



# The Energizer

AUGUST 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

## Curtis Transformer Upgrade



Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc. is thrilled to announce the successful completion of a significant upgrade to our Curtis Substation. This upgrade involves the installation of a new transformer that increases the substation's capacity to 5 MVA (Mega Volt Amperes).

The Curtis Substation plays a vital role in our infrastructure, providing reliable electricity to the towns of Bradford, Campbell, Erwin, Hornby, Wayne, and parts of Addison and Thurston. This enhancement is a crucial step in our ongoing efforts to meet the growing energy demands of our members while ensuring the stability and efficiency of our electric grid.

The new 5 MVA transformer significantly boosts the substation's capacity, allowing us to handle higher loads and serve more members without compromising on service quality.

This upgrade is essential to support future growth and development in the served communities. With the increased capacity and modern technology of the new transformer, we continue to ensure the reliability of our electricity supply. This upgrade reduces the risk of overloads and outages, ensuring that our members receive uninterrupted power even during peak usage times. The advanced design of the new transformer enhances the overall efficiency of the Curtis Substation. This means better energy utilization, reduced losses, and a more sustainable operation.

At Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc., our mission is to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity to our members. The upgrade of the Curtis Substation is a testament to our dedication to continuous improvement and innovation in our services.

We understand the importance of a robust electrical infrastructure in supporting the everyday lives and businesses of our members. This upgrade is just one of the many steps we are taking to ensure that our Cooperative is well-prepared for the future. We will continue to invest in our infrastructure, embrace new technologies, and seek out ways to enhance the service we provide to our communities.



# 2024 ANNUAL MEETING

Make Your Voice Heard At The 2024 Annual Meeting!

Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative will be hosting our 80th Annual Membership Meeting on Saturday, October 19th. It is a great opportunity for us as a cooperative to engage with our membership - you, the members we serve!

If you've never attended the annual meeting, we would encourage you to participate. Why? Because input from members like you matters and helps drive the direction of the cooperative.

At the annual meeting, we report on current initiatives and discuss the financial health and priorities for the coming years, along with a focus on our employees that serve you, each and every day. Although, equally important, this is also an opportunity for Steuben Rural Electric to hear from you.

This is also a time to vote for new directors who will represent you and your community's interests in the cooperative. As a member of Steuben Rural Electric, you have the power to help shape our community's energy future.

You will be receiving an official notice of the annual meeting in September prior to the meeting. We hope you'll exercise the benefits of your cooperative membership and join us for the annual meeting on Saturday, October 19, 2024. We look forward to seeing you there.



# Energy Scams Unmasked

Consumers with water, gas and electricity connections have long been targets for utility scams. But in today's digital world, every swipe and click increases the risk of potential scams.

Scammers are more sophisticated than ever before, and they understand our increasing reliance on technology. With their sharpened digital knives, scammers have adapted their tactics to trick unsuspecting consumers through a variety of methods.

SREC wants to help you avoid energy scams, whether a financial loss or leak of your personal information. Here are some of the latest utility scams, as well as tips to help you stay safe from even the craftiest scammers.

Scammers typically disguise themselves, either physically or digitally, as utility employees or representatives to steal members' money or personal information. A common trick is to claim a member's bill is past due and threaten to disconnect service if payment isn't received immediately. Scammers approach members through a variety of means, including phone calls, text messages, emails, and even in person visits. However the digital line of attack is increasingly more common.

For example, new capabilities disguising caller ID or 'spoofing' can make the phone number you see on caller ID appear to be from a trusted source. Spoofing makes it easier for scammers to deceive you because it's more difficult to immediately verify the call. Another recent scam uses fraudulent websites that are identical to a utility payment web page and what's worse, these pages are often promoted on search engines to trick members into

clicking and making a payment.

Another recent scam involves phone calls, text messages or emails claiming you overpaid your electric bill and will receive a cash or banking refund. This offer may seem too good to be true, and it is likely a scam aimed to steal your personal information.

There are several red flags you can watch for to identify an energy scam. Scammers often use high-pressure tactics to create a sense of urgency, like claiming your electricity or other services will be disconnected if a payment isn't made immediately. Additionally, scammers may ask for unusual payment methods such as gift cards or cryptocurrency. If someone is pushing for an unusual payment method, it's likely a scam. You've probably noticed that many digital scams, like emails or text messages, include poor grammar, spelling errors and odd email addresses. These are red flags, so when you see these dodgy forms of communication, consider it a potential scam.

SREC will never demand instant, immediate payment and threaten to disconnect your service without prior notices or warnings. We strive to resolve challenging situations and work with our members to avoid disconnects. If you're ever in doubt about a potential energy scam, just give us a quick call at 607-776-4161 or 1-800-843-3414 so we can assist. SREC wants to help protect you and our community against utility frauds, and by notifying us about potential scams, you can create the first line of defense.

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## SIGNS OF AN

### ENERGY SCAM

#### High-Pressure Tactics

Scammers will pressure you, creating a sense of urgency. Claims that your power will be disconnected without immediate payment are common with utility scams.

#### Sketchy Payment Methods

Scammers may ask for unusual payment methods like gift cards or cryptocurrency. In these cases, it's likely a scam.

#### Dodgy Communication

Whether an email, text message or letter, utility scams typically include poor grammar, spelling errors or unusual email addresses. These are common warning signs of a scam.



# Energy-Saving Projects for the Weekend Warrior

Are you a weekend warrior? If you're considering home improvement upgrades that save energy and money, we've got a few project ideas for you - all which can be completed in a day or less? Here are three energy-saving projects that you can easily tackle whether you're a weekend warrior pro or a DIY dabbler.

## Get smart about home cooling and heating.

Cooling and heating your home typically account for a large portion of energy bills. Smart thermostats can help keep your cooling and heating costs in check, with ENERGY STAR certified models saving about 8% on annual energy costs.

Now that smart thermostats are more affordable (as little as \$70), this simple upgrade makes for a fun, efficient weekend project. Smart thermostats offer a variety of bells and whistle, but the average model will allow you to set customer temperature schedules, adjust the settings from anywhere (From your phone), and over time, learn your cooling and heating preferences. Your new smart thermostat will come with step-by-step instructions, but this project typically involves shutting off your HVAC at the breaker panel, disconnecting/removing the old thermostat, installing the new smart thermostat and connecting it to your home Wi-fi. Remember to carefully read the installation instructions before you get started.

## Go green and boost your greenery with a rain barrel.

If you've got a green thumb, you already know that rainwater is the best water for your outdoor plants. Rainwater is free of minerals, salts, and treatment chemicals found in tap water or groundwater. It also contains helpful macro-nutrients to foster healthy plant growth.

Installing a rain barrel is an easy way to harvest large amounts of rainwater and reduce home water use - it's a win-win. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, one rain barrel can save a homeowner 1,300 gallons of water annually. Most residential rain barrels range in size from 50 to 90 gallons, so the size you purchase will depend on your watering needs. The simplest way to install a rain barrel is positioning a plastic or wooden barrel directly under your gutter downspout. Basic piping may be required, but this is an easy way to harvest rainwater, and the barrel won't take up much space. Consider a cover for the top of your rain barrel to keep insects and small debris out of your harvested water.

## Create fresh savings with a DIY clothesline.

If you have enough outdoor space available, installing a clothesline is a great way to save energy. Not only will you save on dryer costs-in the summer, you can also save on cooling costs since unwanted heat from the clothes dryer won't be added to your home (which makes your air conditioner work harder).

You can create your own clothes line with two T-posts, wire and hook-and-eye turnbuckles. Depending on your soil, you may need a small amount of Quikrete to set the posts. Another option is installing the line between two trees. A typical load of laundry requires about 35 feet of line, so keep this in mind as you're determining the best location.

If an outdoor clothesline isn't an option, no sweat! You can easily create an indoor drying rack that folds to save space. Home improvement websites like thespruce.com and hgtv.com offer step-by-step tutorials for a variety of indoor clothes racks. These are just a few simple ideas to help you save energy and money. So, get out there, roll up those sleeves and tackle a few projects. 69302

# FREE & EASY ways to save energy

(Spoiler Alert: Your clothes and dishes won't know the difference)

Major home appliances account for approximately 16% of an average home's energy consumption.

16%



1. Run full loads of laundry instead of several smaller ones.
2. Use cold water to wash your clothes.



3. Keep your refrigerator at 35° to 38°F and your freezer at 0°F.
4. Regularly defrost manual-defrost freezers and refrigerators.



5. Skip the heat-dry setting on your dishwasher.
6. Fully load your dishwasher before washing.



7. When buying new appliances, consider Energy Star versions.
8. Unplug appliances you're not using.

Time to replace that old appliance? Replacing older versions with energy-efficient models can save the average household more than \$500 per year.

Sources: National Resources Defense Council,  
U.S. Energy Information Administration

Safe  
Electricity.org®

# #811 Day Serves as a Reminder to Dig Safely

Each August 11th Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative recognizes 811 Day, an annual reminder to dial 8-1-1 at least two full days, but no more than 10 working days (excluding weekends and legal holidays) before beginning any digging project to have underground utility lines marked. This free and simple phone call helps prevent harm to you and those around you, as well as repair costs, fines and inconvenient service disruptions. According to New York 811, and underground utility line

is damaged every nine minutes because someone decided to dig without first calling 811. For more information, visit [www.udigny.org](http://www.udigny.org). Safe digging starts here.

1. Notify UDig NY
2. Wait & Locate
3. Confirm Status
4. Respect
5. Dig with Caution  
762700



## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Placing heat sources, such as lamps, computers or TVs, near your thermostat can result in false temperature readings, increased energy use and inconsistent cooling/heating. Make sure your thermostat is installed in an area clear of obstructions, electronic devices, direct sunlight and drafts.

Ensuring your thermostat is free from these types of interferences optimizes energy efficiency, improves indoor comfort and reduces wear and tear on your cooling/heating system.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



## It Pays to GO GREEN - Sign up for paperless billing!

Did you know that you can help save trees and make a positive impact on the environment just by signing up for paperless billing for your electric bill? It's easy, convenient, and you'll be doing your part to protect our planet. Here's why we think paperless billing is a great choice and how you can join us in this effort and make the switch!

### Save Trees, Save the Earth.

When we use paper for bill, a lot of trees are cut down to make it. By choosing paperless billing, you're helping to save trees and protect our forests. Trees play a crucial role in our environment by providing oxygen, absorbing carbon dioxide, and supporting wildlife habitats. By going paperless, you're helping to preserve these important natural resources.

### Less Waste, Less Pollution.

Traditional paper bills create a lot of waste. Think about the envelopes, invoices, and other papers that pile up each month. By choosing paperless billing, you can reduce waste and keep our landfills from overflowing. Plus, when paper bills are mailed, de-

livery trucks burn fuel and release pollution into the air. By going paperless, we can help reduce pollution and keep our air clean.

### Easy and Convenient.

Paperless billing is easy and convenient. Instead of receiving a paper bill in the mail, you'll get an email notification that your bill is ready to view on-line. With just a few clicks, you can access your bill from anywhere, anytime. You can even set up automatic payments, so you never have to worry about missing a due date. It's hassle-free and saves you time! If you do like to see a paper bill each month though, you can easily print it out right at home from your SmartHub account.

### Be a Planet Hero.

By signing up for paperless billing, you're taking a small but mighty step forwards a greener future. You're showing you care about the environment and are willing to make a change. Your actions inspire others to follow your lead, creating a positive ripple effect that helps protect our planet for future generations.

So, how can you sign up for paperless billing? It's super simple using your SmartHub account. If you haven't set up a SmartHub account yet, no worries! Go to [www.steubenrec.coop](http://www.steubenrec.coop) and register. Once you have set up a SmartHub account, look for the option to enroll in paperless billing and follow the instructions to set up your account preferences. You'll receive your bills through email or be able to access them securely on-line.

Let's work together to make a difference.



# Did You Know?

The average daily cost for electricity is just under \$5.00. When you think about all the ways electricity powers daily life, from charging our cell phones, to keeping our homes cool, to cooking our favorite meals and so much more - that's a great value!

## Where Do You Find Value?

Did you know the average daily cost of electricity is \$4.57, or about \$140 per month?

Electricity fuels our daily life essentials, from heating/cooling equipment to entertainment devices and appliances. Think of how vital power is compared to other everyday purchases. **That's real value.**



Morning To-Go Latte



Fast-Food Combo Lunch



All-Day Power

Sources: Energy Information Administration, MoneyGeek and CNET

## SREC Attends Career Fair at Dana Lyons Middle School

Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative Line workers Douglas Hosmer-Smith and Matthew Strauss attended the Dana Lyons Middle School Career Fair on Monday, June 24, 2024.

Steuben Rural Electric is committed to the communities it serves. We are especially committed to the students, as they are the leaders of tomorrow.

Our line workers attended the career fair to educate the students about what a line worker does at Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative along with the equipment they use daily. Our line workers have a blast attending these events and sharing their job to students, while also teaching them about safety.



Left to Right, Douglas Hosmer-Smith and Matthew Strauss

## 10 THINGS YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW ABOUT POWER RESTORATION

Have you ever watched a video or TV show where a person is cooking a meal, then suddenly, they snap their fingers, and the meal is plated and ready to eat? That's called a jump cut. While we wish we could "jump cut" from a power outage to power restoration, it can often take a lot more effort and people to make it happen. Given our reliance on electricity, there's simply never a good time to be without it. Here are 10 things you might not know about restoration:

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(1) We need you. When your power goes out, it might be just at your house or small section of neighborhood. There is a chance we may not know about it, and no one has reported it. We rely on you to let us know if your power is out.

(2) Our employees might be affected too. Because SREC is a local electric cooperative owned by the members we serve, our employees are local too. They are your neighbors, friends and familiar community volunteers. When you're without power, our people might be too.

(3) It's a team effort. Everyone of SREC's employees are working to get your power restored as soon as possible. Our customer service representatives are taking your calls, line department staff are surveying damage, our vegetation management team is clearing hazards, and dispatchers are organizing crews. When your power goes out, we all work together as quickly and safely as possible to get you back to normal.

(4) We assess the situation first. Every outage is different, and we don't know how dangerous it is or what equipment might need to be replaced. When responding to outages, we first need to see what happened, then figure out what materials we need and a plan for how to fix the problem.

(5) Restoration is normally prioritized by the largest number of members we can get back on in the shortest amount of time. Our crews focus on responding first to public safety issues and critical services like hospitals. Then we complete work that impacts the largest of number of people first.

(6) Our employees face many dangers. Besides working around high voltage elec-

tricity, our crews are on alert for wild animals, weather elements, falling trees, and hast-moving cars. (If you ever drive past one of our vehicles, please do so slowly.)

(7) Flickering lights are a good thing. Some folks mistake flickering lights for outages, but these “blinks” are important because they indicate our equipment worked and prevented a possible outage likely caused by wayward animals or stray tree limbs on the lines.

(8) You need a backup plan. We do our best to help those who need it, but if you depend on electricity for life support purposes, you must have a back-up plan, remember, we don't always know how long restoration efforts will take. If you're unsure what to do, call us so we can help you prepare an emergency location.

(9) Our employees have to rest, and eat. Our crews work long hard hours during outages and need to take time for meals just like everyone else.

(10) Sometimes it's a waiting game. Our portion of the power grid is connected to other electric utilities, and we maintain positive relationships with power providers interconnected to our system. If our outage is due to an issue from their feed into our system, we must let them do their repairs and be mindful of what they're going through to fix it.

We do our best to avoid power disruptions, but they are inevitable from time to time. If the lights go out, know that your co-op team is working as quickly and safely as possible to restore power.

## COMMON CAUSES OF POWER OUTAGES

There is never a good time for the power to go out, but if it happens on a sunny day, you might be left wondering why. Here are the most common causes of a power outage.

### WEATHER

High winds, snow and ice can cause tree limbs to fall on power lines. Other weather effects, like wildfires and lightning strikes, can cause major damage to equipment.

### CRITTERS

Squirrels, birds, snakes and other animals can inadvertently contact power lines, causing short circuits and disruptions to electrical supply.

### Scheduled MAINTENANCE

Occasionally, we plan outages to perform upgrades or repairs to parts of the local grid.

### ACCIDENTS

Vehicles can crash into utility poles, bringing down power lines. Construction and excavation work can also result in disruptions to underground lines.

## THE TRADING POST

- No Ads submitted.

The Trading Post Rules: Only members of SREC may submit ads. Ads must be submitted by the 26th of November 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@steubenrec.com](mailto: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.

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. 523302

# HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

September 2 - Labor Day  
October 14 - Columbus Day  
November 11 - Veterans Day  
November 28 - Thanksgiving  
November 29 - Thanksgiving

## 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.



## \$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.

