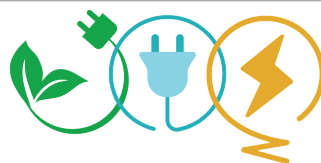


*Pictured: SREC linemen prepare to take part in annual pole top rescue training*



**Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.**  
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

SREC's Member Newsletter  
Volume 1, Issue 3

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# Currents

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## Online Meeting Recap

It is a busy time of year for Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative and our members! On June 5th, 2023, SREC held its Online Meeting – the business portion of our Annual Meeting Event. This series of videos and information, which is hosted on our website at [www.sussexrec.com/annual-meeting](http://www.sussexrec.com/annual-meeting), is still available to view if you have not had the chance to watch it.

As always, our Online Meeting included a Financial Report from the SREC Board of Directors' Secretary/Treasurer Ronald Dupont. This report communicated the Co-op's financials for the year 2022 (also available in the last issue's Annual Report). The Chairman's Report from Jack Haggerty, Jr., Chairman of the SREC Board of Directors, touched on some of the things impacting SREC's operations — namely supply chain issues, cybersecurity, dying trees,

By Chris Reese  
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and rising costs. Jack also went into detail on the Cooperative's power supply in 2022.

The results of our 2023 mail-in board election were reviewed by our general counsel, Thomas Ryan from Laddey, Clark & Ryan. Through a total of 938 returned ballots, 871 votes were cast for District 1's Jack Haggerty, Jr., 860 votes were cast for District 2's William Kovach, and 861 votes were cast for District 3's Karen McDougal. Please join us in congratulating your newly re-elected directors: Mr. Haggerty, Mr. Kovach and Mrs. McDougal.

The final video in our Online Meeting was my Q&A, where I answered five questions submitted by members. In this Q&A, I went into detail on our System Connection Fee, the distinction between member-owned and

>> Continued on pg. 2



co-op-owned equipment, our cybersecurity efforts, our vegetation management program, and Electric Thermal Storage (ETS) heat! If you are curious to learn more about any of these topics, I recommend checking out this video or the individual segments available on our social media pages.

Graduation season also occurs around the same time as our Online Meeting, and our 2023 scholarship and awards announcements were included alongside our Online Meeting.


Our James Howard Goodwin Scholarship offers \$2,000 to member students to support their pursuit of a college education. This year it was awarded to Victoria Annunziata, Luke Keating, and Alayna Carcich from Vernon Township High School, Jonathan Chromcik from Sussex County Technical School, and Mia Sciabica from High Point Regional High School.



*Pictured: SREC CEO Chris Reese and Director of Marketing & Member Services Claudia Raffay with Mia Sciabica, Blake Bayer, and Luke Van Orden, 2023's scholarship recipients from High Point Regional High School*

Our Trade School/Certification Scholarship offers \$2,000 to students pursuing a trade and was awarded to two High Point students: Blake Bayer and Luke Van Orden.

Finally, we presented our new Ray Cordts Community Champion Award that rewards students for volunteer efforts in the community with \$500 and an additional \$500 donation in their name to the organization of their choice. This award was created to honor our late director Ray Cordts, whose impact on our community will not be forgotten any time soon. Our awardees were Hannah Gallagher from Sussex Tech, with her donation going to the Monarchs (which teaches special needs students to ice skate and play ice sports), and Hunter Smith from Vernon, whose donation is going to Karen Ann Quinlan Hospice.

Alongside our Online Meeting, we opened registration for our Member Appreciation Event. This in-person event once again takes place at the NJ State Fair. This year, we can be found at the BBQ Pavilion from 12-8 pm on Monday, August 7th. Members were eligible to register for up to two free tickets to the Fair (until July 3rd) so they could attend our event and enjoy the Fair, on us! This newsletter should be reaching your mailbox around the time of the event. To all who attended, thank you! We look forward to sharing more from this event in the weeks to come. 

# Currents

## 4 KEY FACTORS That Impact Energy Bills

You pay for the electricity you consume each month, but there are additional factors that impact your energy bills.



### Fuel Costs

Before electricity can be delivered to your home, it must first be generated at a power plant or from a renewable source. The cost of fuels used to generate electricity fluctuates, which is why you see a PCA charge on your monthly bill. This monthly charge covers cost fluctuations without having to continually restructure electricity rates.



### Service Costs

Your bill includes a monthly System Connection Fee, which recovers part of the co-op's ongoing investments in poles, wire, meters, system maintenance, and additional costs necessary to provide electric service.



### Weather

When temperatures soar or dip, your cooling or heating equipment must run longer and at maximum capacity, which can greatly increase your energy use. Extreme temperatures can also affect electricity market prices. When the need for electricity increases due to extreme heat or cold, the price of power typically rises.



### Energy Consumption

This is the amount of electricity you use each month to power your home's cooling/heating system, appliances, lighting, electronics, and more. The amount of electricity you consume is measured in kilowatt-hours, or kWh. You have control over how much energy you use, which can ultimately help manage your monthly costs.



The quarterly newsletter of  
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**Sussex Rural  
Electric Cooperative, Inc.**

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

### Our Board of Directors

<b>Chairman</b>	-	Jack Haggerty, Jr.
<b>Vice Chairman</b>	-	William Kovach
<b>Sec./Treasurer</b>	-	Ronald Dupont
Thomas Madsen		Barbara Miller
Brad Sparta		Joseph Barca
Michael Abate		Karen McDougal



## Youth Tour 2023

By Steve Sokolowski

ssokolowski@sussexrec.com



*Above: From left to right, NJ Youth Tour students Maddie Kappelmeier, Bethann Juhr, Isaac Schuman, and Dylan Barca, with chaperone Steve Sokolowski, on their way to Capitol Hill.*

It has been a bit over four years since I've been Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative's Marketing Associate, and during that time I have heard a lot about Youth Tour. My manager Claudia has attended seven Youth Tour trips in her years with the Co-op, and I was set to chaperone the 2020 trip before the pandemic spoiled everyone's plans. With SREC once again participating in 2023, it was my time to head to Washington, D.C. for what was promised to be one of the busiest weeks of my life.

My first hours as a chaperone were surreal. Early on Sunday, June 18th, I found myself driving out to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania in a rental van, with Claudia riding shotgun and four local students in the back. Though they're all from the same area, these high school juniors all attend different schools and didn't know each other well. As a result, the three-and-a-half-hour ride was a quiet one. In Gettysburg we met a bus full of other students from all over Pennsylvania, along with chaperones from their local electric co-ops. I wasn't quite sure what to expect out of this trip, and I'm sure most of the students felt the same way. But after a week together in Washington, D.C., I was amazed to see how close all the students had become and how positive my experience was as a chaperone.

### What Is Youth Tour?

Before I get into the specifics of 2023's trip, I'd like to introduce Youth Tour for those readers who haven't heard of it before. Formally known as the National Rural Electric Youth Tour, this is

a longstanding opportunity that rural electric cooperatives all over the country offer high school juniors. If a student lives in a home powered by a co-op, they are eligible to apply for this free, weeklong trip to Washington, D.C. The trip is coordinated by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) with the help of dozens of state-level directors that organize the activities their states' groups participate in.

Youth Tour has been running since 1950 and Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative began participating in 1986. Each year roughly 1,800 students attend the trip, embracing the opportunity to explore our nation's capital, meet their representatives, make connections with other students from all over the country, and also develop as leaders. One of our students, Bethann, was chosen as the Youth Leadership Council student for New Jersey. She will have the opportunity attend NRECA's Youth Leadership Conference and Annual Meeting to represent our state!

### 2023 Youth Tour

Four local students were selected for 2023's Youth Tour: Dylan Barca from Vernon Township High School, Bethann Juhr from Sussex County Technical School, Madeline Kappelmeier from Pope John XXIII Regional High School,



>> Continued on pg. 4



## Youth Tour 2023

<< Continued from pg. 3

and Isaac Schuman from High Point Regional High School. Claudia and I had the pleasure of getting to know these students while they represented SREC's membership, our community, and all of New Jersey.

As the only rural electric cooperative in New Jersey, SREC is part of the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association and joins Pennsylvania's 13 co-ops for Youth Tour. This year, we also had one student from New York join us on the trip. Our PA-NJ-NY group consisted of 59 students among the sea of countless high school juniors from other states. Our group had 17 chaperones united behind our Youth Tour director Steph Okuniuowski. Steph has worked as a Youth Tour director for over a decade and did a fantastic job organizing our nonstop activities throughout the week, keeping everybody energized and motivated, and making sure everything ran smoothly.

By the time we arrived at our D.C. hotel on Sunday and began the night's orientation events, the students on the trip were already a lot more comfortable with one another. I was inspired by how open and accepting of each other the students were and how quickly they embraced the opportunity to meet new people from all over the country. Youth Tour's state pins helped with this – each state had specially designed pins and buttons for students to trade and collect. It served as a great ice breaker and, once you've built up a collection, a nice way to show off!



Throughout the rest of the week, students and chaperones alike were kept very busy. We visited many monuments and memorials, including the Pentagon Memorial. This memorial has a unique impact now that all high school juniors were born well after September 11th, 2001. Regardless, all of NJ, PA, and NY's students conducted themselves respectfully and thoughtfully. The same went for our visits to other solemn locations like Arlington National Cemetery and the Holocaust Museum. I was very impressed with the maturity our

students displayed while still being able to have fun during lighter activities like the Smithsonian and Udvar-Hazy museums, bowling at Pinstripes in Georgetown, and the Youth Day celebration where attending states' students gathered for inspirational speeches, dinner, and dancing.

One key opportunity that Youth Tour provides students is the chance to meet their representatives. New Jersey's students visited

the office of Congressman Josh Gottheimer, who always makes time for SREC's students on Youth Tour. This year, Congressman Gottheimer sat down with Dylan, Bethann, Maddie, and Isaac to answer their questions and explain how their local actions can have a national impact.

### Beyond Youth Tour

While chaperoning Youth Tour was a lot of work featuring early mornings and late nights, always staying "on," and never having enough caffeine, it was a deeply rewarding experience that I am honored to have been a part of. Each day's schedule was full of unforgettable moments and lessons for the students, and as a first-time chaperone, I feel like I learned as much as the kids!

NJ's students all had a blast and made great friends on the trip. I hope that this experience has had an impact on them that may inspire them for years to come. Many Youth Tour alumni have found themselves motivated to go to school or work in Washington, D.C. Some took on jobs with NRECA or local electric co-ops (including two chaperones I worked with on this trip). Numerous Youth Tour alumni go on to larger-than-life careers, including Apple CEO Tim Cook who credits Youth Tour with his first ever visit to Washington, D.C. You never know what kind of doors Youth Tour could open



*Pictured: New Jersey's Youth Tour group poses with Congressman Josh Gottheimer*






for your kid, or the connections they can make!

We always say that Youth Tour is a life-changing experience, and now I know firsthand that this is true. If I had known about the trip while I was a student at High Point, I would have jumped at the chance to attend! Instead, I'll settle for the experience I had as a chaperone and everything that awaits in the years to come.

If you're a member of SREC and have a child who's soon to be a high school junior, I highly encourage you to look into this trip! The students I met on this trip came from all kinds of backgrounds and had very different personalities, and they all had a wonderful experience. As long as your child is open to learning new things, seizing opportunity, and expanding their horizons, they will get something valuable out of Youth Tour.

Applications for New Jersey's Youth Tour group will open later this year. I hope that you keep this opportunity in mind for your own kids. You can visit [www.njyouthtour.com](http://www.njyouthtour.com) to learn more! 

## YOUTH TOUR

### 2023 THE STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

*Youth Tour is a weeklong trip packed with unforgettable memories, new friendships, and nonstop activities in the capital of our nation. Three of the New Jersey students who attended Youth Tour in 2023 shared with us some of their highlights from the trip and the experiences that meant the most to them. If your child is interested in attending a future Youth Tour, visit [www.njyouthtour.com](http://www.njyouthtour.com) for details on how to apply!*



**Isaac Schuman**

*"My favorite part about Youth Tour was meeting lots of new people from all over the country, touring D.C. and seeing all of the memorials and monuments, and listening to Claudia's fun facts of the day! This trip was a great*

*opportunity for me to learn about the electric cooperatives and how they work. It also allowed me to learn the history of our nation through the museums and many places we visited throughout the week."*



**Dylan Barca**

*"Some highlights for me were visiting the Pentagon Memorial and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier because they had a special, surreal feeling. There was an energy given that made me think back to the sacrifices that were made.*

*It meant a lot to me to represent my state and gave me a feeling of pride. I will never forget the friends I made and the experiences that I went through."*

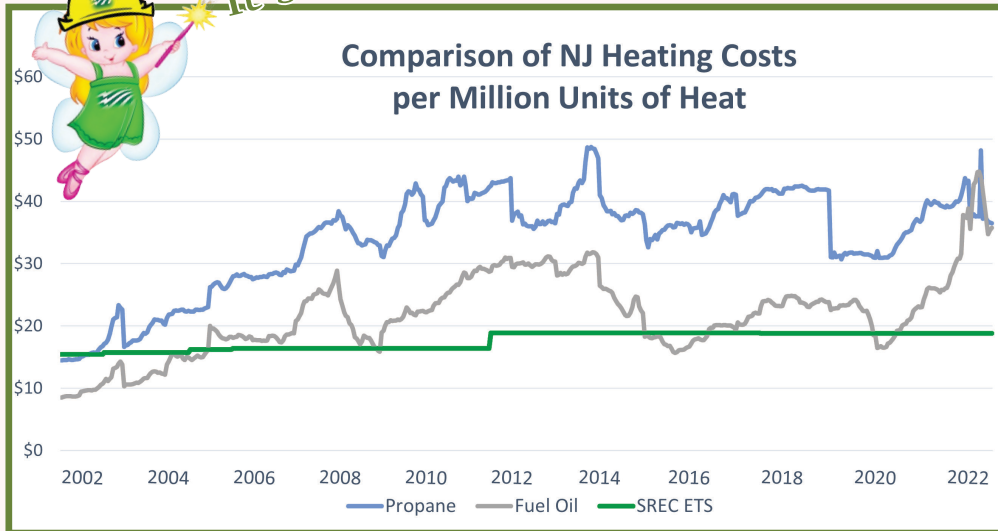
**Maddie Kappelmeier**



*"My experience on Youth Tour was unforgettable and truly amazing. My favorite part was being able to meet people and make friends all across the country, because I had really only known people from New Jersey and a couple relatives from Pennsylvania. Getting to meet people from all over the country made me see how similar or different our lives were. I also enjoyed being able to see so many Washington D.C. monuments, memorials, and museums that brought attention to historic events and taught me more. I also enjoyed learning more about the positive effect of rural electric cooperatives across the country. This opportunity was so special because it made me a part of a group that I will always remember and will always be connected with."*

It's not magic.  
It's ETS!

# ETS HEAT



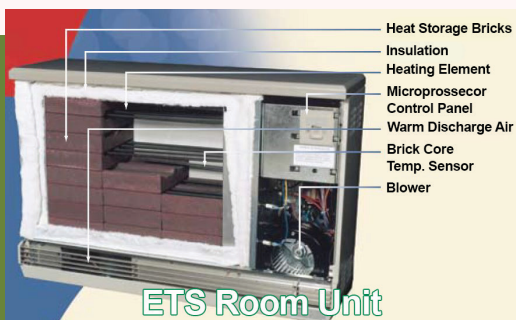
Are you dreading the upcoming colder months, when it's back to riding the rollercoaster of price changes for propane and heating oil? Electric Thermal Storage heat, or "ETS," offers a way to heat your home with reliably-priced, off-peak electricity. ETS is available EXCLUSIVELY to SREC members who can take advantage of a special off-peak rate to heat their home comfortably and affordably.

## Benefits of ETS

**Perfect for Any Home:** ETS is available in room units, as a central furnace, or as a hydronic furnace. Your system will charge using electricity during off-peak hours and distribute that heat as needed through your home's existing baseboard or air ducts. ETS has no burners to maintain or fumes to vent and operates quietly, with practically no sound.

**Environmentally Friendly:** By switching to ETS, you can reduce your carbon footprint! ETS owners free themselves from reliance on fossil fuels by heating their homes with electricity from SREC's nearly 80% carbon-free power mix! And while you reduce your carbon footprint, you'll also see long-term savings by freeing yourself from price fluctuations of oil and propane.

**Refer a Friend, Reap the Rewards:** We offer a Refer A Friend program for those who choose to share the "magic" of ETS with their friends and neighbors. If you are a current ETS owner and recommend it to a friend, be sure to let us know - we'll reward you for spreading the word! When they have their ETS unit installed, you will *both* receive a \$150 credit on your electric bill!



ETS generates and stores electric heat during off-peak hours, when demand is lowest, to release into your home as needed. We can pass these off-peak savings directly to our members. Our ETS rate is nearly half of our normal residential rate!

For more information on ETS and its pricing, visit [www.sussexrec.com/ets!](http://www.sussexrec.com/ets!)







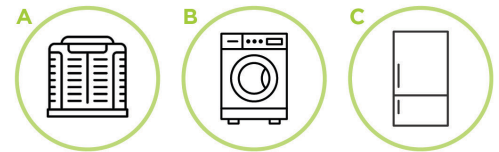
## with Pluggy the Pug SPOT THE BIGGEST ENERGY USER

We use electricity every day, but we rarely think about the appliances and electronics that consume the most energy. Can you spot the biggest energy users?

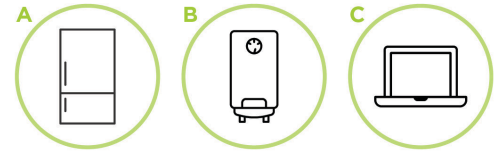
Review each grouping, then circle the one that you think consumes the most energy. Check your work in the answer key below.

Answer Key: 1.A 2.B 3.B 4.C

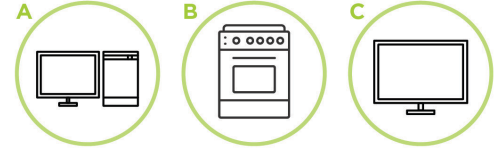
1.
  - A) Heating and Cooling Unit
  - B) Clothes Washer
  - C) Refrigerator



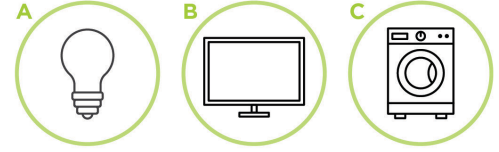
2.
  - A) Refrigerator
  - B) Water Heater
  - C) Laptop Computer



3.
  - A) Desktop Computer
  - B) Electric Oven
  - C) TV



4.
  - A) LED Lights
  - B) TV
  - C) Clothes Dryer



### Save Energy!

- Wash clothing in cold water and air-dry when possible.
- Only run full loads in the dishwasher.
- Turn off lights when you leave a room.
- Take short showers instead of baths.
- Unplug electronic devices when not in use.



## A Rural Road Safety Reminder

When driving on local roads this time of year, stay mindful of slow-moving farm vehicles on the road.

With farmers reaping their harvests in the spring and summer, it's not uncommon to find a farmer navigating heavy machinery along the rural roads of our service territory. When you find yourself behind such a vehicle, we urge that you use caution and patience before passing them on the left side. Your safety, their safety, and the safety of other drivers and pedestrians can be at stake!

You may remember recent headlines that remarked on a steep increase in fatal car accidents in New Jersey in the second half of last year. There were nearly 700 fatalities resulting from around 650 car crashes in New Jersey in 2022.

While not all of these were on rural roads, it is important to keep in mind that these types of accidents are not limited to highways or turnpikes. We have our own hazards that we're all aware of – work zones, animals, or fallen trees – but don't underestimate the danger you can face while passing farm equipment on the road!

Farmers acknowledge that being stuck behind such slow-moving vehicles can be frustrating and often will pull over to let other motorists pass, but you must use caution before passing them – for everybody's sake.

Always be sure that there is no oncoming traffic in the left lane before passing, and never pass in a no-passing zone or within 100 feet of an intersection. Do not tailgate the farmer or other drivers. Also, always consider that farmers pulling to the right may be about to make a wide left turn. Stay attentive of your surroundings and don't be reckless. It could save your life! ⚡

# IN THIS ISSUE OF Currents

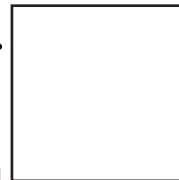










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-  **ETS Heat**
-  **Pluggy's Kids Corner**
-  **A Rural Road Safety Reminder**
-  **Medical Alert Reminder**

## Medical Alert Program

Oftentimes, planning is the best medicine! This is true for both your Co-op when implementing planned outages that let us work on and improve our system, and with members who can use notice of planned outages to make sure their needs will be accommodated while the power is out.



### MEDICAL ALERT PROGRAM


Do you use electric-powered medical equipment?

Enroll in our Medical Alert Program to receive advance notice of *planned outages*.

**www.sussexrec.com/medalert**

We understand that planned outages are inconvenient, which is why we almost always schedule them during times of day when the majority of those in the affected area would be at work or in school. However, we also recognize that an outage, even a brief one, can have a large impact on members that need an uninterrupted access to electricity to power medical equipment they rely on.

If you are one of these members, you live in a household with one such member, or you are their caretaker, we highly encourage you to sign up for our Medical Alert Program! Enrollment in this program will ensure that you receive advance notice of when a planned outage is scheduled so you can prepare your backup plan. Whether that involves a generator or heading to an alternate location that will have electricity for the duration of the outage, Medical Alerts at least gives you time to prepare to keep everyone's health and safety secure.

You can find our enrollment form online at [www.sussexrec.com/medalert](http://www.sussexrec.com/medalert), or you can call into our office to request a copy be sent to you. Please note that to remain in this program, you must enroll yearly. Members whose medical equipment is life sustaining must include their physician's signature in their application. We cannot provide notice of unplanned outages caused by unforeseen circumstances, but you can rest easy knowing that SREC will keep you in the know on any and all planned outages. 



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