

# 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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Heidi Roupp, CFO  
Diane E. White, Executive Assistant

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**Jay Lewis - CCD/BLC/Gold**

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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.

## Guest Column

# Adding Trees to Your Landscape? Consider Where You're Planting

**SPRING IS MY FAVORITE SEASON** as the remnants of winter fade away and summer is just around the corner. With the arrival of spring, landscape projects that were planned over the winter can be started and trees and shrubs can finally be planted. While planting trees and shrubs can have many benefits, there are some precautions to consider when putting them in the ground.

First, if your landscape or planting project involves digging any holes, a call should be made to the Pennsylvania One Call System at 811. Pennsylvania One Call recommends calling three to 10 business days before any digging to give utilities time to locate or clear their underground lines.

In my 28-year career at Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative (SCREC), I have lost count of the amount of times members of the public have unexpectedly dug up underground electric lines and caused an outage that affects a member's or multiple members' electric services.

When underground utilities are dug up, it not only results in a considerable financial cost to the utility and the person doing the digging, but it also causes an inconvenience to the people the utility serves. It could even result in serious injury or death.

Another thing to consider when planting trees or shrubs is location. While there may be an open patch of ground on your property where the electric line runs, and it may look like the ideal planting spot, avoid this area for several reasons.

The first reason is safety and reliability. Trees and shrubs that are planted or growing in a utility right of way can create a slip/trip/fall hazard — or worse, if a downed wire is tangled in branches when lineworkers are working on the system. This also causes delays in restoring power as crews fight obstacles in the right of way.

Trees or vines planted in the utility right of way always seem to grow bigger and faster than expected and create a serious safety hazard for anyone near them. Have you ever seen a tree on fire or sizzling from contact with the electric line? That is high-voltage electricity passing directly from the line to the tree and ultimately to the ground. Anyone standing next to the tree could receive a shock and be seriously injured or killed. This is one reason SCREC strives to trim or cut trees that are close to an electric line.

Another factor to consider when choosing a location to plant trees or shrubs is electricity restoration times during an outage. When trees or shrubs are planted in the utility right of way for privacy or any other purpose, they block the lineworkers' view and slow down restoration efforts as crews are forced to walk the line or drive around to see the rest of the line.

While your own privacy trees or shrubs may not seem like a big deal, consider the amount of other property owners affected by the outage. During a widespread event, this can add hours to the time it takes to restore your electricity. If you want faster restoration times, don't plant trees or shrubs in the utility right of way.

One last consideration: Trees are expensive to purchase and plant. Why not get the most years of enjoyment out of them as possible? Trees planted in the utility right of way will have a shortened lifespan for one reason: As soon as they get tall enough to be a clearance issue or threaten the safety of lineworkers or the reliability of the electric lines, they will very likely be cut down.

While it may seem that I am discouraging anyone from planting trees or shrubs near a utility right of way, I am not. In fact, SCREC has a very informative tree planting guide on its website. Simply go to [screc.com/trees](http://screc.com/trees) and click on "Tree Planting Guide."

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# Find Your Fun at Elk Creek Escape

**SARAH PARRISH**, COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATOR

**WHY DO YOU GO ON VACATION?** Is it to relax, reconnect with your family, enjoy the outdoors, explore, try something new, or make friends? What if you could experience all this — and more — right in our service territory?

Elk Creek Escape offers something for everyone in a safe, friendly campground environment. Your stay is based on your preference: tent camping, 52 RV lots, one rustic cabin, nine cabins with electricity and running water, one main cabin, and one rental house.

“We cater to our customers,” General Manager Russ Merchant says. The staff’s dedication has paid off, earning the campground five-star status on Airbnb, Vrbo, Evolve, Hipcamp, and The Camp Spot. The camp’s amenities include, but are not limited to:

- ▶ Camp store
- ▶ Clubhouse with restaurant, PA skill machines, pool table, arcade games, TV, and more
- ▶ 24/7 campwide Wi-Fi
- ▶ Showers and bathrooms
- ▶ Outdoor pavilion
- ▶ ADA compliant
- ▶ Pet friendly
- ▶ Pool
- ▶ Fire pits and grills
- ▶ Kayak and tube rentals
- ▶ Basketball, volleyball, baseball, horseshoe, ring toss, and cornhole

If you want to get off the campgrounds, the area is not lacking in things to keep you entertained. Within a 5- to 15-minute drive, you can experience:

- ▶ **The outdoors** at Worlds End State Park, the Loyalsock

State Forest, or State Game Lands, where you can go for a scenic hike, drive, or swim. You can also bike, fish, or hunt.

- ▶ **Delicious food** at nearby restaurants.
- ▶ **Festivals** by planning your trip around local events, including the Sullivan County Fair, the Bowhunter’s Festival, and the Sullivan County Fall Festival and Lumberjack Competitions. Be sure to check out local shops, too.

However, the camp doesn’t lack its own events and activities. You can also:

**Host your own event:** Rent just one building or the whole campground! Elk Creek Escape is happy to host your wedding, reunion, or retreat. A planning team is available to ease the stress of managing a large-scale event.

**Explore weekly campground activities:** Throughout the week and weekend, the camp hosts a small petting zoo and creek exploration for children, family movie nights, a pop-up farmers market, and backyard game tournaments.

**Mark your calendar for events:** You won’t want to miss these activities at Elk Creek Escape:

- ▶ **RV Opening Week, April 10 to 18:** Food trucks and entertainment all week.
- ▶ **Fifth-Year Anniversary Celebration, June 5 to 15:** Food trucks and Battle of the Bands all week.
- ▶ **Fourth of July weekend:** Sparklers, food trucks, entertainment, fireworks all weekend.

All these amenities, events, and accommodations are a labor of love by the camp’s owners, Andy Peters and Connie Klick, and their staff.

Elk Creek Escape opened in June 2021, but to many locals it’s the former Little League Camp.

“We wanted to keep the Little League Camp reputation alive by keeping it a campground,” Connie says, “but we wanted to open it to the public and cater to disabled campers by making everything ADA compliant.”

Part of reconstructing the campground from a sports camp to a family campground was turning the bunkhouses into cozy cabins, including a new heating system and full renovations inside.

“We want to help Sullivan County prosper,” Connie says. “We’re so blessed; we’re just paying it forward to the community.”

Elk Creek Escape is at 47 Covered Bridge



ELK CREEK ESCAPE

**FIND YOUR FUN:** There’s something for everyone at Elk Creek Escape: camping, swimming, food, entertainment, friends, and more.

Road in Hillsgrove. For more information, visit [elkcreekescape.com](http://elkcreekescape.com) or call 570-750-3330. The facilities are open 24/7 year-round, including holidays.

Everyone's idea of fun is different, but there is one similarity: Everyone can find fun at Elk Creek Escape! 🍷



**STAY A WHILE:** Time slows down at Elk Creek Escape. Enjoy a cozy fire pit with your family and friends.



**PICK YOUR SPOT:** RV campers have a selection of more than 50 different hookups. Stay for the weekend, seasonally or yearly.

### GUEST COLUMN

*Continued from page 16A*

If our members follow the recommendations in this guide, we may just have an electrical system that is safer, more reliable, and faster to repair.

In conclusion, trees and shrubs are beautiful and very beneficial for improving aesthetics, erosion control, shade, and more. They just do not belong in the utility right of way. 🌳

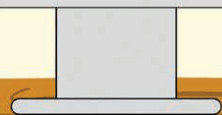
**TODD MOLYNEUX**  
MANAGER OF ELECTRIC OPERATIONS

## 2026 SULLIVAN COUNTY REC VIRTUAL ANNUAL MEETING

6:30 p.m. Thursday, May 21

### Agenda:

- 6:30 p.m. - Call to Order
- Report of 2025 Director Election (Attorney Koernig)
- Board Chair Report (Steve Brady)
- CEO Report (John Lykens)
- Questions answered
- 7:15 p.m. (approx.) - Adjournment



Members must register before May 20 by visiting <https://bit.ly/screcAnnualMtg2026>, contacting Diane White at [dianewhite@screc.com](mailto:dianewhite@screc.com) or 570-924-3381, or using the above QR code. Questions must be submitted prior to the meeting by May 15.

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2026
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## SULLIVAN COUNTY REC CRAIG A. HARTING MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Applications are due

**APRIL 17, 2026**

Visit [screc.com/scholarships](http://screc.com/scholarships)  
for requirements and the application.

Contact Cooperative Communicator  
Sarah Parrish at 570-924-3381 or email  
[sarahparrish@screc.com](mailto:sarahparrish@screc.com) with questions.

# Capital Credits Retirement Checks: What Are They?

**SARAH PARRISH**, COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATOR

**FOR FOLKS WHO HAVE BEEN MEMBERS** of Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative (SCREC) for many years, hearing there's going to be a "capital credits retirement" is news that's happily received.

But for people who are new members, who may have just received their first capital credits retirement check, or have received a check at their address but not in their name, it is certainly confusing. Let's clear up a few frequently asked questions.

## What are capital credits retirement checks?

SCREC is a not-for-profit cooperative. Rates are set so our income from members covers our expenses. We do not set rates to pay dividends to shareholders like for-profit investor-owned electric companies do.

With this in mind, it is not uncommon (and fiscally prudent) that revenue received from our members exceeds our expenses. The difference between revenue and expenses is referred to as a margin in the cooperative world. Margins are allocated each year by the cooperative's board of directors and set aside to be returned to cooperative members at a later date.

When that date arrives and when it is financially feasible, the board votes to retire — or return — these margins to our members. This is called "capital credits retirement" and is often returned to our members in the form of a check. Typically, capital credits are retired 20 to 25 years after being allocated. The philosophy of allocating margins and retiring them back to members is

a practice executed by cooperatives nationwide.

## Why did I receive a capital credits retirement check?

If you received a capital credits check in early 2026, that is because you were a member of our cooperative in 2002 and/or 2003 and contributed to the cooperative's margins by consuming energy and paying your electric bill. Your check reflects your

portion (percentage) of the margins in dollars spent on energy consumption during that period.

## What should I do with a check in someone else's name?

If you received a capital credits check at your address, but it is in a different name, that is because the person who lived there at the time was a member and the cooperative doesn't have their forwarding address. If you can locate that person, they are entitled to their check. If they are deceased or unable to be found, please contact the office at 570-924-3381 so we can deliver the check to the correct individual.

## Can I donate my check?

Yes, you can! If you received a capital credits retirement check and wish to donate it to our Helping Hands Fund, simply write "DONATE" across the face of the check and return it to the cooperative. The Helping Hands Fund assists members who are struggling to pay their electric bill due to an extreme loss or change in life status.

## I know someone who was a member in 2002 and 2003. How can they get their check?

If you know someone who was an SCREC member in 2002 and/or 2003 and has moved or passed away, please contact the office so we can start the process of properly returning the check to the rightful recipient.

## What happens to unclaimed capital credits retirements?

After three years of being unclaimed, the dollars associated with the capital credits retirement check are escheated to a special fund. Prior to 2006, these funds were sent to Harrisburg to be used at the state's discretion. However, after lawmakers passed Act 187 of 2006, the Commonwealth gave electric cooperatives the ability to keep those dollars local and use the unclaimed capital credits for three purposes: energy assistance, civic purposes, or educational purposes.

SCREC uses these funds to support the Sullivan County REC Craig A. Harting Memorial Scholarship, Youth Tour, and the Helping Hands Fund. We also donate some of the funds to area volunteer fire companies, employee and director giving programs, area high school science classes, and much more.

If you still have questions about capital credits retirements, please contact the office at 570-924-3381 or visit [screc.com/capital-credits](https://www.screc.com/capital-credits).

The graphic features a green background with the "smart hub" logo in the top left. The main text reads "USAGE MONITORING" in large white letters, followed by "Be in control and make decisions that can help reduce your bill." Below this is an image of a computer monitor and a smartphone, both displaying energy usage data. At the bottom, the Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative logo is shown, along with the text "A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative". A green banner at the very bottom contains the text "Visit [screc.com/smarthub](https://www.screc.com/smarthub) for more information."