

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

A Culture of Safety

TODD MOLYNEUX, MANAGER OF ELECTRIC OPERATIONS

SAFETY FIRST: THIS IS NOT just a phrase or slogan. It's the culture embraced by all employees at Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative (SCREC).

Do you ever ponder the danger involved in supplying electricity to your house or business? Working with high-voltage electricity is inherently dangerous in the best of times, let alone when there is a storm. Following severe weather, your cooperative lineworkers labor tirelessly to restore electric service.

While it may be unpleasant in your home without electricity, it is less pleasant out in the storm, where lineworkers are facing dangers while trying to restore service as safely and quickly as possible.

While the electricity flowing in the lines may seem to be the most dangerous part of the job, there are plenty of other dangers that need to be addressed. These hazards include broken poles and wires pinned down by trees and ice or lying on the other side of a swollen creek or 200 feet downhill in the brush. Lightning, snow, high winds, darkness, and traffic all add to the danger, but one of the greatest hazards for lineworkers is fatigue. Working the long hours it takes to restore your electrical service eventually takes its toll, and rest — minimal as it may be — is required.

SCREC tries to mitigate the hazards your lineworkers face in several ways:

Safe work practice manual

This manual outlines working procedures that lineworkers follow to mitigate the hazards involved with working on electric lines.

Training

SCREC has a robust training program that all your lineworkers participate in. This training consists of a four-year apprenticeship program, which includes attending schools offered by the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association's Job Training & Safety Program. These schools cover topics, ranging from proper climbing techniques and grounding procedures to gloving and hot-stick procedures, which ensure lineworkers can change hardware, and even poles, while the line remains energized.

SCREC lineworkers also receive on-the-job safety training, from proper work zone setup to outage restoration.

One very important annual training is the pole-top and bucket rescue course, where each lineworker participates in a mock rescue. In the case of pole-top rescue, the steps consist of:

1. Identifying that a fellow lineworker is hurt at the top of a pole and needs to be rescued.
2. Assessing the situation to ensure the rescuing lineworker does not become a victim, too.
3. Calling 911 and the cooperative office to ensure help is on the way.
4. Putting on climbing gear.
5. Ascending the pole and rigging a handline rope around the injured lineworker.
6. Lowering the injured lineworker safely to the ground.
7. Descending the pole and starting CPR or first aid, as needed.

All this is done while being timed; the rescue is expected to be performed in under 4 minutes.

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Art From the Heart

Local Crafter Does Good with Stained Glass Creations

SARAH PARRISH, COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATOR

ONE OF THE MOST COMMON ACTS of selflessness is giving money, time, or things to others without expecting anything in return. It's being down-to-earth and genuine, while acting from the heart. Paul Todd's selflessness with his stained-glass art is a true testament of this.

Paul has always enjoyed looking at stained glass — especially large window pieces in churches. When his sister-in-law was no longer able to use her stained-glass tools, she gave them to him, and Paul has been creating works of art for the past 20 years. Between a few beginners' classes, Paul has mostly learned his craft through trial and error, with a lot of practice and self-taught techniques.

Paul and his wife, Debbie, are originally from Oaklyn, N.J. They made the move to Forks Township, Sullivan County, six-and-a-half years ago after a vacation out west made them fall in love with mountains.

"We knew that Pennsylvania had a lot of mountains ... and a lot more space with a lot less neighbors," he adds.

While in New Jersey, Paul made friends with a local glass shop owner and learned a lot of tricks of the trade from him. After moving to Pennsylvania, he made another glass-loving friend, Keith Whitesel at Whitesel Stained Glass in Williamsport.

"Keith has been such a gift," Debbie says.

The business offers classes and an extensive supply of glass — every color, pattern, and texture Paul could ever need for his creations. Keith's wisdom has also helped Paul become an even better artist.

"He has never disappointed me," Paul says.

Inspiration for Paul's projects comes from all over: magazines, other people's creations, and sometimes, he comes up with his own designs.

"I start designing a piece and go from there," he says.

The design process starts with drawing a pattern (Figure 1) and deciding the best combination of glass colors. Paul then cuts (Figure 2) each individual piece of glass (unless reusing a piece — nothing goes to waste in his studio) and grinds the edges to give it a smooth finish. The pieces are then wrapped in copper foil (Figure 3) and topped with a soldering flux before they are soldered together. Paul then cleans and polishes the solder. A box, like the one shown in Figure 4, takes about five hours to complete.

Paul creates everything from suncatchers to nightlights (Figure 5) to windchimes, windows, Christmas ornaments, jewelry boxes, wall hangings, lampshades (Figure 6), and more. Debbie's personal favorite is the window he made for her bathroom (Figure 7).

"The most challenging part of it all is being satisfied with what you lay out," Paul explains. "I draw my pattern, then change it, then change what color glass I want to use, before finally cutting it. We are our own worst critics!"

Paul's artistic eye and attention to detail comes from 45 years of restoring antique cars. He did everything from metal fabrication to painting, assembly, and interior work.

"He's always tinkering on something," Debbie notes. "There's always something going on."

You may be able to catch Paul and Debbie Aug. 9 at Dushore's Founders Day or at the Christmas Village in Forksville in December.

"I really started doing stained glass for myself," Paul says. "I wasn't looking to make a profit from it."

However, it got to a point where his studio was becoming crowded with his creations, so he decided to try selling some. Money received is, of course, used to buy more

Figure 1

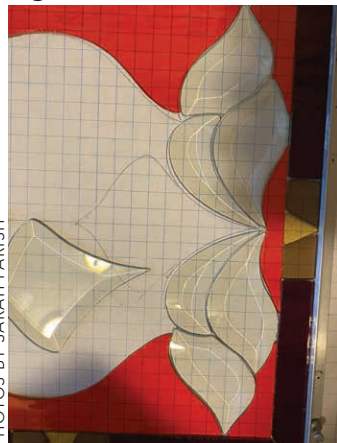


Figure 2

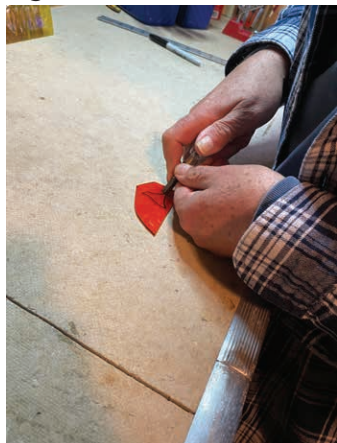


Figure 3



Figure 4



materials: compounds, polishes, copper foil, glass, etc.

“Prices have nearly doubled since I started doing stained glass,” he adds. “It’s an expensive hobby.”

But most of the money Paul earns from his hobby is given to the Tyler Quinter Foundation. Tyler Quinter was a 13-year-old boy in Paul and Debbie’s hometown who passed away from a double congenital heart defect. The foundation gives scholarships to students who exemplify Tyler’s traits and helps families who have medically fragile children.

Paul and Debbie enjoy spending their weekends with their son, Paul Todd Jr., and his son, Blake Massey. They’ve also enjoyed getting to know their neighbors and exploring the area, where they’ve met new people, visited businesses, and learned local history.

“It’s fun,” Paul says. “I do it because I love it.”

Many of his creations have been given to family and friends, and they’ve become treasured belongings. Purchased pieces have just as much sentimental value, with the proceeds helping families in need.

To learn more about the Tyler Quinter Foundation or to make a donation, visit the foundation’s Facebook page or email tylerquinterfoundation@aol.com.

Figure 5

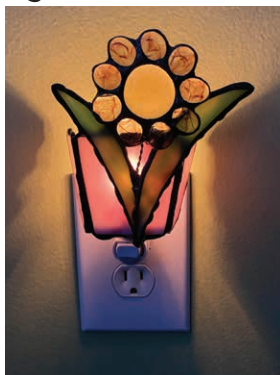


Figure 7



Figure 6



UNCONTESTED 2025 DIRECTOR ELECTIONS

DIANE WHITE, EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

With an uncontested slate of candidates seeking re-election to Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative’s (SCREC) Board of Directors for Districts 2, 6, and 9, the cooperative’s Credentials & Elections Committee agreed to dispense with the formal balloting process. Instead, a unanimous ballot will be cast for the single nominee for each district during the cooperative’s online annual meeting Thursday, May 15.

As a result of the committee’s decision, cooperative members will not receive a director election ballot this year. In addition, the three incumbent directors stand elected to serve a new three-year term, effective May 15.

Candidates who filed petitions to run for board seats are: Karen F. Beinlich, District 2; Jay O. Lewis, District 6; and Stephan P. Brady, District 9. A profile of each candidate follows:

District 2 – Karen F. Beinlich *Elkland and Hillsgrove townships, Sullivan County*



Karen attended the Pennsylvania College of Technology, earning a degree in business. She served the 44th Judicial District Court of Common Pleas as the director of domestic relations for 33 years. As a SCREC director, Karen is chair of the Scholarship Committee and serves on the Audit and Finance committees. She has earned her Credentialed Cooperative Director certification. She is currently attending classes to obtain her Board Leadership Certificate. Karen has been an active volunteer in

Sullivan County for the last 35 years. She and her husband, David, have three children and one grandchild.

District 6 – Jay O. Lewis *Shrewsbury, Wolf, and Mill Creek townships, Lycoming County*



Jay has been a member of the cooperative since 2006 and has lived within the cooperative area for most of his life. He graduated from Montoursville High School and attended Penn State University and Penn College, graduating with a degree in landscaping. He has been a manager at FedEx for the last 25 years. During Jay’s term on the board, he has taken every opportunity to build his skills as a director, which includes earning his Credentialed Cooperative Director, Board Leadership, and Director Gold certifications.

District 9 – Stephan P. Brady *Cascade, Gamble, and Lewis townships, Lycoming County*



Steve currently serves as chair of the board of directors. A retired Air Force officer, he moved to our area because of his love of rural living. Steve is committed not only to maintaining our rural lifestyle but also to improving it through his work as a small business consultant. Steve earned his doctorate from Penn State University in 1999, and decided to retire to Pennsylvania at that time. He has thrown himself into his director duties, engaging in nearly every event and earning his Credentialed Cooperative Director, Board Leadership, and Director Gold certifications.

The Power Behind Sullivan County REC: Our Directors

A Monthly Spotlight

SARAH PARRISH, COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATOR

BEN FRANKLIN SAID, “Then do not squander time, for that’s the stuff life is made of.”

Dave Rakestraw, our District 7 director, serving the members in Upper Fairfield Township, Lycoming County, doesn’t waste a second of the day, often wondering if he’ll have enough time to get everything done. Dave’s father, Curt Rakestraw, also served as the district’s director for 34 years, from 1986 to 2020.

“My dad loved serving as a director,” Dave says. “He took his position very seriously, and it meant a lot to him.”

After Curt’s death, the seat sat vacant for a while before former CEO Craig Harting approached Dave about filling the spot.

“I was hesitant about joining — I already had so much on my plate — but I thought of how much it meant to my dad and decided to run,” Dave recalls.

In 2021, Dave was added to the



PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVE RAKESTRAW

FROM DISTRICT 7: Director Dave Rakestraw has been representing the members of District 7, which covers Upper Fairfield Township in Lycoming County, for four years.

ballot in a special election to fill his father’s spot, and in 2023, he was re-elected. “I’m glad I joined the board,” he says. “We all get along, and there’s not much controversy. We work well together for the membership.”

Dave is currently a Credentialed Cooperative Director. His busy

schedule makes attending events and in-person classes/training a challenge, but he’s thankful for the online courses he can take at home. The training has helped him brush up on his electric co-op knowledge.

“I find it very interesting; more goes on behind the scenes than I expected,” he says. “I really enjoy learning about the electrical industry side of things, too.”

The extra training has not only helped Dave as a director but also as a member of the co-op’s Marketing and Finance committees. He also serves on the Lycoming County Farm Service Agency Committee, which advocates for Future Farmers of America and other agricultural programs.

Dave and his family own and operate a crop farm at their Montoursville home, where they grow and harvest corn, soybeans, wheat, and tomatoes. Spring will be kicking off the Rakestraws’ busy season with planting getting underway soon. He also owns Rakestraw Transportation, running two school buses for the East Lycoming School District.

Between his farming and school bus schedules — which, with a hard winter, was chaotic this school year — Dave’s children keep him and his wife, Kim, busy with sports and other activities. His daughter, Emily, attends Lycoming College. He also has two sons, Noah, a junior at Montoursville High School, and Matthew, an eighth grader. The family has two dogs, too. Kim is a math teacher at Bucktail High School, so she has her own school schedule to balance as well.

It seems everyone has a busy life full of commitments, including work, family, pets, chores, home maintenance, and hobbies. We’re thankful for the folks who take what little spare time they have to serve on the Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative Board of Directors. 🇺🇸

GUEST COLUMN

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Commitment to Zero Contacts

SCREC also participates in the Commitment to Zero Contacts program, in which all of your lineworkers commit to the following life-saving rules:

1. Effective job planning so lineworkers on the crew know the hazards and the work plan to be followed.
2. The use of proper switching procedures to verify the line is de-energized.
3. Testing lines and properly installing personal protective grounds.
4. Proper use of insulated covers if the line is to be worked while still energized.
5. Using proper personal protective equipment, which includes tested rubber gloves and sleeves.
6. Speaking up if they see a hazard while performing the job.

While your lineworkers are very dedicated to restoring your electricity as quickly as possible, sometimes weather conditions are bad enough that the only safe thing to do is wait for conditions to improve.

Please be patient: Every lineworker’s goal is to restore electricity to every member and then go home safely to their family. 🇺🇸

TODD MOLYNEUX

MANAGER OF ELECTRIC OPERATIONS