

# 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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**Craig A. Harting, CEO**  
**Dennis Klem, Manager, Finance and Administration**  
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**Diane E. White, Executive Assistant**

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

## From the CEO



## The ride of your life

By Craig A. Harting

I'VE ALWAYS enjoyed cars and working on them. The average person can't do much anymore, but I still do what I can. In college, I had the opportunity to work on an electric car. But that was very long ago; it didn't go really far or very fast, and it was not practical. Honestly, it was a combination of a dune buggy and a go-kart.

### What a ride

So I was not prepared for a recent drive in a modern electric car (also known as an electrical vehicle or EV). I have to say I was quite impressed. It looked and felt like a real car except it was quicker and quieter. With the batteries in the middle and down low, it drove and handled great. I hated to get out of it.

An EV has more technology than most of you would want, but the basic driving part is really simple. A small tap puts it in forward and then it's just working the "gas" pedal on and off to go and stop. EVs can turn the motors into generators, which means putting the brakes on by just lifting up on the "gas" pedal.

### Things to consider

EVs are much cheaper to operate than a gasoline car. The energy cost is half to two-thirds less than gasoline and there's no maintenance except tires and brakes. Charging time depends on the type of charger and the amount the battery needs.

Most of the time you would be topping off the battery for just a few hours a night. How much electricity would an EV use? On the average, about 500 kilowatt-hours (kWh) or \$65 per month, roughly the same as a water heater.

### EV rate

The co-op has developed a new EV rate to promote charging your EV off-peak. This rate would be for a second meter that you would use just for the EV. This rate has on- and off-peak times. Using just the off-peak rate on this meter would cost 65% less than the regular rate.

The off-peak time on the EV meter is between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m., which would be long enough even for a full charge. Alternatively, you could use one meter and switch over to the Time-Of-Use rate for your entire house and car. This rate has a different set of on- and off-peak times, which applies to your entire use.

### Not a joke

An EV will not work for every application, but they are not a joke anymore and will work for many situations. Purchase costs will continue to decline and battery performance will continue to improve. There are a lot of models to pick from. Take one for a test drive and see what you think. Please call us if you have an interest in an EV and the new EV rate. 

# Sharing nature's beauty through botanical artwork

By John Zelewicz  
Penn Lines Writer

LIVING in the Endless Mountains of Pennsylvania, we're surrounded by nature's beauty. In the spring and summer, you'll find wildflowers, ferns and a myriad of plants dotting the countryside.

In the fall, mountains shine with a kaleidoscope of colors as the cooler days of autumn paints each leaf a brilliant hue. In winter, a hush falls over the landscape and white snow blankets the earth waiting for spring's warm caress to gently brush it away.

One local artist helps keep spring and summer alive throughout the year with her handmade crafts. Lori Beinlich owns and operates Wildflower & Fern, where she creates botanical artwork preserved in French vanilla candles, clay dishes, resin jewelry, and resin nightlights.

While in college, Beinlich started selling candles for Christmas gifts, but she had to put that aside after completing her education. For the next 20 years, she was kept busy teaching deaf education. But about a year ago, she got back into making Botanical Artwork once more.

"I did a little on the side, but now I'm self-employed and working on it



full time," notes Beinlich. "If I'm not creating, I'm suffocating ... this is a perfect fit for me."

Beinlich gathers almost all of the ferns and wildflowers she uses from the woods and the rest of her property. But she always keeps an eye out for anything that catches her fancy.

"I always carry a pair of scissors in the car because friends with flower gardens share them with me," she says. "Daisies, forget-me-nots and Queen Anne's lace are perfect for what I do. The flowers I use have to be small, press nicely and keep their colors."

## Timing is everything

While Beinlich can normally collect ferns all year round (she knows where they are, even under the snow), she is constantly aware that when it comes to picking flowers, timing is everything.

"The earliest ones I can gather are spring beauties," Beinlich explains. "I have to know the seasons for the flowers. I have to know when they're in bloom. If you miss them, they're gone, and you have to wait until next year."

LABOR OF LOVE: Lori Beinlich carefully and lovingly creates botanical artwork that captures a touch of spring and summer in candles, jewelry, nightlights, and more.

Once the flowers are picked, she uses a Microfleur flower press. She lays the flowers out in the press, places it in a microwave and microwaves it for 20 seconds to a minute. The flower press helps preserve their colors. Once done, the flowers are stored in books and kept in a cool dark spot.

Even though the flowers are kept cool and out of sunlight, the colors will slowly fade over time as the flowers become more brittle. They only last for about one year.

As you can imagine, there are a lot of different scented and colored candles available. Beinlich prefers working with French vanilla candles. She feels that French vanilla candles are best for highlighting the colors of the ferns and flowers she uses rather than a brighter colored candle.

Beinlich uses candles she purchases wholesale from a Pennsylvania distributor. Once she has the candles,



CANDLE CRAFT: Beinlich only uses quality French vanilla candles purchased from a Pennsylvania wholesale distributor.

she chooses which fern or flower she wants to put on them. She then carefully melts the candles a wee bit, puts on the flower or fern and, using heated paraffin, carefully dips the candles so the flowers and ferns are coated on the outside.

“The candles I use are good quality candles so, as the candle burns, it only melts the inside and it doesn’t burn the ferns or flowers,” she explains. “As the candle melts, it gives off a lovely glow. Candles come in two sizes: 3 inch by 3 inch and 3 inch by 6 inch.”

### Creates dishes and more

Many would have been content just to turn ordinary candles into something special by adding a touch of nature’s beauty to them, but not Beinlich. One of the other ways she preserves nature’s beauty is by creating small ring dishes made out of clay.

Beinlich carefully rolls out oven-baked clay and then rolls flowers into it. The dish is then baked in the oven at 250 degrees for about half an hour. Once the clay has cooled, she



**FLOWER POWER:** Always looking for new ideas, Beinlich began creating night lights using her flowers and ferns.

epoxy that worked well and looked like glass,” Beinlich says. “If you don’t mix it just right, it won’t harden or may be sticky. It takes time because there are a lot of steps involved. I’ll assemble a dozen dishes at a time. If I tried to do one at a time, it would take much

longer. Once baked, I have to let them sit for 24 hours.”

Another craft evolved over time to where Beinlich now creates night lights. Early on, she was doing a project where she put flowers between glass and soldered it. Always looking for new ideas, she realized that no one had crafted night lights with flowers in them. The first thing she had to do was get some molds to create her night

lights. Beinlich pours epoxy into the mold, carefully places the flowers and then pours more epoxy, which has to sit for 24 hours.

“After the epoxy has dried, I attach all the hardware,” she explains. “I only

make one size of night lights, and I have only been doing it for about five months. I keep them covered while they dry to prevent dust or insects sticking to them.”

French vanilla candles, clay dishes, resin nightlights — you’d think that would be more than enough to keep a person busy. But you’d be wrong. Beinlich also designs and creates resin jewelry. Using an open back bezel, she drips a very small amount of epoxy in the bezel, lays the flowers and drips another small amount of epoxy on top.

After the piece has dried, she attaches the chain and clasp. But that’s not all — each piece comes with a small, folded note telling what the flower means and a little inspirational quote.

### Each piece is individually made and unique

As you can imagine, each piece lovingly made by Beinlich is unique and no two pieces are the same.

“Each piece is individually handcrafted by me, so no two pieces are exactly alike,” notes Beinlich. “On occasion, I do some custom orders. Perhaps someone has saved some flowers from a funeral or a wedding. Perhaps they have some from their own property and I make them something special using their own flowers.”

You may be wondering how you can purchase one of the pieces made by Beinlich. While she did have some of her pieces in shops earlier, she now primarily sells on Instagram and Facebook. In the near future, she plans to start an online shop.

She also has a few other ideas in mind.

“I did an open house here at our home and that went well, so I may do more of that down the road,” she says. “I’m also thinking about doing trunk shows — that’s where someone has a group of family and friends over to their house and I come and do a small demonstration and sell my items.”

You can see some of Beinlich’s work online by visiting Instagram, ([wildflower.and.fern](https://www.instagram.com/wildflowerandfern)) or Facebook ([Wildflower & Fern](https://www.facebook.com/Wildflower&Fern)). 🌿



**HANDMADE:** Beinlich uses flowers and ferns to create beautifully crafted items. Since each item is handmade, each item is special and unique.

pours epoxy onto it to seal it and make it waterproof. Now that may sound easy to do, but Beinlich is quick to point out that there’s a lot more work involved than you might realize.

“I tried other things until I found an

# New equipment makes job easier and faster

By John Zelewicz

TECHNOLOGY has come a long way since I was a kid. Most of the cars had a standard drive. Most of the televisions people had were black and white, and there was no such thing as a remote control to turn the channel. There were no microwaves, no computers (unless they filled an entire room) and no one had even heard of a cellphone.

It's been the same way with working on power lines. Most of the holes for electrical poles were dug, and the poles placed, by hand. Right-of-way (ROW) maintenance required a lot of time and effort as workers manually climbed trees and cut branches off, by a hand saw, to ensure they wouldn't come in contact with power lines.

For Spako Tree Service, a new piece of equipment has made their lives and work a whole lot easier.

"We'd been looking at a skidder bucket for some time now and finally decided to get one," explains Jeff Spako Sr., owner of Spako Tree Service. "The one we have now we purchased



**EFFICIENT EQUIPMENT:** The skidder bucket purchased by Spako Tree Service is a valuable piece of equipment that makes our right-of-way maintenance much more efficient.

from another tree service."

Purchasing any piece of equipment is a major investment. But Spako feels that by purchasing the skidder bucket, his crews can be more productive and work safer. Using the skidder bucket means they don't have workers climbing every tree to trim them. It also reduces the amount of time required to clear ROWs.

"It's amazing how much more work we can get done in a day by using it," he says. "For example, it would take one of our crews about 45 minutes to climb up and trim three small trees. Using the skidder bucket, we can have the same amount of work done in about eight minutes."

While it can do the work of three to four people, only one person is required to operate it. Currently Kyle Spako is the primary operator of the skidder bucket. Tylor Rider has been trained to operate it when Kyle is not available.

## Skidder bucket has limitations

While the skidder bucket is a useful piece of equipment, Spako is quick to

point out that it does have its limitations.

"It's not a cure-all for all places," he explains. "It can't be operated in areas where it can't gain access, it's too steep, or someone's yard because it could tear up the ground. There are still places where the guys just have to put on their climbing gear and climb the tree and trim it."

Moving the skidder bucket from place to place can be tricky. The equipment can only do about 20 miles per hour on the highway. If the skidder bucket has to be moved from one place to another that's reasonably close, it can be driven to where it needs to go. But if it's farther away, Spako has to hire someone to haul it for them.

According to Spako, the plan is to use it each and every day.

"The goal is to use it every day," he says. "If there's a place that we can't use it, we'll move it to another place where we can use it and have a crew come in and trim the trees without the skidder bucket."

So, keep an eye out for the skidder bucket, and we thank you for your help in allowing us to use it where we can. ☀

**Safe Electricity® Storm Safety Kit**

-  Drinking water & food
-  Blankets, pillows & clothing
-  Basic first-aid supplies
-  Prescriptions
-  Basic toiletries
-  Flashlights
-  Battery-operated radio
-  Battery-operated clock
-  Extra supply of batteries
-  Phone

**Reminder: Petitions for Districts 1, 5 and 7 are to be returned by May 6 at 3:30 p.m. Contact Diane White at the cooperative office with any questions.**