



**Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

# Currents

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## WATTS UP?



Always start your portable generator **BEFORE** plugging any

appliances into it to prevent a potential power surge. Once the generator is running, turn your appliances and lights on one at a time to avoid overloading the unit. Remember, portable generators are for temporary usage. Prioritize your needs!

*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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## An Important Reminder

*By: Chris Reese, President & CEO  
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Early in their junior year, member students have the opportunity to learn more about electric co-ops, US history, and our nation’s capital through the Rural Electric Cooperative Youth Tour - a free, week-long trip for local high schoolers to visit Washington D.C. as representatives of Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative.



My oldest daughter went on the last, pre-pandemic trip to Washington, D.C. with eight other students from High Point Regional High School, Sussex Vo-Tech, and Vernon High School. While Youth Tour usually brings over 1,500 students to Washington, D.C. for a week in June, due to the pandemic this year’s trip will be split into two sessions. This change was made to protect our students’ health without depriving them of the truly unique experience that Youth Tour offers.

In high school, junior year is a very busy time. Students might be thinking about college applications and scholarships or technical programs to pursue. They may be involved in sports or other extracurricular activities. Some understandably may not want to add another thing to their plate. But if any of these students heard my daughter or her eight fellow students talk about Youth Tour, there is no doubt in my mind that they would all apply. Let me try and paint you a picture of this wonderful opportunity that your child, as part of an SREC-powered household, has available to them.

America’s rural electric cooperatives have been hosting the Washington Youth Tour since the early 1960s and over the decades have sent more than 50,000 students from rural areas across the nation for a once-in-a-lifetime experience that’s both educationally enriching and fun. As CEO of an electric cooperative and the father of a Youth Tour student, I have witnessed firsthand the life-changing nature of this program. From the moment they step off the bus, it opens kids’ minds to possibilities they may



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# An Important Reminder

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have never before imagined. Speaking to Youth Tour students and their parents, I have learned that many students have discovered new potential career paths, gained a greater understanding of civics and their nation's history, and made friendships that can last a lifetime.

For my daughter, the memories are still vivid. The most impactful part of her trip was a visit to the Holocaust Museum. It inspired her acting in her school's production of the Diary of Anne Frank during her senior year. She and the other students also went to the Capitol building and met their representative Congressman Josh Gottheimer, who sat the students around his conference table



to speak with them, offering insight into what happens in the political environment in Washington. At that moment they were seated at the table discussing the needs and wants of their community with their elected representative. It is one thing to tell your child they have a voice in our democracy, but it's something deeper for them to have a firsthand, direct experience like this that shows their voice and those of their community can be heard at the highest levels.

While Youth Tour gives students a firsthand lesson on politics and governance, that's not the whole of the experience. Just as the best parts of America relate to average, everyday people – focused on their lives, going to work, taking care of their families, and spending time with their loved ones – Youth Tour makes sure these important facets of American life are not left out of the experience. Beyond offering the chance to connect with students from across the country, it also affords the opportunity to learn about how normal Americans have made an impact on our history – even when that means mourning those we've lost.

As we've now reached the 20th anniversary of September 11, 2001, I would like to share with you a very poignant moment of the 2018 Youth Tour as it was told to me by our Director of Marketing and Member Services Claudia, a chaperone on the trip. 2018's trip was unique because it was the first time that the students participating in Youth Tour had been born after the September 11th attacks in 2001. It may be surreal to think about for those of us who vividly experienced the events of that day, but time has marched on and to many young adults, September 11th is an artifact of history that's not attached to a personal experience.

On the bus heading towards the Pentagon Memorial each chaperone gave their account of where they were and how they were affected by that tragic day. The students were aware of the plane that crashed in Somerset County, Pennsylvania and of course the planes that crashed into the towers, but that night they learned more about American Airlines Flight 77 that crashed into the Pentagon and the 184 people who lost their lives. The Pentagon Memorial honors each individual whose life was lost – 125 in the Pentagon and 59 on Flight 77. They had the unique experience of hearing this information from the uncle of a Pennsylvania Youth Tour participant who happens to be the Deputy Surgeon General of the Army National Guard stationed at the Pentagon and was there on that fateful day.



The Pentagon Memorial, which opened in September of 2008, was built on 1.9 acres of land within view of the crash site of American Airlines Flight 77 and consists of rectangular reflecting pools of light that glow from beneath 184 benches, each inscribed with the name of one of the victims. Each 14-foot long, 1,000-pound bench is made of stainless steel and cantilevers over a shallow basin of circulating water that runs the length of the bench.

Upon entering the memorial, visitors cross the Zero Line, which captures the moment in time: 9:37 a.m. on September 11, 2001, when Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon. The stone used in this memorial was cut from part of the original limestone walls of the Pentagon damaged in the attack and still bears charred traces of the fire that followed. The memorial is arranged by age order of those who died, along a timeline, represented by parallel steel rails in the ground that run through the site



diagonally, aligned with the trajectory of Flight 77 on its path into the building. The lines span the range of the victims' ages from the youngest, 3-year-old Dana Falkenberg, to the oldest, 71-year-old John Yamnicky. Each victim is memorialized by a wing-like bench bearing the victim's name. When you look at the name engraved at the end of the bench and see the sky in the background, the victim died in the plane; if you see the Pentagon, the victim died in the building. Victims from the same family are linked by a plaque at the end of the pool of water, which lists their family members who died in the attack, forever binding the family together.



A 2-foot-high granite seating area runs along the perimeter of the site, backed by areas planted with grass and flowers. The perimeter bench is interspersed with black granite slabs with steel inlays that indicate each birth year, marking the beginning of the age lines. Beds of flowers, including black-eyed susans, Echinacea, and sage fill in the areas beyond. Also on site are several species of maple trees, selected because they retain their foliage through the fall and into the winter months, that are clustered in the park to provide shade and a canopy of light and natural beauty. Visitors to the memorial walk on a firm surface topped by a bed of fine gravel designed to accentuate the sound of their footsteps. It is a beautiful yet tragic site that calls to mind the reality of the loss felt since that day.

While this was certainly a heavy experience for 2018's Youth Tour students, they all found it incredibly valuable to gain such insight into this tragic event that shook our nation before they were even born. If there's a high school junior in your family who can appreciate such an experience, I encourage you to recommend the trip to them.

This year as we remember the attacks of September 11, 2001, may we all also try and remember that the best parts of America have nothing to do with politics. It is our connection with one another in our day-to-day life – friends, family, community members – that is America's core strength. But most of all, let us never forget all those who never returned home that fateful day.

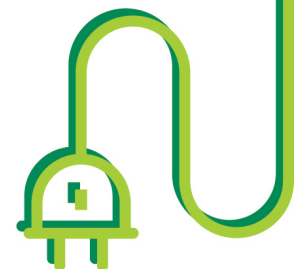


## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Energy used for cooling and heating your home makes up the largest portion of your monthly energy bills.

By combining regular equipment maintenance and upgrades with recommended insulation, air sealing and thermostat settings, you can save about 30% on your energy bills while helping our environment.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)





# Washington D.C. 2022 Youth Tour

**LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS:**

If your home is powered by SREC, you have the chance to apply for the trip of a lifetime - an all-expense paid trip to our nation's capital!

**June 19th - 24th, 2022**



*We Want You!*



**More details coming soon!**  
[www.njyouthtour.com](http://www.njyouthtour.com)



**Sussex Rural  
Electric Cooperative, Inc.**

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