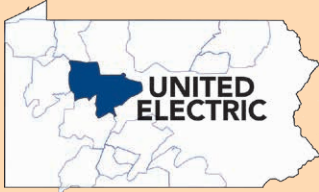




United Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives
serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

UNITED ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

P.O. Box 688
DuBois, PA 15801-0688
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www.unitedpa.com
Outage: 800-262-8959
Office Hours: M - F 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

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Summer Heat Impacts Electricity Costs



LEN HAWKINS

AS THE DAYS GROW LONGER and the temperatures rise, we typically see increasing electrical use, primarily driven by air conditioning. The increased demand during the summer months, particularly during peak hours, significantly increases the cost of electricity we supply to you. We want to take this opportunity to explain why this happens and offer some helpful tips to manage your energy consumption and potentially lower your bills.

The cost of electricity isn't constant throughout the day. Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc., based in Harrisburg, is our wholesale power provider. During periods of high demand — often on hot, summer afternoons and evenings when many people are using air conditioning — the demand for electricity surges. To meet this peak demand, power generators sometimes need to use more expensive sources of energy. This higher cost of generation is reflected in the wholesale price of electricity that we, as your electric cooperative, pay.

Think of it like rush hour on a highway. When more cars are on the road, it can lead to congestion and delays. Similarly, when more people are using electricity at the same time, it strains the system and can drive up the cost of supplying energy.

Maintaining the infrastructure to handle these peak loads requires significant investment in power plants, transmission lines and substation equipment. These costs are ultimately factored into the price of electricity.

Peaks occur on **weekdays between noon and 7 p.m.**, on the hottest days of summer between June and September. It is crucial that we work together to lower demand levels during these peak periods. Since it is impossible to predict exactly when these peaks will occur, we may need to ask you to reduce, or "shift," your electric consumption to lower-demand times (before noon and after 7 p.m.) several days each month — quite possibly several days in a row — when we get a heat wave. This is why we run commercials on local radio stations requesting members to perform the "electric shift," which helps us hold down the cost of electricity.

Voluntarily helping to maintain stable rates is something you as members can do that directly affects future electric prices. To relieve pressure on the grid during peak times in the summer, consider taking the following steps:

- Turn your thermostat up several degrees when a peak is occurring. A general energy-saving rule is not to move the thermostat more than five degrees in either direction or you will negate efficiency and savings.
- **Pro tip:** Seal air leaks around windows and exterior doors with caulk and weatherstripping. Air leaks and drafts force your cooling system to work harder than necessary.
- Run major appliances, such as dishwashers, ovens and dryers, during off-peak hours when the demand for electricity is lower.
- **Pro tip:** Start the dishwasher before you go to bed.

Continued on page 14D

Rustic Views

Why do You Garden?

GLENN SCHUCKERS

I HAVE SPENT A LOT of time writing about how to grow things, from apple trees to zucchini. I have written about when, how, and where to plant, weed, cultivate, water, harvest, and even preserve fruit and vegetables. Those are all important. But I started thinking something was missing.

Then it dawned on me, and looking back on the many columns under my name, one thing was missing: Why do people even have gardens or orchards?

This isn't about big farms and orchards that are more businesses than hobbies (and it isn't even about hobbies). This is about why people have gardens that produce more food than one family can use (excluding community gardens). This is about why people have a garden that is a little more than a hobby but less than a business.

The first reason that came to mind is saving money. From experience, that is an illusion. It is like having a fireplace or wood burner to save on heating bills. It sounds great at first, and then you add up all the money and effort it takes to get all the things needed. Sure, you may break even financially in a few years, but your back and knees will certainly pay the price.

Back to the garden. Unless you plan to hand-spade part of your property, the first thing a gardener needs is a tiller. It can be as small as the job requires, but the most conservative cost estimate here is at least \$200. Not interested in a garden that big? How about those raised beds? I have seen them advertised for as low as \$150, but you probably need at least four.

A few years ago, I totaled what it cost me to grow a half-acre of sweet corn: fuel for the tractor; depreciation on the tractor; fertilizer; the 20-plus hours to plow, plant, and cultivate the corn; the fence to keep deer out; and the repellent to keep raccoons and groundhogs away. I estimated I had spent more than \$4,000 to grow a half-acre of corn. I decided I could buy all the fresh corn we'd ever need for less than \$4,000.

Looking at it in that light, people who have a garden to save money are really kidding themselves. But there are a lot of other very good, sensible reasons for having a garden that have nothing to do with money.

I get good exercise planting and tending to a garden. By its very nature, gardening gets me out in the sun and

MORE THAN A HOBBY: While we may kid ourselves that we're "saving money" with our gardens, there's no denying that working hand-in-hand with nature is an enriching experience.



fresh air. I could just sit on the porch, but before long, that gets pretty boring. There is nothing boring about being in a garden. There is always one more weed to pull, one more shoot to pinch off or one more plant that needs the ground loosened. Before I know it, I will have been in the garden for maybe an hour, breathing fresh air and soaking up the sunshine. I will have been stretching my arms, legs, and back and getting a good workout.

Looking around their garden, gardeners get a sense of satisfaction they can't find anywhere else. People may spend a lifetime working at a job and never see the results they see after a few days in a garden. It may be that row of beans that sprouted a week after they were planted or the area around some tomato plants that's now weed-free after a few hours spent pulling them. It's satisfying seeing the results of time and labor. In our world today, we need that kind of satisfaction for a job well done.

Maybe a garden is a tradition. Some people grew up in a family that always had a garden, so there was never a thought of not having one. Seeking the joy a garden brings encourages the next generation to plant. Young people see how, where and when to plant, so tending plants just comes naturally. Approval from the previous generation keeps the tradition going and growing.

Satisfaction also comes from knowing that the food we're eating has been grown by our own hands, in our own garden. There's no fine print; no names of chemicals we have never heard of and can't pronounce. Just bush beans, green peppers, Rutgers tomatoes, zucchini squash or early cucumbers. I don't think there is much of anything that compares with the taste of a ripe tomato picked off the vine and eaten right there in the garden.

Then, there is the sense of pride that comes from showing off what you have grown, whether it is a big, ripe tomato, a bunch of freshly dug garlic, a shiny green pepper or even a fresh green cucumber. Gardeners love to be proud of what they grow. There is the satisfaction of thinking, knowing and telling others that "I grew this. Six months ago, it was just a little brown seed, and now thanks to my hard work and patience, I had a hand in producing this."

So, whether they take their produce to a farmer's market, to their friends, to their relatives or to their own table, gardeners have as many reasons for keeping their garden as there are gardeners. For those who have planted, tended and harvested a crop, we say thanks. You have fulfilled a basic human need, and no matter what reason you have for tending your garden, you are adding a thread to the fabric that makes us better people. 🍅



Attaching objects to poles puts lives on the line ... and it's a crime!

Lineworkers climb poles at all hours, in all seasons. Sharp objects like nails, tacks or staples can puncture safety equipment, leading to electrocution.

Lineworkers climb poles using hooks or gaffs on their legs and feet. One misplaced hook caught on a nail or staple could result in serious injury to your United Electric lineworkers.

Items not belonging to United Electric will be removed. Damage to unauthorized items is not the responsibility of the cooperative.

 **United Electric**
COOPERATIVE, INC.
A Touchstone Energy® Partner 

FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Continued from page 14A

- Use ceiling fans to make yourself feel cooler. Remember: Ceiling fans cool people, not rooms, so turn them off in unoccupied spaces.
 - **Pro tip:** During summer months, set ceiling fan blades to rotate counterclockwise, which pushes cool air down for a windchill effect.
- Close blinds, curtains and shades during the hottest part of the day to block unwanted heat from sunlight.
 - **Pro tip:** Consider black-out curtains with thermal backing or reflective lining to block heat and light.
- Use smaller appliances, such as slow cookers, air fryers and toaster ovens, to cook meals.
 - **Pro tip:** Studies have shown air fryers use about half the

electricity as a full-sized oven. Air fryers are smaller and use focused heat, which results in faster cooking times, less heat output and lower energy use.

As we face the challenges posed by soaring summer temperatures, understanding the impact on energy demand is crucial for maintaining reasonable rates. By adopting energy

conservation practices during periods of extreme heat, you can save money on your electric bills and help control future power cost for you and your neighbors, keeping our cooperative community cool in more ways than one. 🌱

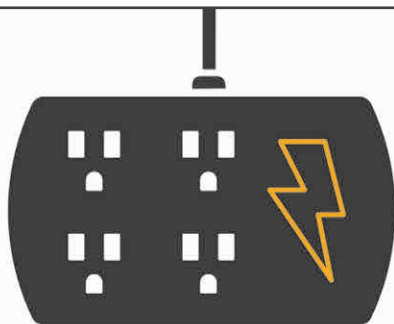
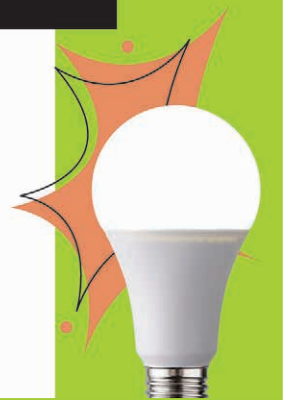
LEN HAWKINS
PRESIDENT & CEO

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Take advantage of the warmer weather to reduce home energy use. Avoid using your oven and use a grill instead. Not only will cooking outdoors eliminate the energy used to power the oven or stove, but it will also avoid raising the temperature inside your home, reducing the need for additional air conditioning.

You can also avoid using the oven with tasty no-bake recipes. Get creative in the kitchen and explore new ways to save energy!

Source: energy.gov



SURGE PROTECTION

Keep your electronic equipment safe.

A power surge is typically caused by lightning, changes in electrical loads, faulty wiring or damaged power lines.

Install power strips with surge protection to protect sensitive equipment.

- Easy to use (just plug them in)
- Protect electronics plugged into the device
- Must be replaced over time or after a major surge event



REMEMBER:

Not all power strips offer surge protection. Carefully read the packaging labels when purchasing.