



United Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives
serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

United Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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Brenda Swartzlander

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From the President & CEO



Annual meeting is so much more than just business

By Brenda Swartzlander

LIKE ALL electric cooperatives, United Electric Cooperative is required to hold an annual meeting of our members each year to certify the results of the director elections, report on the financial state of the cooperative, share important information affecting the electric industry, and conduct any other necessary business of the cooperative; and, of course, we give away some great door prizes!

Unlike other utility companies and corporations that hold annual "stockholder" meetings, cooperatives hold an annual meeting of our members, who are the owners of the cooperative. At United's annual meeting, you will not hear talk of stock prices or profit margins or plans of how we can increase revenues next year. Cooperatives like United Electric are not-for-profit organizations, and our only goal is to provide our members with the energy they need at an affordable price. Your cooperative takes pride in being one of the few organizations where an annual meeting is more of a community get-together, where neighbors meet new neighbors, old friends get reacquainted and we make new friends. It is a chance to step away from our busy lifestyle and the everyday demands on our time and talk face-to-face with others who share our interests.

Being a part of the rural communities we live in, we probably do a better job of staying connected to our neighbors than those who live in more urban settings, but this is something we should not take for granted. The simple act of smiling, saying hello and shaking someone's hand truly lifts the spirits of both parties.

Our country and our rural communities face many challenges. The economy is improving much slower in the rural areas, and attracting good, family-sustaining jobs to rural areas remain an uphill battle. And I don't need to tell most of you that our educated young people being forced to relocate to more urban areas for jobs is a trend we must reverse.

Overcoming these challenges can only happen if we all come together as a community. United Electric's annual meeting is a good place to start. At United Electric, our main focus is always on providing reliable, affordable, and safe power to our members, but ultimately improving the quality of life for all members is at the core of what we do every day. Although the annual meeting is to take care of the important business of the cooperative, it also serves the dual purpose of bringing the community together.

If it has been a while since you attended an annual meeting, or if you have never been there, we strongly urge you to take the time to be with your fellow cooperative members. This year's meeting will be held Wednesday, May 17, at the Brady Township Community Center, starting at 7 p.m.

United Electric is connected to you by more than just power lines; we are all part of the same community, and we hope to see you at this year's annual meeting.

Until next month,


Brenda

Have a successful planting season rooted in safety

AS FARMERS make plans to return to their fields for spring planting, United Electric and the Safe Electricity program (www.safeelectricity.org) urge them to be particularly alert to the dangers of working near overhead power lines. Operating large equipment near these lines is one of the often overlooked, yet potentially deadly, hazards of working on a farm.

Start by making sure everyone knows to maintain a minimum 10-foot clearance from power lines.

“Sometimes a power line is closer than it looks,” says Molly Hall, executive director of the Energy Education Council’s Safe Electricity program. “Helpful safety steps include using a spotter and designating preplanned routes that avoid hazard areas.”

Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting tractors on trailer beds. Many tractors now have tall antennas extending from the cab that could make contact with power lines. Avoid raising the arms of planters or cultivators near power lines, and never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path.

Simply working too close to a power line is dangerous as electricity can arc or “jump” to conducting objects, such



as a ladder, pole, or truck. Remember, non-metallic materials such as lumber, tires, ropes, and hay will conduct electricity depending on dampness, dust, and dirt contamination.

If your equipment does come into contact with power lines, stay in the cab

and call United Electric Cooperative for help. If the power line is energized and you step outside, your body becomes the path to the ground. Even if a line has landed on the ground, there is still potential for the area to be energized. Warn others who may be nearby to stay away, and wait until help arrives.

If exiting the cab is absolutely necessary because of fire, the proper action is to jump — not step — with both feet together, hitting the ground at the same time. Do not allow any part of your body to touch the equipment and the ground at the same time. Hop to safety, keeping both feet together as you leave the area.

For more tips and information on how to stay safe this planting season, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Safe Electricity is the safety outreach program of the Energy Education Council, a non-profit organization with more than 400 electric cooperative members and many others who share the mission of educating the public about electrical safety and energy efficiency.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Dishwasher Efficiency Tip: Air dry clean dishes to save energy. If your dishwasher does not have an automatic air-dry switch, turn off the dishwasher after the final rinse and prop the door open slightly so the dishes will dry faster.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy

Utilities raising awareness about scams

By Tracy Warren

WHEN a scammer called Florida pet clinic operator Cindy Evers last year and demanded immediate payment on an overdue electric bill, it sounded real.

“They knew my account number and gave me a figure that I owed that’s close to what I usually pay on my electric bill,” Evers says.

She paid, even though in the back of her mind, she knew her payment wasn’t late.

“I have pets under sedation, and I’m taking care of animals,” she says. “I think I just panicked, thinking they were going to shut my electricity off. I did what they told me to do.”

Evers lost \$900 because the call was a scam. The scam that duped her has been plaguing utility consumers across North America for several years, robbing them of millions.

Even the wariest consumers can be duped. The scammers are developing new tactics every day. The “past due” scam, similar to the one Evers experienced, goes something like this: a customer gets a call from an 800-number that looks like a valid utility phone number. Widely available spoofing software allows crooks to display what appears to be an official number on caller IDs. The caller threatens to cut off power if the customer doesn’t pay. But here’s the giveaway: the crook will demand payment via a prepaid debit card or money order. And he’ll ask for it within a specified time frame — often an hour or less. The scammer may even quote an amount that sounds like your typical bill, giving him more credibility. Scammers might direct the customer to a specific store nearby that sells the prepaid cards and instruct the customer to put money on the card and provide the card number to the scammer. Some scammers have even been bold enough to contact potential victims in person, coming to the member’s house.

Over the past year, United Electric has had a number of our members call to inform us they had received calls from scammers using exactly the scenario that cost Evers \$900. Luckily, those members were aware of such scams and that the caller wanted them to buy a prepaid card to make immediate payment was a dead giveaway. But these scammers are continually coming up with new ways to cheat honest people out of their hard-earned money.

Here are some tips on how to protect yourself:

- ▶ Do not assume the name and number on your caller ID is legitimate. Caller IDs can be spoofed.
- ▶ Never share your personal information, including date of birth, Social Security number or banking account information with an unknown caller.
- ▶ Never wire money to someone you don’t know.
- ▶ Do not click links or call numbers in unexpected emails or texts — especially those asking for your account information.
- ▶ Cooperatives will NOT require their customers to purchase prepaid debit cards or money orders to avoid an immediate disconnection.
- ▶ If you receive a call that sounds like it may be a scam, or if you believe the call is a scam, hang up, call the police and report the incident to United Electric.

How you can help

You can alert your family members and friends. Share the scammers’ tactics described in this article or those you have heard about. Be aware that there are scammers out there. 🌞

Tracy Warren writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation’s 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives

Help us serve you better; update your contact information

IT IS United Electric’s goal to make interacting with the cooperative as convenient as possible for our members. In order to continue to provide our members with the best possible service, there are times when we need to get in touch with you directly. The co-op continually updates our member records, and you may be asked to verify the phone numbers on your account and indicate which you prefer to be used as your primary phone number.



The co-op needs a current phone number on file for every account so members can more easily and quickly report a power outage or ask a question about products and services. Also, we can contact a member more directly if we have concerns about your electric bill, have a planned outage coming up that affects your power or in case of any other type of system emergency situation. When you contact United Electric by phone, particularly after hours or during a major power outage, our automatic system will recognize the number you are calling from if it is on file with your account. It will help us to access your records quickly, making it easier for both you and the customer service representative helping you.

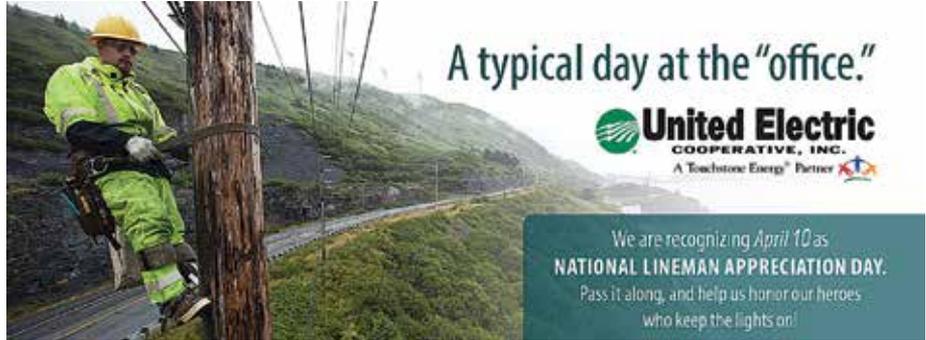
Please consider taking a few moments to update your phone number with us. Call us toll-free: 1-888-581-8969. Or stop by our office from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday (excluding major holidays). Keeping your contact information current will allow us to serve you better. 🌞

Lives on the line

By Meghaan Evans

EVERY YEAR, we take the time to thank our extraordinary lineworkers who dedicate their lives to keeping the lights on in our local communities. United Electric's lineworkers maintain 2,847 miles of line across the 4,300 square miles that make up United Electric's service territory, and without them, our world would be a dark place.

We depend on our entire staff to keep United Electric running smoothly, but on April 10, 2017, we honor all lineworkers who often find themselves in dangerous and challenging situations, so our lives may be a little bit brighter and safer every day. These brave men and women repair damaged lines and maintain critical infrastructure for our communities. Without their hard work and commitment to the job, our co-op would not thrive. No matter the time — day or night, weekday or weekend — if the lights go out, so do they.



Perhaps you've seen our linemen up in their bucket trucks in howling winds and torrential rains, or in freezing, icy conditions. During an outage, they work around the clock near high-voltage power lines until electricity is restored to every member in our co-op community.

In addition to aiding members in our local service territory, lineworkers are always willing and eager to volunteer when a neighboring cooperative in the state or possibly elsewhere in the county is in need after a major outage occurs.

Our lineworkers are brave, committed and critical to our success. National Lineman Appreciation Day

may only come around once a year, but we depend on our dedicated linemen every day to perform the job only they can do.

We hope you will join us in thanking the many lineworkers — both locally and around the world — who light our lives. Remember, your power works because they do! If you see lineworkers out doing their job, take time to say hi and thanks for a job well done. 🌞

Meghaan Evans writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.



ANNUAL MEETING
 will be held at the Brady Township Community Center, Luthersburg, Pa.
 Wednesday, May 17th, 2017, at 7:00 PM
 for United Electric Cooperative's Members

- Directors Report
- Business Session
- CEO's Report
- Director Election Results in Districts 4 & 5

United Electric COOPERATIVE, INC.
 A Touchstone Energy Partner

FREE REGISTRATION GIFT & DOOR PRIZES