



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.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chairman

Stephen A. Marshall, District 5
1030 Donahue Road
Luthersburg, PA 15848
814-583-7320

Vice Chairman

Timothy D. Burkett, District 6
5059 Hamilton Markton Road
Punxsutawney, PA 15767
814-592-5190

Secretary/Treasurer

Eileen Pisaneschi, District 2
1964 River Hill Road
Frenchville, PA 16836
814-263-4491

DIRECTORS

Terry L. Rapp, District 1
609 Pinoak Road
Mayport, PA 16240
814-229-8627

Richard P. Owens, District 7
4044 Gillingham Road
Frenchville, PA 16836
814-592-2825

Richard Petrosky, District 3
P.O. Box 612
DuBois, PA 15801
814-371-8672

David W. Walker, District 4
631 Olanta Road
Olanta, PA 16863
814-236-3321

President & CEO
Len Hawkins

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

Manager of Marketing & Member Services
Kristy Smith

COOPERATIVE CONNECTION

Affordability: Our Commitment to You



LEN HAWKINS

IF YOU'RE LIKE MANY FAMILIES and small businesses across our community, you've felt the pressure of rising costs over the past few years. Groceries cost more. Fuel costs more. And electricity — something none of us can do without — is taking up a larger share of household budgets.

At United Electric Cooperative, we understand those concerns and we take them seriously. Demand for electricity, driven largely by the rapid build-out of data centers, continues to outpace the industry's ability to supply it as old power plants shut down faster than new facilities come online. As your electric cooperative, we have a

responsibility to do everything we can to ensure your power is reliable and affordable.

This commitment is built into the cooperative model. Through partnerships with other cooperatives and our statewide organizations — the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association (PREA) and Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Allegheny) — we've been able to control costs and protect members from skyrocketing rates.

Through Allegheny, the 14 rural electric cooperatives in Pennsylvania and New Jersey own generation resources, including nuclear and hydroelectric facilities based right here in the Commonwealth. These facilities provide the majority of our electricity at stable, predictable costs and shield us from much of the energy market's volatility. That stability is critical as the electric grid faces record demand and costs continue to climb.

Another key piece of affordability is managing when electricity is used.

Through the Coordinated Load Management System, an innovative demand-response program developed by cooperatives in partnership with Allegheny, we work with consumer-members who volunteer to shift their electric use away from peak periods. This, in turn, lowers the amount of expensive power that must be purchased on the open market.

Those savings flow directly back to members, and it's a practical example of cooperation among cooperatives: small actions, taken together, to produce real savings.

Affordability doesn't end with managing costs; it also means returning value when expenses are lower than expected. Because electric cooperatives are not for profit, we have no incentive to collect more than is necessary to deliver safe, reliable electricity. Any margins remaining after covering operating costs are assigned to members as capital credits. As the cooperative's financial position allows, those capital credits are retired and returned directly to members — either as bill credits or checks.

This represents a fundamental difference between cooperatives and investor-owned utilities. Instead of profits leaving the community to pay shareholders, margins stay here and are eventually returned to the people who paid them in the first place.

At the heart of all these efforts is the cooperative business model itself.

Electric cooperatives exist for one reason: to serve their members. Board members are elected from the community. Directors live where you live. Decisions are made locally, focused on safety, reliability and affordability — not on maximizing profits.

Through PREA and Allegheny, cooperatives also come together to share resources, expertise, and long-term planning. This model has delivered value for nearly 100 years and continues to prove itself in an increasingly complex energy landscape.

For co-ops, affordability is more than a buzzword; it means keeping the lights on without stretching the budgets of our friends, neighbors and families even further. While we can't control every factor that affects energy costs, we can control how we plan, how we invest and how we work together.

That's our commitment to you: thoughtful decisions, long-term planning and a cooperative approach that puts members first. 

LEN HAWKINS
PRESIDENT & CEO

More Than a Trip: Youth Tour Opens Doors in Washington, D.C.

KRISTY SMITH, MANAGER OF MARKETING & MEMBER SERVICES

"THIS WENT BY WAY TOO FAST."

More than once — and from more than one student — I heard that same reaction during the 2026 NRECA Youth Tour. Eighty-eight high school juniors from cooperatives across Pennsylvania and New Jersey traveled with chaperones and the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association (PREA) to Washington, D.C., joining more than 1,700 outstanding rural students from 44 states in our nation's capital.

For the six students selected by United Electric Cooperative — Cora Cohenour, Drake Edmonds, Liam Huwar, Peyton Walker, Reise Jackson, and Stevie Doverspike — June 15-20 offered a packed week of leadership, history, friendship and first-hand lessons in how electric cooperatives help shape communities.

Big energy, big ideas: Inside the NRECA experience

From the moment students arrived, NRECA "blue-shirts" — past Youth Tour attendees who have graduated high school — helped set an upbeat tone for the week at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center. The schedule included Co-op 101 sessions, advocacy programs, an inspiring Youth Day lineup and a Co-op Connections Night filled with career booths, activities, and opportunities to see first-hand the importance of cooperative leadership.

Youth Day brought delegations from across the country into one room, each competing to be the loudest and

proudest voice. Chants filled the room, and the excitement even pulled in NRECA employees, including CEO Jim Matheson, who joined a few cheers before taking the stage.

Students also heard from 2025 Youth Leadership Council spokesperson Brynn Lee Hirata of Kauai, Hawaii. "I was carrying the voices of rural communities, Native Hawaiian values and young leaders of the future," she told them. "That realization grounded me."

Returning to the Youth Day stage was two-time Paralympic medalist Mike Schlappi, a wheelchair basketball player turned motivational speaker who appeared in four consecutive Paralympic Games. His message was simple and powerful: "You matter. Everything you do matters."

Each year, he reminds students that "even if you can't stand up, you can stand out."

Trading pins, making friends

Pin trading is always a favorite Youth Tour tradition — and even chaperones get pulled into the fun. Each state brings its own pins or small items to trade, from Iowa's ever-popular corn necklace to the highly sought-after Alaska pin (Alaska traditionally sends only one student).

The tradition gives students an easy way to introduce themselves, start conversations and build excitement for the week ahead. Pa./N.J. students had a variety of pins to trade, along with a limited number of friendship bracelets and fun stickers, including the elusive PREA gold star sticker.

From memorials to Capitol Hill: The PREA itinerary

Between NRECA programs, Pa./N.J. students explored some of Washington's most meaningful landmarks and attractions, including Arlington National Cemetery, the Smithsonian museums, the Holocaust Museum, the Museum of Illusions, and several monuments and memorials. The itinerary also included the National Zoo, The Capital Wheel and congressional visits at the U.S. Capitol.

During meetings with congressional aides from the House and Senate, students asked thoughtful questions about everything from careers in Washington to the growing role of artificial intelligence. Stevie asked what type of schooling or degree is helpful for working in

PENTAGON MEMORIAL: Youth Tour students went to the 9/11 Pentagon Memorial one evening and heard from a survivor of the terrorist attacks.



Washington, learning that many different college majors can lead to careers in government.

Meanwhile, Drake asked aides for U.S. Rep. Glenn “GT” Thompson about data centers and farming in his area, sparking discussion about protecting usable farmland and gathering facts before acting. The group also met U.S. Sen. John Fetterman (D-Pa.) and took a photo with him on the Capitol stairs.

A legacy of leadership since 1964

For decades, Youth Tour has helped rural students see leadership, government and the cooperative difference up close. The event traces its roots to the late 1950s and grew into a coordinated national program in 1964. Students are eligible to apply for the William H. Matson and Jody Loudenslager scholarships through PREA.

They can also apply for United Electric’s Shine the Light Scholarship and the Brenda Swartzlander Scholarship. More than a trip, Youth Tour gives the next generation of leaders a lasting reminder that electric cooperatives are built on service, community and opportunity. 🌟



MEETING A SENATOR: Youth Tour students met U.S. Sen. John Fetterman (D-Pa.) and some even asked him a question or two.



CAPITAL WHEEL: Students started the week off getting to know each other and riding the famous ferris wheel in the National Harbor.

Meet the Students

Cora Cohenour

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Cora is the daughter of Amanda and Randall Cohenour from Brogue, Pa. She attends York County School of Technology and her career goal right now is to become a heavy-duty diesel mechanic. Cora’s sister Brooke attended Youth Tour in 2024.



Drake Edmonds

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Drake is the son of Melissa and Jim Edmonds from Corsica, Pa. He attends Clarion-Limestone High School and his career goal to pursue something in music. Drake currently plays and sings in a local band named Vice.

Liam Huwar

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Liam is the son of Lucas and Lee Huwar from Strattanville, Pa. He attends Clarion-Limestone High School and his career goal to pursue an outdoor profession. Liam’s sister Ada also attended Youth Tour in 2024.



Peyton Walker

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Peyton is the daughter of Mark and Sarah Walker from Rockton, Pa. She attends DuBois Area High School and her career goal is to work in the space sector, possibly at NASA. Peyton is active in the school robotics program.

Reise Jackson

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Reise is the daughter of Tiffany and David Jackson from Sigel, Pa. She attends Clarion-Limestone High School and her career goal is to pursue a profession in the medical field. Reise’s sister Adisen also attended Youth Tour in 2024.



Stevie Doverspike

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Stevie is the daughter of Katherine and Steve Doverspike from Dayton, Pa. She attends Punxsutawney Area High School and her career goal currently is to pursue a profession in business. Stevie is involved in various extracurricular activities.



August is for Pickin’

GLENN SCHUCKERS

AUGUST OFFERS SO MANY CONTRADICTIONS, I hardly know where to start. August signals the beginning of the end of summer and all that I like about the season, but it also signals the beginning of the season I like the most: autumn.

I can recall the frantic rush to begin picking the apple crop that would be the lifeblood of the orchard. It was a three-month race to get the fruit picked from all the trees we had cared for over the past five months into their crates and bins and into the barn, where we could sort and store them for the fall and winter.

Sometimes, we won the race. A few times, we lost it.

A fact of life

That’s how it usually is for farmers and gardeners. The season is not over until the harvest is complete. Planting season was underway some four months ago, and we weathered our way through fields and gardens that were too wet to work and then too dry to allow any planting.

Most farmers I know are both overworked and under-

paid; they farm because they love it and it is what they have done for their whole life. They would never think much about doing anything else. We who depend on the results of their work are lucky because otherwise we would most likely starve.

No cow that I know volunteers for milking and no seed plant goes from a plant to a loaf of bread on its own. Fruit trees need to be planted, pruned and watched over for six to 10 years before they yield the fruit that ends up on our table.

Some wild berries spring up without care or culture, but anyone who has picked those “wild” fruits knows that humans usually only get the “crop” that birds leave behind. And they are the biggest magnet for weeds in the universe. Most of the people I know who raise them either have children willing to pull weeds and pick berries, or neighborhood kids who are willing to weed and pick for a few dollars.

Having been one of those kids myself, I can attest to how it worked. When I was about 10 or 11, my dad reasoned that the space between the rows of apple trees he had planted was an ideal place for rows of strawberries. He bought a horse-drawn transplanter and planted a few thousand strawberry plants.

The bounty of the season

He, my older brother and a hired hand tended the plants all summer. That fall they covered all the plants with straw, and Dad went back to work in his coal mine until spring. By mid-summer, he had rows full of strawberries. There were a lot of kids my age in the area eager to earn a few dollars, so this young army picked the crates of berries that Dad sold to a fruit wholesale house in Clarion.

This went on for a second year, and when our neighbors saw all the money “Jeff” was making, they decided to get on the gravy train, too. The demand for strawberries is mostly constant and when supply outpaced the demand, the price nosedived, thus ending everyone’s career as a strawberry grower and my career as a picker. Luckily, Dad saw it coming and switched to sweet corn in that third year.

I vowed I would never pick another strawberry in my life, but somehow, about 25 years later, I was paying someone else for the right to pick their berries at a “pick-your-own farm” near the village of Troutville.

Every plant, shrub and tree has a place in nature’s plan, but some should have been left in nature’s garden. Meanwhile, we will continue to struggle through August while we fight the weeds, harvest the crops and enjoy the bounty of the season. 🍓



JUST PEACHY: Peaches are the gift of nature to mankind this time of year. They are the tastiest fruit on Earth: fresh and juicy, canned, frozen, or dried. There is no other fruit as delicious as peaches. Sadly, they do not grow well where I live. They thrive only in zones miles south of my home.