

Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives
serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

Somerset REC

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

Emergency Outage Number

814-445-4106
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From the General Manager



Nuclear power is co-op power

By Ruston Ogburn

FROM the time our alarm goes off, we're on the grid. Electricity powers much of our daily lives. As long as the lights come on, we don't give it much thought. We rarely think about where our electricity comes from.

But as a consumer-member of Somerset REC, you have an ownership interest in your power supply resources. Did you know most of the energy used in cooperative homes and businesses in our area is generated by self-owned nuclear power? It's true. For us, nuclear power is co-op power. As a cooperative member, you own part of a nuclear power plant.

Since 1977, we have been partners in the ownership of the Susquehanna Steam Electric Station (Susquehanna), a nuclear facility in rural Berwick, Pa. For decades, this cooperative investment in nuclear power has been a driving force in providing our communities with safe, reliable and affordable electric energy. The plant supplies approximately 60 percent of our energy needs and is one of the main reasons cooperative consumers enjoy one of the lowest and most stable electric generation rates in the region.

But cooperative members aren't the only people benefitting from nuclear power. According to a report by the Pennsylvania General Assembly's bipartisan Nuclear Energy Caucus, without the state's five nuclear power plants, Pennsylvanians would pay close to \$800 million more annually for electricity. The plants annually contribute \$2 billion to the state's economy, pay \$69 million in net state tax revenues and employ 16,000 people.

Nuclear power also provides 93 percent of the Commonwealth's carbon-free energy, helping Pennsylvanians avoid billions in health and environmental costs. No other generation resource comes close to having this kind of impact.

The future of our nuclear plants, however, is a matter of serious concern. Recently, two Pennsylvania plants — Beaver Valley and Three Mile Island — have announced premature closures if action is not taken to correct current market dynamics. Such closures would have devastating, long-term consequences, because once a nuclear plant closes, it's closed forever.

While our Susquehanna plant is not currently in danger, if this troubling trend continues, it will result in higher energy prices and higher environmental costs for us all — something that will hit all our rural co-op members.

To avoid this fate, Pennsylvania needs a market design that recognizes nuclear power's positive contributions. Electric cooperatives are working with legislative leaders on a bipartisan effort to secure the future of nuclear power in Pennsylvania. These lawmakers are introducing legislation to equitably compensate nuclear power for its zero-carbon emissions and grid dependability.

Rural electric cooperatives understand the benefits of nuclear power, and we can help to educate others on its importance. Please take a moment to visit PARuralAction.org and send an email to your local legislators urging them to support efforts to ensure nuclear power remains viable in Pennsylvania. After all, nuclear power is co-op power. ☀

Somerset celebrates Lineworker Appreciation Day

EACH YEAR, a day in April is set aside to honor and give thanks to lineworkers across the country for their dedication and service to their rural communities. National Lineworker Appreciation Day will be celebrated this year at Somerset REC on April 8 to acknowledge an honorable group of skillful and talented men who help keep your lights on. These men are more than lineworkers of the cooperative. They are husbands, brothers, brothers-in-law, fathers and grandfathers who put their life on the line every day so you can have the convenience of safe electricity in your rural home. To recognize their hard work, some lineworkers of Somerset REC were asked to provide a brief look into what they enjoy and feel is most important about their job. Here are their responses:



Brian Marker – 22 years – Chief Lineman

“The job actually chose me, and I’m glad it did. I was raised to believe there is no substitute for hard work and that pride in a job well-done should be its own reward. Being a lineman brings new challenges every day and yet it still amazes me how many strange ways an outage can occur. The crews I work with are some of the most dedicated and hardworking guys you will ever meet. But the hardest part about my job is missed family time. I am proud to be a Somerset REC lineman and find pride in serving the members of the cooperative.”



Roy Bittner – 37 years – Chief Lineman

“I’ve worked at the co-op quite a few years and now that I’m the oldest lineman, I owe thanks to those retired who taught me a lot. My love for the outdoors, meeting new people and being challenged is why I enjoy my job. Working at the co-op has provided me opportunities to assist other co-ops in restoring power after a storm and even training linemen in Costa Rica at our sister co-op. I look forward to working a couple more years to serve our members and being a part of the Somerset REC family.”



Sam Shober – 5 years – Journeyman Lineman

“Well, I don’t enjoy waking up in the middle of the night for an outage, especially during bad weather, because I need my beauty sleep, but I am dedicated to my job and know members are depending on me. It’s satisfying to see your crew’s hard work pay off, and having trust in each other is important because our daily jobs are dangerous with no room for error. Everyone has to be on the same page.”



Bryan Schrock – 16 years – Journeyman Lineman

“I think for myself, the hardest thing and most enjoyable thing about being a lineman are one and the same. When we have outages, we must leave our families, miss activities our kids are involved in and work in all kinds of weather conditions. But when we get the lights on, we have the rewarding satisfaction of knowing that we’ve improved the conditions of all those in the dark.”



Casey Pyle – 4 years – Journeyman Lineman

“When thinking about my future, I knew college was something that didn’t interest me. I wanted to learn a trade and work outside. I applied to be a summer intern at the co-op and knew from that point on I was interested in being a lineman. I find the job challenging at times, but meeting new people and interesting conversations I’ve had with them makes it worth it.”



Garrett Thomas – 3 years – Senior Apprentice Lineman

“After graduating from high school, I had the opportunity to work on the right-of-way crew here at the co-op. It gave me a view of the day in the life of a lineman and it seemed like something I would enjoy making a career out of. I bought a home and relocated to the Berlin area to be able to advance into a lineman position to be closer to the co-op. It’s nice to work outside and get to know our membership better. I never realized how big of a territory Somerset REC provides electric to, but I enjoy seeing new locations and meeting the people. I’m glad to have this opportunity.”



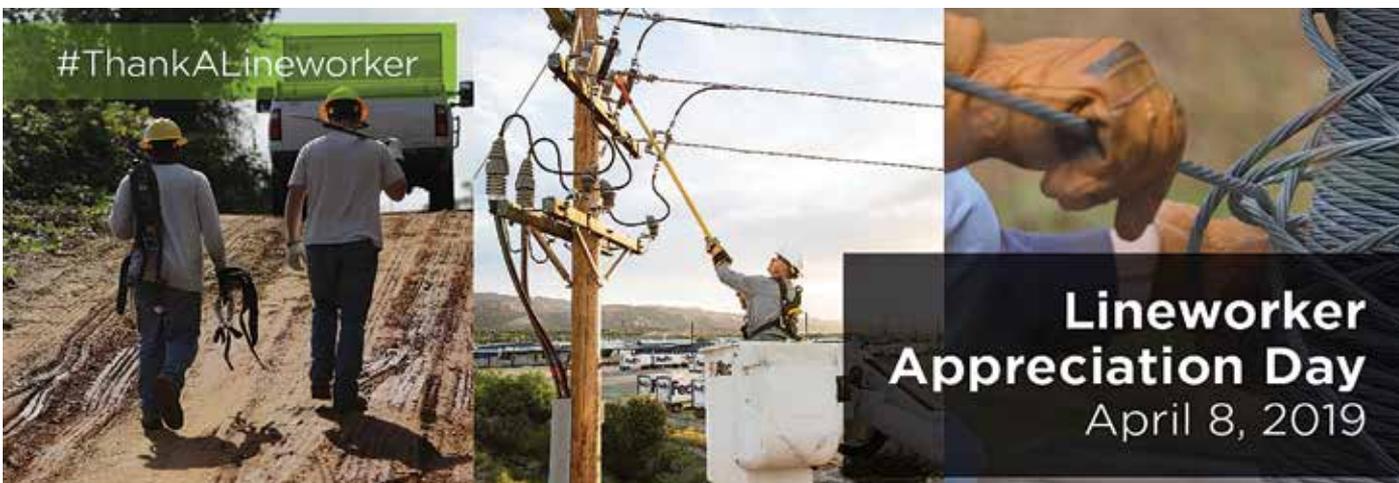
Tanner Smith – 7 years – Journeyman Lineman

“I chose to be a lineman because I knew I wanted to work in an outdoor trade and in the electrical field. I started my lineman career by participating in a lineman program at Blue Ridge CTC in Martinsburg, W.Va. Upon completion, I was hired as a lineman intern/apprentice at Rappahannock Electric Co-op in Front Royal, Va. I knew when the opportunity presented itself that I wanted to move back to my rural roots and provide a much-needed service to my community by being a lineman here. My job has allowed me to work throughout our beautiful county, across Pennsylvania and beyond with other cooperatives. Every day brings new challenges, such as memorizing line feeds and late-night outages. I’m dedicated to my job and it keeps me on my toes for sure!”



Adam Barnes – 10 years – Journeyman Lineman

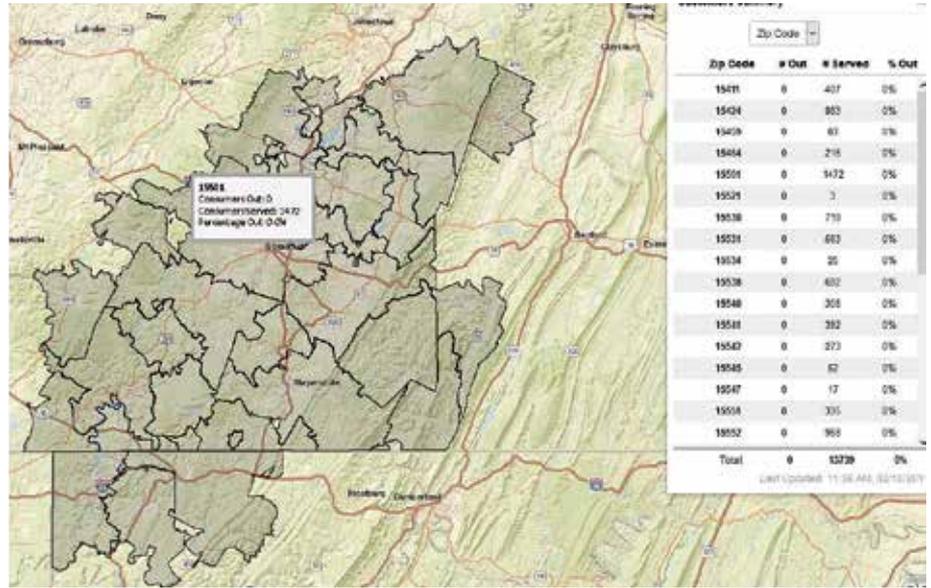
“Being a lineman is something I’ve always had an interest in. I enjoy working outside despite extreme high and low temperatures and working in some pretty harsh conditions. It can be challenging at times figuring out different scenarios, but meeting our members within our service territory makes the job worth it.”



Power outage preparation

POWER outages often occur at the most inopportune times, which is why it is always smart to prepare. Emergency power failures due to natural causes and system problems cannot be predicted, so members cannot receive prior notification when this occurs. It is the member's responsibility to have an action plan in place to cover their essential needs. For some members, this back-up plan may be to relocate with a family member or neighbor, while others may choose to have a back-up system in place to power their heating/cooling system or medical devices.

Generally, a specific timeframe for restoring your outage is not available. Once the crew is dispatched, their top priority



is to safely locate the problem in a timely manner and acquire necessary tools for the outage to be restored. However, this

could take many hours depending on the severity of the situation. At a minimum, members should have a 72-hour supply of food, water and battery-powered devices they may need.

As a member, you are welcome to contact the office for any updates during normal business hours about an outage, visit somerstrec.com or download our SmartHub app for smartphones/tablets. Under the Outage tab, click on the Outage Locator, and you will find a map of our service territory with information on how many members are out of power, number of members served, and the percent of homes affected by ZIP code. This is a great resource that constantly updates as outages are restored. 🌐

Plant efficiently today and save for years to come!

SUMMER	WINTER
PLANT ENERGY SAVINGS	Plant deciduous trees to block heat from the sun in the summer and let sunlight in during the winter.

TYPES OF DECIDUOUS TREES

Oak	Maple
Birch	Poplar
Willow	Cottonwood

PLANT ENERGY SAVINGS | A six- to eight-foot deciduous tree planted near your home will start shading windows in the first year.

The office of Somerset Rural Electric will be closed Friday, April 19, in observance of Good Friday.