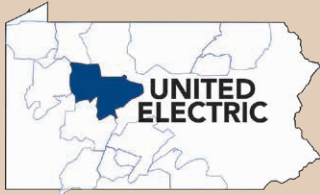




United Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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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Guest Column 2024 Construction Update



MICHAEL FLOCK

I WOULD LIKE TO BEGIN my update with a note to our members about their electric service in the Howe and Sigel areas. All of us at United Electric Cooperative understand your frustration with the current reliability issues you have been experiencing. Please have patience as we work directly with Penelec to come up with solutions to lessen the momentary and extended power outages you have been experiencing.

This will not be an overnight fix, but changes are being made as I write this that will lessen the blinking lights. We are also working cooperatively with Penelec on long-term solutions to supply more reliable power to these areas. These types of solutions typically take some time to implement but will have a positive impact on future reliability.

United Electric has also had our own issues due to storms and tree-related power outages. Our forestry department has been actively working in storm-damaged areas to identify and remove hazard trees that could cause power outages. Please remember to cooperate with our contracted tree crews as we work toward a more reliable power system.

Construction season is an ongoing operation in the utility industry. Each year, we have at least one large-scale construction project underway. Our goal is to upgrade and rebuild 25 miles of line per year to maintain a reliable and safe electrical system. Engineering of these projects also occurs year-round. Central LSS Consulting of Falls Creek continues to be a vital part of our success as its staff performs the bulk of our engineering design work for large system-improvement projects.

United Electric is in the final year of a four-year construction work plan with 14 projects in various stages of design and construction. Since last year's report, BNF Powerline Construction completed two line reconstruction projects in the McGees Mills and Porter areas. These projects account for 20 miles of our 25-mile goal of line replacement for 2024.

We also have two projects in the construction phase. BNF crews are working in the Sugar Camp area, where they are rebuilding a 5-mile section of line fed from our Grange substation. BNF is also replacing a short section of overhead line with underground cable in the Cook Forest area. We chose to bury this line as a safety precaution since it crosses a hiking trail. The overhead line also has been difficult to reach when repairs are needed.

Our forestry contractors are busy clearing rights of way for



JOURNEYMAN JONATHAN FRAZIER

BUCKETS AWAY: United Electric journeymen lineworkers prepare to transfer wire using their buckets to a new pole set behind the old one that was cracked by a tree on Hunters Grove Road outside of Brookville.

Continued on page 14D

Rustic Views

September Successes

GLENN SCHUCKERS

SEPTEMBER IS THE SECOND “HARVEST MONTH” of the year. The first was last month, when the crops we planted and tended were ready to start harvesting. We already have enough green beans in the freezer for the coming year, and sweet corn is there beside the beans. We canned enough peaches to fill the shelves, as well as giving some to our sons and neighbors. This month and October — National Apple Month — will see those fruits put away in different ways, too.

When we built the new house some 12 years ago, I did not have enough foresight to plan for a place to keep apples, hence the basement floor is solid concrete end to end and side to side. This doesn't afford a good place to keep things like apples or potatoes. If I could do it over again, there would be a room with a dirt floor and unfinished walls, like old farmhouses with root cellars.

A finished basement is good for a lot of things, but keeping fruit for the winter is not one of them. We make do by getting our apples into “ready-to-use” form this month — converting them into applesauce or apple pie filling that is canned and shelved for later. Sometimes, our sons say it

would be a lot less work to just buy the applesauce and pie filling at a grocery store, and they are right, but I have also noticed they never turn down a jar or a piece of pie when we have it for dessert. Foresight.

Farmers and gardeners always need foresight. Farmers around here make hay because they know they will need it for almost half a year. They fill their silos with fodder for the same reasons. Back in the last century, farmers built barns because they knew they would need them in the future. I have been told the common practice in the 1800s was for farmers to build a house with the basic necessities: a kitchen, bedrooms and an outhouse. For those youngsters who don't know what an outhouse is, notice the list of necessities did not include a bathroom.

Once farmers had a house with the necessities, they went about building the barn. To those early farmers, the barn was as necessary as the house, maybe even more so. It was where the animals were kept. It was no accident many barns around here were built partially underground, dug into a hillside that not only made building easier but also kept them warmer through the winter. The original house



PLANTED FOR THE FUTURE: Our 5-year-old Cortland tree has apples for the first time – just enough apples for a pie or salad. Five years is about right for a semi-dwarf tree to start producing fruit.

we lived in for 42 years was built on the southeast side of a ridge. Again, not by accident; this was done to provide protection from winds and storms that came out of the north.

Only after the barn was built would they go back and finish the house, maybe adding a parlor and more bedrooms as the family needed them.

While we are giving thanks for the crops we have nurtured and grown for the past season, we continue to harvest while looking ahead to the season that inevitably will come.

Nobody around this neck of the woods can pick corn in December. None of my neighbors can pick beans in January or peaches in March, but what we can do is raid the canning cupboard for the jars of corn, peaches or beans we preserved in September. We can also go to the basement or garage and get winter squash we put away in September.

Just like May and June are important times in the life cycle of farmers/gardeners, and July and August are important times for tending those fields and gardens, so too is September an important month to make sure those beans, tomatoes, corn, and squash are prepared for the coming season. The lives of farmers and gardeners are a constant cycle of looking ahead.

I have yet to meet a farmer or gardener who would not think or talk about “next year.” It is just part of the DNA that makes us who we are. It is more than just optimism; it is a way of looking at the world.

Think about it: Who would spend the time and considerable money to plant 100 acres of field corn without thinking it would produce enough corn or fodder to feed his/her cows next winter? Who would plant tomato seeds without the faith they would sprout and grow into something they could make into sauce? Who would drop dry seeds into the soil without having the faith they would later yield beans or peas on a dinner plate?

If you’ve read my past articles, do you remember the fruit trees my sons and I planted? Now, five years later, the trees have produced fruit. Not enough to open a fruit stand and sell, but there is enough to bring into the house and make into applesauce or filling for a pie or just bite into and enjoy. Most farmers and gardeners measure success in five months or, in the case of garlic and asparagus, a year. People who grow fruit trees measure success in five or six or even 10 years. The ideas are all the same: We plant for the future, whether that is five months or five years.

This month, celebrate the success of this year while we look ahead, already, to the next — which will always be better. 🍎

7 CAMPUS SAFETY TIPS

Every College Student Should Know

Relay these safety tips to your young adults who are about to hit campus for the first time or return for another year.

1. Do not overload electrical outlets, power strips or extension cords. Use power strips with an overcurrent protector.
2. Be aware of your surroundings, especially when listening to music or texting.
3. Unplug small appliances when not in use and all appliances when away for extended periods.
4. This tip still holds true: Never walk alone at night.
5. Avoid using generic cubes or cords. They could overheat, shock or burn you.
6. Locate the emergency call buttons or phones across campus in case of an emergency.
7. Do not put your cellphone on or under your pillow or bedding. It could overheat or catch fire.

Safe Electricity.org®

GUEST COLUMN

Continued from page 14A

line rebuilds. One is a multi-year project that will improve reliability for members in the McGees Mills area. Once the tree clearing is completed, BNF will start construction on the 12-mile project. The final stage of this project is currently in the engineering phase and will be released for construction early in 2025. Our forestry contractors are also clearing the way for a 5-mile section of line on Johns Hill Road near Brookville. This reconstruction project will be completed by United Electric line crews. Together, these two projects account for an additional 17 miles of line that will be rebuilt by the end of 2024.

Along with the McGees Mills project, we have four others in the engineering phase that are nearing completion. The Village of Valier will see new lines in 2025 as we rebuild most of our system in that area. This project includes the replacement of aging wire and poles. The Portland Mills area will also see multiple projects as we work with the Pennsylvania Game Commission and PennDOT to relocate inaccessible power lines closer to the road for easier access. Of course, we must thank our members in these areas for working with us as we attempt to relocate these lines. Having our equipment along the road will enable us to speed up power restoration since crews will be able to use bucket trucks instead of climbing poles to make repairs.

The remaining five projects are in varying stages of design. Many of these are underground lines that have failed multiple times and need to be replaced. Depending on terrain and right-of-way access, we may try to rebuild these lines overhead. It typically takes more than a year to design and prepare a system improvement project for construction. We analyze all possible corridors and costs to determine the best route and placement, whether overhead or underground. These five projects account for 10 miles of line and will likely be completed in the next construction work plan.

We truly appreciate our members' patience and understanding during the construction of our system improvement projects. We do our best to limit the number and duration of planned power outages and try to alert affected members ahead of time. Without the cooperation of our members, we would not be able to accomplish our goals of designing and building a more reliable electric system. On behalf of United Electric, I thank you for your continued support. 🐻

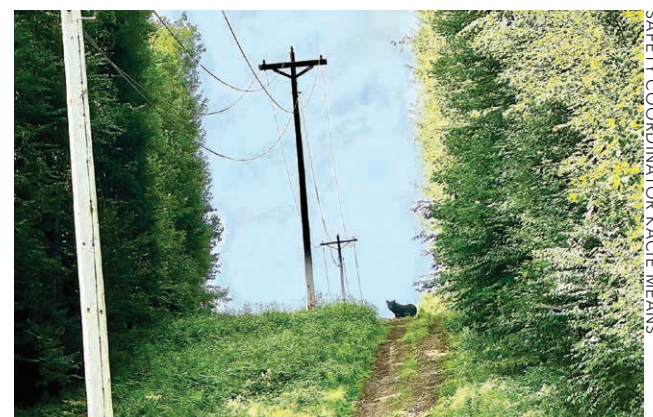
MICHAEL FLOCK
MANAGER OF ENGINEERING



CHAINSAW SAFETY: United Electric Apprentice Lineman Spencer Pomerleau cuts an old pole with a chainsaw after setting a new one. Personal protective equipment is a must while operating a chainsaw.



FINISHING TOUCHES: Crew Chief Chad Guaglianone installs United Electric's identifying pole tag after a new pole is set.



CURIOUS CUB: A lot of United Electric's rights of way (ROW) go directly through forests. While working on our ROWs, employees need to remain alert, especially for curious bears and other animals.

SAFETY COORDINATOR KACIE MEANS

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