

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.

The Survey Results are In!



JOHN LYKENS

THANK YOU TO ALL MEMBERS who replied to our survey on how you view the cooperative. Overall, most of the comments were positive, and we achieved a satisfaction score of 84. Two resounding themes emerged: rates and reliability. In the next several paragraphs, I will try to address both.

Members made quite a few comments about rate increases and the overall cost of their electric bill. It is true that in the last two years there have been three rate increases. Unfortunately, the costs of the material and equipment we use every day to ensure the lights stay on have skyrocketed since 2020. Costs to operate and maintain our distribution system have also increased. To keep the co-op solvent and in the black, we have had to raise distribution costs. Not raising rates and operating in the red would not be fiscally responsible.

Many members noted they use very little energy but have high bills. Your co-op operates and maintains 900 miles of lines and infrastructure. To ensure power is always available, we must maintain clear rights of way, upgrade infrastructure, and hire trained, professional employees. These costs do not disappear when power is not being consumed and are represented by a distribution delivery charge. One might even say these costs are fixed, and the fairest way to recoup them is to do away with the cost per kilowatt-hour (kWh) — or the variable part of the distribution delivery charge — and just charge every member a fixed fee. Under our current cost-per-kWh fee structure for distribution delivery, members using more energy each month are subsidizing those using less. We have questioned whether this current rate model is fair to all members.

Some members compared our rates to those of our investor-owned neighbors, even stating they would rather have Penelec or PPL as their energy provider. Let's see how we compare. For the average residential member who uses 1,000 kWh, our bill is \$186.11. For the same usage, Penelec charges \$202.72 and PPL charges \$174.85. Additionally, when comparing the co-op's generation and transmission charge to Penelec and PPL, our rates are 2 to 3 cents per kWh lower. Your rural electric co-op, by nature, serves very few large population centers. Penelec and PPL both serve larger municipalities, as well as rural areas. Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative serves approximately six members per mile, while Penelec and PPL have more than 30 customers per mile. Yet even with fewer members to share expenses, your co-op's costs continue to stay in line with our investor-owned neighbors.

Members surveyed brought up the issue of reliability, too. I touched on this in the March issue of *Penn Lines*. Trees cause the largest number of our power interruptions. While tree removal and trimming are our single largest maintenance expense, tree contact never seems to let up. Even on "blue-sky" days, animals, material deterioration, and public contact are additional causes of outages. Our transmission providers, Penelec and PPL, also have their share of outages that affect our five delivery points.

It takes our crews an average of three hours to restore interruptions. The actual time varies depending on whether an outage occurs during working hours, the extent of damage to our facilities, the location of the outage, and if a weather event was involved. All in all, our crews do an excellent job responding to power outages. Soon, our outage tracking system, paired with distribution automation, will greatly reduce the amount of time members are without power. Stay tuned for updates as this concept becomes reality in the next few years.

We sincerely appreciate those who responded to the survey. Your co-op isn't perfect, but we are honored to serve every member in a safe, reliable, and cost responsible manner.

Semper Fidelis! 🇺🇸

JOHN LYKENS
CEO

Six Students to Represent Co-op at Youth Tour

DIANE WHITE, EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

EACH YEAR, students are selected from Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative (SCREC) member families to represent your co-op at the annual Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. This year, the event will be held June 16-21.

Youth Tour originated in 1957 when then-U.S. Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson spoke before electric cooperative leaders. The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association began coordinating the program in 1964.

SCREC is pleased to announce the following students have been selected to represent the co-op at this year's event:

Larry Aumen is homeschooled and the son of Anna Maria and David Aumen. Larry is a member of the Christian Home Educators Fellowship Drama Productions and has played piano for 12 years. He enjoys hunting, fishing, photography, and music. He also enjoys farming and restoring equipment and vehicles. In his spare time, Larry volunteers at Loyalsock Baptist Church and the Plunketts Creek Township Recreation Center. Larry's career goal is in agriculture, raising quality grass-fed beef and poultry.

Leah Bedford attends Sullivan County High School (SCHS) and is the daughter of Kristina and Alan Bedford. She is a member of Student Government, National Honor Society (NHS), and Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA). She



enjoys drawing, hiking, baking, photography, music, writing, swimming, biking, and fishing. Leah's career goal is to be an architect.

Makayla Bedford is a student at SCHS and the daughter of Carrie Richmond. Makayla is in 4-H and is the Sullivan County Dairy Princess. She is also a member of the golf team and District 8 Band. When not in school, Makayla participates in Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership at Elizabethtown College. She enjoys hunting, fishing, American history, and line dancing. Makayla's career goal is to work as a park ranger for the National Park Service.



Summer Higley attends SCHS and is the daughter of Colleen Baumunk. She is a member of the World Language Club and Student Government and was the spirit coordinator for her class for two years. She is a member of the Lady Griffin basketball and soccer teams. Summer's career goal is to become a dental hygienist.



Olivia Spako is the daughter of Jennifer and Jeff Spako and attends SCHS. She competed in both regional and state FBLA competitions and was a winner in both. She participated in 4-H for nine years as the club news reporter. Olivia also participated in the State Leadership Conference and plays



travel softball. She enjoys art, softball, reading, crochet, music, hunting, camping, traveling, hiking, baking, and media design. Olivia's career goal is to become a high school English teacher.

Marty Zeigler attends SCHS and is the daughter of Aaron and Robert Zeigler. Marty has been her class president for the past two years and is a member of NHS and FBLA. Marty attended Pennsylvania Free Enterprise Week and was elected CEO. She was also a volunteer youth basketball coach. Marty enjoys playing the guitar, drawing, painting, baking, cooking, and photography. Her career goal is to become a therapist and photographer.



Everyone at SCREC would like to congratulate these six students and hope they have a terrific time at this year's Youth Tour! 🎉

The Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative office will be closed Monday, May 27, in observance of Memorial Day. To report an outage, please call 570-924-3418 or 800-596-8397.

Co-op Invites Children to Participate in First-Ever Electrical Safety Month Poster Contest

SARAH PARRISH, COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATOR

ELECTRICAL SAFETY IS IMPORTANT for children to understand. That's why in May — Electrical Safety Month — Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative (SCREC) is holding its first-ever poster contest for children, ages 5-10. We encourage parents/guardians to discuss electrical safety with their child(ren), who can turn that knowledge into a poster and enter it in the contest.

Requirements:

- ▶ Parents/guardians must be members of SCREC
- ▶ Posters must be on standard 8.5-by-11-inch paper
- ▶ Each poster must have the following information attached:
 - child's name
 - child's age
 - parent/guardian member account number
 - parent/guardian member address
 - parent/guardian phone number
- ▶ The poster must follow each age group's theme
- ▶ Posters must be submitted to SCREC no later than **3:30 p.m. Friday, May 17**
 - Address: 5675 Route 87, P.O. Box 65, Forksville, PA 18616
 - Office hours: 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday-Friday

Age Groups:

- ▶ Ages 5 & 6 — Outlet Safety
 - *Hints:* Never stick anything in an outlet; how to

properly plug in and unplug a cord; never overload an outlet; never used a frayed cord, etc.

- ▶ Ages 7 & 8 — Handling Electrical Appliances/Devices
 - *Hints:* Keep metal objects out of toasters; never use frayed cords; never leave cooking appliances unattended while they are plugged in or hot; never plug in a cord, appliance, or device in water, etc.
- ▶ Ages 9 & 10 — Overhead Power Line Safety
 - *Hints:* Never fly a kite near overhead power lines; always stay away from downed lines; never climb a tree near power lines; never attempt to climb a utility pole; never attempt to reach overhead power lines, etc.

Judging:

Encourage children to use their own creativity and personality when creating the poster, which will be judged on:

- ▶ cleanliness
- ▶ color
- ▶ attention to theme
- ▶ complete information on back

Three winners from each age group will be contacted personally by SCREC. Winning posters will be displayed in the SCREC lobby. Children will have their photo and poster featured in *Penn Lines* and will receive a goodie bag.

Contact Cooperative Communicator Sarah Parrish at 570-924-3381 or sarahparrish@screc.com with questions. 📧

Directors Robbins and Hamilton Recently Recertified

DIANE WHITE, EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative Directors Kathy Robbins and Jeff Hamilton have recertified their Director Gold status. This achievement recognizes directors who are committed to continuing their education beyond the Credentialed Cooperative Director and Board Leadership certifications.

Kathy and Jeff had to take three courses in the past two years to recertify through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. This demonstrates the directors' ongoing commitment to advancing their knowledge and performing their fiduciary duty to the best of their ability.

Kathy is the board representative from District 5, which includes Franklin, Jordan, and Penn townships in Lycoming County and Davidson and Shrewsbury townships in Sullivan County. Jeff represents District 4, which includes New Albany Township in Bradford County and Cherry and Laporte townships and Laporte Borough in Sullivan County.



RECERTIFIED: Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative (SCREC) board Directors Kathy Robbins, far left, and Jeff Hamilton each receive a certificate for updating their Director Gold status from board Chair Ann Henderson.

The Power Behind Sullivan County REC: Our Employees

A Monthly Spotlight

SARAH PARRISH, COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATOR

IF YOU'VE CALLED OR VISITED our Forksville office in the last few months, you've likely been greeted by a new, smiling face. Lindsay Fitch started her career at Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative (SCREC) Feb. 26 as our member service representative.

Since Diane Cusson's retirement in January, several staff members have changed roles. Former billing clerk Lori Williams took Diane's accounts payable position; former office secretary Kim Phillips took the billing clerk position; and Lindsay was hired to fill the vacant office secretary position, which was renamed to member service representative.

Lindsay hit the ground running and dove headfirst into learning the phone system and office extensions/transfers, receiving and recording

payments, answering members' questions, creating and sending out new member packets, and sorting and delivering office mail ... just to name a few of her daily tasks.

"Learning the computer programs has definitely been the biggest challenge," Lindsay says.

Lindsay previously worked in the childcare field for 12 years and most recently at Stull's Flowers in Canton before coming to SCREC.

"I wasn't really looking for a new job, but I was approached about this position and was open to the opportunities it had," she explains. "I'm super excited about the benefits and being able to save and put away for my family's future. It's a secure job and will help make us financially stable."

Lindsay lives in Roaring Branch with her husband, Bryan, and four children: Cheyanne, Morgan, Wyatt, and Lane. They have a herd of beef cattle and feeder pigs, plus two dogs — Bruiser, a German shorthaired pointer, and Heinz, a mutt — and five bunnies, Winter Belle, Tinker Bell, Dexter, Smokey, and Bandit.

In her free time, Lindsay likes to crochet and read.

"I'm a mom; I don't have a lot of free time," she jokes. "With four kids, my nights are busy with homework, supper, laundry, dishes ... but I love it!"

She is a member of the Ogdensburg Church of Christ and likes to sing on the worship team.

After several months of being short-staffed, SCREC is finally back to its full 19 employees, and each one is dedicated to and ready to serve our membership! 📞

Welcome to the Co-op, Shane!

SARAH PARRISH,
COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATOR

The staff and lineworkers of Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative (SCREC) are happy to welcome Shane Kline of Benton to the cooperative family as an apprentice lineman.

"I have friends who are linemen, and they recommended the career," says Shane, who started his SCREC career Feb. 19. "It's great job security ... people are always going to need electricity!"

Shane graduated from Elite Lineman Training Institute in Tunnel Hill, Ga., last year. There, aspiring lineworkers climb poles, build mock three-phase lines, and hang transformers. Students also graduate with a CDL license.

"Everything is done by climbing, we didn't use bucket trucks at all," Shane says. That training will be to his benefit throughout our co-op's rocky, mountainous territory. More often than not, bucket trucks can't reach worksites.

In his free time, Shane likes to work on his 2003 Ford Powerstroke, ride his snowmobile, and go antiquing. He enjoys trips to the White Mountains in New Hampshire with his family, too.

"Becoming a lineman takes years of bookwork and on-the-job training," SCREC Manager of Electric Operations Todd Molyneux explains. "Shane is off to a great start with the education that he received at lineman's school, his previous work experience climbing poles and stringing cable, his willingness to learn, and his work ethic. I believe Shane will become a very good lineman and be a great asset to Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative and the members we serve."

"I'm looking forward to helping the linemen during outages," Shane says.

And the other lineworkers will certainly appreciate the help! Please join everyone at SCREC in welcoming Shane to the team. 📞



MEET SHANE: Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative welcomes recently hired Apprentice Lineman Shane Kline to our operations crew.

LINDSAY FITCH



FITCH FAMILY: Lindsay Fitch, second from left, member service representative at Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative, is shown with her husband, Bryan and four children, from left – Lane, Cheyanne, Wyatt, and Morgan.

SARAH PARRISH