

COOPERATIVE

REVIEW

For members of Union Power Cooperative



Celebrating Agricultural Partnerships

Eighty years ago, farmers founded electric cooperatives like Union Power, and we continue to work closely with our state's agricultural industry to build a brighter future for our rural communities. National Ag Day is March 23, but we are thankful every day to serve our agricultural members by helping them improve efficiency and achieve sustainability goals.

With this in mind, Union Power and the rest of North Carolina's electric cooperatives recently developed a new initiative called **BEST Solutions**. This initiative offers a wide range of customized electric tools and technologies related to **Beneficial Electrification** (BE) and **Sustainable Technologies** (ST) that can meet the needs of agricultural, commercial, and industrial businesses.

New electric technologies are emerging rapidly and are making processes, devices, and equipment cheaper, smarter, and cleaner than ever. Using electricity instead of fossil fuels – what we call **beneficial electrification** – can yield benefits that include cost savings, higher productivity, and reduced emissions. Examples include electric irrigation, electric equipment like forklifts, transportation refrigeration units, and indoor agriculture.

Sustainable technologies are also growing in popularity as many farms and businesses strive to meet clean energy goals. We can apply our expertise and resources to help you

adopt the right technologies to meet your needs. Increased demand for low-carbon energy sources and a decline in the cost of solar and energy technologies are creating more options for businesses interested in utilizing diverse power sources. Potential sustainable technology solutions include solar power and energy storage devices, microgrids that integrate renewable and conventional generation sources, and **Renewable Energy Credits** (RECs) programs.

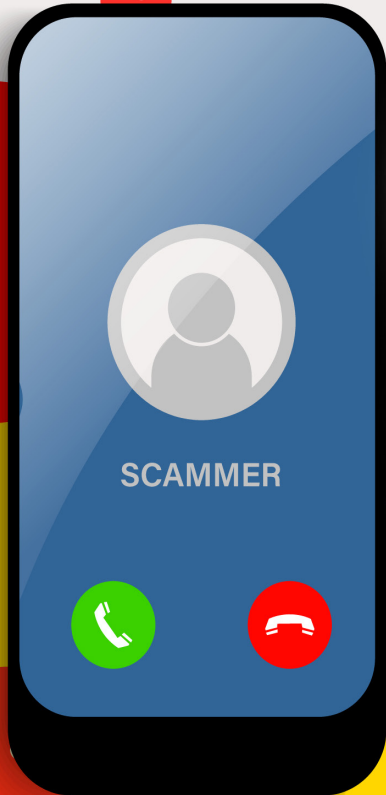
All these technologies and solutions play a part in achieving our vision of a Brighter Future for the people, businesses, and communities we serve. This vision includes a voluntary goal of reducing our carbon emissions by 50% from 2005 levels by 2030 and achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, along with a continued commitment to delivering reliable, affordable electricity, investing in innovative solutions and technologies, and enriching our local communities.

Thank you again to our farmers and agricultural members for the vital ways you support our daily lives. We are proud to serve you and look forward to continuing to partner with you to enhance your operations and our communities.

For more information about **BEST Solutions** and other programs available to agricultural cooperative members, visit ncelectriccooperatives.com/best-solutions.



Don't Fall Prey to Utility Scams



Unwanted calls from unknown numbers are annoying. Calls from familiar numbers requesting money can be alarming and can cost you anywhere from a few dollars to a few hundred dollars. Scammers are becoming more organized and skillful in their tactics to employ prompt responses. Well-organized scammers tend to spoof or replicate the phone number that appears on your caller ID to make it look like you are receiving an incoming call from a Union Power representative. Scammers tend to utilize aggressive and intimidating tactics to prompt a swift response from members. The typical script used for an energy provider scam call is an alert that you are behind on your energy bill, your

account is delinquent and will result in your electricity being shut off within an hour or the same day if you don't pay. If you missed the call, you may receive a text message stating you owe a specific amount of money to avoid disconnection.

Scammers recognize the importance of electricity in our daily lives, and often run utility scams to take advantage of members. As we continue to navigate through the COVID-19 pandemic, we are aware of the increasing number of fraudulent calls made to members. The common misconception is scammers target older adults and they are typical to become victim. Truth is, anyone is at risk of being scammed. Successful scammers master in manipulative tactics.

You do not have to fall victim to these schemes. Here are a few tips to help you handle calls from scammers:



Don't give out your personal or financial information.

Scammers do not know a lot about you. They could have gained access to your name, phone number, and address from public records. Scammers will often ask probing questions to gain additional access to your information. Do not fall for it! Never give out personal information including account numbers, social security numbers, mother's maiden name, passwords, birth date, or other identifying information in response to unexpected calls.



Take your time.

Don't feel pressured to make a decision immediately; this extra step can save you time and money. Hang up and call Union Power to speak to a customer service representative even if the telephone number matches. Union Power does not request nontraditional payment methods for your energy service.



Know the basic details of your energy bill and payment history.

It is always good to check your account status prior to responding to a request for payment. Union Power offers several ways to monitor your energy account. Sign in to your account on union-power.com for 24-hour access, or you can call 704-289-3145 to speak with a customer service representative Monday-Friday between the hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

As your energy provider, we pride ourselves on providing you with an exceptional member experience. Your safety is important to us and we want to ensure you do not fall victim to scams.



Why NC GreenPower?

You can help protect the environment and support STEM education within our local schools by contributing to NC GreenPower!

Union Power has teamed with other utilities across North Carolina to offer our members a renewable energy alternative called NC GreenPower. The program is designed to improve the environment by supporting renewable energy, carbon offset projects, and providing grants for educational solar installations at NC K-12 schools.

Union Power members can voluntarily contribute \$4 a month through their utility bill to help support a cleaner environment through electricity produced from renewable resources. For every \$4 donated, 125 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of renewable energy is supplied to the electric grid in North Carolina rather than from traditional sources.

All contributions are forwarded directly to NC GreenPower for payment to approved green power generators, provide solar educational packages each year to select schools in the Solar+Schools program, and cover NC Greenpower's cost to administer the program. Contributions are tax-free and qualify as a tax-deductible contribution for income tax purposes.

It's easy to participate. Just visit union-power.com/renewable-energy/nc-greenpower to learn more and to sign up. Sign up today and begin contributing with your next electric bill. Remember, you have the power to make a difference!



Move over, it's the law!

The "Move Over" law in North Carolina requires motorists approaching or passing any public service or utility vehicle that is pulled over and operating a warning signal to reduce speed and move their vehicles into a nearby lane, if possible. This includes electric utility vehicles stopped on roadway shoulders, with amber lights flashing. If the roadway has only one lane for proceeding traffic, or if the approaching vehicle may not change lanes safely, the motorist must slow the vehicle and proceed at a reduced speed. Failure to do so can create a safety hazard for the workers and can result in a \$500 fine for the driver of the vehicle.

Motorists should watch for utility service crews, comply with the law, slow down, and move over for utility service trucks. *It could be a matter of life and death!*

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME REMINDER

Don't forget to spring
forward on March 14!
Set your clocks forward
by one hour.





Electric Vehicles 101

As their name implies, electric vehicles are powered – in all or in part – by electricity. All-electric vehicles charge by plugging the vehicle into an electric power source, like an outlet or special charging station. The energy is stored in a battery, and the battery powers the vehicle when it is in use. Hybrid electric vehicles are powered by a combination of an electric motor and an internal combustion engine that runs on gasoline.

What are the benefits?

Electric vehicles (EVs) offer numerous benefits over traditional gas-powered vehicles, including increased energy efficiency, reduced environmental impact, and lower fuel and maintenance costs. According to the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), EVs can be more than twice as energy-efficient, save 70% in fuel costs, and reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 75% compared to internal combustion engines. And the good news is that electricity continues to get more efficient as a power source and its price is more stable than fossil fuels.

Other considerations?

Drivers often cite “range anxiety” as a primary barrier to adopting electric vehicles, but as electric vehicles continue to make up more of the auto market, so too will charging stations. Additionally, battery technology is improving the number of miles electric vehicles can travel on an electric charge, expanding the vehicles’ use from day-to-day commuting and activities to transit and travel.

Union Power Cooperative strives to provide our members with the knowledge needed to make informed energy decisions. Visit our website at union-power.com for more information and to find out if an electric vehicle is right for you.

Need money for college?

Union Power Cooperative is investing in local communities by offering 10- \$1,000 scholarships to area high school seniors who will be chosen from our five-county service area.

All applications must be postmarked or emailed by **March 19, 2021**.

To learn more about this program or to download an application, go to union-power.com/educational-programs/college-scholarships.



Are You Ready to Go Paperless?

Sign Up for E-bill or E-mail!

Switching to E-Bill and online bill pay has many advantages. Probably the best one of all is that it's FREE! Not only can you have your bills delivered electronically, but you can also pay them online without paying a cent for stamps or envelopes.

Other great benefits of receiving and paying bills online include:

- **Convenience** – You don't have to be at home to view or pay bills. You can access them quickly and securely online anytime from anywhere.
- **Enhanced Security** – Replacing paper bills with electronic versions allow you to reduce the flow of personal information from unsecured mailboxes, where paper mail can be a target for theft.
- **Environmentally Friendly** – Using green-friendly E-bills and online bill pay reduces the demand for paper, which reduces solid waste and curb the release of greenhouse gases.
- **Safeguard Your Credit Score** – You can receive e-mail reminders when bills are due and schedule automatic payments, so your bills are paid on time, helping you maintain good credit.
- **Greater Organization** – The days of having stacks of bills on your desk are history. Plus, there's no filing because your billing info is available online, and you can search for a specific bill when you need it.

Stop receiving paper bills and start receiving electronic notifications by signing up for E-bill today. Visit union-power.com/member-resources-services/sign-up-for-ebill to enjoy the convenience of having access to your billing information whenever you want, wherever you are.



Bright Ideas Education Grants

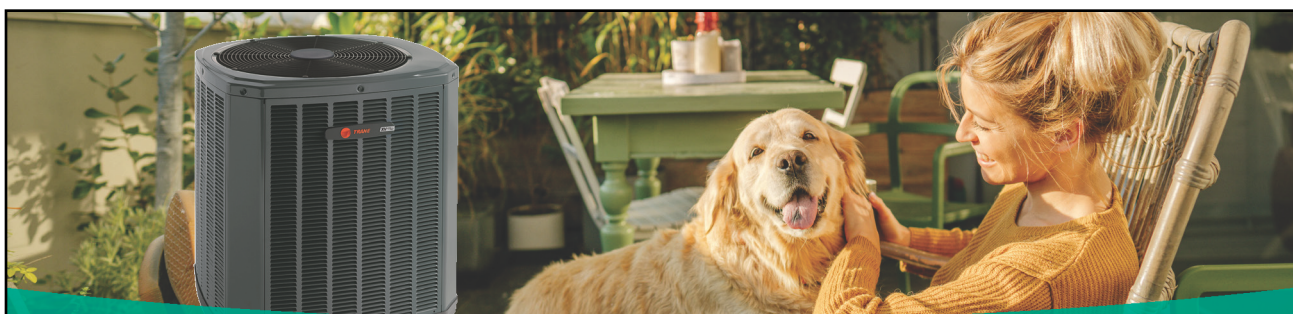
Make Classroom and Remote Learning Projects Possible

Sixteen local teachers received more than \$20,000 in Bright Ideas Education Grants from Union Power last year, benefitting nearly 4,300 students at schools in Cabarrus, Stanly, and Union counties.

Typically, these grants bring creative projects to life inside classrooms. However, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, ideas receiving grants included ways to help students learn both in the classroom and remotely. Grants are awarded for projects in all subject areas, including music, art, history, reading, science, and math.

“Teachers in our area have discovered new and innovative ways to support the education of their students during this unprecedented time — which is what the Bright Ideas grant program is all about,” said Carrie Stroud, vice president of communications & marketing at Union Power. “We are thankful we can help strengthen our communities through programs like Bright Ideas.”

Applications are accepted each year from April through mid-September. The application process will reopen for interested teachers on **April 1, 2021**.



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704-283-9047
savewithunion.com

3 Electrifying Kitchen Appliances to Save Time and Energy

Whether your oven and stovetop are powered by gas or electricity, it's no secret that they consume more energy than smaller countertop appliances, like slow cookers and toaster ovens. In addition to efficiency, smaller kitchen appliances can provide faster cooking times and less hassle with cleanup.

If you're looking for convenient cooking methods with the added bonus of energy efficiency, here are three electrifying appliances for your kitchen:



Air fryers are becoming increasingly popular, and consumers have many good things to say about these handy little appliances. Air fryers use convection to circulate hot air and cook the food--this means little to no oil is required, resulting in healthier meals than those from traditional fryers. Air fryers are small so they won't take up much of your counter space, and with everything cooked in the fryer, cleanup will be a breeze. Air fryers are available in a variety of sizes, and prices range from \$40 to \$200+.

Electric griddles have certainly been around for a while, and they offer several benefits for any home chef (beyond bacon and eggs!). Griddles are convenient because you can cook everything at once--like a "one-pan" meal, and the possibilities are endless. From fajitas to sandwiches to French toast, griddles can help satisfy any taste buds. They consume small amounts of energy and provide quick cooking times, so your energy bill will thank you. Prices and sizes for griddles vary, but you can typically find one for about \$30 at your local retail stores.



Pizza brings people together, so why not consider a **pizza maker** for your kitchen? These compact countertop machines are an inexpensive alternative to a costly brick oven, and they use less energy than your traditional oven. Choose your own fresh ingredients to whip up a faster, healthier pizza at home. Plus, most pizza makers are multifunctional and can be used to cook flatbreads, frittatas, quesadillas, and more. You can purchase a pizza maker for about \$30 to \$150+ online or at your local retailer.

These are just a few electrifying appliance options for your kitchen. Remember, when you're cooking a smaller meal, countertop appliances can save time and energy. To learn about additional ways to save energy at home, visit union-power.com.

Right-of-Way Clearing

During the next month, you may see our tree-trimming crews in your neighborhood: ABC Professional Tree Services, Asplundh Tree Expert LLC, and Lewis Tree Service.

Cabarrus County: Barkley Rd, Barrier Georgeville Rd, Bondale Dr, Bost Cut Off Rd, Brush Harbor Rd, Cal Bost Rd, Cliffdale Dr, Cliffhaven Dr, Cold Springs Rd S, County Line Rd, Faith Trl, Flowes Store Rd E, Heathcliff Rd, Homecliff Dr, Joe Bost Rd, Joyner Rd, Miami Church Rd, Miami Ln, Mine Springs Rd, Mt Pleasant Rd S, Robert Bost Rd, Roundcliff Dr, Sossoman Springs Rd, Wickersham Rd, Yellow Poplar Ln

Mecklenburg County: Ardley Park Way, Clear Crossing Ln, Davis Rd, Ravenglass Ln, Truelight Church Rd, Versage Dr, Willow Bend Ln, Wilson Grove Rd, Wyndbend Ln

Stanly County: Canyon Ct, Chapel Rd, Dry Rd, Edgefield Rd, Hartsell Rd, Lorene Dr, Mabry Rd, Old Aquadale Rd, Reap Rd, Sides Rd, Tyson Rd, Wrenn Rd

Union County: Crow Rd, Doster Rd, Forest Springs Dr, Foxworth Dr, Hollow Tree Ln, John Baker Rd, N Rocky River Rd, Porter Dr, Red Maple Dr, Roscoe Howey Rd, Rushing Rd, S Potter Rd, S Rocky River Rd, Timnah Ln, Tom Laney Rd, Waxhaw Hwy, Weddington Rd, Wildwood Rd, Willoughby Rd, Willoughby Woods Dr, Wind Carved Ln



For more information about Union Power's vegetation management program or tree trimming practices, please call 704-289-3145 and speak with Wil Ortiz (ext. 3323), Carrie Lorenz-Efird (ext. 3291), or Ted Connell (ext. 3320). Visit union-power.com for monthly right-of-way clearing updates.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month:

Don't keep your refrigerator too cold. The Department of Energy recommends a temperature setting of 35 to 38 degrees for the fresh food compartment and zero degrees for the freezer. Make sure the refrigerator doors are sealed airtight to maximize efficiency.

Source: energy.gov



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

The Cooperative Review newsletter is published monthly for the members and friends of Union Power Cooperative.

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