



The Energizer

FEBRUARY 2026 | STEUBEN RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Medical Necessity & Electric Service

At Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative (SREC), we understand that reliable electric service is important to all of our members. For some members, electricity is essential to sustaining life due to the use of electric-powered medical equipment such as oxygen concentrators, neutralizers, dialysis machines, or other life-support devices. In some households, residents may be permanently dependent on this type of equipment.

While SREC works hard to provide safe and dependable electric service, certain conditions beyond our control may result in power outages. For this reason, uninterrupted electric service cannot be guaranteed at all times. Members who rely on electricity for medical needs should be aware of how SREC manages these situations and take steps to prepare in advance.

Members who use life-sustaining medical equipment are encouraged to designate their account as Medical Necessity. When this designation is on file and circumstances permit, SREC will make every reasonable effort to notify members by telephone prior to planned outages for repairs or system improvements and to provide information regarding the expected duration of the outage. When possible, this information may also be used to assist with prioritizing outage restoration. However, Medical Necessity designation does not guarantee continuous service or immediate restoration during an outage.

Because electric service interruptions may occur, it is critical for members who depend on medical equipment to have a personal backup plan in place. This may include having backup batteries or oxygen tanks available, using an uninterruptible power supply, operating a standby or portable generator, or temporarily relocating to a location with electricity during extended outages. Members are encouraged to discuss their specific needs with their physician and follow the medical equipment manufacturer's recommendations. In the event of a medical emergency, always call 911.

SREC makes every effort to contact members prior to planned outages or disconnections for nonpayment. To help ensure timely communication, members are encouraged to keep their phone number and email address up to date through SmartHub or by contacting the Cooperative directly at (607) 776-4161 or (800) 843-3414.

In accordance with 21 CRR-NY 459, SREC is not permitted to disconnect electric service for nonpayment when we know, or reasonably should know, that discontinuance could result in impairment to human health. Members who rely on medical or life-support equipment must complete a Medical Necessity application so the Cooperative is aware of these conditions. In certain cases, accounts may be referred to the local social services commissioner for review, as required by regulation.

Medical Necessity certifications may be required to be updated annually. Failure to provide updated documentation may affect a member's designation. As referenced in 21 CRR-NY 459.10, the Cooperative is not liable for a member's failure to furnish required information.

Members who believe they qualify for Medical Necessity designation may request an application by calling SREC at (607) 776-4161 or (800) 843-3414 or by downloading the form from our website at www.steubenrec.coop. Your safety is important to us, and we encourage all members who rely on electric-powered medical equipment to plan ahead and ensure proper documentation is on file.



Bath Office, 9 Wilson Avenue, Bath, NY 14810

Phone: (607) 776-4161 or (800) 843-3414

Office Hours: Monday - Friday 7:30 am - 4:00 pm

CC Office, 5966 South Rd, Cherry Creek, NY 14723

Phone: (716) 296-5651 or (800) 883-8236 302301

Office Hours: Monday - Friday 7:00 am - 3:30 pm

Important Update on Hydropower Rates

What It Means for Your Electric Bill

Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative (SREC) would like to share an important update regarding our hydro-power allocation from the New York Power Authority (NYPA). NYPA is the provider of the low-cost, renewable hydro-power that meets the majority of our system's electricity needs. This power has been the backbone of affordable electric service for our members for decades.

Recently, NYPA completed a comprehensive review of its hydro-power program and determined that the current rate, unchanged for many years, no longer reflects the cost of operating, maintaining, and reinvesting in the state's hydroelectric system. After discussions with all participating electric cooperatives across New York, NYPA proposed a modest increase that will be phased in gradually over the next several years.

We want our members to know that NYPA worked collaboratively with us throughout this process. As a reminder, NYPA delivers hydro-power at cost and maintains the commitment to provide this power at the lowest cost reasonably possible. This means that (1) they will continue to make an ongoing effort to control their costs; and (2) if the new rate exceeds NYPA's actual cost to generate and deliver power, it can be adjusted downward or kept flat until costs catch up. There is no profit component...just the costs necessary to keep the hydro system reliable, modern, and resilient.

What This Means for Your Bill

For the average member using 1,000 kWh per month:

- Year 1 impact (2026): approximately \$1.46 per month
- Full phase-in (2031): approximately \$8.74 per month

While no increase is ever ideal, this adjustment is both modest and predictable. It also reflects the reality that NYPA has held its rates steady for a very long time, even while most other energy providers, investor-owned utilities, wholesale power markets, natural gas generators, and renewable developers have seen significant cost increases year after year.

Hydropower Remains One of the Most Affordable Energy Sources in the Country

Despite the upcoming adjustments, NYPA hydro-power remains exceptionally inexpensive. Even after the full phase-in:

- NYPA hydro will cost far less than wholesale electricity purchased on the open market.
- It remains significantly lower than the energy supply rates charged by large investor-owned utilities in New York.
- It is also well below the national average cost for power generation.

This means our community continues to benefit from one of the most reliable, renewable, and cost-effective energy resources available anywhere in the United States.

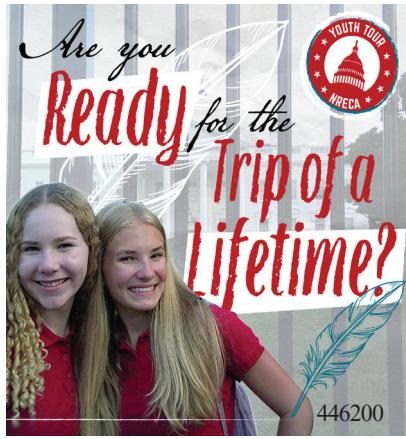
Our Partnership With NYPA Matters

SREC is proud of its long-standing partnership with NYPA. NYPA has been responsive, transparent, and willing to work closely with the cooperatives to ensure that rate adjustments are fair, measured, and phased in gradually. We are pleased to have a partner that values affordability and reinvests directly into the hydroelectric system that powers our homes, farms, and businesses.

Looking Ahead

This adjustment will help NYPA continue to modernize the state's hydro facilities, maintain long-term reliability, and ensure that this clean energy resource remains available to our members for decades to come. SREC will continue to advocate on your behalf and communicate openly as these changes take effect.

If you have questions about how this may affect your bill or would like more information on NYPA hydro-power, please contact our office.



Last Call for Washington, D.C. Youth Tour Applications

Experience a trip of a lifetime with the Legislative Youth Tour. If you are a junior in high school, don't miss this incredible opportunity!

Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative (SREC) is now accepting applications for a student-delegate to represent our cooperative at the Legislative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C.

Since the 1950s, America's electric cooperatives have brought young leaders from across the country to Washington, D.C. for this unforgettable, all-expenses-paid experience. The Youth Tour is designed to inspire students, build leadership skills, and deepen understanding of how electric cooperatives serve their communities.

This opportunity is open to high school juniors who live in SREC's service territory and are the child or dependent of a current SREC member.

During this trip, students will tour museums, historic monuments, explore Capitol Hill, meet with elected officials, and learn about the role electric cooperatives play in local communities and national policy.

To apply, visit <https://steubenrec.coop/nreca-legislative-youth-tour>. For questions contact Kristen Cleveland at (607) 776-4161 or by email at kcleveland@steubenrec.com.

Youth Tour Travel Dates:

April 26-29, 2026

Deadline to Apply:

Tuesday, March 17, 2026 | 4:00 p.m.

Understanding Your Cooperative's Property Taxes

Most people don't think much about property taxes when they flip a switch, but at Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative, they play a major role in what it costs to keep the lights on. Unlike many nonprofit organizations, electric cooperatives in New York do pay property taxes. And for a small cooperative like ours, the impact is significant. Every pole, wire, transformer, substation, and building we own across Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Steuben and Schuyler counties is considered taxable real property.

How Much Do We Pay?

Between town, county, and school district taxes, SREC pays nearly \$1 million each year. With roughly 6,400 billable meters, that's the equivalent of around \$156 per member per year or \$13 per member per month. In other words, before we even purchase a single kilowatt-hour or roll a truck, a meaningful portion of the cooperative's annual budget is already committed to local taxes that help fund the very communities we live and work in. And in the context of our total revenue of roughly \$13 million, property taxes alone represent about 7-8% of all dollars collected from members. That is a real and unavoidable cost of providing reliable electric service in New York State.

How NY's Three Types of Utilities Handle Taxes

New York has three kinds of electric utilities, and they operate under very different rules:

1. Investor-Owned Utilities (NYSEG, National Grid, etc.)

These are for-profit companies. They pay property taxes and earn profits for shareholders. Their costs and rates are overseen by the NY Public Service Commission.

2. Electric Cooperatives (like SREC)

We are not-for-profit, owned by the members we serve. We pay property taxes just like investor-owned utilities, but every dollar stays in the distribution system, there are no shareholders and no profit motive. In addition, we receive preference hydro-power from NYPA, which is extremely low-cost. Our distribution costs, due to our low density, are much higher than investor-owned utilities, but we have much lower energy costs, balancing this out.

3. Municipal Electric Systems (village-owned utilities)

Municipal systems also receive preference hydro-power from NYPA. They also do not pay property taxes. Because of these advantages, municipal electric rates will almost always be the lowest in the state.

Electric cooperatives operate under the same tax obligations as large for-profit utilities, but without the financial advantages municipal utilities receive. That means co-ops must work especially hard to control costs, plan carefully, and make every dollar count.

Why This Matters

Most of our members are surprised to learn how large the property tax burden is for a small rural cooperative. These taxes are important, they support our schools, our county services, and our local governments...but they also directly shape the cost of providing reliable power to each home and business we serve. We believe you deserve to know where your money goes. Property taxes are a major piece of that picture, and being transparent about these costs helps us all understand the challenges and responsibilities of running a not-for-profit electric system in rural New York.

At SREC, we remain committed to balancing reliability, affordability, and fairness. We will continue to manage these obligations responsibly and keep putting member dollars to work where they matter most...maintaining a safe, resilient, locally owned electric system.

Stay in the Know

Help Us Keep the Lights On: Update Your Contact Information

At Steuben Rural Electric, we are constantly working to improve our operational efficiency so we can provide the most reliable electric service possible for our members - that's you!

Accurate data plays a critical role in nearly every aspect of our operations, which is why keeping your contact information up to date is so important. When we have your most current and complete information, we can deliver the high level of service you expect and deserve.

Updated contact information helps us communicate more effectively during power outages. It allows our line crews and office staff to follow up with you if there are questions, extended outages, or restoration updates. In many cases, accurate information can even help speed up the power restoration process.

From time to time, Steuben Rural Electric schedules planned outages to update, repair, or replace equipment. When this happens, we can notify affected members in advance through automated phone messages, personal phone calls, text messages, or email - but only if we have your current contact details and communication preferences on file.

Keeping your information updated also helps when there are questions about energy usage or billing. Any discrepancies on your account can be addressed more quickly and efficiently when we have accurate account information.

Many of our members have been with the cooperative for years, and we recognize that contact details may not have been updated in quite some time. Today, many members rely primarily on cell phones, and we may not have that number in our system.

Please know that Steuben Rural Electric will never share your personal information with third parties. Your information is used only by the cooperative to communicate important updates and service-related information.

We encourage you to take a moment to confirm or update your contact information by:

- Logging into **SmartHub** on our website at www.steubenrec.coop, or
- Calling our office at (607) 776-4161 or (800) 843-3414

By keeping your information current, you're helping us improve service, enhance communication, and better serve you - and all members of the cooperative.

LEVELIZED BILLING



Levelized Billing

What is Levelized Billing?

Levelized billing is a billing option designed to help members better manage their electric bills by providing more consistent monthly payments throughout the year.

Unlike traditional budget billing - where you pay a fixed amount each month and then settle any overpayment or shortfall at the end of the year - levelized billing adjusts as your usage and energy rates change. This means there's no unexpected "catch-up" bill at the end of the year.

With leveled billing, your monthly payment is calculated using a rolling average of your current month's electric bill and the previous 11 months. This approach helps smooth out seasonal highs and lows, preventing drastic changes in your bill - even during the hottest summer days or the coldest winter months.

Levelized billing offers the best of both worlds: more predictable monthly payments without the surprise of a large adjustment later.

Levelized billing may be a good option if you:

- » Prefer **more predictable monthly electric bills**
- » Want to avoid **seasonal spikes** during summer/winter
- » Have lived at your current location for **at least 1 year**
- » Are **current on your electric bill**
- » Like the flexibility of a payment that **adjusts with your actual usage**, not a fixed estimate

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q. What do I need to do to enroll in the leveled billing program?

A. To enroll, please call our office at (607) 776-4161 or (800) 843-8414. Members must have at least 12 months of billing history and their electric account must be current at the time of enrollment.

Q. When can I enroll in the leveled billing program?

A. Members can enroll at any time during the year, as long as their account meets the program requirements.

Q. Are there any fees associated with the program?

A. No. Levelized billing is a free service available to all eligible members.

Q. When will my first payment be due?

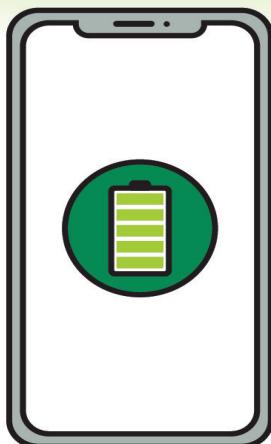
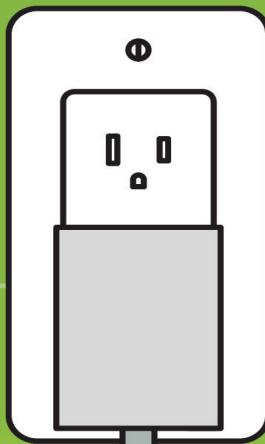
A. Payment due dates remain the same - the 5th of each month. Your first leveled billing amount will appear on your next billing statement after enrollment.

Still not sure? Our team is happy to help you decide if leveled billing is right for your household - just give us a call.

ELECTRONICS EFFICIENCY WORD SEARCH

Did you know there are ways you can reduce your electronics energy use?

Read the energy-saving tips below, then find and circle the bolded words in the puzzle.



- Use a **power strip** with an on/off switch when powering multiple electronics to easily manage energy use.
- For devices that require **batteries**, use **rechargeable** ones, which are more cost-effective and environmentally friendly.
- **Unplug** electronic products that consume energy even when they're not in use, like **phone chargers**.
- Use the sleep or **power management** mode on your **computer** to save on energy costs.

THE TRADING POST

- **FOR SALE:** Champion Inverter Generator, 2000 starting watts, 1700 running watts. Like new with box, \$300.00. Never used. \$520.00 new. Call (607) 684-4249 between 8:00am-4:00pm, M-F.
- **FOR SALE:** Delta 4x6 horizontal band saw - \$125.00; Ash vac - \$25.00; Red Wing boots, size 10, never worn - \$125.00; Tire 275/60/R20, new - \$125.00. Call (607) 664-6448.

- **FOR SALE:** Gould V60 water pressure tank, manufactured January 2020, includes brass tee, very good condition - \$225.00; 50 clean used cinder blocks - \$40.00. Call (607) 359-3116.

- **FOR SALE:** 1997 Fifth Wheel camping trailer, 6-cylinder, ford motor - \$300.00. Call (607) 527-8891 or (607) 346-3208.

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

April 3 - Good Friday
May 25 - Memorial Day
July 3 - Independence Day
September 7 - Labor Day
October 12 - Columbus Day
November 11 - Veterans Day
Nov. 26-27: Thanksgiving

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

Resolutions You Can Afford to Keep!

It costs nothing to...

- Set the water heater temperature to 120 degrees.
- Run only full loads in the washer or dishwasher.
- Turn off lights when you leave a room.
- Unplug electronics and chargers not in use.
- Adjust your thermostat when going to bed or leaving the home.

Spend a few dollars to save a lot more ...

- Get a water heater blanket.
- Use a programmable thermostat.
- Seal air leaks around windows, doors, plumbing, etc.
- Replace regular bulbs with CFL or LED light bulbs.
- Use a smart power strip for electronics.

To generate more energy savings, visit SafeElectricity.org

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 discontinuance 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. 835503

The Trading Post Rules: Only members of SREC may submit ads. Ads must be submitted by November 26th in order to be published in the December Newsletter. You can submit ads by mailing them to Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative, 9 Wilson Ave, Bath, NY 14810 or by email to kcleveland@steubenerc.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. Disclaimer: Items in the Trading Post are published at the request of our members. SREC does not endorse, recommend or assume any responsibility for the products advertised.

SPOT YOUR ACCOUNT

WIN A \$10 BILL CREDIT

To reward our faithful newsletter readers, we've randomly selected and hidden five (5) account numbers and placed them in the newsletter. Hidden account numbers are spelled out numerically (Ex: 123456). If you spot your account number, contact the cooperative by the end of the current month to claim your \$10 bill credit.

