

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

From the CEO



Free long distance and rates

By Craig A. Harting

WHEN I was growing up, there was no such thing as free long distance calling. Long distance was expensive and you thought twice before you hit that “1.” Then came the breakup of AT&T, calling plans and calling cards. You didn’t need to have money for a pay phone!

Now, cellphones are small computers, and monthly plans include data and, of course, long distance. I think all land line plans include unlimited long distance as well.

So, what does this have to do with electricity? Just as telephone plans have evolved so they include long distance for one monthly fee (whether you use your phone or not), I think you will see distribution rates go the same way. Our rates are divided into two basic parts: generation/transmission and distribution.

Generation

Generation is the actual power you use. The generation rate covers the cost of the actual power and the transmission costs to get the power to our substations. We buy all of our power from Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Allegheny). We formed Allegheny in 1946 along with the other 12 co-ops in Pennsylvania and the one in New Jersey to make power and buy power for us.

Today we get 60% of our power from our portion of the nuclear plant at Berwick, 10% from our hydro plant

and other hydro sources, and 30% is purchased from the wholesale power market. It seems like these resources will carry us for a long time.

It appears that the generation rate will always be variable — the more you use, the more you pay. Looking forward, Allegheny rates are projected to be fairly flat for about the next three years.

Distribution

Distribution rates need to cover the costs for our local cooperative. We do this in two ways: with a fixed monthly charge and a variable rate based on your use. But in reality, all of our local costs are fixed. For example, the number of lineworkers and trucks does not change based on the amount of power our members use.

So we all need to pay for the fixed costs of providing the grid to us so it is available whether we use any power or not. Over time, I see distribution rates becoming more of a fixed monthly charge, just like your cellphone plan or land line plan.

Our local rates have tracked inflation over the years, and I expect that to continue. Our last rate increase was in 2017, but we might have to have an increase next year because our costs have risen in the last five years. More to come on that later, but in the meantime, if you have any questions, just pick up the phone and call us using your long distance plan. ☀

Dairy parade returns to town

By John Zelewicz
Penn Lines Writer

THE DAY began with bright sunlight and warm temperatures, just a typical summer day. But as the day rolled on, clouds began to fill the sky, and eventually rain fell, gently at first but growing stronger over time.

Despite the dark clouds that filled the heavens and the falling rain on June 19, it couldn't dampen the spirits of those who came out to welcome back and enjoy a Sullivan County tradition: the annual Dushore Dairy Parade.

Like many fairs, carnivals, parades and other outdoor events, the Dushore Dairy Parade was canceled last year due to the pandemic. And while it was a tough decision to cancel it in 2020, there was little doubt that the crowd would come out to support the parade when it returned to town.

"It was tough and sad for me when we had to cancel the parade last year," says Noreen Keeney, chair of the Sullivan Dairy Promotion Committee. "When you cancel something, it can be hard to bring it back. But people were ready to get out, see their family, friends and neighbors. I knew people would come out to the parade because they wanted to see it and perhaps meet people they haven't seen for some time and to support the community. People know that we'll have the parade no matter if it's sunshine or rain. Though nice weather does make a difference."

The Dushore Dairy Parade has been entertaining residents and visitors alike for around 60 years. In the past, the parade was held in conjunction with the local fire company, but sadly that changed a few years ago.

"In the past, we worked with the Dushore Fire Company," Keeney says. They would hold their annual Fireman's Carnival on Friday night. They would have a parade and sell food and drinks, but about two or three years

ago, they could no longer do that due to lack of manpower. We reached out to the Dushore Area Business Association (DABA) and asked them to help us advertise so we could keep the event going and bring more people to Dushore."

One reason the parade is held in June is because June is National Dairy Month, a celebration that began as a way to promote drinking milk in 1937. Back then, it was known as National Milk Month.

Putting an event such as a parade together can be somewhat daunting if you've never done it before. Thankfully, Keeney isn't a novice at this. In fact, she's been organizing the parade for 20 years.

Many support parade despite weather

Despite the weather, 30 participants took part in the parade, including the dairy royalty and special guests, state Rep. Tina Pickett (R-Bradford) and Bradford County Dairy Princess Charity Wampole. The parade included floats, tractors, a tractor-trailer, trucks, cows and a horse. In addition, fire companies from Dushore, Mildred, Forksville, Eldredsville, Endless Winds and Laporte were represented. And while it's nice to know ahead of time who is going to participate in the parade, there's always room for one more.

"If somebody shows up and wants to participate in the parade, we never turn anybody away," Keeney notes.

Of course, Keeney isn't the only one



DAIRY PARADE: Despite the rainy weather, floats, tractors, a tractor-trailer, trucks, fire companies, cows and even a horse walk in the Dushore Dairy Parade.

who has a hand in making the Dushore Dairy Parade the success it is. In addition to Keeney, the Dairy Committee consists of 12 members, including Co-chair Eileen Warburton, along with past princesses and royalty moms. Members don't have to be former dairy princesses to serve on the committee, but many are associated with the program and volunteer to serve.

Planning for the parade begins in late winter. The committee will meet about once or twice a month. Once the parade is over, the committee won't meet again until fall when they begin to think about the next year.

Like many other activities, the group depends on local businesses to pitch in and help with the parade. Fitzpatrick & Lambert provided the stage, Brian McGuire provided the sound system, the Sullivan County Extension Office provided the podium and helped make signs for the event, and the list of helpers goes on and on.

"It's wonderful how local businesses pitch in to help us with this," Keeney

says. “Businesses on Center Street allow us to take up some of their space and use their electricity. Hurley’s lets us use their parking lot for the craft and food vendors. A lot of the community helps and lends us a hand.”

The parade may be the highlight of the day, but it’s not the only thing going on to entertain people. DABA held its annual fishing contest beginning at noon at Kast Pond, just north of Dushore on Route 220. Kids from 5 to 14 years old participated in the event. Prizes were awarded for the biggest fish and most fish caught for each age group.

To amuse and mystify, Magician Erick Hershey performed at the Sullivan County Library. And for those wondering what it’s like to milk a cow, the Dushore Lions Club hosted another tradition, the Cow Milking Contest, following the parade.

Of course, what would an event like the Dushore Dairy Parade be without numerous craft vendors and food vendors? Hot sausage, barbecue, hot dogs and even freshly made funnel cakes ensured that those attending the parade did not go home hungry.

Time to say goodbye

Following the parade, the outgoing Sullivan County Dairy Ambassador Noah Phillips and Sullivan County Dairy Princess Jillian Vereist made heartfelt speeches telling how much it meant to them to have served in these positions.

Phillips served as the Sullivan County Dairy Ambassador for eight years. He attends Penn State University where he is majoring in ag education & extension. He is a member of Delta Theta Sigma Fraternity, Penn State LEAD Society and Penn State Dairy Science Club.

Vereist served as Sullivan County Dairy Princess for 2020. She is a junior at Sullivan County High School, a member of the National Honor Society, a varsity wrestling cheerleader, and participates in Ski Club and Select Vocals.

Keeney herself served as Dairy Maid and Dairy Princess several years ago, but things have changed since then. At that time, one had to be at least 12 years old to serve as a Dairy Maid, but now children as young as 5 or 6 years old can participate. However, one still has to be at least 16 to serve as the Sullivan County Dairy Princess.

One person noticeably absent from the dairy parade this year was Mary Lambert, who was actively involved with the parade for many years until her passing.

“Even though her

health was declining for the last few years, she was out at the parade in her chair talking to people and attending meetings until the end,” Keeney recalls. “She was very deeply committed to the dairy parade and put so much into it throughout the years to keep it going. She was my neighbor my whole life, and she was definitely a huge part of the Dairy Committee.”

Love for the dairy industry is personal

Keeney’s love of milk and the dairy industry is personal. Her father was a dairy farmer, so she knows firsthand the love and dedication dairy farmers put into their work.

“It’s important to promote the dairy industry,” she says. “Dairy farmers work 24/7. My dad worked a dairy farm and finally sold it in 2018 due to the physical toll it took on him over 50 years. People don’t realize what’s all involved.”

While the Dushore Dairy Parade has been a tradition for a very long time, it can only continue as long as there are people willing to give of their time and energies to keep it going.

“I definitely think people would like to see it continue, especially the older
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CRAFTS AND FOOD: Craft and food vendors are on hand to sell a variety of merchandise and food on the day of the annual parade. Among the food vendors were the Little League Organization with walking tacos, Redeemer Church in Dushore with hot sausage, the Sullivan County Recreational Organization with pulled pork, and for dessert, the Boy Scouts provided deep-fried Oreos and funnel cakes.



SPECIAL GUEST: State Rep. Tina Pickett (R-Bradford), third from left, meets with the 2020-2021 dairy royalty and the 2021-2022 court during the June 19 event.

From the Operations Department

By Walter Tubach

WE ARE in the top five for the busiest years in my 37 years at the cooperative. Last year's planned new services were



Walter Tubach
Manager, Electric
Operations

put on hold due to the pandemic, and they are now underway. In addition, we are working on annual line rebuilding and maintenance and two upgrades for gas companies. Right-of-way cutting is always in full force, the Asplundh Tree Expert

Company is spraying rights-of-way in the Huntersville area, and to top it off, we have the American Testing Company doing our summer pole inspections. All of these projects are very important to Sullivan County REC, and they are expected to continue to improve reliability.

Our lineworkers are changing insulators, transformers and equipment to upgrade the voltage from the Heilman Church to the Huntersville area. This work is needed to double the voltage on the power line from 7,200 volts to 14,400 volts. This will help us carry a more even line load and help with backfeeding situations from the Laporte Substation to the Mill Creek Substation. We never know when an outage will occur and backfeeds will be needed. We continue to upgrade our electrical system so that we are better prepared to get the power restored to our members when an outage does occur.

The power supply from Penelec to our Sullivan County electrical sys-

tem went off on March 8, 2021, at 12:10 p.m. This affected our Dushore, Laporte and Estella substations. Penelec backed the county and restored power within 15 minutes, and we appreciate the quick response.

We had a wind storm on April 30, starting about noon, that caused several outages throughout the day. One pole broke after being hit by a tree, and many power lines were down due to falling trees and limbs. The linemen worked all day, and things came together fairly quickly. By 9:40 p.m. that same night, all the power was restored and the crews could go home. This shows that the money being spent by the cooperative on right-of-way cutting does pay off.

Recently, a dump truck struck the power line over a driveway and pulled the wires down, causing an outage in the Shunk area. We are thankful that no one was injured or shocked.

We had numerous outages over a two-week period in late June in the Sky Meadows area. Lineworkers patrolled the line each time, but in some cases, the issue has to "burn up" or "burn down" before it can be located. That problem eventually turned out to be a lightning arrester that had been struck by lightning.

Unknown causes of outages happened 18 times over the past three months.

I had an upset member call me the other day because of a power outage. She did not understand the cause of an outage on a clear, sunny day. I explained to her that trees can still fall,

squirrels and birds can still get into the line, and tree branches can break and fall into the line regardless of the weather. There can also be vehicle accidents. We had a very nice conversation, and she was pleased with the background I provided.

Ceramic fuse cutouts are causing us a real headache this year as they are breaking, falling apart and dangling off the poles. They have caused blinking lights and numerous power outages. We are changing these items as fast as we can and whenever we can get replacements.

Four transformers burned up, one transformer had a loose connection on the secondary and one of them burned the line.

Trees continue to be our biggest issue with 47 outages. Even though we cut more than 12,000 trees and trim 7,000 trees per year, we can never get them all, and sometimes they cause outages.

Our outage time per member is just under two hours so far this year. It certainly is much better than in the 1980s when we averaged 35 hours per member.

I hope you have enjoyed reading about your electric system and the projects we are working on.

Please remember to call the office with your new phone numbers when you change them. This is one way we are able to contact you for planned outages, to see if your power has been restored during outages and to keep you up to date on other important news.

We are only a phone call away if you need assistance, and please remember to stay safe! ☀️

Dairy parade returns to town

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ones who have enjoyed it for so long," Keeney says. "Hopefully, the younger ones will get involved and want to continue with it for many more years. I have to say that manpower is definitely an issue. I was a little stressed as there were certain groups who couldn't participate this year, so we had to find other people. I wish more young peo-

ple would get involved."

Although there's a lot of work and time involved to pull off the parade, Keeney says it's worthwhile when people tell her how much they enjoy it.

"It's really a great feeling to see the people out there especially because of the time and work you put into it," she says. "The parade promotes the dairy industry, and the dairy industry is a

big part of my life and passion. I'm so thankful when people come up and tell us how much they like it. Despite the weather, I have received many compliments on how nice the parade was. The adults and kids loved it in the rain. Some are already planning for next year! The stress beforehand was all well worth it to see the kids' smiles. We hope it continues to get bigger!" ☀️