

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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Somerset, PA 15501
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800-443-4255

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Website: www.somersetrec.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Director of Marketing and Member Services

Phil Stern

Manager of Metering Services

Jessi Ditzler

Executive Assistant

OFFICE HOURS

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

EMERGENCY OUTAGE NUMBERS

814-445-4106
800-443-4255

A Reflection of the Year and an Outlook for 2024



RUSTON OGBURN

THE END OF ANY YEAR is a time of reflection for many of us. At the cooperative, we reflect on the accuracy of our predictions, determine the effectiveness of our planning and identify lessons learned. Reviewing our work over the past year with the cooperative's history and mission in mind, reminds us it is our job to work through challenges to serve our members with the reliability they expect and deserve.

Energy market volatility and widespread inflation required us to raise rates in 2023. Our recent review of these same factors shows that energy volatility has subsided. However, as predicted, prices have settled at a higher level that appears likely to persist for at least a few years. Similarly, construction material prices continue to remain high. These factors will be examined as part of a cost-of-service study planned for early 2024. The results from this study will be used to determine future rates, and it appears an increase will be needed next spring. We will continue to update you as we know more about the magnitude of this increase.

We have seen good news on supply chains — the lead times for many of our most common components have stabilized. Even though it takes longer to get many items, we can now reasonably predict when they will arrive. That may seem like a low expectation, but it's a welcome change. It allows us to manage our inventory to better match the needs of our members without having the increased costs associated with carrying significantly more inventory. This development aligns well with our planned reduction of complete line rebuilds and increased work to replace specific components of our distribution system.

The most significant surprise of the past year has been a general change of attitude in many people. Pessimism has crept into more conversations in the past year than I can recall. Perhaps it relates to higher costs or lead times or something I have yet to realize. I am naturally optimistic, and focusing on what we can control is the only useful way to move forward.

The challenges our cooperative faces seem small compared to the challenges of those who built this organization from the ground up. Their steady approach is something we can mirror in building and rebuilding our facilities. By continually examining how we can operate better, we'll be able to provide the best possible service to our members.

The strength of this cooperative starts with our members. Our board of directors and staff carry that strength forward to deliver the best services possible for consumers. It continues to be a pleasure to be part of this cycle.

I hope the holidays give you a chance to be surrounded by friends and family and provide a renewed sense of optimism as we enter 2024. Merry Christmas and happy New Year. 🍷

RUSTON OGBURN
GENERAL MANAGER

Let Us Help Keep the Climate in Your Home Comfortable

EMILY BAER, DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND MEMBER SERVICES

MORE THAN 35 YEARS AGO, Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) started promoting its heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) department, an added service to both members of the cooperative and non-members in the community. With the addition of the HVAC department, the co-op can provide indoor comfort for your home as well as offer water heater sales and installation. Somerset REC strives to be more than just your electricity provider; we want to offer our members a cost-effective, efficient, and economical way to heat and cool your home.

Systems offered

Geothermal systems use the heating and cooling power of the ground beneath your home. The Earth maintains

stable temperatures year-round, ranging from 50 to 55 degrees. As a result, the ground remains warmer than cold winter air. Simply put, these systems pull renewable “sunshine” from the Earth to heat your home. In summer, the reverse holds true. Since ground temperatures are colder than warm summer air, geothermal units also offer air conditioning.

Air-source heat pumps and mini-splits are the cooperative’s most-demanded heating and cooling systems. An air-source heat pump contains an outdoor compressor/condenser and an indoor air handling unit connected by a power source and refrigerant lines. Certain models can operate at a temperature of minus 15 degrees and provide heating and cooling year-round. A mini-split is an indoor unit that eliminates duct work, which in turn lowers installation costs. These units come in a variety of options including wall-mount, floor-mount and ceiling-mount applications.

In 2023, the co-op installed 33 heat pumps, including geothermal and air source.


Water heating

The cooperative offers two brands of electric hot water heaters: Marathon and Bradford White. Water heaters can be purchased at the cooperative office, and for an additional cost, co-op HVAC technicians can install them. Installation costs will vary, depending on the materials required to complete the work. This service also includes the removal and disposal of your old hot water tank.

Marathon water heaters are manufactured by Rheem. These highly efficient tanks come with a lifetime tank warranty and a six-year parts and labor warranty. This well-known plastic tank won’t rust or corrode and contains no smelly anode rod. It also contains the most energy-efficient and environmentally friendly type of insulation. The cooperative currently has 50- and 85-gallon Marathon water heaters in stock.

Bradford White water heaters contain hydrojet total performance systems, which help reduce the sediment buildup in the bottom of the tank. This brand features Vitraglas lining, which provides superior tank protection, a silent heat trap to increase energy savings and reduce noise potential, and a user-friendly junction box to allow easy access for electrical connections. This tank has a standard six-year limited tank and parts warranty. It is available in 50-gallon capacity tanks.


PROPERLY SIZING YOUR HVAC UNIT



An improperly sized HVAC unit can wreak havoc on your home. An oversized unit can cause your system to “short cycle” – constantly turning off and on. An undersized unit will run constantly to keep up with demand. Consider the factors below and choose an HVAC system that works best for your home.

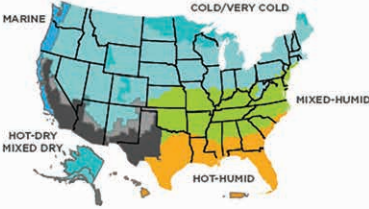
SIZE MATTERS

The square footage of your home can help determine the load capacity of your HVAC unit, but it should not be the only factor considered when reviewing unit sizes. Enlist the help of a licensed professional to determine the best HVAC unit for your home.




GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

The region in which your home is located will factor into how much capacity you need per square foot.




HOME'S ORIENTATION

How sunlight hits your home during different times of the day impacts the load capacity required to properly heat or cool your home.



INSULATION EFFECTIVENESS

The better insulated your home is, the fewer BTUs (British Thermal Units) per square foot your home will need to stay at the desired temperature.



A reliable energy partner will help you determine how each of these factors effect your system's load capacity. Contact your electric co-op for more information.

Source: Dept. of Energy

In 2023, the cooperative sold 28 Rheem Marathon tanks and 18 Bradford White tanks.

Energy efficiency

Every residential heat pump and mini-split sold has an EnergyGuide label, which displays its heating and cooling efficiency performance rating and compares it to other makes and models. Heating efficiency for air-source heat pumps is indicated by the heating season performance factor (HSPF). Cooling efficiency is indicated by the seasonal energy efficiency ratio (SEER). To choose an air-source electric heat pump, look for the Energy Star® label. Pay attention to the HSPF rating, which is more important in colder climates where the focus is on sizing for heating rather than air conditioning.

Service

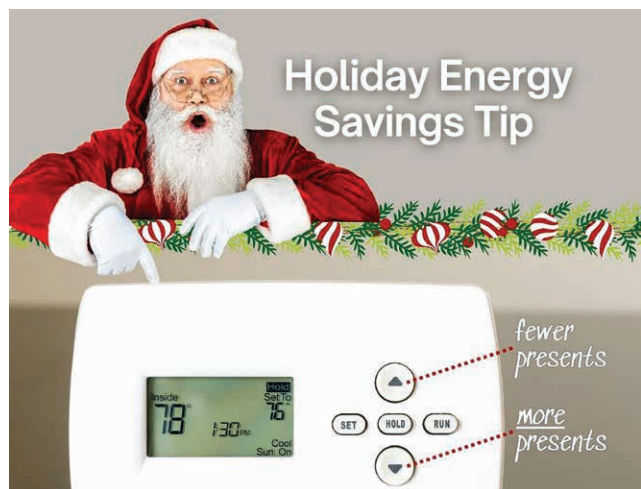
Forced-air HVAC systems require effective air filtration for optimum energy efficiency and good indoor air quality. Air filters should be changed regularly. How often they need to be changed depends on several factors, such as pets that shed, high levels of dust and pollen, presence of cigarette smoke, and more. It can be beneficial in the long run to spend a little more money and breathe a lot easier with regularly scheduled air filter replacements. Schedule a routine seasonal maintenance appointment with the cooperative's HVAC department to maximize your system's longevity and your overall health.

Rebates

The Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association initiated the Local Energy Efficiency Program (LEEP), which is designed to help rural electric cooperatives, including Somerset REC, support energy efficiency locally. Through this program, the co-op currently offers rebates on newly installed heat pumps that meet SEER and HSPF criteria. Together, the LEEP program and cooperative paid out a total of \$10,750 in energy efficiency rebates in 2023.

Rebates are also available to members who have a new HVAC system installed by another contractor. Go to somersetrec.com and choose "Services" in the top menu to find the latest HVAC rebate form.

Rebate amounts and LEEP funded programs are subject to change based on the annually allocated funds. Please contact the cooperative office if you have any questions regarding current rebate amounts, your heating system or are interested in adding air conditioning. Our trained staff is available to help you select the most efficient and economical heating and/or cooling system customized to fit your individual needs. 📞



MEMBERS GIVE BACK: From left, Brook Wilt, JoLinda Wilt, Madelyne Miller and Kimberly Miller assemble generous donations of non-perishable food items for the Casselman Valley Helpers Food Pantry at Zion Lutheran Church in Meyersdale. More than 500 co-op members donated during Member Appreciation Day Friday, Oct. 6, at the Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative office.




HANDY HELPERS: Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative Directors Jason Huston, who was recently elected to the board, Floyd Lehman, Harvey Reckner and Ben Waltermire serve the membership in the food line during Member Appreciation Day. Members could fill their plates with hot dogs, kielbasa, sauerkraut, cookies, chips and ice cream sandwiches.

Donations Accepted for Co-op Cheer!

If you have donated to the Co-op Cheer program, we thank you for your generosity. This year marks six years of members donating new, unwrapped toys, stuffed animals, blankets, items for nursing home residents and more.

The focus of the Co-op Cheer program this year will again be to collect items for nursing home residents. This was a highly supported cause and we thank you again for donating.



Donations accepted through Jan. 12. All donations can be dropped off at the cooperative office.

Please see the list of requested and suggested items below:

- Zip-up sweatshirt
- Thin sweater
- Lap blanket
- Hats, gloves, scarves
- Body wash
- After shave
- Tissues
- Shampoo
- Chapstick
- Hand lotion
- Nail polish
- Puzzles
- Deck of cards
- Word search book
- Crossword puzzle/Sudoku
- Holiday decorative items
- Candy
- Snack items
- Slippers
- Socks with rubber grips
- Slip-on shoes
- Flannel/fleece pants



As a thank-you for participating, members who donate items will be entered to win one of five \$50 bill credits available.



*Thanks for participating in spreading the cheer!
Donated items will be dispersed to nursing homes and non-profit organizations in our community.*



We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Directors

Jerry L. Engle
Lowell L. Friedline
Russ A. Hillegas

Jason Huston
Floyd T. Lehman
Harvey W. Reckner Jr.

Joshua C. Sechler
P. Timothy Vought
C. Ben Waltermire

Employees

Daniele Anderson
Kathy Armstrong
Emily Baer
Adam Barnes
Roy Bittner
Drew Boyer
Jeff Brant
Kristi Burkett
Don Cober
Brock Crawford
Jessi Ditzler

Dave Dudak
Wendy Durica
Carter Engleka
Gary Gindlesperger
Doug Glessner
Glenn Gross
Jonathan Hillegas
John Hochard
Mindy Huzsek
Brian Marker
Phil Martz Jr.

Jessica Maurer
Alex Mazanowski
Andy Nicklow
Ruston Ogburn
Andrew Phillippi
Zack Pritts
Casey Pyle
Phil Read
Tony Retassie
Brandon Riddle
Bryan Schroeck

Sam Shober
Roger Shroyer
Tanner Smith
Kara Specht
Tim St. Clair
Phil Stern
Steve Tataleba
Garrett Thomas
Ken Walker
Rick Yoder
Tawnya Zorn

The office will be closed Dec. 25 & 26 for Christmas and Jan. 1, 2024, for New Year's.

