



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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From the President & CEO



Cooperatives: Larger roles than you thought

By Brenda Swartzlander

IF YOU'VE read *Penn Lines*, then you know United Electric is an electric cooperative. As a result, you and everyone else who receives electric service from us is a member, not a customer. Because you and your fellow members govern how United Electric operates, our top priorities remain providing safe and reliable service and keeping your electric bills affordable. Local control also means we're in the business of improving the quality of life in the communities we serve, from offering college and technical training school scholarships to advice on how you can make your home or business more energy efficient.

Because electric cooperatives were built by, belong to, and are rooted in the communities they serve, they play a vibrant role as economic cornerstones for millions of American families, businesses, and workers. From 2013 to 2017, electric co-ops across the country supported nearly 612,000 jobs and contributed \$440 billion in United States gross domestic product (GDP). This goes to show that affordable and reliable electricity is a key ingredient for a successful economy.

Together, all of our United Electric employees, contractors and members are a key part of our local economy. We provide good jobs to folks who live right here — your neighbors and friends. We deliver services that keep our communities humming. We're happy to lend a hand when we're able and we enjoy being involved with

schools and community organizations like Progressive Agriculture and Youth Days. As a cooperative, we return any excess profits, called margins, to you in the form of capital credits. That money stays in the community rather than going to stockholders in some distant place. You make an investment in the co-op every time you pay your bill. Your monthly investment ensures you have access to safe, reliable and affordable power when you need it.

Electric co-ops are just one type of cooperative operating in America. Dairy cooperatives produce nearly 90 percent of our nation's milk. Credit unions? They're cooperatives, too, with more than 8,000 credit unions across the country serving 91 million consumers. You can also find housing, hardware, and even funeral co-ops throughout the U.S. Some agricultural marketing cooperatives have become household names, like Sunkist, Ocean Spray and Blue Diamond Almonds.

The cooperative form of business continues as an integral part of our lives each day. Not only does the cooperative model work, but it benefits a much bigger picture. So next time you log on to our website's SmartHub application to pay your bill, don't forget about the impact your dollar is making locally and country-wide!

Until next month,

Brenda

Rustic Views

Summer is here

By Glenn Schuckers

SO IT IS finally June — the beginning of summer. If I follow the meteorological definition I mentioned in April, this is the first month of summer. What it means to me is what I think it may have meant to the original inhabitants of this neck of the woods, “planting time.”

My guess is that some folks have already done much if not most of their planting. I have not. I have two reasons for planting in June.

First, I procrastinate. I have no good, scientific reasons for not doing a lot of the garden planting in May, but if I did it then, I would be doing things on time. Doing things on time has never been one of my strengths. I used to be one of those people who drove to the post office or drop box at 11 p.m. the day before my taxes were due because — well, because I put off doing them until there was no time left. Procrastination does have an element of adventure.

But the other reason for not planting early actually has a little basis in experience.

One year I got busy and planted a lot of tomatoes and peppers in a warm spell about the middle of May, foolishly thinking that no cold snaps would follow. I was wrong. Very wrong. About a week after planting them, the weather turned cool, and then it turned cold. After a hurried trip to the local Agway store to get about six dozen “hotcaps,” I set out covering all the young plants. A few hours later, I had all the plants covered and went in for supper and a cup of coffee.

About 4 a.m., I looked at a thermometer in the yard and saw that the temperature had dipped to 26 degrees. So at least my work was for something. Without being covered, the plants would have died. The next morning when it warmed up to the mid-30s, I



PHOTO BY GLENN SCHUCKERS

knew the “hotcaps” had to come off, so it was back to the garden.

That night and for the next six or seven days, the routine was the same. Cover the plants before dark and take the covers off when the sun came up the next morning. In all, it was about two or three hours every day when I could not get any other work done. But I had “saved” the plants, or at least many of them. Some pepper plants did not make it, so by early June, I was out replacing the ones that had been killed and adding some tomato plants to the originals.

The surprising thing was that by the middle of July, the ones I planted late were further along than the early plantings, and when August rolled around, the plants that had been planted later had ripe tomatoes earlier than the ones I planted first.

So much for getting the jump on summer.

The truth is, I believe that “to everything there is a season.” People who live 20 or 30 miles south or east of here

have a different season than we do. Their daffodils bloom two weeks before ours, as do their lilacs and tulips.

I make a yearly trip to the village of Edenville, near Chambersburg, for peaches. It is just over 100 miles south and east of here, but the climate could not be more different. A couple of pretty big mountains lie between here and there and that makes a big difference. Peach and apricot trees thrive there and the sweet corn ripens about a month earlier than ours.

So it looks as though not only is there a time for every season, but also a place for every plant. I learned through experience that most apricot trees will not grow in north-central Pennsylvania without a lot of extra care and fussing, and folks in Georgia and Florida have learned that our northern apples do not grow there.

But I would never presume to tell anyone when to plant or how to plant; I have given some folks suggestions on how to prune and when to prune a fruit tree, but they are only suggestions

based on experience.

I sometimes tell people what I have planted or where I got my seeds, but that's about it. And I only say that to help someone get good seeds or to avoid some mistakes I've made.

But I'll make an exception about what to plant. I am a firm believer that every garden should have some flowers. When I am at a loss to explain something I often revert to a man who was a much better thinker and writer than I am. This is what Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote about flowers as gifts and why they are important:

"... flowers, (are fitting gifts) because they are a proud assertion that a ray of beauty out values all the utilities of the world. These gay natures contrast with the somewhat stern countenance of ordinary nature: they are like music heard out of a work-house. Nature does not cocker us: we are children, not pets: she is not fond: everything is dealt to us without fear or favor, after severe universal laws. Yet these delicate flowers look like the frolic and interference of love and beauty."

So in among the tomatoes and peppers, cauliflower and cabbage, cucumbers and string beans, potatoes and onions, might I suggest a few marigolds or sunflowers. Not only will they maybe keep a rabbit away (they never have for me!), but they will add beauty and color to a garden. And beauty may be as important as all the utility in the world.

Planting a garden, after all, is for more than vegetables on the table or in the freezer. Gardens are a symbol of self-reliance and freedom; they are a link to our heritage. So as you plant this month, think of the avid gardener Thomas Jefferson. We plant not just for ourselves but for all those who esteem the value of getting their hands dirty and having a back that tells us we have been working. 🌻



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.

Safety tips that can save your life

By Anne Prince

ELECTRIC cooperatives' top priority is always to provide safe, reliable, affordable energy to their members. Your well-being and that of the larger communities we serve are of paramount concern.

June is not only the beginning of summer, it also bring with it the potential for severe weather.

While we naturally focus on the sunny aspects this season brings, we also sometimes hear about preventable tragedies involving young people and car accidents. This brings me to the topic at hand: safety.

Does your teen or loved one know what to do in the event of a collision with a utility pole resulting in a downed power line? Do your loved ones know what to do if they come upon an accident with a downed power line? This month, we'd like to share a few safety tips that we hope you never have to use. But if you do, they could save their life.

Life-saving tips

If a car collides with a utility pole, the vehicle may be charged with electricity. Anyone exiting the car could come in contact with thousands of volts of electricity from the downed line. In essence, when you step out of the car, you become part of the



electricity's path to the ground and could be electrocuted. It's critical to stay in the vehicle and tell others to do the same until a emergency crews have told you it's safe to exit the car. If the vehicle is on fire or you must exit for other safety reasons, jump clear of the vehicle. Do not let any part of your body or clothing touch the vehicle and ground at the same time. Land with your feet together and shuffle away (in small steps with your feet still together) to avoid electric shock. Keep moving away until you are at least 40 feet from the vehicle.

If you come upon a car accident involving a utility pole and downed power lines, keep your distance. A downed power line can energize the ground up to 35 feet away. While your natural instinct may be to rush to the car to help, instead pause. Do not approach the car or scene of the accident. Tell others to stay away. While

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Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Streaming content with electronic equipment that has earned the ENERGY STAR® rating will use 25 to 30 percent less energy than standard equipment.

Source: energy.gov



Safety tips

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you may be concerned about injuries to those involved, the best action you can take is to alert emergency officials, who will in turn coordinate with the power provider. For the same reasons described above, never drive over a downed power line or through water that is touching a downed power line.

If you have a downed power line on your property as a result of a falling tree, storm or other circumstance, do not go near the power line. Assume that the downed line is energized and dangerous. Never try to move the power line even if you think it's not energized or if you are using a non-conductive material. We recognize that you may be anxious to clear your property of tree limbs or other debris near the downed line, but please wait until after an electric co-op crew or emergency officials have confirmed that it is safe to do so.

According to the Electrical Safety Foundation International, thousands of people in the U.S. are critically injured and electrocuted as a result of electrical fires, accidents and electrocution in their own homes. Many of these accidents are preventable.

We know first-hand how dangerous electricity is because United Electric Cooperative works with it all day, every day. To us, "safety first" is more than a catch phrase. It is our duty and responsibility to keep co-op employees safe and to help keep our communities safe.

Contact United Electric Cooperative for additional electrical safety tips or if you would like to request a safety demonstration at your school or community event. It is no accident that safety is our top priority. 

Anne Prince writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56 percent of the nation's landscape.



BENEFITS OF TREE TRIMMING

Clearing trees and overgrown vegetation is vital to provide safe, reliable power to our consumer-members.

We clear certain areas in our service territory, known as rights of way, to:

- Keep power lines clear of tree limbs
- Restore power outages more quickly
- Keep crews and members of our community safe
- Reduce unexpected costs for repairs

Vegetation management improves service reliability for you – our members!