



# 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**  
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**David W. Walker, District 4**  
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**President & CEO**  
 Brenda Swartzlander

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 Debra Horner, ext. 8508

**Richard Heverley, Editor**

## From the President & CEO



# Make your voice heard

By Brenda Swartzlander

OCTOBER is National Cooperative Month, and one of the seven cooperative principles that comes to mind this time of year is democratic member control. Election Day is fast approaching (Nov. 3), and the perfect answer to the question of “Why vote?” can be summed up by a somewhat comical political saying that goes, “If you’re not at the table, you’re on the menu.”

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. Elected representatives (directors) are chosen from among the membership and are accountable to the membership. At United Electric, members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote). So, just like in our board director elections, if you don’t vote, you’re not only missing the opportunity to support a candidate who shares your views and concerns, you’re allowing others to chart a course that impacts your future.

## Your vision, your vote

Voting keeps elected officials accountable. Elections are a direct and tangible source of feedback. For example, United Electric board members provide strategic guidance on the direction of the co-op and how it serves the community. Local board members embody the voice and identity of the community. With this being an even-numbered year, we won’t have any local elections running in conjunction with the presidential election, but senators and congressional repre-



sentatives are on the ballot. Whether it’s an election for a mayor, sheriff, state representative, school board or an electric co-op board member, your vision for the community is tied to your vote.

## Staying in sync with the community

Ultimately, the role of the co-op board is governance. While day-to-day decisions are made by our employees, bigger decisions are made by the board, whose mission is to look out for the vitality of the co-op and the members we serve. United Electric board members provide their perspective on community priorities, thereby enabling us to make more informed decisions on long-term investments.

However, elected officials are not perfect, and we need you to help keep the system in check, not just as members of a co-op, but as citizens of this great nation. We depend on you and your neighbors to vote so that our country can stay on course and ensure that our elected officials are in sync with the community we live in and the

*(continues on page 14c)*

Rustic Views

# No other month compares to October

By Glenn Schuckers

I'LL MAKE no bones about it and no excuses, either — my favorite month of the whole year is October. I love this month. I cannot think of any reason not to like this month. It is warm enough to enjoy a morning walk or an evening on the deck, but not so hot that walking, working, or just plain sitting is uncomfortable. I always have work to do but unlike spring, summer and winter, the jobs don't have a deadline.

After all, there is a time in April, May and June when things have to be done. Tomatoes not transplanted by early June will not have ripe fruit by August; corn not planted by June will not beat the fall frost. In the case of fruit trees, those trees need to be trimmed before summer or they may not "harden" before winter.

In July, August and September, vegetables need to be picked before they rot. Fruit has to be picked before it gets too ripe and falls to the ground. The corn planted in June needs to be harvested, as do the tomatoes, beans and cucumbers.

And speaking of beans, some things I have never understood. A generation older than my contemporaries and me always talked about something that would "never amount to a hill of beans." To the best of my knowledge, they never planted beans — green or yellow — in "hills." Beans were always planted in rows about 3 feet apart with a bean plant every 3 or 4 inches. A neighbor of mine when I was growing up as a "townie" always planted pole beans, but they were not in "hills"



**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.



PHOTO BY GLENN SCHUCKERS

either. When they were ready to pick, we would have a "mess" of beans, not a pan of beans or a plate or bowl of beans, but a "mess." They were never any messier than any other food, but that's what we had.

Anyway, a lot of summer jobs have to be done on a pretty strict schedule, as mentioned in the farmers' proverb, "Make hay while the sun shines."

The same thing goes for winter. If we get 10 inches of snow overnight, waiting until it melts is not an option unless I want to stay in the house until March. Sidewalks need to be shoveled and driveways need to be cleared on pretty much a "do-it-now" schedule.

March and April have their own schedules. People who grow their own tomato plants and the folks who run greenhouses know that in order to have plants ready to put out by May and June, the seeds need to be in some soil by mid-March. They can't wait until May, and planting sooner than that just won't work. Likewise, for fruit trees. March is for trimming apple and pear trees, while April is better for

**BEHOLD THE BEAUTY:** When October comes to our hills, they take on a beauty that is hard to explain — better to just gaze and enjoy.

cherry, plum, and peach.

October and even November are different. Jobs need to be done but mostly on my schedule, not nature's schedule.

Sure, the garden needs to be cleaned up but on my schedule. If not today, then tomorrow; if not this week, then next. I like to wrap some of the more tender plants and bushes, but like the garden, other than waiting for a sunny day, there is no rush to get it done. Some people would say that sitting back enjoying the beauty of an October evening is a waste of time. I prefer to think of it as a conversation with God. In short, October is the perfect month for procrastination, and who among us does not like to procrastinate?

And there is no comparison with the beauty of October. No other season even comes close. Almost anywhere north of Virginia, all the way north to Maine and west to the Great Plains,

nature puts on a show of beauty that is incomparable. Scenes from the Deep South, Southwest, and West have nothing that even comes close to the hills of Pennsylvania, New York, Vermont, and all the rest of New England in October. Some years are better than others; sometimes the special colors last weeks, other times the show is a lot shorter, but no matter the length of time when woods are in full color, nothing else can compare. I have been known to just stop and look at the hills around my house in wonder that something this beautiful exists.

Ralph Waldo Emerson virtually “invented” a philosophy called “transcendentalism,” which boils down to the ideas that reason, logic, and science, while all well and good, do not answer all the questions that linger in the back of men’s minds. The term is meant to value the worth of the individual and the worth of all persons, regardless of their gender, race, or beliefs. The beauty of nature cannot be rationally explained.

“Beauty” simply exists, and the beauty found in nature relates people to nature. I tend to believe old Emerson was on to something.

Looking out over the hills in October does not need an explanation or reason. Looking down a country lane this month should leave one speechless. Trying to explain that limits the beauty which words cannot define.

So, this month, let’s just try to appreciate the gift that nature is giving. Let’s not try to define it or add an explanation of why it exists. Nature’s beauty is special in October. All we need to do is stop and enjoy the gift from nature. I constantly remind myself that I need to look beyond the field across the road, maybe pull off the road, look over the hills and take in the beauty that needs no reason to exist. This gift of beauty just is, and it may explain why October is my favorite month of the whole year. What we cannot explain, we need to appreciate. 🌻

### From the President & CEO

(continued from page 14a)

country in which we all thrive.

A strong voter turnout shows interest in the community and ensures that a diverse number of views are represented. The whole community benefits when more people participate in the process, because greater numbers reflect a consensus on the direction of the future and the will of the people.

By voting in national, state, and local elections, you are serving as a role model for your family, friends, and colleagues. The act of voting demonstrates your support for the community and helps officials chart a course for the future. Democracy is not a spectator sport. Research candidates, learn about issues that are on the ballot, and vote in person or by mail. Just vote!

Until next month,

*Brenda*  
Brenda



PHOTO BY GLENN SCHUCKERS

**BEAUTY CANNOT BE EXPLAINED:** Like this monarch butterfly last month, beauty is just to be admired, not defined or explained, just like the colors of hills in October.

**DO NOT TAMPER WITH YOUR ELECTRIC METER**

Meter tampering can result in electric shock, is illegal and increases electricity rates for other co-op members.

WATT HOURS METER

- ⊘ Never break a meter seal.
- ⊘ Never open a meter base.
- ⊘ Never remove a meter or alter an entrance cable in any manner.

If you know or suspect that someone has tampered with their meter, please contact us immediately.



# >> What's on that pole?

This illustration shows basic equipment found on electric power distribution poles. Not all poles have all this equipment on them. They vary according to location and the service they provide.

>> Primary wires run on top. Each usually carries 7,200 volts of electricity from a substation.

>> A crossarm holds power lines, allowing required clearances between lines.

>> Surge arrestors protect the transformer from lightning strikes.

>> A secondary service drop carries 120/240-volts of electricity to the end user. It has two "hot" wires from the transformer, and a bare neutral wire connected to the ground wire on the pole.

>> Telephone and cable TV lines are typically the lowest wires.

>> A head-high "birthmark" shows the size of the pole, as well as where and when it was made.

>> 40-foot poles are sunk six feet into the ground.

>> Insulators (made of porcelain or a composite) prevent energized wires from contacting each other or the pole.

>> The neutral wire acts as a line back to the substation and is tied to ground, balancing the electricity on the system.

>> Transformers convert higher voltage electricity from primary wires to lower voltage for use by consumers.

>> Guy wires help stabilize poles. They also are connected to the pole's ground wire.

>> Pole ground wire—running the length of the pole—connects to the neutral wire to complete the circuit inside the transformer. It also directs electricity from lightning safely into the earth.

>> Co-ops are responsible for keeping vegetation around poles trimmed to avoid interference with the electric system.

