

# 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

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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.

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTION

## Guest Column

## Why Does My Power Blink?

**WHY DOES MY POWER BLINK?** I get this question a lot. Rural life can be appealing for its peace and quiet, open spaces, forests, wildlife, and many other attributes. One inconvenience, however, is the electricity may blink more frequently in rural areas than it does in the city.

Some things that make Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative's (REC) service area so beautiful also contribute to the blinking. Trees, for instance, can cause a lot of problems with electric wires. They can grow into the wires and cause lights to blink, dim, or flicker. Dead branches can drop onto lines, causing blinks or knocking the power out completely. If a large limb or an entire tree falls, it can break the wire, hardware, or the poles themselves. The line that feeds your property may run through many miles of forest to reach you and will continue for many miles after that. This increases the odds that blinks and outages could pop up in your service area.

Squirrels often find their way into trouble when they encounter an electric line. Unfortunately, they don't know the difference between a wire and a tree limb, and this contact causes blinking and outages, too. Other animals that cause outages include birds, bears, beavers and more.

Beyond nature, our system has thousands of individual pieces of hardware, from insulators and lightning arrestors to switches and transformers, and it only takes one piece of faulty hardware to cause an interruption to electrical service. That's why your cooperative performs routine inspections and maintenance, which enables us to identify and repair/replace faulty hardware before it becomes a problem.

Sullivan County REC receives electricity from the transmission grid at our substations. While generally very reliable, the transmission lines that supply our substations are susceptible to the same issues that cause blinking and outages on our distribution lines.

Electric distribution systems are designed with switches that isolate a section of line when a short circuit, or fault, occurs. Some of these switches will lock out and isolate a section of line to prevent widespread outages. Another type of switch that protects your electrical system is a fuse, which isolates a section of line whether the fault is transient or permanent. If you ever hear a gunshot sound when the electric blinks, it's probably the fuse doing its job.

It does not matter if the fault occurs between the substation and your property or between your property and the end of the line. When a fault occurs, you will see a blink.

## Mitigation

Sullivan County REC employs many programs to minimize these blinks. Our right-of-way maintenance program consists of trimming and/or cutting trees and brush that pose a threat to the electric line. We also clear a path under the line that makes it safer and quicker to restore electric service when an outage occurs. We treat young trees with herbicide, too, to control their growth before they cause an issue.

The cooperative also installs wildlife protection on all transformers when hanging them for a new service or changing them for any reason. This keeps squirrels, birds, and other wildlife from contacting the line and causing blinks and outages.

Finally, Sullivan County REC partners with a contractor to conduct drone patrols of our distribution lines. These drones take detailed photos, which allow us to check the condition of poles and accompanying hardware for cracks and breaks. Cooperative lineworkers can then repair previously unknown problems before they cause blinking or an outage.

Even with all the programs that Sullivan County REC utilizes, and all of the hard work that our linemen do to provide and maintain safe, reliable electric service to your property, there are countless potential faults that can make your power blink. When I think of all the potential causes of blinks for the electrical system, I can't help but wonder: Why does the power not blink more? 🤔

**TODD MOLYNEUX**

MANAGER OF ELECTRIC OPERATIONS

# Add Hand-Crafted Charm to Your Home with Pierced Tin Designs

**SARAH PARRISH**, COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATOR

**THE LITTLE TOUCHES** in a house make it a home: a cozy blanket your grandmother made, family photos, or perhaps your children's artwork on the refrigerator.

Hand-crafted pieces can add the same personal touch to your home, too. At Pierced Tin Designs by Country Accents, Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) member Theresa Sullivan creates intricately punched and pierced tin pieces for homes across the country.

Sullivan started at what used to be known as Country Accents 25 years ago. Looking for a part-time job to keep her busy while her kids were in school, she was mentored on the tin-punching and -piercing process for 10 years by the owners before she purchased the company. She relocated the business to its current location on Dunwoody Road outside of Barbours and rebranded it as Pierced Tin Designs by Country Accents to better reflect the business's craft.

Sullivan takes the business's core principle to heart, and it's reflected in every piece she makes. The artwork is "hand-crafted," which means each piece — from the raw material to the finished product — is made by hand. This is different from "hand-made artwork," which can simply be products that are taken off a production line by hand.

## Made to order

Customers begin the process by requesting a catalog, which includes pre-designed templates and a sample packet of tin colors and finishes. If they prefer a custom order, they can submit a photo to Sullivan, who will create a one-of-a-kind template for their design.

Once the tin color and template are chosen, Sullivan cuts the tin to the desired size. She then strips the finish and applies an antique finish, if the customer requests it. After that, she creates the template and tapes it over the tin. The trickiest part is resizing images to correctly fit the desired size of tin, she says. Then, Sullivan indents and

**FINISHED PRODUCT:**  
Finished pieces by Pierced Tin Designs by Country Accents are displayed in a few cabinet doors.

SARAH PARRISH



**ALL BY HAND:** Each piece created by Theresa Sullivan, owner of Pierced Tin Designs by Country Accents, is hand-crafted — from cutting the tin and giving it an antique finish to punching and piercing the design and buffing it clean.



SARAH PARRISH





pierces the tin according to the design before buffing the piece and prepping it for shipping or pickup.

"The most rewarding part of the job is seeing the pieces displayed and used in homes," she says. "I love seeing photos from my customers."

If you're feeling crafty, you can try your hand at making your own artwork. In addition to completed pieces, Pierced Tin Designs also sells do-it-yourself (DIY) kits. Sullivan will package all the materials and tools you need to create your own punched tin.

"The COVID-19 pandemic really sparked the at-home DIY kits," Sullivan says.

She now ships kits to homeschooled students, museums that host heritage days, and small schools all over the country.

Sullivan notes that since the pandemic, she's encountered challenges. Finding products is more difficult, and many companies now require minimum orders. Pricing has also surged. In addition, there is an ongoing battle between technology and hand-crafted goods. Machines, she says, can mass produce items in a few seconds, while it can take her hours to carefully and lovingly create the same items.

Despite all this, Pierced Tin Designs is holding strong. Sullivan has designed all kinds of pieces: pie-safe inserts, RV refrigerator covers, cabinet door inserts, framed artwork, Christmas ornaments, light fixtures, lantern DIY kits, and more.

To view available designs or for more information, search for "Pierced Tin Designs LLC by Country Accents" on Facebook, visit [piercedtin.com](http://piercedtin.com), shop Sullivan's Etsy page at "PiercedTinDesignsLLC" or check out what she has on display at McCarty Mercantile in Hillsgrove. You can also call 570-478-4127 or email [sales@piercedtin.com](mailto:sales@piercedtin.com).

Small businesses are the heart and soul of any community, and when we support them, we bring this heart and soul into our homes. Add a little charm to your home by shopping locally. 📍

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**Note:** Sullivan County REC members

are invited to participate in Co-op Connections, which offers discounts on hundreds of services offered by national companies (health and wellness, travel and entertainment, safety and security, retail, and more) and businesses right here in our service territory. Pierced Tin Designs by Country Accents is one of our supporting businesses. To learn more about the program, visit [screc.com/co-op-connections](http://screc.com/co-op-connections), call our office at 570-924-3381, or email [info@screc.com](mailto:info@screc.com).

## 2025 SULLIVAN COUNTY REC CRAIG A. HARTING MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



**Leah Bedford**

*Sullivan County High School  
Marywood University*



**Abbigale Bowman**

*Hughesville High School  
Wilkes University*



**Jenna Eberlin**

*Sullivan County High School  
Lycoming College*



**Christopher Koschak**

*Sullivan County High School  
Penn State University*



**Ty McCoy**

*Pennsylvania College  
of Technology*



**Kaycee Sontheimer**

*Hughesville High School  
Penn State University*



**Olivia Witmer**

*Montoursville High School  
Bloomsburg University*



**Allyson Witter**

*Montoursville High School  
Penn State University*



**Marty Zeigler**

*Sullivan County High School  
Susquehanna University*

# The Principles of Co-op Membership

## Cooperative Principle 4: Autonomy and Independence

### A Monthly Spotlight

**SARAH PARRISH**, COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATOR

**COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE NO. 4** is “Autonomy and Independence.” As the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association explains it, “Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control as well as their unique identity.”

So, what does this principle really mean to you, the member?

Cooperatives can operate solely on their own. They are self-governed organizations, thanks to our members’

economic input and democratic control. Unlike an investor-owned utility, which relies heavily on its stockholders for making decisions and providing a financial base, cooperatives such as Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative do not have investors or stockholders. Instead, we rely on our members.

However, sometimes it is necessary to enter into business agreements to make sure cooperatives have the necessary means to function. In these cases, cooperatives make sure the agreements don’t jeopardize our members’ control because they’re still the base of the cooperative. 📌



**LESSONS IN SAFETY:** It’s never too early to start teaching children about electrical safety. As part of our commitment to safety at Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative (REC), we’re concerned about our employees’ safety as well as the public’s safety. Over summer break, Lineman Nolan Chase, Operations Assistant I Jeff Spako, and Cooperative Communicator Sarah Parrish visited Crossroads Church in Muncy, which was hosting a day camp for kids in kindergarten through sixth grade. Students learned about avoiding overhead and downed power lines. They also tried on rubber sleeves and gloves, operated grip-all and extend-o sticks, climbed inside a bucket, and explored a bucket truck. Everyone went home with an electrical safety activity book and stickers. If you are interested in having an electrical safety presentation with Sullivan County REC, call 570-924-3381 or email [info@screc.com](mailto:info@screc.com).