

# 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  
Dennis Klem, Manager,  
Finance and Administration  
Walt Tubach, Manager,  
Electric Operations  
Diane E. White, Executive Assistant

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Ann B. Henderson - CCD\*/BLC\*\***  
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**Stephan Paul Brady - CCD/BLC/Gold\*\*\***  
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**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.

### CORRECTION NOTICE

In the "Notice of 2023 Director Elections" published in the November 2022 issue of *Penn Lines*, District 5 - Shrewsbury and Davidson townships are in Sullivan County, not Lycoming County.

## Shining a light on things to appreciate



**THIS IS THE TIME OF** year when Americans reflect on the things in our lives that we are thankful for. It's easy for us, as we journey down this road we call life, to focus on matters that are discouraging or disheartening. In doing so, however, we miss the opportunity to express gratitude for the things we truly appreciate.

I would be remiss if I didn't share mine this Christmas season.

I am extremely thankful to be a part of a program designed to bring power to rural communities across this great nation.

Communities in rural Sullivan, Lycoming and Bradford counties are examples of the kind of places investor-owned utilities would not serve because it was not profitable to do so. Decades ago, rural electric proponents saw the societal benefits of extending power to farms, mills, schools, homes, and camps beyond city and borough limits. Electricity brought quality-of-life improvements for families and individuals who were able to tap into the cooperative's distribution facilities.

For those of us too young to remember or experience life without electricity, it is easy to take this essential commodity for granted. Imagine for a moment your life without it. Clothes would need to be washed by hand, and this would be done in a tub filled with water pumped by hand from a shallow-dug well and heated on a coal, wood, or propane stove. Heating our homes would consist of splitting wood or purchasing coal and constantly feeding a wood or coal stove to keep warm. Electricity has simplified our lives and given us the opportunity to focus on living our lives rather than constantly working to live.

To the men and women across our state and our nation who make this essential commodity readily available to all consumer-members, we thank you for being a part of a program that started as an experiment to bring power to rural areas. That "experiment" has transformed over the last 85 years into an industry-leading electric service program. I would like to thank our employees and the board of directors for doing their part to fulfill the mission of Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) in providing safe, reliable power and related services to our membership in an environmentally sound and fiscally responsible manner. And to you, our members, thank you for your continued patronage.

In the spirit of the season, we would also like to thank all of our military personnel who have served and are currently serving. Without your service and sacrifice, our great nation would not remain free. To those in law enforcement at all levels, thank you for putting your lives on the line day in and day out. Without your constant vigilance to uphold the law, our great nation would be consumed by lawlessness and chaos. And to our first responders who consist of EMS and fire department personnel, thank you for being available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to protect us and our loved ones. Without your courage, there would be fewer Americans to keep our nation strong.

In less than 30 days, we will close the book on 2022 and start a new chapter: 2023. As this year passes and turns into the next, we reflect on the challenges that this year brought to Sullivan County REC. We are thankful for the opportunity to learn from them and apply those lessons to the challenges that are ahead. We look forward to continuing to serve you perpetually into the future. *Semper Fidelis.* 🇺🇸

**JOHN LYKENS**  
CEO

# Christmas Village: The 'Hallmark' of Sullivan County

SARAH PARRISH, COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATOR

**PICTURESQUE SULLIVAN COUNTY LOOKS LIKE** it's from a scene right out of a Hallmark Channel movie: snow-covered pine trees dangling over dirt roads, quaint little boroughs and villages decorated with lights and wreaths, and its famous red covered bridges spanning frozen creeks.

Now, what's the only thing that could make this more like a real-life Hallmark movie? Perhaps a Christmas-themed event to help raise money for a county organization while bringing community members together for a week of laughter and good cheer. That's just what the Phillips family set out to do when it started the annual Christmas Village.

"I love Christmas," event organizer Kim Phillips says. "You always hear about other places around the area, like Candy Cane Lane in Williamsport, and I thought, why not bring that to Sullivan County?"

The Christmas Village introduced its inaugural display in 2019 at the Sullivan County Fairgrounds in Forksville. It took a hiatus in 2020 due to COVID-19, and was back better than ever in 2021 and 2022 — but this year had some major changes.

In years past, it was up to volunteers to decorate the fairgrounds, transforming it into a dazzling display of twinkling lights, archways and inflatable decorations. Members of the community could drive through the fairgrounds, "ooh" and "aah" over the spectacle, and then drop off a donation to benefit the Sullivan County Agricultural Society. But this year, volunteer decorators took a step back from the spotlight and asked members of the community to go head-to-head in the Great Light Fight.

Individuals, families, churches, county organizations, businesses, farms, clubs and 4-H groups were all encouraged to show off their love of Christmas by entering the Great Light Fight. For a \$20 donation (\$10 for the agricultural society and \$10 into the pool for the winner), entrants were given a spot at the fairgrounds to decorate and supplied with electricity. The rest was up to them. Sugar plum fairylands, Frosty's winter wonderland, and Santa's North Pole — the creativity was endless! Besides the grand-prize pool of money, competitors were in the running for a trophy and some big bragging rights.

Decorating began in mid-November and lasted until Sunday, Nov. 27, when the Christmas Village opened. The village was lit every night that week, from Sunday through Saturday, Dec. 3, for the public to drive through.

On Saturday, vendors set up in the 4-H building — and,



PHOTO COURTESY KAYLA LAMBERT

**HORSING AROUND:** The young and young-at-heart always enjoy the annual drive-through light display at the Sullivan County Fairgrounds in Forksville. Money collected benefits the Sullivan County Agricultural Society.



PHOTO COURTESY KAYLA LAMBERT

**DIFFERENT DISPLAYS:** Visitors are treated to creative holiday displays at the fairgrounds in Forksville. This is the first year for the Great Light Fight, part of the 2022 Christmas Village.

yes, there was heat inside. In years past, there have been upward of 25 vendors selling a little bit of everything, which offered community members a great way to support local small businesses and start their Christmas shopping.

Past vendors have included Ceramics by Shirley, Crafts by Rita, Crafts by Stacey, Hats by Connie, Jewelry by Carissa, JGR Enterprise, Knits and Treats by Linda, Love Soy Peace Candles, LuLaRoe by Samantha, Mountain Manis with Ashley, Paparazzi Jewelry, Scentsy, Soap by Madison Minnier, WoodChuck WoodCrafts and many more. Area kids offered a helping hand, too. Students from Sullivan County High School sold baked goods, the Sullivan County Fair Queen Program offered hot chocolate and 4-H members did kids' crafts.

"I need to thank my family for all their help getting ready for and setting up the Christmas Village every year," Kim says. "I couldn't do it without them."

Organizers and volunteers of the village also extend their thanks to the Kiwanis Club of Sullivan County, which covers the insurance for the event. If you are interested in more details about the Christmas Village or participating in 2023, call Kim Phillips at 607-857-3052.

Anything is possible at Christmas, so who knows: Maybe Forksville will be the next site of a Hallmark movie! 🎄



**TRANSFORMATION:** Members of the community transform the Sullivan County Fairgrounds into a winter wonderland.

## Wishing you a very Merry Christmas!

*We have been through a lot of adversity these last few years, and it's important, now more than ever, to appreciate our lives and the people in them.*

*We at Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) appreciate our members — in fact, you are the reason the cooperative was formed 85 years ago. Our goal is to support you all year long, not just during storms when we are trying to get your power restored as quickly and as safely as possible.*

*The board of directors and employees of Sullivan County REC would like to wish our members a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!*

### Board of Directors

**Ann Henderson (District 1)**  
**Karen Beinlich (District 2)**  
**Jim Lambert (District 3)**

**Jeff Hamilton (District 4)**  
**Kathy Robbins (District 5)**  
**Jay Lewis (District 6)**

**Dave Rakestraw (District 7)**  
**Dave Aumen (District 8)**  
**Steve Brady (District 9)**

### Employees

**Kendall Achey**  
**Nolan Chase**  
**Diane Cusson**  
**Darrick Higley**  
**Dave Kepner**  
**Dennis Klem**

**Alex Laudermilch**  
**Tom Livezey**  
**John Lykens**  
**Todd Molyneux**  
**Sarah Parrish**  
**Chad Phillips**

**Kim Phillips**  
**Jeff Spako II**  
**Walt Tubach**  
**Diane White**  
**Lori Williams**  
**Tyler Worthen**

# The power behind Sullivan County REC: our employees

## A Monthly Spotlight

**SARAH PARRISH**, COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATOR

**CONTINUING FROM OCTOBER'S** installment highlighting the work-horses behind Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative (REC), our next featured employee is Senior Lineman Chad Phillips.

Chad lives in Sonestown, Sullivan County, with his 13-year-old daughter, Alexis, and two dogs. Outside of work, he enjoys coaching his daughter's soccer team, hunting and fishing.

Starting at Sullivan County REC 15 years ago, Chad has loved the challenges and thrills that being a lineworker has brought him.

There are the routine, mundane days — although they are seldom — when the lineworkers focus on new construction, routine maintenance, conversion of voltage and minor outage restoration. But the excitement, and Chad's favorite part of the job, starts with what everyone else hates to hear: storm damage.

"I love storm work," Chad says. "You either love it or hate it, and I like helping our members get their elec-



**HAVE NO FEAR:** Most people dread high-stress situations – not Sullivan County REC Senior Lineman Chad Phillips. The 15-year veteran loves the adrenaline rush and excitement each new challenge brings.

tricity back and the adrenaline each different situation brings."

His passion for his career is evident in the dozens of photos he takes while out in the field. Snapped utility poles, downed trees, hazardous ice and snow conditions ... you name it, he's photographed it.

The long hours away from home are the hardest part of the job. He recalls when Hurricane Sandy swept through the area, and the linemen worked 18-hour days for nine days straight. On top of that, they're outside all winter, battling freezing cold temperatures, ice, wind and snow.

But, overall, Chad loves his job. He originally applied because he hoped to learn a new trade — he had previously been a tree trimmer for Spako's for six years — and thought he'd be able to tackle the position of lineworker. Since he's started, he's had a lot of memorable experiences and adventures with his crew. He swam across the Loyalsock to bring line across. Another time, he walked through a beaver pond with all his equipment and then climbed a utility pole with his waders still on. He also gets to spend a lot of time in Bradford, Sullivan and Lycoming counties, where he appreciates the rural scenery, especially in the fall.

The adage goes, "It takes a village to raise a child," and that holds true at Sullivan County REC. Our village of 19 employees is dedicated to making sure our members are safe and comfortable. Chad is just one of the many workers in our village who help to keep your lights on.

Check back in January to see which Sullivan County REC employee the spotlight will shine on next! 📸

**12 Days of Holiday Safety**  
It's easy to make safety a part of your holiday with these tips. Tackle one a day and you're well on your way to a safe New Year!

**Day 1** **What's that noise?** Test your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. Make sure everyone knows what to do if they hear them.

**Day 2** **What a shocker!** Before use, inspect all electrical lights, decorations and extension cords for damage.

**Day 3** **Two's company, three's a crowd.** Do not overload outlets with too many decorations or devices.

**Day 4** **Is it working?** Test your ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) and arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) to make sure they're protecting you.

**Day 5** **Ouch!** Prevent trips and falls by keeping cords safely along walls and out of doorways and high traffic areas.

**Day 6** **Kids eat the darndest things!** Avoid putting lights, metal hooks, breakable ornaments, and other small decorations within reach of young children.

**Day 7** **Thirsty?** Keep your Christmas tree stand full of water. A fresh, green tree poses less of a fire hazard than a dry tree.

**Day 8** **Make a wish!** Blow out the candles before leaving a room or going to bed.

**Day 9** **Nice and warm.** Keep space heaters at least 3 feet away from anything that can burn — decorations, trees, gifts and curtains.

**Day 10** **Can't touch this!** Consider installing tamper-resistant outlets/receptacles to prevent kids from inserting objects into the slots.

**Day 11** **Escape Route:** Share your family fire escape plan with overnight guests.

**Day 12** **Hot stuff!** Keep children away from cooking areas; use back burners and turn pot handles in away from little hands.

There's no greater gift you can give your family than a safe and happy holiday! Learn more at [holidaysafety.org](http://holidaysafety.org)

**Co-op office closed  
Dec. 23, 26 and Jan. 2.  
Merry Christmas &  
Happy New Year!**