

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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OFFICE HOURS

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

EMERGENCY OUTAGE NUMBERS

814-445-4106
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Proactive Planning Lessens Blow of Rising Prices



**RUSTON
OGBURN**

LET'S FACE IT: We're a power-hungry generation.

And while we're talking on our smartphones, asking human-like computers for advice, and puttering around the yard with electric lawn mowers and weed eaters, dark clouds are gathering over the grid.

Will we have enough energy to power our ever-growing needs? Some experts don't think so.

They point to our voracious appetites for all kinds of watts — kilowatts, megawatts, you name it — and to head-scratching energy policies that are driving traditional resources like coal and natural gas plants off the grid faster than new resources can come online.

While steps are being taken to address the imbalance at state and national levels, some damage has already been done, resulting in higher costs to deliver electricity. Lots of factors are at play, but for members wondering what this means for their household budgets, it's important to understand PJM Interconnection, its recent capacity auction and the anticipated impact on our rates.


PJM oversees the multi-state power grid that Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) is plugged into and coordinates the flow of electricity from generators to local utilities like ours. It also operates wholesale markets and plans for future grid needs. Each year, PJM hosts a capacity auction to ensure it has enough electricity to meet peak demand in the future.

Recently, in reaction to increased demand and tightened supply, capacity market prices didn't just increase, they skyrocketed — by more than 800% for the 2025-2026 delivery year. And for consumers across the grid, that signals one thing: potentially higher electric bills.

Fortunately, Somerset REC gets its wholesale power from Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Allegheny), which we own and operate along with 13 other rural electric cooperatives in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Over the decades, the Allegheny board, overseen by directors from each of these 14 cooperatives, has made forward-thinking investments in energy resources, including nuclear and hydropower plants, that today provide nearly 67% of the electricity we distribute to our members.

These assets are important because they shield us — and you — from the energy market's volatility, including the extremes we've seen and will likely continue to see on capacity pricing. Neighboring investor-owned utilities buy 100% of their energy on the open energy market, making them and their rates vulnerable to that volatility. Our exposure, however, is limited because our supplier, Allegheny, only needs to buy about one-third — or about 33% — of our energy needs from outside sources. With long-term power-purchase contracts in place to further manage risk, we've set the stage for additional price stability.

As a result, Allegheny offers some of the lowest, least-volatile generation rates in the PJM region — and that's not going to change when the 2026 numbers are set later this year. Further, Allegheny continues to find ways to reduce costs and maintain stability. It recently secured millions in federal grant funding to boost its supply of affordable, carbon-free energy and add to its nuclear resources. That funding will help stabilize overall energy costs for consumers.

At Somerset REC, rising costs are never taken lightly, and rate increases are only considered as a last resort. Our board of directors is made up of cooperative members just like you, so they understand the impact that rate changes have on local families and the rural communities they serve. That's why we will continue to work with partners like Allegheny to keep the safe delivery of electricity as affordable as possible. 

RUSTON OGBURN
GENERAL MANAGER

Somerset County Students Take on Washington

EMILY BAER, DIRECTOR OF MARKETING & MEMBER SERVICES

EACH YEAR, SOMERSET RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE (REC) selects students who have just completed their junior year of high school to attend the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Youth Tour, a weeklong tour of Washington, D.C. Fourteen delegates from Somerset County had the opportunity to interact with more than 1,700 students from around the country, tour historical and cultural sites, and meet with legislative staff members from their congressional districts.

While in Washington, D.C., they joined teens from 43 states, celebrating more than 60 years of Youth Tour success. The goal of Youth Tour is to provide outstanding rural teens with an opportunity to learn more about electric cooperatives and how the federal government works while having fun and making new friends.

This once-in-a-lifetime experience teaches students to be aware of important issues and to become active citizens working to make a positive difference in their communities. It is an experience like no other.

On the go

Each day of Youth Tour is filled with activity and little down time, and the heat and humidity in the middle of June can be exhausting. Everyone sleeps a little and talks — and walks — a lot. The program has endured for 60 years with the one constant: the students, who never fail to be



A 'CAPITOL' INVESTMENT: Students from Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative pose in front of the Capitol building as part of Youth Tour. Back, from left: Luke Barron, Freddie Sutton, Lindsey Shaffer, Jayna Nieves, Taylor Demchak, Addie Barto, Sydney Walker, Elsie Barna, Emma Klahre and Emily Baer. Front, from left: Alauna Berkey, Olivia Baker, Madi Visinsky, Ava Hummel and Trinity Hoover.

amazed, inspired, humbled and grateful. Next year, most of these teens will be headed off to college or trade school, so this is an opportunity for them to explore new experiences and maybe find some direction.

The 14 students sponsored by Somerset REC were: Olivia Baker, Elsie Barna, Luke Barron, Addison Barto, Alauna Berkey, Taylor Demchak, Trinity Hoover, Ava Hummel, Emma Klahre, Jayna Nieves, Lindsey Shaffer, Freddie Sutton, Madison Visinsky and Sydney Walker. These students were selected by a panel of judges after an interview and essay contest.

A memory book, which is similar to a yearbook, will be given to each student. It will include Youth Tour highlights, quotes and photos about their unforgettable week in Washington D.C. Here are a few comments from the students this year to give you a better understanding of their experience.

Olivia Baker — “I enjoyed my week on Youth Tour while seeing different cultures and ways of life. I learned that I could connect with many people by being myself and other people will love me for it. For anyone considering going on this trip, do it! It is seriously life-changing!”

Elsie Barna — “The most impactful thing to me was the opportunity to see the Pentagon. I learned how easily I can make friends and how easy it is for me to talk to complete strangers. I would tell other students to make the most of the week by getting out of your comfort zone. Every day is fun, and you get so many amazing opportunities. I would highly recommend it.”

Luke Barron — “Experiencing city life and seeing our nation's capital was very impactful to me. I will never forget dancing in front of the White House in Lafayette Square. I would tell other students that it is a fun, educational trip to a place that all Americans should see.”

Addison Barto — “The thing that impacted me the most was all the museums and seeing things that I haven't seen before. I learned I am more confident than I thought when making new friends, and I hope I never forget pin trading with other states. I would absolutely recommend it — this is one of the most special experiences I've ever had!”

Alauna Berkey — “I loved seeing the amount of history and legacy our nation has to offer in its capital. I learned that I care about what goes on in D.C. and the way our government works more than I originally thought I did. I hope I never forget being able to experience D.C. fully for the first time. I would tell other students that this truly is the trip of a lifetime and there's none other like it. No matter who you are, this trip will change and impact everybody.”

Taylor Demchak — “It's amazing how many

opportunities are out in the world for me. This trip brought me out of my comfort zone and the dance party brought everyone together from many different states. I would tell students how fun it was."

Trinity Hoover — "I enjoyed getting to learn the inner workings of our national government. Not only do I hope I never forget my first time in D.C., but I also hope to never forget the people I met through pin trading. If you are a shy person like me, this trip is the perfect way to prepare yourself for the new beginnings that college will bring you."

Ava Hummel — "The most impactful thing to me was seeing how different life is outside of Pennsylvania. I gained confidence and stepped out of my comfort zone, and I hope I never forget the flash mob in front of the White House. I would tell other students that this trip is an incredible opportunity, and it would be one of the best experiences they can ever have."

Emma Klahre — "What impacted me the most was the motivational speech given by Mike Schlappi, where he said that we are not too young to make a difference. After imagining all the amazing things I can do when I grow up ... I finally realized that I don't have to wait to make a difference. I learned that starting a conversation with a stranger only takes one 'hello.' I would tell other students that not only will you make amazing friends and connections, but you will also find yourself supported by the staff to reach your full potential."

Jayna Nieves — "Seeing the Pentagon Memorial made a huge impact on me. I learned that it's OK to be my loud and outgoing self around new and old friends. If they don't like me, it's their loss. This trip is well worth it. The people, places and chaperones made my trip so much fun, and I am so grateful for this experience."

Lindsey Shaffer — "Visiting the memorials allowed me to learn and appreciate the deeper meanings to the events I learned about in school. Meeting new people is way easier than I thought it would be. The trip is amazing, and it makes you step out of your comfort zone in a not-so-uncomfortable way."

Freddie Sutton — "I really liked going to the museums and monuments. I would tell other students to take the opportunity to take this trip because it is so much fun."

Madison Visinsky — "I learned that I have the ability to do things that make me feel uncomfortable, like talking to new people, becoming extremely close with people I just met and to be on time. I hope I will be able to remember the big moments, but I pray I don't forget the small ones. Youth Tour is an experience you don't want to pass up. Not only do you make lifelong friends, but you also get to learn about history. It's a long week, but every moment is worth it."

Sydney Walker — "What impacted me the most was realizing that there are so many people out there who are also driven and motivated in life. I had never been to D.C.



IN THE SHADOWS: Students representing Somerset County Rural Electric Cooperative pose in front of the International Spy Museum in Washington, D.C.



A MOMENTOUS OCCASION: Students representing Somerset County Rural Electric Cooperative pose for a photo in front of the Washington Monument.

before, so I was super excited to go on Youth Tour to explore national monuments. I hope I will never forget seeing them for the first time and how emotional I was about our nation's history. I also hope I never forget the memories I made with friends I just met. Youth Tour is a super great opportunity to meet new people, see new places and learn new things. I would recommend it to anyone!"

Wow, aren't these amazing kids? As their chaperone, I am fortunate enough to see these students enter as strangers and leave as friends, step outside their comfort zones, and gain confidence. The monuments and memorials stay the same each year, but guiding these enthusiastic students through our nation's capital and seeing the excitement in their eyes is what makes it different every time.

This was my fourth Youth Tour excursion and spending a week with these students is a great honor. It is a wonderful opportunity to get to know the students in our community. After all the farewell hugs at week's end, I feel confident our future is in good hands. 🇺🇸

Power Line Safety: Tips Worth Sharing

IT IS IMPORTANT TO BE ALERT and knowledgeable about what to do when you see a downed power line, or when your vehicle, farm equipment, or construction equipment is in an accident involving a utility pole.

Your immediate priority should be your own safety and the safety of others. Stay at least 30 feet away from any downed line. Electricity can travel through the ground, so do not approach downed wires or anything they are in contact with, such as puddles of water and fences.

If you are in the vehicle and in danger of a fire or another hazard, jump out without touching the vehicle and try to land on the ground with your feet together. Then, shuffle away with small steps. You can also hop with your feet together and get as far away you can — preferably 50 or more feet away. By keeping your feet together and on the ground, this minimizes the risk of electrical shock.

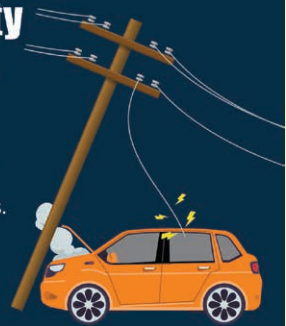
Never try to move or drive over a downed power line. Contact 911 and Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative to report the emergency. Even if a downed line appears to be a phone or cable line, don't touch it — you could have misidentified it or it could be touching an energized power line. The best approach is to treat all downed lines as if they are energized.

Knowing how to keep yourself and others safe around downed wires is important. Please share this information to keep everyone safe while traveling. 📢

DOWNED POWER LINE and Vehicle Safety

When electric equipment becomes damaged, the ground and objects can become energized. Know what to do to **save your life** and the lives of others.

 Safe Electricity.org®



In an accident involving a power line:

1. **Stay Inside the Vehicle:** The ground may be energized.
2. **Call 9-1-1:** Report downed or damaged lines.
3. **Warn Others:** Tell bystanders to stay away.
4. **Wait for Utility Crew:** Do not exit until it's safe.



If you notice smoke or fire:

5. **Exit Safely:** Cross arms over your chest and jump out with feet together. Do not touch the car and the ground at the same time.
6. **Move Away:** Shuffle or bunny hop with feet together. Get as far away as you can.



Happy
LABOR DAY
★ ★ ★ ★ ★
SEPTEMBER 1

The office of Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative will be closed Monday, Sept. 1, in observance of Labor Day.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Replace your cooling system's filter regularly to maintain strong airflow and boost energy efficiency. A clean filter means your system doesn't have to work as hard, saving energy and lowering your utility bills. Factors like allergies and pets in the home can impact how often filters should be replaced. Check the filter every month and replace it as needed. Changing filters regularly also reduces wear and tear on your cooling system, helping extend the life of the unit.

Source: energy.gov

