

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
Todd Molyneux, Manager,
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Diane E. White, Executive Assistant

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ann B. Henderson - CCD*/BLC/Gold Chair**

Stephan Paul Brady - CCD/BLC/Gold* Vice Chairman**

Kathy A. Robbins - CCD/BLC/Gold Secretary

David L. Aumen - CCD/BLC/Gold Karen Beinlich

Jeff Hamilton - CCD/BLC/Gold Jim Lambert - CCD

Jay Lewis - CCD/BLC/Gold David R. Rakestraw - CCD

***Credentialed Cooperative Director**

****Board Leadership Certificate**

*****Director Gold Certificate**

OFFICE HOURS

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

Weathering the Storm



JOHN LYKENS

JANUARY'S WEATHER TOOK QUITE A TOLL on our electric distribution system. Back-to-back storms in the first half of the month left approximately one-third of our total meters without power for as long as 27 hours, with an average response time of a little more than six hours per member affected.

This is 200% longer than our normal response time — but not from lack of effort by lineworkers and support staff. Wind gusts of up to 60 mph roared through our system Jan. 9 and again Jan. 13. Our lineworkers put in long hours restoring members' power, and just as they were getting caught up on well-deserved rest, we were calling them back to work.


While the jury may still be out on the cause, these severe weather events have become more frequent and more intense since the start of my career 30 years ago. This, unfortunately, correlates to more outages for you, our members.

It's easy to ask, "Why isn't the cooperative doing more to prevent outages in the first place?" Let me tell you what the cooperative is doing to prevent outages.

Trees are, and will continue to be, the No. 1 cause of our outages. This was definitely the case in January as high winds toppled trees and caused power outages throughout our service territory. Your cooperative devotes hundreds of thousands of dollars to removing trees and their limbs to prevent related outages along the cooperative's 900 miles of right of way (ROW).

I can personally attest to the fact that Penn's Woods is in bad shape and in a pattern of continual decline. Our trees have succumbed to pests, disease, and parasitic fungi from other parts of the world, which have made them prone to limbs breaking off or the entire tree falling. Emerald ash borers have ravaged our ash trees. The woolly adelgid is killing our state's tree, the mighty hemlock. Wondering what is affecting our evergreen trees? Why, it's Cytospora canker. Cherry trees — rust. Oak and maple? Boring bugs. American chestnut (where they spring up from the roots) — blight. And the list goes on.

Our members have chosen probably one of the most beautiful places in Pennsylvania to call home. Most members live among the vast forests in our service territory. If you do not, the lines that ultimately power your home are positioned there. You may have heard the adage, "Where there are trains, there will be train wrecks." Where there are cooperative distribution lines, there will be outages. Unfortunately, it is the nature of the business. A properly executed ROW program helps prevent outages and damage to the cooperative distribution system.

Keeping the lights on for our members in a safe and cost-responsible way is the core of Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative's (SCREC) mission. To that end, all of us — from your board of directors to every SCREC employee, including me — will continue to take measures to prevent outages by contracting with professional tree-trimming crews who employ best practices to maintain tree growth. I'd like to personally thank Spako's Tree Service for the professional work they perform on all our distribution circuits. Semper Fidelis. 

JOHN LYKENS
CEO

Co-op Enables Schools to Expand Science Curriculums

SARAH PARRISH, COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATOR

THE COOPERATIVE DIFFERENCE goes much further than the Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative (SCREC) office.

Of course, in the office, our consumers are our members, not customers. We're always willing to help our friends and neighbors — whether it's explaining energy use, a high bill, or giving them options for financial assistance.

Our cooperative values also extend into our communities: putting shingles back on a church roof, hanging up snowflakes to decorate for Christmas, and digging holes for playground equipment. SCREC works for the sustainable development of its communities while focusing on member needs. That's Cooperative Principle No. 7: concern for community.

Co-ops are also dedicated to educating, training, and informing their members, directors, and employees so they can perform to the best of their abilities. They can then, in turn, inform the general public, particularly



PHOTO COURTESY OF HUGHESVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

NEW CURRICULUM: Hughesville High School students determine the flow rate of a channel by timing how long it takes to dispense one liter of water.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HUGHESVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

FLUID DYNAMICS: Students of Brandon White's new "Wave and Fluid Science" course at Hughesville High School experiment with fluid dynamics. Students connect a variable water pump and tubing to a channel that will drain into a five-gallon bucket before being pumped back into the channel.

young people, about the benefits of electric cooperatives, summed up by Cooperative Principle No. 5: education, training, and information.

This past summer, SCREC decided to donate funds to local high schools to provide opportunities for our young residents, who will (hopefully) be future cooperative members, directors, and/or employees.

Donations were made to Hughesville, Montoursville, and Sullivan County high schools to support their science departments or vocational education programs. The funding could be used to introduce a new program or buy additional materials for an existing program. Projects didn't need to be related to electricity or the energy field. Instead, the schools were encouraged to fund whatever they needed to help students learn in a new way.

Supporting science

At Hughesville High School in the East Lycoming School District,

physics teacher Brandon White was able to purchase material for a new course, "Wave and Fluid Science."

"The generous gift provided the class with a leaf blower, vacuum, tubing, water pumps, trays, and five-gallon buckets," White explains. "This will give students the experience of investigating air and liquid flow with products they can find at the local hardware store."

Students used some of the equipment to learn how to measure liquid flow rates. With the water pumps, tubing, buckets, and troughs, students investigated flow rates as well as occupations that rely on the controlled flow of liquids, such as gasoline, oil, and water. The other purchased material will be used throughout the school year.

"Thank you to SCREC for the funds to support hands-on learning at our school district," White says. "I was excited to use this equipment to teach students about content that is

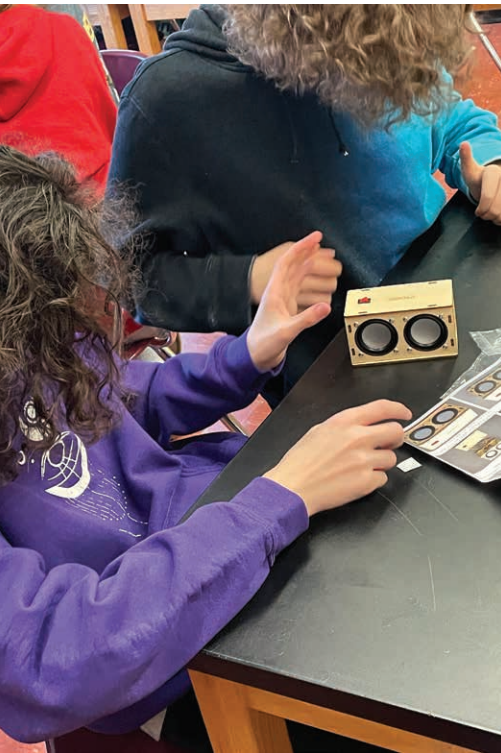


PHOTO COURTESY OF SULLIVAN COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE: Eighth-grade students at Sullivan County High School use their electronic and robotic knowledge to complete a Bluetooth kit, which they were able to take home.

often not taught in school. The lab worked really well, and the kids were very engaged. The donation money is being put to great use.”

At Sullivan County High School, the donation is being used to develop a science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM) program for seventh and eighth graders.

“We decided early on that we wanted to use the money to enhance our STEAM program that was put in place two years ago,” Principal Lynn Eberlin says. “When put in place, there was not really a curriculum to go along with it. Our staff has spent time over the last two years developing a curriculum for the seventh- and eighth-grade STEAM courses, and during this development, there was a desire to incorporate some electricity and robotic activities into the eighth-grade curriculum.”

In Jay Zeigler’s classroom, the donation was used to purchase a wiring activity, called the electronic

playground, to introduce the basics of electronics to seventh graders.

“Students learn about different components, such as batteries, resistors, capacitors, diodes, LEDs, speakers, switches, and potentiometers,” Zeigler says. “While learning about the various components, they learn what function each component plays in an electronic circuit and what its purpose is.”

The electronic playground holds several of these components with springs as contacts. Students are able to connect the components by attaching a wire from the springs to an electronic circuit. Students can make more than 150 different projects on the playground.

Zeigler reviews the electronic components with eighth graders before advancing into robotics.

“Students are able to learn how the electronic components work together in a system,” Zeigler explains. “Typically, in eighth grade, I use electronic kits that students can build and come away with a finished product that they can take home. This year, we constructed Bluetooth speakers thanks to the SCREC donation.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF SULLIVAN COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

LEARNING OPPORTUNITY: Students in Jay Zeigler’s seventh-grade science, technology, engineering, art, and math class at Sullivan County High School learn the basics of electronics on an electronic playground.

Donations were made possible through Act 187 of 2006, which gives electric cooperatives the ability to use unclaimed capital credits for energy assistance, civic purposes, and educational purposes. SCREC’s Board of Directors adopted a resolution to use unclaimed capital credits that otherwise would be escheated to the Commonwealth for the aforementioned three purposes.

SCREC is much more than an electric provider; our governing cooperative principles enable us to create better communities for our members. 🌱

Notice of the 2024 Director Election

DIANE WHITE,
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

The Credentials & Election Committee of the Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative Board of Directors met Jan. 25 and approved the following candidates to stand for election:

DISTRICT 3 – Overton Township, Bradford County, and Forks Township and Forksville Borough, Sullivan County:

▶ **James F. Lambert** (currently serves on board)

DISTRICT 4 – Laporte Township, Laporte Borough, and Cherry Township, Sullivan County, and New Albany Township, Bradford County:

▶ **Jeffrey S. Hamilton** (currently serves on board)

▶ **Marvin E. Brown**

DISTRICT 8 – Plunketts Creek Township, Lycoming County

▶ **David L. Aumen** (currently serves on board)

All members can vote in all director districts. Ballots will be mailed separately from *Penn Lines* and your monthly bill. Completed ballots should be returned in the blue envelope, which is self-addressed and postage paid. The cooperative must receive ballots by 9 a.m. Thursday, May 16. Please allow sufficient time for delivery.

The Power Behind Sullivan County REC: Our Employees

A Monthly Spotlight

SARAH PARRISH, COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATOR

OUR CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER and Human Resources Manager Heidi Roupp has only been at Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative (SCREC) for nine months, but she's already made herself right at home with her office, duties, and coworkers.

"My coworkers are the best part of the job," she says. "It's such a warm and welcoming place to work, and I love the family environment and camaraderie here."

Heidi came to our cooperative on May 22, 2023, replacing former Manager of Finance and Administration Dennis Klem after his retirement. She had formerly been employed at Tri-County Rural Electric Cooperative as an accountant, and has an associate degree in business administration and a bachelor's degree in accounting from Mansfield University.

"I saw it as a good opportunity to advance my career and to take on new responsibilities in different roles," she explains, "while still staying in the co-op setting."

Days at SCREC are busy for Heidi. She's tasked with daily data entry, bank balancing, journal accounting

entries, and net metering, plus payroll biweekly, capital credits, and monthly board reports. In between, she always has time to crack a joke, tell a funny story or dance to make her coworkers laugh.

She had a lot of new things to learn, especially with the human resources position: payroll, benefits, insurance, etc. Heidi had also never been in a management position before, but luckily she has a great staff.

"They all know their job and do it well," Heidi boasts. "I really don't have to manage them; I'm just here to support them — they're great!"

Staying in the co-op setting has been a huge blessing in transitioning jobs, too.

"I really like working for the members; I'm there to support them with education and financial aid, and to make sure they're getting what they need," Heidi adds. "Co-ops are also known for their family environment and the support of coworkers. That makes the stressful duties of my job a lot easier to manage."

Heidi grew up outside of Allentown and moved to Tioga County in seventh grade, which she recalls as a big change for a 13-year-old girl. She now lives in Ogdensburg (tackling a 40-minute drive every day!) with her family and pets.

The Roupp household never has a dull moment. Heidi

and her husband, Phil, have three daughters: Shea and her husband, Dalton, are expecting their first son; Raeann attends Mansfield University for radiology; and Lydia is a freshman student athlete at Canton High School. They also have a yellow lab, Lizzie; two cats, Ella and Lulu; and a herd of beef cattle and chickens.

Most of Heidi's weeknights are spent attending games for whatever sport Lydia is currently playing (right now, she's on the varsity girls' basketball squad for the Canton Warriors). During most summer weekends, her family visits their campsite at Tanglewood Campground in Covington. She also enjoys reading and quilting.

"I have a huge collection of fabric I should really use ... and other craft items," she says. She's also always on the lookout for books and antiques. (And so am I!)

Every other year, the Roupps enjoy a family vacation to the Outer Banks in North Carolina. COVID-19 threw a wrench in their schedule, which they're hoping to get back on track in 2024.

Heidi is a member of Ogdensburg Church of Christ and serves as treasurer. She is a huge fan of holidays, especially Christmas, and celebrates the season to its fullest.

There have been numerous retirements in the last 18 months; many long-time employees have transitioned into life after serving many years at SCREC. Through this many employees have stepped up and taken on new roles and responsibilities at the co-op. These employees, old and new, work dutifully to serve our members to the best of their abilities. 🍷



MEET THE ROUPPS: Heidi Roupp, second from right, is shown with, from left, her son-in-law, Dalton, daughters – Shea, Lydia, and Raeann – and husband, Phil.