

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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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

Clarence B. Waltermire, District 5

Vice President

Jerry L. Engle, District 4

Secretary/Treasurer

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Harvey W. Reckner Jr., District 9

**Ruston Ogburn
General Manager**

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Manager of Information Technology

Douglas E. Glessner,

Manager of Outside Operations

Jonathan Hillegas,

Director of Finances

Emily Baer,

Director of Marketing and Member Services

Elizabeth Morocco,

Executive Assistant

Phil Stern,

Manager of Metering

Office Hours

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

Emergency Outage Number

814-445-4106
800-443-4255

From the General Manager



Co-op ends 2020 by looking forward

By Ruston Ogburn

I CANNOT reflect on 2020 without noting that this has been the strangest year in nearly everyone's memory. Most plans were disrupted in ways that could not have been predicted in January. Despite these setbacks, your cooperative has been able to maintain our service and keep nearly all our planned projects on track.

Our right-of-way maintenance program cleared almost exactly the number of miles we planned to cover. Mild weather through most of the year allowed the co-op's crews and contractors to work steadily. The nature of this outside work also allowed it to be completed even during COVID-19-related distancing requirements. This progress has put us on the path to complete our planned seven-year cycle in 2021.

Once this first cycle is complete, we will revisit the areas we cleared seven years earlier. We are hopeful that the next cycle will be completed more easily because many recently cleared areas will be in a better condition through the second round of this cycle.

The first dry summer in several years allowed us to address several urgent line rebuilding projects in both Pennsylvania and Maryland. Most of the Maryland work has focused on rebuilding original lines that have reached the end of their useful life. This work will continue through most of 2021.

The most impactful line work

occurred on the Donegal to Seven Springs 138-kV line. The replacement of hundreds of insulators and a weak pole will increase the reliability of that line for the next three or four decades. This project, which was detailed in the November *Penn Lines*, highlights the resourcefulness of our lineworkers when working on unique and challenging projects.

A final reflection on the role of Somerset REC through the past year shows the importance of providing reliable and affordable electric service to our members. Many members spent more time at home this year than they have in decades, and many members are juggling the effects of layoffs and economic uncertainty, so keeping our rates low and returning capital credits to our members remains a high priority.

I would like to recognize all the co-op employees for continuing their essential work through these difficult times. I am thankful to work with such a committed group of men and women who understand that our members are the reason we come to work every day. Because of that understanding, we keep our members' needs in mind with each decision we make.

As always, please give me a call or stop by the office if you have anything you would like to discuss. I hope you and your family can enjoy the holidays. Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. 

Members celebrate golden anniversary at local family business

By Emily Baer

AT ONE TIME, most small communities had a country store of some sort. These stores offered a variety of items ranging from food and household items to tools and clothing. Now, however, these country stores are almost a thing of the past.

In the small village of Buckstown stands a locally owned and operated family business known as Duppstadt's Country Store, or "The Buckstown Mall." Located 2 miles west of Reels Corner along Route 30 and 1 mile east of the Flight 93 National Memorial, this one-of-a-kind store is sure to offer something for everyone.

Late owners James and Carole Duppstadt purchased the business from Jack and Helen Spangler on Jan. 1, 1971. With a young family of their own with five children under the age of 13, this was quite a leap of faith.

Over almost 50 years, the Duppstadt family has seen many changes and has had to learn to adapt to the needs of the patrons for the business to survive. After reminiscing with the current owners — Melody Wetmiller, Mark Duppstadt, Matthew Duppstadt, Michelle Kimmel and Mike Duppstadt — it was eye-opening to learn how the business has evolved over the years.

In the early years of operation, the primary goods sold were dairy items, deli items and grocery products. Over the years, inventory was expanded to meet the customers' needs. Cross-coun-



FOOTWEAR SELECTION: Employees Chuck Deeter, left, and Robin Duppstadt stand in front of one of the area's largest footwear selections, also known as "The Boot Room." Other styles of work and western footwear are also on display.

try skis were sold and rented, Stihl chainsaws and Snapper lawnmowers were sold and repaired, and guns and ammunition were offered.

"Almost every time I work at the store, somebody will come in and say, 'I drive by here all the time, and I finally decided to stop in and see what you have,'" notes cooperative member Mike Duppstadt. "The customer almost always continues with 'I'm glad I did.'"

Duppstadt's Country Store offers an eclectic mix, both nationally known brands and locally sourced products. The current selection of items includes footwear brands for men, women, and children such as Red Wing, Carolina, Double-H, Minnetonka, and other well-known work and western brands. All footwear can be special ordered if a certain style is not in stock. Clothing brands such as Carhartt and Wrangler are also fully stocked with jackets, sweatshirts, hats, and gloves. Alpaca socks are also a local winter favorite.

Looking for home goods?

Duppstadt's Country Store offers a wide selection of Lodge Cast Iron cookware and accessories, Fiestaware, Park Design table linens, and more. Other popular items include McCutcheon's jams and jellies, Weaver Nut Company candy, Beachy's apple butter, and local maple syrup. Hunting

"My parents were committed to quality products and honest service, and we intend to keep that standard. Our family has been blessed with great customers for 50 years and have gotten to know so many wonderful people from near and far."

— Mark Duppstadt

and fishing licenses, along with gift certificates, are also available.

Co-op member Mark Duppstadt says, "My parents were committed to quality products and honest service, and we intend to keep that standard. Our family has been blessed with great customers for 50 years and have



THEN AND NOW: The building, located in Buckstown along Route 30, continues to house a wide variety of goods and will be sure to take you back in time.

gotten to know so many wonderful people from near and far.”

“Family businesses such as ours are few and far between,” says cooperative member Michelle Kimmel. “We are blessed to pass on a trip down memory lane for previous customers and say hello to first-timers who are amazed when they walk through the door. Holding on to traditions of hard work and perseverance got our parents through the last 50 years. I recently had a conversation with an 86-year-old gentleman in the store. As his eyes were full of wonderment, I remember him saying, ‘I used to come in here years ago. If someone can’t find it anywhere else, by golly they know where to go. There’s only one place like this. Keep it going.’ That man made me smile. I’m happy to be a part of the legacy of Duppstadt’s Country Store.”



FAMILY TRADITION: The late owner of Duppstadt’s Country Store, Carole Duppstadt, is shown surrounded by her children who are carrying on the store’s legacy. Pictured, from left, are: Mark Duppstadt, Melody Wetmiller, Matt Duppstadt, Michelle Kimmel and Mike Duppstadt.

Now more than ever, it is important to support local businesses within the community. Plan a visit to The Buckstown Mall, even if it is just to browse

and say hello! Who knows, you may even see a familiar face.

“Stop by if you’re in the area,” Mike says. “You never know what you may find.”

Duppstadt’s Country Store is rooted in a tradition that has been in its family for 50 years. I know because I am part of that tradition. My grandparents were Jim and Carole, and I’m the daughter of Mark Duppstadt.

The store currently has two full-time employees, Robin Duppstadt and Chuck Deeter, while family members rotate weekend shifts.

Duppstadt’s Country Store is open seven days a week, Mondays through Saturdays from 9 a.m.-6 p.m. and Sundays from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. You can also find them on Facebook, contact them at 814-754-4400 or on the web at duppstadtscountrystore.com. 🌐

Meet Drew Boyer

Your cooperative’s newest employee



DREW BOYER is a familiar face to the co-op, working as a summer intern on the right-of-way crew after graduating from high school. He went on to work for B & L Tree Service, but recently accepted a full-time position on the SREC right-of-way crew. While working for B & L Tree Service, he was a crew foreman for one of the crews that contract-

ed with Somerset Rural Electric. His tenure there gives him an edge because of his familiarity with cooperative service territory.

Boyer started work at the cooperative on Aug. 17, filling an open position in our right-of-way department. Some of the duties on the right-of-way crew include running bucket trucks, climbing to trim trees, using a chainsaw and chipping brush.

“This is what I have been working toward since high school: a chance to work at Somerset REC with future interest in becoming a lineman,” Boyer says.

Boyer, who lives in Fairhope, is the son of Brad Boyer and Michele Smith. In his spare time, he enjoys spending time with family and friends, loves hunting and riding his side-by-side. Welcome to the cooperative family, Drew! 🌐

Co-op communicator receives state award

THE SOMERSET Rural Electric communications staff was recognized during the 2020 Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association (PREA) Communications Awards program held Oct. 6. The program, sponsored by the statewide organization representing 13 electric cooperatives in Pennsylvania and one in New Jersey, is designed to recognize the work of cooperative communicators.

Awards were presented by Craig Harting, CEO of Sullivan County Rural Electric Cooperative and chairman of the PREA Awards Committee.

Somerset Rural Electric received an Award of Excellence for Best Use of Cooperative Principle for an article written by Emily Baer, director of marketing & member services, and Honorable Mentions for Best Wildcard and Best Graphic Design.

The awards program was held in conjunction with the 2020 PREA Strategic Communications Forum. The forum focused on the following topics: effective online communication, political update, and a cooperative roundtable featuring reports from attendees.

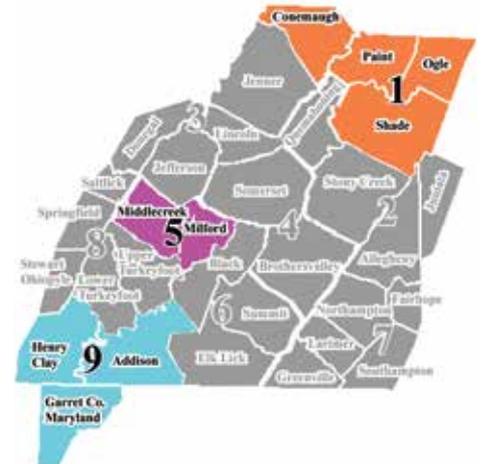
Eighteen representatives of 14 Pennsylvania and New Jersey cooperatives, including Baer, participated in the online forum. 🌐



2021 director districts up for election

THE 82ND ANNUAL meeting of members of Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc. is quickly approaching and is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, May 27, 2021, at Seven Springs Mountain Resort.

Somerset REC is proud to have a board comprised of committed and knowledgeable directors who play a vital role in the decision-making process at the cooperative.



Listed below are the three director positions open for election in 2021 at the annual meeting. Directors elected are required to serve a three-year term. The following districts up for election include:

- ▶ District 1: Conemaugh, Ogle, Paint, Shade
- ▶ District 5: Middlecreek, Milford
- ▶ District 9: Addison, Garrett Co. (Maryland), Henry Clay

If you are interested in running for one of these positions, your primary residence must be in one of these areas, and you must be a member in good standing. Please submit to the cooperative, in writing, your request for the specific district no later than Jan. 29, 2021. 🌟

**'TIS THE SEASON
for Co-op Cheer**



As we enter our 3rd Annual Co-op Cheer, we'd like to thank our members that have participated in donating to our local children and charities within our service territory in previous years.

Now until December 11th, we encourage you to bring a new, unwrapped toy into the co-op office. With donation, each member will receive an LED night light and one entry to win 1 of 5 \$50 bill credits available.

Making Christmas bright. Spread the cheer, Co-op Cheer!

Give the Gift of Electricity

gift certificates available



Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays from your local rural electric cooperative.

Directors

Jerry L. Engle	Russ A. Hillegas	Joshua C. Sechler
Lowell L. Friedline	Floyd T. Lehman	Wayne E. Sechler
Carl A. Hay Jr.	Harvey W. Reckner Jr.	C. Ben Waltermire

Employees

Kathy Armstrong	Wendy Durica	Phil Martz Jr.	Bryan Schrock
Emily Baer	Carter Engleka	Jessica Maurer	Sam Shoher
Adam Barnes	Gary Gindlesperger	Alex Mazanowski	Roger Shroyer
Roy Bittner	Doug Glessner	Elizabeth Morocco	Tanner Smith
Drew Boyer	Glenn Gross	Andy Nicklow	Kara Specht
Jeff Brant	Jonathan Hillegass	Ruston Ogburn	Phil Stern
Kristi Burkett	John Hoehard	Andrew Phillippi	Garrett Thomas
Don Cober	Keith Kimmel	Zack Pritts	Ken Walker
Brock Crawford	Clarence Knopsnyder	Casey Pyle	Riek Yoder
Jessi Ditzler	Mindy Luteri	Phil Read	Tawnya Zorn
Dave Dudak	Brian Marker	Tony Retassie	

