



**Sussex Rural
Electric Cooperative, Inc.**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Currents

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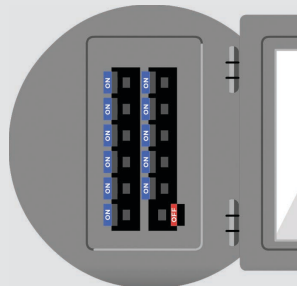
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WATTS UP?

If your power goes out, it might not always be an outage.



Be sure to check your home's circuit breaker before calling to report a power outage. If you've accidentally overloaded a circuit, a breaker in your breaker box will be in the OFF position. After restoring power, try to determine what appliance caused the circuit to overload.

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



@sussexrec



@SussexREC



Giving Thanks

By: Chris Reese, President & CEO
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As the holidays approach, my mind is drawn to the thing that's been on all our minds lately: the pandemic. I'm sure everyone is a bit burnt out on the topic at this point, but unfortunately it's still a major part of the reality we have to live in.

Fortunately, I would say that this past year has been a much better year than 2020. While many of us this year have still undergone great difficulties due to the pandemic, in general the confusion, uncertainty, and disruption to our lives that the virus presented in 2020 was much worse. I am sure we are all thankful that, as a whole, things are trending closer to normal.

Still, the coronavirus is something to take seriously and it has left a horrible impact on many individuals and families. If you know someone who has battled COVID-19 and won, or you yourself caught it and recovered, that is certainly something worth being thankful for. Here at SREC, while we have had some positive cases among our employees over the last two years, I am incredibly thankful that everyone on our team has ended up bouncing back and that there has been no major spread of the virus throughout our staff.

This time last year, we at Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative had just welcomed back many of our employees to the office following a six-month period where about half of our staff had shifted to working from home. At that point in time, thanks to cases going down and vaccines becoming available, we felt it was feasible to accommodate our full workforce in the office once again. While the pandemic has had a few spikes since then, especially with the rise of the delta variant, we have been able to keep the office open to all employees with minor adjustments and for that I am also thankful.

Even as conditions continue to look promising, we are of course remaining cautious. All employees are encouraged to social distance and to wear masks if they are not vaccinated. We still remain closed to the public, though in some cases we now allow fully masked individuals into our lobby if they need to speak with our member services team. It is a far cry from our old status quo where members were always welcome inside to pay their bills or donate food to our food drive, but I am glad we are making progress.



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Giving Thanks

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While we are approaching things cautiously, we nevertheless are hopeful for things we can do in the coming year. The pandemic has affected our ability to host or take part in community-based programs that have fostered our relationship with our members for so long. Thankfully, we are now dipping our toes back into the water.

For one, we will once again be holding a food drive where we collect donations from members and employees. This food drive will run from November 1st until December 16th and will benefit the Sussex County Division of Social Service's food pantry. If you are interested in donating, you can stop by our office's front door and you will be buzzed into our vestibule where the donation box is located.

Co-ops like Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative are governed by a set of Co-op Principles, which you can read more about in this issue's secondary article. Looking ahead, we are hopeful to bring back other programs that can help us continue to live up to the Seventh Co-op Principle of Concern for Community. This includes many of our school-based programs. Our educational presentations to students have been conducted virtually for the last year and we have been happy with their impact. However, when instructing our community's next generation of leaders on electricity, energy distribution, and electric safety, in-person is ultimately the best way to convey this important information.



We have reached out to several schools in our service territory extending the offer for class visits. Our new initiative, "SREC & Me, 80% Carbon Free" aims to reach high school students to share more in-depth information than what's covered in our educational programs aimed at younger students. We are hopeful that we will have the opportunity to visit our local schools more often in the near future.

As for another school-related program—Youth Tour may be a possibility this year, though it is one that we are still not 100% sure on. The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association does plan to host a Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. this coming summer after cancellation of the event for 2020 and 2021, though with substantial changes. We will continue to keep a watchful eye on the plans for the event as well as the status of the coronavirus across the US before deciding on our participation. Because Youth Tour is a program where members' high school aged children are brought to Washington, D.C. by your electric Co-op, we want to treat the possibility of the trip with the utmost caution.

While our participation in Youth Tour is uncertain, another event – namely, our Annual Meeting – is one that we are certain we want to bring back, even if it will look different than previous meetings. As you all know, our 2020 Annual Meeting was canceled following the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic. In 2021, we held an Online Meeting where all content was posted to our website at www.sussexrec.com/online-meeting. We still had our usual updates, Q&As, and prize drawings, and we found the Online Meeting to be very successful.

However, it could never be the same as the usual in-person meeting that affords our staff the opportunity to meet face-to-face with our members. We are still working out the details, but we are confident that it won't be the same as a normal year's Annual Meeting. This is not a bad thing of course. The need for change brings with it unexpected innovation and improvement. We are hopeful that a new take at the Annual Meeting will bring us the opportunity to reunite with our membership at this great event, and thankful that conditions have improved enough to allow us the chance.



COOK UP ENERGY SAVINGS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON.

- Clean oven burners regularly.
- Match the pan size to the burner you're using.
- Use small appliances like slow cookers and toaster ovens when possible.

From our table to yours,
Happy Thanksgiving!

Even while things are improving, we have no promise that life will ever fully return to the way things were before 2020. However, vaccines, social distancing measures, and creative thinking can help us readjust our plans to handle things in the safest way possible. I am thankful that a drop in cases and greater protections have afforded us this "wobble room." I hope that this holiday season, we can all take a moment to reflect on the difficulties of the past two years and voice our thanks to everything we have overcome. On behalf of everyone at Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative, we're thankful for you all. Have a wonderful Thanksgiving!

A handwritten signature in cursive script.

Cooperative Principles

By: Steve Sokolowski, Marketing Associate
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As a cooperative, Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative has a different business model than other companies. In the 1930s, rural Sussex County residents worked together to form SREC and bring power to their communities. We do not answer to investors that are governed by profits – instead, we are governed by our members.



Beyond member-ownership, the thing that sets cooperatives (in all industries) apart from other businesses is the Seven Cooperative Principles that inform their values. These principles were first introduced in 1844 and have stood the test of time as guiding principles that help cooperatives, and thus their members, succeed. They are:

Voluntary and Open Membership

Just like all co-ops, Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative was created out of necessity—to meet a need for affordable, reliable electric power that was not being met in our community. In 1937, a group of neighbors banded together and organized our electric co-op. For a modest membership fee, any rural resident could get electricity brought to their home. Neighbors came together to tackle a problem that they all had but couldn't solve alone. They worked together for the benefit of the community, and the newly established electric lines helped power economic opportunity in our area.

While decades have since passed, that same motivation remains—the focus on our mission and serving the greater good. In this, we include everyone to improve the quality of life and economic opportunity for the entire community. Membership is open to everyone in our service territory, regardless of race, religion, age, disability, gender identity, language, political perspective, or socioeconomic status.

Democratic Member Control

SREC is well suited to meet the needs of our members because we are locally governed. Each member gets a voice and a vote in how the Co-op is run, and each voice and vote are equal. As with SREC's leadership team and many of its employees, our board of directors live right here in the community on Co-op lines. These board members, who help set long-term priorities for the Co-op, have been elected by fellow members like you. We know our members have a valuable perspective, and that's why we are continually seeking your input through surveys and encourage you to weigh in on important Co-op issues and participate in our board elections.

Member's Economic Participation

Our mission is to the highest quality of service at the lowest possible cost. As a not-for-profit utility, we operate at-cost and members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative. When we do make a profit, at least part of that capital remains the common property of the Cooperative to go towards Co-op programs, initiatives, capital investments, and supporting other activities approved by the membership. By investing this capital into our system, we improve reliability of our service for years to come. When our board deems it's the right time, we will "retire" some of these funds to return these profits to the members who contributed to them. These are known as capital credits, which you typically receive every year. We will have more news about 2021's capital credit retirements soon!

Autonomy and Independence

The fourth principal, Autonomy and Independence, means that the Co-op operates in an autonomous way that is solely directed and guided by its members, reflecting the values and needs of our local community. This means the Co-op is not being influenced by leaders or shareholders several states away. Instead, the Co-op is led by the local members it serves.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Fall is the perfect time to prep your home for the upcoming winter chill. One of the best ways you can save energy and stay comfortable is to caulk and weatherstrip areas that typically need sealing. Start by sealing around windows and doors. Seal plumbing, ducting, and areas where electrical wiring comes through walls, floors and ceilings for additional energy savings.

Source: [energy.gov](https://www.energy.gov)



Cooperative Principles

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Education and Training

A major focus for Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative is enhancing the knowledge of Co-op employees and board members, which enables them to contribute to the development of the Co-op. By investing in continuous learning for our employees and board members, SREC is making a commitment not just to individual professional and personal growth, but to the future of the Co-op and the high quality of service our members expect and deserve. It's a win-win situation.

We also strive to inform our members and the general public about the mission and operations of the Co-op, as well as other energy-related matters. We provide this very newsletter as a means to keep our members informed, and our various education-related programs such as our electric safety demonstrations are ways that we work to educate our members on important topics.

Cooperation Among Cooperatives

The sixth principle fosters the way that co-ops work together to address bigger challenges. While this principle applies to all types of cooperatives, it is especially relevant in the energy industry. In our case, we put this principle in action after major storms or disasters cause widespread power outages. When this happens, we call on nearby electric co-ops to assist with restoration efforts—and we of course extend the same help to them when they need us.

In addition, because we are part of the national electric co-op network, we can connect and collaborate with other electric co-ops throughout the country. Electric co-ops leverage these relationships to share ideas and tackle industry-related challenges, like cybersecurity and an evolving energy landscape.

Concern for Community

Our concern for community is essential to who we are as cooperatives. We serve our community not only by being an essential service, but by helping to power our local economy. Whether through economic development, volunteerism, or donations to local causes, we invest in this community because it's our home too! I think you'll find that most cooperatives bring good people together to make good things happen in the community. We hope you feel that way about us, your local electric co-op.

On behalf of everyone at Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative, we are thankful for your membership. You power our mission to provide electric service to these communities, with the Seven Cooperative Principles acting as our guide. We hope you all have a wonderful Thanksgiving!

