



# 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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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Chairman

**Stephen A. Marshall, District 5**  
 1030 Donahue Rd.  
 Luthersburg, Pa. 15848  
 814-583-7320

### Vice Chairman

**Timothy D. Burkett, District 6**  
 5059 Hamilton Markton Rd.  
 Punxsutawney, Pa. 15767  
 814-938-7991

### Secretary/Treasurer

**Eileen Pisaneschi, District 2**  
 1964 River Hill Rd.  
 Frenchville, Pa. 16836  
 814-263-4491

## DIRECTORS

**Shanelle Hawk, District 1**  
 502 Pine Run Rd.  
 Mayport, Pa. 16240  
 814-365-5646

**Arden E. Owens, District 7**  
 505 Trout Run Rd.  
 Shawville, Pa. 16873  
 814-765-6458

**Richard Petrosky, District 3**  
 P.O. Box 612  
 DuBois, Pa. 15801  
 814-371-8672

**David W. Walker, District 4**  
 631 Olanta Rd.  
 Olanta, Pa. 16863  
 814-236-3321

**President & CEO**  
**Brenda Swartzlander**

**Consumer Advocate**  
**Paula Pascuzzo, ext. 8501**

**Richard Heverley, Editor**

# Perfect evening for the 2018 annual meeting

By Richard Heverley, *Marketing & Member Services Manager*

**THROW AWAY** those old, inefficient, incandescent lightbulbs and install the new energy-efficient LED lightbulbs the co-op sent you. That was the message delivered at this year's annual meeting.

With nearly 400 United Electric members and guests filling the hall to near capacity, board Vice Chairman Tim Burkett called the co-op's 81st annual meeting to order promptly at 7 p.m. on May 16. He welcomed the members to their annual meeting, extended the co-op's appreciation to many members who faithfully attend the annual meeting each year, and offered a special welcome to all those attending for the first time. He also thanked the Clearfield County Dairy Princess Committee for providing their excellent milk punch, cheese, snacks and fruit as they have for several years.

Eileen Pisaneschi, the board secretary/treasurer, read the Official Annual Meeting Notice that appeared in the May issue of *Penn Lines*, which was mailed to all members of United Elec-



PHOTO BY PETER FITZGERALD

REPORT: President & CEO Brenda Swartzlander addresses the members during the 81st annual meeting.

tric on April 27, 2018.

"The annual meeting will be held May 16, 2018, at 7 p.m. at the Brady Township Community Center in Luthersburg, Pa.," read Pisaneschi. "At the time of the mailing, there were 16,169 members of the cooperative, and all members were sent the notice along with the 2017 Annual Report."

After motions from the floor to approve the 2017 annual meeting minutes and the 2017 financial report, Burkett reported, "United Electric finished 2017 in a sound financial and operational position." He expressed his and the board of director's gratitude to all the members who support the cooperative in their efforts to improve the system, not only to meet our current members' needs, but also to meet the future electric needs of the area. He also thanked the management of United Electric, and the employees of the cooperative, who all continue to pull together for the betterment of our co-op.

"The board of directors remains

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PHOTO BY PETER FITZGERALD

2017 REPORT: United Electric board Vice Chairman Tim Burkett speaks at the annual meeting.

**2018 annual meeting**

*(continued from page 14a)*

dedicated to their commitment to continued system improvement, and take advantage of every opportunity to ensure that the co-op is run in the most efficient manner possible,” he said.

Burkett introduced United Electric President & CEO Brenda Swartzlander. After thanking all of the members for their interest in their cooperative, Swartzlander provided a brief summary of initiatives and services implemented to enhance the co-op’s efficiency and to make it easier for members to interact with the cooperative.

She also updated the members on the progress of the new metering system, which is in the final stages of completion.

“We currently have 15,500 TWAC meters installed with 3,500 meters remaining to be installed by the end of the year,” she explained. “With this system in place, we can now download a reading around midnight each night in order to provide members with 24-hour use information. This system also allows us to get a real-time reading from the meter, which allows us to know if there is power to the meter, or if there is possibly an outage at that



**SPEAKER:** PREA/Allegheny President & CEO Frank Betley explains the savings members will realize by changing out their inefficient incandescent lightbulbs with the LED bulbs the co-op is providing to the members.

PHOTO BY PETER FITZGERALD



**ELECTION RESULTS:** President & CEO Brenda Swartzlander, left, and PREA/Allegheny President & CEO Frank Betley, right, congratulate newly re-elected directors Arden Owens and Shanelle Hawk.

location. ... This is especially useful during an outage situation when we are trying to be sure power has been restored to all the accounts in an area.”

Swartzlander also reported on the SmartHub program introduced at annual meeting a couple of years ago.

“SmartHub allows members to access their account information from their computer, tablet or smartphone,” she explained. “We currently have 7,527 members registered on SmartHub. Members are using the site to check on their use status, to pay bills online, set themselves up for automatic bank drafts, or to report an outage directly into our outage management system.”

She added, “Initiating systems and programs to go beyond simply providing you with safe, reliable and affordable electric service is not the only thing that sets United Electric apart from other utility companies you may have done business with. As a not-for-profit cooperative, United Electric returns any excess margins (or profits) to our members. United Electric has returned capital credits of over \$9.6 million to our members over the last nine years. We returned \$1,078,000 in 2017 alone. These capital credits that are returned are from many prior years’ margins. The board has budgeted for the return of capital credits this year, as well. This

is no small feat. It takes the combined efforts of this devoted board, management and dedicated employees to make this all work. We are all constantly looking at the operations and efficiencies within the cooperative. The board has directed us to have a rate study completed this year to make sure we are where we need to be. You’ll hear more on this later in the year.”

Swartzlander also noted that United Electric has a mission statement, which is taken very seriously by the board, management and staff. It reads, “United Electric will provide reliable and safe electric service at the lowest possible cost consistent with sound management and cooperative principles.”

Guest speaker Wallace Barron, former vice president of marketing, customer service and distribution engineering at Florida Power Corporation in St. Petersburg, Fla., updated members on the changes in the generation supply mix occurring nationwide. Barron explained that closing nuclear and coal-fired base-load generation plants and replacing them with plants operating on natural gas (which is cheap at this time) is putting all of our eggs in one basket, leaving us susceptible to spikes in gas prices, and the resulting spike in electricity prices. He pointed out that even though renewable energy sources

*(continues on page 14d)*

## Rustic Views

# Let's hear it for the 'Red, White and Blue'

By Glenn Schuckers

**PATRIOTISM.** This is the month when most of us think about being patriotic. We watch Fourth of July parades, have picnics with red, white and blue decorations, maybe even wear a straw hat with patriotic stripes. But what exactly do people mean when they discuss being patriotic?

I think that question has been around as long as there has been a United States.

We need to remember that there has not always been a "United States."

Before we had a ratified Constitution, we had the Articles of Confederation. It was an early attempt to unite the colonies in a separation from England. "Confederations" had been around for some time and none of them ever worked very well. Their problems were always that they did not give the last word to a strong central government.

There was a reason for that. From the time when the first colonists arrived, they were under the control of a king. For over 100 years, the king and the British Parliament controlled just about everything that happened in America, and as the colonists here groped about for a way to govern themselves, they were determined not to substitute one king for another.

In fact, as the new nation took shape, two groups began to vie for power.

On the one hand, some leaders feared that if too much power were put in the hands of the "common people," they would not know how to deal with it. They were the "aristocrats" of their day, and they held the belief that to

PHOTO BY GLENN SCHUCKERS



run smoothly, a country needed a king or someone else with that power even if he had a different name.

On the other hand, people like Thomas Jefferson believed that given the chance, an educated population would and should have the power to govern themselves. The arguments between the two sides were "dynamic" to say the least. At times, they even got violent and involved legislators as well as people in the streets.

We now know two things.

One, the federal government has the authority when it comes to what laws will be made and how they will be enforced. That principle was not certain for almost 100 years after the Constitution was ratified, and it took the deaths of hundreds of thousands of men and women as well as millions of dollars of destruction during the Civil War to settle that issue.

States and commonwealths in the United States cannot pass laws that defy the federal Constitution. They cannot mint their own money, they cannot restrict commerce over state lines and they cannot raise their own armies.

On the other hand, the federal government itself is a division of power between the states and the people. We often hear the House of Representatives referred to as the "People's House" because it is the closest thing we have to direct representation by our leaders. It is based on population

and changes as the population changes.

The other house of Congress is the Senate. There, population has nothing to do with the number of senators. Every state gets two senators, so in the Senate, Rhode Island, Wyoming, California and Pennsylvania all have the same power.

Generally speaking, that has worked

well. Generally speaking.

Going back to what "Founding Fathers" thought would work, we need to consider things that sometimes get forgotten.

First, when the Constitution was written, things were a lot different than they are today. The only communication that took place was by letters and newspapers. That was a reason that being both a postmaster general and a newspaper publisher gave a man like Benjamin Franklin so much influence.

Second, America during its early days was first and foremost an agrarian society. Farmers and farming formed the basis of society, economics and government. The interests of farmers and the interests of the government were just about one and the same. America was established, grew and ruled mostly by agricultural interests. This changed dramatically over the years as the Industrial Revolution made us a more urban society.

But to get back to the point of being patriotic, this is the month for patriotism. As a matter of conscience, though, just like it isn't enough just to be Christian on Sunday, it isn't enough just to be patriotic in July. We need to be patriotic every month, every week and every day of the year.

We need to honor America and be proud of being Americans throughout the year. Before we forget who we are and why we arrived at where we are,

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**2018 annual meeting**

*(continued from page 14b)*

such as solar and wind are increasing, because they depend on weather conditions to operate, they are not capable of supporting grid reliability. Baseload generation remains critical in maintaining a reliable supply of power

co-ops across the state, made the commitment to send each household a pack of four LED bulbs. Your co-op made the commitment to provide you with these new energy-saving bulbs; now I'm here tonight to get a commitment from you to install the bulbs as soon as you receive them."



ATTENDEES: A near-capacity crowd of members and guests attend the 2018 annual meeting.

when consumers need it.

Frank Betley, president & CEO of the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association (PREA), United Electric's statewide service organization, and Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc., our statewide generation and transmission supplier, also spoke.

He said, "After a conversation we had in this very room last year about lightbulb efficiency, we at your statewide organization, along with your co-op representatives, took a long look at the benefits for our members upgrading to LED lighting. As your wholesale power provider, we own about 70 percent of our generation supply, but that means we must go out on the market and buy the other 30 percent ... and at times that can be very expensive compared to our own resources. We began running the numbers to calculate how much less generation capacity we would have to purchase if each co-op member installed just four LED bulbs in place of 60-watt incandescent bulbs. It turns out that it is a very smart investment. Your co-op, along with the other 13

Betley said he understands no one wants to throw away something that is still working, but in this case, it is the smart thing to do. The high efficiency of the LED bulbs will pay for themselves in electricity savings many times over their expected 20-plus year life span.

His parting comment to attendees was, "Change those lightbulbs as soon as you receive them."

Judge of Elections Patrick Lavelle reported the results of the director election in Districts 1 and 7. Because there were no petitions seeking the board position in either district, in accordance with the cooperative's by-laws, incumbent R. Shanelle Hawk was re-elected in District 1 and Arden E. Owens was re-elected in District 7.

Having concluded the business of the cooperative, Burkett thanked members for their continued support of the cooperative, stressing the importance of member participation. He also encouraged the members to keep in contact throughout the year and invited everyone back to next year's meeting. 🌟

**Rustic Views**

*(continued from page 14c)*

we need to think about what it took to get here.

Just like a good farm or a good garden takes a lot of work, so does a good nation. Every farmer and every gardener knows plants and fields and animals need care and attention. So does a good nation. If I plant beans and corn and tomatoes and cucumbers in May and walk away until August, that work of planting will be a waste of time. I cannot expect to harvest a crop that I have not tended.

The same goes for our country.

I cannot hang out a flag on the Fourth of July and then put it away for a year.

Too many men and women worked too hard, and too many men and women gave their lives for me to forget all they worked and sacrificed for. And honoring this nation one or even two days a year is just not enough.

So let's make every day like the Fourth of July. And it isn't just flying a flag or watching a parade. In our daily lives, we can be patriots every day by an act of patriotism, an act of kindness or an act of loyalty.

I can remind my children, maybe even my friends, that this country, America, did not just happen. It took work and sacrifice and great planning, along with God's blessing, to get where we are. Happy Fourth of July. 🌟



**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.

**OFFICE CLOSING**  
 United Electric's office  
 will be closed  
 Wednesday, July 4, in  
 observation of  
 Independence Day.