



**Sussex Rural
Electric Cooperative, Inc.**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Currents

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THROWBACKS 1937 - 2022

This year to celebrate our 85th Anniversary, we will be sharing a look back at Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative's history. Follow us on our social media accounts and look out for the #ThrowbackThursday hashtag for a unique, weekly look back at our 85 years of service!



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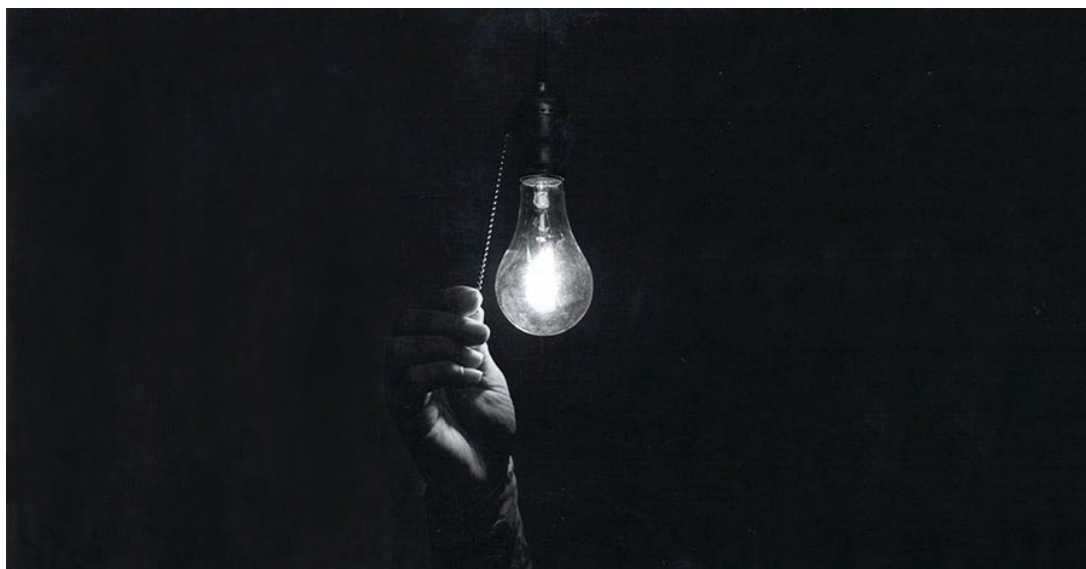


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Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative
64 County Route 639, Sussex, NJ 07461
p: 973.875.5101 f: 973.875.4114
website: www.sussexrec.com
email: currents@sussexrec.com

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85 Years of Service

By: Chris Reese, President & CEO
contactthecoo@sussexrec.com



In the 1930s, electricity was a rare commodity in rural communities like ours, reserved only for those along the major roadways and that could pay exorbitant costs to have investor-owned utilities connect their property to the electric grid. Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative was officially established in 1937, 85 years ago. This was a grassroots effort to represent the farmers and rural residents of our communities and provide them with access to the electric service that was quickly becoming a necessity. Over the decades and through to today, the employees behind SREC, many of them members, have dedicated themselves to the mission of providing our membership with the highest quality of service at the lowest possible cost.

While there is a lot of uncertainty surrounding the way of the world in the year 2022 (the same uncertainty I've been writing about for almost two years at this point...), this has never changed: We are incredibly proud of our history as a unique utility that was created by members, for members, and owned by those it serves.

Having now reached this amazing 85-year landmark, we are excited to share our pride in our history with you, the members, in a variety of ways. We have a lot to look forward to in the coming year. Please join me in celebrating the old and the new in 2022, the year of our 85th anniversary!

Some Things Change...

As we head into the new year, members will notice some things changing. Don't worry, these changes are not ones that will have an impact on your monthly bills! They may, however, change up some of the ways you interact with your Co-op. One example I can share with you now concerns this very newsletter.

This year, *Currents* will be shifting from its usual monthly format that has been in place since its first issue in 1998 to a new, quarterly

"While everything else—gasoline, heating oil, groceries—seems to be going up in price, I am happy to report that our members will not see an increase in residential rates to start the year."

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85 Years of Service

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format. Rather than being included in the mail with your bill, *Currents* will soon be adopting a direct-mail model. It will be sent to every member's residence in the middle month of each quarter. To make up for the less frequent newsletters, each issue of *Currents* will now be eight pages long. We are very excited for the opportunity to provide additional content that is more varied in each issue.

This change is partially inspired by the fact that more and more members are opting for paperless billing, meaning they wouldn't be receiving a physical copy of *Currents* with their bills. We absolutely encourage all members to sign up for this convenient option that uses less paper, especially now that we can keep the communication channel of our newsletter open to all members. Other changes and new additions to our member-facing programs will be coming soon, so stay tuned for more announcements!



...Some Things Stay the Same

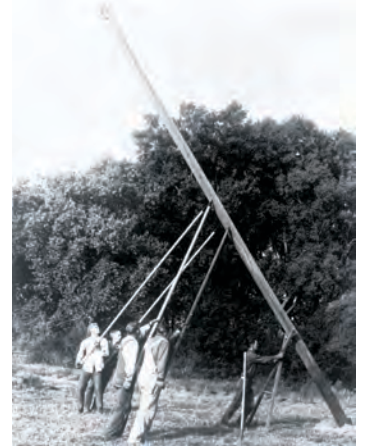
Each year, Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative's board of directors and management come together to decide if a rate increase is needed to keep pace with costs of operation. While everything else—gasoline, heating oil, groceries—seems to be going up in price, I am happy to report that our members will not see an increase in residential rates to start the year.

Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative's mission statement has always been "to provide the highest quality of service at the lowest possible cost." This was true at the time of our founding, when we offered membership for a fee of just \$5 – the same fee we charge today. The promise of affordable electricity was impossible for rural citizens until FDR's New Deal and Rural Electrification Act paved the way for Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative and other electric co-ops throughout the country.

In this same spirit and taking into account the circumstances of our post-pandemic world, we are resisting pressure to increase our rates. Instead, we are watching expenses and relying on our strong finances to carry us into 2022. SREC's board of directors and management have come to this decision despite rising costs of operation. We felt it would be best not to raise our residential rates for our membership at a time when many things in other areas of life are still very uncertain.

Celebrating Our History

In the grand scheme of things, the time that has passed from Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative's founding to where we stand today has been relatively short. It is bizarre to think that only 85 years ago, members of this community had lived most of their lives without electricity - working the fields of farms without electric-powered equipment, performing tedious chores by hand, and spending their nights crowded around a gas-powered lamp as the only source of light. It is a testament to how fast society has advanced over the last eight-and-a-half decades that we all live in such vastly different conditions.



SREC had a central role in making this change possible within our rural communities. Some families may have older members who were still young during the initial rural electrification process and can remember what it felt like to experience electric lighting, refrigeration, or running water for the first time. Though for the most part, modern members are very far removed from what this was like. Electricity is an everyday necessity, and it's hard to imagine what life was like without it.

The story of rural electrification, how community members founded SREC to meet this growing common need, and the 85 years of history that follows is a story we intend to share. As a part of our year-long 85th anniversary celebration, we will be sharing small snippets of this larger history each week on social media. I'm sure many of our readers are familiar with the concept of #ThrowbackThursday. While many social media users use this hashtag to share personal reflections of the recent past, we'll be delving a bit farther back than most – touching on pieces of SREC's 85-year story. We hope that you all appreciate the insight into your electric co-op's long history!

2022 looks to be a promising year with many opportunities for exciting developments. We hope you all join us in celebrating Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative's 85th anniversary of serving its members. Happy New Year to you all, and here's to 85 more years!



Your Guide to Generators

By: Dave King, Supervisor of Electrical Contracting, SREC Resources (NJ Licensed Electrical Contractor #15375A)
dking@sussexrec.com



The last thing that anyone wants to deal with is a power outage. No matter the cause – whether it's extreme weather, a branch or tree that's fallen, or a vehicle collision with a pole – all that matters to most who are affected is when their power will come back on. While utility crews from Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative work on restoring power, there is one tried and true method to make sure you are not held back by a power outage: a generator!

Generators offer peace of mind when you're faced with an outage. They relieve some of the stress associated with how long an outage might last. With a generator, related issues like if the food in your refrigerator will stay fresh or what you'll do without any electric-powered medical equipment someone in your home may rely on are no longer a concern.

Unfortunately, for many people the process of finding the generator that is right for them can be difficult. There are a lot of factors to consider, from price to make and model to the load needed to power your home. When generator shopping, you'll be met with many questions. How many people live in your home? How much extra fuel can you keep on-hand? Will you need to power your whole house, or select appliances?

As the Supervisor of Electrical Contracting at SREC Resources, Sussex Rural Electric's contracting subsidiary, I have a lot of experience with generators. If you're considering purchasing a generator to keep your power flowing through thick and thin, keep the following in mind to make sure you find the one that best suits your needs.

The first thing you should consider is which type of generator you are looking to buy. For most consumers looking to power their home during an outage, the main two types of generators to look at are portable generators and standby generators.

Portable Generators

Portable generators are smaller, lower wattage generators that you set up at the time of an outage. These generators are usually more affordable than standby generators. Due to their lower wattage (usually 7,500 watts up to 10,000 watts), these generators cannot power your whole house. Instead, you would determine which appliances or areas of the home you most need running during an outage. With limited generator capacity, you should keep narrow it down to the essentials: some lights, refrigeration, and heating or cooling appliances for example. It's important to calculate the total electrical load you will need covered during an outage to make sure the generator you purchase can meet these needs. Each appliance's manual should be able to give you information on the amount of power it uses.



These generators have a good value for the service they provide, but there are still additional factors you will need to consider. These generators are usually powered by gasoline or propane, so you will need to make sure you have enough on-hand to ride out longer outages. Additionally, you need to carefully consider your placement when running the generator. Always use these generators outdoors to prevent buildup of deadly carbon monoxide gas! For nasty storms, it may be best to invest in a tent or other shelter that can keep the generator protected from the elements while it's running.

Also, it's required that someone in your household should have a good understanding of how to use your portable generator safely. The simplest, but less convenient, way of using a portable generator is to use extension cords to plug your devices into the generator. It may seem easier to connect the generator directly into your home's electrical grid but plugging your generator into your home's breaker box or other improper outlets is dangerous. This could damage your home's wiring or cause a dangerous back feed effect that sends electricity back through utility power lines.



The best option for homeowners is to have a transfer switch, such as a GenerLink, installed by a licensed electrician. This is a device installed behind your electric meter that allows anyone to safely and easily connect a portable generator to your home. This takes a lot of the hassle out of setting up your portable generator, especially during an ongoing storm!

Standby Generators

A home standby generator can handle a higher load, generally up to 20,000 watts, meaning it's possible to power your whole house during an outage. These generators, such as the Cummins Quiet Connect Generators offered by SREC Resources, are permanent installations, directly connected to your home through an Automatic Transfer Switch (ATS), that will turn on automatically once your electricity goes out. Standby generators can be air cooled or liquid cooled and fueled by natural gas, propane, or sometimes diesel.

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Your Guide to Generators

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This option is more convenient than a portable generator but can also be much more expensive. Securing a standby generator and having it installed by a licensed electrician can run a homeowner multiple thousands of dollars and is an investment that can add value to your home. The ease-of-use that comes with having a standby generator connected to your home is unmatched. Many retailers of standby generators, including SREC Resources, offer financing options to make purchasing a generator more affordable.



Keeping Current

It's important to note that generators of both kinds require upkeep to make sure they remain ready for an outage. A standby generator should be serviced every year. In addition, your standby generator is programmed to exercise for at least 20 minutes every other week to keep it ready to run. In contrast, a portable generator only needs to be run once a month to stay ready for an outage. Customers who purchase a Cummins generators through SREC Resources can utilize our maintenance services to provide a more detailed inspection of your generator's condition.

A generator can be a life-changing purchase, preventing an outage from ever disrupting your daily life. The money and time researching you invest in finding the right generator will pay off by always keeping your power flowing on your terms, regardless of whatever outside circumstances are affecting your co-op's system.

This guest column was provided by Dave King, the Supervisor of Electrical Contracting at SREC Resources. SREC Resources is a wholly owned subsidiary of Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative. SREC Resources, NJ Licensed Electrical Contractor #15375A, offers sale and installation of Cummins whole house generators and GenerLink transfer switches to residential customers, both SREC members and non-members, as well as other electrical contracting services for commercial and industrial customers. For more information, visit www.sussexrec.com/srec-resources.

Lightning was ~~powering~~ through the clouds outside. Thanks to your planning, their story time, and life as you know it, continued inside.





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Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Maximize your heating system's performance by inspecting, cleaning or replacing air filters once a month or as needed to reduce energy costs and prevent potential damage to your system.

Make sure radiators, baseboard heaters and warm-air registers aren't blocked so air can flow freely.

Source: Dept. of Energy

