

Cooperative Review

SEPTEMBER 2021



September Marks Annual Celebration for Driving Electric

National Drive Electric Week kicks off Sept. 25, and Union Power is joining this nationwide celebration to highlight the many benefits of driving electric.

Electric vehicles (EVs) have a lot to offer our member-consumers, including increased convenience and cost savings, decreased maintenance, and a better driving experience.

Today's EVs offer near-instant torque, meaning fast acceleration and more response behind the wheel. There are sleek options to fit any driver, from sedans to SUVs. As for charge time, vehicles will vary depending on the brand and type of battery they have. Because they have fewer moving parts than gas-powered cars, they require less maintenance and no oil changes. Finally, they continue to become more affordable, especially when paired with rebates, tax incentives, and a low-interest loan available to cooperative members through the ElecTel Cooperative Federal Credit Union.

Union Power is taking steps to make it more convenient than ever to drive an electric vehicle. We are partnering with other electric cooperatives across North Carolina to build an electric vehicle charging network that allows EV drivers to easily travel throughout our state and to the communities co-ops are proud to call home.



If you are considering driving electric, contact one of our energy specialists at 704-289-3145, or visit union-power.com/electricvehicles for more information.



Check Out Our Electric Vehicle Calculator:

Our Electric Vehicle Calculator is one of many resources that allow members to compare their gas-powered vehicles with various plug-in and hybrid EVs to understand the difference in monthly costs and savings. Members can access this feature by visiting union-power.com/energysavingscalculators.



A Return on Your Investment

Capital Credits Coming Soon

Paying your electric bill isn't just payment for service—it's an investment in your cooperative. As a member providing a share of our capital, you're building equity in the co-op, and capital credits are your return on that investment.

Each year, any margins (revenues in excess of expenses) generated by Union Power are proportionally allocated to you as capital credits and are held in an account in your name. Those margins are then reinvested into the cooperative for capital expansion, system improvements, and ongoing operations and maintenance activities.

Once the cooperative has met its financial requirements, and after a period of time, capital credits are returned (paid) to you.

Based on the continued financial strength of the cooperative, the board of directors has approved a capital credit retirement of approximately \$3.5 million to be distributed in 2021. This year's capital credit retirement is comprised of 100% of the unretired balance of 2002 and 2003 allocations, as well as 7% of the unretired balance of 2004 allocations. This means, if you had service with us during the years of 2002, 2003, or 2004, you will receive a payment.

For those members who are eligible for a payment, you will see this in the form of a credit on your September electric bill. Former members who have since moved off of our system will receive a check in the mail.

Capital credits are one of the tangible benefits of being a member of an electric co-op and a big part of what makes us different from other utilities. Learn more about capital credits by visiting union-power.com.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month:

Energy used for cooling and heating your home makes up the largest portion of your monthly energy bills.

By combining regular equipment maintenance and upgrades with recommended insulation, air sealing, and thermostat settings, you can save about 30% on your energy bills while helping our environment.

Source: energy.gov

\$ 3.5 Million
Capital Credits
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in 2021

Tackling Home Improvement Projects Just Got Easier

Apply for an Energy Efficiency Loan with ElecTel

Did you know Union Power Cooperative members are eligible for membership with ElecTel Cooperative Federal Credit Union?

As an ElecTel member, you can borrow up to \$35,000 at low rates for home improvement projects, including new windows and doors, electric heat pumps, furnaces, air conditioners, generators, solar projects, water heaters, insulation, and ENERGY STAR® appliances. The Energy Efficient Loan program offers flexible payment terms and is open to residential property owners of single-family homes, duplexes, mobile homes, and owner-occupied condos.

Find out more by visiting electel.org and become an ElecTel Cooperative Federal Credit Union member today!



Important Update: 2021 Annual Meeting

In last month's newsletter, we announced our plans to host a virtual annual meeting this year due to the lingering impacts of COVID-19. Members can attend the business portion of our annual meeting virtually on Saturday, Oct. 9 at 9:00 a.m. via the Union Power Cooperative YouTube Channel.

Be on the lookout for an annual meeting packet in your mailbox and email inbox for information on registering for the business meeting. Additional details will be available in the October issue of our newsletter and on our website at union-power.com/annualmeeting.



Tips for a Safe Harvest

Agriculture is the backbone of our country, and our livelihood greatly depends on the crops provided by American farmers. In addition to being one of the most labor-intensive professions, farming is also considered one of the most dangerous jobs in the U.S.

The hard work and exhaustive labor are tough, but rushing the job to save time can be extremely dangerous—even deadly—when farming near electrical equipment.

Every year, we see collisions where tractors and other farming equipment accidentally collide with utility poles and power lines, causing injuries and power outages. These dangerous accidents can be avoided by looking up and around your surroundings when operating large farm machinery. So, if you're preparing for the harvest season, please keep the following safety tips in mind:

- Maintain a 10-foot clearance around all utility equipment in all directions.
- Use a spotter and deployed flags to maintain safe distances from power lines and other electrical equipment when working in the field.
- If your equipment makes contact with an energized or downed power line, contact 911 immediately and remain inside the vehicle until the power line is de-energized. In case of smoke or fire, exit the cab by making a solid jump out of the cab (without touching it), and hop away to safety.
- Consider equipment and cargo extensions of your vehicle. Lumber, hay, tree limbs, irrigation pipes, and even bulk materials can conduct electricity, so keep them out of contact with electrical equipment.

September 19–25 is National Farm Health and Safety Week, but practicing safety on the farm year-round yields positive results. We hope you never find yourself in a situation where farming equipment contacts power lines or poles, but if you do, we hope you'll remember these safety tips.



Visit [union-power.com](https://www.union-power.com) for more electrical safety tips.



Stay Prepared During Peak Hurricane Season

Hurricane season is at its peak from mid-August to late October, and as North Carolinians know too well, any part of our state can be impacted by a hurricane—not just the coast. As the frequency and intensity of these storms increases, it's more important than ever for our members to make safety and preparedness a priority.

Union Power is prepared to respond if severe weather causes power outages and encourages you to be prepared with these simple steps:

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- Union Power is prepared to respond if severe weather causes power outages and encourages you to be prepared with these simple steps:
- Outline a communication and evacuation plan for your family before a hurricane or storm warning is issued to minimize confusion and fear. If you have pets or livestock, include them in your plan.
 - Sign up for local weather alerts and warnings.
 - Follow Union Power Cooperative on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to stay informed about the weather, outages, and other information.
 - Bookmark our online outage map to access real-time outage updates: outages.union-power.com.
 - Review safety tips and info at union-power.com/outages-safety.
- In the event of a power interruption, members should report outages by calling 800-794-4423. Members are also reminded to never go near or drive over downed power lines, as they may remain energized.
- ## Storm Preparedness Checklist
- Important documents sealed in a watertight plastic bag
 - Cash
 - Three days' worth of non-perishable food, water, and medication
 - First-aid kit
 - Battery-powered radio
 - Flashlight
 - Extra batteries
 - Personal hygiene items
 - Extra clothes and blankets
 - Food and other supplies for pets

Storm Preparedness Checklist

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Teachers: The Bright Ideas Deadline is Approaching

Don't miss your chance to apply!

Each year, Union Power grants teachers the opportunity to light up learning in their classrooms with a Bright Ideas education grant.

Teachers in K-12 classrooms with innovative ideas have the unique opportunity to apply and receive up to \$2,000 to fund creative learning projects that would otherwise not be possible. Interested teachers must submit their application(s) by **Friday, Sept. 17**.

For grant writing tips, more information, and to apply, visit union-power.com/brightideas.



Get ready for the season of change!

The leaves are falling, and your new system installation is calling.

Stay cozy this fall—contact Union Services to get your new Trane heating and cooling system today.



TRANE

It's Hard To Stop A Trane.

704-283-9047
savewithunion.com



Understanding Power Surges and Blinks

Have you ever noticed your lights blink during a thunderstorm? Or perhaps you've noticed a blinking microwave clock when you return home. When this happens, you've likely experienced a brief disruption to your electric service, which could result from a power surge or blink. While the symptoms of surges and blinks can appear similar, what's happening behind the scenes can be quite different.

What is a power surge?

Power surges are brief voltage spikes or disturbances that can cause damage to electronic equipment within your home or business. While most electronics are designed to handle small variations in voltage, some increases in voltage can be extremely damaging to your electronic equipment.

Surges can be caused by internal sources, like HVAC systems with variable frequency drives, or external sources, like lightning and damage to power lines and transformers.

Union Power encourages all members to install surge protective devices (such as surge protector power strips) to safeguard your sensitive electronics.

What is a power blink?

Power blinks are also brief service interruptions, but they're typically caused by a fault (short circuit) on a power line or a protective device that's working in reaction to the fault. Faults can occur through a variety of instances, like squirrels, birds, or other small animals contacting an energized power line, tree branches touching a power line, or lightning, and other similar events.

Any of the events noted above can cause your power to blink, but you may also experience a brief interruption when protective devices that act like circuit breakers are working to detect the fault. Believe it or not, these brief power blinks caused by protective devices are good because that means the equipment is working as it should to prevent a prolonged outage.

Regardless of the cause, rest assured Union Power crews will be on their way to inspect the outage and make repairs if necessary. And you can help, too!



Any time you experience **repeated** disruptions to your electric service, please let us know by calling 704-289-3145.

Right-of-Way Clearing

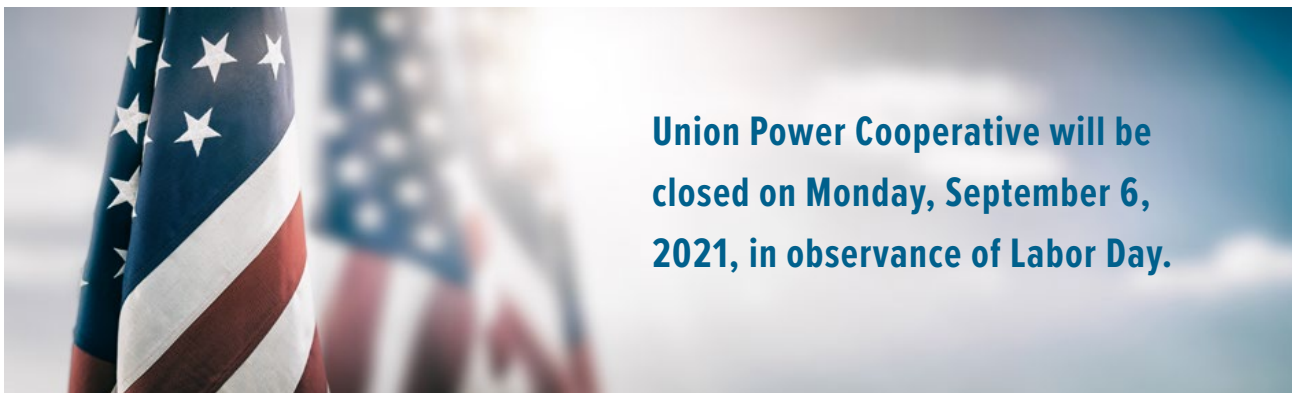
During the next month, you may see our tree-trimming crews in your neighborhood: ABC Professional Tree Services and Lewis Tree Service.

Cabarrus County: Atwater Dr, Basswood Dr, Boyd Allman Rd, Cauble Rd, Faith Trl, Faraway Circle, Flowes Store Rd, Hahn Scott Rd, Harbor Dr, Honeysuckle Ln, Hwy 601, Island View Dr, Joyner Rd, Mallard Dr, Maple Bluff Ln, Miami Church Rd, Paige Rd, Point View Ct, Roundtree Rd, Sam Black Rd, Shoreview Dr, Swan Dr, Thunderbold Rd

Stanly County: Barbee Rd, Big Lick Rd, Coyle Rd, Crest Ridge Dr, Dryewood Ln, Elm St, Farm Pond Ln, Gold Hill Rd, Hallie Ln, Harvell Rd, Hwy 49, Island Creek Rd, NC Hwy 200 S, Pless Mill Rd, Sunset Lake Rd, Tyler Rd



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) and Carrie Lorenz-Efird (ext. 3291). Visit union-power.com for monthly right-of-way clearing updates.



Union Power Cooperative will be closed on Monday, September 6, 2021, in observance of Labor Day.



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

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Exec. Vice President & General Manager

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