

# 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](mailto:screc@epix.net)  
 Website: [www.screc.com](http://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**

**David L. Aumen – CCD\*/BLC\*\*/Gold\*\*\***  
*Chairman*  
**Ann B. Henderson – CCD/BLC**  
*Vice Chairman*  
**Kathy A. Robbins – CCD/BLC**  
*Secretary*

**Stephan Paul Brady – CCD/BLC/Gold**  
**Benton J. Fiester**  
**Wayne E. Gavitt – CCD**  
**Jeff Hamilton – CCD**  
**Jay Lewis – CCD**

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

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

## From the CEO



### To be thankful

By Craig A. Harting

I’LL HAVE TO ADMIT, on one hand, it’s a little hard to be thankful this year ... for a whole list of reasons. But on the other hand, as I reflect deeper, I think we can find some reasons to be thankful, even this year.

We all hoped COVID-19 would go away, but it’s hard when we see how it has hit some families. The loss of jobs due to COVID-19 weighs heavily, and it’s painful to see the loss of small businesses.

It’s nearly impossible to discuss politics, and our country seems deeply divided going forward. It’s sad to see the division and the violent protests. My prayer is that we can all come together somehow.

### To be thankful

But upon reflection, I realize I can be thankful ... and for many things. No one in our co-op family has gotten sick. We have had no major storms, and I am always thankful for that.

I am very thankful we are having a good year financially and that we were able to return a record amount of capital credits that may help folks when they need it. In addition, we were able to hold rates and still maintain services.

I am thankful that we get to live where we do and in an area with so many good people. I am thankful for my family and our health. I am grateful to live in this country in spite of our problems. We are still a great country in so many ways.

My prayer is that all of you have a great Thanksgiving and have something you can be thankful for ... even this year. I am very thankful for our employees and thank them for all of their hard work this year:

Kendall Achey  
 Nolan Chase  
 Diane Cusson  
 Thomas Eberlin  
 Darrick Higley  
 Dave Kepner  
 Dennis Klem  
 Alex Laudermilch  
 Tom Livezey

Todd Molyneux  
 Chad Phillips  
 Kim Phillips  
 Jeff Spako  
 Walt Tubach  
 Diane White  
 Lori Williams  
 John Zelewicz

# Annual meeting held online due to COVID-19

By John Zelewicz  
Penn Lines Writer

THEY SAY the one constant in life is change, and change can happen when you least expect it. Years ago, Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) used to hold its annual meeting at the courthouse in Laporte. Over time, it was eventually moved to the auditorium in the Sullivan County High School.

The annual meeting was held there for years until 2019. On the morning of Wednesday, May 29, 2019, fire companies responded to a fire at the Sullivan County High School. The fire was contained, although there was damage to the high school auditorium area.

“At the time, it sounded like the fire was fairly minor,” explains Craig Harting, CEO of Sullivan County REC. “We thought they’d have things cleaned up, and we’d be able to hold our annual meeting at the school as planned.”

Unfortunately, the amount of damage was more than first anticipated, and on Thursday, May 30, the school informed the co-op that it would not be possible to hold the meeting there. The co-op’s board and staff researched what options were available as far as that year’s meeting was concerned.

The co-op contacted the Sullivan County Fair Association to see about partnering with them to hold the 2019 annual meeting in conjunction with the fair. Unfortunately, the fair schedule was set, and after extensive discussion and research, a decision was made to cancel the meeting in 2019.



COURTHOUSE: The Sullivan County Courthouse in LaPorte is the site of early cooperative annual meetings.



HIGH SCHOOL: Members met for many years at the Sullivan County High School Auditorium following the move from the courthouse. A fire at the school led to the 2019 annual meeting being canceled.

And so it was decided to hold the 2020 annual meeting in conjunction with the Sullivan County Fair on Sept. 3.

Little did anyone expect that in early 2020 the lives of everyone in the world, the United States and even Pennsylvania would be affected by the pandemic.

“We had planned on holding the annual meeting at the fair this year, but then COVID-19 happened,” Harting notes. “As we watched public events such as concerts, sporting events, parades and county fairs being canceled, we looked at holding the annual meeting online if the Sullivan County Fair was canceled ... and eventually it was.”

## The first online annual meeting

On Thursday, Sept. 3 at 2 p.m., Sullivan County REC Board Chair Ann Henderson called to order the co-op’s first online annual meeting. But for this to happen, a lot of things had to be worked out first ... such as what program to use for the meeting. According to Harting, the co-op had used Zoom Meeting to hold the co-op board of directors meetings when the state was in the red phase due to the virus. Since they were

happy with the features of Zoom, it was decided to use it for the annual meeting.

“For the meeting, we purchased Zoom Webinar for three months,” Harting says. “We felt this would give us time to try it out and get used to it before we held the annual meeting on Sept. 3. Even though we had been using Zoom Meeting for a while, we wanted to ensure we were comfortable with using Zoom Webinar before

the meeting was held.”

To ensure that things went off without a hitch, three practice sessions were held with Henderson, Harting, Attorney Robert Chappell and Diane White, executive assistant. This allowed them the opportunity to practice their presentations as well as adjust settings before going live online.

Members were informed of the online annual meeting via *Penn Lines*, bill stuffers, email and on the co-op’s Facebook page. Choosing a day and time when to hold the meeting wasn’t difficult as it had already been planned.

“We held the meeting on Sept. 3 at 2 p.m. because that was the same day and time we had planned to hold the meeting at the fair this year,” Harting explains. “We also wanted to have it on that day because the director elections would be completed the day before.” Fortunately, the meeting went off without a hitch, although one of the biggest concerns was the possibility of losing internet service before or during the meeting ... as we know can happen in Sullivan County.

## Highlights from the annual meeting

Once the meeting was called to order, Henderson held a moment of silence

in memory of board member Curtin Rakestraw II, who passed away on Aug. 7, 2020.

One of the first orders of business concerned the 2020 director election results:

**Ann Henderson** was unopposed for District 1 and re-elected by 952 votes.

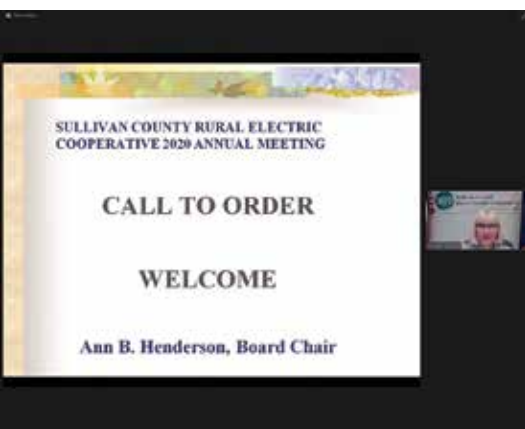
**Kathy Robbins** was unopposed for District 5 and re-elected with 966 votes.

**Curt Rakestraw II** served as director for District 7, but due to his passing, a special election will be held in 2021 to fill the vacancy.

Henderson spoke about capital credits and noted that this year the co-op sent out 4,128 capital credits checks for a total of \$652,963. These capital credits checks covered the years 1986-1992.

“We’re paying off the older years first,” Henderson said. “Unfortunately, we do get a lot of checks back due to bad addresses. We want to find as many people as possible so we can return that money to our members.”

One way for members to see if they are owed capital credits is to visit the Sullivan County REC website at [srec.com](http://srec.com) and click on the “Do We Owe You money” icon. Who knows, you may find that you or someone you know has a capital credits check waiting to be claimed!



**ONLINE MEETING:** The co-op’s first online annual meeting is called to order by Board Chair Ann Henderson. Henderson touched upon a wide range of topics including information available to members on the co-op’s website at [srec.com](http://srec.com).

## Harting addresses members

Following Henderson’s report, Harting touched upon a wide variety of topics during his report. Harting also took a moment to remember the late Curtin Rakestraw II.

“Curt was a board member for many, many years,” Harting said. “I enjoyed working with him and he will be missed.”

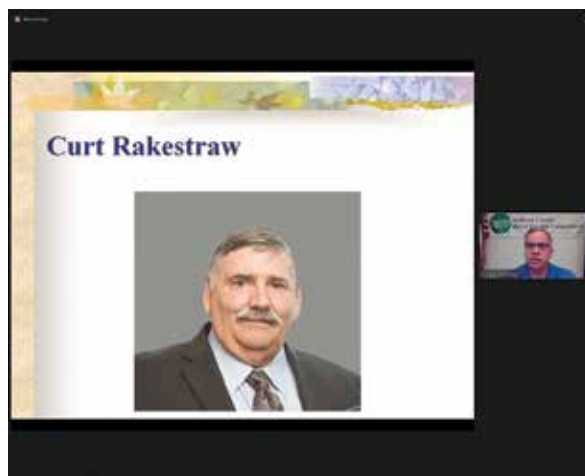
Harting communicated the co-op’s new 20-year long-range plan, which includes plans to continue strengthening backfeeds and invest in the electric system.

He also addressed the number of outages in 2019. In 2019, there were 425 outages, which averaged out to 6.29 hours per member. While the co-op continues to do all it can to reduce the number of outages, the reality is that outages will always be a fact of life.

“We live in a rural area, and trees often play a part in outages, especially during storms,” Harting said. “We have made significant progress in maintaining our rights-of-way. Maintaining our rights-of-way helps reduce the number of outages we experience.”

During severe storms in the past, such as Tropical Storm Lee in 2011, the co-op lost accounts due to some seasonal properties being destroyed and never being rebuilt. This year, though, the co-op has picked up 50 new accounts so far. In fact, 2020 may set a recent new record for the number of new accounts in one year.

As with past annual meetings, members were allowed to ask any questions they might have. One member asked why their lights were blinking and what caused it. Blinking lights can be caused by any number of things, such as loss of power to substations, animals, lightning, a branch hitting a line, a cracked insulator ... this and much more can cause blinking lights, and the cause is often hard to locate.



**REMEMBRANCE:** Sullivan County REC CEO Craig Harting takes a few moments to remember former co-op Director Curtin Rakestraw II, who passed away in early August. Rakestraw had served on the board since 1986.

“The way a circuit breaker operates is that it opens if it detects a fault on the line,” Harting explained. “After a brief amount of time, it will reconnect and see if the fault has cleared and, if so, then the power will stay on. When this happens, members experience a ‘blink.’” This occurrence during a storm is completely normal. But if blinking occurs when there are no storms, this is not normal and you should report it.”

While the online annual meeting allowed members to participate despite the pandemic, Harting missed being able to interact with members directly.

“It was very different from the meetings we’ve had in the past,” he says. “It was strange talking into a camera instead of speaking to members in the school auditorium. I missed being able to look at our members, and I missed talking with them.”

Due to COVID-19 concerns and the success of the online meeting, next year’s annual meeting has also been set to be held online on May 19, 2021. Information concerning the time of the meeting will be provided at a later date.

For those interested in viewing this year’s online annual meeting, simply go to the cooperative’s website at [srec.com](http://srec.com), click on the “News & Events” tab and the “2020 Annual Meeting” link. 🌞

## Notice of 2021 director elections

*Candidates sought for Districts 3, 4, 8 (three-year term), special election for District 7 (two-year term)*

Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative will hold director elections for Districts 3, 4, and 8, and a special election for District 7 in 2021.

To be eligible for director candidacy and to serve on the board, you must be a bona-fide resident of the district you seek to represent and have been a member at the cooperative since Jan. 19, 2020.

Residential members from Districts 3, 4, 8 or 7 interested in running for a position on the cooperative's board of directors must be nominated by a petition signed by at least 10 members residing in the candidate's respective district. Petition nomination forms and further instructions are available by contacting Diane White at 570-924-3381, by email at [de.white@frontier.com](mailto:de.white@frontier.com) or on the cooperative's website at [screc.com](http://screc.com). Petition nomination forms can be requested starting Nov. 19, 2020.

Petitions must be received by 3 p.m. Jan. 19, 2021, in order to be considered. The petitions will be reviewed by the cooperative's Credentials and Election Committee. The election of directors will be conducted via mail-in ballots. Qualified candidates will also be asked to submit a brief biography, which will be included with the official ballot and published in *Penn Lines* and on our website.

### Director districts up for election in 2021:

**District 3 (three-year term):** Overton Township, Bradford County; Forks Township and Forks Borough, Sullivan County

**District 4 (three-year term):** Albany Township, Bradford County; Laporte Township, Cherry Township and Laporte Borough, Sullivan County

**District 8 (three-year term):** Plunketts Creek Township, Lycoming County

### Special Election in 2021:

**District 7 (two-year term):** Upper Fairfield Township, Lycoming County



## THE PERFECT CHRISTMAS GIFT

Do you have difficulty finding a Christmas gift for a friend or relative? If you do, why not get them a Sullivan County Rural Electric gift certificate?

Gift certificates are available in any amount. Just give us a call or stop by the office, and we will credit their account. A gift certificate will be printed showing how much was credited to the account and who purchased the gift certificate. You can give it to them or we can mail it for you. It's as simple as that. We can even keep your name anonymous if you don't want them to know.

So if you know someone who is having a hard time making ends meet or aren't sure what to give them for the holidays, why not consider giving them a gift certificate from Sullivan County REC?

## DO NOT TAMPER WITH YOUR ELECTRIC METER

Meter tampering can result in electric shock, is illegal and increases electricity rates for other co-op members.



- ⊘ Never break a meter seal.
- ⊘ Never open a meter base.
- ⊘ Never remove a meter or alter an entrance cable in any manner.

If you know or suspect that someone has tampered with their meter, please contact us immediately.