


**Sullivan County  
Rural Electric  
Cooperative, Inc.**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

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**Monday through Friday**  
**7 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.**

**FROM THE CEO**

**Shaving power costs**



by **Craig A. Harting**  
CEO

**POWER COSTS** are half of your total electric bill. As a member of Sullivan County REC, you own power plants that supply two-thirds of your needs. We purchase the other one-third we need. We buy all our power through Allegheny Electric Cooperative, which is owned by the 13 co-ops in Pennsylvania and the one cooperative in New Jersey.

**Increases coming**

Our power costs have been fairly stable over the past 10 years but that will be changing next year. Allegheny is forecasting an increase in 2012. At this point it appears the increase will be about 12 percent of your overall bill.

This increase represents what is going on in the power markets. Power costs have been increasing for some time and new power purchase contracts are more expensive. Coal prices and environmental costs are influencing these prices.

What about natural gas and the Marcellus Shale? Over time increased natural gas supplies should help, but natural gas generation currently accounts for less than 20 percent of our power markets. This share will likely increase as older coal-fired generators are replaced with natural gas-fired units.

**Shave costs?**

Besides using less power is there anything else we can do to hold down the cost of power? Yes! For the past 25 years we have been using a load management system to control water heaters during peak load times. This system has helped save more than a million dollars in power costs.

But we can do more. Allegheny has worked with us to upgrade our load management system. By using our automatic meter reading system we can use newer technology and two-way control devices.

**New system coming**


Basically the load management system shuts off electric water heaters during times of peak demand. After the peak has passed power is restored to the water heater. The co-op saves peak demand charges and you have hot water during the control period.

We should receive the new control devices in the coming months. Our initial focus will be on replacing the older devices that are now installed. If you have one of these devices we will be contacting you to make an appointment to change it over.

After the existing devices have been replaced we will be offering participation to all other members with an electric water heater. You should never notice the device is controlling your water heater and you will receive \$2 off your bill each month. In addition you are helping to hold down future power costs.

**Shaving peaks**

We are also considering using an in-home device that would plug into your outlet and light up when a peak load period is approaching. This would allow you to shut off appliances during peaks that increase our future power costs. You will hear more about this program if we decide to move forward with this.

By working together we can reduce our future power costs. We thank those of you who are on the load management program now and look forward to working with all of you to help hold down our future power costs. 

# Sometimes you can go back

BY JOHN ZELEWICZ  
*Penn Lines Writer*

**THEY SAY** you can never go back. While that may be true in many instances, John Souder proved it isn't always the case. In March 2011, Souder along with his daughter, Lori, and his granddaughter, Kaiti Beinlich, spent a week in Honduras. After a five-hour trip that started in Philadelphia, they touched down in San Pedro Sula.

This was not Souder's first visit to Honduras. He and his wife, Susan, first went to Honduras in 1999 to lend a hand following the devastation caused by Hurricane Mitch.

"When Hurricane Mitch hit Honduras in 1998, the country was devastated," Souder notes. "They got 72 inches of rain in seven days. Think about it. If we get five inches of rain in one shot, our creeks overflow their banks. This was 10 inches of rain every day for seven days."

Most of us would be content to provide assistance to disaster victims by sending donations of food, clothing or money. And while it's true such donations are important and greatly appreciated, for Souder it just wasn't enough. He has always been interested in mission



**IN HONDURAS:** From left, Lori Beinlich, John Souder and Kaiti Beinlich sit in front of the Puhlapunzak Falls, a famous Honduras tourist attraction.

work and had done such work in this country. When the disaster happened in Honduras, he kept saying he wished he could do something to help.

Of course you don't just grab your passport and bag and jump on a plane for Honduras. John and Susan contacted the organization Mujeres Amigas Miles Aparte (MAMA). In English, that means

Women Friends Miles Apart. He told the organization the couple would like to help. It wasn't long before Dr. Priscilla Benner, founder of MAMA, contacted the Souders and took them up on their offer of assistance. She was looking for a couple willing to go for three to six months.

"We made sure our passports were up to date, had our shots, and

made sure everything was taken care of, including our animals," explains John.

Then they were ready to go.

## No habla Espanol!

One of the obstacles facing the Souders was the fact that neither of them spoke Spanish, but they wanted to help. As a carpenter, John was ready to help build homes.

"I worked with the Spanish maestro who oversaw the projects," John reports. "He had to learn how to speak English and I had to learn how to speak Spanish."

While John was busy helping to build 10 homes, Susan was helping with those in need of medical attention. They stayed in a small motel near the work site or stayed in town with a nurse and her mother. They were there from January to March 1999.

While some wouldn't want to trade places with those living in Honduras, Souder believes we can all learn a lesson from them.

"It's a blessing to give and to help those in need," he notes. "But they have so much to teach us as well. If only we can learn the lesson of being more content with what we have, or better yet



**MEMORIES:** John Souder stands with Joshua, youngest son of church elder Israel. In Souder's hand is a photo of Joshua taken 11 years ago on Souder's first visit to Honduras.

learn to do with less, then we'd have gained a lot."

You may think that after nearly three months of offering assistance in Honduras, Souder would have been happy to get back to his daily routine. But you would be wrong. He returned in February 2000 to help build a church in Buenos Aires.

After returning home from the second trip, Souder often wondered how things were going in Honduras. He thought of the homes and church he had built and of the people he had met. He wanted to return once more and see how things were progressing. In 2005, he went back and although he wanted his wife to go with him, she was unable to go due to her battle with cancer. This time, he was with another team but he was able to see some of the same people he had met before.

While Souder enjoyed this trip to Honduras, it just wasn't the same without his wife. Sadly, Susan was never able to return to Honduras with John, but he did find others interested in returning to Honduras with him.

"When I came back in 2005, I told Susan that I didn't want to go again without her," Souder reports. "I just missed her so much. We prayed and hoped that she would get better. Unfortunately that didn't happen. About a year after her passing, I felt like going back again. Our daughter, Lori, and her oldest daughter, Kaiti, wanted to go along. That really made the experience nice."



**VISITING OLD FRIENDS:** John Souder visits with Julia Fereunte and her daughter and granddaughters on a recent visit to Honduras. Souder met Fereunte on a previous visit.

### Revisiting familiar places

One of the first places Souder wanted to visit in Honduras was the church he had helped build in Buenos Aires. He wanted to see it again, but he also wanted to give a special offering from his church, Living Hope, in Estella. Souder also wanted to visit the place where he had stayed on a previous visit. Unfortunately, the people who had lived there had passed away, but another woman he had known, Julia Fereunte, was living there.

"I really wanted to see Julia," Souder explains. "She was so very kind to us

when we were there before. She washed their clothes and helped the people where we stayed. To make money and support her family, she cooked and sold about 200 tortillas a day."

Souder was excited about seeing Julia because John and Susan had helped support one of Julia's children so she could go to school. Julia had five children and could not afford

to send them all to school.

"For the children to be able to go to school, they had to buy their own uniforms and school supplies like pencils and paper," Souder explains. "We supported one of her children. She's 16 now and will soon graduate from high school."

Another reason Souder wanted to return was to give a very special gift to three young girls.

"I wanted to visit the people in the houses that we built," he reports. "There were three girls living in the houses named after my wife, Susan. I wanted to see them and give them each an angel pin from Susan's collection. I was only able to find two of the girls, so I left one of the angel pins behind for the third girl."

While Souder has no plans to return to Honduras, he is thankful for his time spent there. He was able to renew his connection to the country and to the people living there.

"I enjoyed going back," he states. "I feel it gives me a stronger relationship with the church and people in the community. People asked me for my address as they wanted to send me letters. Some wanted my email address. I had email from them waiting for me when I got home." 🌞



**WORSHIP IN HONDURAS:** Lori Beinlich and Amy (Boydell) Zorilla, right, visit with others at a church whose name means "Living Hope Evangelical Mennonite Church."

# Set it and forget it...not!

**IF YOU STAY** up late (or get up very early) you're familiar with info-commercials. Products in these commercials often have a catchy phrase. One you may be familiar with announces the ease with which you can prepare meals. All you have to do is purchase the item, put your food in it, and then "set it and forget it!"

Unfortunately, most things in life aren't that easy. And no matter what the item is, it will wear out eventually. We constantly have to replace lightbulbs, clothing, change the car's oil, tires, and the list goes on and on.



So it is with lines, poles, insulators and cross arms. The truth is that nothing lasts forever. Items are damaged by storms, trees, animals and the inevitable passage of time. So it is that from time to time, planned outages are required to make line improvements or repairs.

Planned outages can help reduce the amount of time power is off to members and it is safer. For example, say there's a badly damaged pole that needs to be replaced. It may only take a couple of hours to do this when crews and materials are on site. But if nothing is done and the pole breaks in the middle of the night during a storm, it will take longer to get crews and materials there, and the

outage will be much longer. Also making repairs in the dark takes longer and is more dangerous.

Making needed repairs isn't just some haphazard operation. Think of it more along the line of a carefully choreographed ballet or a well-planned military operation! Every detail is carefully reviewed — who has to do what and when. All needed materials have to be on hand. Everything and everyone has to be in place ready to go once power is turned off.

## Necessary to de-energize lines

Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative tries to perform needed repairs with the least amount of inconvenience possible to its members. But there are times when it becomes necessary to de-energize lines so work can be done.

"We do a lot of work with the line energized," explains Dave King, manager of operations for Sullivan County REC. "But when you need to do a lot of work in one area, it's better to shut the power off. It makes things safer, and we can get the work done faster."

When planned power outages are required, we use our Porche Outage Reporting System to let members know when these outages will occur.

"We try to notify our members of planned power outages so they can prepare for them," explains John Zelewicz, consumer service representative for Sullivan County REC. "And while our Porche system is a great way to do this,



unfortunately we sometimes miss a few members.

Part of the problem is that members have changed their

phone numbers and unless we have the correct number, we can't call them."

Sullivan County REC understands how disruptive power outages can be and would like to take this opportunity to thank our members for their understanding during planned outages while vital maintenance is performed. ☀

## New tools to use

What do you think of when I say the word "tool?" Perhaps it's that expensive, chrome-plated socket set you keep in the garage. Perhaps it's that faithful hammer you've had since, heck, so long you can't even remember when you got it. Or perhaps it's that bent knife in the silverware tray that you use as a letter opener, screwdriver or pry bar when a cupboard gets stuck.

One definition of the word tool is: a handheld device that aids in accomplishing a task.

While that may be one definition, tools are no longer simply things that we hold in our hands. A tool can be a car, a lawn mower, a computer or even a computer program. One important tool that we have for our members is our HomeEnergySuite — a computer program that offers a wide range of helpful information.

**Interactive House** - This program helps members see where and how much energy is used in the home. It allows members to visit individual rooms such as the kitchen or living room and look at appliances such as refrigerators and televisions to see ways to help reduce electric use.

**Calculator** - This feature allows members to enter information about their home such as heat settings, type of cooking stove, and how often you do laundry, which can vary greatly from home to home. Enter the information, and you'll get an estimate of energy costs.

**Library** - What's a kilowatt-hour (kWh)? What's a transformer and what does it do? This feature provides the answers to these questions and many more. It also provides information about electricity in the home, as well as basic electricity fundamentals.

**Fun** - You're never too young to learn about electricity. Kids' Korner is a site for kids to learn about electricity in a fun and exciting way. Kids have the opportunity to play games, try experiments and even use an online coloring book.

Our HomeEnergySuite has something for everyone. If you're looking for ways to cut energy costs in your home or are curious about how electricity is generated or looking for games for the kids to play, then this is the site for you!

You can visit our HomeEnergySuite by accessing your cooperative website at: [www.screc.com](http://www.screc.com).

# First-graders 'plug' in

**FIRST-GRADE** students in area schools recently practiced inserting an electrical plug into an outlet so they can safely use their charger and other electrical devices. Connie Albertson, executive assistant at Sullivan County REC, visited and discussed electrical safety with students at Turnpike and Laporte elementary schools in Sullivan County and Renn and Loyalsock Valley elementary schools in Lycoming County.

Students eagerly raised their hands when asked to name

items at their homes and classrooms that use electricity. Once they thought about their daily use of electricity, Albertson alerted them to some of the dangers of becoming careless and taking electricity for granted. Each student practiced plugging a cord into an outlet. The hit of the presentation was when Albertson let a student try on a hardhat and rubber gloves used by linemen to work safely near power lines. ⚡

