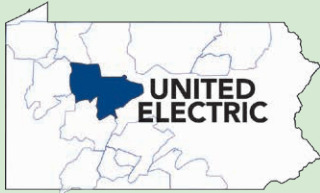




United Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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
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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Luthersburg, PA 15848
814-583-7320

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Punxsutawney, PA 15767
814-592-5190

Secretary/Treasurer

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Mayport, PA 16240
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Shawville, PA 16873
814-765-6458

Richard Petrosky, District 3
P.O. Box 612
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Olanta, PA 16863
814-236-3321

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COO, HR Manager & Consumer Advocate
Lauren Gustafson, Ext. 8501

Manager of Marketing & Member Services
Kristy Smith

Guest Column

Perseverance, Community and Progress

A Historical Account of How Rural Electrification Transformed Clearfield County



KRISTY SMITH

DEDICATION, HARD WORK AND STEADFAST persuasion were essential in Clearfield County nearly 90 years ago, when the dream of rural electrification began to take shape.

Home Camp dairy farmer A.L. Orner became the first president of the Clearfield Electric Cooperative's Board of Directors. Before his death in 1999, A.L.'s son, Leroy*, recalled in a *Penn Lines* article how Bill Mitchell, the Clearfield County Agricultural Extension agent, began reaching out to area farmers about forming an electric cooperative.

Mitchell gathered people he thought might be interested in electrification, and the first co-op meeting was held in his office in Clearfield. By Dec. 31, 1936, the Clearfield Electric Cooperative was officially incorporated, and by December 1937, the system was energized. The first board of directors in 1938 included A.L. Orner, Allan Roos, Charles Nicodemus, Roy Fink, Latimer Lansberry, J. Donald McGee, John Christian, Agnes Cornelius and J. Blaine Byers.

A daunting task

Launching an electric cooperative was a daunting task. Many homeowners feared the government would seize their property if they signed up. LeRoy recalled his father spending countless evenings at church and grange hall meetings, speaking to neighbors and explaining the cooperative's benefits.

Securing federal Rural Electrification Act (REA) funding required purchasing a state charter. To cover the expense, membership in the cooperative was \$5 in 1936 — a significant sum for one person at the time.

LeRoy remembered accompanying his father to a meeting near McGees Mills. Despite hours spent convincing attendees of electricity's advantages, no one was ready to sign up. Yet, after the meeting, a local man named Zenith Muth took a stack of membership applications. Later that week, Mr. Muth returned with a handful of completed forms, each with a \$5 bill pinned to it.

Skepticism lingered, however. Some believed electricity would never reach their homes. When it came time to incorporate, funds still fell short. Most were ready to give up, but Latimer Lansberry and A.L. Orner persevered, borrowing the remaining money from a local hardware businessman. As new memberships rolled in, the loan was repaid.

A.L. Orner and the cooperative's attorney, Clarence Cramer, traveled to Washington, D.C., to apply for the REA loan. Preparing a map for the application was the next crucial step. On the Orner dining room table, markers indicated where each paying member lived. Only those who paid would receive electricity in the first round; subsequent joiners had to wait for the second loan before being connected.

A co-op is born

As the first president, A.L. Orner selected Geneva Fullerton as secretary for the Nichols Street office in Clearfield. Klauder Engineering in Philadelphia sent an engineer to design the system layout.

Securing rights of way through local properties was the next hurdle. While some

Continued on page 18D

Rustic Views

A Month of Miracles

GLENN SCHUCKERS

IT HAPPENS EVERY YEAR. Depending on where you live, it may have already happened or will happen in the next few weeks. People in the southern regions of our magazine's distribution area may have seen it already, and for the rest of us, we will soon see what I'm referring to: the beginning of the new year for people who grow things.

For those of us who grow our own plants, such as tomatoes, peppers, cabbage, and cauliflower, from seeds, the new season started about three weeks ago when we put seeds into the ground in small pots and watched young seedlings sprout. That was the first miracle of the new season.

Another miracle, just as wonderful and mysterious, happens this month. Roots and bulbs buried in the soil have been waiting to make an appearance. When spring rains bless the soil and it begins to warm, those roots and bulbs will begin to sprout. Green shoots will emerge from what looked like dead roots, and they will spread upward as they seek the air and sunshine that will transform them into the flowers of spring and summer.

A blooming miracle

This is happening just as it has happened for centuries and millennia. Archeologists have discovered evidence of these types of plants that date back before humans or even animals were on Earth. Plants have been around for almost as long as there has been a planet. They have even

existed and bloomed without any human help.

While that was happening underground, another mystery has been playing out above, in the sky. For months, the trees, except for the coniferous, have been brown. The leaves dropped off in October and November and left bare limbs and twigs. They returned to the soil and lay there, slowly returning nutrition to the Earth.

Forests looked brown and bare, but now, almost overnight, it seems the leaves have come back. First, we saw the red of the buds as they were about to open and then, one day, they were green.

Life has returned to our once-barren fields and wooded areas, and what was once cold and white has become warm and green. The colors of life have returned.

This transformation happened without any help from me or any other person. Yes, I plowed the garden last fall, but the change from brown to green was beyond anything I could do. We mortals may do our best to help nature along, but it's nature that is in control. I can put seeds and plants in the soil, but I can't make them grow.

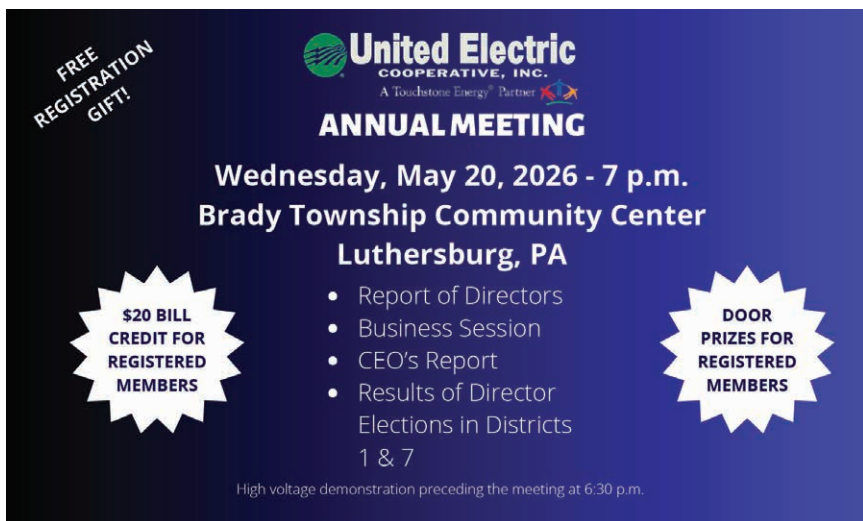
Wonder and awe

As soon as the conditions become favorable, I will put seeds and plants in the ground, having faith that if I do what nature requires of me, it will do its part.

I may plant beans and squash and cucumber and sunflower seeds; I may watch the first sprouts peek out of the ground; and I may see new leaves of plants shoot out of the stem. As they do, I will rejoice that I may have done something to help them along, but I will always remember that I am but a part of the circle of life. The seeds and plants may grow and produce their harvest, but it is nature's harvest, not mine.

This is truly a month of miracles, so I need to remember to watch those miracles unfold.

They will not last long, so I cannot procrastinate my appreciation for long. I will always be surprised by the way nature renews each spring. I will always be awed by the rhythm of the seasons here in the North, and hope that I can pass some of that wonder and awe to anyone who will listen. 🍃



FREE REGISTRATION GIFT!

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ANNUAL MEETING

Wednesday, May 20, 2026 - 7 p.m.
Brady Township Community Center
Luthersburg, PA

- Report of Directors
- Business Session
- CEO's Report
- Results of Director Elections in Districts 1 & 7

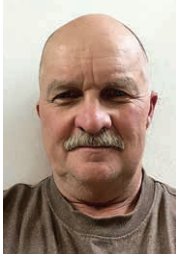
\$20 BILL CREDIT FOR REGISTERED MEMBERS

DOOR PRIZES FOR REGISTERED MEMBERS

High voltage demonstration preceding the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Candidates for United Electric Board of Directors in District 1

Terry L. Rapp



TERRY L. RAPP

Terry L. Rapp, a proud 1978 graduate of Redbank Valley School District and Clarion County Career Center in New Bethlehem/Clarion, has built a life defined by hard work, community spirit, and dedication. Earning not only his diploma but also professional certifications in welding and diesel mechanics, Terry set the stage for a dynamic career. In 1982, he channeled his entrepreneurial drive and founded T.R. Excavation of Mayport, a successful business specializing in excavation and hauling services. Terry's expertise also led him to a 31-year career with Columbia Gas. Beyond his professional life, Terry is deeply involved in his community, actively supporting the Clarion County 4-H and the Clarion County Fair. Since 1984, he has been a member of the Masonic Lodge and finds fellowship at Zion Lutheran Church in Shannondale. Terry and his wife, Deborah, make their home in Mayport, where they raised their daughter, Renee, and son, Zane. They have five beloved grandchildren.

Richard P. Owens



RICHARD P. OWENS

A proud 2000 graduate of Clearfield Area High School, Richard P. Owens embarked on his career in construction straight out of school, quickly discovering his passion for the powdered metals industry. For the past 25 years, he has thrived at Clearfield Metal Technologies, rising through the ranks to become a respected molding supervisor. Rich's dedication extends beyond

his profession. He previously served as a supervisor for Clearfield County's Girard Township, a role that demonstrated his commitment to community leadership. He is an active member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Fraternal Order of Eagles in Clearfield and is an avid sportsman, belonging to the Mosquito Creek Sportsman's Club. With his wife, Megan, Rich enjoys life in the scenic Frenchville area, where they are raising their three children, Kara, Hannah and Blake. 🇺🇸

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BRENDA L. SWARTZLANDER SCHOLARSHIP

ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR THE BRENDA L. SWARTZLANDER SCHOLARSHIP*

Eligible applicants must major in:

- Business Management
- Engineering

Deadline to apply: 4/15/26

Applicants are also eligible to apply for the Shine the Light Scholarship.

Contact Kristy Smith:
888-581-8969, Ext. 8507
ksmith@unitedpa.com
unitedpa.com

**Must be a United Electric Cooperative member or dependent. Directors, employees and their families are ineligible to apply.*

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DREAM. SHINE. ACHIEVE.

ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR THE SHINE THE LIGHT SCHOLARSHIP

All students attending or planning to attend higher education*

Application deadline is **April 15, 2026.**

Contact Kristy Smith:
888-581-8969, Ext. 8507
ksmith@unitedpa.com
unitedpa.com

**Must be a United Electric Cooperative member or dependent. Directors, employees and their families are ineligible to apply.*

GUEST COLUMN

Continued from page 18A

landowners resisted, requiring detours, most were eager to help their neighbors access electricity. Once enough rights of way were secured, a Philadelphia contractor arrived to hire men for construction. They dug holes and set poles by hand. It took six to eight men to set a pole, followed by crews attaching hardware and a man with a horse dragging the wire and positioning the poles.

The first substation was built at Bell's Landing, with lines extending up Banner Ridge and out to Harmony. Population was sparse; between Oklahoma near DuBois and the Orner farm, only seven houses dotted the landscape. The inaugural cooperative annual meeting was held in a tent in a field near Bell's Landing.

Later gatherings took place at the Calvary Armory in Clearfield and eventually at Clearfield Area High School. One historic meeting at the high school occurred on Oct. 27, 1966, when General Manager J.E. Nicholson of Jefferson Electric Cooperative arrived. A vote was held to merge Clearfield Electric Cooperative and Jefferson Electric Cooperative, forming United Electric Cooperative — a pivotal moment in local history. 📍

KRISTY SMITH

MANAGER OF MARKETING & MEMBER SERVICES

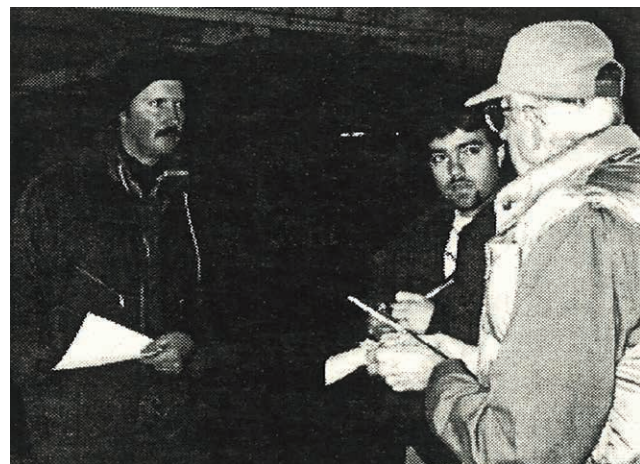
** LeRoy Orner was interviewed for a similar historical article, which was featured in Penn Lines in October 1996. The Orner Farm can still be found in Home Camp and remains involved in the cooperative. United Electric Cooperative COO and HR Manager Lauren Gustafson is the great-granddaughter of A.L. Orner.*



AT WORK ON THE DAIRY FARM: A *Penn Lines* staffer photographs the Orner family in their milking parlor. Shown, from left, are David, Sarah, Ross and Frank Orner. Sarah is Ross's youngest daughter and the sister of Lauren Gustafson, United Electric's current COO and HR manager.



DECADES IN THE MAKING: United Electric Cooperative has gone through a number of changes from its origins as Clearfield Electric Cooperative in 1936. Here, a modern three-phase line is built in 1987.



CARRYING ON THE LEGACY: Ross Orner, left, and LeRoy Orner, right, are interviewed for a *Penn Lines* article in the late 1990s. The Orners are descendants of A.L. Orner, a founder of Clearfield Electric Cooperative and its first board president.



LEADING THE CHARGE:

J.E. Nicholson, general manager of Jefferson Electric Cooperative, played a pivotal role in the merger of his cooperative with Clearfield Electric Cooperative in 1966. The newly merged cooperative was named United Electric Cooperative, which continues to serve consumer-members today. Jefferson Electric Cooperative merged with Clearfield Electric Cooperative to form United Electric Cooperative in 1966.