

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.

Advocating in Washington, D.C.



JOHN LYKENS

QUITE OFTEN, RURAL COMMUNITIES ARE overlooked when lawmakers make decisions on legislation that directly impacts them. It's our job to educate members of Congress so they can make informed decisions when voting on laws that affect our communities. This is exactly what Directors Jeff Hamilton and Steve Brady and I did in Washington, D.C., April 22 and 23, with hundreds of CEOs, directors and other key personnel from co-ops across the nation.

Three key issues for co-ops and our members were discussed with legislators: overriding the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) recent power plant rule, safeguarding rural electric infrastructure, and protecting U.S. Department of Agriculture (DOA) funding for co-ops. Conversations with legislative personnel on these issues prioritized electric reliability and affordability.

In May 2023, the EPA announced several proposed rules that would limit greenhouse gas emissions from new and existing coal and natural gas-fired generation facilities. Under the proposed rules, carbon dioxide emissions would need to be controlled starting as early as 2030. Although the timeline for these emission cuts varies for both generation sources, the reductions, which are significant, would rely on unproven technologies, such as co-firing natural gas plants with clean hydrogen and capturing carbon and storing it for coal-fired plants.

The demand for electricity is expected to reach record highs in 2024 and 2025, growing by 2.5% and 3.2%, respectively. On top of that, the demand for electricity is expected to grow by 38 gigawatts (GW) by 2028. If these regulations are put in place, an estimated 110 GW of generation sources will be forced to retire. To replace these generation facilities with wind and solar or to comply with the EPA's latest regulations for new and existing power plants will be more costly and increase generation costs for all consumers. Legislators were educated on the disparity that will take place between available generation and demand, and the additional costs consumers will bear. Stressing the need to provide reliable and affordable electricity, we and fellow electric co-op leaders encouraged legislators to oppose the EPA's stringent power plant rules.

On a separate front, there is a push to place new regulations on co-op-owned poles. Communication providers are pushing Congress to place new, burdensome requirements and unreasonable timelines on rural pole owners like your co-op. They are looking for a "one-size-fits-all" rate and timeline to be able to attach to co-op poles. However, a one-size-fits-all approach does not equitably fit the landscape of most co-op-owned poles. Your co-op has an efficient pole attachment process that recovers pole replacement costs from the communication provider, not the co-op or the membership. Legislators were encouraged to reject new regulations on cooperative-owned poles.

Finally, in 2022, Congress created the Empowering Rural America loan/grant program — also known as the "New ERA" program — to help co-ops fund and deploy energy innovation technologies throughout their service territories. The funding for the New ERA program was set at \$9.7 billion. These DOA dollars can be used for renewable energy, energy storage, carbon capture, nuclear, generation and transmission system efficiency improvements, and other projects to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Legislators were encouraged to continue to support the New ERA program and oppose any cuts proposed to the program.

We understand American families are struggling as the costs of goods and services continue to rise. By taking the time to address our legislators in Washington, D.C., we were able to educate them on legislation that would increase costs to our members. We are grateful for the opportunity to represent rural communities across the nation to keep electric rates affordable and electric reliability strong. Semper Fidelis! 🇺🇸

JOHN LYKENS
CEO

Fall in Love with Camping at Falling Waters Campground

SARAH PARRISH, COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATOR

HOW DO YOU GET AWAY from it all? You know, the hustle and bustle of everyday life, the monotony of the work-week?

What about somewhere that forces you to slow down? Where you can still see the Milky Way at night and listen to the creek nearby, and where kids can play together in the fields and among the trees.

Falling Waters Campground, home of Buttermilk Falls outside of Shunk, offers this kind of respite. Owner David

Gubala, a member of Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative, purchased the property in January 2022.

“I always wanted to own a campground,” he says. “I wanted to do something I loved, and I love camping!”

David, who lived in Schuylkill County, previously owned and operated a trucking company, but driving a tractor-trailer and sitting in traffic was starting to wear on him, and he needed a new career.

A campground in the Danville area didn’t work out, and neither did another one near Ricketts Glen.

“My 10th grade science teacher reached out to me because he knew I was looking for a campground,” David recalls. “He had heard about this campground [Falling Waters] being for sale, so I went for a ride to check it out, and the rest is history.”

David dove headfirst into making it his ideal campground, and there is always a project or maintenance underway: mowing grass, maintaining the roads, trimming and cutting trees, upgrading and adding electric meters, repairing buildings, painting, conducting monthly water tests, and cleaning the bath house.

“It’s constant!” Dave jokes.

His partner, Kelly Stabley, lends a hand, too. And from the size of the campground, it’s easy to see why. Nestled on roughly 30 acres, the campground has 64 RV spots, more than 20 tent sites, and four cabins.

SARAH PARRISH



CAMP LIFE: If you’re a veteran camper or just starting to dabble in the hobby, Falling Waters Campground has something for everyone. June is National Camping Month. Celebrate it in Shunk.

SARAH PARRISH



FALLS CABIN: Ahhh... the perfect place to get away from it all: a rustic cabin nestled at the top of famous Buttermilk Falls.

SARAH PARRISH



AMENITIES: Falling Waters Campground offers more than just camping. There’s a large bath house with hot and cold water, a store and beer distributor on-site, golf cart rentals, and more.

Campers are welcome year-round, and the bath house is always open. RV sites go for \$52/night, primitive tent sites are \$24/night, tent sites with water and electric are \$36/night, and cabins are \$68/night. One cabin is primitive, and the three others offer electric with no water. They are furnished, but campers must bring their own bedding. Limited seasonal sites are available, too.

In addition to campsites, Falling Waters offers a store with supplies and ice cream, an on-site beer distributor, pavilion rentals for events, golf cart rentals, free Wi-Fi for most of the campground, propane tank filling, a large, clean bath house (with hot and cold water), and a rentable RV and camper — just to name a few of the amenities available there. The restaurant is currently available for lease.

For David, though, camping is fun, but it's the people who make the job great. Going to visit the customers is his favorite part of the day.

"All my campers are wonderful people," he says over and over. "Everybody is always offering food, snacks and drinks. I like to talk to everyone — I'm always meeting new people (like folks from Nevada, California, Maine, Vermont, and Louisiana) and visiting with my regulars."

Safety is important at the campground, too. Everyone looks out for each other, and the kids feel safe there. "It's a close-knit community," David adds.

This summer, on Saturday, June 15, David invites campers and non-campers alike to the campground for a fun day of drinks, food, and music. From 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Timber Ridge Winery will offer wine tastings, Chuck & Weezer's will be there with their famous food truck, and Logan Route will be performing live music.

Falling Waters Campground is located at 11364 Ellen-

ton Mountain Road, Shunk, PA 17768. The campground can be contacted at 570-924-3427 or fallingwaterscamp@gmail.com. Also, keep an eye on its Facebook page — Falling Waters Campground — and fallingwaterscampground.com for upcoming events, details, and more information.

So grab your tent, camper, or RV, pack your bags, and get outside to spend a few days celebrating National Camping Month this June at Falling Waters Campground. Take time to unwind, spend time with family and friends, and, as David quips, "who knows ... you might see Sasquatch around, too!" 🐼

SARAH PARRISH



LOTS OF OPTIONS: New to camping? Don't worry, Falling Waters has lots of options. From primitive to semi-primitive tent sites, cabins, and options for RVs and campers, there's something for everyone.



SARAH PARRISH

FUTURE LINEMAN: Braeden Fisher, left, of Picture Rocks and a Hughesville High School senior, helps steady a pole during a job-shadowing experience with Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative line crews in March. Braeden wants to follow in his father's footsteps to become an electrical lineworker. "I like being outside, working with my hands and seeing something different every day," he says. Braeden is hoping to attend Northampton Community College in Bethlehem for its electrical lineworker program in spring 2025. "I definitely enjoyed the job-shadow," Braeden adds. "It made me realize what goes into the job. I've never been on-site while they are working. It was a lot of learning!"

The Power Behind Sullivan County REC: Our Employees

A Monthly Spotlight

SARAH PARRISH, COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATOR

MOST BOYS CAN'T WAIT to live up to the phrase “like father, like son,” whether that’s becoming a football quarterback, taking over the family farm, turning into a gear head, or signing on as a business partner.

The same can be said for Joshua Heess, Jr., who after years of watching his father work as a lineworker for Penelec, joined our co-op as an apprentice lineman on May 1, 2023. “Growing up around my dad being a lineman made me want to become one, too,” he says.

Josh completed a two-week climbing school in Indiana, PA, through the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association’s (PREA) Job Training & Safety program. As he advances in his career here at Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative (SCREC), he will undergo more extensive training: chainsaw school, gloving, and hot sticking, to name a few.

Josh is also the first lineworker at SCREC to participate in the Power Delivery Program. Developed by Northwest Lineman College in Idaho and adopted by our CEO John Lykens, this four-year program helps lineworkers advance from apprentice to journeyman status through self-paced modules. Each year, apprentices must study 10 sections then pass a test for each section to move onto the next module.

Sections cover a variety of information — transformer banking, proper grounding, personal protective equipment, knot tying, switching, supervisory control and data acquisition (or SCADA) systems, basic rigging, electrical theory, and Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards — that lineworkers need to know to perform their jobs to the best of their abilities while staying safe.

After completing his first 10 sections and passing each test within his first year, Josh advanced from first-year apprentice lineman to second-year apprentice lineman.

“I definitely wasn’t expecting bookwork with this job,” he jokes, “but it isn’t an issue.”

Josh’s favorite parts of the job are performing hands-on tasks in the field and learning new skills.

“I like troubleshooting, finding out what the issue is when lines are dead,” he says. He admits it is hard spending time away from home, especially his dogs, Benelli and Remington, but thankfully losing sleep and working in all weather conditions don’t bother him (yet).

Josh is a lifelong resident of Shunk. Outside of work, he’s an avid hunter — deer, turkey, bear, small game, and pheasant. He recently trained his two dogs to go bird hunting with him and

enjoys meeting up with friends on state game lands and going to shoots. He also likes working on his 2000 Dodge Ram 2500. His family’s farm keeps him busy, too: beef and dairy cattle, horses, donkeys, miniature ponies, goats, chickens, ducks, geese, turkeys, and rabbits all need to be tended to.

Our hard-working group of lineworkers, whether they’ve been at the co-op for 25 years or are just celebrating their one-year anniversary, are all dedicated to keeping our members’ lights on 24/7. Their commitment to continuing to learn throughout their careers shows their devotion to SCREC, their fellow co-workers and our members. 🛠️



JOSH HEESS JR.

ALWAYS LEARNING: Josh Heess, Jr., second-year apprentice lineman at Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative, takes part in pole top rescue training.



SARAH PARRISH

SAW ARTWORK: Local artist Angie Cott holds a saw she painted with a storm restoration scene. Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative staff found the old tree-trimming handsaw during spring cleaning and asked Cott to beautify it before displaying it in the cooperative’s board room. Many thanks to Angie!