

May your mornings  
bring joy.  
And your evenings  
bring peace.  
May your troubles  
grow less.  
And your blessings  
increase.  
Happy St.  
Patrick's Day!



# MERA

## HOMETOWN NEWS

AND CALENDAR OF EVENTS  
Items of interest to MERA Members  
March 2026

Want to know more?  
Check us out at  
[merasite.org](http://merasite.org)

### A Note from MERA's President

I am happy to announce that our Director's Board is now complete. **Rob Kehr** has joined us; he worked 38 years for Met-Ed/First Energy. He has agreed to take on the duties of Picnic Chairman. We appreciate his serving and welcome him aboard!

Our February meeting was well attended although the weather wasn't the greatest. **Donna Goughnour** brought in a speaker from the Reading Museum; it was fun hearing about the history of Punxsutawney Phil. It was really informative, giving a look at the many areas who celebrate Groundhog Day.

There are many more interesting programs planned for the coming months. Plan on joining us for a light lunch and to share memories with fellow retirees.

Jim

### MERA Calendar of Events

*You won't want to miss any of these great MERA events!*

- **Happy Hour and Hike March ??** Hike **3pm (note time change)** at Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area to see the migrating snow geese. This date will be a last minute decision, depending on when the lake thaws. We will meet for the hike at Willow Point parking area off Hopeland Road/Kleinfeltersville Road. Happy Hour at 4pm K-Ville Hotel and Tavern, 2647 Heidelberg Ave. (Rt 897), Kleinfeltersville. Watch your email and the website for last minute updates
- **MERA General Meeting March 16, 1:00** at the Muhlenberg Rec Center located at 3025 River Rd, Reading, Pa. 19605. Our program will be presented by Brant Portner, Environmental Education Specialist from Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area. The program will be informative regarding the snow geese migration through our area. A light lunch will be provided!
- **Anniversary Luncheon, April 16\*, 11:00 am** at Victor Emmanuels, 311 Hazel Street. Buffet includes salad, pizza, chicken parmesan, pasta, and beverages. Bring a dessert to share! Price:\$15. Deadline for reservations is April 7. Call **Gary Pleiss** at 610-927-7590. **\*NOTE date change.**
- **Happy Hour and Hike, April 29.** Hike 2pm on the Exeter River Trail. 4pm Happy Hour at Island Pizza, 3060 Limekiln Road, Birdsboro

- **MERA Bus Trip. Longwood Gardens, May 8.** Includes: motor coach transportation, lunch at Buckley's Tavern, and admission to Longwood Gardens, including a one hour guided tour and plenty of free time to enjoy the gardens and fountains! And, there will be ice cream! Cost is \$158. Registration deadline is March 27. If you have questions, reach out to **Barb Seidel** at 484-794-0857 or baseidel3523@gmail.com.
- **MERA General Meeting May 18**, 1:00 at the Muhlenberg Rec Center located at 3025 River Rd, Reading, Pa. 19605. Historian Paul Miller will present a program on the history of the South Mountain resorts. A light lunch will be provided!
- **Happy Hour and Hike, May 27.** Hike at 2pm at Shiloh Hills 303 Sage Drive, Sinking Spring. Happy Hour at 4pm at Paolo's, 2480 Lancaster Pike, Reading
- **Happy Hour and Hike, June 17.** Details to follow.
- **MERA Annual Picnic June 18, 11:00am** at Jim Dietrich Park. Details to follow.
- **MERA Bus Trip, St Michael's, Maryland. June 24.** The day includes lunch at the Crab Claw Restaurant, free time to stroll through this quaint little town and a cruise taking in the beauty of the Chesapeake landscape. Transportation, lunch and cruise included in the price of \$174/person. Registration deadline is May 27. If you have questions, reach out to **Barb Seidel** at 484-794-0857 or baseidel3523@gmail.com.

## MERA Welcomes New Board Member

The MERA Board is pleased to welcome new board member: **Rob Kehr**. Rob was appointed to fill a vacant board position. Rob retired four years ago following a 37+ year career at Met-Ed in both the Hamburg line department and the FirstEnergy transmission department. When he retired, Rob was manager of transmission group. He will be working on MERA special events. He says the best part of being retired is "not worrying about storm forecasts!"

## Bits & Pieces

**Cindy Thomas** left for Vegas two days early to beat the snow. Instead of shoveling a foot of snow, she enjoyed shows by Blake Shelton, Donnie Osmond and David Copperfield. At the February general meeting, **Sandy Myskowski** delivered 10 lbs. of Easter candy made by her church's volunteers. The smell of homemade chocolates was in the air! She, Bill and their Scottie dog Snuggles spent New Years stranded in their cabin in Lycoming County...and enjoyed every minute! **Doug Myers** just got back from a ski trip to Whitetail Mountain Resort in south central PA, near the Maryland border. **Stan Miller** says, "I haven't gone anywhere...but I am enjoying winter without storm duty!" **Del Somerville** recently welcomed his 7<sup>th</sup> grandchild! **Barb Seidel** went to Philadelphia to see Reading High graduate Danny Gardner play Luminaire in the Broadway national tour of *Beauty & The Beast*. "He was fabulous!" **Nancy Speicher** is still glowing from a 15-day European cruise that included Barcelona, Monaco, the coast of Italy and Greece. What was her favorite spot? "Oh, it is so difficult to choose. It was all beautiful but we had more leisure time in Greece, which was lovely!"

# A Letter to FirstEnergy's PA Customers

## From John Hawkins, President FirstEnergy Pennsylvania

At FirstEnergy Pennsylvania, we're grateful for the opportunity to support the local communities that make Pennsylvania such a special place to call home. With a new year underway, I'm energized by all we're accomplishing together and excited for the innovative ways we'll continue working to deliver the safe, reliable power you depend on.

### **A Smarter, Stronger Grid for Pennsylvania**

Over the past year, we've made meaningful investments to strengthen our electric system and better serve our customers – like you. For example, in northern and central Pennsylvania, our crews replaced aging equipment to help enhance reliability. In the western part of the state, we rebuilt a critical section of the grid. In eastern Pennsylvania, we built a new substation (Met-Ed, Northampton County) to help meet growing demand.

These projects – along with many others completed over the past year – highlight our ongoing focus on improving service reliability and reducing both the frequency and duration of outages. We're already seeing encouraging results:

- In 2025, **13% fewer customers were impacted by outages** compared to 2024
- The **average outage length decreased by 27 minutes** in 2025 compared to the previous year
- **More than 3,500 smart devices were installed** in 2025 to limit the number of customers impacted by an outage and get the lights back on faster

Looking ahead, our mission remains clear: continuing to enhance your electric service today while preparing our system for the energy needs of tomorrow. Several major projects are already underway to support this commitment, like:

- A new substation and transmission line (Met-Ed, Adams County) that will support critical community infrastructure
- Grid updates to benefit thousands of customers in Westmoreland County
- Rebuilding a transmission line (Met-Ed, Lehigh and Berks Counties) to help the system better withstand severe weather, falling trees and other hazards that can cause outages

### **Giving Back to our Communities**

In addition to our system investments, we are proud to continue to support our communities through our employees' volunteer efforts and FirstEnergy Foundation donations to critical organizations. The FirstEnergy Foundation proudly made its largest hunger-relief grant to date, donating \$750,000 to 37 food banks and pantries in Pennsylvania (including Met-Ed communities) providing approximately 2 million meals to help address food insecurity. FirstEnergy Foundation donations also supported organizations like IM ABLE (Met-Ed, Berks County) and the United Way (including Met-Ed communities) that provide critical services to our neighbors in need every day. Most recently, a \$25,000 grant to Fill a Glass with Hope® marked a decade of the Foundation's support for this important program that helps provide fresh milk to Pennsylvania food banks.

### **Thank You for Trusting Us**

It is a privilege to be your local electric company. We look forward to continuing to support you and your families, businesses and communities this year and every year.

Wishing you a safe and happy 2026!

Sincerely,

John Hawkins

President, FirstEnergy Pennsylvania

## Sunshine Remembrances

MERA sent condolences to **Walt LaSota** on the passing of his father and to **Karen Fisher** on the recent death of her husband Ron.

## MERA Member Milestones Happy March Anniversary!

Walter & Wilfriede Axsmith  
Thomas & Deborah Fegley  
Lowell & Catherine Kessler

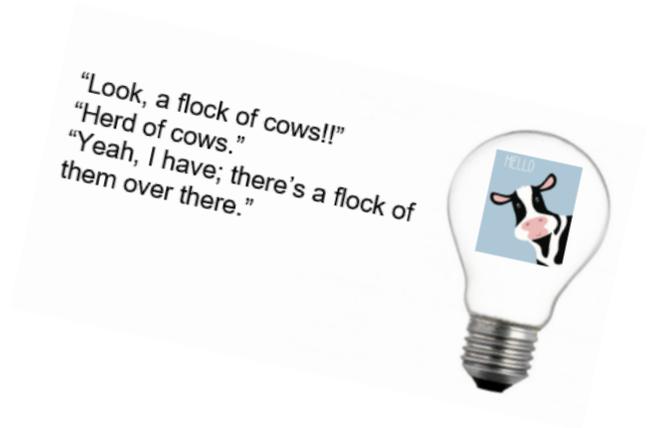
Tom & Shirley Krick  
Shirley & Bill McClure  
David & Debra Rutter

Ted & Cindy Seaman  
Rick & Bonnie Shiner  
Del & Laurie Somerville

## Happy March Milestone\* Birthday!

\*A milestone birthday is one that ends in "0" or "5."

Daniel Bausher	Rich Piergrossi
Donald Fix	Maria Stempo
Bill McClure	Beth Stout
Beverly Moyer	Teresa Strock
Richard Pawling	Sue Topper



**Attention!** Hometown News is looking for nonprofits to profile – specifically nonprofits where MERA members volunteer. If you donate your time to a local organization – and would like to give them some publicity, please contact **Karen Baxter** at [kbaxter@ptd.net](mailto:kbaxter@ptd.net). THANK YOU!