



THE ENERGIZER

DECEMBER 2023 | STEUBEN RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

OFFICE LOCATIONS

Bath District Office
9 Wilson Avenue
Bath, NY 14810
(607) 776-4161
(800) 843-3414

Cherry Creek District Office
5966 South Rd
Cherry Creek, NY 14723
(716) 296-5651
(800) 883-8236

OFFICE HOURS

Bath District Office
Monday - Friday
7:30 am - 4:00 pm

Cherry Creek District Office
Monday - Friday
7:00 am - 3:30 pm

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

District 1 - James McCormick
District 2 - Janice Hoad
District 3 - Edward Borkowski
District 4 - Walter Longwell
District 5 - Gerald Chase Jr.
District 6 - Gordon Foster
District 7 - Robert Nichols
District 8 - Randy Stankey
District 9 - William Moss III

HAPPY
HOLIDAYS

432302

Steuben Rural Electric's 79th Annual Membership Meeting



Bath District Members at the Canisteo-Greenwood High School auditorium.

2023 Annual Meeting Highlights

Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative held its 79th Annual Meeting at the Canisteo-Greenwood High School in Canisteo, which was also live streamed to our Cherry Creek members at the Pine Valley Central High School in South Dayton on Saturday, October 14, 2023. The Cooperative had a great meeting in which we shared with our members and guests the current status and future of Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative. Food, raffle prizes, gifts, and fun was enjoyed by all. The annual meeting provides members with the opportunity to get to know their cooperative.

The annual meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the invocation, offered by Pastor George Coon. Board President, James McCormick welcomed attendees to the meeting and introduced the Cooperative's board of directors, management, and special guests.

At the annual meeting, Cooperative members elected three of their peers to serve on the Cooperative's Board of Directors. In District 3, Edward Borkowski was re-elected. This district covers Ur-

bana, Wayne, Bradford, Hornby, and Orange. In District 4, Walter Longwell was re-elected. This district covers Bath. In District 6, Gordon Foster was re-elected. This district covers Thurston, Campbell, and Rathbone.

In addition to the election of the directors, the Cooperative provided its members reports on its end-of-year financial status, updates on the Cooperative and what's ahead for the future of the Cooperative. Board President, James McCormick and General Manager, Bryant Dillon both acknowledged the many challenges that the Cooperative is faced with but echoed its commitment to reliable, responsive and efficient service at the lowest possible price.

The board recognized the following for their years of service to the Cooperative; Wade Nelson, Line Foreman 35 years; Tracy Davis, Operations Assistant 30 years; Robert Nichols, Director/Vice-President 20 years; Janice Hoad, Director/Secretary 15 years; and William Moss III, Director 10 years.

See Annual Meeting | Page 5

NEW EMPLOYEES



SREC welcomes Kristin Dibble. Kristin resides in Hornell, NY with her children, four dogs, one cat and a turtle. Kristin has held numerous roles in the accounting field. In her free time, Kristin likes to play competitive and recreational softball, bake and attend all of her childrens extra curricular activities. Kristin is looking forward to learning a new industry and working in the accounting department here at SREC. Please join us in welcoming Kristin to the Cooperative.



SREC welcomes Conner South. Conner resides in Hornby, NY with his wife and children. He comes to SREC from Taylor County Rural Electric Cooperative in Campbellsville, Kentucky. He is excited to continue his hands-on training with SREC. Conner is a graduate of the South east Lineman Training Center in Trenton, Georgia. In his free time, he enjoys fishing, hunting, and traveling with his family. Please join us in welcoming Conner to the Cooperative.

SOME COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT CAPITAL CREDITS

What are Capital Credits?

Capital Credits are an allocation of funds that represent your share of the ownership in the Cooperative. **Capital Credits** can also be called equity or your investment in the Cooperative. Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc. is a member-owned, non-profit organization. At the end of each year and after all operating expenses have been paid, the remaining margins are allocated to each member based on the amount of energy purchased during the year. This allocation of margins is referred to as **Capital Credits**.

When Are Capital Credits Retired?

Capital Credit checks are mailed to members each September that the Cooperative makes a general retirement. Each September, SREC's Board of Directors evaluates how much to pay taking into consideration such factors as the impact on electric rates and financial strength of the Cooperative. Capital credits are refunded on a 25-30 year rotation. On September 29, 2023 Steuben Rural Electric paid over \$380,000.00 to members that used power in 1996 and a portion of 1997.

What Happens If You Move Off The Lines Of The Cooperative?

Your Capital Credits will be held in the account's name until they are refunded. You will receive a refund each year that the Cooperative makes a general retirement, mailed to the most current address on file. You must keep the Cooperative notified of address changes; otherwise, you may not receive your entitled refund check when mailed. 970800

Unclaimed Capital Credits - Is Your Name On The List?

Please review the list of unclaimed capital credits on our website at www.steubenrec.coop/unclaimed-capital-credits. The listing includes members whose capital credit checks have been returned to the cooperative by the USPS due to an insufficient or outdated address. Please review the list and if you have any information that would be helpful to us in locating these members, please contact the SREC office at (607) 776-4161.

A Message from your Board President

Happy Holidays!

Spark joy and light this holiday season. From our co-op family to yours, we wish you safe and warm season with friends and loved ones.

James McCormick - Board President

Five Ways to Safeguard Your Home This Winter

60202

As the temperatures drop and the days grow shorter, there's a natural inclination to create a warm and cozy haven at home. Unfortunately, as we see increased use of heating equipment, candles and electrical items, the number of home fires tends to increase during winter months.

Here are five ways you can safeguard your home for the winter season.

1. Ensure carbon monoxide and smoke detectors are working

properly. If your detectors are battery-operated, replace the batteries annually. Test the detectors once a month and give them a good dusting to ensure the sensors are clear of dirt and debris.

2. Inspect electrical cords. We depend on more cords during winter, whether for holiday lighting, extension cords or portable heaters. Before using any corded items, double check to make sure cords aren't frayed or cracked. If you use portable space heaters,

remember to keep them at least 3 feet away from flammable items. Use models that include an auto shut-off feature and overheat protection. Space heaters can take a toll on your energy bills. Use them efficiently (to heat smaller spaces) and safely. Never plug a space heater into a power strip. Speaking of power strips...

3. Avoid overloading electrical outlets and power strips. When overloaded with electrical items, outlets and power strips can overheat and catch fire. If you use power strips for multiple devices, make sure the strip can handle the electrical load. For a safer bet, look for power strips that include surge protection.

4. Clean the fireplace to improve safety and efficiency. There's nothing better than a warm fire on a chilly night, but it's important to maintain your fireplace for safety.

As wood burns, a sticky substance known as creosote builds up in the chimney. When creosote buildup becomes too thick, a chimney fire can ignite. The chimney should be cleaned at least once a year to reduce fire risks. Regular cleaning also improves air flow and limits the amount of carbon monoxide that seeps indoors.

5. Practice safety in the kitchen. As we spend more time in the kitchen during the holiday season, be mindful of potential fire hazards. Never leave food that's cooking on the stove top unattended. Clean and remove spilled foods from cooking surfaces and be mindful of where you place flammable items like dish towels.

Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative wants you and your family to stay safe during the winter season. Visit www.steubenrec.coop for additional safety tips.

2024 Legislative Youth Tour - Washington, D.C.

Attention all area 11th grade high school students whose parents are members of Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative. An all-expense-paid opportunity of a lifetime to Washington, D.C., will take place April 21 through April 24, 2024.

The difference between electric cooperatives and other utilities is that "giving something back to the community" is part of our business plan. So, why do electric cooperatives bring high school students to Washington? Because they're committed to giving our next generation of community leaders the political insight and hands-on leadership experience they need to flourish.

Annually, Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative, along with the other three New York Cooperatives, sponsor a selected youth-delegate with the opportunity to travel to Washington D.C. to meet with our nation's political leaders in April and learn about our Nation's legislative process.

The selected student will be going with representatives from Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative in meetings on Capitol Hill with members of Congress as part of the annual National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Legislative Conference. The conference is a national lobbying effort by our nation's rural electric cooperatives to inform our members of Congress about rural areas like those in Steuben, Schuyler, Cattaraugus, and Chautauqua counties.

This unique trip gives young people the opportunity to watch history come alive, explore museums, memorials, and monuments, make friendships that will last a lifetime and be part of a group that has more than 50,000 alumni in every walk of life, including U.S. Senators and CEO's.

Students interested in being considered for this event must complete the application and have it submitted to the office of Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative by 4pm on Tuesday,

March 19, 2024.

You can find the application on-line by visiting <https://steubenrec.coop/legislative-youth-tour> or you can email keleveland@steubenrec.com and she will send you an application. If you have any questions, please call 607-776-4161 ext. 2118.

Qualifications:

- * Must be a junior in high school.
- * Your parent(s) must be SREC members.
- * Have at least a "B" average.
- * Participate in extra-curricular activities and/or community service.



COOPERATIVE NEWS

Recently, the Cooperative announced that it would be holding two public hearings regarding a potential rate increase. The first rate hearing was held on November 29, 2023 in the Bath District and the second on November 30, 2023 in the Cherry Creek District. We would like everyone that took the time out of their today to attend and speak at these hearings. The public hearing process is critical in promoting transparency. Excellent questions comments were raised by all who attended these hearings.

After careful consideration, the Cooperative will be moving forward with implementing a 6.75% increase to the average, 1,000 kWh residential bill. The financial impact of this increase will be \$9.03 on the average bill. This rate increase will go into effect on the February 2024 billing statements and impact all rate classes and is split between the fixed charge and per kWh distribution charge. New rates would be as follows:

<u>Rate Schedule</u>	<u>Rate Class</u>	<u>ChargeType</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Before</u>	<u>After</u>
Rate Schedule 1	Residential	Customer Charge	Fixed Charge	\$ 28.95	29.95
Rate Schedule 1	Residential	Distribution Charge	Per kWh Charge	\$ 0.072641	0.080667
Rate Schedule 1A	Residential ETS TOU	Customer Charge	Fixed Charge	\$ 21.83	22.58
Rate Schedule 1A	Residential ETS TOU	Distribution Charge - Peak	Per kWh Charge	\$ 0.105355	0.116996
Rate Schedule 1A	Residential ETS TOU	Distribution Charge - Off Peak	Per kWh Charge	\$ 0.027544	0.030587
Rate Schedule 1B	Residential DG	Customer Charge	Fixed Charge	\$ 28.95	29.95
Rate Schedule 1B	Residential DG	Distribution Charge	Per kWh Charge	\$ 0.072641	0.080667
Rate Schedule 2	Small Commercial	Customer Charge	Fixed Charge	\$ 54.32	56.20
Rate Schedule 2	Small Commercial	Distribution Charge	Per kWh Charge	\$ 0.049629	0.055113
Rate Schedule 3	Large Commercial	Customer Charge	Fixed Charge	\$ 156.57	161.98
Rate Schedule 3	Large Commercial	Distribution Charge	Per kWh Charge	\$ 0.005565	0.006180

For those members that were unable to attend the public hearing, the Cooperative provided information on the proposed increase such as, the proposed rates, details on why the increase was found to be necessary, information on how to control your energy charges and a comparison to other local utilities. The need for an increase ultimately boils down to widespread inflation over the past few years and the current labor market.

From the gas pump to the grocery store, we've all seen costs going up. Pandemic-driven supply chain disruptions, a war in Ukraine, and skyrocketing natural gas prices have fueled inflationary pressures and cost increases in just about every sector, including the electric utility industry. In the last several years, costs for all materials and equipment have risen dramatically. As an example, the cost to purchase a 10kVA transformer (standard residential transformer) has risen by 100%, from \$650 to \$1,300, over the past 3 years. Similarly, the cost for a standard 40-foot wood pole has risen from \$330 to \$772, a 134% increase. In late 2019, we were purchasing 1/0 ACSR conductor (most common wire) for \$0.27/ft, which has since increased to \$0.55/ft, a 104% increase. These are just a few examples of our most utilized items on the distribution system that we use in basic maintenance procedures. These same kinds of increases are widespread and are not isolated to just a few items. As a result, the Cooperative needs to adjust member rates to provide adequate revenue for system maintenance, replacement, and repairs.

There is also a national shortage of qualified lineworkers. These are the individuals that keep our lights on and are in dangerously short supply. To compound the issue, the average time it takes from an apprenticeship to the beginning stages of working on energized electric lines is about 4 years. In addition, the level of federal funding is rapidly increasing the demand for qualified lineworkers. Electric distribution and transmission contractors are raising wages so high that lineworkers are now leaving their careers at investor-owned utilities. Investor-owned utilities are now, and have been, poaching lineworkers from rural cooperatives and municipal electric departments at higher wage rates. Our neighboring investor-owned utility is paying qualified lineworkers far above the Cooperative's current rate of pay. As such, we have had to increase lineworker compensation significantly, over the past few years to maintain a stable base of lineworkers, as has every other rural electric cooperative and municipality. Without qualified lineworkers, reliability of electric service would be compromised.

For resources on controlling your energy costs, please visit Steuben County Rural Electric Cooperative's website or call us at 1-800-843-3414 and ask for our Member Service Representative. We can assist you in viewing your energy consumption in 15-minute intervals to help determine where you could best find energy savings.

This is certainly not news that we enjoy delivering, but we appreciate the support of our members during this difficult time for all. As other local utilities have been raising rates by over 20%, the Cooperative has been hard at work trying to control costs in an effort to minimize the impact on our members. We will continue to do our part in carrying forward the Cooperative's mission of improving the quality of rural life by providing our members with low cost, reliable electricity, and related services in a safe manner.

SREC Annual Meeting

CELEBRATING 79 YEARS



846500 Cherry Creek District Members at the Pine Valley Central High School auditorium

Two hundred seventy members registered at this year's annual meeting. Thank you to all those members who attended and showed their support for their local cooperative. Next year's meeting is scheduled for Saturday, October 19, 2024. It will once again be livestreamed to the Pine Valley Central School in South Dayton. We hope to see you there for the celebration of the Cooperative's 80th Year!



Members at the Pine Valley High School



Bath District Employees Betty Hall and Kim Cruse at the Canistee-Greenwood School



General Manager/Bryant Dillon, Director/Walt Longwell



Members at the Canistee-Greenwood High School

WHY HOST A SATELLITE MEETING?

To meet Steuben Rural Electric members where they are! The two meeting locations meant members could drive a short distance to participate in the full meeting experience. Whether attending the primary meeting at Canistee-Greenwood or the satellite meeting at Pine Valley members enjoyed a chicken dinner, member gifts and participated in the meeting real time (via livestreaming).



Wade Nelson, CC Foreman and Randy Stankey, Director



Cherry Creek Employee Katie Smith registering members at the Pine Valley High School



THE TRADING POST



• **FOR SALE:** New Coleman off road ATV, front & rear cargo racks, \$2,000.00 or best offer; Sprinter Travel Trailer, 8ft. wide, 26ft. long, nice for travel, camping and hunting, \$2,000.00 or best offer. Call 607-359-3896.

• **FOR SALE:** Craftsman air compressor, 5hp, 20 gallon tank - \$100.00; apartment size electric cook stove - \$100.00; Oreck XL upright vacuum - \$60.00; new rotors & breaks pads for 2003 Rav 4 - \$165.00; used p/t deck spindles - \$1.00 each; 3 pcs 6" round gallon duct pipe - \$15.00; and 1/2" breaker bar 19" long - \$15.00. Call 607-661-6348.

• **FOR SALE:** Two sets of climbing gear - \$350.00 each; spurs - \$150.00; new saddle

with lanyard rope - \$200.00; 120' triplex rope - \$100.00; and speed saw - \$40.00. Call 607-776-7363.

• **FOR SALE:** "Grassfed Angus Ground Beef", 95% lean non-certified organic, reasonably priced at \$4.50 per lb. "Healthy Food Healthy You". Call 585-728-5243 or 585-991-9173.

• **WANTED:** Looking for help getting the weeds out of my pond. It's a 1/4 acre pond and has weeds around the perimeter. If you know somebody or can help call 607-382-0545 for details. Please leave a message.

Statement of Nondiscrimination

Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc., is an equal opportunity provider and employer. In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, domestic violence victim status, family/parental status, salary history, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET

Center at (202)720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800)877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found on-line at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by mail:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
Fax: (202) 690-7442
E-mail: program.intake@usda.gov

The Trading Post Rules: Only members of SREC may submit ads. Ads must be submitted by the 26th of January in order to be published in the February newsletter. You can submit ads by mailing them to Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative, 9 Wilson Ave, Bath, NY 14810 or by email to kleveland@steubenrec.com. All ads must be typed or printed clearly. Include your name and account number on all submissions. Ads are not allowed to be automatically repeated. They must be resubmitted for each issue. The cooperative reserves the right to edit material for content and/or space as necessary. Ads are published on a first-received basis with no guarantee your ad will appear.

Disclaimer: Items in the Trading Post are published at the request of our members. SREC does not endorse, recommend or assume any responsibility for the products advertised. 835101

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

Dec. 22 - Christmas Holiday
Dec. 25 - Christmas Holiday
Jan. 1 - New Year's Eve Day
Jan. 15 - Martin Luther King Jr.
February 19 - Presidents' Day
March 29 - Good Friday

THIRD PARTY NOTIFICATION

In accordance with the provisions of the New York Codes, Rules and Regulations, Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative is required to permit a residential member to designate, in writing a third party to receive a copy of every notice of disconnectinuance of service to the member, provided that such third party indicated in writing a willingness to receive these notices, please contact the main office at (607) 776-4161 for a copy of the applicable paperwork.



\$10 IS HIDING IN THIS ISSUE

Each month, we hide five account numbers within the text of the newsletter. If you find your account number, contact the Cooperative by the end of the current month at 607-776-4161 to receive a \$10 credit on your electric bill.

