

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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STAFF

John Lykens, CEO
Dennis Klem, Manager,
Finance and Administration
Jeff Truesdale, Manager,
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Diane E. White, Executive Assistant

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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.

Electrical Safety at Home



SAFETY. WE HEAR THIS WORD multiple times a day at work, home and while going about our daily tasks. But what exactly is “safety” and how can we apply safety at home?

I would define safety as the ability to observe one’s surroundings for potential hazards and mitigate those hazards to prevent personal injury or death. Safety is not instinctive; on the contrary, it must be learned and applied. Since every hazard is unique, mitigating them and preventing injury is a lifelong learning process.

While there are plenty of hazards associated with high-voltage electricity, there are equally as many — or possibly more — hazards associated with low-voltage (household-voltage) electricity. For homeowners and renters, it is important to know and understand the hazards associated with household electricity use and how to prevent accidents, injuries, and disasters.

Each and every year in the U.S., approximately 400 individuals are electrocuted in their homes, resulting in approximately 200 fatalities. Electrocution can occur any time an individual comes in contact with a bare, uninsulated, energized wire or object. Areas of concern throughout one’s home are receptacles — commonly referred to as outlets — switches, lamp and appliance cords, extension cords, light fixtures, emergency generators, and main-entrance panelboards — commonly referred to as breaker boxes.

The following suggestions can help mitigate the hazard of electric shock in your home and keep you, your family members, friends, and pets safe:

When it comes to outlets and switches, ensure GFCI (ground-fault circuit interrupter) receptacles are installed and tested regularly in areas where water can be tapped, such as kitchens, bathrooms, laundry rooms, and outside. Water is conductive and acts like a wire, meaning electricity will flow through water if the water comes in contact with an energized receptacle, light fixture, or switch. Install outlet caps in all unused receptacles or replace outlets with tamper-resistant outlets (required in all new home construction after 2008). And finally, replace any missing, cracked or broken cover plates throughout your house.

When it comes to cords, check for damage and cracks. Replace worn cords and plugs with new ones. Only use extension cords that are in good condition, and only use them on a temporary basis. Extension cords are subject to damage not associated with permanent, protected indoor wiring.

Don’t forget about the main-entrance panelboard. Ensure all breaker slots are occupied by either a circuit breaker or a circuit breaker blank cover. Make sure all bedrooms are protected by an arc-fault circuit interrupting (AFCI) circuit breaker (required in all new home construction after 1999). This type of circuit breaker detects arcing caused by such things as a loose plug or loose wiring at the receptacle.

Electricity and its safe use are crucial to our 21st century way of life. Understanding the hazards associated with electricity and taking the necessary steps to mitigate these hazards may save your life and the lives of your loved ones. Please take a few minutes this month to apply the suggestions listed above and remember: SAFETY IS NO ACCIDENT. Semper Fidelis. 🇺🇸

JOHN LYKENS
CEO

From the Operations Department

BY WALT TUBACH, ELECTRIC OPERATIONS MANAGER

December 28, 2022

AS I WAS GROWING UP, I remember my parents and grandparents saying, “Time goes faster as you get older.”

Naturally, I did not believe that because a minute was a minute, an hour an hour, etc. But as I grew older, this really did appear to be true. It seems like only yesterday when I was hired at Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative (SCREC) as an apprentice lineman/tree trimmer in 1984. I worked my way up through the ranks and eventually was able to become the operations manager. The employees here are a great bunch of people who taught me how to work safely, work long hours when needed, and be the best I could be. I respect all of the employees and treasure the time and memories I shared with them. This is a bitter-sweet time in my life because I love what I do, but it is time to step away: As of Dec. 29, 2022, I will retire.

My years at SCREC have been both challenging and rewarding, but I would not change anything. However, I am looking forward to spending more time with my wife and family and spoiling my four grandchildren. I am hopeful to see all my friends throughout our service area and all the people employed in all the cooperatives across this state. My replacement is Jeff Truesdale, and I hope you welcome him in the same way you have welcomed me over the last 39 years.

Now, let’s talk about outages.

A look at the numbers

Outage time is up this year to an average of 20 hours per member. The total number of outages throughout the year was 679. Numerous bad storms in the spring really took a toll on us with high winds and rain that pummeled the southern part of the system early. I also planned more than

24 outages during the summer to rebuild and upgrade the system in the same area. These planned outages are necessary when we cannot do the upgrade with the electricity on; most of the work, however, was performed with the line energized. There was a total of 39 planned outages across the system. I apologize for these inconveniences.

Power supply outages have caused 4 ½ hours of this time total, or 33 times we had supply outages. This outage time would be higher per member without the backfeeds at each of our substations. The outage time per member for each substation was: Dushore, 12 hours; Estella, 18.02 hours; Kellyburg, 17.29 hours; Laporte, 22.13 hours; and Mill Creek, 24.88 hours.

Equipment failure caused 21 outages. This can be from a broken insulator, stranded wire, a fuse cutout breaking apart or numerous other items. Each year, we walk and/or ride over 150 miles of our 940-mile system, which covers three counties, to look for problems that may arise. This preventive maintenance program has been invaluable.

Animals getting into the power line have caused 81 outages this year. This includes birds and bats landing on the wire, racoons and squirrels climbing the poles, and any other scenario you can imagine.

Thirty-nine member-related outages occurred through the year, including motor vehicle accidents, fires and the public cutting trees over the line.

Unknown/other issues caused 197 outages. In these instances, linemen could not find the reason for the outage.

Trees falling over the line caused 155 outages. Our brushing crews have cut more than 10,650 trees and trimmed another 8,178 this year, but trees continue to be an issue. More than 800 miles of our 940 miles of line runs through forested areas, so we do the best we can to keep the rights of way clear.

Weather conditions, such as rain, ice, snow, high winds and whatever else Mother Nature decided to throw at us, caused 250 outages in 2022. This proves the forces of nature are in control.

The employees at SCREC work very hard to deliver reliable electric and to serve you. And remember: We are only a phone call away, if you need us.

I hope you have enjoyed reading my articles through the years about your electric system, the outages we incur and the problems we face. And please, stay safe.

I wish you the very best. 🍷



We're Here to Help: Members May be Eligible for Two New Programs

SARAH PARRISH, COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATOR

LIFE HAPPENS. WHETHER FOR THE good or the bad, it happens to all of us. Maybe you're struggling financially and past-due bills are piling up. Or maybe you're trying to live a more energy-efficient lifestyle, and you've made some major changes to your home, life, or vehicle.

You may be eligible for two new programs: the Pennsylvania Homeowner Assistance Fund (PAHAF), which provides financial assistance to help with delinquent electric bills; and rebates and tax credits available through the Inflation Reduction Act for energy-efficient upgrades. Learn more about the two new programs and their eligibility requirements below:

PAHAF utility assistance

The last few years have been anything but ordinary, and while things are starting to look more "normal," a lot of folks are still feeling the side effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on their wallets. Luckily, the PAHAF can assist if you have delinquent electric bills.

Those looking to apply must meet the following criteria:

- ▶ Household income is equal to or less than 150% of the area median income (AMI). The average AMI for our service area is \$75,400.
- ▶ Homeowner must own and occupy the property as their primary residence.
- ▶ The property is in Pennsylvania.
- ▶ Homeowner must have experienced a financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic since Jan. 21, 2020 (hardship may have started before Jan. 21, 2020, but

must have continued after that date) and needs assistance with electric bills.

- ▶ Homeowner cannot be receiving the same assistance from another federal, state, local, nonprofit or tribal source.

For more details and to apply, visit our website, screc.com (under "Member Services," select "PAHAF Utility Assistance").

Inflation Reduction Act rebates and tax credits

With the newly enacted Inflation Reduction Act in place, rebates and tax credits are now available to families who are trying to make a positive impact with energy-efficient improvements.

Savings include the following:

- ▶ Up to 30% in tax credits for energy-efficient home improvements, such as installing a heat pump.

- ▶ Rebates for residential energy-efficient improvements, including updating/upgrading heat pumps, cooktops, and other appliances.
- ▶ Up to 30% in tax credits for rooftop solar, batteries and geothermal heat pumps.
- ▶ Up to \$7,500 in tax credits for new clean vehicles and up to \$4,000 for used clean vehicles.

To see if you are eligible for any of the above-mentioned rebates or credits and to find out how to apply, visit screc.com (under "Member Services," select "Rebates & Tax Credits").

Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative members are also eligible for other programs that can help with their electric bill payments. To learn more about other options or these two programs, visit our website, call 570-924-3381, or email info@screc.com.



The Power Behind Sullivan County REC: Our Employees

A Monthly Spotlight

SARAH PARRISH, COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATOR

“Working with everybody here is my favorite part of the job. I really enjoy the employees.”

THIS SEEMS TO BE A pretty common sentiment when talking with employees of Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative (SCREC). And our latest employee

in the spotlight, Diane White, testifies to that statement, too.

Diane is our co-op’s executive assistant to CEO John Lykens. Behind the scenes, she assists the board in whatever it needs — arranging travel/lodging, typing minutes, preparing for meetings, etc. She

is also the cooperative’s ACRE coordinator, makes the arrangements for our linemen’s schools and classes, and assists the CEO with a variety of projects. She also gives presentations about Youth Tour to area high school juniors and educates local first graders about electrical safety.

Diane started at SCREC in January 2014. Previously, she worked at Endless Mountains Resource Conservation and Development Council in Wysox and then went to Farmers & Mechanics Insurance Agency in Forksville.

“I knew I would be qualified for this position,” she says. “At Endless Mountains RC&D, I worked with their board and knew that my duties would be similar.”

The job has perks, too: Not only was she prepared for the position with background experience, but it also came with a great group of co-workers.

“Working with everybody here is my favorite part of the job. I really

enjoy the employees,” Diane says. “I also really like working with all the students I get to visit, especially the first graders — you never know what they’re going to say!”

She has also had the opportunity to travel, too, and has met and made friends with other executive assistants from all over the country as well as other co-op employees in Pennsylvania.

Over the last nine years, the biggest change Diane has faced was SCREC getting a new CEO. She had worked with former CEO Craig Harting for more than eight years, and upon his retirement in June 2022, she wasn’t quite sure who would replace him or what personality the new CEO would have. But Diane couldn’t be happier to work with John.

Diane lives outside of Forksville with her husband, Greg, and Maine Coon, Duncan. She truly enjoys spending time with her family and friends, playing Friday night Yahtzee, and in the springtime, working in her flower gardens.

“I love the water,” Diane says. “I especially love the beach, but any lake will do!” In the summer, she likes to travel to any beach or lake for a swim and the scenery.

All of the employees at SCREC work together to keep your power on and doing it with such a close-knit group of co-workers only adds to the job.

Next month’s issue will highlight one of our linemen — who will the lucky victim be? 🍷



PHOTO BY SARAH PARRISH

HAPPY TO HELP: Sullivan County REC Executive Assistant Diane White is always ready with a smile and to lend a helping hand, whether she’s supporting fellow employees or board members to make sure things run smoothly at the cooperative.