



# 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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## Guest Column



# Important lessons are taught early

By Kristy Smith

NOW THAT we're well into the new year, you've probably noticed a few more items have accumulated in your home since last year has come and gone. New versions of electronic and mobile devices, TVs, computers, and gaming stations have replaced the older versions in our homes, particularly those with children. Consumer electronics coupled with the increase of smart home appliances, technology and electric vehicles have slowly but steadily changed our homes and lifestyles.

This ever-connected world is the modern environment in which children are growing up. With lifestyles increasingly reliant on technology and, in turn, energy consumption, teaching our young consumers to save energy is an important life lesson, especially when young consumers grow up to be full-fledged members.

## The why

But before parents can teach their children *how* to save energy, they must first answer the question, "*What's in it for me?*" As most parents can attest, convincing kids to care about energy efficiency is a hard sell. Parents need to explain why it's important to save energy and how it benefits the child — otherwise they will not understand the need to change their habits and will be less motivated to do so.

In the simplest terms, less money spent on an electric bill can mean more money used for fun activities,

which is something children can relate to! A less tangible (but just as important) lesson: using less energy means running your home more efficiently, conserving natural resources and helping the environment.

## Learning by doing

Because "saving energy" is an abstract concept for children, be specific about energy efficiency actions and set an example. We know that children learn by observing what their parents do. Even if they don't say anything, children are processing your actions. When you turn off the lights when leaving a room or unplug the phone charger once the device is fully charged, they will notice. Learning about energy efficiency doesn't have to be a boring lecture. Make it fun for greater impact.

For younger kids, turn energy efficiency into a "treasure hunt" game to locate all the things in your home that use electricity. Depending on the age of the children, challenge them to count and group the items into categories: electronics, appliances, lights, etc. If age appropriate, have them create a list. Ask which gadgets and appliances could be turned off or unplugged to save power every day.

For older children, show them how to program the smart thermostat and appliances. Shop with them for LED lights and discuss Energy Star-rated appliances. Show them the electric bill

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Rustic Views

# Impatiently waiting for patience

By Glenn Schuckers

**PATIENCE.** I found one definition of that word that goes, “the capacity to accept or tolerate delay.” Patience is a human quality, a quality that some people seem to have more of than others. I do know I could use more patience than I seem to have. My motto has always been, “I want patience, and I want it now.” I know some things take time and those things cannot be hurried along, but that has never stopped me from trying to hurry them along.

I should have inherited more of that quality from my dad. Dad started planting fruit trees in 1944, the same year I was born. He knew it would be at least seven years before those trees bore enough fruit to even start to pay back the investment in time, effort and money. Seven years. By then the son born that year would be seven years old, probably in school. So, for seven years, and more, he kept mining coal.

Farmers plant crops with no guarantee. They plant crops with faith that the crops will grow and mature. It takes about 100 days for many of those crops to grow into something that is valuable, and even then, farmers plant and tend those crops without knowing what they will be worth 100 days later. An awful lot can happen in 100 days. A corn field can be totally destroyed by hail in an hour of one of those days. A field of wheat can be destroyed by high winds or a week of rain during those 100 days. And during those 100 days of waiting, there is nothing humanly possible that can be done to hurry the outcome or change what happens.



**Glenn Schuckers**, a longtime member of United Electric, operated Schuckers' Orchard in Luthersburg until the mid-1990s. He is a retired high school teacher and a contributing writer for *The Courier Express*.

We are pleased to have Glenn provide our *Penn Lines* readers with his take on rural life.



PHOTO BY GLENN SCHUCKERS

**HEAVY BURDEN:** One of our spruce trees in January, bent to the ground with the weight of ice and snow.

It takes patience to wait almost 100 days or seven years. During the seven years while Dad's trees were growing, he had to learn how to be a fruit grower. He read books and talked with Dr. Bittner from the Penn State Extension Office, as well as county agents who knew how to prune, feed, and nurture fruit trees. Some of the advice was good, some not so good. Some advice he got was to spread hay around the base of the young trees to keep the weeds away. It worked on the weeds, but it also made a very comfortable home for rabbits and mice who found it to be room and board for their appetites. Young bark made good eating during the winter; mulch was one idea that was soon left by the wayside.

I am not sure I could have waited seven years for an investment in time, effort and money to pay off. As I said at the beginning, patience is not my virtue. Take our backyard, for example.

We built our “new” house among some spruce trees that are about 40 years old. The location was right, and after we cleared a few acres we had a lot big enough to build a house with a nice size lawn and garden. We never gave a thought to what might happen to the spruce trees in a hard storm or during the winter's ice and snow attacks.

About the middle of January, we found out. One of the few winter storms that month left us with a coating of ice covered with about four inches of snow. That may be a little hard to believe as it only affected areas above 2,000 feet of elevation. Following the storm, when roads were clear we had a trip to town and discovered that within five miles of where we live there was very little, if any, ice and snow. The people who travel U.S. Route 322 from DuBois to Clearfield know what happens on Rockton

Mountain, and we happen to live at the same elevation.

At any rate, when we woke up that morning, three or four of the spruce trees bordering our backyard were bent down to the ground. A couple more were broken off completely, and one or two others were uprooted.

The ones that surprised me the most were the ones that were bent over. Beginning about six or eight feet off the ground, they were bent over at a 90-degree angle with their top six or eight feet covered with snow.

Now the question is, will they straighten up? As the pictures with this column show, one of them is back to about 50% of being horizontal. Should I have patience and wait to see if nature gets those trees back to their original condition, or should I help nature along by putting a rope around a nearby tree and try to straighten the ones that were bent over? In my mind I have a plan, but it involves putting a ladder on a tree next to the one



PHOTO BY GLENN SCHUCKERS

**INTERVENTION:** The same tree about halfway back to its original shape. Do I try to straighten it back or wait for nature?

bent over and tying a rope to it, then putting the rope around the bent over tree, then back around the straight tree and pulling.

Would it work? Good question. I am not sure it would work. The better question is whether I have the patience to wait and see if nature will bring the tree back or will I risk the plan I have in mind.

My brain tells me to have patience and wait and see, but that takes, uh, patience. 🌱



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## ANNUAL MEETING

Brady Township  
Community Center  
Luthersburg, PA

Directors' Report - Business  
Session - CEO's Report -  
Director Election Results in  
District 2

# MAY 20 2020

Business Meeting begins at  
7:00PM

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All students\*, including adult learners\*, who are attending or planning to attend a university or technical school are eligible to apply by April 15, 2020.

\*Must be associated with a cooperative member. Directors and employees, and their families are not eligible to apply.



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**Guest Column**

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so they can see the costs, energy use and how their actions impact the bill.

Kids of all ages can learn a few simple energy-saving habits that can last a lifetime:

- ▶ Turn off lights, devices, computers and video consoles when not in use.
- ▶ Open blinds and curtains during winter days to let warm sunlight in and close them during summer days to keep your home cooler.
- ▶ If your children are old enough to run the dishwasher or wash their own clothes, teach them to run these appliances only with a full load and during off-peak energy hours.

**Rewards**

Offer rewards for agreed upon milestones. Rewards provide positive reinforcement on energy-saving actions. The idea is to create a habit of being energy efficient. And for parents, this could mean less nagging about turning off that light!

Teaching your children about saving energy is not only a creative way to spend time with them, it helps your home to be more energy efficient and can instill good habits that will benefit your child long into adulthood. You never know: your grown-up child may become a United Electric Cooperative member like you, and lessons they learned from you will help them if they become a parent. ☀

**FOR SALE**

United Electric is accepting sealed bids on this truck. Minimum bid is \$3,500. Bids will be received at United until May 1, 2020. Truck can be seen at United Electric: 29 United Road, DuBois PA 15801. Appointments can be made to view by calling 814-371-8570, extension 8504.

Description is as follows:

- ▶ 2003 Ford F-350 SD, 4 x 4
- ▶ Mileage is 108,103
- ▶ 5.4 L gas engine
- ▶ Auto transmission
- ▶ Service body and 8' Western snow plow



**NATIONAL LINEMAN APPRECIATION DAY**

**KEEPING THE LIGHTS ON 24/7/365.**

**APRIL 13, 2020**