



# The Energizer

MAY 2026 | STEUBEN RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## Celebrating the People Who Power Our Cooperative

At Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative, we have the unique privilege of seeing firsthand what it truly takes to keep the lights on for our members. Each April, we pause to recognize two groups of dedicated professionals who play essential roles in delivering safe, reliable electricity to our communities, our line workers and our administrative team.

### Honoring Our Line Workers

On April 18, 2026, we celebrated Line Worker Appreciation Day, recognizing the brave men and women who are always ready to respond when our members need them most. When storms impact our communities and outages occur, many experience inconvenience—but our line workers see a call to action.

Whether it means leaving family dinners, working through the night, or facing challenging weather conditions, our crews are always prepared to restore power safely and as quickly as possible. That readiness comes from rigorous training, deep experience, and a shared commitment to serving others.

What makes line workers especially remarkable is that they are not just restoring power to a system—they are restoring power to their own communities. They live here, raise their families here, and understand that electricity is essential to daily life, local businesses, schools, farms, and emergency services. Powering the places we call home is personal to them.

Electric cooperatives like Steuben Rural Electric were built on the principle of neighbors helping neighbors, and our line workers embody that spirit every day. They are often the first to respond and the last to leave, working long hours behind the scenes. We are grateful to our members for their patience and encouragement during outages, and we thank our line workers for their dedication, professionalism, and unwavering focus on safety.

### Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative Line Department

**Bath District:** Andrew Badeau, Marissa Carlineo, Joseph Englehart, Evan Green, Michael Green, Douglas Hosmer-Smith, Ernie Jessup, Scott Jones, Trenton Labarr, Emily Murray, Richard Pendle, and Matthew Strauss.

**Cherry Creek District:** Kevin Hunt, Matthew Meyers, Wade Nelson, Evan Wightman, and Justin Young.

### Recognizing Our Administrative Professionals

Administrative Professionals Day observed this year on Wednesday, April 22, gives us the opportunity to recognize another vital part of our cooperative team—those who keep our daily operations running smoothly.

First observed in 1952 as National Secretaries Week, this day has grown to celebrate the many important roles administrative professionals play in organizations around the world. At SREC, their contributions are essential to serving our members.

Our administrative professionals are often the first voice you hear when you call and the friendly faces who assist you when you visit our office. Their responsibilities include answering member inquiries, processing payments, managing billing and service orders, coordinating new service connections, obtaining easements, handling accounts payable, and much more.

Simply put, Steuben Rural Electric could not operate without their dedication and professionalism. Their behind-the-scenes work ensures efficiency, accuracy, and the high level of service our members expect and deserve.

**SREC Administrative Professionals:** Tracy Davis, Emily Murray, Kristen Cleveland, Katie Smith, Jennifer Madigan, Susan Roche, Kristin Dibble, Karlie Sheetz, and Katrina Case.

### A Shared Commitment to Service

While their roles may differ, both our line workers and administrative professionals share a common goal: serving our members and strengthening our communities. Together, they are the backbone of our cooperative.

Please join us in taking a moment this April to say “thank you” to these dedicated individuals. Their hard work, commitment, and teamwork power not only our electric system—but also the communities we are proud to serve.



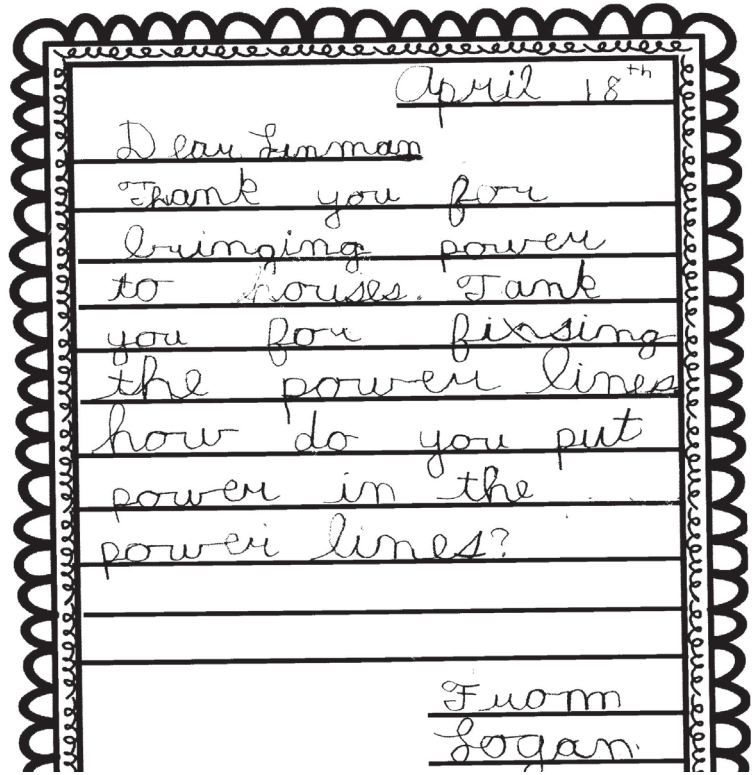
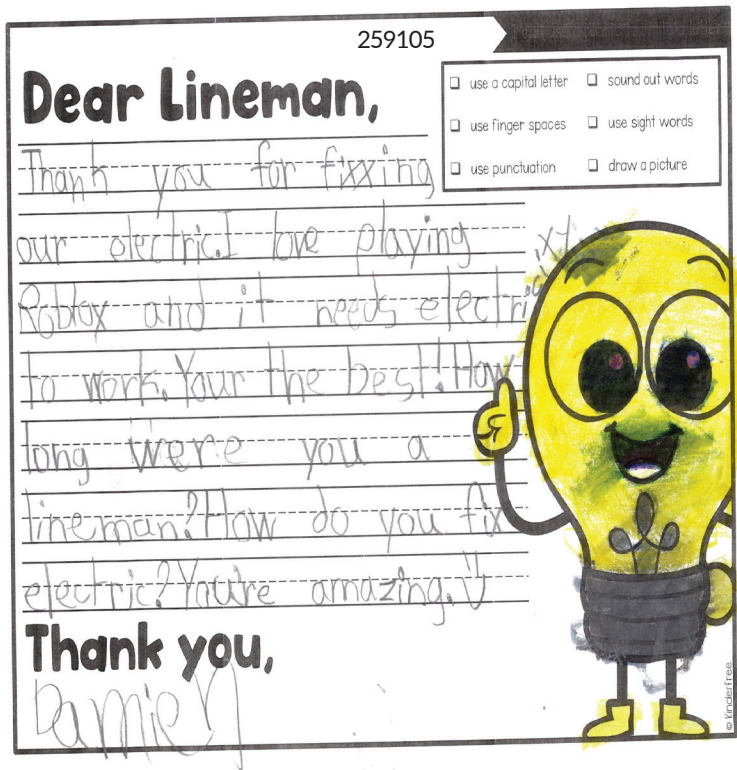
*Bath Office, 9 Wilson Avenue, Bath, NY 14810*  
*Phone: (607) 776-4161 or (800) 843-3414*  
*Office Hours: Monday - Friday 7:30 am - 4:00 pm*

*CC Office, 5966 South Rd, Cherry Creek, NY 14723*  
*Phone: (716) 296-5651 or (800) 883-8236*  
*Office Hours: Monday - Friday 7:00 am - 3:30 pm*

# Thank You Notes

The linemen serving Steuben Rural Electric's Cherry Creek District recently received a heartfelt show of appreciation from local students, reminding us all of the impact their work has on the communities they serve. Students from Cattaraugus-Little Valley Elementary School and Fredonia Elementary School took the time to write thank-you notes expressing their gratitude for the dedication and hard work of our line crews. These messages, filled with kind words and colorful drawings, highlight just how much their efforts are noticed—especially during

challenging weather and long hours spent restoring power. Our linemen have proudly displayed these notes in their workspaces and break areas, where they serve as a daily reminder of why they do what they do. Acts of appreciation like these not only boost morale but also strengthen the connection between our crews and the communities they serve. Steuben Rural Electric extends its sincere thanks to the students and teachers who made this thoughtful gesture possible. Your words of encouragement mean more than you know.



## YOUTH TOUR 2026

*Make Your Mark*

Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative was proud to be represented in Washington, D.C. from April 26–29 at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Legislative Conference. This annual event brings together electric cooperative leaders, staff, and youth delegates from across the country to engage with policymakers and discuss the issues that matter most to rural communities.

We are especially pleased to announce that Richard Blackman and Weston Nichols were selected as our 2026 Youth Tour delegates. Richard and Weston joined members of our Board of Directors and management team for this unique opportunity to experience the legislative process firsthand while representing Steuben REC on a national stage. They were also joined by three additional student delegates representing the other New York State electric cooperatives,

providing an opportunity to connect with peers from across the state. During the conference, participants attended policy briefings, heard from national leaders, and met with elected officials to advocate for reliable, affordable energy and the needs of rural electric cooperatives. The schedule was fast-paced and filled with valuable learning experiences, offering our delegates insight into how decisions made in Washington impact our local communities.

In addition to conference activities, the group took time to explore the nation's capital, visiting several of Washington, D.C.'s iconic monuments and museums. A highlight of the sightseeing experience was a stop at Ford's Theatre, the historic site where President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated, offering a meaningful connection to our nation's history.

Adding an unexpected twist to the trip, Washington, D.C. was also hosting a surprise visitor—the King of England—making for an especially memorable atmosphere in the nation's capital.

We are proud of Richard and Weston for their selection and participation, and we thank all of our representatives for their continued dedication to serving our members and community.

FROM OUR COMMUNITY TO THE NATION'S CAPITAL:  
SREC STUDENTS, DIRECTORS AND STAFF ATTEND THE  
LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE IN WASHINGTON, D.C.



Left to Right: Gordon Foster, Gerald Chase, Robert Nichols, Weston Nichols, Bryant Dillon, Richard Blackman & Randy Stankey



Left to Right: Thomas (OMECE), Weston (SREC), Richard (SREC), MaKenna (DCEC) & Bailey (OEC)



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Left to Right: Weston Nichols and Richard Blackman



Left to Right: Weston Nichols and Richard Blackman

## REFLECTIONS FROM THE YOUTH TOUR

“I am very thankful to have been selected as one of the student representatives for the Youth Legislative Tour through Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative. It was an incredible opportunity to visit Washington D.C., and learn more about the electric cooperatives that provide power to much of the country and how they operate. It was interesting to hear about some of the cooperative’s priorities and the ways they engage with the policymakers. I immensely enjoyed the experience, especially seeing places that are such a big part of our country’s history, and visiting the many famous monuments and museums. It is definitely something I would highly recommend to any student who has the opportunity.”

— Richard Blackman



“Thank you for allowing me to be a part of the Legislative Youth Tour this year. It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that I will remember for the rest of my life. I really enjoyed spending time seeing all of the historical landmarks, especially the night tour. I learned how a small town like Addison can have a big voice in government when we are unified with other small communities through our co-op. I also appreciate the time the co-op leaders spent helping me understand SREC. Thank you again for your generosity.”

— Weston Lee Nichols

# ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH

## Safety is Our Priority

At Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative, our mission goes far beyond simply delivering electricity to your homes and businesses. As a member-owned cooperative, we are deeply invested in the well-being of our community, and that includes ensuring you and your loved ones stay safe.

Electricity is an essential part of our lives, but it must be treated with caution and respect. That's why we make safety a top priority - because nothing is more important than protecting the people who make up this cooperative: you, our members.

We are committed to sharing life-saving electrical safety information through our newsletters and social media. But safety awareness isn't just a one-time conversation; it's something we must practice every day.

### Stay Safe Around Electricity

Whether you're working on a home improvement project, cleaning gutters, or trimming trees, always be mindful of overhead power lines connected to your home. A simple moment of awareness can prevent a dangerous accident.

If your project requires digging - whether for a fence, landscaping, or any underground work - never assume you know what's below. Call 8-1-1 or visit [www.udignity.org](http://www.udignity.org) a few days in advance to have underground utilities marked. Taking this precaution can prevent accidental contact with buried electrical lines, which could lead to injury or service disruptions.

### Protecting Our Children

Our youngest members are naturally curious, and we must teach them how to stay safe around electrical equipment. Remind children to never climb trees near power lines, avoid playing on or around pad mount transformers (those green utility boxes), and fly kites only in wide-open areas far from power lines. These simple rules can help prevent serious accidents.

### A Commitment to Safety Education

Steuben Rural Electric is proud to be a partner in the Safe Electricity program, which provides valuable safety resources for all ages. We encourage to visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org) for engaging videos, interactive games for children, and educational materials designed for teachers and families.

As you go about your day, please take a moment to think about electrical safety - for yourself, your family, and your community. Stay safe and thank you for being a member.

# STAY IN THE KNOW



Stay connected by keeping your contact information up to date. Current contact information benefits you in multiple ways.

- ✓ Faster outage reporting and response
- ✓ Timely alerts about planned outages and other important updates
- ✓ Smoother customer service interactions
- ✓ Improved access to member benefits and programs

Ensure your phone number, email address and mailing address are up to date so you can enjoy the benefits of staying connected.

## Scott Jones Graduates from Lineman Apprenticeship



We're thrilled to share some exciting news from this past fall. Our newest Journey Lineman, Scott Jones, was honored at

the Lineman Apprenticeship Graduation held at the Woodcliff Hotel & Spa in Fairport, New York on October 23, 2025.

After four years of dedicated on-the-job training and classroom instruction, Scott has officially graduated from the apprenticeship program. His commitment to Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative, our members, and the communities we serve is truly commendable.

Please join us in congratulating Scott on his outstanding achievement and welcoming him in his new role.

# Understanding Your Electric Bill

At Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative (SREC), we understand that many members saw higher electric bills in January and February, even in cases where usage stayed about the same. That can be frustrating, and it's a fair question: what changed? The answer largely comes down to how electricity is purchased and how winter weather impacts the cost of supplying power.

## How Your Electric Bill Works

Your electric bill is made up of several components and understanding them helps explain why some parts change while others stay the same.

The **Customer Charge** is a fixed monthly fee. This helps cover a portion of essential costs that exist regardless of how much electricity is used. These include property taxes, maintaining facilities, insurance, and vegetation management like tree trimming along power lines. These are real, ongoing costs required to keep the system in place and operating safely, whether your usage is high or low.

The **Distribution Charge** covers the cost of delivering electricity to your home. This includes maintaining poles and wires, responding to outages, upgrading infrastructure, and supporting metering and billing systems. Because SREC serves a rural area with fewer members spread across many miles of line, these costs are shared among fewer people. That's why distribution costs tend to be higher for rural utilities compared to larger, more densely populated systems.

There are also **state-mandated charges**, including the New York State Zero Emission Credit (ZEC) and the NYPA LTA Rider. These support statewide energy policies, including maintaining carbon-free generation and funding energy efficiency programs. These are not set by SREC but are required by New York.

The final piece, and the one that changed the most this winter is the **Energy Supply Charge**. This reflects the actual cost of purchasing electricity and is the most variable part of your bill.

## Why the Energy Supply Charge Increased

SREC has a significant advantage compared to many utilities: we receive about 85% of our electricity from low-cost hydropower through the New York Power Authority (NYPA). This helps keep overall costs stable and affordable. However, that supply is not unlimited.

When electricity demand rises above our hydropower allocation, we must purchase additional energy from the wholesale market. This is often referred to as "incremental" power, and its price can vary significantly depending on market conditions. This winter, several factors came together to drive those market costs higher.

First, colder-than-normal weather increased overall electricity use. A common way to measure this is through Heating Degree Days (HDD), which track how much heating demand is created by outdoor temperatures. HDD compares the average daily temperature to 65°F, which is considered a baseline indoor comfort level. For example, if the average temperature for a day is 35°F, that day produces 30 heating degree days.

Looking at actual data from our region, January 2026 recorded approximately 1,369 heating degree days, compared to a normal of 1,331. February recorded about 1,177, compared to a normal of 1,156. While those differences, 38 HDD in January and 21 HDD in February, may not seem large at first glance, they represent sustained colder conditions over long periods of time, not just a few isolated cold days.

That matters because heating demand doesn't spike just during the coldest days, it stays elevated around the clock. Overnight temperatures remain lower, heating systems run longer cycles, and homes don't get the same recovery periods during the day. Across thousands of homes, that adds up quickly. Even a 2–3% increase in heating demand across an entire system can push total electricity use significantly higher.

From a system perspective, that sustained increase is critical. It's not just about total energy use, it's about when and how long demand stays high. During this winter, we saw extended periods where system demand remained elevated for many consecutive hours and days. That is what ultimately pushed demand well beyond our hydropower allocation.

Second, and just as important, were rising natural gas costs and constraints on the gas system itself. In New York, natural gas is a primary fuel used to generate electricity, especially during periods of high demand. That means when natural gas prices increase, electricity prices typically follow.

However, it's not just about supply, it's also about delivery capacity. Natural gas must move through pipelines, and those pipelines have limits. During cold weather, those pipelines are heavily used to serve home heating demand first, leaving less available for power plants. In other words, electric generation is competing directly with heating demand for the same fuel.

This winter, that competition intensified. During the coldest periods in January 2026, natural gas demand surged across the Northeast, and pipeline constraints drove prices sharply higher. In some cases, natural gas prices spiked into the \$50 to \$200 per MMBtu range, compared to just a few dollars under normal conditions. As a result, wholesale electricity prices also increased significantly.

At the same time, the New York Independent System Operator (NYISO) had to take additional steps to maintain reliability. As natural gas became more constrained, NYISO called on higher-cost generation resources, including oil-fired and demand response, to meet demand. These units are more expensive to operate, which further increased the cost of electricity during peak periods.

The result is a chain reaction: colder weather increases heating demand, heating demand tightens natural gas supply and pipeline capacity, and both natural gas and electricity prices rise. Those higher costs ultimately flow through to the Energy Supply Charge on your bill.

Together, these factors meant that SREC had to purchase more electricity from the market, and at higher prices, for extended periods of time.

## How This Impacts Your Bill

The Energy Supply Charge is designed to reflect the actual cost SREC pays for electricity. It is a pass-through charge, meaning it does not increase or decrease the Cooperative's margins. When supply costs go up,

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the charge increases. When they come down, it decreases.

This is why you may have seen higher bills even if your usage didn't change significantly. The cost per unit of electricity increased during the coldest periods of the winter.

It's important to note that other parts of your bill remained stable. The Customer Charge and Distribution Charge, which are set locally and controlled by SREC's Board of Directors, were not increased. These charges are designed to provide stability and reflect the cost of maintaining a safe and reliable electric system.

### Why This Matters

SREC operates as a not-for-profit, member-owned cooperative. That means we do not generate profits for shareholders. Rates are set to recover the cost of providing service...nothing more. When there are margins, they are returned to members over time through patronage capital.

Our hydropower allocation continues to provide a strong foundation

for keeping costs lower than many other utilities. However, during periods of extreme weather, like we experienced this winter, reliance on higher-cost market power becomes necessary.

### Looking Ahead

Energy markets are influenced by weather, fuel costs, and regional demand, all of which can change quickly. While we expect conditions to moderate over time, some volatility in the Energy Supply Charge may continue in the near term.

We also recognize that understanding your bill isn't always straightforward. That's why we are committed to providing clearer, more transparent information to help you better understand how your electric service works and what drives costs.

If you ever have questions about your bill, your usage, or ways to manage energy costs, please don't hesitate to reach out. We're always here to help.

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## Understanding Your Electric Use: New "Electric Usage Review" Tool Available

At Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative, we believe one of the best ways to serve our members is by helping them better understand their electric use. Thanks to the investment we have made in Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI), we now have the ability to review electric consumption in far greater detail than ever before.

AMI technology records electric usage in hourly intervals, giving us a much clearer picture of when electricity is being used in a home. This allows our staff to work with members to identify unusual patterns, hidden loads, or appliances that may be consuming more electricity than expected.

To help make this process easier, Steuben Rural Electric has created a new Electric Usage Review tool that members can access on our website.

### How the Electric Usage Review Works

The Electric Usage Review is a simple questionnaire that helps us gather important information about your home and the appliances you use. When combined with the hourly data from our AMI meters, it allows us to perform a detailed review of your electric consumption.

With this information, we can often help identify things such as:

- Appliances that may be running more than expected
- Hidden or overlooked electric loads
- Seasonal equipment that impacts usage
- Opportunities to improve energy efficiency
- Possible equipment issues (failing water heaters or well pumps)

Our goal is not only to help members understand their electric bills, but also to provide practical tips and insight that may help reduce energy consumption and improve efficiency.

### Extending the Value of AMI Technology

The cooperative made a significant investment in AMI technology to improve service for our members. While the system provides benefits such as faster outage detection and improved billing accuracy, it also gives us the ability to analyze electric usage patterns and provide personalized support.

The Electric Usage Review program is one way we are extending the value of that investment by using the data to help members make informed decisions about their energy use.

### Where to Find the Form

Members who would like assistance reviewing their electric usage can complete the Electric Usage Review form on our website.

Visit: [www.steubenrec.coop](http://www.steubenrec.coop)

Then navigate to: Member Information → Electric Usage Review

Once submitted, our staff will review the information along with your usage data and follow up with any observations or recommendations.

### We're Here to Help

At Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative, we are committed to working alongside our members to ensure you receive the greatest value from your electric service. Whether you have questions about your bill, want help identifying unusual usage, or are simply looking for ways to improve efficiency, we are always happy to assist.

We encourage members to take advantage of the Electric Usage Review tool and let us help you better understand your energy use.

## Director Nominations Now Open for Districts 3, 4, and 6

Would You Like to Serve as a Director on the Steuben Rural Electric Co-op Board?

Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative (SREC) is governed by a nine-member Board of Directors elected by and from our membership. The Cooperative's service territory is divided into nine districts, with each district represented by a director who resides in that district. Directors serve three-year terms. This year, we will hold elections for directors in Districts 3, 4, and 6.

District 3 includes the townships of Urbana, Wayne, Bradford, Hornby, Orange.  
District 4 includes the township of Bath.

District 6 includes the townships of Thurston, Campbell, and Rathbone.

Any member meeting the qualifications outlined in SREC's Bylaws may become a candidate for election to the Board by contacting the nominating committee member for their district. SREC's Bylaws are available online at: [www.steubenrec.coop](http://www.steubenrec.coop).

The nominating committee will meet on June 24, 2026, to select candidates for each of the three districts. A notice listing eligible candidates will be published in the September Annual Meeting Newsletter. The election of directors will take place at the Annual Meeting on Saturday, October 17, 2026.

If you have questions about the nominating process or would like more information about serving as a director, please call (607) 776-4161 ext. 2118 or stop by our office.

Serving on the Board is a meaningful way to represent your district and help guide the future of your Cooperative.



## Watch For Your Patronage Capital Summary in May

One of the greatest benefits of being an owner-member of Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative is receiving patronage capital. In May, members will receive a summary in the mail detailing their patronage capital allocation for 2025. The amount allocated to you each year is based on how much electricity you used during that year.

Once allocated, your patronage capital is retained by the Cooperative and used as an important financial resource. These funds help rebuild aging infrastructure, increase system capacity, maintain reliability, and support day-to-day operations. By utilizing patronage capital in this way, the Cooperative can keep rates affordable while continuing to provide dependable electric service.

Patronage capital is generated when the Cooperative collects more revenue than it costs



to operate during the year. In the nonprofit cooperative world, these funds are called "margins." In a for-profit business, they would be considered profit. The key difference is that at a cooperative, those margins belong to the members.

Over time, you will receive your allocated patronage capital back even if you move outside of SREC's service area. The Cooperative's Board of Directors authorizes the retirement of patronage capital when finances allow, most often annually in October. The oldest allocations are retired first. Currently, the Cooperative retires patronage capital on a rotation of approximately 26 years.

For more information about patronage capital, please visit [www.steubenrec.com](http://www.steubenrec.com).

## SWITCH AND SAVE



### Save Time & Money with Auto Pay and Paperless Billing

#### Auto Pay

Your payment will be automatically deducted from your bank account or card on the 20th of each month.

#### Paperless Billing

Members are notified each month by email when their bill is ready. You can view it by clicking on the link in the email or by logging into your Smarthub account.

#### How to Enroll

To enroll, log into your Smarthub account:

#### Auto Pay

Go to **Bill & Pay > Auto Pay Program > Enroll >** and add either a credit card or bank account

#### Paperless Billing

Go to **Settings > Paperless Billing > Select Go Paperless**

#### Questions?

Please contact the office directly at (607) 776-4161 with any questions or if you need help enrolling.

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# THE TRADING POST

• **FOR SALE:** Four all-season and four directional winter tires, size 225/75 16", with very low mileage. They are mounted on brand new Rough Country rims (16x8, 5-lug, 5" pattern) with no mileage. \$700.00 per set of four or \$1,200.00 for all eight. Call (607) 776-9212. 934100

• **FOR SALE:** Brand new Generac GP5500 generator, never used and always stored indoors under cover. It features four 120V outlets and one 240V outlet. Originally paid \$594, asking \$500 OBO. Call (607) 527-3037 and please leave a message.



# HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

May 25 - Memorial Day  
July 3 - Independence Day  
September 7 - Labor Day  
October 12 - Columbus Day  
November 11 - Veterans Day  
November 26 - Thanksgiving  
November 27 - Thanksgiving

# 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

# SPOT YOUR ACCOUNT #

To reward our loyal newsletter readers, we've hidden five (5) account numbers in this issue. Each hidden account number is spelled out numerically (for example: 123456). If you find your account number, contact the cooperative by the end of the month to claim your \$10 bill credit.



Keep your eyes open—you could be one of our lucky winners!

### 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 discontinuance 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.



The Trading Post – Submission Rules: Only members of SREC may submit ads for the Trading Post. To be published in the August newsletter, all ads must be submitted by July 24th. You can submit your ad by mailing it to Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative, 9 Wilson Ave, Bath, NY 14810, or by emailing [kcleland@steubenrec.com](mailto:kcleland@steubenrec.com). All ads must be typed or printed clearly and include your name and account number. Ads will not automatically repeat; they must be resubmitted for each issue. The Cooperative reserves the right to edit material for content or space. Ads are published in the order received, and publication cannot be guaranteed.

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