

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

Jerry L. Engle, District 4

Vice President

Floyd T. Lehman, District 1

Secretary/Treasurer

Russ Hillegas, District 2

Douglas Black, District 3

James B. Harrold Sr., District 5

P. Timothy Vought, District 6

Jason Huston, District 7

Joshua C. Sechler, District 8

Harvey W. Reckner Jr., District 9

Ruston Ogburn
General Manager

STAFF

Gary Gindlesperger

Manager of Information Technology

Jonathan Hillegas

Director of Finances

Andrew Phillippi

Manager of Outside Operations

Emily Baer

Director of Marketing & Member Services

Phil Stern

Manager of Technical Services

Jessi Ditzler

Executive Assistant

OFFICE HOURS

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

EMERGENCY OUTAGE NUMBERS

814-445-4106
800-443-4255

Holding Back the Forces of Nature



**RUSTON
OGBURN**

MOTHER NATURE SPENT PLENTY of time this summer demonstrating how powerful storms can wreak havoc on our homes, roads and electric system. The plentiful rain gave the vegetation along our lines a significant boost, which will create additional clearing work in the coming years. Even though this was an above-average year in many ways, it fits the typical trend of our continual work against nature to keep our system reliable and resilient.

This summer's storms provided another example of how isolated the impact can be on our members. We saw areas where flooding destroyed buildings and bridges in one valley, with the surrounding areas getting a gentle rain. I had conversations with members who could barely believe that a storm of any significance could have passed just a short distance away, and parallel conversations with those hit with the storms who assumed our entire system was devastated.

In addition to the weekly storms hitting somewhere in our territory and the typical summer trend of blinks caused by birds flocking near freshly harvested fields and snakes making their way into underground facilities, we had an outage caused by something that none of us had ever seen. In early August, lineworkers found several insulators 30 feet in the air covered with freshly cut hay. It's hard to know exactly how the hay became wrapped tightly into the lines, but it caused several insulators to fail on an otherwise calm and clear night.

On a larger scale, nature has taken its toll on the more than 40,000 poles across our system. Our annual inspection cycle identified that the strength of about 2% of the poles tested had degraded to the point where repair or replacement are necessary. We are careful to not waste money replacing solid poles, but we err on the side of caution with our testing and replacement work. This ensures that new strong poles are installed before weakened poles create reliability or safety issues.

Being proactive with this testing cycle allows us to manage the scale of the work to fit into our line crews' annual work schedule. This also aligns with our plans to avoid financial volatility for priorities that can be more actively and steadily managed.

As the summer fades to fall, many of us will be dealing with the annual force of nature in the form of mice and other critters making their way into garages and homes as a reminder that winter is close at hand. Your cooperative will be preparing for the next season, too, to ensure we can serve our members through whatever conditions come next.

As always, if you have any questions on how we deal with storms, strengthen our system, or prepare for the unknown, please call or stop by the office. 🐭

RUSTON OGBURN
GENERAL MANAGER

Somerset County Students Make Their Mark at Youth Tour

EMILY BAER, DIRECTOR OF MARKETING & MEMBER SERVICES

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN MORE THAN 1,800 of America's best and brightest students come together for one week in our nation's capital? The tour of a lifetime! In June, electric cooperatives across the U.S. sent groups of high school students to Washington, D.C., for the 2026 National Rural Electric Cooperative Youth Tour.

Thirteen students representing Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) participated. They learned about electric cooperatives and spent time on Capitol Hill, meeting with U.S. representatives, senators, and their staff. Students also visited many monuments and memorials.

"Youth Tour is an opportunity for students to step outside of their comfort zone and be empowered to use their voice as leaders in their own schools and community," Somerset REC's Youth Tour Coordinator Emily Baer says. "We're delighted to give them this amazing opportunity — the best moment as a chaperone is watching delegates enter as strangers and leave as friends."

Here's what some of the delegates who represented Somerset REC had to say about their time in the nation's capital:

- **Mallory Emerick, student at Meyersdale Area High School:** "Youth Tour allowed me to meet incredible people and explore so many friendships. It changed my entire perspective on being a leader and using my voice for the better. Thank you, Somerset REC!"
- **Patty Kovacs, student at Shanksville-Stonycreek High School:** "It was truly a blessing to experience all the tours, memorials and sites in five days at our nation's capital. I will forever cherish the friends and memories made."
- **Jaydon Cannone, student at North Star Area High School:** "Washington, D.C., is not only a city; it is a place for new beginnings to make YOUR mark. This is an event that every student should strive to be part of."
- **Isabelle Schmuck, student at Rockwood Area High School:** "Youth Tour was such a special experience!"



YOUTH TOUR MEMORIES: Thirteen local students representing Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative participated in the NRECA Youth Tour earlier this year. Some of them are seen here near the Capitol in Washington, D.C.

I made so many friendships that will last a lifetime with delegates not only from Somerset County, but all across the United States. I will never forget all of the places we visited and the pins that we traded."

► **Lennon Bobby, student at Shanksville-Stonycreek**

High School: "Youth Tour was an incredible experience. I, along with everyone else, had an amazing time. I got to meet so many interesting people and had the chance to understand the inner workings of our government. I cannot praise it enough. I highly suggest everybody try out for this opportunity."

► **Abigail Ickes, student at Meyersdale Area High**

School: "It was an eye-opening experience of diversity. It wasn't one state comparing itself to another; rather, it was people who hadn't experienced life that way before sharing it with one another."

Youth Tour is just one of the ways the cooperative is investing in our future leaders. Somerset REC does so much more than provide safe, reliable and affordable power. We are dedicated to improving the futures of students in our community because we know they are next in line to lead the way. 🇺🇸



ENJOYING THE RIDE: Students from Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative took a ride on the Capital Wheel as part of their experience at Youth Tour over the summer.

Mallory Emerick



Patty Kovacs



Jaydon Cannone



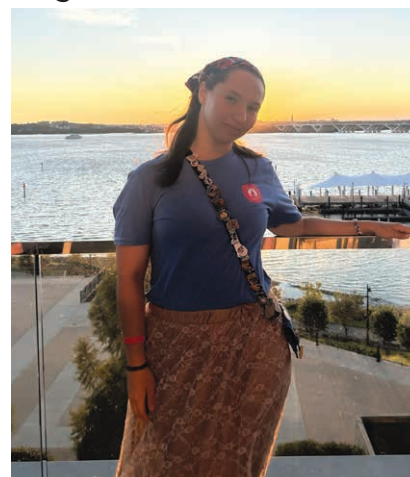
Isabelle Schmuck



Lennon Bobby



Abigail Ickes



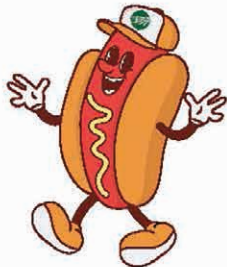
MEMBER GIVEAWAY! LED LIGHT DAY – OCTOBER 7



MEMBERS MAY STOP BY THE CO-OP OFFICE
OCT. 7-9 FOR A FREE LED NIGHT LIGHT!

ONE PER MEMBER WHILE SUPPLIES LAST.

Member Appreciation Day



JOIN US FOR LUNCH! WE WILL BE
GRILLING HOT DOGS AND KIELBASA
AND OFFERING REFRESHMENTS.

THURSDAY, OCT. 15
10 A.M. - 2 P.M.

SOMERSET REC OFFICE
223 INDUSTRIAL PARK RD
SOMERSET, PA 15501

ONE OF THE SEVEN COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES IS
CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY.
LET'S HELP OUR NEIGHBORS IN NEED.

WE WILL BE COLLECTING NON-PERISHABLE ITEMS
TO BE DONATED TO FOOD PANTRIES IN OUR
COMMUNITY. ALL DONATING MEMBERS WILL BE
ENTERED FOR A CHANCE TO WIN
ONE OF FIVE \$50 ELECTRIC BILL CREDITS.



TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS



October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month, which is the perfect time to take a fresh look at your passwords. Forget the old advice about cramming passwords with symbols and random capitalization. Today's cybersecurity experts recommend using longer passphrases. A password made up of four or five unrelated words is easier to remember and much harder for criminals to crack than a short, complex password. Use a unique passphrase for every account and enable multi-factor authentication whenever available for added protection.

Source: NIST



ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Don't let phantom energy haunt your electric bill this October. Many electronics continue using electricity even when they're turned off. TVs, gaming systems, coffee makers and phone chargers can quietly draw power around the clock. While each device uses only a small amount, the energy waste can add up over time. Before heading out for Halloween fun, unplug devices you don't use regularly or plug them into a smart power strip that automatically cuts power when equipment is off. It's a simple trick that can help keep phantom energy waste in check.

Source: Dept. of Energy

