

## Your Link to Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative



### High Voltage . . .



You are only as old as you feel is a saying I have heard most of my life. I happen to believe it is true. Personally, I don't feel much older now than when I was in college. Okay you skeptics, keep it down, it's true.

At any rate, aging is a fact of life (notice the brilliant philosophical touch here?). But are you as old as your calendar years say you are or are you older? How about younger? We all know people who don't look their age. Several years ago, the local newspaper ran a survey you could take to determine your "real age" based on how you answered a series of questions based on health, exercise, family medical history, eating habits and so forth. Intrigued, I took the survey (marketing types seem to be suckers for surveys) and yes, I tested younger than my actual age. Since then, the survey has evolved into a website and very interesting Internet destination called RealAge.com.

Surf over to [www.realage.com](http://www.realage.com) and take the RealAge test. The test is free and you also get a personalized plan to feel younger. If you answer the questions honestly you will get some interesting results. For best results, have your blood pressure, resting heart rate and cholesterol data handy. Other than these bits of information, the questions are easy and do not require any preparation.

You can elect to get regular e-mails from RealAge.com and over the years I have gotten a lot of benefit from these. If a healthy life style is of interest, then this site is certainly worth the few minutes needed to complete the test.

### Commentary by the President & CEO



## Since When Is the Wind Not Free

by Jim Siglin  
*President & CEO*

Interest in renewable energy is on the rise again. Concern over fossil fuel's contribution to global warming has spawned proposals for climate change legislation most of which mandate development of renewable energy sources. I regularly receive inquiries from members looking for more information and clarification on the subject. With all the commotion comes, inevitably, some misinformation. Prime among the misinformation is the sentiment that renewable energy should be less expensive than traditional forms since the "fuel" is free. After all, the wind blows when and where it pleases and barring cloud cover, the sun shines every day with a regularity you can set a clock (or at least a sundial) to.

Renewable energy is currently more expensive than standard sources for two key reasons: economies of scale and what I'll term as "dispatchability". Let me address economies of scale first. The typical coal plant generates around 900 megawatts (MW). The typical commercial wind generator is 3 MW and the typical residential wind generator just a few kW. To match the output of the coal plant you would need 300 wind generators and a huge amount of land to spread them across. The economics favor the single 900 MW facility over the 300 smaller units in terms of plain cost per kWh to generate the power.

Part of economies of scale is getting the electricity from where it is produced to where it is consumed. Since electricity has zero shelf life (unless stored in batteries), it is consumed as soon as it is produced and delivered. Taking our

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example above, the coal plant enjoys the advantage of a single connection to the electrical grid. The 300 wind generators may require several to capture and route the power.

The US electrical system is a huge grid composed of generation facilities, transmission lines and distribution systems. This massive grid is managed by regional system operators. Think of the system operators like air traffic controllers. They make sure the power gets from where it is generated to where it is needed when it is needed.

The system operators are in charge of directing the flow of power to make sure demand equals supply and that the system is not overloaded. Power suppliers are required to provide a day ahead forecast of how much energy they will need, where they will need it and when they need it, hour by hour. The system operator combines all the forecasts and makes sure there is enough capacity in the system to handle the load. They also make sure that there are enough power sources to meet the electricity requirements. The system operator then instructs the various power plants and power sources connected to their part of the grid when to generate and how much to generate. They "dispatch" the power sources.

Here's where "dispatchability" comes into play. A coal plant is easily dispatched. Once started, it simply operates barring some mechanical problem. Wind and other renewable sources are dependent upon the weather for their production. If the wind doesn't blow, they don't produce electricity. If they don't produce electricity, the system has a shortfall in electricity. The system operator needs to make up the shortfall by purchasing power from some other source, usually at a much higher cost. Since the renewable generation supply cannot be reliably dispatched it is a riskier product and carries a commensurately higher price.

Without question, renewables are an integral part of our future. Cooperatives are

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# IDENTITY THEFT PROTECTION

By Tom Tate

Unless you have been cut off from all forms of modern communication for a while you are likely familiar with the crime of identity theft. Myriad companies are hawking their wares to help you avoid / recover from the crime while banks and other institutions are urging caution by their customers. The news outlets like to play it up as a scourge and epidemic. Now, don't get me wrong, it is a serious problem and we saw, as a company, just how insidious it can be.

Here's what happened in July to a SREC Member. One evening, a man called the Member and identified himself as one of our employees. He advised the Member that they were in arrears and that to avoid interruption of service he could take a check-by-phone payment on the spot. Unfortunately, our Member provided the requested information. Later, the Member had second thoughts and contacted our after hours operation. We told them that we do not make collection calls after 4:30 PM then urged the Member to close their checking account and notify the police.

What would lead a person to give their financial information out to a stranger over the phone? Most important to the chances of success, the scammer created a sense of legitimacy. He knew the Member's account number and had some knowledge of their payment status. For maximum effect, he called at night when most people are home relaxing with their guard down – prime conditions for a scam.

Let's look at the situation. Where did the caller obtain the SREC account number

and payment status? From a variety of sources. The dastardly fellow could take it from the mailbox (a simple task in our rural setting), go "dumpster diving" and pull discarded statements from the trash or, if he knew the Member, simply copy the information during a visit. And, when he had established his legitimacy, he simply asked for the rest.

There are some steps you can take to reduce your risk of identity theft by protecting the information necessary for the crime.

1. Secure your mail. Rent a Post Office box, buy a locking mailbox (look at the end of the article under Gadget Alert for more) or sign up for online statements and bill payment services. Each option has its pros and cons and your specific circumstances will dictate which is best for you.

2. Keep ALL financial documents in a safe and unobtrusive place in your home. Left lying about the kitchen offers anyone the opportunity to peruse your personal habits and information.

3. Shred, burn or otherwise destroy every piece of financial information rather than simply throwing it in the trash. This includes credit card offers, mortgage applications and so forth. It may be junk mail to you but it can turn into an expensive exercise if stolen and used. My personal favorite is shredding. It is rather soothing to sit and watch TV while feeding the daily dose of junk mail to a voracious shredder. In spy thrillers, the secret agents grab the shredded documents and painstakingly glue them back together. This might happen if you are discarding national security documents but most identity thieves are interested in a quick score. Like any theft prevention, if you make it hard, the thief will simply pass you by in favor of an easier mark.

By the way, shredded paper makes wonderful pet bedding and is easily recycled.

Finally, there are some very nice services you can purchase that help you determine if you have been a victim of identity theft

and how to recover from it. Your financial institutions are a good place to inquire about such services. Such a service is probably not necessary if you take the proper security steps mentioned above but it may be worth the price for the peace of mind it provides.

Of course, one of the best ways to avoid data theft is to get off the mailing lists. Consider it the paper equivalent of the Do Not Contact registry for telemarketers. A quick Google search turned up this useful site:

<http://www.creditinfo.com/cards/preventSellLists.shtml> This site lists several addresses and this magic number: 1-888-567-8688 that you can call and get off most credit card offer lists.

**Gadget Alert!** Naturally, I look for the most gadget-oriented item I can find and here is an offering from one of my favorite places on the Internet, Smarthome.com. They offer an amazing array of home automation, security, conservation and other items. Check out this secure mailbox.

If you order this mailbox, get help with installation as this baby weighs in at 70 pounds! Now you are secure and have gotten some vigorous aerobic exercise to boot.

Secure Mail Vault, White, Item# 74662  
Price: \$199.99

<http://www.smarthome.com/74662.html?src=HML07RB05> (also available in black)

## Since When Is the Wind Not Free

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actively engaged in promoting and securing renewable energy sources. After all, cooperatives cover 60% of the land mass of the United States and those areas contain prime locations for renewable energy production. You can take pride in knowing that 70% of your cooperative's power is already carbon free since it comes from nuclear and hydro sources. You can make a difference by giving renewable initiatives in our area your consideration as they are introduced.

In the meantime, make an immediate contribution through conservation and careful use of your electricity and other energy sources. Conservation and efficiency improvements are forecast to provide more benefit than all renewables sources combined so start doing your part today. See more on conservation at our web site, [www.sussexrec.com](http://www.sussexrec.com) then click on the Energy Use and Efficiency link on the left side. Or, give a call at 973.875.5101 with any questions.

## ADDRESS/TELEPHONE CHANGE?

Has your mailing address or telephone changed recently? If so, please make sure you contact us and provide us with the new information. In the event of an outage, we rely on your phone number to bring up your account information quickly and accurately.

You can contact us by sending an e-mail to [customerservice@sussexrec.com](mailto:customerservice@sussexrec.com), indicate the change on your bill stub, or call us at 973.875.5101 and select the customer service option.

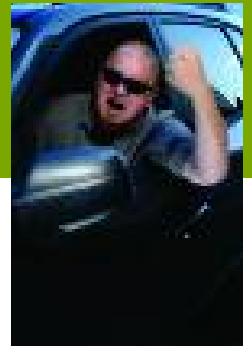
Buses and crosswalks and kids...



Oh my!

Yes, Dorothy, school is open again so please watch for kids heading back to school on foot and by bus.

# Keep Your Eyes on the Road, Your Hands Upon the Wheel



Summer's end is drawing near and so is the beginning of a new school year. Seems like a good time to share some important information about how to protect ourselves and our children on the roadways. Though we know motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among people ages 5 to 29; we've only recently begun to track how many accidents are a result of distracted or aggressive driving. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that aggressive driving accounts for about one-third of all crashes and about two-thirds of the resulting fatalities. Recognizing driver distractions and developing techniques to manage them will help to ensure your safety and those around you.

With the end of the lazy days of summer comes the start of more demanding school and work schedules. The ability to 'multi-task' is usually considered an admirable quality – unless you are behind the wheel of a car. Did you know the driving task alone requires approximately 200 decisions per mile and that, at 55 mph, your car travels

the length of a football field in the 3-4 seconds you take your eyes off the road? According to a survey of 1,100 drivers age 16 and older by Volvo Cars of North America, AAA, and the Partners for Highway Safety, over 90% of the drivers said they speed, eat, use cell phones and even read while driving. Distracted driving is as commonplace as it is dangerous.

## I'm late, I'm late...

Alice's rabbit quoting, "I'm late, I'm late for a very important date." was certainly stressed out and distracted but at least he was not behind the wheel of a speeding vehicle. Are you a distracted driver? Most people can't avoid some form of distraction while driving. For example, the parent running late may engage in multiple distractive behaviors in order to complete the morning routine during the 10-minute drive to school. That's what's called 'cognitive workload overload' Could this be you? The General Motors website provides a fun, interactive demonstration to help you assess your own distractibility at: [http://www.gm.com/company/gmability/safety/drivers\\_seat/distracted\\_driving/index.html](http://www.gm.com/company/gmability/safety/drivers_seat/distracted_driving/index.html). A distracted driver is not prepared for the unexpected and may make a mistake that sets off a chain reaction of aggressive driving or worse, causes an accident.

## Curb Distracted and Aggressive Driving

You need to be conscious of your own driving, and how it appears to others. In many cases, aggressive drivers try to "get even" or "teach a lesson" to the careless or inconsiderate driver that has wronged them. A simple case of momentary distraction on your part may be enough to set off such drivers. They demonstrate their frustration with you by driving in a reckless, rude or intimidating manner - such as speeding, tailgating, unsafe lane changes, failing to signal, making obscene gestures and using their horn excessively. You can't control how other drivers will

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## MARK 'EM AND CELEBRATE

### September

- Sep 1-30 Backpack Safety America Month
- Sep 1-30 Go Wild During California Wild Rice Month
- Sep 1-30 National "5-A-Day" Month
- Sep 1-30 National Biscuit Month
- Sep 1-30 National Chicken Month
- Sep 1-30 National Coupon Month
- Sep 1-30 National Honey Month
- Sep 1-30 National Mushroom Month
- Sep 1-30 National Organic Harvest Month
- Sep 1-30 National Potato Month
- Sep 1-30 National Rice Month
- Sep 1-30 National Skin Care Awareness Month
- Sep 1-30 Fall Hat Month
- Sep 1-30 Great American Low-Cholesterol, Low Fat Pizza Bake
- Sep 2-8 National Waffle Week
- Sep 3 Labor Day
- Sep 9 National Grandparents Day
- Sep 12 Video Games Day

- Sep 15 Int'l. Eat An Apple Day
- Sep 15 Wife Appreciation Day
- Sep 16-22 National Clean Hands Week
- Sep 16-22 National Love Your Files Week
- Sep 17-23 Bottled Water Week
- Sep 22 Ice Cream Cone Birthday (1903)
- Sep 23 Autumn Begins
- Sep 23-29 National Keep Kids Creative Week
- Sep 24 Family Day – A Day to Eat Dinner with your Children

### October

- Oct 1-31 Celebrate Sun Dried Tomatoes Month
- Oct 1-31 Eat Better, Eat Together Month
- Oct 1-31 Frozen Foods Festival
- Oct 1-31 Go Hog Wild – Eat Country Ham Month
- Oct 1-31 National Bake and Decorate Month
- Oct 1-31 National Book Month
- Oct 1-31 National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

- Oct 1-31 National Chili Month
- Oct 1-31 National Construction Toy Month
- Oct 1-31 National Dental Hygiene Month
- Oct 1-31 National Popcorn Poppin' Month
- Oct 1-31 National Roller Skating Month
- Oct 1-31 National Seafood Month
- Oct 1-31 Spinach Lovers Month
- Oct 1-31 Talk About Prescriptions Month
- Oct 1-31 Vegetarian Month
- Oct 7-13 Fire Prevention Week
- Oct 8 Columbus Day
- Oct 8-12 Improve Your Home Office Week
- Oct 10 National Cake Decorating Day
- Oct 12 World Egg Day
- Oct 14-20 National Chestnut Week
- Oct 16 National Boss Day
- Oct 20 Sweetest Day
- Oct 28 Mother-in-Law Day
- Oct 31 Halloween

## Keep Your Eyes On the Road *Continued from page 3*

react; however, you can control your own actions and responses.

### Prevent Distractions and Aggressive Driving:

- Get enough sleep; lack of sleep makes you prone to mistakes and emotional reactions.
- Prepare clothing, briefcases, school bags and lunch boxes the night before.
- Plan for delays, extra time for your trip.
- Before driving, review maps or directions and how to use technologies in your car (GPS system, DVD player, new cell phone, etc.).
- Consciously make safe driving your priority.
- Be polite, courteous, and apologetic if necessary, even if the other driver is not.
- Do not speed, tailgate or block the passing lane.
- Always use your signal when changing lanes. Do not cut off other drivers.
- Make yourself comfortable by listening to relaxing music or a comedy and opening a window periodically.
- Do not take other drivers' mistakes personally, and NEVER retaliate.

In its extreme, aggressive driving can escalate into "road rage", a criminal act of deliberate violence against another motorist or pedestrian. Road rage is in the headlines daily; reports range from deliberate braking to shootings. In April 2007, a 34 year-old Colorado man was convicted of

first-degree murder and given two life sentences for two deaths resulting from his expression of road rage. The details of the Colorado incident are a chilling reminder of just how dangerous aggressive driving can be and that you should never underestimate the mindset of another driver or what they would be willing to do to "get even".

### Avoid Becoming a Victim:

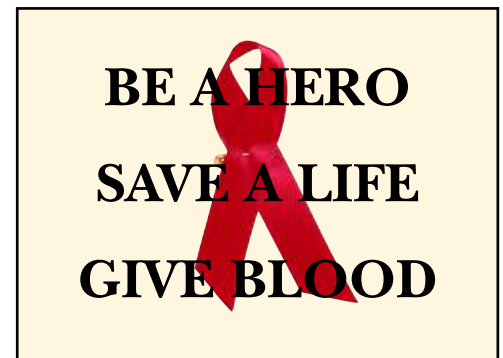
- Stay away from aggressive drivers and do not make eye contact or even look in the direction of the aggressor.
- Do not make obscene gestures or swear at other drivers.
- Stay calm, and focused and do not react if you are provoked.
- Leave enough room between you and the car in front of you when stopped in traffic.
- Call 911 or drive to the nearest police station if you are being harassed or followed.

RoadRagers.com is a website that provides driving style analysis, tips on how to cope with issues related to driving and an online community where drivers share frustrations and report bad drivers (roadragers.com is not associated with any law enforcement agency). Its lighthearted approach encourages people not to take action on the road, but to calmly drive home, turn on the computer and file a report.

This is a serious topic and as a reader you may need a little comic relief at this point. Go to this site for another unique solution to road rage: <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=1882664901133929840>

## From Road Rage to Road Respect... we have a long road ahead of us

Continued increases in motor vehicle accidents tell us we need to step up our efforts to change our driving behaviors. If it's true that drivers have more stress and less concern for fellow motorists, then we need to step up our efforts in changing driver attitudes as well. We can start individually by setting a good example when behind the wheel; be attentive, patient, compassionate, and courteous. Spread the word. Talk about distracted and aggressive driving habits with family, friends and community groups whenever you have the opportunity. Creating awareness is a very effective way of bringing down those stubborn fatality statistics and building up the idea of "road respect".



## Currents

is published monthly by



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## Make the wise choice

When it's time to buy a new water heater, there are a number of choices you can make. You can purchase a heater warranted for six or eight years, one that will be cheap to buy, but expensive to operate. Or you can invest in a Marathon and save money in operating costs...for a lifetime. Marathon - super efficient and warranted not to leak for as long as you own your home.



- **Seamless Polybutylene Tank** will never rust, corrode or leak.
- **Environfoam® Insulation** completely surrounds the tank. Superior efficiency with no Ozone-depleting chemicals.
- **Heating Elements** designed to maintain water temperatures and perform in the harshest water environments (just like ours here in NJ).
- **Bowl-Shaped Tank Bottom** developed to allow more complete tank draining.

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<http://www.sussexrec.com/brochures/Marathon.html>

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WATER HEATERS *in water heaters.*