

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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***Credentialed Cooperative Director**

****Board Leadership Certificate**

*****Director Gold Certificate**

OFFICE HOURS

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

Guest Column

Members Have the Power to Make a Difference



DIANE WHITE

A BOY THROWS A STRANDED starfish into the ocean. A man notices and says, "Son, don't you realize there are miles and miles of beach and hundreds of starfish? You can't make a difference!" The boy bends down, again, picks up another starfish and throws it back into the surf. Then, smiling at the man, he says, "I made a difference for that one."

At some point, everyone thinks they cannot make a difference by themselves. "The Starfish Story" teaches us this definitely is not true. In fact, if everyone did something small, collectively, it would make a big difference.


As a member of an electric cooperative, you can implement change by joining America's Electric Cooperatives PAC, a political action committee that offers cooperative members an opportunity to advocate for cooperative priorities and rural communities. Now, more than ever, we need to protect our rural values. Your PAC contribution, when added with other members' contributions, supports efforts on behalf of rural electric communities in Pennsylvania and throughout the country.

America's Electric Cooperatives PAC, an arm of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, is a grassroots movement backed by nearly 35,000 employees, directors, and consumer-members across the country.

Thanks to efforts like the PAC, the cooperative voice has been represented in many federal and state legislative initiatives, such as the Bipartisan Infra-structure Law, the Inflation Reduction Act, federal transformer regulations, broadband, retirement savings, "move over" legislation, and the Revitalizing Underdeveloped Rural Areas and Lands (RURAL) Act.

Electric cooperatives will be facing numerous challenges this year that will affect all our members. Therefore, we are encouraging you to lend your voice to help represent rural America at the state and federal levels. Some of the challenges we are facing include grid reliability, state and federal energy policies, rules and regulations concerning electric vehicles, and a reconfigured General Assembly (with electoral maps shifting power away from rural areas). We also need to protect policies already in place that support rural electric cooperative consumer-members.

America's Electric Cooperative PAC represents people like you, individuals who are concerned and willing to help make rural Pennsylvania a better place to live, work, and play. Adding your voice to hundreds of thousands of others in this movement gives you the power to make a difference — all for just a small contribution each month.

If you are interested in becoming a member of America's Electric Cooperative PAC, please reach out to me at 570-924-3381 or dianewhite@screc.com. 

DIANE WHITE
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

A Bad Day Racing is Better than a Good Day at the Office

SARAH PARRISH, COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATOR

IF YOU LOVE WHAT YOU DO, you'll never work a day in your life.

How many of us are lucky enough to say that confidently? For the Phil and Robin Miller family in Huntersville, small-track racing and motor machining isn't just work or a job; it's a lifestyle the family has been fully immersed in since the 1980s.

In fact, Phil and Robin actually met while racing.

"He would always visit with my dad," Robin says, "but it took him two years to talk to me!" Phil and Robin raced semi-late models against each other at Selinsgrove Speedway while Phil worked for a machine shop.

After getting married and building their home, Phil opened Miller's Automotive Machines. "I've been very fortunate," he says. "When I first started, I was just hoping to get enough work to get us by." Now the shop is celebrating its 30th anniversary, and Miller's Automotive is recognized throughout the racing community. Customers

have come from New York, Maryland, Ohio, and

Indiana to have Phil work on their engines.

"We've never advertised," Robin says. "All of his business has been through word of mouth."

It's easy to see why Phil has such a strong following — his work and dedication are evident in every piece that passes through his shop doors. "We've torn down and rebuilt a motor that raced in Clinton County one night, then raced at Selinsgrove the next morning," he says.

And Robin couldn't be prouder of his hard work. "There have been nights where we didn't leave the racetrack until 3 or 4 a.m. because he was helping someone with their car," she says. "The racing community is fantastic; we have the best customers ever."

Miller's Automotive Machines specializes in all kinds of engine work: new, rebuilds, repairs, and machining. Phil particularly likes dirt and circle track engines. He also works on tractor engines while occasionally pulling truck engines and custom work.

Over time, vehicle engines deteriorate, warp, and break, especially when used hard during racing or pulling. Phil's job is to repair these parts so the vehicle can run to the best of its ability. That may require taking the engine completely apart and fixing individual pieces, or he may be able to work on the engine while it's still together.

Common repairs include valve grinding (creating a flat surface for a better seal); boring cylinders (creating larger cylinders for more horsepower and torque); decking heads or blocks (making a flat surface); shot peens (this prevents cracks in metal and extends its life); hot tank blocks (this cleans parts); and magnafluxes (this detects cracks in metal).

Not only can Phil repair engines, but he can also add horsepower to them, too. Engines are tested on a dynamometer (sometimes called a "dyno"), which gauges the horsepower being put out by the motor. The highest horsepower engine he ever built was a naturally aspirated 1,100-horsepower big-block Ford pulling truck (for comparison, the average pickup truck from the factory has 355 to 420 horsepower). His craftsmanship has earned him the opportunity to work on some rare pieces of automotive history, too; namely, a Boss 429 Ford engine that was only made for two years — 1969 and 1970 — and placed in Ford Mustangs.

"Machining is a dying art," Phil says. "Everything is made to be disposable now." Thankfully, Miller's Automotive Machines is a family business, and he's passed the talent along to his wife and one of his sons.

"It's definitely not what I thought I'd be doing, but it's been a challenge, and I like that," Robin says.

During the summers, she used to operate the Sunset Ice

SARAH PARRISH



SARAH PARRISH



MILLER LEGACY: Phil and Robin Miller met while racing, and their passion was passed along to their sons, Nathan, above, who won the International Motor Contest Association modified championship, and Ethan.

Cream Shop on Loyalsock Avenue in Williamsport, and in her spare time, would help Phil clean parts, tear engines apart, and run a few machines. Now, their son, Nathan, helps by balancing rotating assemblies (this balances the crankshaft by adding or subtracting weight to keep the engine sturdy).

Phil and Robin have another son, Ethan, and daughter, Amber. The two boys raced International Motor Contest Association modifieds in Clinton County for a few years, with Nathan even winning the championship. Being a motorhead truly runs in the family — Nathan's daughter, Delanie, loves being in the shop and helping her pap.

Small family businesses are hard to come by nowadays. Luckily for the Miller family, their loyal customers and community have kept them busy since 1994, allowing them to leave a legacy in the small-track racing and motorhead communities. 📍

SARAH PARRISH



RARE BEAUTY: This Boss 429 Ford engine is one of the rarest pieces Phil Miller has worked on. It was only produced for two years in Mustangs.

SARAH PARRISH



FAMILY BUSINESS: Robin and Phil Miller pose with their granddaughter Delanie, who loves to help her pap in the shop.

SCREC COMMENDED AT STATEWIDE COMMUNICATIONS CEREMONY

Members of Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative's (SCREC) staff were recognized during the 2024 Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association (PREA) Communications Awards Ceremony, held Oct. 2 in Bedford. The program is sponsored by the statewide organization that represents 13 electric cooperatives in Pennsylvania and one in New Jersey.

Awards were presented by Pete Fitzgerald, PREA vice president - public affairs & member services, and Colleen Taylor, a regional vice president for the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation.

SCREC received two Awards of Excellence, one for Best Feature Story, "Remembering Craig Harting," and another for Best News Story, "Co-op Connects First Electric Vehicle Meter," both written by Cooperative Communicator Sarah Parrish. The co-op was also awarded two Honorable Mentions: one for Best Website, screc.com; and another for Best Use of Cooperative Principle, "Giving Back to Our Members and Communities," by Parrish.

The ceremony also featured the first presentation of the Craig Harting Leadership Award, which recognizes cooperative leaders and their commitment to cooperative communications. SCREC CEO John Lykens received an honorable mention for his column, titled "Capital Credits and You."

The awards program was held in conjunction with the 2024 PREA Communications Institute with 13 representatives from 10 Pennsylvania cooperatives attending. Parrish represented SCREC at the educational event.

To read past issues of SCREC's pages in *Penn Lines*, visit screc.com, click on the "Penn Lines" tab, and choose "Co-op Penn Lines pages."



AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE: Recipients of the 2024 PREA Communications Awards of Excellence were, seated from left, Nikki Staley, Central Electric Cooperative; Emily Baer, Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative (REC); and Sarah Frank, Adams Electric; and standing, from left, Doug Roles, Valley REC; Sarah Parrish, Sullivan County REC; and Kami Noel, Adams Electric Cooperative.

The Power Behind Sullivan County REC: Our Directors

A Monthly Spotlight

SARAH PARRISH, COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATOR

EACH DIRECTOR DISTRICT COMES UP for election every three years. In 2025, District 2 (Elkland and Hillsgrove townships, Sullivan County), District 6 (Mill Creek, Shrewsbury, and Wolf townships, Lycoming County), and District 9 (Cascade, Gamble, and Lewis townships, Lycoming County) are up for election.

Jay Lewis of Huntersville has been representing the members of District 6 since October 2015 and has nothing but praise for his colleagues on the board. “Everyone who has joined the board has made it a great group of people to work with,” he says.

Jay was appointed to the board after Charlie Hall retired from his position. “Dave [Aumen] filled me in on the requirements of the board, so I was pretty well prepared when I joined,” he says.

Thankfully, Jay enjoys learning, and the courses offered by the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association (PREA) have come in handy. They’ve helped him better understand his role as a director and the ins and outs of helping our electric co-op function.

“It’s a very unique industry,” he says. “Craig [Harting, the cooperative’s former CEO] and now John [Lykens, the current CEO] have been great teachers about the electrical side of things. It’s made me feel much more comfortable being on the board.”

Jay’s training and learning have advanced him through the Credentialed Cooperative Director, Board Leadership Certificate, and Director Gold credential programs, which requires recertification every two years. “Thankfully, I’ve been able to take advantage of [online] classes,” Jay says. “Working a full-time job and being on the board is a lot of work.”

Joining the board has been very rewarding for Jay. “There are a lot of different viewpoints across the board, but we all get along and are respectful of each other — we all have a chance to be heard,” he says, adding that at times, he enjoys playing the devil’s advocate and debating with fellow directors. “As a board, we make sure policies are up to date, the budget is correct ... kind of guiding the cooperative.

“Our biggest challenge was when Craig retired,” Jay adds. “The process to replace him was daunting. Thankfully, PREA helped, and we formed a search committee, which helped us narrow down applicants and [navigate]

the decision-making process.”

Jay serves on our Budget, Broadband, and Policy committees. “Being on the committees has offered me the chance to gain more knowledge about the co-op; I’ve learned a lot from Dennis [Klem, the cooperative’s former manager of finance & administration] and Heidi [Roupp, the current chief financial officer].”

Outside of the board, Jay likes spending time with his three children:

Nathaniel, who provides security for a gas company; Rebecca, who attends Lycoming College; and Emily, a junior at Hughesville High School.

“Emily is very involved in school ... musicals, plays, color guard ... she keeps me busy!” he says. There’s also Jake, the dog, and Brownie and Sad Eyes, the cats.

Jay has been the manager of sortation for FedEx since 2000, but he started there in 1997 as a package handler and driver. In his free time, he enjoys helping his father with his hobby farm — cutting firewood, managing a few beef cattle, working on old tractors, etc. Jay also serves on the board for the Covation Center in Williamsport.

Our board’s diverse perspectives and backgrounds help them wager every possibility they can to make the best decisions for our membership. If you are interested in learning more about the board or possibly running for a seat, please contact Diane White, executive assistant, at 570-924-3381 or dianewhite@screc.com, or visit screc.com/directors.



REPRESENTING DISTRICT 6: Meet Jay Lewis, the Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative director who represents members in Mill Creek, Shrewsbury, and Wolf townships in Lycoming County.