



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.

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

1964 River Hill Rd.

Frenchville, Pa. 16836

814-263-4491

DIRECTORS

Shanelle Hawk, District 1

502 Pine Run Rd.

Mayport, Pa. 16240

814-365-5646

Arden E. Owens, District 7

505 Trout Run Rd.

Shawville, Pa. 16873

814-765-6458

Richard Petrosky, District 3

P.O. Box 612

DuBois, Pa. 15801

814-371-8672

David W. Walker, District 4

631 Olanta Rd.

Olanta, Pa. 16863

814-236-3321

President & CEO

Brenda Swartzlander

Consumer Advocate

Paula Pascuzzo, ext. 8501

Richard Heverley, Editor

From the President & CEO



'Back to school' is a constant for us

By Brenda Swartzlander

IT'S A new school year, and kids of all ages are getting ready for a fresh year of learning. Students attend school to gain knowledge about a broad variety of subjects and learn new skills to prepare them for the future. United Electric Cooperative is also continually learning from advanced technologies to improve electric service, reliability and safety, which will enhance the quality of life for the members.

United Electric keeps abreast of industry trends as the energy sector is rapidly changing. Innovations in technology and energy types are fueling demand for more options. Consumers are looking for more ways to manage their energy use with smart technologies. Members expect more convenient payment methods such as automatic draft from a bank account (found online through SmartHub), as well as mail-in payment coupons and in person.

Another area of constant change is metering and outage management. Automated meter reading (AMR) is the technology of automatically collecting energy consumption data and transferring it from the electric meter to the co-op. Because this information can be collected remotely, it enhances our system's efficiency, helps control costs, improves work processes and provides members with their own metering information. Have you checked your daily electricity use using our SmartHub app?

Similar to AMR, there is another technology called advanced metering infrastructure (AMI). This is an integrated system of intelligent meters, communications networks and data

management systems that enables two-way communication between utilities and consumers. In the event of an outage, AMI helps to distinguish between events that impact a single home or multiple outages. This is critical because resolving either issue is a very different process. The two-way communication is integral to AMI as it provides a means to verify power has been restored after an outage. However, one of the biggest benefits from improved technologies, especially for outages caused by extreme weather, is pinpointing the outage by knowing the location, which helps us to reduce risk for crews out on the road during severe weather events. All of this, combined with your outage calls, helps us to get the lights back on faster and safer.

In addition to providing essential information during major outages, United Electric analyzes AMI data for anomalies, including faults, damaged meters or energy theft. Detecting these problems early helps our cooperative to never lose sight of our top priority — providing safe, reliable and affordable electricity.

For United Electric Cooperative, our "school year" is never over. We will continue to learn from our members about their priorities, and we will continue to study and research the issues so that we may better serve you, now and in the future.

'Til next month,


Brenda

Rustic Views

Everything needs care

By Glenn Schuckers

PEOPLE often ask me two things about writing this column for *Penn Lines*. The first question is usually about why I write. The answer is simple. I enjoy writing, and I enjoy entertaining people with what I write. The fact that so many people have told me that they enjoy these little slices of rural life makes the time and care I put into them worthwhile. What many people don't know is that because of the logistics of putting a magazine together, articles and columns usually get written about six weeks before readers see them. That can make things a little challenging.

As I work on writing this, it is about the middle of July. As you read it, it will be late August or the first of September. I have no way of knowing what may happen between now and the time you read this, no way of knowing how the weather or the world may change in the next six weeks. And a garden will look a whole lot different.

The other question people usually ask is where I get the ideas of what to write about, since every writer must have an idea in mind before he or she begins to put words on paper. That answer is also pretty simple; I look around me at what I am doing and what is going on.

This morning, for example, I worked in my garden. When I started the garden this year, I was determined that it would be better than last year. Weather had a lot to do with that, but gardeners and farmers seldom if ever



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

STILL GROWING: This pepper plant may not look like much in July, but by September, it should be loaded with peppers to stuff.

use weather as an excuse. Wet seasons, drought, cold nights or winds are just elements they have dealt with all their lives. But the excessive rain last summer made having a good garden more challenging than usual.

As I planted the garden this year, I decided to change a few things. I planted fewer tomatoes. Since we

have a two-year supply of sauce in the basement, we don't need to harvest bushels of tomatoes. A few for slicing, maybe a few for stuffing would be enough. That also meant I did not use the black plastic mulch I have used for the past many years. I have gone back to the method we used when we had hundreds of plants for commercial sale

— straw mulch put down a couple of weeks after planting.

We always like bush beans, so there are a couple of rows of them as in the past. I think Ann probably froze 25 or so packages of beans last year and that has been enough to get us through.

I have gone back to planting some cucumbers, and that means I'll probably make another batch of lime pickles, even though there are a few jars left from past years.

We love winter squash and I added something new for me, butternut. Also new this year are some "spaghetti" squash plants. I have thought about them in the past, but I remembered to order the seeds this year, along with some pumpkins. As usual, there is a field of sweet corn at the old farm, too.

So that is a smaller garden than usual with the plan that smaller will be easier to take care of.

Half way through the summer, it seems to be working. I have found that it's a lot easier to care for this size garden than the big ones of the past. And that now gets me to what this month's column is all about.

I cultivated the tomatoes before I mulched them, and hoed the beans, cucumbers, squash, and pumpkins in the past week, and each day when I returned to work, I noticed how the plants seemed to respond to that care.

I have also noticed that the field corn in fields nearby was up and growing, but that in the few days after the farmers went through with a cultivator, the plants seem to grow a little



PHOTO BY GLENN SCHUCKERS

SUMMER TREAT: Bush beans start small but are a summer treat when fresh from the garden.

faster than before, almost as though that extra bit of care made them respond with a spurt of growth.

The very day after I hoed the beans and cucumbers, they were 2 inches taller than the day before. Same went for the squash and pumpkins. Seeing plants that are taller and more vigorous, a better shade of green with sturdy stems and bigger leaves is a reward. It is a reward just about anyone who grows anything will tell you makes the time, expense and effort worth it.

I no longer grow crops for the money they bring in. There was a time when we sold dozens of baskets of tomatoes to a whole-

sale house nearby, when we sold canning tomatoes and cucumbers by the bushel. It was a commercial business and the rewards were in the profits.

Today, the rewards are of a little different kind. Today's rewards are having a meal with

fresh beans or corn on the cob fresh from the field. Nothing can compare (to me, even though I know a lot of people are not fans of squash) with a baked acorn or butternut squash in the middle of the winter. If the pumpkins do well, I'll invite some neighbor kids to come over and pick out one for Halloween. And home-frozen beans are always better than the ones from the store.

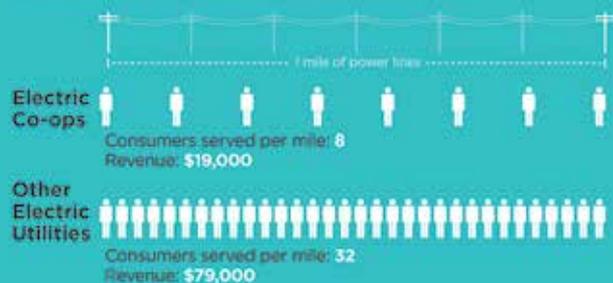
So, as I was hoeing the beans and other plants, I thought about how plants and animals, too, may be like people. When I scratch my dog's ears, I know he likes it by the look on his face and the wag of his tail. And people smile when I drop off a box of tomatoes or some cucumbers. But the real reward is just in the doing.

So when the plants respond, it is good to remember that all living things need care. When I plant a garden, it needs to get care, and whether the plants are vegetables, flowers, or trees, they will respond to our care.

Our rewards will not be measured in dollars or cents, but in the pure joy that comes from doing well, or as Ben Franklin so often said, "Doing well by doing good." 🌱

Going the Extra Mile

Electric cooperatives maintain more miles of power lines per consumer than other types of electric utilities. Even though they serve fewer consumers and acquire less revenue, electric co-ops always go the extra mile to power the communities they serve.



Safety tips for college students

BEFORE heading off to college, students need to be equipped with supplies for their dorm rooms and important knowledge for living on their own — including electrical safety knowledge.

Many colleges across the U.S. ban cooking appliances in on-campus housing, including hot plates, coffee makers, and microwaves; and many of these places have a designated area for the use of the products.

Safe Electricity offers tips for students to help prevent and reduce the risk of electrical fires in student housing:

- ▶ Only purchase and use electrical products tested for safety. Some common approved safety labels are UL, CSA and MET.
- ▶ Avoid overloading extension cords, power strips or outlets.
- ▶ Use power strips with an over-current protector that will shut off power automatically if there is too much current being drawn.
- ▶ Never tack or nail an electrical cord to any surface or run cords across traffic paths or under rugs where they can be trampled or damaged.
- ▶ Use the correct wattage lightbulbs for lamps and fixtures. If no indica-



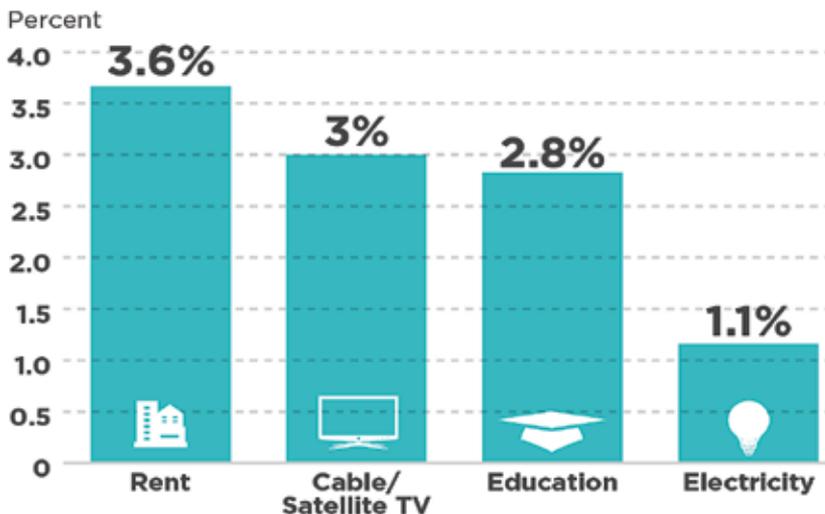
tion is on the product, do not use a bulb with more than 60 watts. For energy savings, use LEDs or CFLs.

- ▶ Keep all electrical appliances and cords safely away from bedding, curtains, papers, and other flammable material.
 - ▶ Make sure outlets around sinks are equipped with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) before using them. If they are not, contact the resident assistant, camping housing staff or landlord.
 - ▶ Unplug small appliances when they are not in use and all electronics when you are away for extended periods.
 - ▶ Always use microwave-safe containers. Glass, ceramic containers and plastics labeled “microwave-safe” should always be used. Metal and aluminum foil can damage the microwave or start a fire. If the microwave is damaged in any way, do not use it.
 - ▶ Smoke detectors should never be disabled, and fire alarms should never be ignored or taken casually as a drill. Every time a fire alarm sounds, residents should calmly and quickly follow practiced procedures and immediately exit the building.
- For more fire and electrical safety information, visit SafeElectricity.org.

ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

The cost of powering your home rises slowly when compared to other common expenses. Looking at price increases over the last five years, it's easy to see electricity remains a good value!

Average Annual Price Increase 2013-2018



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
Consumer Price Index