



# Currents

## CONTENTS

- P1** / 2022 Annual Meeting Event
- P2** / In Memorium: Ray Cordts
- P3** / Your Candidates for Election
- P4** / Lineworker History
- P4** / Efficiency Tip of the Month

**Our 2022 Annual Meeting Event is just around the corner. Here's everything you need to know at a glance:**

### May 2022 Board Elections

- Ballots arriving in early May
- Vote for each of our three districts
- Send back completed ballot by mail

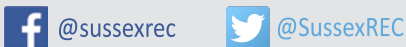
### June 6, 2022 Online Meeting

- Business portion of Annual Meeting
- Q&A with the CEO
- Register for our in-person event to receive *two free NJ State Fair tickets*
- Online Monday, June 6 at [www.sussexrec.com/online-meeting](http://www.sussexrec.com/online-meeting)

### August 8, 2022 In-Person Member Event

- Held at NJ State Fair
- Member-focused portion of Annual Meeting
- Visit our tent to receive member appreciation gift and \$10 bill credit, and enter our prize drawing!

**Follow us for more details!**



CURRENTS is published monthly by Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative  
64 County Route 639, Sussex, NJ 07461  
p: 973.875.5101 f: 973.875.4114  
website: [www.sussexrec.com](http://www.sussexrec.com)  
email: [currents@sussexrec.com](mailto:currents@sussexrec.com)

### Our Board of Directors

<i>Chairman</i>	-	Jack Haggerty, Jr.
<i>Vice Chairman</i>	-	William Kovach
<i>Sec./Treasurer</i>	-	Raymond Cordts
Barbara Miller	Thomas Madsen	
Ronald Dupont	Brad Sparta	
	Joseph Barca	
<i>President &amp; CEO</i> - Christopher P. Reese		



## 2022 Annual Meeting Event

*By: Chris Reese, President & CEO  
[contacttheceo@sussexrec.com](mailto:contacttheceo@sussexrec.com)*

Throughout our 85-year history, Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative's Annual Meeting has been an essential part of our operation. This meeting lets SREC staff meet face-to-face with members to take questions and share information about the Co-op. And of course, there's always food and prizes! Traditionally, this gathering takes place in early June and is something that we plan for and look forward to all year. This meeting is also the usual avenue where we announce the results of our board elections, scholarship awards, and the students selected for the year's Youth Tour trip.



As many of you know, the Annual Meeting has not been held in its usual form since 2019. The onset of the coronavirus pandemic forced us to cancel our Annual Meeting in 2020. For 2021, we were able to pivot to an Online Meeting that still provided the usual information, announcements, and prize drawings, though not with the same in-person energy that a typical Annual Meeting provides.

For this year, as covid cases decline and restrictions gradually vanish, we have put together a plan for a new type of Annual Meeting Event that can capture the spirit of the in-person event while still prioritizing the health and safety of all involved. In addition, we aim for this Annual Meeting Event to be more convenient than ever for our members, meeting you where you are and rewarding you for your participation!

We are using "2022 Annual Meeting Event" as the umbrella term to describe two distinct parts of the greater whole – a business-oriented Online Meeting held on Monday, June 6th plus an in-person member appreciation event on Monday, August 8th, held at the New Jersey State Fair at the Sussex County Fairgrounds. These both take place after our annual board of directors election, which members will participate in by mail during the month of May.

### Board of Directors Election

As a member-owner of Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative, you get to vote on the direction of the Co-op through participation in our board elections. As we have the last several years, we will conduct these elections by mail to make voting as convenient as possible for our

>> CONT. PAGE TWO

# 2022 Annual Meeting Event

>> CONT. FROM PAGE ONE

members. Your ballots for this election will be arriving in your mailboxes in early May. Once received, please cast your vote and send your completed ballot back to us using the included prepaid envelope.

In this election, for the first time in recent years, we have a contested seat for our board of directors. In addition to the two directors up for re-election, we have two new candidates contending for our District 3 seat. Both of these new candidates are very involved members who are part of our Member Advisory Committee. Information about this year's candidates from each of our three districts can be found on the following page of this month's newsletter. All members get to cast a vote for each district's seat on the board, regardless of the district you reside in. Be sure to make your voice heard when your ballot arrives!

## 2022 Online Meeting

This year, we will be once again holding a pre-recorded Online Meeting that will serve as the "business" portion of the event. It will include the results of the election, a speech from our board's chairman, a financial report, and a question-and-answer segment where I answer your questions. We will be releasing more information on how to submit questions soon, so please stay tuned to our social media channels!

A popular part of last year's Online Meeting was our prize drawing. This year, a prize drawing will be incorporated into our in-person event at the NJ State Fair, which you can learn more about in the next section of this article. We encourage all members to tune in to the Online Meeting when it goes live on June 6th because that is when registration begins for the in-person member appreciation event. Registering on the Online Meeting's webpage will earn you *two free tickets* to the NJ State Fair for the day of our member appreciation event, Monday, August 8th!

2022's Online Meeting and the registration form will go live at [www.sussexrec.com/online-meeting](http://www.sussexrec.com/online-meeting) on Monday, June 6th. We hope that you join us to learn more about the Co-op and receive more information about the next half of the 2022 Annual Meeting Event!

## SREC at the Fair

The New Jersey State Fair is one of the biggest events in Sussex County. The shows, rides, vendors, and exhibits that fill the Fairgrounds are an iconic summer sight for our area. Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative has been a part of the NJ State Fair in the past by having a booth or through participating in Fair events like Green Day.

With the opportunity to hold an in-person event for 2022's Annual Meeting, we felt it would be best to incorporate it into a major local event that many members and their families would plan on attending anyway. Here, we can also keep everyone's medical needs in mind by having our gathering take place outdoors. You can get two free tickets to the NJ State Fair for the day of this member appreciation event by registering on our website once the Online Meeting goes live on June 6th.

With your free tickets, you can experience everything the Fair has to offer. While at the Fair, we encourage you to visit our tent to get the most of our member appreciation experience. Each member who's registered can stop by to receive their gifts from SREC. When we held our Online Meeting, we know that members missed the \$10 bill credit that they would receive for attendance at a normal Annual Meeting. You may be happy to learn that we will be bringing that back, and more!

In addition to the \$10 bill credit, members will also receive a membership appreciation gift and a ticket for our prize drawing that will happen later that day. We will not be giving away as many prizes as we did during last year's Online Meeting, but on average each prize will be more valuable. This year's prizes include a free year of electricity (a big hit from last year's Online Meeting), various bill credits, and some other special items! We will be giving out more information on prizes as we approach the date of the event. We hope you all are as excited to learn about them as we are to share this information.

Our tent at the Fair will be staffed throughout the day by myself, by other Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative employees, and by members of our board of directors. We will be available to meet with you, speak about our service and programs, and answer any questions you may have. We hope to see you there!



## In Memorium - Ray Cordts

It is with great sadness that we report that Ray Cordts, Secretary and Treasurer of our board of directors, passed away on Sunday, March 20th. Ray was a mainstay in Sussex County's business community and had a long, distinguished career with Lakeland Bank. Ray served on the Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative Board of Directors for 27 years and along with his financial acumen always brought his sense of humor with him into the boardroom. He always had a joke ready if you asked, or even if you didn't. Ray will be deeply missed by all of us at the Cooperative, and we are keeping his wife Pam and his family in our thoughts during this difficult time.

# Your Candidates for Election



**District One Candidate Brad Sparta** is an assistant superintendent at the Upper Montclair Country Club in Clifton. Brad was appointed to the SREC Board of Directors in December 2014 and has been re-elected by the membership in 2016 and 2019. He has completed five national education courses needed to be a Certified Cooperative Director and is currently working on obtaining his Board Leadership Certificate. Brad's extensive education includes a B.S. in Management and a B.A. in Economics from East Stroudsburg University in 1992.

Brad is one of the founding members of the Vernon Education Foundation and the first president to be elected. Brad served on the Vernon Township Board of Education from 2009 to 2012 and from 2015 to 2021. Brad is a lifelong resident of Vernon. He and his wife of over 20 years, Robyn, reside in Vernon with their

two daughters.



**District Two Candidate Joseph Barca** was raised in Vernon and is a 1988 graduate of Vernon Township High School. Joe graduated in 1993 from West Virginia University with a B.S. degree in Marketing and is a member of the Sigma Chi fraternity. Joe was employed by Citigroup and JP Morgan Chase as a Vice President for 25 years and in his career has worked in the Information Technology, Information Security and Cyber Security field. He earned his Master's Degree in Management Information Systems in 2003 from Stevens Institute of Technology during his time with Citigroup. Joe is currently employed by Lynx Technology Partners as Cyber and Third-Party Risk Manager.

Joe was first elected to his seat on the SREC Board of Directors in 2019 and has recently completed the required courses to receive his Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) Certificate. In this day and age of Cyber-attacks, with Joe's background in Information Security and Cyber Security, one of Joe's main focuses is to protect the Co-op with his expertise, oversight, and governance from a Cyber Risk perspective. Joe resides in Vernon, NJ with his wife Allison and their three children Kayla, Dylan and Lia. He enjoys spending time outdoors skiing and hiking with his family and is an avid sports fan.



**District Three Candidate Michael Abate** has lived in Wantage for 15 years and resides on Compton Road. Michael easily fell in love with Wantage's countryside after previously living in Newton, and finds the people of Wantage so friendly and giving. In April 2014, Michael had the opportunity to join the newly formed SREC Member Advisory Committee. Michael was honored to be accepted into this committee and values being a part of SREC's desire to improve for the benefit of its members. In the eight years since, Michael has come to understand the values and principals SREC maintains.

Michael owns his own business in residential construction/renovations called Action Services & Contracting, giving him over 30 years of knowledge and experience working with customers as well as employees.

Michael feels this would be an asset to SREC if elected to the board, and his experience working with SREC's board members and key employees in committee meetings has shown that he shares the same American values and belief in always doing the right thing. In addition, his past experience with automobiles and knowledge of customers' household needs can be valuable to SREC as it grows into the future of our electric world.



**District Three Candidate Michael Gall** is a resident of Lafayette Township who has dedicated himself to serving the families of Sussex County. He has served on the SREC Member Advisory Committee since 2016. He has also served on the SREC Nominating Committee, the Lafayette Township School District Board of Education, and the Sussex County Educational Services Commission Board of Education. He resides on Cedar Ridge Road with his wife Dana and their three children Gracie, Lincoln, and Jackson.

During his tenure as former Principal of Wantage Elementary School and current Superintendent of the Sussex-Wantage Regional School District, Michael has been a driving force in the greater community. He has a vast amount of experience in various areas of developing budgets, crafting policies, facilities management, and public sector contract negotiations. He worked collaboratively with all stakeholders to successfully

combine the positions of Superintendent and Principal, as well as Director of Curriculum and Vice Principal, to save the district approximately \$250,000 per year. He also assisted in brokering one of the most successful contract negotiations in the history of the school district, saving taxpayers a projected \$3 million dollars over the life of the three-year public sector contract. He hopes that his leadership experience, volunteerism, and conservative voice would be a welcome addition to SREC's board of directors.

# Lineworker History

By: Steve Sokolowski, Marketing Associate  
ssokolowski@sussexrec.com

Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative's crews are a constant presence in our community. You may notice them out and about, traveling in bucket trucks, digger trucks, or pickups and working on our power lines or other electrical equipment. The co-op lineman has been a critical member of the community since Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative was formed in 1937. We would not be able to provide today's members with reliable power if not for our crew of expert lineworkers, and SREC would not exist if not for the original generation of lineworkers who banded together to build our rural electric infrastructure.



In honor of the linemen who serve our community today and those who came before, SREC celebrates Lineworker Appreciation Day on the second Monday of April. 2022's Lineworker Appreciation Day falls on April 11th. To celebrate both Lineworker Appreciation Day and SREC's 85th anniversary, I would like to share some history of this noble profession.



The role of lineworker was not originally created to build, repair, and maintain the electric grid. In fact, the first lineworkers were tasked with setting wooden poles and stringing wires to support the adoption of the telegraph across the US in the 1840s. As electrification became more common in the United States and other countries, linemen were employed by investor-owned utilities in the creation of their electric infrastructure.

Working on live electric lines proved to be much more dangerous than telegraph or telephone lines due to the risk of electrocution. At this time, the profession was considered one of the most dangerous jobs a worker could have. Approximately 1 in 3 linemen were killed on the job. Because of this, many lineworkers were involved in the union movement in the US and contributed significantly to the adoption of workplace safety standards. This led to apprentice programs becoming standard practice in this vocation. While lineworker still ranks highly among yearly lists of the world's most dangerous jobs, advancements in technology and safety measures have mitigated many of the dangers lineworkers face every day.

In the 1930s, rural electrification significantly increased the need for lineworkers to help bring power to poorer rural areas where investor-owned utilities would not. This includes the area that would become SREC's service territory. Many career linemen traveled the country to find work as new rural electric co-ops sprung up, but in countless cases these new co-ops relied on their own communities' farmers to act as linemen. While mostly untrained and lacking modern safety measures, these original rural lineworkers helped build the backbone of the rural electric grid.

Over the years, equipment and training have improved significantly. Lineworkers originally had to climb each pole they worked on but can now use bucket trucks to gain easy access to power lines. Modern lineworkers have access to personal protection equipment (PPE) and specialized tools to help them work efficiently and safely. All of this helps them perform their



critical work, which they take on no matter the time or weather. In addition to keeping power flowing in their own communities, lineworkers frequently offer mutual aid services to help other towns, states, or even other countries when it is needed!

So, this year on April 11th, or any time you see a lineworker, please thank them for the work they do to keep power flowing. After all, lineworkers are the power behind your power.

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

When streaming content, use the smallest device that makes sense for the number of people watching. Avoid streaming on game consoles, which use 10 times more power than streaming through a tablet or laptop.

Streaming content with electronic equipment that has earned the ENERGY STAR® rating will use 25% to 30% less energy than standard equipment.

Source: Dept. of Energy

