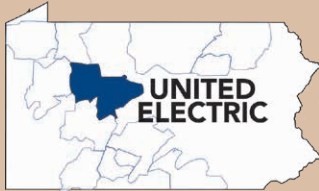




United Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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

What it All Means: Understanding Your Electric Bill



LEN HAWKINS

NOW THAT AUGUST IS OVER, I hope temperatures will cool down a little. In the summer, air conditioning and dehumidifiers are usually the main reasons energy use goes up. When temperatures reach the 90s or higher, cooling systems run more often and use much more electricity than they do on milder days. For many members, that extra cooling has led to a higher electric bill — and a few questions about what drives the cost.

At United Electric Cooperative, we want members to understand what they are paying for each month. Your bill's total amount includes several important costs that help deliver safe, reliable electricity to your home or business.

The biggest part of your bill is often the amount of electricity you use. Electricity is measured in kilowatt-hours (kWh). A 100-watt lightbulb typically uses 100 watts per hour. To measure your kWh use, divide your watts per hour by 1,000. That in mind, one hour of use would be 0.1 kWh.

Another important factor is the cost of power itself. Like the 13 other electric cooperatives in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, United purchases power from Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Allegheny). Power costs can change based on fuel prices and the resources used to generate electricity. However, Allegheny's long-term investments in facilities, including those that generate hydroelectric and nuclear power, helps keep our costs more stable than those of investor-owned utilities.

Hot weather can also affect costs in less obvious ways. When many homes and businesses are using more electricity at the same time, demand across the region increases. Grid operators, like PJM Interconnection, which services Pennsylvania, must make sure enough power is available during these peak periods, when soaring demand also increases the cost of electricity.

Transmission costs are another part of the bill. Before electricity reaches your home, it travels across high-voltage transmission lines from power plants to local distribution systems. These lines and related equipment require ongoing maintenance and upgrades to keep electricity moving reliably, especially as demand grows.

Closer to home, United maintains the local distribution system that delivers electricity to members. This includes poles, power lines, transformers, substations and other essential equipment. These costs are supported through the monthly base rate, which is a flat fee all members pay no matter how much electricity they use. The base rate helps cover the basic costs of keeping the system ready to serve you every day. Those costs include labor and emergency response.

The good news is that small changes can help lower energy use. Try setting your thermostat a few degrees higher when you are away, replacing dirty HVAC filters, using ceiling fans, sealing air leaks and avoiding the use of major appliances during the hottest part of the day. These simple steps can help reduce energy use, lower your bill and ease demand on the local grid.

United's mission is to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity while being open about the factors that affect energy costs. We know every dollar

Continued on page 14C

Rustic Views

A Matter of Satisfaction

GLENN SCHUCKERS

IF AUGUST WAS A MONTH of contractions, September is a month of transition. As anyone who keeps track of things like temperature will tell you, we have often had some very hot days this month, but along with those, we can expect some cool nights.

I like the cool nights because I've been told they put color on the apple cheeks. I never tried any experiments to see if it was true, but it sounded like a good way to find something good about cold nights. It also enhanced the satisfaction that comes with producing a crop.

A prime month for apple picking

When we had an orchard, September was indeed the prime month for picking apples in our geographic zone. By the middle of the month, all but the very latest winter varieties were ripe. We determined ripening by the color

of the seeds. White seeds meant they needed to ripen a bit more, while brown seeds meant they were ready to pick.

Speaking of picking apples, we used to give tours to elementary school children to help them better understand what it takes to get apples from the trees to store shelves. Looking at the 20-bushel bins and trees full of fruit, I could always count on one question from the children: How do you pick all these apples?

I had a stock answer: one at a time.

Harvest was always the most labor-intensive part of having an orchard. To stay in business, we needed to pick about 5,000 bushels of apples, and on average, there are about 175 apples in a bushel, which means we had to pick 875,000 apples.

Allotting for Sundays and rainy days in September, we needed to pick about 35,000 apples a day. With about



THE MOST FRUITFUL DAYS: September is the prime month for picking apples in our region.

10 pickers, that boiled down to about 3,500 apples — or about 20 bushels — per picker per day. That was a good day in a good year.

But as we all know, good days and good years are few and far between. Because our trees were planted before dwarf trees became popular, at least half those apples had to be picked from a ladder between 5 and 15 feet long — and as I said before, one at a time.

It was a challenge, but we managed to do it for about 20 years with a lot of support from very dedicated helpers who saw the value in having a local orchard.

Meeting demands

September is also the month when tomatoes ripen, cucumbers need to turn into pickles, and winter squash needs to be picked and put away. I could often postpone planting seeds and plants for a few days or weeks, but if I put off picking ripe tomatoes or cucumbers, it usually meant they were lost forever.

I am sure that most farmers encounter those same demands because I have seen dairy farmers in fields with tractors and wagons hauling in hay long after the sun has set. I've also seen them driving through cornfields for hours, cutting the crop they need for winter feed. That phrase, "Make hay when the sun shines," is not just an idle thought; it is what farmers live by this time of year.

And if there is a mechanical problem with necessary equipment, the only solution is to fix it as quickly as possible and get back into the field. The repair doesn't need to be permanent, but it does need to be good enough to keep going until the work is done. When I had the orchard, a roll of electrical tape or a lot of bailing wire often kept a tractor going until it could be permanently repaired.

Sore back or shoulder pain? They are annoying, but unless they prevent a farmer from working, they are usually ignored. I have seen farmers limp to their tractor and pull themselves into the seat — maybe with one arm in a sling — so they could get back to work. Sick days and personal days are never in a farmer's vocabulary. Jobs that have to be done get done.

Figuring out 'why?'

That begs the question: "Why do they do it?" I'll bet if you ask 10 farmers that same question, you will get 10 different answers.

"It's what I have always done."

"Someone has to do it if people are going to eat."

"The farm has always been in the family, and I have to keep it going."

"I like being my own boss, and farming lets me do that."
"Farming isn't just a job, it's a way of life."

Those are five different answers, but if I were to ask 40 more farmers the same question, I would most likely receive 40 more different answers.

The same goes for gardeners. Many people who raise gardens don't do it for the money they may make or because their families depend on the harvest they may (or may not) get. I have had a garden of one size or another for about the last 50 years. For about 30 of those, having a garden was a financial necessity.

People who might not have driven 20 miles to buy apples would make the trip if they could get freshly picked sweet corn, tomatoes or beans at the same place. Lately, my gardens have been getting smaller, to the point where this year's garden is in four 4-by-8-foot boxes on the ground. They are called "square-foot gardens" and have made gardening fun again.

My harvests won't be as large as they were 10 years ago, but they will be a harvest from plants and seeds I planted in the soil and tended through the summer. It is that satisfaction that makes the effort worth it. 🍷

FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Continued from page 14A

matters, and we work to make smart investments that support reliable service and the communities we serve.

Later this year, United will introduce a new bill design to make monthly statements easier to read. Beginning in December, bills will have a more modern look, an updated energy use chart, improved service-address information and more space for important messages. More details will be shared in *Penn Lines* and through a bill insert in December.

If you ever have questions about your electric bill or programs that can help you save energy, please reach out. We are here to help you better understand your bill and make choices that work for your household.

Thank you for allowing United Electric to serve you. 🍷

LEN HAWKINS
PRESIDENT & CEO



United Electric
COOPERATIVE, INC.

A Touchstone Energy® Partner



TIPS FOR A SAFE HARVEST

Harvest season brings hard work and can be exhausting, but rushing the job to save time can be extremely dangerous and even deadly when working near overhead power lines. We urge farm operators and workers to keep these safety tips in mind:

Always keep equipment at least 10 feet away in all directions from power lines.

Remember to lower extensions when moving loads.

Use care when operating large machinery near power lines.

Inspect the height of equipment to determine clearance.

If a power line is sagging or looks to be dangerously low, call 888-581-8969 immediately.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

September kicks off the fall shoulder season, when cooler mornings and milder evenings often mean you can give your heating and cooling system a break. Open windows, use ceiling fans and enjoy the fresh air whenever temperatures allow. It's also the perfect time to schedule annual HVAC maintenance before colder weather arrives. Because demand is typically lower during the fall, heating and cooling professionals often have greater availability, making it easier to book an appointment. Regular maintenance can improve your system's efficiency, help prevent unexpected breakdowns and keep your home comfortable all year long.

Source: Dept. of Energy

