

# 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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## Guest Column

# The Closure of Summer



**GROWING UP IN MEYERSDALE, AND** as a past member of Buffalo Creek 4-H, I always looked forward to and made sure never to miss the Somerset County Fair. I can remember my mom working at Krause's food booth while I enjoyed rides with friends and volunteered with my high school sports teams to park cars or serve food at the firefighter's stand.

Demolition Derby Night was always a family event because my dad participated. Now, years later, it is still a family tradition to watch my brother as he enters the derby each year. My aunts, uncles, cousins, and family friends crowd together in the grandstands with our 4-H milkshakes in one hand and a bag of kettle corn in the other as we watch the mud fly and cars dwindle down to the winner.

In 2009, I competed for Somerset County Fair Queen and that will always be an experience I will never forget. The fair represented the closure of summer for me growing up as it was the last week before we started back to school.

As a recently hired employee at Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative (REC), I'm still looking forward to visiting the fair this year, but in a much different role. At the fair, Somerset REC has a booth, where you'll find employees who are ready to answer your questions about anything at the co-op. Most members and non-members think we only provide electricity, but we truly offer so much more. The fair provides an excellent opportunity for the cooperative's staff to meet our members in person and support a community event. Since 2001, the co-op has been supporting the junior livestock sale by purchasing 4-H animals and, in most cases, donating them back to the organization.

A few items at the co-op's fair booth include a sample Marathon hot water tank, HVAC informational pamphlets, and multiple displays that explain the differences in lightbulb wattage, light color, and home insulation types. Our lightbulb wattage display shows you the different styles of lightbulbs available and their respective wattage. It also demonstrates how four LED bulbs are equivalent to one incandescent bulb. The color comparison part of the display shows the difference between warm white, soft white, cool white and bright white bulbs, as well as the difference between natural light versus daylight. Finally, our insulation chart shows the difference between fiberglass, cellulose, and foam insulation based on R-value and air penetration. And of course, we can't forget the kids! Bring them by the booth to grab a color-changing pencil, coloring book and more.

The Somerset County Fair runs Aug. 20-26 in Meyersdale. Be sure to stop by our booth in Exhibit Hall 3 (in the corner closest to the main parking lot) to see our new and improved fair booth and sign up for this year's giveaway! We hope to see you there so we can show you everything that Somerset REC has to offer to our members and community. Our employees can answer any of your questions about the co-op and our future events. 🍎

## DANIELE ANDERSON

FRONT OFFICE ASSISTANT

# Youth Tour: An Unforgettable Experience

**ABBY RETASSIE AND ABBY STOLTZFUS**, SUMMER INTERNS

## THE NATIONAL RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Association Youth Tour is a week for high school juniors and chaperones to fully engage in a truly unforgettable experience in Washington, D.C. Students acquire leadership skills, learn about our nation's capital, build friendships that will last forever, and so much more.

Attending a trip away from home requires many students to step out of their comfort zone, meet new people and experience new things. Approximately 1,800 students from across rural America gather in Washington, D.C., for this all-inclusive week of touring our nation's most captivating monuments and memorials.

In June, Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) sponsored 11 students from Somerset County to participate in this once-in-a-lifetime trip. Students visited the Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Smithsonian museums, the World War II Memorial and the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, just to name a few. Students also went on a dinner boat cruise and bowling, visited the Washington National Zoo, participated in a Co-ops 101 course and saw "The Lion King" at the John F. Kennedy Center. Students also visited Capitol Hill to meet with lawmakers and get an inside look at democracy in action.

Prospective high school juniors who are interested in attending Youth Tour must fill out an application and attend an interview at the cooperative. This interview allows the judges to learn more about the students' involvement in their school and community and extracurricular activities. Our co-op encourages every student who is eligible to apply for this



**THOMAS JEFFERSON MEMORIAL:** Students and Somerset REC Youth Tour chaperone Emily Baer pose in front of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial along the banks of the Potomac Tidal Basin. Front row, from left: Anna Stewart, Kyley Emerick, Olivia Shunk, Alyssa Richard, Samantha Hayman and Jillian Donia. Back row, from left: Elwood Ream, Marcella Dupre, Lainey Ludden, Joshua Wagner, Jack Keiser and Baer.

experience. It is truly one of the best experiences available to students and is something they will never forget!

Here are responses of Somerset REC students when asked about their experience on Youth Tour:

**Jillian Donia, North Star High School** — "My experience on Youth Tour — being in a positive environment, meeting new people and getting out of my comfort zone — was something I really enjoyed! I liked the boat cruise the most because it was a good way for everyone to step out of their comfort zone and network in a fun setting. I would recommend this trip to underclassmen because you get to see things you normally wouldn't, and the speakers were encouraging with what they had to say. I think getting out of your comfort zone and not worrying about what others think is important and this trip made me realize that!"

**Marcella Dupre, Meyersdale Area High School** — "The Arlington National Cemetery impacted me the most as I was surrounded by those who sacrificed everything so that I could be free. It was a very emotional and eye-opening experience for me. I enjoyed the inspirational speakers because they spoke with such momentum and excellence! My experience was life changing. I met many cool friends who shared the same passions as myself. There was never a dull moment, and we were constantly busy!"

**Kyley Emerick, Meyersdale Area High School** — "I really liked the World War II Memorial we went to. My favorite parts of the week were the dinner boat cruise and the Iwo Jima Sunset Parade. My experience was a lot of



**HAVE A DREAM:** Students visit the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial to kick off the week of Youth Tour. Shown, from left, are: Joshua Wagner, Elwood Ream, Jack Keiser, Marcella Dupre, Jillian Donia and Lainey Ludden.

fun, and I would recommend it to anyone who is looking to make new friends, broaden their horizons, and just grow as a person. I learned about how co-ops truly work together, and the goal is to better the community.”

**Samantha Hayman, Berlin Brothersvalley High School** — “My favorite moment was the boat cruise on the Potomac River. My experience on Youth Tour was outstanding. I met so many people, and I am so grateful for being selected as the Pennsylvania Youth Leadership Council (YLC) representative and joining the YLC crew that will provide more opportunities for my future. I also learned that I could do more for my community if I set my mind to it. This trip provided me with a confidence boost, and I plan to improve my speaking skills throughout this journey!”

**Jack Keiser, Shanksville-Stonycreek High School** — “I really enjoyed the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial and the Jefferson Memorial. Personally, I loved seeing the U.S Marine Drum and Bugle Corps; that was my favorite part. I also really enjoyed hanging out with everyone in a week jam-packed with a whole lot of fun stuff to do. It was very entertaining and really informative, not only about the monuments and memorials, but also learning about electric co-ops.”

**Lainey Ludden, Salisbury Elk Lick High School** — “The Pentagon Memorial was by far my favorite memorial that we visited. My experience has been unforgettable as there were so many learning experiences, places that I have never seen before, and all the friendships that I am leaving with. I learned that I can be myself, and people will accept me for me.”

**Anna Stewart, Meyersdale Area High School** — “My favorite memorial was the Vietnam Memorial. I had never seen it before except in paintings, so it was interesting to see it in person. I also enjoyed seeing ‘The Lion King’ at the Kennedy Center. My experience on this trip was eye-opening, as I’d never been away from my family this long. This trip would give underclassmen so many opportunities and scholarships they wouldn’t have access to otherwise. I learned that there’s a lot more jobs and opportunities out there that may suit me more than what I had originally planned on pursuing in my future. I also realized there are a lot of people out there who share my sense of humor, and that making friends is easier when you step out of your comfort zone!”

**Elwood Ream, Rockwood Area High School** — “I really enjoyed the Lincoln Memorial and loved everything I did during the week. I made new friends and got to see places I never would have seen if I hadn’t gone on this trip. I would’ve stayed longer if I had the chance. I learned how co-ops work together and are determined to make the community a better place.”

**Alyssa Richard, Somerset Area High School** — “My favorite memorial was the World War II Memorial. It was beautiful and had a nice representation and dedication



**CAPITOL HILL VISIT:** Students wait to visit with U.S. Rep. Guy Reschenthaler (R-14th). Standing, from left: Kyley Emerick, Alyssa Richard, Anna Stewart, Joshua Wagner, Jack Keiser, Quentin Brooks (REA Energy student), Charles Edwards (REA Energy student), Marcella Dupre and Lainey Ludden. In front, from left: Elwood Ream, Cleo Long (REA Energy student), Olivia Shunk, Jillian Donia and Samantha Hayman.

to this country. My favorite parts of the week were the friends that I made and networking on the bus on the way down to D.C. At first, we were all strangers, and then suddenly everyone was talking to each other and getting to know one another. Now they’re all my friends, and we are planning to get together after this trip. My experience was life changing. I have been to D.C. before, but I have not seen as many things as I have seen on this trip. Now that I am older, I understand and appreciate the history and true meaning behind monuments and memorials. Everything was wonderful! I also learned that failure is OK, and I am not meant to get everything I go after in life.”

**Olivia Shunk, Salisbury Elk Lick High School** — “My favorite memorial was the Thomas Jefferson Memorial. It was very interesting, and I learned a lot about it as well as other historic moments in our country. The boat cruise was my favorite part of the week as everyone was interacting with each other, dancing, and just having fun. My overall experience was amazing! I met so many new friends that I hope to remain in contact with for a long time, had new experiences, and learned about how cooperatives work together.”

**Joshua Wagner, Rockwood Area High School** — “I honestly just had a blast! I have been to Washington, D.C., plenty of times before, but there were so many things that I’ve never seen before this trip. I loved connecting with other students, and pin-trading was so much fun. The trip brought me out of my shell and gave me the confidence to talk to other students. I am 100% making my little brother sign up for this trip next year. I think it is a once-in-a-lifetime experience and no one should miss out on all these amazing opportunities!” 📍

# Co-op Hires Additional HVAC Tech



## SOMERSET RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE (REC)

welcomed Brandon Riddle to the co-op family March 15 as a heating, ventilation and air conditioning technician.

His previous work experience includes five years in the HVAC field, installing oil, propane, natural gas, electric and heat pump systems. Brandon also performed plumbing labor including installing main water lines, sewer lines, water heaters, and grinder and sewage pumps. He also

supervised the installation of industrial-sized HVAC units and replaced, repaired, and tested units to ensure proper

operation.

Brandon's responsibilities at the co-op will include facilitating the installation and maintenance of new mini-splits and geothermal units, installing and maintaining water heaters, wastewater testing, and aiding the metering department, if necessary.

He graduated high school in 2007 and served in the United States Army from 2008-2014. Brandon earned both his HVAC technician and installer certification that included a universal refrigeration license. He lives in Friedens with his wife, Megan. They have three children: Sierra, Piper and Iris. In Brandon's spare time, he enjoys golfing and spending time with his wife and children.

"I am excited to be with a company that is member-orientated and not profit driven," Riddle says. "It is a privilege to be able to help our members, doing what I love to do. The cooperative truly cares about its employees, and I am eager to start my career at Somerset REC." 📍

## Annual Meeting Survey Results

TO CONTINUE IMPROVING MEMBER service, we included a survey in the annual report that members received at the annual meeting May 25. Overall, 157 surveys were collected, and the results showed members are very satisfied with their electric service with the cooperative. A few of the highlights include:

- Attending members felt low electric rates and restoring

outages quickly was the most important thing to them about Somerset REC.

- Members who prefer the in-person annual meeting like the location of the meeting to be at the Somerset Area High School, rather than Seven Springs Resort.
- 80% of members who turned in a survey read *Penn Lines* magazine.
- Only 30% of members engage in the co-op's website and its social media channels, such as its Facebook page. 📍

