



# 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



# October is National Co-op Month!

By Brenda Swartzlander

ACE Hardware, State Farm, REI, Land O'Lakes and United Electric all share something in common: We're all cooperatives. October is National Co-op Month, which is the perfect time to highlight the many ways cooperatives are unique.

Co-ops, by definition, are a self-governing union of people who come together to voluntarily meet a common need through a jointly owned and democratically controlled business. As your electric cooperative, United Electric's main goal is to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity to you, our members.

Rural America is served by a network of around 900 not-for-profit electric co-ops, most of which were formed in the 1930s and 1940s. United is just one of those independent cooperatives, serving 11 counties and more than 16,000 members. Since we are locally owned and operated, revenue generated by United goes back to you, our members, and into our communities.

Because we are guided by the seven

cooperative principles, it's not about dollars — it's about opportunity for all and being fair when engaging with our members. The cooperative way is a values-based business model, and United is a reflection of our community and its evolving needs. We view our role as a catalyst for good to help make our corner of the world a better place.

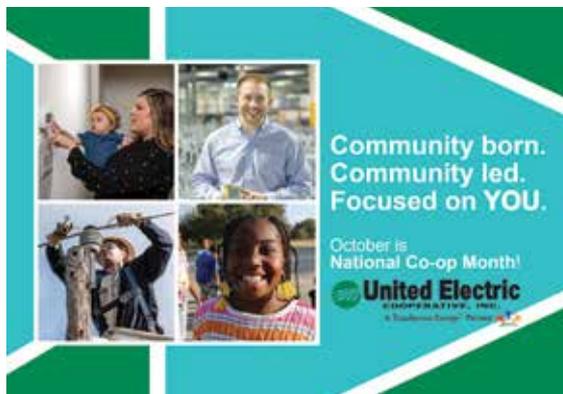
United Electric prides itself in connecting with our members. When you call our office, you will be able to speak with someone who can help answer your questions. We also connect with you through *Penn Lines* every month to keep you informed about co-op business and Pennsylvania happenings. We provide programs like the Co-op Connections Card, our water heater program and Members United, to name a few.

Times and technology may change, but our commitment to our members remains constant. We continue to upgrade our electric system, implementing new technologies where appropriate, and explore new ways to help our membership. We welcome member

participation as we plan for the future of our co-op. During National Co-op Month, I ask you to remember that working together, we can accomplish great things for our community now and into the future.

Until next month,

  
 Brenda



Rustic Views

# October's colorful spectacle

By Glenn Schuckers

WHEN I think about autumn or what most of us call “fall,” I think of one thing. Not warm sweaters — that’s more for December or January — not hot chocolate, not Friday night football games or even crisp October mornings.

Fall is the time for clear days when I can see “forever” with no haze to shorten the view, when the odor of leaves on the ground fills the air, and when apples and cider are just about everywhere. In short, fall is the time I think of color, especially the color of the woods and old log roads that are just about grown over.

Years ago, when my younger son and I roamed the fields and forests with a couple of shotguns looking for grouse, we came to know that a certain area not too far from the house was home to an abandoned log road that led through prime grouse habitat. We did see grouse there, or at least we saw the tail feathers of grouse as they flew away after startling both of us by the beating of their wings. Once in awhile, we did see one land in a tree, but we had an understanding that no matter what, we would never shoot a sitting grouse. If we could not shoot it in flight (which I never could), it would go free.

But the best part of the forest roaming was we could get a display of fall colors that only comes once a year and only lasts a few weeks at best.

So what I think most about when it



**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

comes to fall is the color of the woods during this once-a-year display of nature’s beauty.

Science has an explanation of why the leaves “change” color. It turns out the leaves don’t actually “turn” color at all. All year long, leaves are green because of the chlorophyll in them. Chlorophyll is green and is the dominant pigment in leaves during most of the year, from spring through late summer. It is what enables the trees to combine water and sunshine into energy that allows the trees to grow. Then, as days turn cooler and shorter and there is less sunlight, the chlorophyll begins to fade and allows the other colors of the leaves to come out.

So leaves don’t actually “change” color, but as the green fades, the other colors that have been there all along become visible. Different species of trees have different amounts of pigments of various colors, and lots of people I

**OVERLOOKING THE OBVIOUS:** The road past our house is a masterpiece of nature’s canvas, but it’s easy to ignore since I see it every day.

know can identify each tree they see by the color of its leaves in October.

We are lucky to live in an area of what biologists call “mixed species.” What that means, simply, is that the woods around here are a mixture of lots of varieties and species of trees. There are white oaks, red oaks, sugar maples, silver maples, autumn blaze maples, poplar, aspen, and on and on, along with hemlock, spruce, and pine, which all keep their green leaves (needles) all year.

It is a simple matter of evolution that some trees have leaves that have different colors that finally become brown and fall off, as do the oaks, maples, poplars, and fruit trees. Were they to stay on the trees when rain turns to snow, the weight would break the limbs and even whole trees as we have seen with an early winter snowfall. The



ones whose leaves are on the ground are more likely to survive and pass along that trait to the next generation. Multiply that by thousands of generations and we have the forests of mixed species.

That amounts to the science of why we have those colorful vistas so many of us just ignore in October and November. We take scenes for granted because we have seen them every fall for as long as we have lived around here. We don't notice the attention our woods attract from people who have not seen them every fall. Those who have spent their lives in a city or in an area that is green all year long, travel hundreds of miles to see what we so often take for granted.

A man I passed on an interstate many years ago when traffic was stopped in the Hudson Valley was more intent on looking at his laptop on the seat beside him while nature presented a once-in-



PHOTO BY GLENN SCHUCKERS

**A DELIGHT:** This white dogwood tree by our house is a delight all year. It has white flowers in spring and green foliage all summer that becomes a vibrant red in the fall.

a-lifetime picture of hills and trees and the river. Just because it is there, does not mean we will “see” it.

Nature can put on a show that no picture could capture, no artist could paint, but we have to open our eyes and tune in our senses to see it. If we take this month's splendor for granted, if we just look out our windows and say, “Oh yeah, that's nice,” we won't realize how nature presents a gift that has no price.

Science, biology, and chemistry may

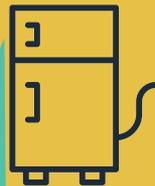
explain the why of the colors we see all around us, but it takes an eye and a mind that is open to the wonders the eye can see to appreciate that beauty. It's a cliché to say that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, but in this case, it is true. Nature paints the landscape but to “see” that landscape, we must realize what is there. It is a scene that only appears once a year and maybe for only a few weeks, but once you've really seen it, it can never be forgotten. 🌞

# FREE AND EASY WAYS TO SAVE ENERGY

Here are 10 easy, no-cost ways to save energy this summer:



**1.** Close or lower window coverings during the heat of the day



**6.** Unplug that extra fridge, especially older, inefficient models (they have to work even harder in a hot garage)



**2.** Set your thermostat a few degrees higher



**7.** Optimize your programmable thermostat's features (around 40% of homeowners never program them)



**3.** Take cooler showers (this feels better in the summer, anyway)



**8.** Check the airflow around windows and doors (add weather stripping if needed)



**4.** Use countertop appliances or a microwave instead of your oven



**9.** Unplug all chargers and electronics before leaving the house



**5.** Better yet, grill or smoke food outdoors



**10.** SHUT THE FRONT DOOR (don't air condition the outdoors)

Safe Electricity.org<sup>®</sup> Learn more at: