

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

Ann B. Henderson - CCD*/BLC/Gold**
Chair

Stephan Paul Brady - CCD/BLC/Gold***
Vice Chairman

Kathy A. Robbins - CCD/BLC/Gold
Secretary

David L. Aumen - CCD/BLC/Gold
Karen Beinlich

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.

Guest Column

Electric Cooperatives Serve the Communities Around Them

WHAT DOES IT MEAN to be an electric cooperative member? In short, it means you are a shareholder of the cooperative. However, being a cooperative member is much bigger than receiving a capital credit check each year.

In the mid-1930s, rural America didn't have access to electricity. With many miles of line that needed to be erected and so few houses to be connected, it wasn't financially sound for large public utilities to do so. With the help of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936, signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, federal funding was provided to install electrical distribution systems across rural America.

Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative (SCREC) is one small electric cooperative among the 13 in Pennsylvania and one in New Jersey that make up the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association (PREA) and Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Allegheny). PREA serves as our statewide voice, advocating for the needs of rural electric cooperatives, while Allegheny serves as our wholesale energy provider, generating and transmitting energy at the lowest cost possible. At the national level, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) represents more than 900 consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives, public power districts, and public utility districts in the United States. To say we are part of something bigger is not an understatement.

How does this all relate to you as a cooperative member? It really all starts with you and the power of your voice. As a cooperative member, you can vote for a peer who will represent you on the board of directors. Directors serve three-year terms and make decisions about the cooperative's operations to maintain reliable electricity at a reasonable cost. The board of directors then chooses who among them will represent SCREC on the PREA and Allegheny boards. Your voice makes an impact on the bigger picture.

Electric cooperatives not only serve the membership but also the surrounding communities. One of the core principles is "concern for community." SCREC gives back to our communities through donations to local schools, libraries, and fire and ambulance companies. The cooperative also sponsors a scholarship program for area students. In addition, our Helping Hands program, which is supported by member donations, helps financially struggling members pay their electric bills.

"Education, training and information" is another core principle of electric cooperatives. Our cooperative employees routinely participate in safety training and other programs to be more effective at their jobs. Employees also spend time educating the public about best safety practices. SCREC staff visit local elementary schools to help students understand how to be safe around power lines, pad-mounted transformers, and substations. Our lineworkers partner with local fire companies, where volunteers are taught how to handle power lines downed by storms and blocking roads. Keeping employees and the public safe is our No. 1 priority.

When I think about what an electric cooperative means to me, I think about family. I enjoy the camaraderie we share and the help and support we give to one another. We celebrate each other's accomplishments and give support when someone is in need. When you ask an employee what they like most about their job, you will undoubtedly hear "the people we work with" and "helping our members." So, whether you are a new member, a seasoned member, a board member or an employee of an electric cooperative, you are part of a family. 🍷

HEIDI ROUPP
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Preparing for the Worst: Operations Department Practices Emergency Rescue

SARAH PARRISH, COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATOR

OUR TOP PRIORITY AT SULLIVAN County Rural Electric Cooperative (SCREC) is safety — for our lineworkers, office staff, members, and the public. Every day, each employee performs their job using proper safety practices and procedures to ensure everyone can go home to their families at the end of the day.

But accidents happen, and it's in those emergency situations when employees need to keep a level head. To help them prepare, SCREC is dedicated to providing staff

with safety/rescue training, such as first aid, CPR, mayday response, bucket truck rescue and pole top rescue.

Our operations department put all those practices to the test during its annual pole top rescue training in May.

Pole top rescue is practiced in the event a lineworker is stuck on a pole and unable to climb down to the ground. This could be because of a medical complication, heat stroke, heart attack, or gaffing out, which is when a lineworker's metal climbing spikes don't stab the pole and he falls into it. The training is mandatory for each employee in the operations department, including lineworkers, managers, and assistants.

Previously, pole top rescue simply involved each person climbing a 20-foot pole, rescuing a 200-pound dummy from the top of the pole, and then lowering it to the ground. This year, Operations Assistant I Jeff Spako wanted to simulate a more complex emergency situation that combined several components of our safety training.

"I wanted our crews to be proactive versus reactive if an emergency situation ever arose," he explains. "We never put all three of our emergency trainings into motion. This helps build muscle memory on how to respond."

To make the simulation as lifelike as possible, each person had to radio a fake mayday call into the office. The initial "Mayday! Mayday! Mayday!" call cleared the airwaves, so only the person making the call and dispatch were allowed to be on the radio. The person issuing the call had to relay the reason for the call, who was involved, if aid was needed, the address, county, and township of the incident, and any other relevant information, such as landmarks and pole numbers.

Once a readback was received from office staffer Kim Phillips, each person had four minutes to grab their climbing gear, put it on, then climb the pole and lower the dummy to the ground. Once on the ground, they had to administer first aid, CPR chest compressions, and AED.

With the help of the Lycoming County 911 Communications Center, second-year Apprentice Lineman Josh Heess, Jr. was able to practice a simulated 911 emergency call. In case of an emergency, a direct 911 call is preferred; however, in our service territory, cellphone service isn't always available, which is when the radio mayday method is used. The office employee answering the radio mayday call is then responsible for making the 911 call.

SARAH PARRISH



EMERGENCY RESPONSE: Crew Chief Dave Kepner, right, and second-year Apprentice Lineman Josh Heess, Jr. go through a simulated 911 emergency call during SCREC's new pole top rescue program.

SARAH PARRISH



PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: Journeyman Lineman Tom Livezey performs CPR on the dummy victim after rescuing him from the pole.

The rescue program provided a crash course in emergency response and helped our office staff identify some areas that can be improved in our mayday procedure plan.

“None of us had ever called 911 before,” Jeff recalls. “We were not prepared to answer all the questions they asked. It gave us insight into what info we need to have ready. It also helped prepare our office staff (Kim also made a simulated 911 call) and showed the 911 center what an emergency situation from us may look like, too.”

Staff from the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association (PREA) Job Training & Safety (JT&S) program were on hand to help with the training. They included Dennis Shawley, manager; Fred Kuzemchak and Ken Musick, safety instructors; and Billy Parker, safety and compliance instructor.

“This training is for your safety and the guys’ benefit,” Dennis says. “It’s all about making an emergency situation more efficient.”

SARAH PARRISH



POLE TOP RESCUE: Journeyman Lineman Alex Laudermilch secures a practice dummy during a pole top rescue training session. Each participant had four minutes to grab their gear, put it on, climb the pole, rescue the dummy, then lower it safely to the ground.

SARAH PARRISH



MAYDAY: Operations Assistant II Tyler Worthen radios the simulated mayday call into office staff.

The SCREC operations department would like to thank its office staff, Lycoming County 911 Communications Center and the PREA JT&S program for their support throughout the training.

“I think the guys feel more confident now that if they were ever in an emergency situation, their co-workers would be able to rescue them in a timely manner,” Jeff notes. 📌

2024 Director Election Results

DIANE WHITE, EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

THREE SULLIVAN COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC Cooperative director positions were up for election this year. A total of 5,270 ballots were sent to members, with 911 being returned. On May 16, the Credentials & Election Committee convened to count the ballots and authenticate the director election. The results from this year’s election were as follows:

- District 3 — James F. Lambert:** 855 votes
- District 4 — Jeffrey S. Hamilton:** 449 votes
- District 4 — Marvin E. Brown:** 419 votes
- District 8 — David L. Aumen:** 847 votes

The board also held a reorganization meeting on May 16 at the cooperative office. The following officers were elected:

- Stephan Brady — Chair**
- David Aumen — Vice Chair**
- Kathy Robbins — Secretary**

The Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative office will be closed Thursday, July 4, in observance of Independence Day. To report an outage, please call 570-924-3418 or 800-596-8397.

The Power Behind Sullivan County REC: Our Employees

A Monthly Spotlight

SARAH PARRISH, COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATOR

THEY SAY IF YOU LIKE YOUR JOB, you never work a day in your life. If that's true, our first-year Apprentice Lineman Shane Kline never works.

"Honest to God, and I'm not being corny, I like everything about my job," Shane says with a grin.

Shane is the newest employee at Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative (SCREC), having started working at the co-op Feb. 19. But he's not necessarily new to the field — he's a 2023 graduate of Elite Lineman Training Institute in Tunnel Hill, GA, and was formerly employed as a fiberoptic lineman by Celerity in Quakertown.

"I have a few friends who are linemen, and they told me how much they like their jobs, plus the stability and benefits," says Shane, who also holds an associate degree in HVAC from Penn Tech. "And it's always interested me."

Linework is an evolving field, especially with new technology and safety practices being implemented, and involves continuous learning.

So far, in his five months at SCREC, Shane has spent two weeks at basic climbing school in Indiana, PA, and three days at chainsaw school in Forksville. He will also be completing the Power Delivery Program, a four-year program adopted by cooperative CEO John Lykens. The initiative helps lineworkers advance from apprentice to journeyman through self-paced modules.

Shane has enjoyed being on projects that require using equipment, such as setting poles with the skid steer or hauling, lifting, and hanging transformers from hooks with a utility terrain vehicle. Working on an open secondary line in Masten was an interesting job, too, Shane says, joking he didn't think that kind of equipment was still around. His only qualm about the position is working in the summer heat or rain.

"I don't like getting my clothes and shoes soaking wet," he says. "If I could work in the rain and stay dry, I'd be fine."

Shane, a native of Benton, recently moved to Forks Township. He enjoys working on his 2003 Ford Powerstroke, fishing and antique shopping (especially for Pyrex; his favorite shops are in Adamstown). He's excited to gain more experience as he continues his career at the co-op.

"I want to get better at my job and be able to do more work to help the guys," he says. "It's an awesome career. It's close to where I'm from, and I like what I do. I couldn't have gotten a better place."

We couldn't ask for a better co-worker to round out our nine lineworkers and 19 total employees here at SCREC. 📍

SARAH PARRISH



PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT: First-year Apprentice Lineman Shane Kline attends chainsaw school as part of his ongoing training.



SCREC BEHIND THE SCENES: Lydia Roupp, left, and Cheyanne Fitch, freshmen at Canton High School, were curious about the roles their mothers fulfill at Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative, so they participated in Bring Your Child to Work Day. The students learned what happens daily in the office and how co-ops operate. They also got to see some of the equipment and tools our lineworkers use. Lydia of Ogdensburg is the daughter of Phil and Heidi Roupp, the cooperative's CFO, and Cheyanne of Roaring Branch is the daughter of Bryan and Lindsay Fitch, our member service representative.