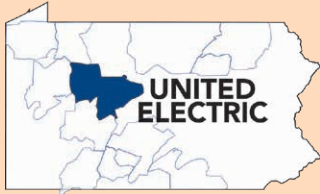




United Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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 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

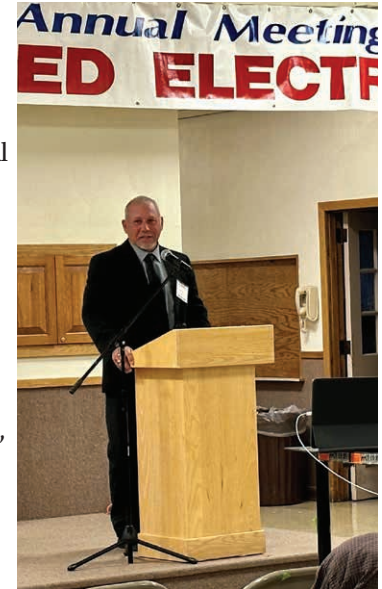
Consumer Advocate
Debra Horner, ext. 8508

Manager of Marketing & Member Services
Kristy Smith

Annual Meeting of the Members

IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL, SUNNY DAY for gathering in Luthersburg for our 2023 annual meeting of the members. Billy Parker, manager of safety, expertly presented a high-voltage demonstration, explaining how equipment works on our electrical system. Chief Lineman Dan Marshall and Jason Duttry demonstrated potential dangers and the power of electrical equipment.

Board Chairman Stephen A. Marshall called United Electric's annual meeting to order. Everyone joined in for the playing of the national anthem, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Marshall welcomed approximately 200 members, families and guests and then whole-heartedly acknowledged all military veterans in attendance. Marshall also introduced and thanked the rest of the board members, as well as special guests Steve Brame, president & CEO of Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Allegheny) and the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association (PREA), and Pete Fitzgerald, PREA/Allegheny vice president-public affairs & member services.



POINT OF ORDER: Stephen Marshall, chairman of the United Electric Cooperative Board of Directors, calls the annual meeting to order. Marshall also represents the cooperative on the board of directors for Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc., the wholesale power provider for rural electric cooperatives in Pennsylvania.

Down to business

Eileen Pisaneschi, board secretary/treasurer, read the official annual meeting notice that appeared in the May issue of *Penn Lines*, which was mailed to all members of United Electric May 2, 2023.

"The annual meeting will be held May 17, 2023, at 7 p.m. at the Brady Township Community Center in Luthersburg, Pa.," read Pisaneschi. "At the time of the mailing, there were 16,161 members of the cooperative."

After motions from the floor to approve the 2022 annual meeting minutes and financial reports, Marshall expressed gratitude on behalf of himself and the board "to all the members who support the cooperative in our collective efforts to improve the system." He also thanked the management and employees of United Electric for their dedication to the cooperative.

Important updates

Marshall introduced United Electric Cooperative President & CEO Brenda Swartzlander, who thanked everyone for attending and provided members with a summary of what the cooperative has accomplished since last year, as well as what is yet to come.

"Some of you may recall that last year we kind of eased into our first in-person event following two years of cancellations and postponements due to the COVID-19 pandemic," she said. "I think it's a good sign that we're all getting back to business. After all, annual meetings are all about bringing people together, so it's nice to have you here this evening, along with your board of directors, cooperative staff, and some special guests."

Continued on page 18B

FROM THE MANAGER OF MARKETING AND MEMBER SERVICES

Continued from page 18A

“This past year, we completed our regular maintenance and inspection programs,” she continued. “This included our right-of-way program. We maintained approximately 500 miles of line, and our pole inspection program saw 5,808 poles inspected and treated. Sixty-six poles (1.1%) were determined to be unserviceable and were replaced. System improvement projects totaling more than 15 miles of line upgrades were completed as well.”

Swartzlander went on to point out that “there is so much involved in the scope of these projects: engineering or design of the projects, which are incorporated into our work plan and approved by the board of directors, talking with the property owners, clearing the right of way, and finally doing the necessary construction. This is really oversimplifying the tasks required to get the project completed.”

Swartzlander read a letter received from thankful members, Jim and Jane McKillip. The McKillips’ property was used as a staging area for a system improvement project in their area. They were in awe of the size of the job and how so much more goes into their electric service than they thought.

“To get this type of letter really means so very much to us,” Swartzlander said. “And when I say ‘us,’ I mean everyone — the board, the employees, the contractors that provide services for us, everyone that is part of our United Team, including you, our members. After all, this is your cooperative.”



KRISTY SMITH

CONSEQUENTIAL CONTACT: A member looks on as Journeyman Lineman Jason Duttry demonstrates the consequences of animal contact with electric lines.

After discussing our capital credits return to the membership (\$14.4 million over 14 years) and Youth Tour participation this year (four outstanding students), Swartzlander discussed significant outages that occurred over the last six months.

“On Friday, Dec. 23, heavy rain followed by a large cold front with wind gusts upward of 55 mph, and lasting approximately 24 hours, caused widespread outages throughout our service territory,” she reported. “More recently, on Saturday, April 1, a storm front brought heavy rain and high winds, with gusts upward of 60 mph. It’s all hands on deck when we are in outage restoral mode, from the dedicated folks in the office to those dedicated folks out in the field.”

Swartzlander closed with a sincere thank you to the membership for their patience, as well as a thank you to all the employees for assisting with the annual meeting. “I’d also like to thank the board for its never-ending commitment and support in all things United.”

Special guest

Brame has spent the past 20-plus years in various roles at PREA and Allegheny, most recently as vice president-public affairs & member services.

“I was born and raised in State College, but my roots are in Clearfield County,” Brame said. “My grandparents were both born here in Houtzdale and Madera. Although I may work for PREA and Allegheny, I actually work for all of you. These organizations work to support the 14 cooperatives in Pennsylvania and New Jersey to provide safe, affordable, reliable power, and I’d like to emphasize reliable power here today.”

Brame explained reliable power is becoming a concern lately: “Flipping on a light switch is an act most of us probably take for granted these days, but sending those electrons from the power plant to that light switch in your hallway is no small feat. The concern today is whether our grid is ready for the 21st century.”



KRISTY SMITH

REGISTRATION STATION: United Electric Cooperative staff registered 156 members for the annual meeting.



GUEST SPEAKER: PREA/Allegheny President & CEO Steve Brame addresses United Electric Cooperative members for the first time.

Brame discussed a winter storm this past Christmas Eve that saw nine states having to implement rolling blackouts. Nearly a quarter of the region’s resources went offline unexpectedly, mainly due to equipment failures and fuel supply problems.

“During that event, PJM Interconnection, our regional grid operator, issued an emergency alert to all energy users across its 13-state region to voluntarily conserve power, hoping to avoid the need for rolling blackouts,” Brame recalled. “While we averted disaster, there were still more than 7 million outages across the PJM region. As a result of that event, generation providers that went offline are facing up to \$2 billion in fines for their failure to provide power when needed — a failure of reliability.”

Brame added: “So why are we seeing this marvel of the 20th century — the electric grid — struggle so much in the 21st century? ... We’re transitioning to an all-electric economy; we’re electrifying the economy at a time when we’re replacing traditionally reliable sources of energy with less-dependable sources. We have supply chain issues and permitting challenges, and we’re also experiencing more frequent and more severe weather events.

“Fortunately, cooperatives are consistent in their efforts in what I call the ‘Three Ps’ in dealing with reliability issues — policy, performance and people,” he continued. “When it comes to public policy, cooperatives have always been particularly good at explaining the practical realities of things in light of lofty policy goals. We continue to invest in the system and adapt our processes to minimize power interruptions — and that includes having those responsible for delivering our power invest in the reliability of our cooperative delivery points.”

DEMOCRATICALLY CONTROLLED: PREA/Allegheny President & CEO Steve Brame, left, and United Electric Cooperative President & CEO Brenda Swartzlander, right, congratulate newly re-elected directors Pete Petrosky, second from left, and Tim Burkett, vice chairman of both the cooperative and PREA boards of directors.

directors and staff of United Electric.”

Election results

Marshall introduced the judge of elections, Patrick Lavelle, who reported the results of the director elections in Districts 3 and 6. Because there were no petitions to run for the board in District 6, incumbent Director Timothy D. Burkett was re-elected in accordance with the cooperative bylaws.

Having received one petition to run in District 3, election ballots were mailed to all members of that district before the meeting. The candidates were Henry Daugherty and incumbent Richard A. Petrosky. After the votes were tallied by members who agreed to be tellers, Lavelle declared Petrosky to be re-elected to the board.

Having concluded the business of the cooperative, Marshall asked for a motion for adjournment. Once again, he thanked all members for their continued support of the cooperative.

“Your participation in the business of the cooperative is extremely important, and I encourage you to stay engaged with us by any means you enjoy using,” he said. “Please come back next year to show your support.”

KRISTY SMITH
MANAGER OF MARKETING AND MEMBER SERVICES



Failing Forward in the Garden

GLENN SCHUCKERS

IN MY OPINION, THERE IS one thing I should never take to a garden. No, it is not a sickle or anything to cut the weeds that are bound to grow there. And no, it is not a lawn chair to sit in when it is time for a break, or a cooler of iced tea, although about this time of year that might be a tempting idea.

The one thing I should never take to a garden is a cellphone.

The thing I like about being in the garden is there is no noise, and noise is what I want to get away from in a garden. What I most want to listen to when I am in a garden is ... nothing. No advice on what kind of tomatoes to plant, what varieties of beans or cucumbers or squash or peppers to plant. I don't want to be told how far apart the rows of corn should be or how tall the cages for the tomatoes should be.

I have already decided what kind of corn and cucumbers, what varieties of beans I have planted, and what direction the rows should run, North to South or East to West. By now, the plants are in the ground, the seeds have sprouted and are inches tall, and I long ago decided I would plant the cucumbers around some netting they could climb.

I want to hear nothing in the garden. Well, not nothing. I can still hear birds in the trees and bushes around the garden. I am no expert, so I don't even try to name them by their song. I recognize many that I have heard before, but since they pose no threat to what I am growing, knowing whether they are thrushes or finches or chickadees doesn't make much difference. They are there, and I am here trying to tend what I planted a month ago. I pose no threat to them nor do they to me, so I just enjoy their conversations.

And I can hear the breeze, which is almost always blowing where our garden is located. I could fret that the breeze will dry the ground where my



CATCH ME OUTSIDE: I let my wife know that I will be in the garden and how long I should be there, and then I leave my cell phone in the house.

plants are growing, but my fretting will not bring a shower, nor will it quiet the breeze.

The best thing about silence (sort of) is what it teaches me. That may sound strange, but there is a lot to learn when there is no noise. Things like the lessons my dad and grandfather taught me many years ago. Things I have learned from the mistakes I have made over the years, such as when I tried to recycle shredded paper as a mulch around the tomatoes. It sounded like a good idea at the time, and it looked good until there was a hard rain. The shredded paper turned into a hard mass that looked more like cement than mulch. After a lot of hours picking it out from around the plants, I decided shredded paper did not make good mulch.

What I hear in the silence of the garden is what I need to remember. First, I should not avoid doing something just because I have never done it before. Doing the same thing over and over just because it worked in the past is not what gardeners and farmers do.

If that had been the case a few million years ago, we would still be eating raw potatoes sitting in front of a fire. Or, more probably, we would

still rely on what the hunters brought home for dinner, instead of planting and growing some food for the family.

Let's face it: Whether it is moving a garden to a new place, replacing a garden plot with raised beds, trying to grow eggplants for the first time or not planting that variety of corn that I've been growing for 20 years, progress only happens when I try something new.

Will every garden experiment succeed? Of course not. History is a record of failures, and my history as a gardener and farmer is no different. But if I vow to learn from each failure and not make the same mistake more than twice, I can repeat a success a few times or maybe until something looks more promising. But I don't learn a whole lot from success.

More than twice? Yes. One mistake may just be a sign that I did something wrong, like planting the beans too early or picking the potatoes too late. I will agree that one mistake should not rule out ever doing the same thing again. But if something is a failure twice it should be clear that whatever it is, it's probably not going to work the third time.

I once planted two apricot trees on the hill below our old house. They were not recommended for our climate, but I thought with enough care and protection I could make them grow.

They grew for three years, albeit with a lot of time and

effort to protect them, but after four years of seeing the buds and branches die off after a March frost, I decided the climate map was right; our climate does not allow for apricot trees.

So, this month I will tend the garden, listen to the birds through the morning, the worms moving underground in the afternoon and the corn growing on a warm summer night. I will hope Nature gives us some rain and that the sounds of silence will keep on teaching me lessons. 🍷

History is a record of failures, and my history as a gardener and farmer is no different.