and garden tools while one half of our garage stood neat, clean and empty. When we added a second car, a friend said something I didn't understand: "You are the only people I know with a two-car garage who can actually park their cars inside. Most people's garages are filled with junk."

As is normal, life goes on and somehow as humans we tend to "accumulate things." Notice I did not use the word "collect." "Collect" is when you gather things of value or of personal interest. "Accumulate" is when stuff comes in your house and never leaves.

One of the main reasons we all keep things is, "just in case." There are several funny things about this logic. When the time comes for you to use the item in question, you often forget you have it. If you do remember that you have it, odds are you will not remember where you put it.

Even though my wife and I built a large home many years ago, we managed to fill it up one small item at a time. One bedroom became an office. Another bedroom was turned into a sewing room. The third bedroom became a very comfortable guest room just in case anyone visited.

Shelves and closets were added in the garage and in

the basement to store jars of miscellaneous screws and half-filled cans of surplus paint — in addition to other treasures too numerous to mention. Several years ago, we built a large storage building on our property to handle the overflow of junk and other treasures.

The ridiculousness of this situation struck me the other day when I pulled into my driveway and saw my truck parked outside the garage. The truck was parked outside because one half of the garage was filled with household

items we moved there to make room for new furniture we purchased. We had meant to get rid of all this extra "stuff," but first we needed to think if we might need some of it later, "just in case."

There is an old saying that goes, "You can't take it with you," and that normally applies to money. However, that statement is true with everything we own, store, gather, collect, salvage or otherwise attempt to protect from the ravages of time. The truth is, we all might be better off without all the extra baggage we carry through life.

I constantly think about selling all the extra stuff we own, and I guess that is what

will happen to it when I die. The only thing that bothers me about dying and having all my stuff go up for sale is that I will miss a really great auction.

The true meaning of life is not in things around us; it is in the beauty of the world and people around us. It would be better for all of us to simplify our lives and focus on the best use of the time we have left. Personally, I intend to do just that.

But first, my wife says I need to get rid of a lot of "stuff."



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.



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