

# 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

**Craig A. Harting**, CEO  
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**Diane E. White**, Executive Assistant

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Ann B. Henderson** – CCD/BLC  
*Chairman*  
**Wayne E. Gavitt** – CCD  
*Vice Chairman*  
**Kathy A. Robbins** – CCD/BLC  
*Secretary/Treasurer*  
**David L. Aumen** – CCD\*/BLC\*\*/Gold\*\*\*  
**Stephan Paul Brady** – CCD/BLC/Gold  
**Benton J. Fiester**  
**Jeff Hamilton** – CCD  
**Jay Lewis** – CCD

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

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

## From the CEO



## Loss of a leader

By Craig A. Harting

WE ARE mourning the loss of Curt Rakestraw, who passed away on Aug. 7. Curt was a leader on our board of directors and will be greatly missed.

Curt joined the board in 1986 and served as board chair for six years and vice chair for five years. He also served on many committees over the years. Most recently, he was on the Finance Committee and chairman of the Budget Committee.

We were proud to have Curt represent us on the Allegheny Electric Cooperative Board of Directors. Allegheny is a cooperative formed by the rural electric cooperatives in Pennsylvania and New Jersey to provide us with the electricity we distribute to you. Curt served as chairman of the Allegheny board for two years.

In 2018, Curt received the Miracle Mile Eminent Service Award from the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association (PREA). This is the highest recognition PREA bestows upon an individual.

Curt was a national leader as well. He represented Region 1 (Maine to North Carolina) on the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC) Board of Directors. CFC is a cooperative formed by rural electric cooperatives to provide capital for electric cooperatives.

### The person

Curt served us well in so many ways, but who was he as an individual? He


was a warm, caring person who would talk about you more than himself. He was someone who loved to meet new people and learn more about them.

Curt had the ability to get others to speak. He would let others speak first and would only add items that were not brought up. But when he would speak, people would listen, and he made a difference.

He truly cared for people and their welfare. He was a person who could bridge the gap and bring people together. History and economics were two subjects that fascinated Curt. He loved to study and talk about history, markets, and the events that affected markets.

As anyone would tell you who knew him, Curt possessed a very special gift for numbers. If you told him, he would know your telephone number and your birth date, including the year! He must have known hundreds of them. And he would remember them from year to year!

He had an equal gift to perform calculations in his head. In my early days here, I used to take a calculator to the board meetings, but I soon stopped as he would beat me to the answer every time.

Curt, thank you for your insight, leadership, guidance and wisdom. We will miss you ... 



Curt Rakestraw

# Navigating streams and rivers in a kayak

By John Zelewicz  
Penn Lines Writer

THERE'S a quiet hush in the air. The only sounds are the gentle murmur of water lapping upon rocks and an occasional bird that splits the quiet with a song as it wakes and greets the new day. The sun peeks over a gently sloping hill while early morning mist rises like forgotten spirits upon the water.

One man quietly paddles. The glass-like water splits momentarily as his paddle breaks the water and propels him onward. Always onward. These are the moments that Brian Ammon lives for, enjoying the world around him as he and his kayak head toward their final destination.

Ammon started kayaking in the early 1980s. Growing up near Freeland, Pa., Ammon always enjoyed sports, and because he grew up near the river, he watched people kayaking.

"I've always been active in sports and started kayaking white water," he explains. "Eventually I got away from it as I got involved with other activities such as riding motorcycles. When I moved to Hillsgrove, I got back into doing it."

You may find Ammon kayaking almost anywhere, including the Loyalsock Creek, Pine Creek or anywhere on the Susquehanna River. One likely place you will find him and fellow kayakers is at the Greevy launch

between Montoursville and Williamsport. It's a public launch where kayakers like to meet and sometimes race.

But Ammon doesn't just enjoy a relaxing trip down the Loyalsock. No, he enjoys the camaraderie and excitement of kayak racing. In fact, he ran 16 races last year and competed in two categories, Sea Kayak and Unlimited. Those participating in a Sea Kayak race can only use a kayak that's less than 18 feet long. In Unlimited, you can run anything you want. Ammon prefers to use his Epic V10 Kayak, which weighs 26 pounds, and is 21 feet long and 17.7 inches wide.

"Most races are 5 to 12 miles long and sometimes longer," he says. "I did a race last year that was 25 miles long on Pine Creek. At the start of the race, they square up all the boats side by side, then they either blow a whistle, sound a horn or just yell, 'Go,' and we're off. Kayak racing is not really a spectator sport."

This has been an unusual year due to the pandemic, which has affected many events, including kayak racing.

"There were no races this year due to

the pandemic," Ammon says "Even the nationals in Michigan were canceled this year."

You may be asking yourself how kayakers get back to their vehicles once they get to their final destination. Normally, they depend upon friends to do what's known as shuttling. It takes at least two people to make it happen. Say four people go kayaking together and they plan to put their kayaks in near Hillsgrove and kayak down to the Sandy Bottom area.

First, all the kayaks are dropped off near Hillsgrove, and one person remains to keep an eye on them. The vehicles are driven down to Sandy Bottom and one vehicle takes everybody back to Hillsgrove. This is just one way of doing it. Another way is



**SAFETY FIRST:** One of the things Brian Ammon keeps on hand while kayaking is a throw bag. Here, he demonstrates how to use a throw bag, which comes in handy if a fellow kayaker needs assistance.



**CHOICES:** Kayaks come in a wide range of sizes, weight, and materials such as plastic, fiberglass, and carbon fiber. When choosing a kayak, it's important to keep in mind where it will be used and what it will be used for.



to put all the gear in one vehicle, drop all the kayakers and people off, and the vehicle drives down to the pickup point and waits for the kayakers to arrive.

## Remember, safety first

While trying to figure out how to get your kayak from point A to point B and back again requires some careful planning, the one thing Ammon wants to emphasize is safety.

“I do paddle by myself for a workout, but mostly I kayak with other people,” he says. “It’s like swimming — you don’t want to go out by yourself. No matter how experienced you are, you want other people around just in case something happens. It’s always a good idea to have someone to help.”

Depending on the weather, you can kayak from the end of May up through October, or even longer if you live in a warmer climate. To help keep warm, Ammon uses a dry suit and a spray skirt. More advanced kayakers go out in cold weather with a spray skirt that helps keep them warm and helps to keep the water out.

Kayaking sounds like good exercise and a fun way to get outdoors and enjoy the beautiful creeks and rivers around us. Ammon points out that there are many different kayaks available, and you want to ensure you get the one that’s right for you.

“A lot of people go to box stores and pick out a kayak,” he explains. “Yes, you can go in and they’ll help you get a kayak, but they might just

ask you what color you want. A box store doesn’t know what you want. You might buy something and be unhappy with it. The biggest mistake someone can make is buying a kayak based on price.”

## Picking out the perfect kayak

For beginners, Ammon recommends doing a little research before purchasing a kayak. If you don’t know someone who kayaks, go to an outfitter who can help set you up with what you need. Another option is to find out where kayakers go in your area and talk to them.

“Kayak groups are friendly people and if you show up, they’d be more than happy to talk to you about it,” he says.

Of course, purchasing a kayak isn’t the end. When thinking about kayaking, you’re going to need a kayak, paddle and vest. But you also have to think about other things such as how you’re going to transport it. Do you have a truck you can put it in? If you have a car, do you have a roof rack? They can be heavy, so it can be difficult to get one on top of your vehicle.

The basic equipment needed in addition to a kayak is a paddle (one per paddler), personal flotation device (life vest), bilge pump, sponge (to help get the remaining water out of the kayak when done), dry bag, headlamp with spare batteries (if kayaking when dark) and signaling whistle.

Of course, this is just a partial list. A lot depends on what you plan to be doing. If you plan to be paddling for a long time, you’ll probably want to take along a snack and water to drink.

“Something to remember



**GETTING READY:** Brian Ammon demonstrates how to properly get into a kayak. While he has a variety of kayaks, this wood strip kayak is his favorite. He says, “I don’t paddle it as much as I do the others, but I like old school and also because of the time I put into restoring it.”

is that life vests have to be Coast Guard-approved,” he says. “If you have a vest that slips over your head, then you have to wear it all the time. When you’re kayaking in cold weather, you have to wear a vest. When you’re kayaking white water, you also need to wear a vest. Other times, you can simply keep a vest tucked away on the kayak, but if it’s stuffed up in the front, it’s not going to do you any good if you can’t get to it when you need it.”

Ammon encourages kayakers not to take anything on the river that they don’t want to lose or get wet, including car keys, eyeglasses, hats, etc. One way to keep things safe is by putting them in dry bags and putting a leash on them so they don’t float away.

When you go swimming, your goal is to get wet and enjoy the water. When you’re kayaking, the goal is to stay on top of the water and have some fun paddling along. But as Ammon points out, those wanting to kayak should remember its definition.

“The definition of kayaking is trips between swims,” he says with a smile. 🌞



**WINNER:** In addition to kayaking for fun, Brian Ammon also competes in kayak races. These are just a few of the medals he has won in past competitions.

## Prevent fires – use lightbulbs safely

LET THERE be light. It's been a long time since people had to depend upon candles, gas lights or kerosene lanterns to help them get around at night. But thanks to those inventors who never gave up, we now have electric lights.


Ever since, lightbulbs have been lighting up our nights and allowing us to work, read, and see for longer periods. They are such an integral part of our everyday lives that it is all too easy to forget important safety precautions.

Here are some safe lighting reminders to help you and your family stay safe:

- ▶ Closets and storage areas are especially dangerous for lightbulbs. Lightbulbs could easily start a fire if clothing, boxes and other stored goods come in contact with them. Keep everything 12 inches away from surface-mounted lighting and 6 inches from other types of lighting. Do not use uncovered lightbulbs.
- ▶ Use only bulbs that match the wattage of a lamp or outlet. A bulb with a higher wattage than is specified is a fire hazard.
- ▶ Lamp cords should be kept in good

working condition. Damaged, worn, cracked, or frayed cords and power plugs with the third grounding pin removed should be repaired or replaced.

- ▶ Do not place lamp cords under rugs or in high-traffic areas, and do not tack them to a wall.
- ▶ Turn off the lights before you switch out a bulb.
- ▶ Secure lightbulbs tightly in their sockets.
- ▶ Lights that flicker or light switches that are discolored or hot to the touch should be immediately shut off. Have a qualified professional replace them.
- ▶ Be especially careful using halogen lightbulbs. They run hotter than any other type of lightbulb.
- ▶ Consider using LEDs. They do not give off as much heat and last much longer than incandescent bulbs, so you will not have to replace them as often.

For more tips on electrical safety around the home, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org). 


## Sullivan County Rural Electric approves retirement of patronage capital

BEING a member and owner of Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative entitles you, our members, to patronage capital. Unlike investor-owned utility companies that generate profits



for shareholders, Sullivan County Rural Electric operates on an at-cost basis. Any margins made by the cooperative are returned to the members.

We are pleased to announce the board of directors has approved the retirement of patronage capital.

The board voted to apply \$652,963 toward patronage for members who were on-line during 1986 through 1992, and 4,128 checks were mailed on July 30. 

### Are you prepared for an outage?

The cooperative will install a generator switch behind your meter that connects your generator to your home.

The switch will automatically switch to generator power during an outage, and it comes with a removable cord that plugs into the switch and your generator.



A 30-amp switch costs \$583 (tax included) and a 40-amp switch costs \$683 (tax included). Our lineworkers will install the switch at no cost. Call the office if you are interested in a generator switch.

### Hot water for life!

This is the last water heater you will buy.

New Rheem Marathon Water Heaters are available for purchase from the cooperative.



- ▶ High Efficiency – 2 1/2 inches of polyurethane foam insulation
- ▶ Lifetime Tank Warranty – Built to last for as long as you own your home
- ▶ Non-Metallic Tank – Will not rust or corrode

\$919.22 (tax included) – 50-gallon tank

Call the office if you are interested in a Marathon water heater.

**OFFICE CLOSING**  
**SULLIVAN COUNTY REC'S**  
**OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED**  
**MONDAY, SEPT. 7, IN**  
**OBSERVANCE OF**  
**LABOR DAY.**

