



# 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  
814-592-5190

#### 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**  
Len Hawkins

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

**Manager of Marketing & Member Services**  
Kristy Smith

## Market-Driven Increases



**LEN HAWKINS**

**AT UNITED ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**, we continually monitor the cost of wholesale power on the open market because about 33% of the power we need comes from it. The other 67% comes from generation sources we own, which are normally very cost-stable.

2025 was one of the worst years for the power industry. The winter saw drastic cold spells in our region, with that severe weather predicted to continue for years to come. Several rainstorms in the spring and fall brought damaging winds in excess of 50 mph. Summer in our region never found a happy medium and often brought extreme heat with high humidity.

All these factors caused open market rates to increase. If you remember my article in December, I noted how market forces have pushed costs upward, and although we are protected from the worst of the energy market chaos — primarily, through our partnership with Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc., our wholesale energy supplier — rate adjustments must be made to offset additional generation and transmission costs.

After consulting with internal and external rate professionals, United Electric will need to make changes. Beginning with January bills, most members will see the total per kilowatt-hour (kWh) charge increase to \$0.15533/kWh (total generation, transmission and distribution).

This decision is never an easy one to make, especially knowing the cost of everything else in our lives has increased. In fact, United has worked very hard over the last few years to find new ways to absorb the rising costs of fuel, materials and system maintenance.

What does this mean for you, our members? Currently, United's average residential member uses 815 kWh/month. Using this as a base, the average monthly bill will rise from \$165.39 to \$179.69, an increase of \$14.30. We have compared our rates with those of neighboring utilities for your awareness and are happy to report that United's rates are still lower than consumers of those utilities who use the same average kWhs.

There is never a good time to announce a rate increase, but we continue to monitor the situation in conjunction with everything going on in the world today. As your electricity provider, we know that you depend on us to deliver the power you deserve at an affordable price when you need it, no excuses.

Thank you for being a member of United Electric Cooperative and joining our commitment to a healthier community and a better future with safe, reliable, affordable energy for all your needs. Please contact our office at 888-581-8969 if you have more questions. 📞

Until Next Time,

**LEN HAWKINS**  
PRESIDENT & CEO

## 'Faith in a Seed'

GLENN SCHUCKERS

**I THINK CERTAIN TRAITS ARE INHERITED.** Even though he was not a farmer in any sense of the word (he has a Ph.D. in speech therapy and is a professor and administrator at Louisiana State University), my older brother managed to keep a few head of cattle on some land in Louisiana and always thought like a farmer.

And even though I spent 34 years teaching secondary school, I always thought of myself as a farmer, too. In fact, for 25 of those years, I was actively engaged in being a fruit farmer and have continued to plant and tend to a garden for some 55 years. I have always thought of myself as a farmer first.

### A growing experience

The one thing all farmers and folks who work in and around land share is especially relevant this month. The ground is frozen and mostly covered with snow, and there are few if any leaves on the deciduous trees, but the work goes on.

Dairy and beef farmers have cows to feed. People with horses have to feed and groom them. And when we had the orchard, winter was always the time to start pruning fruit trees. In short, there is no “off season” for farmers; there is never a time when we have no jobs to do.

Another trait farmers share is the way they look ahead. One time, a spring frost wiped out an entire year of fruit production, but the orchards still needed care. Still, they weren't cared for in the same way they were when a crop was coming: Mowing was done once a month instead of once a week, the trees were sprayed three times during the summer instead of the usual six, and projects that had been planned in March were postponed until the next year. But the trees were still there. The hope was that the next season would be better, but in the meantime, things needed care.

That's just the way farmers and gardeners think.

### Once a farmer, always a farmer

This January is no exception. Age has taken its toll on my gardening activities, and I can no longer plant, tend and harvest a full-acre garden. As much as I hate to admit it, I will have to make changes. Still, I plan to plant, tend and harvest a garden even if it is not as extensive as it was 10 or 20 years ago.

I have decided that having a garden and fruit trees to tend to is important. I am just as much an orchardist

now with a dozen semi-dwarf apple trees as I was when I had 400 full-sized trees, and I am just as much a gardener now with four or five raised bed gardens as I was with 1 or 2 acres.

It is the idea of being a farmer or gardener that counts just as much as the actual practice.

With that in mind, my helper and Amish neighbor built four 4-by-8-foot frames for raised beds that we will fill with a soil mixture in a few months to house the new gardens. The idea is that a bed 8 inches above ground level will be easier to tend to than plants at ground level. The width will allow me to reach the plants from both sides, and four 8-foot rows will yield as many plants as one 32-foot row.

Will it work? I am not sure. I know I had similar gardens behind the previous house and grew plants like cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, carrots and broccoli that did not do well in the big garden. But no one who puts seeds in the soil is ever sure they will succeed. Planting is an act of faith, and as Henry David Thoreau wrote way back in the 19th century: “I have great faith in a seed. Convince me that you have a seed there, and I am prepared to expect wonders.”

### An act of faith

Thoreau's book, “Faith in a Seed,” has always been a favorite of mine because it talks about how seeds are dispersed, how they grow, and how nature has evolved to produce wonders — how the simple act of placing a seed in the soil shows how man needs to imitate nature. That act shows we have faith in the future and repeating that act millions of times allows society to exist.

But before I or anyone else can plant even a single seed, we must decide which seeds to plant, and therein lies the dilemma. Unless I have seeds from a plant that is not a hybrid, which are also called open-pollinated seeds, I need to select the seeds. Planting seeds from a hybrid plant will not produce plants that are like their parents, so unless I have seeds that I am sure will produce the plants I want, I am at the mercy of companies that sell seeds. Most seed companies are reputable, and the seeds they sell will turn out plants that are as advertised.

That is also a problem. In their drive to be profitable, seed companies need to provide as many different varieties of plants as they can, which is now almost an infinite number. Anyone who has ever selected wallpaper knows what that means — there are so many styles, designs and colors that

selecting one is almost impossible. The same goes for seeds. There are dozens of varieties of almost any vegetable, and they all sound wonderful.

Most gardeners who have bought seeds probably began receiving catalogs early last month, and my heart goes out to the postal delivery people who had to deliver them. Truth be told, I would probably be just as successful if I put all the pages of a seed catalog up on a board, threw a dart and ordered the seed on which the dart landed. I used to spend hours deciding on which variety of corn, squash or green beans to order. I even tried to spread the harvest over a couple months, but that didn't work.

### A road paved with good intentions

Then, there is the matter of how many seeds to order.

When I had a bigger garden, I sometimes had as many as 50 tomato plants, but packets of tomato seeds often had more than 100 seeds. When I started my own plants from seeds, I would plant 100 seeds, and if three-fourths of them sprouted, that meant we had 75 plants.

I did not have the room or means to grow all the plants, but after they had done me the honor of sprouting and growing, I could not bear to cast them out, so they went into the garden where they grew and produced. We sold as much as we could, but that's also how we ended up

with some 50 quarts of homemade sauce on shelves in the basement.

In summary, my idea is really my intention: to have a garden where I can work for a few hours without being immobilized the next day. But as Dad used to say, the road to perdition is paved with good intentions. Stay tuned. 🎧



**BRENDA L. SWARTZLANDER SCHOLARSHIP**

**ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR THE BRENDA L. SWARTZLANDER SCHOLARSHIP\***

Eligible applicants must major in:

- Business Management
- Engineering

**Deadline to apply: 4/15/26**

Applicants are also eligible to apply for the Shine the Light Scholarship.

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

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

# EXPLORE

## Washington D.C.



### Explore

See museums, memorials and monuments all over the city. This all-inclusive trip packs in everything!



### Network

Meet students from nearly every state while you become part of almost 60,000 Youth Tour alumni.



### Learn

Discover the impact electric cooperatives have nationally and meet with your congressional leaders face-to-face.



### Plan

Transportation for the 2026 Youth Tour picks up from many convenient locations across Pennsylvania on Monday, June 15, and returns on Saturday, June 20.

## YOUTH TOUR 2026

### HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS: THIS IS YOUR MOMENT!

#### APPLICATION DEADLINE: 2/21/26

#### APPLY NOW



**Contact Kristy Smith**  
✉ ksmith@unitedpa.com  
☎ 888-581-8969, Ext. 8507  
🌐 www.unitedpa.com






# 2026 United Electric Board Elections to be Held for Districts 1, 7

United Electric Cooperative members residing in Districts 1 and 7 will be eligible to vote in the 2026 director elections in May.

Members residing in Districts 1 and 7 are also eligible to run for the board (see below for districts by county and township). A mail-in ballot will be sent to every member in Districts 1 and 7, giving everyone an opportunity to vote, including those who do not, or cannot, attend the annual meeting. The cooperative's 2026 Annual Meeting will be held

Wednesday, May 20, at the Brady Township Community Center in Luthersburg. More information about the 2026 election will be provided in future issues of *Penn Lines*.

Members residing in Districts 1 and 7 who are interested in running for the United Electric Board of Directors should read the following bylaws carefully:

## UNITED ELECTRIC BYLAWS

### ARTICLE IV - BOARD MEMBERS

#### SECTION 2. Districts (excerpt).

**DISTRICT NO. 1.** *Armstrong County* - Redbank Township; *Clarion County* - Clarion, Farmington, Highland, Limestone, Millcreek, and Redbank Townships; *Forest County* - Barnett Township; *Jefferson County* - Barnett and Eldred Townships.

**DISTRICT NO. 7.** *Clearfield County* - Girard, Goshen, Huston, and Lawrence Townships; *Elk County* - Fox, Horton, Millstone, Ridgway, and Spring Creek Townships; *Jefferson County* - Heath Township.

#### SECTION 3. Qualifications.

No person shall be eligible to become or remain a Director of the Cooperative who is not a member in good standing of, and receiving electric service as required in Section 2. hereof from the Cooperative at such member's primary residential abode for a minimum period of one continuous year immediately preceding his/her election within the particular district which such member is to represent. No person shall be eligible to become or remain a Director of, or to hold any other position of trust in, the Cooperative who:

- (a) is in any way employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise; including, but not limited to, the sale and distribution of electric power;
- (b) is engaged in regularly selling at wholesale or retail, goods, equipment, or material that is used in and about the business of the Cooperative;
- (c) is unwilling to become acquainted with the business and working of the Cooperative;
- (d) does not complete half (50%) of the required NRECA Director Certification Training within three (3) years of election or appointment, and complete NRECA Director Certification at the conclusion of the Director's second term in office;
- (e) shall miss three (3) consecutive regular meetings of the Board without just cause and excuse filed with the Secretary and approved by the Board;
- (f) is not willing and able to attend all regular and special meetings of the Board, unless prevented by unavoidable circumstances;
- (g) is in any way employed (or is the spouse of an employee) by the Cooperative or has been an employee (or is the spouse of a former employee) of any electric cooperative or association;
- (h) has been convicted of a felony within the last five (5) years;

(i) is the parent, husband, wife, son, daughter, brother or sister of a person regularly employed by the Cooperative, whether by the whole or half blood or by adoption.

(j) has been removed as a Director of this Cooperative by vote of the Members or the Board. 'Ineligibility' under this subsection may be waived by the Board, at the Board's sole discretion, if the Director was removed by the Board.

Upon establishment of the fact that a nominee for Director lacks eligibility under this Section or as may be provided elsewhere in these bylaws, it shall be the duty of the Judge of Elections, as hereinafter provided, to disqualify such nominee. Upon the establishment of the fact that any person being considered for, or already holding, a position of trust in the Cooperative lacks eligibility under this Section, it shall be the duty of the Board to withhold such position from such person, or to cause such person to be removed therefrom, whichever be the case. Upon establishment of the fact that a Director is holding office in violation of this Section, it shall be the duty of the remaining Directors on the Board to remove such Director from office. Nothing contained in this Section shall, or shall be construed to, affect in any manner the validity of any such action taken at any meeting of the Board of Directors; PROVIDED the action taken was one in which none of the Directors had an interest adverse to that of the Cooperative.

#### SECTION 4. Nominations.

All incumbent Directors are automatically nominated to run for the office of Director and shall be one of the nominees to run for the office of Director, unless they decline and/or refuse to run. Any additional nominations for director shall be made by the submission of a written petition signed by not less than twenty-five (25) members of the Cooperative in their respective district. Such petition shall contain the following information:

1. Statement Release for Background Check Information;
2. Signed Review of the Director Oath of Office;
3. Signed statement that petitioner has reviewed the qualifications and is eligible to be elected as a Director of United Electric;
4. Brief Biography of Petitioner.

All such nominations by petition shall be addressed to the Judge of Elections and must be received at the Cooperative headquarters office no later than 4:30 p.m. on the last business day in January immediately preceding the annual meeting.

Nominations by petition not received in a timely manner or with incomplete, untrue, or inaccurate documentation will be disqualified. There will be no nominations taken from the floor and there will be no write-in candidates.

To receive petition forms and the additional information that must be completed for a director nomination, please contact Kristy Smith, manager of marketing & member services, at 888-581-8969, Ext. 8507.

**\* Please note: Completed petitions must be returned to the cooperative headquarters in DuBois no later than Friday, Jan. 30.**