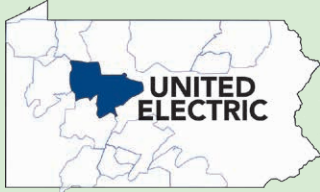




United Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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
Lauren Gustafson, ext. 8501

Manager of Marketing & Member Services
Kristy Smith

Guest Column

Whatever it Takes: Powering Life, from a Lineman's Perspective

Utility line work is ranked as one of the 10 most dangerous jobs in the country. United Electric lineworkers work rain or shine, often in challenging conditions, to ensure you have reliable electricity. We're celebrating National Lineworker Appreciation Day on April 8.

MY NAME IS CARL, and I have been a lineman for 39 years. I'm one of 20 linemen at United Electric who work every day in all weather conditions to make sure our local farms and businesses can operate and our community's homes enjoy comfort and safety. I love being a lineman. It's demanding work, but it's extremely rewarding. Electricity plays a lot of roles in our world, and this is something we fully understand at United Electric.



CARL YEBERNETZKY

The danger

A lot of people know line work is dangerous because we work near high-voltage electricity. Move just the wrong way or lose focus for a split second and it could be deadly. You have to be aware of your surroundings and the safety of the person next to you.

We often work on energized power lines, and you can't always tell they are energized by just looking at them. You're working with an element of danger that requires concentration, and there is no margin for error. The environment compounds the pressure because when you need power the most that is usually when the weather is the worst. I'm often working in storms — with rain, wind, and extreme heat or cold — in the dark, or on the side of the road next to fast-moving traffic. Yes, it's dangerous, but that's what we're trained to do.

Many may not realize it, but we undergo years of training before we can officially be called a lineworker. We start as an apprentice, a title we typically hold for four years. After that apprenticeship — and with more than 8,000 hours of training under our belts — we transition to journeyman lineworkers, and that's when we're considered officially trained in our field. We are certified in first aid, CPR and pole-top rescue, to name a few, but our education is ongoing. Lineworkers receive training continuously to stay mindful of safety requirements and up to date on equipment and procedures.

It's not just our training that helps keep us safe. It is essential that every lineworker looks out for the other. It takes everyone on the crew to do the job safely and correctly. Constant communication ensures all of us go home to our families after every shift.

The physical demands

Line work is physically demanding, but you won't hear any of us complain. I know what I signed up for — loading heavy materials and climbing poles and in and out of buckets. A lot of times, we go places the trucks can't, so I might be hiking through the woods loaded down with 40 pounds of personal protective equipment. Most of us are just glad to be outside. It keeps us mindful of staying in shape and having healthy habits.

The sacrifices

There are some sacrifices to being a lineworker. I'm often first on the scene of an emergency, and I see things that are devastating like car accidents, structure fires and damage from severe storms. You don't know what you're going to face or when you're

Continued on page 16D

Rustic Views

To Everything There is a Time

GLENN SCHUCKERS

A LOT OF THINGS ARE going to happen this month, but some of us are going to want to do things that should be put off. Now, I am the champion of putting things off. I call it “finding the proper time for getting things done.” My wife calls it procrastination. No matter what you call it, there is a lot of value in timing. The trouble is nature doesn’t always know that value.

A few warm days last month may have started making buds swell on some trees and bushes. There have been many years when we did not have lilac blooms because the buds started to swell too early and were too far along when frosts froze them. That’s the way it is with nature — things are on a one-way street. Once trees and bushes begin to “spring” into spring, there is no going back.

What can you do?

Anyone with a fruit tree can tell you about a time when their tree was covered in blooms before the weather

turned cold again. All it takes is one night when temperatures fall into the 20s for the blooms to turn brown and drop off. There is nothing anyone can do about it.

Large commercial orchards in regions where spring frosts are prevalent have discovered if they spray the trees with water the afternoon before a frost, the ice that forms may protect the blossoms. The frozen water is about 32 degrees, which may be a few degrees warmer than the nighttime air temperatures. Sounds counterintuitive, but it actually works.

What doesn’t work very well is to create heat around the trees. When we had the orchard, we spent more than a few nights burning fires there on frosty nights. Once the fires were hot enough to prevent the frost, the trees were scorched on one side and frosted on the other.

The nature of warm air is to rise, not spread out. Since most orchards are planted on hills and in valleys, the warm air goes up while the colder, frosty air settles down. When



TIME IS RELATIVE: Days, months, weeks, minutes and hours all help us measure time, but our patience and nature’s clock all have their own measures.

I asked our resident expert what to do when the temperatures dropped while the trees were in bloom, his advice was to go to bed and get some sleep. In other words, in areas of deep valleys and ridges, there is not much that can be done.

Bushes and plants are another matter. One year I was foolish enough to plant a field of tomatoes around the middle of May. I spent six or seven evenings covering all the plants with “hot caps” to save them from frost. But since it would be too hot under the caps when the sun came up, I had to go back and take them off before the sun got too warm.

I have also wrapped some of our smaller flowering bushes after they started to get close to blooming and the weather turned cold. We have a flowering almond that is beautiful when it blooms in early June, but the flowers are very tender in April and May, so I have learned to keep it under a burlap wrap until after Mother’s Day.

The trouble is it creates a perfect bed and breakfast for rabbits, so I have to keep checking to make sure rabbits aren’t nesting under the burlap.

Timing and patience

I have always noticed Mother’s Day is the best target for apple trees around here to be in bloom. That is the time when most of our apple trees are in bloom. Some of the early ones may be a bit past full bloom, and late varieties, like Winesap and Northern Spy, will be a bit later, but generally we can count on most to be in bloom then.

In other words: “To everything there is a time and a season under heaven.”

This is not the month to plant things with tender buds that will be damaged by frosty nights, nor is it time to plant seeds that will sprout and be above ground in two weeks. Of course, if there are seeds like tomatoes, peppers or cabbage that don’t do well if they don’t get planted until June, they should have been planted and protected last month.

And a word about planting bare-root trees. Contrary to the way it may look, these usually do better than those in pots. At one time, we had about 5,000 apple trees, and all of them had been planted bare root. Dad had done many of them himself or with a helper, and he drafted my brother and me as we reached an age to plant correctly.

The trick with bare-root trees is to make sure there are no air pockets in the hole. That means packing the soil tightly around the roots with lots of probing and thumb packing. Dad taught us to stand over the tree with its trunk between our legs so we could stomp up and down until we were sure the ground was well packed.

Once that is done and the trees are firmly rooted, the buds will begin to open in a couple of weeks, and as spring moves forward, they will begin to grow.

The thing to remember about almost everything in a garden or orchard is that timing is about 90% of success. The other 10% is patience and waiting for nature to run its course.

There are a lot of things we all can learn from both a garden and an orchard, and I think patience may be the biggest lesson. No matter what the catalogs may tell you, no fruit tree is going to bear fruit six months or even a year after it is planted. And I seriously doubt any tomato plant will produce 20 tomatoes the summer after you plant it.

There is no such thing as a carefree orchard or garden. Planting trees, vegetable plants and seeds are but the first of many steps. Nature will help some along the way, but nature is just as helpful to ragweed and quack grass as it is to beans and cucumbers.

A friend of my dad who also had a commercial orchard used to say, “Yes, nature and I are partners in the orchard, but you should have seen the place when she had it by herself.” 🍷



GUEST COLUMN

Continued from page 16A

going to face it.

We get calls at all hours and in the middle of the night. I've missed a lot of holiday dinners, concerts, school plays and other family events. My family is very supportive; my father also worked for a power company. As linemen, we know we need to get the power back on for our friends and neighbors.

It's worth it

One of the things I enjoy most about my job is my coworkers. The co-op is like a second family to many of us. Like a family, it's a culture of trust, teamwork and service. But it's not just a local thing: Cooperation among cooperatives, a co-op principle, means we help co-op crews in many other states when they ask for it. I've had the privilege of working in Mississippi, Kentucky, Virginia, and North Carolina, among



LIFE-SAVING TRAINING: Crew Chief Carl Yebernetsky prepares to lower a training dummy safely to the ground for his yearly pole-top rescue certification. Safely climbing a pole to reach an incapacitated fellow lineworker is a procedure all lineworkers must learn. This and other ongoing training help to instill trust among coworkers in emergency situations.

others. We all work together as a family unit, even us out-of-towners. I've built some great relationships and still keep in touch with a lot of lineworkers I have met over the years.

I take a lot of pride in my work. We all do. Even when it's cold and wet, I know I'm working to keep people warm, dry, and safe. There's a lot of satisfaction in hearing someone yell "thank you" from the window after the lights come back on. No matter how tired I am or how long I've been working, that feeling always makes it worth it.

United Electric employees live in the same communities we serve. We live in the same neighborhoods as our members. We shop at the same stores. Our kids go to the same schools, and many of us volunteer at our local churches and fire companies. If your lights are off, there is a good chance ours are off, too. You can trust we are doing our best to get the lights back on as quickly and safely as possible. 📧

CARL YEBERNETSKY
CREW CHIEF



A Touchstone Energy® Partner 

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, 2024.

Contact **Kristy Smith:**
888-581-8969, ext. 8507
ksmith@unitedpa.com
www.unitedpa.com

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

