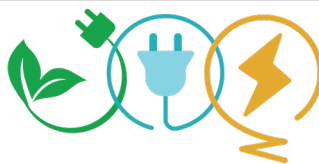




*Pictured: Trucks belonging to other cooperatives parked across from Sussex REC's office while they wait to assist in power restoration following Hurricane Sandy in 2012.*



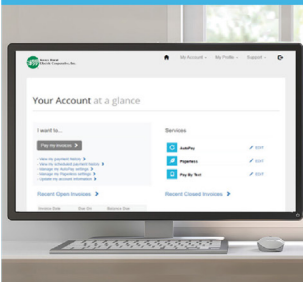
**Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.**  
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SREC's Member Newsletter  
2025, Issue 1 of 4

# Currents

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**Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative**

## The Other Side of Mutual Aid

In our last issue of *Currents*, we looked at the human side of mutual aid. We shared the story of seven of our linemen who joined the restoration efforts in Georgia to help communities devastated by Hurricane Helene. As an addition to that story, I am pleased to report that each of these linemen, through our Employee Directed Giving program, have elected to donate to the two churches that treated them so kindly during their time there. Each church will receive a donation of \$1,000.00 through this program.

In this issue, we will explore the other side of mutual aid. How does it work? How do co-ops decide when it's needed? During prolonged outages, members sometimes ask if we will call crews in from other places. While mutual aid crews have

By Claudia Raffay,  
[craffay@sussexrec.com](mailto:craffay@sussexrec.com)



provided critical help after some major storms, every situation is different. Several factors play a part in a co-op's decision to ask for mutual aid, chief among them being the cost.

### What is Mutual Aid?

Mutual aid is a collaborative approach to emergency planning. The mutual aid model allows electric co-ops to help each other out during times of need. The system permits co-ops to "borrow" restoration workers from other co-ops to temporarily increase their workforce and their ability to respond to a major outage.

Mutual aid has been a part of our DNA since electric co-ops were

>> Continued on pgs. 2 & 3



*“Mutual aid has been a part of our DNA since co-ops were first formed... From the very beginning, electric co-ops shared expertise and relied on each other to assist in times of need.”*

first formed. The concept originated with initial rural electrification efforts in the 1930s. From the very beginning, electric co-ops shared expertise and relied on each other to assist in times of need.

Because the national network of transmission and distribution infrastructure owned by electric cooperatives has been built to federal standards, line crews from any of the U.S.’s nearly 900 electric co-ops can arrive on the scene ready to provide emergency support and secure in their knowledge of the system’s engineering. Co-ops across the country also keep signed agreements on file which standardize the process and save time that would otherwise be spent negotiating the specifics.

Sussex REC has been on both sides of mutual aid. Our crews have responded to recent major outages in neighboring Pennsylvania and, as shown in our last article, in Georgia. We even sent linemen to help with repairs in Louisiana following Hurricane Katrina. On the flip side, we’ve called for help through this system many times, including as recently as the summer of 2024, when two storms blew through our territory with incredible speed and caused widespread outages. The cost of restoration for those two summer storms was over \$500,000, including mutual aid costs.

### **The Logistics of Mutual Aid**

Mutual aid ultimately benefits co-ops’ consumer-members by increasing and accelerating their co-op’s ability to restore power during large outages. The additional manpower provides a critical safety net during times of crisis, especially for small co-ops. This can reduce



restoration time by multiple days, but that benefit must be weighed against the logistical and cost challenges that come with calling for help.



Disaster response and mutual aid is managed by electric co-ops, as well as co-ops’ statewide organizations. Statewide organizations, like our Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association, assist with coordination between states. These efforts require effective logistics management and experts who fully understand resource allocation. A variety of equipment may be needed to complete repairs for major outages, including bucket trucks and other specialized vehicles, utility poles, transformers, and wires. Skilled lineworkers, tree trimmers, damage assessors, and other key personnel are also often shared among co-ops. These experts provide critical skills and manpower to speed up the restoration process.

As with any storm, our goal is to restore power safely and efficiently. Large storms that may make mutual aid necessary are also very expensive, so the co-op must weigh all of its options to best control costs. For example, we knew ahead of Hurricane Sandy that damage would be extensive enough to require mutual aid. We called on crews from as far as South Carolina and Florida, who were dispatched after the storm passed through their own communities and it was determined their co-ops could afford to spare the manpower.

Sometimes, it is not practical or possible to call for mutual aid. Large storms like hurricanes or nor’easters are likely to affect nearby co-ops, limiting our options and making it difficult to determine in advance who we can call for help. A good example is February’s ice storm, which worked its way east across most of the Midwest.



The scale of that storm meant no mutual aid crews were available for us. It even increased hold times for our after-hours call center, which provides similar services for other electric co-ops throughout the U.S.

If we call in crews, we are incurring costs to cover gas, use of trucks and equipment, and wages for the visiting crews. We are also responsible for covering their hotels and meal expenses while they are working for us. The costs incurred are tracked by the crews' home cooperative and a bill is sent to the co-op receiving the help.



In the case of the storms in Georgia, work provided by our linemen and their accommodations were paid for by SREC, also paying their salary and overtime pay. SREC had no way of knowing how long it would take for the cooperatives in Georgia to reimburse these costs and the maintenance of our equipment. Luckily, the Georgia cooperatives were able to tap into FEMA aid and emergency lines of credit from cooperative lenders to cover the massive effort of visiting linemen and reimburse us in a timely manner.

## A Cooperative Effort

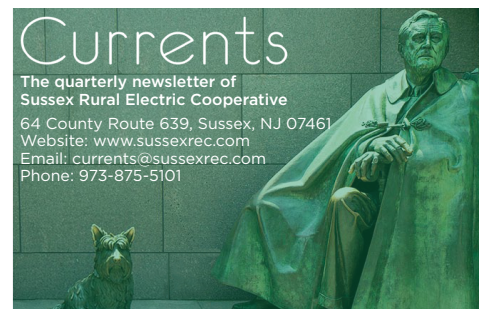
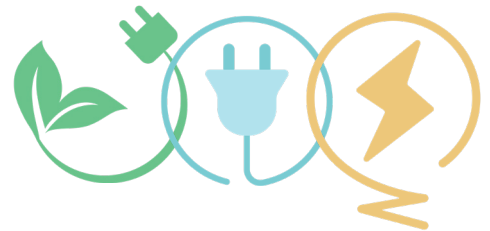
Mutual aid continues to be a vital part of how electric co-ops operate and serve their members. By sharing resources, co-ops can significantly enhance their response capabilities. It helps make it possible for small, locally focused businesses like co-ops to effectively manage large-scale crises that can come from devastating storms.

Electric co-ops operate according to Seven Cooperative Principles, and principles six and seven, Cooperation Among Cooperatives and Concern for Community, are directly connected to the mutual aid model. Mutual aid is essentially about neighbors helping neighbors, even when those neighbors are fellow co-ops located hundreds of miles away.

Mutual aid is perhaps the best example of the difference that Cooperation Among Cooperatives makes. It ensures that members receive reliable electricity and the peace of mind that comes with knowing you are part of a larger network that takes care of each other, even in the face of major challenges. ⚡

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP

Turn your suds into savings. Lower your energy use in the laundry room by washing clothes with cold water whenever possible, as heating water accounts for most of the energy used in a laundry cycle. Wash full loads to make the most of energy savings, and use high-efficiency detergent designed for cold washes. For drying cycles, clean the lint filter before each load to improve airflow and use dryer balls to reduce drying time.



**Sussex Rural  
Electric Cooperative, Inc.**

**President & CEO** - Christopher P. Reese

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## ARE YOU STORM READY?

Follow these safety and preparation tips during spring and summer storm seasons.

### Be Prepared

- Create an emergency kit with power outage essentials: batteries, power banks, flashlights, non-perishable foods, water, medical supplies, and prescriptions.
- Develop an emergency family plan with meeting points, communication methods, and evacuation routes. Share your plan with all family members.
- Monitor weather for important updates that could impact your emergency plan.

### Stay Safe

- Ensure a safe shelter. Stay away from windows and doors. In tornadoes, move to a basement or an interior room without windows.
- Use portable generators safely: Operate outdoors in well-ventilated areas, place on a flat, dry surface, do not overload, and always read the operating manual before use.
- Severe storms can bring down tree limbs and power lines. If you encounter a downed line, stay back. Always assume a downed line is live and dangerous.



## Be Ready for Storm Season

*Preparedness is the Best Defense*

Spring is on our doorstep and all of us are looking forward to more opportunities to be outdoors and enjoy the warmer weather. Unfortunately, spring and summer can also create the perfect conditions for severe storms.

Sussex REC crews are always prepared to respond should power outages occur in our area. When severe storms cause power disruptions, our line crews take all necessary precautions before they get to work on any downed lines.

I would encourage you to also practice safety and preparedness to protect your family during storms and outages. FEMA offers a guide at [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) on storm and disaster preparedness. Here are some key strategies that you can use as a starting point:

- *Stock your pantry with a three-day supply of non-*

*perishable food, including canned goods, energy bars, peanut butter, powdered milk, instant coffee, water, and other essentials (i.e., diapers and toiletries).*

- *Confirm that you have adequate sanitation and hygiene supplies like towelettes, soap, and hand sanitizer.*
- *Ensure your First Aid kit is stocked with pain relievers, bandages, and other medical essentials, and make sure your prescriptions are current.*
- *Set aside basic household items you will need, including flashlights, batteries, a manual can opener, and portable, battery-powered radio or TV.*

During thunderstorms, it is best to unplug major appliances, TVs, computers, and other sensitive electronics to help avert damage from potential power surges and prevent



Summer storms have the potential to knock down tall trees from outside of our rights of way, damaging power lines and even breaking utility poles.

overloading circuits during power restoration. That said, do leave one light on so you will know when power is restored.

If you plan to use a portable generator, ensure it's rated to handle the power you will need, and always review the manufacturer's instructions to operate it safely.

Listen to local news or NOAA Weather Radio for storm and emergency information, and check [www.sussexrec.com](http://www.sussexrec.com) for restoration updates. You can also follow us on Facebook or sign up for email alerts at [www.sussexrec.com/email](http://www.sussexrec.com/email) to receive updates during large outages.

Severe storms can occasionally bring down power lines. If you see a downed line, always assume it's energized

and never approach it. If flooding occurs, never walk through areas where power lines could be submerged.

You can never know how much damage a storm will cause. This past summer, a severe storm that lasted less than 10 minutes caused tree damage throughout the territory and outages that lasted for several days. Advance planning can reduce stress and anxiety caused by the weather event and lessen the impact of the storm's effects.

We recommend that you make a plan today, because storm preparedness is always your best defense. When your power goes out, call our 24/7 outage reporting number at 877-504-6463. This is the fastest way to let us know if your power is out.



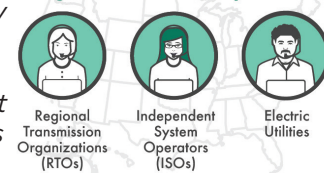
## ELECTRICITY SUPPLY & DEMAND

Behind the scenes, a network of people and facilities work together to ensure you have electricity when you flip the switch.

The amount of electricity generated and how much is sent to where it's needed are

typically coordinated and monitored by regional grid operators that essentially act as energy traffic managers.

### Regional Grid Operators



As electricity demand varies throughout the day, grid operators, power plant operators, and electric utilities work to forecast, plan, and purchase enough electricity for everyone.

Ensuring communities have the exact amount of electricity they need is a challenging task, but behind the scenes, a network of industry experts make it happen every day.

### Factors that Impact Supply & Demand

- Supply Chain Issues
- Extreme Temperatures
- Infrastructure Costs and Availability
- Demand Surges
- Fuel Costs
- Federal/State Regulations

## FAQ: Energy Tariffs

*Responding to recent tariff announcements*

We at Sussex REC have received multiple questions about how the Co-op and its members may be affected by recently announced tariffs. Members have especially expressed concern for the newly announced tariffs affecting energy from Canada.

While there is still a lot of uncertainty at this time about how these tariffs will come into play, we want to assure our members that our agreements for purchased energy are locked in for 2025. Members should not expect a sudden change in rates this year as a response to tariffs or government policy changes.

Our Cooperative receives nearly 67% of its energy from resources that are member-owned and based in the U.S. These come from our part-ownership of our power provider Allegheny Electric Cooperative and its investments in carbon free energy sources within the U.S. Through Allegheny, we are part owners of the Susquehanna Steam Electric Station, a nuclear plant in Berwick, Pennsylvania, and the Raystown Hydroelectric Plant in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania. We also make use of long-term contracts from other power sources within the U.S. These resources will not be impacted by tariffs or trade disputes.

While the open market purchases that round out our power mix may be partially affected, it's still too early to determine that for sure. Other tariffs affecting materials, like transformers, wire, or other supplies, could increase costs for us beyond 2025. This is difficult to quantify with the information we have now. Thankfully, we have the support of policy and energy experts at Allegheny Electric Cooperative and NRECA to help us navigate these changes. We are actively working with them to forecast potential effects these new policies may have on us in the future. ⚡




## Medical Alert



Access to electric power is essential for many of the most basic actions in our daily lives. For those of us who rely on electric-powered equipment, such as respirators or dialysis machines, to meet medical needs, access to power is even more vital.

Power outages can create interruptions in the flow of electricity that can have a negative impact on these individuals. While most outages are a result of outside forces, some are planned by Sussex REC for grid maintenance. We aim to give vulnerable members advanced notice of planned outages through our Medical Alert Program.

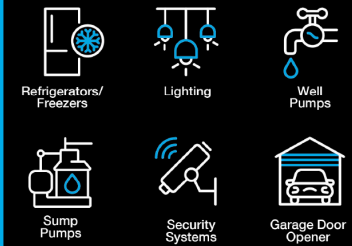
If you, a family member, or someone you are a caretaker of relies on medical equipment at home, take the steps to prioritize health and comfort in planned outage situations. Enrollment in our Medical Alert Program will “opt in” your account to receive notice by phone in advance of a planned outage that would affect your area. This would give your household the information needed to put any back-up plans into place.

Whether this means hooking up a generator or moving to an alternative location for the extent of the outage, planning is the best medicine in these situations. Don’t let utility outages affect the health and comfort of those in your home who rely on medical equipment. Find our enrollment form at [www.sussexrec.com/medalert](http://www.sussexrec.com/medalert). 



### CONNECT PORTABLE GENERATORS TO YOUR HOME SAFELY & EASILY!

With the GenerLink transfer switch, you can power the essentials of your home during an outage.



## SIGNS OF AN

## ENERGY SCAM

As technology has gotten more advanced, so have the tactics that scammers use to swindle your hard-earned money. Whether it comes through a phone call, text, or email, don’t leave yourself vulnerable to scams! Watch out for these **RED FLAGS!**

### High-Pressure Tactics

Scammers will pressure you, creating a sense of urgency. Claims that your power will be disconnected without immediate payment are common with utility scams.

### Sketchy Payment Methods

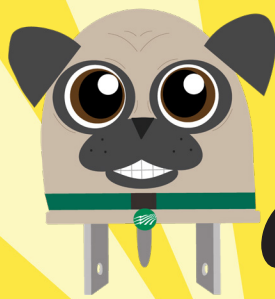
Scammers may ask for unusual payment methods like gift cards or cryptocurrency. In these cases, it’s likely a scam.

### Dodgy Communication

Whether an email, text message or letter, utility scams typically include poor grammar, spelling errors or unusual email addresses. These are common warning signs of a scam.



Whenever you notice one of these red flags, it could be a scam! Keep in mind: you shouldn’t trust phone numbers you can’t verify, click links you don’t recognize, or provide your login info or passcodes to anyone over the phone. If you suspect a scammer is trying to get you, exit the conversation and let us know by calling **973.875.5101**. Find more tips to combat scams at [sussexrec.com/scams](http://sussexrec.com/scams).



## KIDS' CORNER

with Pluggy the Pug

Saving energy at home is a great way to benefit the environment and help your family save money. With the help of an adult, you can look for ways you can save energy around your home.

You can get started using the tips here, then check off the areas where you've identified ways to save!

For more activities from Pluggy the Pug, you can visit:  
[www.sussexrec.com/pluggy!](http://www.sussexrec.com/pluggy!)



### ☐ TASK: Bright Ideas

Ensure your home uses energy-saving LED bulbs. If you find incandescent or CFL bulbs, replace them with LEDs.

### ☐ TASK: Empty Rooms

Turn off lights and ceiling fans in unoccupied rooms to conserve energy.



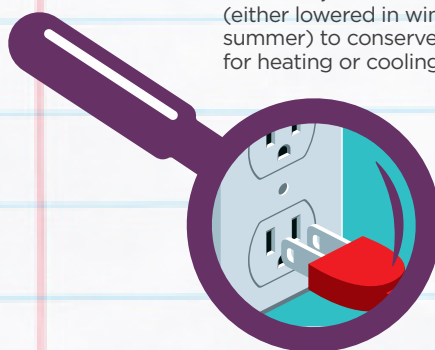
### ☐ TASK: Sealed for Savings

Check windows to make sure they are closed and locked. Sealed windows help prevent air leaks, which saves energy.



### ☐ TASK: Set to Save

Check the thermostat to see if it can be adjusted a few degrees (either lowered in winter or raised in summer) to conserve energy used for heating or cooling your home.



### ☐ TASK: Slay Energy Vampires

Energy vampires are devices that consume energy even when they're not being used. Unplug these items, like phone chargers and tablets, when you're not using them.



## DOES YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION NEED TO BE UPDATED?

HAVE YOU MOVED? DO YOU HAVE A NEW PHONE NUMBER?  
DID YOU GET YOUR CAPITAL CREDIT CHECK?

**UPDATE YOUR INFO!**

CONTACT US: 973-875-5101

[WWW.SUSSEXREC.COM/UPDATE-INFO](http://WWW.SUSSEXREC.COM/UPDATE-INFO)

*#StayPluggedIn*



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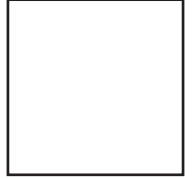
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-  **Pluggy the Pug's Kids Corner**
-  **Member Focused - From 1937 to 2025**

## Member Focused - From 1937 to 2025

As a not-for-profit, member-owned rural electric cooperative, Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative's mission is to provide its members with the highest quality of service at the lowest possible cost.

We were founded in 1937 by members of this very community to help meet a need for affordable, reliable electric power. This helped bring our rural corner of New Jersey into the modern age and created opportunity for the entire community.

Our members are at the heart of everything we do, which is why we are always seeking member feedback. When members lend their voice to the conversation, it helps us at Sussex REC understand your needs, values, and experiences.

Our Member Satisfaction Survey takes as little as two minutes to fill out. Please consider taking the time to let us know your thoughts about your Co-op and how we can serve you in 2025 and beyond. 



**We care  
about what  
you think.**

Answer this quick survey to let us know what matters to you and how we can serve you better.

→

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