



United Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

United Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Post Office Box 688
 DuBois, PA 15801-0688
 Customer Service: 888-581-8969
 www.unitedpa.com
 Outage: 800-262-8959
 Office Hours: M - F 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

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 1030 Donahue Rd.
 Luthersburg, Pa. 15848
 814-583-7320

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 Punxsutawney, Pa. 15767
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 814-263-4491

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 814-365-5646

Arden E. Owens, District 7
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 814-765-6458

Richard Petrosky, District 3
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 DuBois, Pa. 15801
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David W. Walker, District 4
 631 Olanta Rd.
 Olanta, Pa. 16863
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Consumer Advocate
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From the President & CEO



Thankful for your membership

By Brenda Swartzlander

“WE MAKE a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give.” In the spirit of this quote by Winston S. Churchill, I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for your membership in our electric cooperative. Because of your connection to United Electric Cooperative, we are able to make our community a better place.

I usually use this space to provide updates on new projects and developments, and report on the progress of ongoing initiatives. We share these updates so all of our members have a window into our priorities, progress and challenges. However, during this season of giving thanks, I think it's equally important to let you know just what an impact you have on our co-op and the greater community, likely in ways you may not even realize.

As part of the cooperative business model, one of our core principles is “Concern for Community.” While our priority is always to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy, we view our role in the community as a catalyst for good. This is why we established our Members United Round-Up Program so many

years ago. Primarily, spare change from members’ bills funds this program, which helps only members of United Electric who have fallen on hard times. For example: your bill this month is \$97.75, but you decided to enroll in our Round-Up program. Your bill would be rounded up to the nearest dollar, making it \$98, with the extra quarter going toward Members United. Members United is managed by Community Action, which also administers other energy assistance programs. Please return the Members United form to start helping your fellow members now, or call our office at 888-581-8969 for more information.

Members like you who contribute to programs like these, as well as attend co-op events, alert us to problems and provide suggestions online or to our employees, help us improve operations and thereby better serve the larger co-op membership. The cooperative is a reflection of our local community and its evolving needs. Together, let's continue making our corner of the world a better place. We can't do it without you, and for that, we are thankful for your membership. ☀

Members United Round-Up program

Yes, I would like to help members through the Members United Round-Up program.

Name on Account: _____

Account Number: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Signature: _____

Rustic Views

Be thankful for the simple things around us

By Glenn Schuckers

SIMPLE things surround almost all of us. Things we see every day, places we pass, neighbors to whom we talk, family members, friends — these are the simple things that we may take for granted.

Later this month, most of us will set aside a day to say thanks. Although the day is still some three weeks away, I'd like to take this time to write about what this day means to me. Last year in this space, I wrote a little about how Thanksgiving came to be a national holiday, how President Abraham Lincoln, in the midst of the Civil War, advised the nation that it was right and fitting to take time to say thanks.

This year, I hope you will allow me to be a little more personal about what Thanksgiving means to me.

Six years ago this past March, the house my family and I had called home for some 42 years was destroyed by fire, to the point where building inspectors, insurance men and builders said there was no hope of rebuilding at that location. So the first thing I have been thankful for over the intervening six years is that we had enough land to build a new house.

I also have been thankful for all of the people who made building a new house possible. I said at that time there was a reason that young people build new houses. It was stressful and without the experts and their opinions, I doubt the house would have been finished. And for the past six years, I have been thankful for all they did.

The neighbors who pitched in with lunches and dinners, who helped get



PHOTO BY GLENN SCHUCKERS

trees and stumps out of the way, who just called or stopped by to say they were there if we needed them — I have been and continue to be thankful for all they have done.

We have been in the new house (it still isn't quite "home") for these past six years, and I still can see the first Thanksgiving dinner we had here in 2012. Over not just these past six years, but for much of my adult life, it has become more and more apparent that I have so much to be thankful for that words can hardly contain them. Maybe as I write about them here it will be a reminder to all of us that what we see, what we hear and what we experience every day are things we can say thanks for.

Take a look at the photo that accompanies this column. It is a township road near our home. Chances are it or one like it is not too far from where you live, too. It's one of those things we so often take for granted, but thousands and thousands of people drive for hours to look at a simple country road like that one.

I know. I was once one of them. I took the family and drove for eight or nine hours to New England to take pictures and look at scenes very much like the ones in that picture. And all the time there it was, 10 minutes from my driveway.

I think what I am saying is that we need to be thankful for the simple things all around us.

We take a family for granted, but millions and millions of people do not

have a family that can gather together on Thanksgiving. And almost every day, a family somewhere is broken.

It may be a crime, it may be drugs, a careless driver, a cruel disease. There are so many things that can destroy a family, and yet we so often don't take time to be thankful for the family we have.

I have also been blessed to have almost amazingly good health. Some 18 years ago, I had a bout with the common male cancer, but thanks to early detection and great doctors, I have been cancer-free for the 18 years since. Others in my family were not so lucky. After working in coal mines and smoking Kool cigarettes for 30 years, my dad died at the age of 68. And even though he was hale and hearty, my older brother suffered a massive heart attack and died at that age, also.

So even though I don't think about it every day, or even less often than that, I am going to make it a point to say thanks for good health a lot more often.

I have been blessed with an amazingly patient wife for almost 50 years. And one son for nearly 48 years, another for 37, have been sources of pride and happiness. As I wrote above, a family is something to be thankful for.

So this month, as we all get ready for Thanksgiving, let's not forget all the simple things we so often take for granted. Take a drive and stop to look at the roads we see every day, but never really see. Talk to neighbors and really listen to what they have to say, and tell them how much it means to have neighbors like them.

Thanksgiving doesn't need to be a grand holiday with turkey and all the fixings. It does not have to look like a Norman Rockwell painting. Whether our Thanksgiving table hosts one friend, a few family members, or a



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.

whole crowd of children, grandchildren, aunts, uncles, and cousins is beside the point. The point is to say thanks for everything we have, all the simple things that give life meaning, that might get overlooked if we only think about the bits and pieces we may

think are missing.

This year on Thanksgiving, I hope I'll give thanks for the simple things I have, and concentrate on them and not waste time dwelling on what I think I want.

We can all be thankful for the sim-

ple things, such as the scenic country road like the one in the photo that many of us live next to every day but never really see, while strangers may drive hours to look at what we pass by every day and never take time to appreciate. 🌞

Common health myths

By Allison Goldberg

HEALTH and nutrition are young sciences, and better information is constantly emerging from new studies. It's easy to miss new information, and our brains naturally cling to the first versions of what we hear. Let's take a look at a few common, stubborn health myths.

Antiperspirant causes breast cancer.

According to the American Cancer Society, researchers found no link between antiperspirant or deodorant use and breast cancer risk, based on a study comparing 813 women with breast cancer and 793 women without breast cancer.

Being cold will give you a cold.

A cold is a virus, and catching a cold means you've become infected by a virus (or many viruses — there are thousands). Cold air is not a virus. However, there are a few reasons we're more likely to catch a cold during winter months: we're more likely to be in closer quarters indoors (and thus sharing more air and germs), drier indoor air leads to drier nasal cavities (mucus membranes are better at protecting us when moist) and rhinovirus germs replicate faster at lower temperatures, among other reasons.

Cracking joints will cause arthritis.

The cracks and pops you hear when you crack your joints is air being released from the liquid that lubricates your joints. It doesn't cause arthritis, but that doesn't mean it's good for you. Harvard University Medical School says people who crack their knuckles tend to have lower grip strength and increased inflammation in their hands.

Organic food is more nutritious and pesticide-free.

A 2010 study by British researchers compared 162 scholarly, peer-reviewed,

published articles that compared organic and traditionally grown produce. All told, their review found no difference in 15 noted nutrients, including vitamin C, beta-carotene and calcium.

They also analyzed results for organic and traditionally raised meat, dairy, and eggs and found that organic livestock products actually had higher levels of fats. In regard to chemicals, both traditionally grown and organic farms use pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides; according to *Scientific American*, over 20 chemicals are approved for use by the U.S. Organic Standards and the amount of chemicals used on organic crops is not limited. Even though organic pesticides, herbicides and fungicides are created from natural sources, that doesn't necessarily mean they're safer.

Vaccines cause autism.

In 1998, a British gastroenterologist named Andrew Wakefield published a falsified paper in which he linked the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine to autism. His findings were not replicable, the conclusions he drew were not supported by data and he had financial conflicts of interest. He and his autism study have been discredited; he is no longer allowed to practice medicine in the U.K. According to Autism Speaks,

the risk factors for autism include parental age, pregnancy and birth complications, closely spaced pregnancies and environmental risk factors.

You need to cleanse your body of toxins (also known as “detoxing”).

Your body is a self-cleaning machine. You expel toxins (i.e., carbon dioxide) on your breath thanks to your lungs. Your kidneys and liver clean your blood. Your colon removes waste. Your sweat releases excess salts from your skin. The best way to “detox” is to treat your body right by drinking enough water and moderating unhealthy foods, alcohol and drug use — and that includes quitting tobacco. There's no need to fast or deprive yourself. In fact, eating an abundance of fresh or frozen vegetables and fruit, drinking more water, and getting more sleep are the best ways to help your body perform optimally. 🌞

Allison Goldberg 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.





Calling ALL prospective students of higher education!



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

Two well-established cooperative principles include “concern for community” and “education and training” for our members. In keeping with these traditions, the board of directors of United Electric has decided to reinvest returned, unclaimed capital credits back to the community by providing educational scholarships to our members. Several years ago, as a result of Pennsylvania’s lobbying efforts in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania electric cooperatives became able to use their escheated money within their local communities. Escheated money is capital credits from 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 funds locally for specific causes.

All students*, including adult learners*, who are attending or planning to attend a university or technical school are eligible to apply. For an application and details see the cooperative’s website, unitedpa.com, or call Kristy Smith at 1-888-581-8969, extension 8507, by April 15, 2019.



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

2019 Rural Electric Youth Tour

ATTENTION – High school juniors

It's time to start planning for the 2019 Youth Tour. This is an **all-expenses-paid** excursion that draws over 1,800 rural high school juniors from across the country 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. Any junior who may be interested, please contact Kristy Smith at United Electric Cooperative at 1-888-581-8969, extension 8507, for an application. All applications **must** be received at United Electric by **March 2, 2019**.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Cooler temps are just around the corner! Is your home's heating system ready? Remember to replace furnace filters once a month or as recommended. If you heat your home with warm-air registers, baseboard heaters or radiators, remember to clean them regularly to increase efficiency.

Source: energy.gov

