



# 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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**Paula Pascuzzo, ext. 8501**

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## From the President & CEO



## Home is where our heart is

By Brenda Swartzlander

FIRST and foremost, United Electric Cooperative is dedicated to doing what we do best: providing a safe and reliable supply of electricity at an affordable cost. But our dedication to the success and betterment of the communities we serve is also very important. Why? The answer is simple: we live here, too.

Local people working for local good. That's the essence of the cooperative principle, "Concern for Community," one of seven guidelines governing cooperative operations. Your board of directors and staff support policies and projects that are good for the communities we serve because what's good for our community is good for the co-op.

Each year, we open doors for our members to further their education with scholarship programs and the annual Rural Electric Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C. These programs offer outstanding opportunities for high school students, as well as adults wishing to further their education.

United Electric has supported the Youth Tour for high school juniors for decades. This is an opportunity for young people to visit Washington, D.C., to see the sights, meet other students from across the nation, and to visit with our elected officials. Although the tour is designed to be fun, it is also educational as it provides the students insights into our country's history and how our government operates. If you have a high school junior, I would encourage you to contact our office as soon as possible to get an application for them.

Another educational opportunity United Electric is proud to offer our

members is the "Shine the Light" scholarship program. This program is available to high school seniors heading off to college or trade schools, as well as adult learners wishing to further their education or perhaps looking to make a career change. Several years ago, as a result of our lobbying efforts in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania electric cooperatives are now able to use unclaimed capital credits money from former members we have been unable to locate to sponsor programs within our communities. Rather than escheating the unclaimed funds to the state, these funds now stay here at home to be used for the betterment of our communities. What better way to utilize some of these funds than providing scholarships to our members and their dependents? Over the past three years, we have provided scholarships to a number of members and their dependents attending universities across the state, as well as a number of trade schools. The scholarship recipients have been a mix of students attending college straight out of high school and adult learners returning to school.

When it comes to United Electric Cooperative, community comes first. That's the cooperative difference. If you or your dependent have any interest in either the Youth Tour or the scholarship programs, you need to act quickly. Please contact Kristy Smith at United Electric Cooperative at 888-581-8969, extension 8507, for an application.

  
'Til next month,  
Brenda

Rustic Views

# Packages and puffery

By Glenn Schuckers

I RECALL a story about a pastry shop in a little town where the apple pie was not selling very well. It seems the crust was often soggy and the apples were hard. As people learned, either by first-hand experience or through the word-of-mouth conversations that sustain a small town, that the pies were not worth the rather high price the shop charged for them, they stopped buying them. The shop owner, needless to say, was not pleased that his pies were not selling and his profits were going down.

So to remedy the situation, he brought in an advertising expert to fix the situation. The advertising expert told the shop owner that the trouble with his pies was in the box they were sold in.

“Your boxes are just plain brown cardboard and the name of the pies is all wrong,” he said.

Following the expert’s advice, the owner ordered lots of shiny, foil-covered boxes with bright red lettering and changed the name from “Small-Town Apple Pies” to “Mom’s Farm-Baked Fresh Apple Pies,” with a subtitle that announced, “Our pies are baked just like Grandma used to do it.”

When customers first saw the new boxes they could not wait to try the pies inside, but sadly they soon learned that nothing inside had changed. They were still soggy pies with undercooked apples inside.

Sales went back down and the owner was confused. His shiny boxes and new name still were not selling.

No one had told him that the trouble



**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.



YUMMY: A good apple pie will have a slightly brown crust and just slightly firm fruit; maybe not the “best” ever, but most assuredly good and probably “better” than most.

was not in the package, it was in the product inside. Finally, someone said that instead of an advertising expert, he should have brought in a new baker or at least have given his baker a new recipe. Instead of changing the package, he needed to change the product.

I see a lot of that going on all around me.

Last month, I ordered the seeds for this year’s garden and there was a lot of “puffery” in the seed catalogs that companies sent out. Here are some names of seeds:

Tomatoes: Goliath, Steakhouse, Big Beef, Sweetie, Mortgage Lifter, Oh Happy Day, and Porterhouse. Peppers: Emerald Giant, Big Daddy, Good as Gold, Biggest Sweet Ever, Chardonnay. Sweet corn: Incredible, Sweetness, Sugar Buns, Ambrosia, Nirvana. Cucumbers: Pick-a-Bushel, Supremo, Sweetest Yet, Tasty Green. Even the lowly sugar pea was “Mammoth Melting Sugar.”

So I got to wondering if “Steakhouse” is a better tomato than “Porterhouse,” if “Incredible” is better or sweeter corn than “Sugar Buns,” and if “Biggest Sweet Ever” is a bigger and sweeter pepper than “Big Daddy.” Would I really get a bushel of cucumbers from “Pick-a-Bushel” cucumber plant?

It was all so confusing.

Part of the confusion, I think, comes

from how we have come to use language. There are three degrees of comparison and people who make comparisons need to learn them. We realize that there is “good,” “better” and “best.” There is “big,” bigger,” and “biggest,” and “fast,” “faster,” and “fastest.”

But while we all realize these degrees of comparison, we seem to overlook how they so often get overlooked and overused. And it is not just in the garden.

How often have you heard a sports-caster talk about “the best catch ever made?” The “best pass” ever on a football field? A football player’s tackle the “best” of the season?

Honestly, I would like to see the use of those superlatives outlawed. It was a good catch, a good tackle, a good pass. I’ll even go so far as to listen to a “great” catch or a “great” tackle, but talking about events as the “best” so diminishes the event as to make it just another in a string of exaggerations.

Same goes for descriptive names of vegetables and fruits.

Two years ago, I planted some fruit trees, two peach trees among them. One was an old, favorite, white peach that I used to really like, but can’t find easily anymore. I knew we live on the northern border of the climate for that peach and that I would have to spend

extra time and effort to keep it healthy. The other was called "Reliant," because the description said it was developed for northern regions. The boys and I planted them both in April along with nine apple trees. All grew and thrived the first summer and they seemed to go dormant in the fall. We did not have an especially hard or cold winter, but the next spring, the white peach, a "Belle of Georgia," got buds and came back to life. The "Reliant?" Never a bud, no new growth, nothing but dead branches and twigs. It had not survived a fairly mild winter.

I called the nursery and they promptly replaced the tree, but with another variety. So much for relying on name descriptions.

I no longer plant anything based on its name.

For years, we grew "Lochief" corn. It was good, a little late in the season, but I believe the best of any variety is not the earliest. I plan to go back to it this

year. It seems to me that waiting a little longer for any crop means the quality will get better. Maybe we should think the same about people, too? Younger may not always mean better. At any rate, maybe we should look more at the

product than at its fancy description, get over our use of superlatives and rely on common sense instead of what the ads tell us. A good pie is a good pie, no matter what it's called and no matter what kind of box it comes in. ☀



## ATTENTION ALL STUDENTS!

United Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
is proud to present the  
**'Shine the Light' Scholarship**  
program for its fourth year

Two well-established cooperative principles involve "concern for communities" and "education and training for our members." In keeping with these traditions, the board of directors of United Electric has decided to reinvest unclaimed capital credits back to the community by providing educational scholarships to our members.

Several years ago as a result of lobbying efforts by the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania electric cooperatives are now able to use this unclaimed money within their local communities. These funds come from capital credits belonging to former members that have been unclaimed and the members have not been able to be located for three years. Legislators have agreed to allow the cooperatives to use these funds locally for specific causes.

United Electric Cooperative is offering scholarships to members and dependents of members who have been members for at least one year prior to Dec. 31. Scholarships are for advanced education at an accredited university or technical school. Students must be working toward a minimum of a certificate through a master's degree or higher. Opportunities include adults.

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

For application and details, please see our website at [www.unitedpa.com](http://www.unitedpa.com) or contact Kristy Smith at 888-581-8969, extension 8507, by April 15, 2019.



**\*Directors and employees of United Electric Cooperative, Inc. are not eligible.**

# Safety training put to use

AT UNITED Electric, safety is always our top priority. United's crews and all of the contractors employed to work on our electric system and right-of-ways are continually trained in the safest approach to their work. They are also trained in CPR, as well as the proper use of fire-suppression equipment.

This training came in handy recently. On Friday, Jan. 18, a Davey Tree Expert Company crew was trimming and clearing a section of United Electric right-of-way in the Sylvan Grove Road area near Kylertown. The Davey Tree crew, comprised of foreman Chris Weitoish, mower operator Matt Smith and groundman Ron Weitoish, noticed an odd-smelling smoke coming from a member's house. Upon closer observation, the crew knew something wasn't right. Two of the crew members retrieved their fire extinguishers off their right-of-way equipment and took their pickup down to the house. As they arrived at the member's home, a volunteer fireman (in his personal vehicle) also arrived at the house. The

fireman did not have any firefighting equipment with him, but was able to use Davey's fire extinguishers to put out a flue fire.

The next day, Davey's general foreman, Rob Kunselman, spoke with the homeowner's daughter. Patty Demchak (also a United member) informed Kunselman that the quick action taken the day before not only prevented the house from burning to the ground, but most likely saved the lives of her elderly parents, Ann and Edward Veres Jr., who were home at the time and were totally unaware of the fire. She went on to inform Kunselman that the fire chief told her the house would have been fully engulfed within another 15 minutes.

United Electric is proud of all of our employees and contractors who not only serve our members' electric needs, but are also willing to put their training to use and come to the aid of someone in trouble. Thanks to the quick thinking on the part of the Davey crew members, a disaster was avoided. ☀

## 2019 Rural Electric Youth Tour

**ATTENTION – High school juniors**

Youth Tour is an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., for sightseeing, education and fun in our nation's capital. The 2019 Youth Tour will be held the week of June 16-21. If you are a junior who might be interested, please contact Kristy Smith at United Electric Cooperative at 888-581-8969, extension 8507, for an application. All applications must be received at United Electric by **March 10, 2019**.



### BE PREPARED BEFORE A STORM STRIKES

In the event of a power outage, be prepared by keeping the following items in an easy-to-find emergency supply kit.

- WATER**  
 Three-day supply, one gallon per person per day.
- TOOLS**  
 Flashlight, extra batteries, manual can opener, battery-powered or hand-crank radio, NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert.
- FIRST AID KIT AND PRESCRIPTIONS**  
 First aid supplies, hand sanitizer and at least one week's supply of prescriptions and medications for the family.

Learn more at [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

Source: American Red Cross, Federal Emergency Management Agency.