

Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

Sullivan County REC

P.O. Box 65
 Forksville, PA 18616
 570-924-3381
 1-800-570-5081
 Email: screc@epix.net
 Website: www.screc.com

Staff

Craig A. Harting, CEO
Dennis Klem, Manager, Finance and Administration
Walt Tubach, Manager, Electric Operations
Diane E. White, Executive Assistant

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ann B. Henderson – CCD/BLC
Chairman
Wayne E. Gavitt – CCD
Vice Chairman
Kathy A. Robbins – CCD/BLC
Secretary/Treasurer
David L. Aumen – CCD*/BLC/Gold*****
Stephan Paul Brady – CCD/BLC/Gold
Benton J. Fiester
Jeff Hamilton – CCD
Jay Lewis – CCD
Curtin R. Rakestraw II – CCD/BLC/Gold

*Credentialed Cooperative Director
 **Board Leadership Certificate
 ***Director Gold Certificate

Office Hours
 Monday through Friday
 7 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

From the CEO



The _____ year

By Craig A. Harting

SO WE'RE halfway through 2020. What a year so far. I've heard it called a number of things: "the year that never happened," "the lost year," "the year we skipped," "the gap year" (as in when kids take a year off before going to college), and we're only halfway through 2020.

In any event, it's been disruptive but here at the co-op, we've tried to keep it as normal as possible for you. Things have been going as well as could have been expected. Thankfully, we got through the shutdown period without a major storm although the co-ops in Pennsylvania were ready to help each other if needed. We will always work to repair any outage as soon as possible.

Lockdown

We never shut down, but we did split the office and crews to increase separation, safety, and availability. This worked out well as we were able to keep up with the daily work and connect new services and security lights as needed.

We do line inspection during the winter so we had completed some prior to the lockdown. Our lineworkers check sections of the system each year for potential problems. We then schedule repairs and planned outages as necessary to take care of problems before they cause an outage.

Each year, we have Osmose Utilities Services check poles for us, and they found some poles to replace and upgrade. We were able to replace some of

these during this time. We experienced two small storms, but we were able to handle the trouble with our own crews. We were very happy that right-of-way crews could continue to work.


Going forward

After two months, we combined operations but we continued practices recommended by the state and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. We will continue to maintain good practices going forward. We really appreciate your support of our lineworkers in the field and ask that you continue to maintain social distances to protect them.

Going forward, we will finish the maintenance work, which will keep us busy for a while. We also have been upgrading poles for communications companies. Later this year, we hope to complete some system improvement projects we have planned.

Financially, we are very sound at this point. Sales have met our budget, and overall expenses have been down. The lack of major storms has helped as well as receiving some Paycheck Protection Program funds. We should be able to return several years of capital credits this year.

Dependable

Our goal is to always be dependable, reliable and "People You Can Count On." We want to be the one thing that hasn't changed in this ____ year. Please call if we can ever be of service to you. Thank you for your support. 

Sullivan REC offers many online services

By John Zelewicz
Penn Lines Writer

EVEN before the coronavirus pandemic affected us, the co-op has always offered online services for our members to make doing business with us easier. Some people take to using online services like a fish takes to water. But there are those who would rather have a tooth pulled than try to navigate the internet highway. Whether you're a novice or an expert, Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative has many services members can do online. That includes everything from checking your bill or electric use to viewing and reporting power outages.

To access all the information available on the co-op website, simply go to screc.com. There are six icons in the lower left-hand corner of the page. They are:

Manage Account – This icon takes you to a page where you can log into your online billing services. Once logged in, you're able to perform a wide range of tasks. You can sign up to have your monthly bill sent to you electronically. You can view your current and past electric use on a graph, pay your monthly electric bill, and even set up automatic payments.

Energy Kids – This icon takes you to a page where kids can learn about electricity, what we use electricity for and how to save energy. There are even



CO-OP WEBSITE: A wide range of options is available for members on the co-op website, including everything from checking on capital credits to catching up on previous issues of *Penn Lines*.



OUTAGE VIEWER: One thing you'll notice when visiting the co-op website is the new and improved outage viewer. The new viewer has several options so you can see where outages are occurring and if a crew has been assigned to an outage.

games and other activities such as riddles and puzzles.

Do We Owe You Money? – Here you'll find a list of members who have capital credits waiting for them. What are capital credits? Your cooperative is a not-for-profit corporation owned by its consumer-members. All revenues in excess of expenses (called margins) are allocated back to each consumer-member who contributed revenues that year. The allocation is based upon the total amount of electric bills paid by the member for that particular year. Unfortunately, some members have moved and the co-op is unable to send them their capital credits check because we do not have a current mailing address. If you check the capital credits list, you may see the name of

someone you know, or maybe even your name.

Co-op Owners for Political Action – Co-op Owners for Political Action is part of the Action Committee for Rural Electrification (ACRE®) and provides a way for electric cooperative members to become more involved in the governmental affairs that affect your cooperative and our rural areas. By uniting together, we can make our voices heard. Rural areas have fewer legislators, and our needs can get lost and overlooked. Please consider joining the only political action committee that looks out for you and your electric service. Membership is easy and may be added to your monthly electric bill for your convenience.

Helping Hand Fund – The coopera-



ENERGY KIDS: In addition to a wide range of information for members, there is also an Energy Kids website where children can learn the history of energy, how to use and save electricity, as well as have access to games and activities.

tive established a Helping Hand Fund to assist members who are experiencing an economic hardship or tragic loss. On this site, members can download an application form. Members who wish to do so can also donate their capital credits check to the Helping Hand Fund. For more information about how to do this, simply click on the Helping Hand Fund icon.

Outage Viewer – This is one of the most popular features on the co-op website. Clicking on this icon opens up a viewer where members can see where outages are occurring. This site was recently upgraded. Members now have a wide range of options as to how the outage map will appear. Members can also view information on how many meters were out in the

past 48 hours. In addition to showing ongoing outages, it shows what outage crews have been assigned to. Currently, a program is being created that will allow members to report an outage by simply using the outage viewer.

This is just a brief description of what members can do on Sullivan County REC's website. On the Billing and Members Services tabs, members can also get information about a wide range of services, including yard lights, water heaters, Generlink (a meter collar device that makes connecting a portable generator safe and easy), connecting solar systems, our new electric vehicle rate, and more.

If you haven't checked out the co-op's website or you haven't visited it in a while, why not check it out today? 🌞



Director Hamilton recently certified

Jeff Hamilton is the newest Sullivan County REC director to obtain his Credential Cooperative Director (CCD) certificate. The CCD curriculum consists of five courses designed to provide essential knowledge required of cooperative directors. Hamilton is the board representative from District 4, which includes Laporte Borough, and Laporte and Cherry townships in Sullivan County, and New Albany Township in Bradford County. 🌞



Jeff Hamilton



BILLING INFORMATION: Members can sign up for online billing services. Once a member is signed up, they can view their electric use, pay their monthly electric bill and set up automatic payments.

Notice of the 2020 Annual Meeting of Members

The Annual Meeting of the Members of Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc., Forksville, is scheduled to be held on Thursday, Sept. 3, 2020, at the Sullivan County Fair, beginning at 2 p.m.

However, due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the uncertainty of all local events, there is a possibility the annual meeting will be canceled for this year.

If the Sullivan County Fair is NOT canceled, then an official notice and registration form will be mailed with your August electric bill (or emailed if you have electronic billing).

2020 director elections

The Credentials & Election Committee approved the following candidates to stand for election:

DISTRICT 1 – Ann B. Henderson: She is currently serving on the board of directors.

DISTRICT 5 – Kathy A. Robbins: She is currently serving on the board of directors.

DISTRICT 7 – Curt R. Rakestraw II: He is currently serving on the board of directors.

Your completed ballot should be returned in the blue envelope, which is self-addressed and postage paid. **We must receive the ballot by 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 2, 2020.** Please allow sufficient time for delivery. Elected candidates serve three-year terms beginning in September 2020.

From the Operations Department

By Walter Tubach

IT IS hard to believe we are halfway through 2020. I know it's been a very tough year for everyone with businesses and schools closed due to the pandemic, and trying to make ends meet and stay healthy. I know businesses tried to come up with plans to continue to stay open and work safely, but it was difficult to do. The best plan for the cooperative was to split the office



Walter Tubach
Manager, Electric
Operations

and line crews in half. One-half of the employees worked one week and the other half worked the next week during the state's red phase so only part of the employees, heaven forbid, would be affected if they got the virus. That way, we could keep half of the employees safe and healthy, and continue with outages and emergency work. It was a difficult time to try and keep up with the workload, but the cooperative employees worked very hard with limited help and did a fantastic job of doing what needed to be done in the office and in the field.

The cooperative hired a contractor, Osmose Utilities Service, to check 1,600 poles in the Huntersville and Heilmann Church area in March and April. Each year, we check some of the 22,000 poles we have on the electric system. That way, over a period of 13 to 14 years they are all checked, and then we start all over again. We have poles that are still solid from when the cooperative opened in 1937. The contractors did find some poles that need to be replaced or restored, and we will be working on these replacements over the next few months.

We are in the process of replacing some poles that need to be raised for First Light to run fiber into Sullivan County from the Lungerville area. This is a welcome addition to the county, and numerous people look forward to

attaching to it if and when it becomes available.

We had approximately a six-hour outage to our members in the Dushore area on Feb. 16. It was caused by a loose ground wire that came in contact with the three-phase power line, which tripped the breakers at the substation. Once the lineworkers fixed this issue, they had several other problems come up that they needed to fix.

I have numerous Penelec power supply outages to report. The Laporte Substation experienced a power supply outage on Feb. 7. The lineworkers backfed this substation from the Mill Creek Substation so our members in that area only experienced a 55-minute outage.

The Estella Substation lost power supply on March 4 around 5:50 a.m. I called the Penelec dispatcher to see if they could backfeed this substation from their loop in Sullivan County. Penelec's radio-controlled devices worked, and our members were only out of power for 10 minutes.

The Kellyburg Substation experienced an outage on May 15 at 4:45 p.m. Our lineworkers responded and backfed this substation, so our members were out of service for less than two hours.

Power supply outages represent a quarter of the outage time our members have experienced so far this year. We are having good outage numbers to date with the average outage hours per member at 3.7 hours. This is a true testament to the amount of work being done by your cooperative by moving and rebuilding the system where needed, keeping a tree-trimming cycle going, and focusing on finding and fixing any problems in the areas that are affected by multiple outages.

High wind and snow hit us hard on April 17 and 18. The lineworkers and right-of-way crews worked together all night and all day to restore power

as quickly as possible. Everyone had power restored by late on April 18. We thank you for your patience.

Trees continue to be our biggest culprit with 34 outages being caused from them falling onto the lines. One outage was caused by a tree that got away from a logger. We are very thankful no one was injured in that incident.

We had eight outages with no known cause and four outages were caused by squirrels coming into contact with the line. Electrical equipment going bad caused numerous outages. One tap clamp came loose and burned the line, one lightning arrestor was hit by lightning and four transformers quit working, causing outages. We also had some planned outages for repair and maintenance work that cannot be done when the line is energized. These outages are a nuisance, but we only do them when absolutely necessary. I apologize to any member who did not receive a phone call notifying them the day before a planned outage. If you are one of these members who did not receive a call, please check with the office to update your phone number.

A tractor-trailer caught a low phone line and tore down our lines in the Dushore area. If you see a low wire, please let us know so we can notify the owner of the wire and get this taken care of before it causes a problem. Most of the phone and internet wires are attached to our poles and once someone hits their low wires, it usually causes a problem for us as well. We make sure our wires meet or exceed the required specifications.

There were two house fires on our system where we responded to make sure the electricity was turned off so no firefighters or bystanders would be shocked or electrocuted.

I hope that you have enjoyed reading my article about your electric system and the causes of outages. Please remember we are only a phone call away, and remember to be safe! 🌞