



United Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

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From the President & CEO



What can United do for you?

By Brenda Swartzlander

WHEN YOU pay a utility bill, do you ever stop to think about what your utility does locally? As a cooperative, United Electric can offer so much more than multiple ways to pay your bill or fancy usage analysis tools. Cooperatives have inherent duties to their members that include providing education, training and information, and concern for our communities. These are two of the Cooperative Principles that we take very seriously.

Every May and September, United Electric participates in Progressive Ag and Youth Days. Second-graders from schools across Clearfield and Jefferson counties come to a central location to participate in a day dedicated to safety presentations and demonstrations. United Electric presents our High-Voltage Demonstration for the entire group in the morning, and throughout the day smaller groups visit our Tabletop Electric Demonstration station.

Educating the community on the dangers of electricity has and will always be a priority for us, which is why we offer local fire companies and similar groups access to our DuBois facility for High-Voltage Demonstrations and tours. Several times throughout the year, fire departments, school students, and various other groups come to our facility to get an inside look at our equipment and how we keep the lights on.

For the last three years, United has provided scholarships to students of all stages of higher education. The scholar-

ship has been made possible by Pennsylvania cooperatives' lobbying efforts in Harrisburg to allow local cooperatives to be able to keep their escheated money to help our local communities. Escheated money is capital credits from former members that have been unclaimed for a period of time. The money stays here to help grow our communities instead of going to the state.

Each year, we also send outstanding juniors in high school on an all-expenses paid educational trip to Washington, D.C. For over 50 years, Pennsylvania electric cooperatives have participated in the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Youth Tour. Students participating in Youth Tour are given a unique opportunity to learn about co-ops, engage with other students from across the country, and learn firsthand how our government works as they tour our nation's capital and meet with their congressional representatives.

I hope that you view United Electric Cooperative not just as your electric utility provider, but as a local business that encourages pride and prosperity in our local communities. To learn more about our community involvement, stop by our office in DuBois, log on to our website, www.unitedpa.com, or give us call at 888-581-8969. We love being a part of the community, and we hope you feel the same way too.

Coopportunity: 2018 Rural Electric Youth Tour

By Kristy Smith

EACH YEAR, over 1,800 of rural America's outstanding high school students travel to Washington, D.C., to gain an understanding of the political process, interact with their elected officials, see history up close and learn more about electric cooperatives. The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) Youth Tour has been a tradition for 53 years. From June 10–15, delegates, chaperones, and staff from 43 states travelled to Washington, D.C., to hear from NRECA speakers and congressional representatives, as well as have guided tours of America's historical places. This year, United Electric Cooperative chose eight outstanding students from our territory to represent our cooperative: Kieran Bunnell, Thad Butler, Brooke Holben, Cecilia Manno, Luke Poole, Hannah Rittenhouse, Kenneth Stover II and Marissa Wheeler.

June 11 was this year's Youth Day for all attending students. Youth Day consists of engaging speakers and the opportunity to interact with fellow students from across the country. Jim Matheson, NRECA CEO, spoke to students about making sure they are doing what they can for their communities and remembering to exercise their right to vote — not only in national elections but local ones as well. This year featured two speakers who were previous Youth Tour students and are now interning at NRECA. The word "Coopportunity" was minted by these students to remind the current Youth Tour delegates that anything is possible when you broaden your horizons. Students also heard from Bobby Von Bokern, a journeyman lineman at Owen Electric Co-op in Kentucky, about his time spent in Haiti for NRECA International. Bobby had a slideshow of photos and a few videos of everyone coming together to "get the lights on" for a small village in Haiti. He left the students with an



PHOTO BY KRISTY SMITH

ON TOUR: United's Youth Tour students enjoy the water features at the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial. Rear, from left: Kenneth Stover, II; Marissa Wheeler; Hannah Rittenhouse; Luke Poole; Cecilia Manno; Brooke Holben; and Kieran Bunnell. Front: Thad Butler.

exceptional quote: "The work you put in right now distinguishes who you are going to be for the rest of your life." Once again in the Youth Day line-up, students heard from two-time Paralympic medalist Mike Schlappi. He always discusses his entire life, including the shooting accident committed by his best friend that left him without the use of his legs. Schlappi stresses to all the students every year that their voice matters, and even if you can't stand up, you can stand out.

Following Youth Day, Pennsylvania and New Jersey students were treated to arcade gaming, good food, and co-op-themed scavenger hunts at Dave & Buster's. This provided the students some time to get acquainted since the Pennsylvania/New Jersey group has grown so large. Prizes were awarded to the top three teams, and all the students seemed to be more comfortable with each other following this event. Throughout the week, the Pennsylvania/New Jersey students visited Arlington National Cemetery, the Smithsonian museums, the News Mu-

seum (Newseum), Madame Tussuads Wax Museum, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Udvar-Hazy Space Center and various monuments. Also on the itinerary was a visit to the Washington National Zoo, Union Station, and various NRECA events where all of the students had the chance to mingle with each other.

In addition to touring our nation's capital, students also get to meet with their congressional representatives for a question/answer session. All of United's students met with U.S. Rep. Glenn "GT" Thompson (R-5th). Students took the opportunity to ask questions about a wide range of topics, including the Domestic Violence Abuse Act and its funding, gun control, addressing the mental health issue, and the farm bill's provisions for dairy farmers.

More than 51,000 students from all over rural America have participated in NRECA's Youth Tour program throughout the years. The Rural Electric Cooperative Youth Tour was established after then-U.S. Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson encouraged visits to

the nation's capital as an educational experience for youth. Pennsylvania students who have attended the Youth Tour are eligible to apply for the Jody Loudenslager Scholarship offered through the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association. Loudenslager was a 1995 Pennsylvania Youth Tour participant from Trout Run, Pa. She was among the 230 passengers killed on July 17, 1996, when TWA Flight 800 exploded after takeoff from New York. Jody was committed to higher education, whatever form it takes, and believed that Youth Tour instills the importance of electric cooperatives and the values they represent to the next generation of leaders.

PHOTO BY KRISTY SMITH



Meet the students

Kieran Bunnell attends Curwensville Area Jr./Sr. High School and is the son of Lance and Vickie Bunnell of Olanta. Kieran participates in Spanish Club, Envirothon, National Honor Society and Literature Club. He also coordinates Logs to Lumber meetings and served as the secretary for three years. He plans to continue studying math and science with a career in engineering.

Thad Butler attends Clearfield Area Jr./Sr. High School and is the son of James and Ann Butler of Frenchville. Thad participates in Key Club, track and student council. His special interests include band, cross-country and Spanish Honor Society. Thad plans to pursue a career as a pediatrician.

Brooke Holben attends Jefferson County-DuBois Area Vocational-Technical School and is the daughter of Scott and Michelle Holben of Brookville. Brooke participated in color guard and Skills USA. She also volunteers for her local Christmas banquets and fall festivals. Brooke currently studies audio and video production and would like to become a military combat videographer.

Cecilia Manno attends Brockway

Area Jr./Sr. High School and Conserve School in Wisconsin. She is the daughter of James and Jackie Manno, Jr. of Brookville. Cecilia participates in concert and marching bands, Dale

Carnegie leadership training, musicals, and Scholastic Challenge. She also volunteers with her local bible school and church youth group. Cecilia has a major interest in environmental stewardship/sustainability and would like to pursue a career in conservation leadership.

Luke Poole attends Punxsutawney Area High School and is the son of LouAnn Poole of Oliveburg. Luke participates in student government, cross-country, tennis, choir and cheer. He also volunteers his time through

Key Club and the Punxsutawney Theatre Arts Guild. Luke is very interested in music and politics and is undecided on a career goal at this time.

Hannah Rittenhouse attends Clarion-Limestone High School and is the daughter of Joe and Shannon Rittenhouse of Brookville. Hannah participates in cross-country, volleyball, track and basketball. Hannah would like to become a nutritionist and personal trainer.

Kenneth Stover II attends Glendale Jr./Sr. High School and is the son of Teresa Dixon of Coalport. Ken is involved in marching, concert, jazz, and district bands and participates in soccer. Ken has a major interest in computer programming and ultimately wants to be become a successful game developer.

Marissa Wheeler attends DuBois Area High School and is the daughter of Edward and Delores Wheeler of Penfield. Marissa is involved in chorus, tennis and National Honor Society. She also volunteers with her local church's youth group and is employed at Hoss's. Marissa is interested in the medical field and would like to become either a trauma surgeon or an anesthesiologist. ☀

YOUR POWER OUTAGE PANTRY

We do our best to avoid power outages, but unfortunately, Mother Nature occasionally has different plans. Stay ahead of the storm by stocking your pantry with a variety of non-perishable items.

Set these items aside for extended outages only, and your storm prep will be a breeze!

- BEANS
- CANNED FRUIT
- CANNED TUNA
- CANNED VEGETABLES
- CEREAL
- DRIED FRUITS
- DRIED MEATS/JERKY
- GRAHAM CRACKERS
- PASTA
- RICE
- SPAM
- OATMEAL

Don't forget to stock up on disposable goods, like paper plates, napkins, plastic cutlery and cups.

Rustic Views

Rewards of farming and gardening

By Glenn Schuckers

ASK JUST about any farmer why he does what he does and you'll probably get a variety of answers. One might tell you that he's in it for the money. That, of course, would be sarcasm because no farmer I ever knew got rich farming.

One reason that I hear often is that farming is in their blood. The farm may have been in the family for three generations or even more. It may have been passed down from one generation to the next for 100 years or more. Getting away from a heritage like that, especially when they have been part of that farm their whole lives, is somewhere between hard and impossible.

The real reward, it turns out, is in being a farmer.

I can understand all of those reasons because I ran an orchard for some 20 years. It had not been in the family for three generations and was not 100 years old, but I, too, liked the independence and honestly liked farming.

Now, most farms fall into one of about four categories, especially around here. I would have to say that most of them are dairy farms, although their numbers are declining. There are a few beef farms, a few that specialize in grain, and maybe even fewer that grow fruits and vegetables. Ours was in that last category since we had at one time about 40 acres in apples, pears and sour cherries. There were a few plum trees and even fewer sweet cherry trees and a few acres of vegetables.

When I was a kid, my dad (who planted the first trees the year I was born, 1944) decided that instead of wasting the spaces between the rows of trees, he would plant strawberries. My guess is that there are still a few people about my age who recall picking strawberries there, and he shipped out truckloads of

crated berry boxes for a few years. Then, everyone thought "Jeff" was making a lot of money growing strawberries, so lots of others decided to get in on it. The result was a flood of berries on the market and prices so low that no one made anything.

That's just one of the factors that make farming so "exciting."

Crops get planted usually about five or six months before they are harvested and no one really knows when the planting is going on what that crop will bring. Between planting and harvest come six months of wondering when or if it will rain, when or if there will be



PHOTO BY GLENN SCHUCKERS

JUST A PEACH: Fresh picked peaches sit in a basket between a jar of "canned" peaches and a jar of peach jam.

a hail storm, when or if there will be an early frost, or when and if a disease will ruin the crop.

Then, six months after planting, farmers learn what prices the crop will bring. Dairy farmers learn after they have made the investment for the season what price their milk will bring, just as do hog farmers and vegetables growers. If they are all lucky, their harvest will be worth enough to allow them to start the whole cycle again the next year.

That gets me to this month, August, when most of the year's harvest starts.

I know farmers have been making hay since the first week in June, but for many of us who have reduced our "farms" to an acre or two, we still look at August as when the "real" harvest begins.

This is the month for ripe peaches and apples and sweet corn. Those are three good reasons to put in the time, effort and money to be a gardener. And make no mistake: it takes time and effort and

money to have a good garden these days.

Maybe most important is taste. Anyone who has never tasted a ripe tomato just minutes after being picked off the vine does not know what he or she has missed. Same goes for green beans, picked and steamed a few minutes after they were picked. In short, the taste of all kinds of garden-fresh produce is reason enough to grow a garden.

Then there is the cost. With a couple dollars' worth of seed, we get enough green beans in the freezer to last a year. Of course that does not count the cost of time, fuel and machinery to plow the garden, the cost of a fence to keep the rabbits away or the time it takes to plant, weed and pick them. But gardeners, like farmers, don't dwell on the time they spend in the fields or garden.

If they did, they might just give up.

But the harvest, especially for gardeners, is not the reason we plant a garden. We can go to a good farmers market and get fresh produce, and the time we spend in a garden could be spent playing golf.

No, the harvest is just the bonus. The real reward is the time we spend there. Pulling weeds might seem like work to some, but the reward of seeing a tended garden far outweighs the work it takes to get there. Same goes for putting seeds or plants in the ground. It may sound odd to people who have never had a garden, but the satisfaction of seeing things grow, bringing seeds and plants to a harvest is reward enough.

So even if the harvest is less than what I expect, if the tomatoes are not as big as I want, the bean plants less than full, the cucumbers not as straight as they could be, the reward for a gardener is the process of creating a garden. August is just the cherry on top, and if that cherry is less than perfect, that's OK. The real reward, like the real reward for farmers, is already in the barn. 🌻



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.