

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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7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

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Guest Column



Location determines service provider

By Emily Baer

SEVERAL times a week, the cooperative receives inquiries from people who want to have Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative (SREC) as their electric provider. Some examples of these inquiries go like this:

“Could you please explain to me what determines if your service is SREC or a neighboring electric provider? How does it work?”

“I am building a new house; could you tell me if you are the service provider in that area?”

“Hello. My current electric rate is high, and I heard SREC offers lower rates. What do I need to do to become a customer there?”

For most people, their electric provider is not a high priority. If they can flip the light switch, warm up leftovers in the microwave or take a hot shower, they are not giving much thought as to who provides their electricity. And to be honest, growing up, I never thought about who supplied the electricity to my parents’ house either. That is, until I began working for an electric company and purchased a house on my own.

My parents’ home is located along Buckstown Road in Stonycreek Township on cooperative lines. We lived only three houses and less than one-quarter mile from my great-grandmother’s house, but sometimes one house would have power and the other wouldn’t. During times like this, I questioned how that could happen.

The answer was simple. Her home was served by the neighboring electric provider and we had SREC. But why, when we lived so close to each other, didn’t we get our electricity from the same company? The answer involves something called territorial boundaries.

In Pennsylvania, territorial boundaries for each electric supplier were established in 1975. Basically, a snapshot in time established each utility’s boundary. Prior to territorial boundaries, each utility typically had its own set of poles and wires, often right beside each other. It was becoming a rat’s nest of wires with a maze of utility poles cluttering the roadsides. After the boundaries were established, the law mandated all future development be served by the closest utility provider in order to eliminate redundant investments in infrastructure, improve quality and service, and lower overall costs.

If you live within our service territory, yes, you can have SREC. In fact, if you live within our service territory, by definition, SREC is your only electric service provider. You might still get random telephone calls from energy companies offering to save you money on your electric bill, but you can just ignore them because you are a member of SREC, and SREC has the lowest and most stable rates compared to nearby electric service providers. ☀

Co-op substations – What’s really behind the chain link fence?

By Emily Baer

WHAT IS an electrical substation?

An electrical substation is part of an electrical generation, transmission, and distribution system that transforms voltage from high to low, or the reverse. To help provide a better understanding of how electricity gets to our members, we must first understand where that power comes from.

The first step of how power gets to your home is generation. The electricity that is provided to our members comes from a vast assortment of generation stations. These generation stations are powered by nuclear, coal, gas, oil, wind, solar or hydropower.

The second step is transmission. Once the electricity is generated, it needs to have a path or lines to be transported through. Transmission companies are also often referred to as the suppliers. For Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative, FirstEnergy is the transmission supplier and delivers electricity to all 18 of our delivery points.

The third step is distribution. This is where Somerset REC gets involved in the process. We are known as a distribution service provider, and the last link in the chain of entities that contribute to getting the power to our members. The cooperative does not generate the power that it supplies to our members, but instead purchases it through another source. Below is a list of Somerset REC’s delivery points and some special notes of interest.

1. **Arnold** – Currently serving 759 accounts. The parcel of property for the Arnold Substation was purchased in May 1980 with the construction of the substation starting shortly thereafter. This was the first substation for the cooperative where the supplier provided the cooperative with 115,000 volts of energy. Since that time, the cooperative has built an additional five substations



FORT HILL SUBSTATION: Constructed in 2016, the Fort Hill Substation is the most recent addition to Somerset REC’s service territory. It currently serves 2,692 members.

serviced at 115,000 volts or more. Another interesting point is that Arnold Substation also was the first substation where the cooperative became involved with getting the electricity generated from wind turbines back onto the electrical grid. Although the wind turbines have since been decommissioned, they have been replaced with a unique battery storage system that is currently in operation.

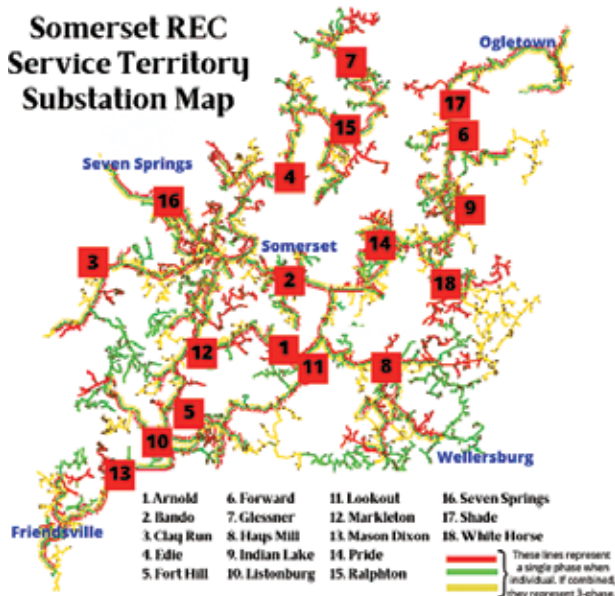
2. **Bando** – Currently serving 276 accounts. Bando, built in 1939, was the cooperative’s first delivery point. Located along the Mud Pike and near the intersection of the Water Level Road, Bando originally served members as far away as Maryland. Although this delivery point still plays an essential part in the overall system, its current service area has been dramatically decreased in size.

3. **Clay Run** – Currently



BANDO SUBSTATION: Located along the Mud Pike near the intersection of the Water Level, this historical substation, the Bando Substation, was the first delivery point to members of Somerset REC in 1939. It currently serves 276 members.

Somerset REC Service Territory Substation Map



DELIVERY POINTS: The cooperative system is comprised of 18 delivery points stretching from Addison to Ogletown to deliver safe, reliable power to members. Currently, 12 substations are serving members, while five substations are used for backup. The remaining substation is solely used as an interconnection point to transfer electricity produced by the Lookout Wind Farm to the power grid.

serving 566 accounts.

4. **Edie** – Currently serving 547 accounts.

5. **Fort Hill** – Currently serving 2,692 accounts, it was constructed in 2016 and is our most recently added delivery point. Fort Hill Substation was constructed primarily as an interconnection point to transfer electricity that was being produced by the Ringer Hill Wind Farm to the power grid.

6. **Forward** – Currently serving 859 accounts. Forward Substation was constructed primarily as an interconnection point to transfer electricity that was produced by the Forward Wind Farm to the electric power grid.

7. **Glessner** – Currently serving 455 accounts.

8. **Hays Mill** – Currently serving 1,242 accounts.

9. **Indian Lake** – Currently serving 480 accounts.

10. **Listonburg** – Currently serving as a backup station.

11. **Lookout** – Serves Lookout Wind Farm. Lookout Substation was constructed solely as an interconnection point to transfer electricity that was produced by the Lookout Wind Farm

to the power grid.

12. **Markleton** – Currently serving as a backup station.

13. **Mason Dixon** – Currently serving as a backup station.

14. **Pride** – Currently serving 2,215 accounts. Pride Substation was primarily constructed to fulfill the growing load demands of the coal industry.

15. **Ralphton** – Currently serving 687 accounts.

16. **Seven Springs** – Currently serving 3,292 accounts. Seven Springs Substation was primarily constructed to fulfill the growing load demands of Seven Springs Mountain Resort and

the surrounding area.

17. **Shade** – Currently serving as a backup station.

18. **White Horse** – Currently serving as a backup station.

There are six substations that serve as high-voltage stations. These high-voltage stations supply at 115-kV (1,000 volts) or greater. They are

1. Arnold – 115,000 volts/115kV
2. Fort Hill – 115,000 volts/115kV
3. Forward – 115,000 volts/115kV
4. Lookout – 115,000 volts/115kV
5. Pride – 115,000 volts/115kV
6. Seven Springs – 138,000 volts/138kV

The remaining delivery points are supplied at 23kV-25 kV.

Operations Manager Doug Glessner explains the pros and cons of delivery point voltages.

Historically, the higher the delivery point voltage, the more reliable it is. There are several reasons for this, including one major factor, funding.

“A comparison that I use to help explain this is like comparing traveling on an interstate highway compared to traveling on a smaller state rural route,” Glessner explains. “Typically,

comparing the interstate highway to high-voltage lines, they are going to be built heavier and better maintained, in part due to the funding that is available to them. Likewise, the state rural route and lower-voltage lines will still get you where you are going; however, they tend not to be built as heavy nor do they tend to receive the same funding as the bigger systems.”

Of course, this would be considered a good point for utilizing the higher-voltage system. Just as in the highway example where there is a typically higher volume of users on an interstate highway, because of the higher number of accounts being supplied by a high-voltage system, when it goes down, more people are negatively affected. Therefore, that is one reason why Somerset REC has backfeed delivery points, or substations, available. ☀

COME VISIT US AT THE

MEGASHOW

Home, Garden, & Business Expo

Friday, March 26 2 to 8 pm
Saturday, March 27 10 am to 8 pm
Sunday, March 28 Noon to 5 pm

Lowes Plaza, Somerset
1736 North Center Avenue

100+ Vendors Of All Varieties
Home Improvement Ideas
Food Trucks
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And Much More!

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For information, call
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somersetcounty.chamber.com.

REBATES AVAILABLE FOR QUALIFYING PRODUCTS

GEOTHERMAL & AIR SOURCE HEAT PUMPS
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ELECTRIC WATER HEATERS

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Don't keep your refrigerator too cold. The Department of Energy recommends a temperature setting of 35 to 38 degrees for the fresh food compartment and zero degrees for the freezer.

Make sure the refrigerator doors are sealed airtight to maximize efficiency.

Source:
www.energy.gov



DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME REMINDER

Don't forget to spring forward on March 14!
Set your clocks forward by one hour.



Somerset REC scholarships available

Each year, Somerset REC awards \$1,000 scholarships to high school seniors.

- An applicant must be a graduating high school senior whose parents or legal guardians are Somerset REC members.
- Students attending public, private, parochial or home school are eligible to apply.
- Student must be enrolled in an accredited college or university.
- The 2021 deadline to apply is **Monday, April 5.**

Applications are available on the co-op's website at www.somersetrec.com on the homepage. If requested, applications can be mailed and are also available in the guidance offices at local high schools.

