Beyond power, a history of innovative partnerships

Your parents, grandparents and great-grandparents formed this electric cooperative. They set the poles, strung the lines and went door-to-door asking the people in the community to become members of the cooperative. By making an investment in the co-op, a service was provided that would bring light and opportunity to this community.

The power of electricity transformed our communities. In the 1930s, opportunities for electrification eluded us because established utilities didn’t think it was economical to serve less-populated areas. So, our forefathers took it upon themselves to create their own utility, and that’s how Union Power Cooperative came to be.

Electricity introduced light, refrigeration, household conveniences, entertainment and economic opportunity. But at first, some cooperative members weren’t sure how to use it. One member wouldn’t unscrew the lightbulb in her kitchen because she was afraid the electricity would spill onto the floor. Others didn’t know how to operate their new appliances, or work safely around electricity.

So, your cooperative taught them. As a cooperative business, one of our founding principles is “education.” This principle led us to set up demonstrations in our lobby and host booths at community events to help our members understand how to best use their new tools.

That same pioneering, innovative spirit that led to the electrification of our community and education of our original members still drives us today. Beyond providing you with electricity, we are implementing new tools and resources to help you better understand and manage your energy use.

Technology is fueling consumer expectations, opening up exciting options that put you in control. Think of mobile banking and streaming video services – those came as a result of evolving consumer expectations. As a cooperative member, we think you deserve options for how, where and when you use energy, too.

We’ve integrated sophisticated technology into our system that allows us to offer you meaningful energy management services, like high usage alerts, real-time energy data and pay-as-you-use options.

Find the latest news as well as tools and services available to you by visiting us at union-power.com.
A path to energy independence

While fireworks and Independence Day parades are synonymous with the Fourth of July, no such fanfare comes to mind when discussing energy efficiency.

Perhaps it should. If you think about it, energy efficiency not only benefits individuals and families, but the country as a whole. Energy efficiency, combined with energy conservation and advances in technology in the utility industry, ultimately help our country on a path toward greater energy independence. And that’s worth celebrating.

Benefits of efficiency
At its essence, greater efficiency means less energy is used for the production of goods and services. For individual consumers, a reduction in energy use usually translates to a tangible financial benefit—more money in your wallet at the end of the month. If your co-op neighbors are also using less energy, collectively, it means the overall cost of providing that electricity could be lower and may result in reduced costs for co-op members. For many, this is reason enough to strive for greater energy efficiency.

On a national level, energy efficiency, sometimes called the “fifth fuel,” has a more profound impact. It can potentially boost the economy by allowing consumers and businesses to invest in other areas. As importantly, greater energy efficiency may slow the rate at which domestic energy is depleted, and therefore reduce or diminish the need for foreign energy.

Strike up the band
There’s no need to wait for the first exploding burst of fireworks in the night sky to start your energy efficiency efforts. Every American can take charge of their own energy use, regardless of the date on the calendar. Small steps can lead to a big difference for you and your neighbors, whether across the road or across the country.

Energy efficiency can generally be achieved two ways. The first is with mechanical change, such as replacing an older HVAC unit or less efficient appliance or with a new ENERGY STAR model or upgrading to new, insulated windows. Less-expensive actions include improving the seal of your home’s “envelope” by caulking exterior windows and doors and sealing openings where pipes and ductwork meet the outside. Swapping out the last incandescent bulbs (inside and outside) with LEDs also makes a noticeable difference.

Smart control
The second way to realize energy efficiency is through smarter management of your energy use. Leveraging smart thermostat technology is a good place to start. Most smart thermostats are paired with an app, allowing remote control access by mobile phone or tablet. Program your thermostat to reflect your family’s schedule. Many thermostat programs allow you to view and edit your thermostat schedule and monitor the amount of energy used. Sometimes, however, energy efficiency is simply a matter of changing old habits such as washing clothes in cold water instead of hot or running the dishwasher during off-peak times.

Regardless of the path you take on the road to energy efficiency and independence, Union Power Cooperative can help you on the journey. View our energy savings calculators at union-power.com/energysavingcalculators to help you find ways to save.
Pump up your pool’s efficiency

After a low-impact workout in the backyard, a swimming pool provides the perfect summer retreat. But who wants it to be a wallet drain? Soak up these pool efficiency tips to save money while maintaining your personal, pristine oasis.

Each pool is equipped with an energy guzzler: the pump. The bigger the pump, the higher the power bill. Make sure your pool uses the smallest pump possible. New products like variable-speed pumps offer a good way to save. A knowledgeable pool supply or service firm can help choose a proper pump for your pool, taking into consideration its size, filter, and piping.

Greater savings can come from decreasing pump operation time, no matter the pump size. Keep drains clear of debris, or your pump will work harder to circulate water. Also, find a proper balance for backwashing the filter. Too much backwashing—the process of filtering and disposing of dirty water—wastes water, while too little strains the pump.

Here are some common myths that lead to extra pump time (and wasted energy):

**I need to run my pump to keep chemicals mixed** - **FALSE**
Circulate while adding chemicals, and they will stay mixed. There is no need to recirculate the water each day to “re-mix” the water.

**My pool will be dirty if I don’t run my pump to constantly clean debris** - **FALSE.**
Try running your pump for six hours or less a day, as suggested by the U.S. Department of Energy’s EnergySavers.gov. If the cleanliness is not to your liking, increase filtration time by 30-minute increments until you are satisfied. If six hours works well, try decreasing filtration time to find a balance with energy efficiency.

To keep debris down without running your pump overtime, use a skimmer to manually clean the water. Also, try using a timer to run your filter for several short periods during the day rather than allowing debris to pile up after one long continuous filtration.

**I need my pump to run continuously to keep algae at bay** - **FALSE.**
Proper chemical balance and brushing down pool walls are the best algae fighters.

Make sure your pool isn’t draining energy dollars needlessly by adjusting pump time and investing a little legwork. You’ll have a prime poolside spot to relax in afterward, and the relief you’ll see on your power bill will be well worth the effort.

If you’re thinking about installing a pool but don’t know how it will affect your power bill, check out our pool pump calculator along with more tools to help you save energy around your house, by visiting us at union-power.com/energysavingscalculators.

Union Power Cooperative ▪ July 2017
Bright Ideas: A far-reaching impact

Since 1994, Union Power Cooperative has been awarding grants to local teachers whose innovative, classroom-based projects would not otherwise receive funding. With over $20,000 in grants distributed across five counties each year, the cooperative is constantly doing its part to engage in local communities.

Taking pride in awarding grants, Union Power’s Communications team visits winning schools each fall to surprise a deserving teacher in front of his/her classroom. This past year, it was the co-op’s Communications staff that was surprised. While presenting an award to Art teacher Danielle Gaimari from Cox Mill High School, the staff learned of the long-reaching effect Gaimari’s grant would have on those less fortunate. Titled “Portraits of Hope,” the art class was given a service learning project that allowed them to learn about the culture and atmosphere of the country Bolivia.

Upon learning about the large population of orphans who have been left without families as well as any personal belongings, the class purchased 36 portraits of children from Bolivia. The class then took to canvas to paint individual portraits of their assigned student.

“The Portraits of Hope project gave me a new perspective on how people in other countries live,” explained student Madison Castles.

Another student described her connection with her “new friends” as “very emotional.” Danielle Rizzo said, “I know what it is like to lose someone special and not have anything but memories to look back on.”

Once the portraits were complete and a personal note added, the project was packaged and delivered to Bolivia and handed out to orphaned students. Receiving their individual treasure with smiles and laughter, the students were recorded displaying their gratitude. The video was sent back to Ms. Gaimari, who viewed it with her classroom. With goosebumps and tears, her art class was able to see the direct impact such a small gift could make in the life of a child who has been left homeless.

This Bright Ideas grant, along with other creative ideas brought to fruition in classrooms from Cabarrus County through Union County, allow students to make a difference in the life of an individual. Whether creating an inviting learning environment for children with special needs, to designing and building chairs and bookshelves to be displayed in the pediatric units of our local hospitals, the Bright Ideas program has a far-reaching impact.

To date, Union Power Cooperative has awarded over $276,000 in grants to schools within our five-county service territory. On a statewide level, more than $10.9 million in grants have been awarded all over North Carolina, impacting 2.1 million students.

The Bright Ideas application period is open each year from April through September and grants are awarded in November. Submit your innovative project today by visiting union-power.com/brightideas.
The art class was given a service learning project that allowed them to learn about the culture and atmosphere of the country Bolivia. Upon learning about the large population of orphans ... the class then took to canvas to paint individual portraits of their assigned student.
Please make room for roadside crews

When the power goes out, so do Union Power Cooperative’s line crews. Line workers are the first to respond after an outage occurs, and they work tirelessly to restore power to the communities we serve.

If you’re traveling and see one of our crews on the side of the road, we kindly ask that you move over if possible and give them a little extra space to work. We deeply care about the safety of all, and this extra precaution ensures just that.

If you approach a crew while traveling on a two-lane road in North Carolina, moving over isn’t an option. The North Carolina “Move Over” law requires motorists to slow down, move over if possible, and approach cautiously when a utility vehicle is stopped on the side of the road restoring electrical service during an unplanned event such as a hurricane or ice storm. If you approach a crew while traveling on a four-lane road, and safety and traffic conditions allow, we ask that you move over into the far lane.

Utility crews aren’t the only ones who could use the extra space. Emergency responders, such as police officers, firefighters and emergency medical technicians, often find themselves responding to emergency situations near busy roadways. We ask that you follow the same procedures mentioned above to help keep these crews safe.

There’s plenty of room for all. Let’s work together to keep everyone safe on our local roadways.
Co-op Connections
Start saving today!

Cooperative members have saved $100 million in pharmacy costs nationwide using their Co-op Connections card. At Union Power, our participating members have saved over $66,000 in prescription costs locally.

In addition to pharmacy savings, Co-op Connections offers local discounts. We have over 155 local businesses in our area that offer a wide variety of services to Union Power members.

Start taking advantage of these savings today. A full list of participating local businesses can be found by visiting us at union-power.com/coopconnections.

We have over 155 local businesses in our area that offer a wide variety of services to Union Power members.

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We have 155 local businesses offering discounts to our members in a wide variety of services. Plus all the National Discounts and Pharmacy discounts too. 22 new local businesses have been added in the last three months.

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Cathy’s Coffee
“ We do provide a discount for the Union Power Co-op. I have regulars who come in and mention the discount occasionally we will have new customers ask about the discount. Thank you for the program.”
Owner, Cathy

Hess Tire and Auto – Monroe, NC
“ I have member who comes in several times a month. They do not need to show their card just mention the program and we give them $5.00 off oil change.”
Manager, David

union-power.com/coopconnections

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TWO NEWS BUSINESSES

FACE ART & MORE
10% DISCOUNT

LAID BACK TRAVELS-INDIAN TRAIL
$25 BOOKING BONUS FOR 5+ NIGHT LAND VACATION
AND/OR $25 ON-BOARD CREDIT FOR ANY CRUISE
During the next month, you may see our tree-trimming crews in your neighborhood. ABC Professional Tree Services, Asplundh Tree Expert Co., and Carolina Tree Care.

**Cabarrus County**
England Rd, Hartsell Rd, Joyner Rd, Log Cabin Trail, Mineral Dr, Mt Pleasant Rd S, Reed Mine Rd, Smith Rd

**Union County**
Duncan Keziah Rd, Fowler Rd, Maple Hill Rd, Red Fox Run Rd, Secrest Hill Dr, Emily Ln, Price Dairy Rd, Roanoke Church Rd, Poplin Rd, Hilton Meadow Dr, Creekwood Dr, Meadowood Dr,

Country Villa Dr, James Hamilton Rd, Monterey Ln, Clear Creek Dr, Arbor Creek Ct, Northwood Dr, Secret Shortcut Rd, Willis Long Rd, N Rocky River Rd, Myers Rd, Willow Ln, Executive Point Dr, Haywood Rd, Aldersbrook Dr, Helmsville Rd, Chestnut Ln, Red Barn Trail, Antioch Church Rd, Walden Ln, Greywood Ln, Cari Ln, Michelle Dr, Amanda Dr

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1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410.

2. fax: (202) 690-7442.

3. email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.