

Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

SULLIVAN COUNTY REC

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*Credentialed Cooperative Director
**Board Leadership Certificate
***Director Gold Certificate

OFFICE HOURS

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

Improving Household Energy Use



IT HAS BEEN SAID THE “greenest” energy is that which does not need to be produced in the first place. And with energy costs continuing to rise on every front, reducing energy consumption is one way for every member to save not only on their electric bill, but also on all energy bills. In the next few paragraphs, I will outline several strategies members can take, beginning with little to no investment, to reduce energy consumption at home and reduce their monthly electric bill.

We first need to look at what accounts for the energy use in the average member household. The following categories account for the energy consumed in the average American household: appliances — 35%; heating and cooling — 35%; hot water heating — 20%; and lighting — 10%.


Since heating and cooling and hot water heating account for more than 50% of the energy consumed, it makes sense to start here. Adjusting the thermostat a few degrees from normal (68 degrees in the winter and 78 degrees in the summer for home heating and cooling, and 110 degrees for hot water), sealing leaks around windows and doors with caulk or foam insulation, insulating hot water pipes, and fixing leaking faucets can help reduce energy consumption for little to no cost.

Adding insulation to your home will reduce heat loss in the winter and heat gain in the summer. This option will cost the homeowner a modest amount of money upfront, but will continue to pay dividends for the foreseeable life of the home.

Replacing older, non-Energy-Star®-rated appliances and HVAC equipment is another alternative, but again that requires investment on the homeowner's part. Typically, appliances that are 10 years or older should be considered for replacement. Additionally, purchasing new appliances with the Energy Star label ensures the appliances exceed the federal minimum standard for efficiency.

These are just a few examples and suggestions members can take to reduce their energy consumption and ultimately reduce the overall cost of using energy in their homes. More examples and suggestions can be found on the U.S. Department of Energy's website at energy.gov/eere/energy-efficiency.

Where significant investment is required, such as adding whole-home insulation or replacing electric baseboard heat with heat pumps, incentives in the form of tax credits or rebates may be available. The recently passed Inflation Reduction Act provides federal tax credits for the purchases of heat pumps and heat pump water heaters. These credits could add up to as much as \$9,750 for qualified households. Additionally, most states have Weatherization Assistance Programs that are designed to assist homeowners in weatherizing (adding insulation, replacing windows, sealing structure cracks and leaks, etc.) their homes.

Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative is committed to providing safe, reliable, and fiscally responsible energy to each and every one of our members. To that end, we are here to assist you in using this critically important commodity as efficiently as possible. Please check our website and social media platforms for more information on resources, incentives, rebates, etc. that will help keep you more comfortable in your homes and lower the cost of doing so. Semper Fidelis. 

JOHN LYKENS
CEO

Thank You, Walt, for 38 Years of Service

SARAH PARRISH, COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATOR

“I REALLY ENJOYED MY JOB, I really did.”

Walt Tubach couldn't say it enough. Throughout his time at Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative (SCREC) the former electric operations manager made friends with dozens of co-workers, members and other folks he met along the way. But, after 38 years of dedicated service to the co-op, Walt formally retired on Dec. 29, 2022.

Early days at SCREC

Walt's SCREC story begins in July 1984 just after his 22nd birthday (sorry to date you, Walt!). Then-CEO Ed Dezich welcomed Walt aboard the team as an apprentice tree trimmer and lineman. He worked as a tree trimmer for two years, then starting in 1986, he spent the next six years attending the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association's Job Training & Safety schools. His first call was in January 1987.

For the next 17 years, Walt did line work. In the 1990s, he started taking online electrician courses to be certified in staking engineering. In 2003, he became Electric Operations Manager Dave King's assistant, and upon Dave's retirement in 2011, Walt took over this position.

Making improvements

Walt's biggest obstacle (quite literally an obstacle course of trees, shrubs, rocks and overgrowth) was clearing rights of way. When Walt started at SCREC, blocked rights of way greatly increased outage times. He and his crew spent many hours clearing miles of overgrowth, which was eventually hired out to Asplundh Tree Expert, LLC and then to Spako Tree Services. He spent the following years maintaining these areas so they are now easily



BACK IN THE DAY: Walt Tubach's first group of fellow SCREC linemen included, from left, Lee Lorow, Mark Smith, Walt Tubach, Dave King, Jim Rinker, Judson Benjamin, Donald Shaffer, Jim McCarty, Russell Bennett, and John Miller. Absent from photo is Emery Smith. The picture was taken at the dedication of the SCREC 50th anniversary historical marker on Sept. 25, 1987.

accessible to line crews. Another crucial time-saving change over the years was moving many miles of line out of wooded areas and closer to roadways. “We moved a lot of line,” Walt recalls. “It was time consuming, but it really cuts down on outage time.”

But one of the best improvements during Walt's career was the installation of AMR meter reading and GPS mapping. About seven years ago, every pole on SCREC lines was numbered so its exact location could be identified. Once a month, Walt would take a couple days to GPS map all the new poles, lines, etc., that were replaced during the month. This system of finding precise locations of poles and lines has also decreased outage time for members dramatically.

Equipment has also improved since Walt's first days at SCREC. Starting with just one tiny bucket truck, there are now four bucket trucks and a Bobcat digger, plus other equip-

ment is rented when needed.

“We've come a long way in my tenure here as far as improvements,” Walt says. From when he started, the average yearly overtime went from 500 to 600 hours to now between 250 to 300 hours, and the average yearly outage time went from 45 to 50 hours to just 6 to 8 hours. And, when Walt began, there were only 3,500 meters — now there are more than 6,000.

A lot of these improvements were done alongside former SCREC CEO Craig Harting.

“It was my pleasure working with Walt for nearly 33 years of his 38-year career,” Craig says. “I enjoyed seeing him progress through various linemen positions and into management. He's done a great job for our cooperative over the years and has always put the members first. Walt's hard work has paid off and improved reliability over the years and will continue to pay off for many years to come. I wish

him a great retirement, as he deserves it, for all of his hard work and dedication to the co-op and its members.”

Remembering the good times ... and the bad

Over 38 years, Walt has made a lot of memories and experienced a lot. “I’ve learned you have to plan for the worst, but hope for the best,” he says. “Always have a plan!”

That advice can apply to any situation, but Walt’s most memorable worst-case scenario was the ice storm of 2001.

“It was the worst storm I ever worked in, and it was a 10-day ordeal,” he recalls. The freezing rain began on New Year’s morning and coated everything in 1.5 inches of ice. It was also the morning L&H Lumber in Forksville burned, which seemed to give the rest of the day a bad omen.

After the freezing rain, 18 inches of snow followed. The hold-ups were endless: getting trucks through the snow and finding downed lines in the foot and a half of snow, which was then encased in a thick coating of ice. Numerous co-ops sent crews to help repair lines and poles. The men worked 18-hour days, and Walt’s crew never made it out of Elkland Township.

“Just when you thought you made some headway, something would go wrong, and you’d have to restart at



YEARS OF SERVICE: Walt Tubach pictured four years into his 38-year career at SCREC in 1988.



JUDDY AND WALT: Judson Benjamin, left, and Walt Tubach in 1987.

the beginning,” Walt recalls. “It is a very rewarding job, but it would really eat at me when our members were without power for so long. At the end of each day, I had to tell myself that I served the people of the co-op to the best of my ability.”

Serving his members and co-workers was the highlight of Walt’s day. Meeting new people and getting to know them, plus his great group of fellow co-workers, made the job.

“I’m going to miss it — no doubt about it,” he says. “I’m going to miss serving the members and the people I work with.”

Life outside of work

Walt and his wife, Lou Ann, along with their long-haired Dachshund, Sophie, live in Forksville. They are proud of their sons Matt (wife, Ashley, and their son and daughter) and Jordan (wife, Cecily, and their two daughters).

Walt likes to stay busy. In his free time, he enjoys ice fishing in the winter and camping in the warmer months. He and Lou Ann try to use their camper at least once a month when the weather cooperates. That’s also what he’s looking forward to most in retirement: traveling as much as possible.

Walt is also a 43-year member of the Forksville Volunteer Fire Company and currently serves as its assistant chief. He coached T-ball, Little League, Teener League and the

Sullivan County High School varsity baseball team. He coached at the high school for nine years and still has the school’s best baseball record. He also worked as grounds crew for the Little League World Series in Williamsport for 11 years lining the fields.

Work must go on

Walt’s last day at SCREC was on Thursday, Dec. 29, 2022. His successor, Jeff Truesdale, assumed full responsibilities as electric operations manager on Friday, Dec. 30, 2022.

Jeff has more than 23 years of experience in the electric operations field. He served C&T Enterprises (Claverack and Tri-County RECs and associated companies) for 19 years, starting as an apprentice lineman and working his way up through journeyman, serviceman, asset and purchasing supervisor, and then to line superintendent. Prior to SCREC, he worked at ArborMetrics Solutions, LLC as a front-line operations supervisor. He and his wife, Katina, have four children.

Walt is still on-hand as a contracted consultant a few days a week. He has been helping Jeff through the beginning process and will be available until he is settled into his position. His biggest advice for Jeff is to have a lot of patience. “You need a ton of patience: to learn what the job is and what it all entails, to deal with irate members, and to get every job that needs done every day complete.”

“I have known Walt for over 25 years and have had the pleasure of working directly with him for the last seven months,” says SCREC CEO John Lykens. “In the short time we’ve had to work together, I can confidently say Walt loves the cooperative and loves serving the SCREC membership. I’m sad to see Walt leave SCREC, but I’m thrilled to see him enjoying full-time retirement a few years earlier than

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THANK YOU, WALT

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originally planned. More time to be able to spend with family and the ones we love will always trump the careers we choose, no matter how much we love what we do.”

The employees, directors and members of SCREC want to thank Walt for his many, many years of dedicated service to the co-op and wish him a peaceful, relaxing, and fun retirement! 🍷

Director Lewis Recently Certified

Director Jay Lewis has recently been certified with Director Gold status. Director Gold recognizes directors committed to continuing their education beyond the Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) and Board Leadership Certificate (BLC) training. Jay had to take three courses in the past two years to achieve Director Gold status, which demonstrates his ongoing commitment to advancing his knowledge and performing his fiduciary duty to the best of his ability. Jay is the board representative from District 6, which includes Shrewsbury, Wolf and Mill Creek townships in Lycoming County.



GOLD STATUS: Ann Henderson, chair of the Sullivan County REC Board of Directors, presents fellow Sullivan County REC director Jay Lewis with a Director Gold certificate, which recognizes directors committed to continuing their education.

The Power Behind Sullivan County REC: Our Employees

A Monthly Spotlight

SARAH PARRISH, COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATOR

OUR NEXT FEATURED EMPLOYEE AT Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative (SCREC) is Todd Molyneux.

Dedicated to his job and his community, Todd has been with SCREC since May 1998. He started with our then in-house tree-trimming crew and worked his way through the ranks to senior lineman.

“I had always heard that it was a good and secure job, which made me want to apply for it,” Todd says. Before SCREC, he had been employed in the logging industry.

When asked what his favorite part of the job is, Todd is quick to answer. “I like talking to all the different members and doing what we can for them. I really enjoy meeting different people, and we have a lot of really interesting members that we serve.”

Todd also likes to have fun during the day, joking with his coworkers. His favorite memories are of working with Jud Benjamin.

“He always had a story to tell or a joke to make,” Todd recalls. “He really made the job a lot of fun.”

The only downside of the job is spending a lot of time away from home, especially nights and weekends.

“I expected that going into the job,” Todd remarks. For anyone interested in the electric lineman field, Todd notes it’s a great career — you just have to be prepared to put in the extra hours of work and be willing to miss sleep.

Todd lives in Millview with his wife, Tina. They have four children, one granddaughter and one grandson on the way. They also have a menagerie of animals: one dog, two cats, three cows,



FUN AT WORK: Senior lineman Todd Molyneux is a hands-on project guy, making the busy days at SCREC perfect for him. He likes to keep them interesting by having fun and joking, plus meeting with the members we serve.

and bunnies and chickens.

“There’s always something to do,” Todd says. He spends his free time working on his house and tinkering with machinery, equipment and vehicles. He’s a hands-on person and enjoys completing projects and helping people in the community. He’s a member of Living Hope Fellowship and has been on several mission trips overseas.

Todd is just one piece of the SCREC puzzle that provides a reliable energy source to our members. Visit our employee spotlight section in the March issue of *Penn Lines* to see who we highlight next! 🍷