

Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives
serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

SOMERSET REC

223 Industrial Park Road
Somerset, PA 15501
814-445-4106
800-443-4255

Email: e-mail@somersetrec.com
Website: www.somersetrec.com

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OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Friday
7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

EMERGENCY OUTAGE NUMBERS

814-445-4106
800-443-4255

Guest Column

Members Rewarded for Helping Manage Peak Energy Demand



EMILY BAER

AS ELECTRICITY DEMAND CONTINUES TO grow and wholesale power costs increase, every member can play an important role in helping maintain a reliable electric system. At Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative (REC), our Coordinated Load Management System program is designed to help stabilize future power costs by balancing electric supply and demand. This reduces strain on the electric grid during periods of peak demand — often, the hottest and coldest days of the year — while rewarding members who elect to participate with a bill credit.

How does it work? In partnership with Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc., our wholesale energy provider, a temporary signal is sent to interrupt power to participants' water heaters during peak-demand periods. When the signal ends, the water heaters return to normal use.

Is your water heater eligible? Let's find out.

► Does your water heater have a minimum capacity of 40 gallons?

► Is your water heater fully electric and not connected to an additional fuel source?

If you answered "yes" to both questions, you qualify for the program. Other key factors to consider are possible control times and days your water heater could be disabled. Possible control times include 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. on weekdays and weekends, excluding major holidays.

Interested members can select from three participation levels*, each designed to fit different household needs and comfort levels.

Tier 1 – Maximum (Full) Participation: \$150 bill credit. This option is designed for members who want to maximize their savings while providing the greatest level of support during peak electric use.

Tier 2 – Enhanced (Moderate) Participation: \$100 bill credit. A balanced option for members willing to participate more often in exchange for additional savings.

Tier 3 – Basic (Minimal) Participation: \$75 bill credit. Ideal for members who want to participate while maintaining the highest level of flexibility.

All three levels also include free element and thermostat replacement parts with an active load management switch.

Whether you choose the maximum, enhanced or basic participation level, your involvement helps keep wholesale power costs low. Load management has long been one of the most effective tools available to electric cooperatives. In 2025, Somerset REC saved more than \$300,000 thanks to the nearly 2,000 members who participate in our load management program.

Interested in enrolling or learning more? Call the co-op office at 814-445-4106 to see what participation level best fits your household. Together, we can help control wholesale power costs. 

EMILY BAER

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING & MEMBER SERVICES

**By committing to the Coordinated Load Management System program for three years from the date of device installation, participating members will receive bill credits determined by the cooperative. Credit amounts may be revised periodically based on program requirements and available funding. If a member asks to change tiers or have the device removed within the three-year timeframe, a portion of the originally applied bill credit will be charged back to your electric account.*

Flight 93: A Tragic Story Evolves into a Tale of Courage and Leadership

EMILY BAER, DIRECTOR OF MARKETING & MEMBER SERVICES

WHILE THE SEPT. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks were an undeniable tragedy, the story of Flight 93 has become a powerful reminder of courage, hope, and human resilience with visitors to Somerset County's memorial often asking themselves: "Would I have had the courage to do what they did?"

When it comes to immortalizing the tragic events that unfolded on that clear Tuesday morning in September, the Friends of Flight 93 National Memorial, the official nonprofit partner of the National Park Service, does just that. Its mission is to honor the sacrifice and courage of the passengers and crew of Flight 93 by supporting the memorial through volunteerism, philanthropy, education, environmental stewardship, and civic engagement.

Making a positive impact

The actions of the passengers and crew that day continue to inspire people to think about service, sacrifice, and working together for a greater purpose. The legacy of those actions has also grown through the many foundations, scholarships, and charitable initiatives created by family members. All ensure that although lost,

their loved ones continue to make a positive impact.

Together with the National Park Service, the group ensures that visitors from around the world can learn from the Flight 93 story and be inspired by the courage and selflessness demonstrated on 9/11. Its work focuses on three strategic priorities: education, environmental stewardship and visitation.

Donna Gibson, executive director of the Friends of Flight 93 National Memorial, has been a pivotal part in the success of this organization.

"Since our founding in 2009, Friends has evolved from a grassroots support organization into a strong nonprofit partner with an endowment, national partnerships and a growing portfolio of programs," she says. "Of all our accomplishments, I am particularly proud of the National Day of Learning 'Teach to Remember 9/11,' which reaches learners around the world, and the Flight 93 Educator Symposium, which equips teachers with the resources and confidence to teach this history in meaningful ways.

"Both programs," she adds, "help ensure that future generations understand not only what happened on Sept. 11, but why it still matters today."

As part of "Teach to Remember 9/11," Somerset County and its role in one of the most significant days in American history are highlighted. Area residents have embraced the responsibility of honoring the passengers and crew members who died when Flight 93 — one of four airliners hijacked by terrorists — crashed in Shanksville.

ALWAYS CARING: Friends of Flight 93 Executive Director Donna Gibson, center, meets with visitors and participants during the Friends Day of Caring, an event where businesses and the community support projects at the memorial.



LUMINARIA CEREMONY: Donna Gibson, executive director of the Friends of Flight 93 National Memorial in Shanksville, carries one of 40 luminaries, each in honor of the passengers and crew who banded together against the flight's hijackers on 9/11. The Luminaria Ceremony, which was once an annual program, is now every five years, honoring major anniversaries.



A community responds

In the hours, days, and years that followed, community members welcomed families, supported first responders, volunteered countless hours, and helped ensure the Flight 93 story would never be forgotten. Community members served on the Flight 93 National Memorial Task Force and ensured the Flight 93 National Memorial was completed.

Today, many residents continue to serve as volunteers, advocates, donors and ambassadors for the memorial, demonstrating a deep commitment to preserving this important chapter of American history.

When visiting the memorial, the landscape is one of its most powerful interpretive elements. Architect Paul Murdoch thoughtfully incorporated the site's history and natural features into the design.

From the hemlock trees that witnessed the events of Sept. 11 to design elements that acknowledge the area's farming and coal-mining heritage, the landscape tells its own story. The trails and overlooks offer visitors a chance to slow down, reflect and process what they have learned. The quiet beauty of rural Somerset County creates a setting that encourages contemplation and remembrance.

The memorial would not be what it is today without the support of the community. Residents have volunteered thousands of hours, participated in tree plantings and stewardship projects, attended commemorative events, and welcomed visitors from around the world. Their continued involvement reflects a shared commitment to honoring the passengers and crew while preserving the memorial as a place of reflection, learning, and healing.

One of the most inspiring aspects of the Flight 93 story is that the passengers and crew were strangers brought together by circumstance. They communicated, gathered information, made a collective decision and acted to overtake the terrorists who were in the middle of following through on a plot to kill thousands of Americans.

Their selfless actions remind us that leadership is not defined by a title or position; it is demonstrated through courage, responsibility and a willingness to act when others need us most. The Flight 93 story continues to show



RESPONDING TO THE SCENE: When Flight 93 crashed in a field near Shanksville on 9/11, it took down a three-phase power line that served a small group of homes, cabins and a business.



ALWAYS ON CALL: Somerset REC lineworkers were nearby when the Flight 93 crash occurred and were among the first on the scene.

us what can happen when people put aside differences and work together toward a common purpose.

A commitment to service

On the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) lineworkers were responding to outage calls in the area where the plane had crashed. When the plane went down, it took out a three-phase power line that served eight residential homes, four seasonal cabins and a commercial building.

When cooperative personnel met with the FBI about restoring power to these members, they were asked to come back the next day for an answer. They learned then that it could be weeks before the work could be done.

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The cooperative understood the tragic situation that had unfolded, but staff felt they still had an obligation to restore power as soon as possible. In that moment, a phone call was made to a neighboring private power company, GPU Energy (later acquired by FirstEnergy), which had a line close to the cooperative's de-energized line. Without hesitation, GPU Energy offered the assistance needed, and our lineworkers worked tirelessly to get the power back on.

As a result, power was restored to our residential members by 9:30 that night.

From that point forward, Somerset REC was involved in hooking up temporary services to trailers housing personnel from the FBI, Pennsylvania State Police, the state Department of Environmental Protection, the Salvation Army, United Airlines and others. Approximately 10 days later, crews were allowed to go in and fix the original downed wire and restore power to normal.

Whether they are lineworkers restoring power after a storm, first responders answering a call, or citizens facing an unexpected crisis, they all share a commitment to service, responsibility, and helping others. On Sept. 11, ordinary people became heroes because they chose to act.

The same spirit of dedication can be seen every day in lineworkers, emergency personnel and community volunteers who often work behind the scenes to keep others safe. Those common values of service, sacrifice and teamwork connect all these stories.

Sharing your story

When it comes to preserving the legacy of 9/11 and making it meaningful for visitors who were not old enough to remember the day's event, Donna Gibson asks those who remember to share their stories.

"As the generation with direct memories of Sept. 11 becomes smaller, our responsibility to tell the story becomes even more important," she says. "Through interpretive exhibits, educational programming, digital resources, and personal stories, we help younger visitors connect with the people behind the headlines.

"The focus is not only on what happened, but on the values demonstrated that day — courage, leadership, service, and unity — which remain relevant regardless of when someone was born," she adds. "More than anything, I hope people remember that the 40 passengers and crew members of Flight 93 were ordinary people who faced extraordinary circumstances. In a moment of unimaginable adversity, they demonstrated remarkable courage, selflessness and unity. Their actions remind us that one person's decision to act can make a profound difference, and that together, ordinary individuals can change the course of history."

As we celebrate and honor the 25th anniversary of 9/11, I hope you find a moment to demonstrate these values — courage, leadership and service — within your own community to honor the heroes of Flight 93 and those whose lives were lost. 🇺🇸

THANK YOU AND BEST WISHES TO DON COBER

EMILY BAER, DIRECTOR OF MARKETING & MEMBER SERVICES

Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) would like to wish Don Cober a happy retirement after more than two decades of service to the cooperative.

Don joined Somerset REC in 2004 after an already accomplished career. A retired farmer, he also owned and operated his own HVAC business before he was offered a position with the cooperative. His experience and technical expertise made him a valuable addition to the team.

During his time at Somerset REC, Don served as a geothermal and meter/load management technician, assisting both the metering and HVAC departments. Whether helping members with geothermal, heating and cooling systems, installing water heaters, supporting load management programs, or addressing metering needs, Don was always willing to lend his expertise to those who needed it.

Looking back on his career, Don says one of the biggest changes he witnessed was the rapid advancement of technology. The arrival of smartphones and significant improvements in metering technology transformed how work was performed and how information was shared with members.

When asked about his favorite memories, Don laughs and says he could write volumes about the experiences he's had over the years. The countless interactions he's had with co-op members and the stories he's collected throughout his career are memories he will always cherish.

Reflecting on his time at Somerset REC, Don shares that if he could build a time machine, he would do it all over again.

As Don begins this new chapter, we thank him for his years of service, dedication, and commitment to Somerset REC and its members. We wish him a long, happy and well-deserved retirement.

Thank you, Don, and good luck!

ONTO THE NEXT CHAPTER: Don Cober recently retired from Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative after more than two decades of service.

