



Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

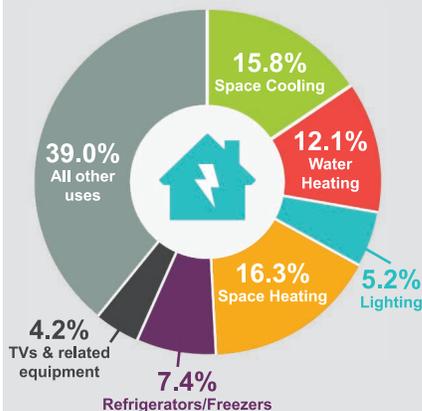
Currents

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WATTS UP?

The latest data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration shows the combined use of clothes washers and dryers, computers, dishwashers, small appliances, and other electrical equipment (noted as "all other uses") accounts for nearly 40% of electricity consumption in American homes.



For weekly fun facts on energy efficiency, electric safety, and more, follow us on social media and look out for #WattsUpWednesday!

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CURRENTS is published monthly by Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative
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Ringing in the New Year

By: Chris Reese, President & CEO
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It may have seemed like a year that would never end but, remarkably, 2020 has drawn to a close. This feels like a cause for celebration, even if we can't celebrate it like we would on any other New Year. I am sure we are all hoping that with this New Year will come better things.

While we're all glad to be through 2020, we must remember that the circumstances that made this past year difficult are still with us as we cross into 2021. The coronavirus is still a factor that will continue to have a major impact on our lives. Until the vast majority of us here in the United States are able to get access to a vaccine, masks and social distancing will continue to be necessary parts of our everyday lives. While the New Year may seem to be the "light at the end of the tunnel," we can't let our hope for a better year come with a drop in diligence and responsibility.

The financial aftershocks of the pandemic continue to affect some of our members. This will likely be the case well into 2021. This has been a difficult time for us all, but many families and businesses were hit harder by COVID-19's economic impact than others. This is part of the reason that we are not implementing any rate increase for 2021. While some indicators tell us there is a need for a small increase, like a high power cost next year, we feel it would be inappropriate to implement an increase to your monthly electric bill at a time when so many people are struggling. Everyone has enough on their plates right now.

If you have recently been faced with financial hardships and you are struggling to pay your bill, Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative offers options that can help. Our

Ringling in the New Year

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office is willing to work with you. If you call our office with just some simple details of your situation, we can set up a payment arrangement or enroll you in leveled billing, both options which can keep monthly payments affordable for members who qualify. You can find more details on these options, as well as information on assistance programs that SREC members may be eligible for, at sussexrec.com/assistance.

Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative has been closed to the public since March, when the coronavirus pandemic hit full swing. Employees were able to work remotely for a period of time until we felt conditions were safe enough for everyone to return to the office. While we have now crossed the threshold into 2021, we still do not plan to reopen to the public for the foreseeable future. We miss seeing many of you in our office each day, but we feel that this is our best option to ensure the health and safety of our employees, our members, and the community as a whole.

Many members still drop by to pay their monthly bills in-person. While we can't accept your payment face-to-face, members can take advantage of a dropbox for bill payments at their convenience. When you pull into our parking lot, you can find it on the left side of the office. Otherwise, we encourage members to take advantage of paying their bills online via www.srecbillpay.com. This website lets you take care of your payment from the comfort of your home and offers options for recurring bank drafts that automatically pay your bill each month.

Most New Year's messages in *Currents* are a little more cheerful than this one. While I wanted to offer a reminder that our current circumstances are not yet over, don't get me wrong – as long as you remain safe and are mindful of your impact on others, there is no reason for you to let the state of the world get you down or hold you back. We may still be in the midst of a global pandemic, but the New Year remains a juncture for growth, change, and seizing new opportunities.

Make the most of this New Year while continuing to make smart and safe choices. If you're one for New Year's resolutions, there's plenty of ways you can strive to improve your lifestyle and outlook, even when the world isn't yet back to status quo. If adhering to a resolution may be too much pressure in this tumultuous time, practicing self-care and focusing on your immediate needs can help keep you from becoming overwhelmed. These options are both great ways to ring in the New Year and keep yourself focused on the coming bright spots of 2021. Remaining positive and hopeful for the future can help us all carry on until COVID-19 becomes a thing we look back on instead of something we have to live with.

Have a happy, safe, and healthy New Year, everyone!

Prefer the inbox
over the mailbox?

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www.srecbillpay.com

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Replace standard power strips with advanced power strips to save energy. Advanced power strips look like ordinary power strips, but they have built-in features that are designed to reduce the amount of energy used by standby electronics that consume energy even when they're not in use (also known as phantom load).

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) estimates that the average home loses \$200 annually to energy wasted by phantom load.

Source:
www.nrel.gov



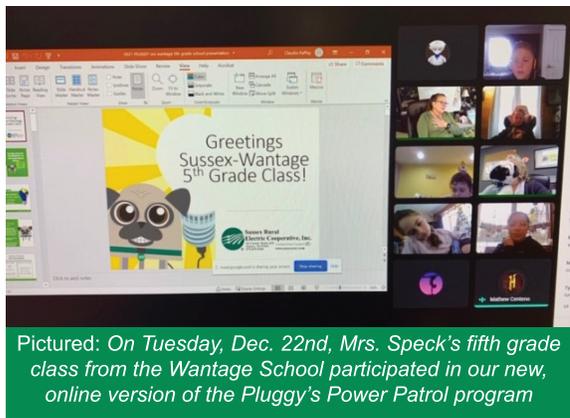
Pluggy's Power Patrol

By: Steve Sokolowski, Marketing Associate
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Without electricity, our modern lives would not be possible. While it powers everything we do, it is critical to always keep safe around electricity. The children of today were born into an interconnected world, powered by electricity. To them, electricity is ubiquitous and familiar, which perhaps makes young children the most vulnerable to electricity's dangers. This is why electric safety education is a focal point of Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative's educational outreach efforts.



Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative has been a proud partner to our local schools throughout its nearly 84-year history. As a community-based organization, being a part of building the next generation of leaders is a great privilege. Being a local electric utility means we are in the best position to inform the youth of our community on the importance of electric safety. When teaching this lesson, it is important that we present this information in a way that both reinforces this message and makes kids want to learn.



Pictured: On Tuesday, Dec. 22nd, Mrs. Speck's fifth grade class from the Wantage School participated in our new, online version of the Pluggy's Power Patrol program

In 2019 SREC introduced Pluggy the Pug as our youth outreach mascot. He is a pug, who is also a plug, that was adopted by Lineman Larry and has learned all about electricity, the science behind it, and the best practices to stay safe. Pluggy invites local students to join him as official members of Pluggy's Power Patrol, dedicated to keeping their homes safe from electrical hazards and spreading knowledge about electric safety. During Spring 2019, this program reached between 1,500 and 2,000 local students, ranging from preschool to fifth grade. We reinforced everything taught during our presentation by giving students and scouts Pluggy-branded activity books, stickers and temporary tattoos, and a Power Patrol badge sticker to take home with them. We also gifted each teacher with a stuffed pug to keep in their classrooms as a reminder to their students.

A national and regional award-winning program, the Pluggy's Power Patrol program had a great first year that unfortunately was cut short due to the coronavirus pandemic. While planning for the next school year, it was clear that the pandemic would present us with new challenges in providing the best possible educational experience. Through deliberation and innovation, we have adapted Pluggy's Power Patrol to best suit the current needs to children, teachers, and scout leaders.

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APPLIANCE REBATES

Get money back for buying energy efficient
\$50 for each ENERGY STAR rated appliance
www.sussexrec.com/rebate



Pluggy's Power Patrol

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2021 ENERGY EFFICIENCY CALENDAR

Pluggy the Pug is here to teach you some of the many ways you can save energy! Saving energy helps reduce your family's monthly bills AND helps our environment. Change your energy use habits by following the monthly tips below. Keep this calendar on your refrigerator to remind family members to be energy efficient throughout the year.



JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL
Turn off lights when you leave a room. 	Instead of turning up the heat, put on an extra layer of clothing or stay cozy under a blanket. 	Take short showers instead of baths. 	Ask an adult to help you plant a tree to help shade your home in the summer. 
MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST
Decorate your backyard or porch with solar-powered lights. 	Turn off fans when you leave a room. 	Dry heavy linens outside on a clothesline instead of using the dryer. 	Don't leave the refrigerator door open too long when deciding what to eat. 
SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Turn off running water while brushing your teeth. 	Unplug energy vampires like chargers, gaming consoles, and cable or satellite boxes when not in use. 	Remind family members they can use cold water when washing clothes. 	Decorate your home with energy-saving LED holiday lights. 

The new version of the Pluggy's Power Patrol educational program is able to deliver a comprehensive, fully customizable experience over Zoom and can reach students whether their classes are in-person, all virtual, or some hybrid of the two. Pluggy comes to each presentation equipped with new visuals, exclusive activities, and topics that are fully customizable to meet a group's grade level, areas of interest, and goals.

This new phase of Pluggy's Power Patrol has already begun. Presentations are hosted live over Zoom and allow for full participation from students or scouts. This is all offered by Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative, absolutely free. If you are an educator at a school in our service territory or a scout leader who is a member or who leads a troop of scouts from mostly SREC-powered homes, and are interested in scheduling a virtual presentation with us and Pluggy, let us know by reaching out to Director of Marketing & Member Services Claudia Raffay at craffay@sussexrec.com. After the last school year ended with shutdowns and stay-at-home orders, we are excited to be able to bring back Pluggy and teach kids in a whole new way!

For any parents interested in having their child take part in the learning, we have resources for you as well! All activities included in our Pluggy's Power Patrol activity book are available to print and download on our website. Some activities are exclusive to our school and scout presentations and cannot be found on this page. But as a bonus, you can find a Pluggy calendar on this page featuring twelve energy-saving tips that your young Power Patroller can practice at home! You can find all of this at www.sussexrec.com/pluggy.

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