



The Energizer

FEBRUARY 2024 | STEUBEN RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

OFFICE LOCATIONS

Bath District Office
9 Wilson Avenue
Bath, NY 14810
(607) 776-4161
(800) 843-3414

Cherry Creek District Office
5966 South Rd
Cherry Creek, NY 14723
(716) 296-5651
(800) 883-8236

OFFICE HOURS

Bath District Office
Monday - Friday
7:30 am - 4:00 pm

Cherry Creek District Office
Monday - Friday
7:00 am - 3:30 pm

Depository Box Available for
After Hour Payments at Both
Office Locations

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



ELECTRICITY PLAYS AN ESSENTIAL ROLE IN EVERY DAY LIFE



Electricity plays an essential role in everyday life. It powers our homes, hospitals, and schools. We depend on it to keep us warm in the winter (and cool in the summer), charge our phones, and binge our favorite TV shows. If the power goes out, even briefly, our lives can be disrupted. The system that delivers your electricity is often described as the most complex machine in the world, and it's known as the electric grid.

What makes it so complex? We all use different amounts of electricity throughout the day, so the supply and demand for electricity is constantly changing. For example, we typically use more electricity in the mornings when we're starting our day, and in the evenings when we're cooking dinner and using appliances. Severe weather and other factors also impact how much electricity we need.

The challenge for electric providers is to plan for, produce, and purchase enough electricity so it's available exactly when we need it. Too much or too little electricity in one place can cause problems. So, to make sure the whole system stays balanced, the electric grid must adjust in real time to changes, and unforeseen events.

At its core, the electric grid is a network of power lines, transformers, substations and other infrastructure that span the entire country. But it's not just a singular system. It's divided into three major interconnected grids: the Eastern Interconnection, the Western Interconnection and the Electric Reliability Council of Texas. These grids operate independently but are linked to allow electricity to be transferred between regions when backup support is required.

Within the three regions, seven balancing authorities known as independent system operators (ISOs) or regional transmission organizations (RTOs) monitor the grid, signaling to power plants when more electricity is needed to maintain a balanced electrical flow. ISOs and RTOs are like traffic controllers for electricity. The journey of electricity begins at power plants.

Power plants can be thought of as factories that make electricity using various energy sources, like hydro power, natural gas, solar, wind and nuclear energy. Across the United States, more than 11,000 power plants deliver electricity to the grid.

Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative is a full requirements customer of the New York Power Authority ("NYPA"). This means NYPA is responsible for fulfilling all of our energy needs. The largest portion of our energy comes from an allotment of hydro power from NYPA's Niagara Power Project. In total 51 municipal and rural electric cooperative systems in the State of New York are provided with an allocation of 765 megawatts of cost-based hydro power based on a contractual obligation with NYPA. Our allocation of hydro power from the NYPA covers approximately 85% of our total energy needs. Any energy required above this allotment is procured by NYPA from the wholesale market. We work closely with NYPA to provide electricity at the lowest possible costs. This relationship with NYPA benefits members like you by prioritizing affordability and reliability.

To get the electricity from power plants to you, we need a transportation system. High-voltage transmission lines act as the highways for electricity, transporting power over long distances. These lines are supported by massive towers and travel through vast landscapes, connecting power plants to electric substations. Substations are like pit stops along the highway, where the voltage of electricity is adjusted. They play a crucial role in managing power flow and ensuring that electricity is safe for use in homes and businesses.

Once the electricity is reduced to the proper voltage, it travels through distribution power lines, like the ones you typically see on the side of the road. Distribution lines carry electricity from substations to homes, schools, and businesses. Distribution transformers, which look like metal buckets on the tops of power poles or large green boxes on the ground, further reduce the voltage to levels suitable for household appliances and electronic devices.

After traveling through transformers, electricity reaches you - to power everyday life. We're proud to be your local, trusted energy provider. From the time it's created to the time it's used, electricity travels great distances to be available at the flip of a switch. That's what makes the electric grid our nation's most complex machine - and one of our nation's greatest achievements.

Are space heaters efficient for my home?

Small space heaters are meant to do exactly as their name says: heat a small space. But unfortunately, many people use portable space heaters to heat their entire home, which can really take a toll on your energy bills. The truth is, whether you should use space heaters really depends on your home's efficiency and energy needs.

If you're using a space heater to compensate for problems in your home, like inadequate insulation, drafty windows and exterior

doors, or an inefficient heating system, space heaters are not a practical solution. Your best bet is to improve the overall efficiency of your home. If you're on a tight budget, caulking and weather stripping around windows and exterior doors is a low-cost, easy way to save energy. Depending on the size of your home, adding insulation can be a great next step. Taking these active energy-saving measures rather than relying on space heaters for supplemental warmth can reduce your heating

and cooling bills.

Perhaps your home is energy efficient but you're cold-natured and want a specific room to be cozier than the rest. In his case, a space heater may work for your needs. A good comparison is ceiling fans: we use ceiling fans in the summer to cool people, not rooms. A space heater can be used in a similar way during winter months. Only use a space heater in small spaces that you're occupying and, if possible, try to shut off other rooms to contain the warmth provided by the space heater. If you decided to use a space heater to heat a small area in your home, make sure the heater is properly sized for the space; most heaters include a general sizing table.

A word about safety: the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates more than 25,000 residential fires are associ-

ated with the use of space heaters every year, resulting in more than 300 deaths. If you must use a space heater, purchase a newer model that includes the most current safety features and make sure it carries the Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) label. Place the heater on a level surface away from foot traffic when in use. Always keep children and pets away from space heaters.

Consider alternative ways to stay warm like extra layers of clothing or UL-approved electric blankets. If you have hardwood or tile floors, lay down area rugs to provide additional insulation and maintain warmth.

We know it's cold out there, but remember in addition to safety concerns, space heaters can greatly increase your energy bills if used improperly.

What is Levelized Billing?

Steuben Rural Electric offers levelized billing as a way to even out your monthly electric payments. By participating in the levelized billing program, you will be able to smooth out the high and low seasonal fluctuations in your electric bill.

Levelized billing is different than the typical fixed budget billing option, where you pay the same amount each month regardless of your energy usage and make up any shortfall or receive a credit at the end of the year.

How will my bill be calculated? Levelized billing is a payment plan where you pay an average amount each month, based on your actual electrical usage. Your actual usage is calculated each month according to the readings received from your home's meter. The current month's bill is then added to the previous eleven (11) months' actual bill and divided by twelve (12) to arrive at an average monthly bill. The amount is then adjusted up or down depending on your actual account balance.

Will my levelized payment amount

change much from month to month? It depends on how much your actual usage changes on a monthly basis. If your actual electrical usage increases or decreases due to a change in your lifestyle, change in appliances, or a change in heating or cooling, your levelized payment amount will be adjusted accordingly.

When is my account balance settled? Unlike many other budget plans, levelized billing does not have a settlement month unless you elect to stop participating in the program. As long as you continue to pay the level payment amount each month, your account will be gradually adjusted in response to your actual usage. If you decide you no longer want to participate in the program, just call the main office at (607) 776-4161 and ask to be removed from levelized billing. Once you pay your account balance, all future bills will be based on each month's actual electric usage.

How do I stay on levelized billing? To stay eligible for levelized billing, you must pay the full amount of the levelized payment

due each month by the due date. If you do not pay the full amount by the date it is due, your account will automatically be removed from levelized billing and placed on our normal billing.

How will I know my actual usage, payment, and balance? You will receive a monthly bill statement which will show your current month's actual usage, your current balance, and your new level payment amount. 1007500

How and when can I go on levelized billing? You qualify for levelized billing if you meet the following requirements:

- Your account balance is paid in full.
- You have received service at your present address for at least twelve months.

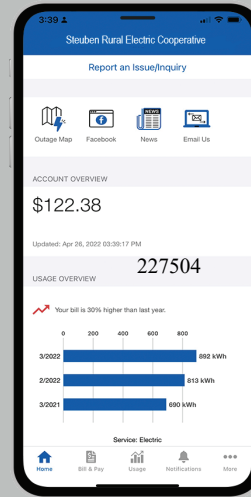
LEVELIZED BILLING



**POWER
IN YOUR
HANDS**



**Simplify your life.
Pay online safely
and securely.**



- » Account Management at your fingertips.
- » Pay your bill online using a credit card or bank account.
- » View detailed account information and energy usage.

Available in both Apple App and Google Play Stores!

Register today! Visit: <https://steubenrec.smarthub.coop/Login.html>

Convenient
**PAYMENT
OPTIONS**

**Choose the Option
Right for You!**



SREC OFFERS several ways to pay your bill, giving you the opportunity to choose the one that works best for you. There are also payment options that we do not accept at the Cooperative.



PLEASE TAKE SPECIAL NOTE OF THE PAYMENT OPTIONS WE DO NOT ACCEPT. When we receive reports of utility scams, it's not uncommon to hear that the member was told to purchase gift cards or use a payment app such as Venmo or Zelle. *If you receive a call like this, hang up and call our office to verify the status of your account.*

AVAILABLE PAYMENT OPTIONS

- » Online Payment through SmartHub
- » Secure Pay-by-Phone IVR System
- » Automatic Payment Plan
- » By Mail
- » Pay in Person
- » Drop box
- » Your Bank's Bill Payment System
- » Budget Billing

PAYMENT OPTIONS THAT ARE NOT AVAILABLE

- » Gift Cards, Venmo, Zelle, and credit cards numbers over the phone

ALSO KNOW THAT WE NEVER CONTACT MEMBERS to make a payment over the phone. We may alert them to a past due balance, but payment must be made through one of the methods mentioned above.

Power Pole Clutter

Flyers, satellite dishes, posters, basketball hoops, decorative lights, even hunting stands. You name it, someone has tried to staple, nail or tie it to a power pole. Here's a quick look at the dangers and pitfalls associated with unauthorized pole attachments.

Illegal

Many state and local laws and the National Electrical Safety Code prohibit any unauthorized items on poles. Utilities can face fines if these attachments aren't removed.



Pole Damage

Even small holes can allow moisture and insects past the pole sealant, which can shorten the life of the pole or weaken it and cause it to fall in a storm.



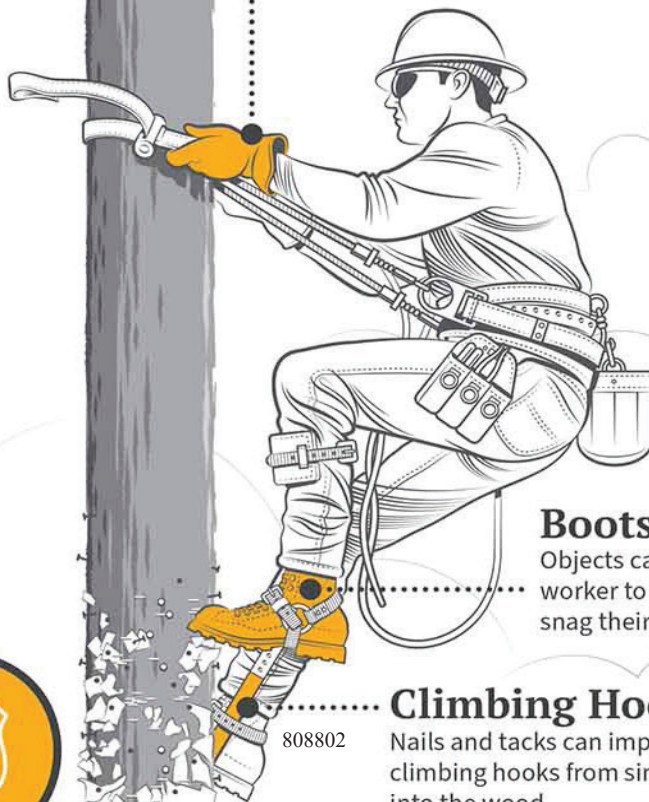
Hinders Repairs

Posters and flyers can hide identifying markers on poles and slow repair work.



Gloves

Staples, tacks and nails can puncture a lineworker's insulated rubber gloves and expose them to electric shock.



Boots

Objects can cause a worker to fall if they snag their boots.

Climbing Hooks

808802

Nails and tacks can impede climbing hooks from sinking into the wood.



Dangerous

A person who gets too close to energized lines while attaching an object can be electrocuted.



Distraction

Some materials posted on poles, like mirrors or holiday decorations, can be a distraction to drivers.

Cooperative News

Don't Cut – Call

Cutting a tree into a powerline or other utility infrastructure may result in death, injury, or fine. The hazards of cutting or trimming a tree are vast and require specialized personnel under most circumstances. Many of us in rural NY are accustomed to working with chainsaws and equipment. However, few of us are skilled in removing trees within proximity of a powerline or utility infrastructure. Depending on the source, electrocution is the cause of death for 40 percent of work-related fatalities within the tree industry.

Safe removal of a tree or limbs near powerlines may require specific skills (tree climbing, directional felling/pruning), specialized equipment (ropes, insulated pole saws, bucket trucks, etc.), or intentional power outages (managed by the utility).

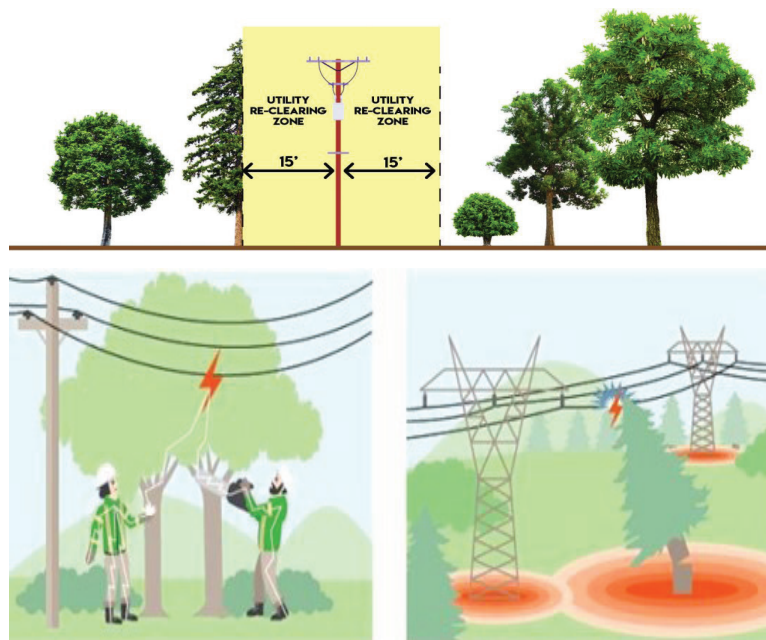
In addition to the above, trees that are dead, dying, or of certain species, require additional knowledge and skill to remove safely. Further, liability insurance is necessary to avoid financial repercussions if things go awry.

Ash trees infested with emerald ash borer (EAB) often require professional expertise to remove due to the way the beetle infestation weakens the trees' roots, trunk, and support scaffolding. Dead ash trees can be unpredictable and often break in areas of the tree during removal that are unprecedented. No one, professional or other, should climb an ash tree for any reason as every ash tree in NY is considered "infested" and 100% mortality of the species is expected. An ash tree can be "alive," presenting with green branches throughout the canopy, and still be extremely weak due to EAB infestation. As a side note: Do not put deer stands in ash trees!

If you or any member of SREC believe a tree needs to be removed or trimmed, you are asked to call the Cooperative office at (607) 776-4161.

A representative will be sent to your site to evaluate the trees in question. You may be notified that the tree is safe for now, requires SREC attention, or asked to contact a privately insured tree company to address your needs. You should not attempt to remove or trim a tree that could contact the powerlines, without an industry professional evaluating your tree first. Failure to call the utility before cutting may cost you injury, death, or a fine.

Stay safe,
Nick Hess
Steuben Rural Electric – Utility Forester



Apply Now for the 2024 Youth Tour Trip to D.C.



Steuben REC will send one high school junior on an all-expenses paid Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C. on April 21-24, 2024. At Steuben REC one way we invest in the next generation of rural New York leaders is by participating in the Legislative Youth Tour program. We're looking for high school juniors with a passion for government and public service to apply for a once-in-a-lifetime trip to our nation's capital in April.

The selected student will be going with representatives from Steuben REC, along with the other three New York State Cooperatives. Students will learn about U.S. government, meet with members of Congress on Capitol Hill, and make friendships that will last a life time. On the trip, students take in the sights of D.C. as they visit monuments, museums, and historical landmarks.

The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour has brought high school juniors to Washington, D.C. for over 50 years and nearly 50,000 students have participated in this program. Interested Juniors must apply and are selected by their Cooperative.

This opportunity is fully sponsored by Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative. For more information and to obtain the application, visit <https://steubenrec.coop/legislative-youth-tour>

THE TRADING POST

- **FOR SALE:** New Coleman off road ATV, front & rear cargo racks, \$2,000.00; Sprinter Travel Trailer, 8ft. wide, 26ft. long, nice for travel, camping and hunting, \$2,000.00 or best offer. Call 607-359-3896.
- **WANTED:** Looking for help getting the weeds out of my pond. It's a 1/4 acre pond and has weeds around the perimeter. If you know somebody or can help call 607-382-0545 for details. Please leave a message.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Area rugs are an easy, cost-effective solution to cold floors. Adding area rugs to hard-surface flooring can add warmth to any room and keep your feet cozy on cold winter days.

Choose rugs made from wool or other natural fibers and plush or high-pile textures for the most insulation. Place rugs in areas where you need additional warmth, like the foot of a bed or under a coffee table. Area rugs can enhance the aesthetic of your home and keep you cozier.



HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

- February 19 - Presidents' Day
- March 29 - Good Friday
- May 27 - Memorial Day
- July 4 - Independence Day
- September 2 - Labor Day
- October 14 - Columbus Day

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 disconnectinuance 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.

BEST BETS FOR Winter Savings

Energy consumption spikes during winter months as we spend more time indoors and heating systems work overtime. You can help reduce demand and strain on the electric grid by conserving during peak energy times. Reducing energy use will also help lower your energy bills.

UNPLUG WHEN POSSIBLE

Turn off unnecessary lights and electronics when you aren't using them. 346702

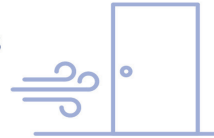


MAINTAIN HEATING EQUIPMENT

Maintain your heating system by replacing dirty, clogged filters and scheduling an annual inspection for necessary maintenance.

ELIMINATE DRAFTS AND AIR LEAKS

Seal air leaks and drafts around windows and exterior doors.



USE APPLIANCES WHEN ENERGY DEMAND IS LOWER

Run large appliances like clothes washers, dryers and dishwashers early in the morning or before you go to bed.



LOWER THE THERMOSTAT

Home heating accounts for a large portion of energy consumption. Adjust your thermostat to the lowest comfortable setting (68 degrees or lower).



\$10 IS HIDING IN THIS ISSUE

Each month, we hide five account numbers within the text of the newsletter. If you find your account number, contact the Cooperative by the end of the current month at 607-776-4161 to receive a \$10 credit on your electric bill.



The Trading Post Rules: Only members of SREC may submit ads. Ads must be submitted by the 26th of January in order to be published in the February newsletter. You can submit ads by mailing them to Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative, 9 Wilson Ave, Bath, NY 14810 or by email to kcleveland@steubenrec.com. All ads must be typed or printed clearly. Include your name and account number on all submissions. Ads are not allowed to be automatically repeated. They must be resubmitted for each issue. The cooperative reserves the right to edit material for content and/or space as necessary. Ads are published on a first-received basis with no guarantee your ad will appear.

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