
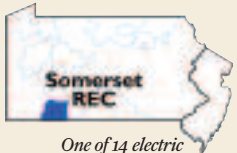


Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

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General Manager

OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Friday

7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

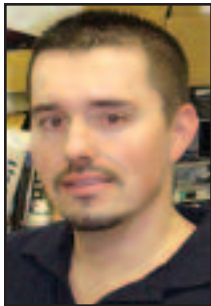
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GUEST COLUMN

Embracing change



by Phil Stern
Meter Technician

PERHAPS you've read "Who Moved My Cheese?" by Spencer Johnson. If so, you know the book is a story of some mice that were in a maze and found a room full of cheese. Day after day, the room would be replenished with new cheese and the mice ate their fill. Then one day, the cheese was not there. Some of the mice went

on to look for more cheese, but two of the mice stayed behind, waiting for more cheese to be put back in the same room. The two mice, starving after not eating for a couple of days, started complaining about why the cheese was moved. When one mouse brought up the idea of looking for more cheese, the other shot down the idea, saying it was too dangerous to go out looking for more cheese. They could starve looking around the maze for more cheese.

Somerset Rural Electric Cooperative members are seeing big changes in the way the co-op operates.

Most members can relate to getting readings from their meters. They have been sending the readings with their monthly payments for years, sometimes running to the meter in a downpour or trudging through several feet of snow, just to get a five-second reading. In the next few years, all of this will change. We are in the process of installing a new meter called the Cannon, and our plan is that it will be fully deployed by the end of 2013. The Cannon will give us daily readings for every meter on our lines. We will also be able to communicate with any of the meters from a computer at the co-op. This will enable us to get the exact reading from the meter, without anyone needing to walk to the meter. This means the hassle of reading your meter every month will become obsolete. This will also be useful in outage detection and restora-

tion, as we can "ping" the meters to see where the power is off during an outage.

The Cannon system will also be a significant part of the future of our load control system (LCS). The current LCS is over 20 years old and parts are becoming hard to obtain. Members who elect to have us install a load control receiver (LCR) on their water heater, will help us maintain the price we pay for electricity. When the demand for electricity is reaching a peak, an LCR will control the water heater and shut it off for a little while to keep the peak lower. Since the co-op's price for electricity is affected by peaks, this helps control the overall cost. Members who have an LCR will be getting a replacement LCR in the next few years that will be more efficient.

Another change many of our members are aware of is the implementation of internet over the power lines (IBEC). Prior to this addition, a number of our members could only go online with the slow, tedious performance of dial-up service. The installation of IBEC started in the Bando Substation and has been getting a positive response. IBEC will be a good supplement to help these members surf the web without putting them to sleep.

But what happened to the mice, you ask? The mice that embraced change and left the room searched the maze and found another room full of cheese and ate until they could eat no more. The two mice that remained in the room waiting for the room to be refilled with cheese, waited and became hungrier. These two will become extinct if they don't accept change and leave the room to search for cheese.

As you can see, there are lots of interesting changes in store for Somerset Rural Electric and its members. These changes will make the co-op more efficient than it already is. Change is something that can be difficult for all of us, but keep in mind — movement in a new direction helps you find more cheese. 