

Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

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OFFICE HOURS

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

FROM THE CEO

A job never done



by Craig A. Harting
CEO

IT'S VERY rewarding to admire a job that you've finished. We feel that way when we finish building a line or a substation. But there's one job that's never done no matter how hard we work — the job of working safely.

We've all heard the expressions like "Safety First" and "Safety is Job One." While we all agree with these expressions, we

sometimes are tempted to take a shortcut. But in our business a shortcut could lead to severe injury or death.

You might expect we would have a thorough safety program, and you are correct. Working with trees and electricity can be dangerous so we take safety very seriously. At your cooperative we are all involved with safety. It starts with the board.

The board of directors has developed a policy on safety that directs our safety efforts and establishes a Safety Committee. The board hears monthly reports on safety and funds the safety program. Management carries out the policy and works with the employees.

Safety Committee

The Safety Committee has a very critical and vital role in our program. These employees meet monthly to review any accidents, near misses and safety suggestions from employees. The committee also develops and reviews the Safe Work Practices — the rulebook that outlines safe work practices and gives direction on what to do and what not to do.

We are very proud of our Safety Committee and its work. In fact, it is one of

only two rural electric cooperative safety committees certified by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry. This is the committee's second year of certification.

Our Safety Committee members are: Kim Phillips, Nolan Chase, Chad Phillips, Dave King and myself. Thank you for the great job you do for us.

RESAP

I'm also pleased to report we have been continuously accredited by the national Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program since 1981. We undergo a review for this program every three years and our review comes up next year. Beginning next year, RESAP requires us to develop an annual safety improvement plan designed to improve various aspects of our safety program.

Another measure of our safety program is our worker's compensation rate modifier. Our rate modifier is below 1.0, meaning that our group has a below-average experience rate of injuries and time away from work. This is a testament to the care that employees take each and every day.

Means nothing

In the end these measures and recognitions mean nothing if someone is hurt tomorrow and that can happen very easily. We can never rest on our efforts to work safely, and we must be ever-vigilant and diligent each and every day. We must live in a culture of safety that is always looking to improve. Like electricity that is always looking to go to ground, our safety program must always be seeking ways to improve.

We are never done with this job. 

Pow-wow keeps tradition alive

BY JOHN ZELEWICZ
Penn Lines Writer

BACK IN the 1970s, a television mini-series called “Roots” ignited people’s desire to learn more about their family roots. But for American Indians, a deep understanding and respect for their past was already there and continues to be just as strong today.

Every year, the Eastern Delaware Nations (EDN) Pow-wow is held at the Sullivan County Fairgrounds. This event presents an opportunity for Native Americans to gather and celebrate their heritage. It is also an opportunity for others to learn more about the group’s rich heritage.

“When Grandfather Wayandaga settled in the area, he wanted to share the culture with other people,” reports Mollie Eliot, EDN secretary. “He wanted to let them know that there were still Indians in the area....and that they had been hiding in the dominant society. EDN’s first pow-wow was actually held in Muncy Valley at Tanner’s Place in 1989. It was then decided to hold it at the Sullivan County Fairgrounds because it was centrally located for most of the members.”

Eliot’s son, Lee Zelewicz (whose American Indian name is “Wave of Thunder”), says this year’s event was a huge success with around 3,000 visitors.

“There are only a certain number of attendees ticketed,” Zelewicz notes. “Chil-



TRADITIONS HANDED DOWN: Native American tradition is handed down from generation to generation.

dren aren’t ticketed so we can only estimate the number of visitors. We figure this year we had close to 3,000 people.”

Of course, attendance can be greatly dependent upon the weather. Fortunately, this year the weather was almost picture perfect.

Dancers keep tradition alive

Pow-wow attendees have a rare opportunity to watch dancers participate in traditional dances while adorned in traditional regalia from their cultures — fancy dancers, grass dancers, fancy shawl dancers and even Aztec dancers. Aztec dancers from Mexico participate with a cultural dance,

which is a totally different type of dancing that’s all about their culture.

Many visitors wish to take photos of the dancers, but there are a few rules to keep in mind. If the subject is in traditional regalia, you must first ask permission to take a photo. No photos are allowed for the grand entry, flag song or veterans’ dance. These are honoring songs and ceremonial dances, so it is inappropriate to take photos.

Dancers weave their way across the hardened earth while accompanied by singing and beating of drums. Zelewicz notes these drums are special to Native Americans.

“The drum provides the heartbeat of the pow-wow and, with the singers, provides the music to bring people together,” he states. “Each drumming group is referred to as a ‘drum,’ and these groups are com-



TRADITIONAL APPAREL: Many people participating in a pow-wow wear traditional apparel representing their history and culture.



LIKE A HEARTBEAT: Drums provide the heartbeat of the pow-wow.

posed of several drummers/singers. The drum has a spirit and greatly influences the sound of the ‘drum.’”

Like many events, the EDN pow-wow is held the same time each year, usually on the weekend of Father’s Day.

Information booth center of activity

One spot constantly humming with activity is the information booth. People stop there to gather information about EDN and what occurs at the pow-wow. Since the drummers and dancers don’t have time to interact with people, this gives visitors an opportunity to ask questions and learn about the event.

Visitors to the pow-wow can check out

the numerous vendors offering everything from hand-crafted items like leather goods, beadwork and so much more. Visitors have a wide variety of food to sample — even traditional food like fry bread — a piece of flat dough cooked in oil. Fry bread is an important part of Native American culture and is often served at gatherings and at home.

The number of vendors may vary from year to year.

“We usually have a good turnout,” Eliot notes. “We had around 40 vendors this year. It was actually down a little bit, which could be due to the price of gas.”

If you have children, you know how difficult it can be to keep them occupied at such an event.

Don’t worry. There are plenty of activities planned especially for children.

“We have a teaching teepee for kids to interact directly with cultural materials and some years, hear stories,” Eliot explains. “Also we have a candy dance for kids. We throw candy around the dance circle and when the music

stops they pick it up. If somebody ends up with no candy, then the other children share what they have.”

People come from all over

The pow-wow is not just a local event. It draws people from neighboring counties and from other states, too. Since it is one of the earlier pow-wows in northeast Pennsylvania, it brings people from a large area.

“It is a very spiritual experience, a cultural outreach, and there is a lot of sharing going on behind the scenes,” Zelewicz explains. “It’s actually a community, a sub-culture really.”

Like any activity, a lot of time and planning is required to make things go smoothly at the pow-wow. It also takes a large number of volunteers willing to give of their time. Planning starts in November and must include a fulltime kitchen crew to prepare meals for the dancers, drummers and all of the volunteers.

There may have been a time when it was difficult for people to find a pow-wow to attend. But Eliot reports they have begun to pop up everywhere.

“If you wanted to go to a pow-wow in Pennsylvania or a neighboring state, you could go to one every weekend,” Zelewicz reports. “What makes this one special is that it’s very well established so you get people coming back year after year.”



READY FOR A SHOW: Spectators gather in eager anticipation of fancy dancers, grass dancers and fancy shawl dancers.



IT’S EDUCATION, TOO: The teaching teepee offers a place for kids to explore and learn about Native American culture.

Linemen lend a hand

You would naturally expect a lineman to perform such duties as putting up electrical poles, replacing transformers and making repairs during an outage, but a couple of Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) line-



PREPARING FOR A MOVE: A mother bear is tranquilized in preparation for relocation.

men recently had the rare opportunity of helping to capture some bears.

A mother bear and two cubs decided that (like many people) they especially enjoyed Worlds End State Park.

“Apparently there was a sow and two cubs that were hanging around the camping area right along Route 154,” reports Jeff Spako, deputy wildlife conservation officer (DWCO) and lineman for Sullivan

County REC. “They were getting into the dumpster and close to the camping area. While there were no problems that I’m aware of, it could have escalated into a dangerous situation.”

Bill Kocher, park manager for Worlds End State Park, notified Rick Finnegan, wildlife conservation officer (WCO), about the bears. Finnegan then contacted Sullivan County REC and asked for assistance. Sullivan County REC CEO Craig Harting offered the cooperative’s assistance with a bucket truck if needed.

“As it turned out, we were here at the office when they found the bears in a tree, so lineman Ralph Kisinger and I took a bucket truck to go and retrieve them,” Spako notes.

Bears don’t cooperate

The mother bear was captured by using a tranquilizer dart, but the cubs were too small to use tranquilizer darts on as they only weighed about 15 pounds each. The cubs were not cooperative.

“It took awhile to retrieve the cubs,” Spako reports. “They kept running up and down the tree several times before we got them both snared.”

The bears were tagged and released



FUN IN THE TREE: Deputy Wildlife Conservation Officer Jeff Spako reports the two cubs took a while to capture as they seemed to enjoy running up and down the tree they were in.

on State Game Lands 12 near Bradford County. Spako reports the mother bear came out of sedation perfectly fine with no injury.

Some may wonder why the bears had to be moved in the first place. According to Spako, people and bears just don’t mix.

“It was primarily a safety issue,” he emphasizes. “We had a mother and two cubs running around the park where there’s a lot of public activity. Somebody could have gotten between the mother and the cubs, and a dangerous situation could have arisen.”

Also, many people forget bears are wild animals and are not pets or playmates as seen on television and in movies. 🐻

Join us on Facebook

There are many ways to communicate. They include the old-fashioned ways such as calling on the telephone or sending a card, letter or postcard via the postal service. Then there are the newer and faster ways such as email, cell phones, Facebook and even Twitter (not the sound a bird can make).

Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative tries to keep our members informed of a wide range of topics including what’s happening at the cooperative, ways to save energy and money, electrical safety, etc. We provide members with this information primarily by two ways, *Penn Lines* (your cooperative monthly magazine) and our web pages.

But when there’s a planned outage or a large outage, an easy way to keep members informed is to use Facebook. This is a fast way for us to convey information to our members in a timely fashion. Of course, for members to view this information, they have to belong to our Facebook community.

If you would like to join our Facebook community, simply go to your Facebook account (you’ll need to set one up first if you don’t currently have one) and do a search for Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative.

We’re looking forward to talking to you on Facebook.