

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

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Walt Tubach, Manager,
Electric Operations
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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

Electricity is a Bargain



THE NEW YEAR HAS FINALLY arrived. It is a sigh of relief for those optimistic for what 2023 will bring and cringeworthy for those who believe we may be in for a repeat of 2022. One thing is certain: Whatever challenges or opportunities the new year brings, we will rise to face them head on.

One of the challenges we will all be facing is the increase in cost to power our homes effective Jan. 1, 2023. In my November column, we estimated the average consumer-member would see an overall increase to their bill of approximately 10%. Since this time, the generation and transmission supply costs for 2023 have been finalized, resulting in an overall increase of just over 11%.

What does this look like in terms of actual dollar amounts? A member using 1,000 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity over the course of a month prior to the rate increase would have had a bill in the amount of \$165.07. Today, this same amount of electricity will cost \$183.57, or just over 11% of the previous amount.

For those members living near PPL Electric service territory, some of your neighbors are paying \$186.43 for the 1,000 kWhs of electricity they consume. And for those members close to Penelec's service territory, your neighbors are paying \$182.19. The amounts quoted were calculated at the time of this writing. Since the PUC allows investor-owned utilities to adjust these rates every three months, these figures may vary come Jan. 1, 2023. All of this is to say your electric cooperative is steadfast in its mission to keep costs affordable. We are very competitive when it comes to rates and stack up well against our investor-owned neighbors who benefit from a much higher customer density.

What does \$183.57 get the average Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative member over the course of a month? It provides lights, entertainment, clean clothes, comfortable climate control, access to the worldwide web, meals, water, hot showers, clean dishes, refrigerated and frozen food, and the list goes on. What does \$183.57 purchase outside of the electricity market? You won't quite be able to pay for a full weekend of camping at your favorite campground at the average cost of \$100 per night. You will, however, be able to take two friends to a Philadelphia Phillies game at the average cost of \$61 per ticket. You'll also be able to spend one night at an average motel with a "free" continental breakfast, put 35 gallons of No. 2 heating oil in your 275-gallon oil tank, and take your spouse, two friends or children, and yourself to the Texas Roadhouse for a round of ribeyes. You probably will not be able to purchase a month's worth of groceries, round-trip airfare to anywhere other than Orlando, or nosebleed seats for an Eagles playoff game.

I believe we can all agree that electricity is a bargain when we take into account all that it enables us to enjoy over the course of a month. It enables us the opportunity to focus on living our lives rather than working in another capacity, such as splitting wood, carrying water, preserving food, etc., to live. Not only is this essential commodity priced responsibly, but it is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. That is until the weather, trees, animals, etc., prevent this from happening. When outages do occur, you can count on every employee at your cooperative to assist in restoring power to your home. It continues to be our pleasure to deliver safe, reliable, cost-responsible electric power to all members. *Semper Fidelis.* 

JOHN LYKENS
CEO

Send Your Student on the Trip of a Lifetime: Apply for Youth Tour 2023

SARAH PARRISH, COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATOR

THE TRIP OF A LIFETIME sounds extravagant, doesn't it? Something you have to save spare change over the course of several years to make happen. But what if we told you that you could offer your child the trip of a lifetime — and it wouldn't cost you a cent? All you have to be is a member of Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative (REC).

As a better way to educate our next generation of co-op members, Sullivan County REC partners with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) to provide area students with a trip to Washington, D.C. Students meet with their U.S. representatives and senators to get a peek inside governmental affairs. They'll learn how cooperatives function (specifically electric cooperatives), discuss rural electrification and get to have fun sightseeing around our nation's capital. This year's Youth Tour is Sunday-Friday, June 18-23.

To apply, students must be a junior during the 2022-2023 school year; attend either East Lycoming High School, Montoursville High School, or Sullivan County High School; and their parent/guardian must be a Sullivan County REC member. School guidance offices will have the application. Please return it to your school's guidance offices no later than April 30. If your student is home-schooled and would like to apply, they are more than welcome! Please contact the Sullivan County REC office.

Students from electric cooperatives all over the nation come to Washington, D.C., to participate in the event. Students from our service area will be grouped with other students



CAPITOL TOUR: Sullivan County REC students who traveled to Washington, D.C., for the last in-person Youth Tour in 2019 were, from left, Noah Phillips, Samantha Skoranski and Nathaniel Lewis. Youth Tour is back, in-person and better than ever for 2023.

from cooperatives represented by the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association. They will take a bus to Washington, D.C., and stay with this group at the hotel and while traveling. Students will always be accompanied by chaperones.

The cost of the trip, travel and boarding is free of charge to the family.

Students will also be given a \$50 Visa card for personal use.

“One of the most memorable things about Youth Tour is the amazing connections you make while there,” says Noah Phillips, who participated in the 2019 Youth Tour. “I have friends down here at Penn State who went with Tri-County REC and Nathaniel Lewis,



COOPERATIVE REPRESENTATION: A group of students, including Sullivan County REC's representatives, had the chance to meet with U.S. Rep. Fred Keller, center, during the 2019 trip.

who was also part of the Sullivan County REC group. I am still friends with a lot of Youth Tour participants."

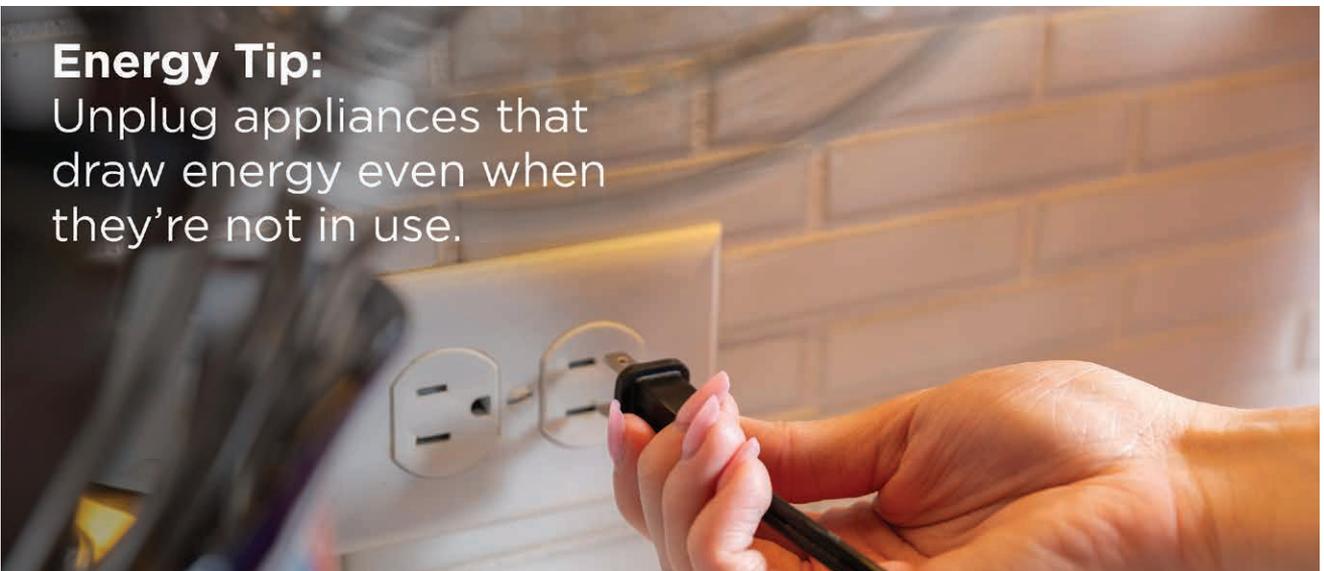
Noah is the son of our office

assistant, Kim Phillips, and her husband, Randy. Noah is a 2020 graduate of Sullivan County High School and went on Youth Tour the summer of his junior year. Besides the lasting friendships he made, Noah especially liked touring the Pentagon Memorial. "It was an awe-inspiring place for me," he says.

Three students will be selected from all applicants to participate in the 2023 Youth Tour. Your school's guidance office will have the final decision as to who will travel. Please direct questions to your school's guidance office or contact Diane White at the Sullivan County REC office, 570-924-3381 or dianewhite@screc.com.

Energy Tip:

Unplug appliances that draw energy even when they're not in use.



The Power Behind Sullivan County REC: Our Employees

A Monthly Spotlight

SARAH PARRISH, COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATOR

AS WE ENTER THE DOLDRUMS of winter — the never-ending span between the holidays and spring — our next featured employee is a ray of sunshine in our Forksville office: Diane Cusson.

Diane has always worked for cooperatives, but she didn't plan it that way. Her first job was at Liberty Mutual in Williamsport, and then she transferred to another branch when she moved to New Hampshire for a short period. Back in Sullivan County, she worked for the Sullivan County Penn State Extension Office in Dushore for two years before beginning her tenure at Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative (REC).

Her first role in the office was working at the front counter.

"I got to meet and know so many of our members through that position," she says.

When the option for her current position, accounts payable clerk and records, opened, she took it — the only downside of the job is not being at the front counter and getting to see and visit with so many members.

The biggest change Diane has undergone at the cooperative is all the technological updates. Working at the extension office, she got some practice with computers; but when she came to work at Sullivan County REC, it was like stepping back in time — everything was done on paper, and there were no computers. Since 1987, things have advanced, and the change has been for the better. Not only for those who work in the office, but also for the lineworkers in the field. The progress has also stopped Diane from having to come in at 2 a.m. during the middle of a storm to



ON THE JOB: In her home away from home, Diane Cusson manages Sullivan County REC's accounts payable and records.

answer the phone!

Even with all these advances to make life easier, Diane still has a busy workday. She's second in line for answering the phone; she posts bills for operating materials, office supplies, utility poles, transformers, etc., and pays them weekly; keeps records for the board of directors; double checks the time sheets before they're sent to accounting; scans and files paperwork; sorts the bills to be sent out for bulk mailing; and oversees the radio to reach the lineworkers in the field.

"When you think about it, it seems like you spend more time at work than you do at home," she says. "My coworkers have become like family, and they're what really makes the job special."

And, after 35 years of dedicated service to Sullivan County REC, she's made many close friends.

Outside of the Forksville office,

Diane lives in Millview with her cat, Sammy. She has two sons, Rich and Bob, and three grandchildren, Zoe, Clara, and Joey. She is a member of the Millview Wesleyan Church, where she serves as secretary of the board and likes to participate in its mission society, the Millview Quilters, when she has an open Wednesday. Her great-aunt got her interested in quilting, and when she has free time, she enjoys it along with knitting and cross stitch. Her favorite thing to do after work is to put on comfortable clothes (something we can all agree on) and go for a walk.

Like a dog without its bone, Sullivan County REC would be lost without Diane. She's dedicated to making sure our members are served first and our lineworkers are safe in the field, "I always worry about them!" she says. Check back in February to see which of these lineworkers we highlight next. 📌