

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,
Electric Operations
Heidi Roupp, CFO
Diane E. White, Executive Assistant

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dr. Stephan Paul Brady - CCD*/BLC/Gold*****
Chair

David L. Aumen - CCD/BLC/Gold
Vice Chair

Kathy A. Robbins - CCD/BLC/Gold
Secretary

Karen Beinlich - CCD

Jeff Hamilton - CCD/BLC/Gold

Ann B. Henderson - 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.

Hope for the Best, Prepare for the Worst



JOHN LYKENS

WINTER IS A BEAUTIFUL TIME of year in the Endless Mountains of northern Pennsylvania. As I'm peering out my window, a light snowfall is decorating our yard and the surrounding fields and forests. Norman Rockwell couldn't paint a more picturesque landscape.

While today's winter scene is beautiful and harmless, sometimes weather can wreak havoc on the electric power distribution system. That was the case on Nov. 22, 2024, when a heavy, wet snow blanketed our region, taking down trees and powerlines. This storm affected more than 70% of the membership and left some without power for at least two days. Line crews from outside our area were brought in to help.

Winter is far from over. The potential still exists for heavy, wet snow, ice, and high winds. The last thing the cooperative wants is for our members to be without power. To that end, we've invested a sizable amount of money in tree trimming and system upgrades to prevent outages from occurring in the first place. Unfortunately, despite our best efforts, severe weather will continue to negatively impact our electrical distribution system. Being prepared for power outages, especially during the cold winter months, is crucial to weathering the storm. Here are a few tips:

Stay warm: Have plenty of blankets and warm clothing on hand. Every modern home heating system uses electricity. Days with temperatures below freezing and no heat source can put you in danger of succumbing to hypothermia (when your core body temperature drops below 95 F). Wearing warm clothes and covering up with blankets will help keep your body above this critical temperature.

Use a generator: If possible, have a standby generator or portable generator available that is sized properly to power critical loads in your home. Powering your heat source will ensure you and your home stay at a safe, comfortable temperature. If using a portable generator, make sure it is located outside your home to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.

Use space heaters: Propane heaters are another option for staying warm. They can be very effective, but can also produce carbon monoxide while in operation; make sure there is adequate ventilation.

Stock up on food and water: An ample supply of non-perishable food and bottled water should be available. We encourage members to stock at least three days' worth of food and water to be properly prepared for extended outages. Non-combustible lighting sources, such as flashlights and battery-powered lanterns, should be on hand, too. Avoid using candles as a light source.

Seek shelter: While no one wants to leave their home, it may be necessary to seek shelter at a relative's or friend's home or even stay at a hotel for a night.

Plan for the worst and hope for the best. Your former CEO Craig Harting lived this adage throughout his career at Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative. You can never be over-prepared. Conversely, not being prepared enough for long winter outages may have serious consequences.

Your cooperative will do everything possible — from working long hours in adverse conditions to calling in outside crews and contractors — to put the lights back on for each and every member. Semper Fidelis. 🇺🇸

JOHN LYKENS
CEO

Join Us for Youth Tour 2025!

SARAH PARRISH, COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATOR

YOUTH TOUR IS MORE THAN a week-long getaway; it's an opportunity — some have called it “a trip of a lifetime” — to let your child discover, learn and mature with like-minded students their own age. And the best part? This all-inclusive trip won't cost your family a dime.

Youth Tour started in the 1950s to introduce rural students to our nation's capital and offer them an opportunity to experience everything it offers (sights, museums, politics, culture, food, and more). Organized by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the trip brings together students from our cooperative, who will travel to Washington with roughly 70 other teens representing fellow co-ops in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Once they arrive in D.C., the high schoolers will join more than 1,500 students from across the nation at the Gaylord National Resort Convention Center in National Harbor, Md.

A few favorite activities students experience during the week include monument tours/sightseeing, the Smithsonian museums, Arlington National Cemetery, congressional visits, the Pentagon Memorial, and the Washington National Zoo. They also learn about rural electrification and cooperatives and have the opportunity to socialize with other Youth Tour students.

In 2024, six students represented Sullivan County

Rural Electric Cooperative (SCREC) on Youth Tour: Larry Aumen, Leah Bedford, Makayla Bedford, Summer Higley, Olivia Spako and Marty Zeigler.

“If you're second guessing it... just go!” Marty says.

Our students' testimonies are the greatest sales pitch we can offer.

“We still talk about it!” Leah says, adding that most of the students are still in touch with friends they made during Youth Tour week.

“I really liked meeting kids from other states and throughout Pennsylvania and New Jersey,” Makayla says.

Olivia adds: “Everyone came from different places, but we're all similar ... you're going to make friends.”

Marty had a lot of fun while learning, noting “every second of every day you're doing something.” And so did Olivia: “I liked learning about the co-ops and what an REC actually is — it opens you up to new job opportunities, too.”

They all agreed that it was a great eye-opener for what they may experience when going off to college this fall, too.

“It seems intimidating, but it's really not,” Leah says. “It taught me a lot of independence being away from home for that long.”

Makayla says she learned great life lessons, and Marty notes participants experience sharing a room with a roommate.



SCREC



SCREC

One of my favorite testimonies came from Marty, who said the chaperones (I was one, so I may be a bit biased) and Steph Okuniewski (Youth Tour coordinator from the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association) really made the trip great. Larry agreed: "Steph and all the chaperones were so accessible, helpful, and cooperative!"

This year, Pennsylvania and New Jersey students will board two coach buses on Monday, June 16, to leave for D.C. They will return home Saturday, June 21.

Youth Tour is open to students who meet the following requirements:

- ▶ Was a high school junior during the 2024-2025 school year (cyber, public, private, and home schools are all eligible).
- ▶ Their parent/legal guardian is a member of SCREC.

Applications are available by contacting Diane White at 570-924-3381 or dianewhite@screc.com, visiting screc.com, or stopping by our office at 5675 Route 87, Forksville. Complete and notarized applications need to be returned to the office by Wednesday, Feb. 19. A maximum of six students from SCREC will be chosen to attend Youth Tour. In the event that more than six applications are received, a committee will be formed to review the applications and select the six students who will represent the cooperative.

If interested, here are a few things students and parents need to know before submitting an application:

- ▶ Youth Tour week is hot! Sunscreen and plenty of water/Gatorade will be available.

- ▶ There is a lot of walking (more than 50 miles in one week).
- ▶ Students/parents are responsible for providing extra cash for souvenirs, snacks, etc. For meals, students are either given vouchers or use prepaid Visa cards.
- ▶ Participants should expect late nights and early mornings.
- ▶ Students will share a room with another teen (males with males, females with females).

Last year's students had a few other tips to pass along to potential Youth Tour students:

- ▶ Stay hydrated.
- ▶ Wear a hat.
- ▶ Bring sunglasses.
- ▶ Don't wear pants.
- ▶ Take lots of pictures.
- ▶ Don't wear Crocs.
- ▶ Nap when you can.
- ▶ Don't be afraid to ask questions.

Staff and directors of SCREC encourage students to take advantage of this opportunity. The trip is all-inclusive, and students learn lessons and make friends they'll remember for a lifetime. But don't take it from us, listen to the students who actually went and experienced Youth Tour:

"Be open to new things and experiences," Marty says.

"Don't be shy, go say 'Hi!'" Larry says.

"It's educational and fun," Leah says.

"You'll meet lots of different people, from rural places and not so rural," Makayla says. 🍷



The Power Behind Sullivan County REC: Our Directors

A Monthly Spotlight

SARAH PARRISH, COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATOR

OUR BOARD IS NOT ONLY tasked with maintaining the cooperative's policies and financial well-being, but many directors also use their position to take political action on issues that directly impact your electric cooperative and rural way of life.

Jeff Hamilton is one such director who enjoys and takes pride in lobbying for rural electric cooperatives.

"Politics has so much to do with the functioning of our cooperative," says Jeff, who has visited with legislators in Washington, D.C. and Harrisburg at various events. "Lobbying is very effective."

"It does matter what you say," he continues, noting recent front-burner topics have included the electric grid, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's power plant rules, and the promotion of nuclear and intermittent power. "Lobbying is all about informing political parties and making improvements."

Jeff represents our members in District 4, which covers Albany Township in Bradford County, and Cherry and Laporte townships and Laporte Borough in Sullivan County. Thousands of acres in Loyalsock State Forest and State Game Lands 13 disperse its members far and wide.

Jeff was first elected to the Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative Board of Directors in 2018. He

had considered running for the board sooner when Walter Botsford retired, but someone had already been appointed to fill the spot. Jeff waited out the three-year election period, then ran in a contested election to get on the board.

When he first joined the board, Jeff only knew former Director Wayne Gavitt and former CEO Craig Harting — and at his first meeting he was asked to help vote for the board chair in a room full of people he'd never met. Now, Jeff enjoys working with all of his fellow board members.

"We have an excellent board," Jeff says. "There are a lot of different perspectives; it's interesting to see things from other people's point of view."

Learning the cooperative's finances and the board's oversight of them was a challenge. Thankfully, Jeff has been able to take advantage of training offered by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

"I felt it was important to spend a lot of time on the courses," he says.

Jeff has put the knowledge he gained from the training and from former directors like Gavitt and Curt Rakestraw to good use. Currently, he chairs our Broadband and Finance committees and holds his Credentialed Cooperative Director, Board Leadership, and Director Gold certifications. Jeff is also a Laporte Township supervisor, and the skills he has gained from being on the board have benefited him in this role, too.

Jeff is a member of the Laporte-Eagles Mere Lions Club and the Muncy Valley United Methodist Church. He has a master's degree in electrical engineering from Yale and is a consultant for digital television technology. His career has taken him around the world, and he's created 12 patents that are now used in most televisions.

Jeff and his wife of 40 years, Sue, enjoy taking hikes and working on their wooded property. Keeping in touch with their four children — Bill, George, Glen, and Kim — and keeping up with their three grandchildren — ages 17, 7, and 2 — keeps them busy.

"We [the board] are members too, and we feel the effects of board decisions," Jeff says. "I take my role very seriously; it gives me the opportunity to make a difference."

As members of the cooperative, too, we're thankful for such dedicated directors to guide our rural electric co-op. 🇺🇸

PHOTO COURTESY OF JEFF HAMILTON



MEET DIRECTOR HAMILTON: District 4 Director Jeff Hamilton, left, is shown with his youngest son, Glen, and wife, Sue, in Arizona, where Glen works in construction.