

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.

Rate Adjustments Needed to Maintain System Reliability



JOHN LYKENS

LAST YEAR AT THIS TIME, Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative (SCREC) instituted new rates to cover increases in both distribution and generation costs for most rate classes.

Inflation remains a factor. So do the wars in Ukraine and now Israel, which have put upward pressure on raw materials, causing increases in equipment and material costs. These prices continue to rise, and the lead time for material and equipment remains longer than normal.


So, what does this mean to our members? Unfortunately, to keep up with rising costs and to ensure a reliable electric distribution system, it is necessary to increase the distribution portion of our rates. No one wants to hear this, and I certainly don't want to be the person to pass on this news; however, it is necessary.

The cooperative's current distribution rate structure is made up of both a fixed and variable fee. The fixed fee covers part of the costs associated with distributing power to each member. The variable fee is an energy-dependent charge based on usage. As its name implies, this fee varies depending on weather conditions and, to a lesser extent, on the efficiency of the electrical appliances you use. While these costs vary for each member from month to month, the cooperative's costs — those covering necessities like equipment, materials, labor, operations, and maintenance — remain largely fixed, whether our members use a few kilowatt-hours (kWh) or several thousand kWhs.

Because the cost to *deliver* energy remains independent of energy *consumed*, SCREC's board and management have discussed transitioning to a fixed, flat rate for the distribution portion of each residential member's bill. As a result, the cooperative will be embarking on a cost-of-service study and rate study in 2024 to further explore this concept. If we opt to transition to a fixed-cost recovery model for distribution costs, the fixed basic service charge will increase, and the variable portion of the distribution charge will decrease in 2024.

In the end, the average residential member will see their total bill increase by approximately 1.8%.

The cooperative's board of directors and employees understand families here and across the country continue to struggle with the increasing cost of goods and services. The cooperative has a Helping Hands Fund to support members who are having difficulty paying their electric bill. The state also has funds to assist members in paying their energy bills. Trehab Community Services administers this service for the state. Visit screc.com and click on "Helping Hands Fund" under the "Financial Assistance" drop-down menu to learn more.

It is never pleasant to deliver the news of a rate increase to the SCREC membership. Please know the cooperative doesn't take increasing rates lightly and explores all options and opportunities to minimize any increases. Rest assured, the cooperative will continue to work to keep costs responsible and deliver safe and dependable electric power to our members. Semper Fidelis. 

JOHN LYKENS
CEO

Co-op Connects First Electric Vehicle Meter

SARAH PARRISH, COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATOR

THE WAY OF THE FUTURE IS slowly creeping into our rural homes and communities throughout Bradford, Lycoming, and Sullivan counties. In October, the co-op interconnected its first electric vehicle (EV) meter to our line system.

Dave Abernathy, of Forksville (Lincoln Falls), is the first member of Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative (SCREC) to sign up for and to receive our special EV service rate.

Dave has lived in Williamsport since 1969, but his hobbies brought him to Sullivan County. Like many who call the area home, he was drawn to its natural beauty and availability of outdoor adventures, including backpacking, rock climbing, and hiking. He's been up and down the East Coast, but his favorite spots have always been in Sullivan County: Old Loggers Path, Loyalsock Trail, and the canyons and vistas of Worlds End State Park and the Loyalsock State Forest, to name a few.

So when the time came for Dave and his wife, Shirley, to downsize, they looked to Sullivan County for their new home (and to stay close to the grandchildren). But Dave hasn't let dirt-road living hamper his innovative and forward-thinking interests.

Before retirement, his last career venture was helping struggling businesses turn their operations around to become profitable and flourishing. The last business he helped was an electrical engineering company, and it sparked an interest in the field.

"I'm mainly self-taught ... lots of reading and research," Dave says.

This fascination led, of course, to EVs. For Dave, the decision to purchase a Tesla was a no-brainer. Dave has found the Tesla to be the safest EV

since it's engineered to perform well in crash tests. It's also a smart investment — one with lots of cargo space, he says. Nearly 80% of repairs are software updates, Dave says, and if it does require service, he takes it to the Tesla service center in Mechanicsburg.

"It's basically a computer on wheels," he says, "and it drives like a dream!"

Dave also considered the away-from-home charging options before making the purchase. Tesla is the most common charging station found, making it the most reliable EV for traveling, he says.

However, most charging will be done at home. Instead of saving money at the pump, Dave will be saving money at the meter after linemen Chad Phillips, Alex Laudermilch, and Josh Heess, Jr. installed a special EV service rate meter on Dave's garage.

The EV rate is most effective during off-peak hours, which are between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. when the energy load throughout our service territory is at its lowest. On top of a \$2 monthly service fee, the EV off-peak rate is only \$0.092 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) compared to the on-peak rate of \$0.171/kWh. Dave's Tesla can be plugged in once he returns home and programmed to charge only during the off-peak hours.

Dave figures driving his Tesla will only cost him roughly two cents per mile. "I'm very thankful that my electric cooperative is doing an EV rate," he says.

Since purchasing his Model Y in August 2023, Dave has done some research. Each charging hour generally produces 30 miles (note: colder temperatures do affect the battery). At 100%, the battery is good for 324 miles of travel. Dave typically keeps his at 80% to maintain the life



PHOTO BY SARAH PARRISH

IT STARTS WITH ONE: Dave Abernathy of Forksville is the first Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative member to have an electric vehicle meter installed at his home. He owns a Tesla Model Y.

of the battery.

Dave advises folks considering an EV to do their research and buy the proper equipment to take care of the vehicle. He says it's also important to make sure the wiring and plugs in your home/garage can handle the EV's electric load and to purchase quality charging adapters.

"The energy revolution is here," Dave says.

SCREC is ready to answer your energy-related questions so you can make informed energy decisions for your homes, cabins, and businesses. 📞

We Will Miss You, Diane!

SARAH PARRISH, COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATOR

“I’M GOING TO MISS MY CO-WORKERS, they’re like family,” Diane Cusson says somberly. And we are going to miss her, too! After 36 years of service, Diane is retiring Friday, Jan. 12, from Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative (SCREC).

Diane has spent her entire career working for cooperatives. Her first job was at Liberty Mutual, and then she moved on to the Sullivan County Penn State Extension Office in Dushore. Diane’s journey with SCREC began Oct. 1, 1987, when she started working the front counter as office secretary before taking the accounts payable position.

When Diane worked at the extension office, she was introduced to computers. However, when she joined SCREC, everything was still done by paperwork.

“It was like stepping back in time,” she says, “but now they’re way beyond my computer skills!”

Diane’s days are busy at the co-op: She helps to answer the phone; radios our lineworkers in the field; gets the mail; posts bills for operating material, office supplies, utility poles, transformers, etc. and pays them weekly; keeps expense records for the board of directors; double checks time sheets before they’re sent to accounting; scans and files paperwork; and sorts the bills to be sent out for bulk mailing. And this is just a few of her daily tasks.

Still, she always makes time for an extra cup of coffee, to catch up on her co-workers’ latest news and ventures, and to lend a helping hand.

“I love the atmosphere of working together to serve the members,” Diane says. “They’re your friends and neighbors, and I’ve gotten to know so many of them over the years.”

Despite all of us begging her to stay, Diane is looking forward to retirement — and she has a LOT of plans.

Diane wants to be a community volunteer. She says she needs a purpose and is determined to use her well-deserved free time to benefit the community. A quilter, she is looking forward to joining the Millview Quilters Missionary Society at Millview Wesleyan Church on Wednesday afternoons. The group has been quilting for more than 100 years, and she’s eager to take part in the fun.

“It’s a good time,” she says. “All the quilts are hand-stitched. We have lunch, fellowship and solve the world’s problems — but no one ever asks us.”

Besides quilting and volunteering, her grandchildren keep her busy, especially going to sporting events. Diane also serves as secretary of the church’s board.



SCREC PHOTO

36 YEARS AGO: Diane Cusson in 1987, only a few months into her career at Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative.

Diane lives in Millview — which isn’t too far away for a visit — with her cat, Sammy. She has two sons, Rich and Bob, and three grandchildren, Zoe, Clara, and Joey.

“Take pride in your job,” Diane advises. “Draw from your co-workers — we all work together as a team. The co-op will be good to you; it’s been good to me.”

From every employee at SCREC, we wish Diane the happiest retirement and hope she will come back to visit often. We will miss you, Diane! 🍷



PHOTO BY SARAH PARRISH

THANKS, GUYS: We’re thankful for our lineworkers who are always ready to lend a helping hand to the community. Tom Livezey and Darrick Higley put our members first and recently helped to replace shingles that had blown off the Forksville United Methodist Church roof during a storm. The church congregation certainly appreciated it!

The Power Behind Sullivan County REC: Our Employees

A Monthly Spotlight

SARAH PARRISH, COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATOR

AS I'M WRITING THIS, Dave Kepner has been on call the entire night and will be into the next morning to restore power to our members. A day-before-Thanksgiving wind, sleet, and rainstorm wreaked havoc on tree limbs, utility poles, and power lines, causing hundreds of outages throughout the cooperative's service territory.

"I'm not going in until every member's power is restored," a determined Dave says.

His strong will and dedication make him a good crew chief for our operations department, and he sets a good example for the young, up-and-coming lineworkers. Dave was promoted to the position in June 2023 and saw it as an "opportunity to push and challenge" himself. Half a year later, Dave feels confident he is settling into his role — everything is starting to come together.

"I like the position; hopefully I'm doing all right!" he quips.

Dave is tasked with planning, organizing, and scheduling the day-to-day work for the cooperative's lineworkers and then delegates projects to the crews. He also manages oversight and safety on job sites, all while performing other duties, such as helping with work orders, outage restoration, and meter reading.

Dave lives outside of Forksville in Elkland Township with his wife, Heather, son, Grayson, and pet cat. He spends his free time cutting firewood and working on his house. He's a member of the Lycoming Creek Anglers Club and enjoys fishing out of Lycoming Creek.

"I'm your typical Sullivan County guy," Dave says. "I like to hunt and fish."

Before becoming crew chief, Dave was a senior lineman for the co-op.



KEPNER CREW: Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative Crew Chief Dave Kepner with his wife, Heather, and son, Grayson.

He started in March 2010 after working for Asplundh Tree Expert.

"I had worked a lot of storms with the co-op guys, and wanted to try working it from this end," Dave says.

That wish has turned into a nearly-14-year career. His favorite parts are construction jobs and troubleshooting outages. He also enjoys putting on rub-

ber gloves and working on 7,200-volt lines. Nighttime storm outages are the hardest to work through, though.

"You have to watch out for each other's safety and your own," he says.

Dave has been through many of the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association's Job Training & Safety schools and classes: climbing; beginner, intermediate, and advanced hot stick and gloving; metering; substation regulation; key man; and chainsaw safety — to name a few.

"My advice to young linemen is to keep answering your phone for outages," Dave says. "You need to instill that in new people. You need to be part of the team and make sacrifices after hours for the team. We only have nine guys downstairs who have 6,000 meters and our members depending on them to keep their power on and safe for them. We all need to help each other out."

We couldn't say it better ourselves! At a small co-op, it's all hands on deck, and co-workers willing to lend a helping hand are greatly appreciated. 🍷



PHOTO BY SARAH PARRISH

WE'RE IN THE SAME BOAT: Spako's Tree Service removes two maple trees from the front yard of Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative along Route 87 in November. Just like our members, the co-op sometimes needs trees removed on its property in Forksville for the safety of our employees, members, and the community. While we're sad to see them go, we all understand it was for everyone's safety. We ask our members to keep this in mind when trees need to be removed or trimmed on their property near our electric lines.