

## Union Power Lineman Ranks Among the Fastest in N.C. at Pole Top Rescue Competition



**J**ason Helms, a lineman at Union Power, ranked among the fastest in the state at the 2021 Pole Top Rescue Competition at Nash Community College in Rocky Mount.

This biennial event pits line workers against the clock and each other as they demonstrate essential lifesaving skills and the job knowledge required to maintain the lines that power the lives of electric cooperative members. Each competitor had to win a similar event at their local cooperative to advance to this state championship competition.

During the competition, each line worker executed a rescue scenario of retrieving an unconscious coworker from atop a utility pole. The competitor, dressed in full climbing gear, must radio for help, scale 20 feet up the utility pole, lower a 105-pound mannequin and begin lifesaving procedures. All North Carolina electric cooperative line workers must complete this same scenario in less than five minutes to maintain their certification to work on co-op lines.

Jason completed the rescue scenario with a time of 1:57, placing second place in the overall competition.

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**“Performing a pole top rescue is one of the many skills linemen learn in a rigorous annual training program that emphasizes diligence and safety. Pole Top Rescue ensures that our linemen are prepared to handle a life-threatening pole top emergency that may arise as quickly and safely as possible,” said Lonnie Kirkley, manager of operations at Union Power.”**

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# Supporting Local Teachers and Students

The last few years have shown us exactly how much we should appreciate those who dedicate themselves to teaching our children. Union Power Cooperative is honoring teachers and celebrating innovation in education this month by awarding Bright Ideas grants to educators in the following counties, Union, Stanly, Mecklenburg, and Cabarrus counties. The education grants will fund innovative classroom learning projects that will benefit more than 5,062 students who will participate in the Bright Ideas projects funded by Union Power.

Typically, these grants bring creative projects to life inside classrooms. However, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Union Power has been flexible with the types of projects awarded to ensure that all students can benefit, whether in the classroom or a remote learning environment. Grants are awarded for projects in all subject areas, such as music, art, history, reading, science, math, and more.

“Grant applications have been filled with unique ideas geared toward helping students learn both in the classroom and virtually,” said Carrie Stroud, vice

president of communications and marketing at Union Power Cooperative. “The innovative and creative learning initiatives developed by our area’s teachers are impressive, and we are proud to help them facilitate these projects.”

Bright Ideas grant applications are collected each year beginning in April through mid-September. Winning proposals are selected in a competitive evaluation process by a panel of judges. The application process will reopen for interested teachers in April 2022.







The winning teachers are listed by respective county, along with the amount of funds they received (listed in order of teacher who submitted grant, school, project name, and the amount awarded):

| 2021-2022 Bright Ideas Winners |                               |   |         |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|---------|
| Teacher Name                   | School                        | Grant Name  | Awarded |
| Joanne Bernard                 | J. N. Fries Middle            | Bringing Computer Science to Students with Disabilities | \$1,788 |
| Megan Charlton                 | Beverly Hills STEM Elementary | Making the Makerspace                                   | \$1,962 |
| Deidre Mallow                  | Independence High             | Culinary Craving Greenhouse                             | \$1,970 |
| Danielle Lefebvre              | Jay M. Robinson Middle        | Inclusive Garden: Helping Young Minds Grow              | \$1,994 |
| Andrea Wisniewski              | Sandy Ridge Elementary        | Math/Science Project Based Learning                     | \$1,528 |
| Abbie Hess                     | Independence High             | Sustainable Apothecary Art Supply Garden                | \$2,000 |
| Adam Haas                      | Rocky River Elementary        | Engineering Critical Thinking Skills                    | \$2,000 |
| Brittani Waldrip               | Central Elementary            | A Little Spot of Counseling at Central Elementary       | \$247   |
| Drew Laucher                   | Richfield Elementary          | Outdoor Science Classroom for K-5                       | \$1,921 |
| Jennifer Crawford              | Oakboro Choice STEM School    | OCSS Agriculture Center                                 | \$1,947 |
| Stacey Larson                  | New Salem Elementary          | Catching Curiosity STEM Binx                            | \$1,659 |
| Chris Roncone                  | Union County Early College    | Cyclone Shelter   | \$2,000 |



# Easy Energy Management to Help You Save

Interested in finding out how much money you could save on your utility bills?

**U**nderstanding your energy use is the first step towards saving! Union Power offers multiple resources to help members learn more about their home's energy consumption, pinpoint issues, and develop solutions to make energy-saving home improvements.

With easy-to-read graphs and analyses, our online home assessment is designed to provide you with helpful information about how your household uses energy and find smart ways to make your home more efficient, comfortable, and enjoyable.

Get instant feedback on how you can save money and energy with our self-guided, online Home Energy Assessment. It's simple. You answer questions about your home. We analyze the results and create a customized report that shows how your home is predicted to use energy and ideas on how to save. Take your assessment today!

## Here's how to get started:

### ■ Create your home's energy profile.

To begin, visit [union-power.com](https://union-power.com), click on the Member Resources & Services tab, then Audit My Home. Next, select the "My Home" link at the bottom of the page. You will need to enter the account number printed on your electric bill and the location of your home. Once your account is synced, you will be asked a series of 12 questions ranging from your home's size (square feet), number of occupants, insulation type, average thermostat settings, and more. Let our Home Advisor walk you through creating your comprehensive home profile. Don't have all the information right now? That's ok; you can always come back. Just remember, the more details you share, the more accurate the analysis will be.

### ■ Get custom recommendations.

Using your home's unique profile, the Home Advisor gives you prioritized recommendations for improving energy efficiency. When you are done, click "Show

Analysis" to see your results. The analysis gives your home an "efficiency rating". It will also give you an option to view a detailed breakdown of your electricity cost and usage from year to year and month to month, as well as information on ways to save energy based on your results.

### ■ Improve your home's efficiency.

Build on your list of improvements and track your progress.

Taking small steps to ensure your home is as energy-efficient as possible can add up to significant results that you'll see in your utility bills for years to come. If you have any questions, please call 704-289-3145 to speak with one of our energy specialists.



Visit [union-power.com](https://union-power.com) to learn more ways you can save energy.



# Don't get caught out in the cold!

In unpredictable weather, be sure your heating system is able to take on the cold this winter.

Stay home, stay safe, and stay cozy this season with a new high-efficiency Trane furnace.

Trane guarantees its furnaces will keep you and your home reliably warm during those colder months. Here are just a few of the reasons you should choose a Trane furnace for your home:

**High-efficiency system.** Everyone claims to have the highest-efficiency furnace, but Trane has worked hard to include components across the board to ensure its furnaces operate at 90 percent annual fuel utilization efficiency (AFUE) and higher.

**Quiet operation.** Many furnaces have a noisy sound level while running. Trane furnaces have cabinet insulation for their moving parts like the blower motor and fans. These furnaces run exceptionally quiet.

**Great value.** A great value does not necessarily mean the lowest price. In fact, it typically does not. It does mean with all the updated features and high-efficiency ratings on a Trane furnace, you will receive a more affordable unit than others with more bells and whistles.



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*We are your local heating, cooling, and electrical services company serving the greater Union County since 2003.*

# Middle School Students: Score a Summer Sports Camp Scholarship

Over the past two summers, the Touchstone Energy Sports Camps have been canceled due to COVID-19 safety concerns, but we are thrilled to announce that Union Power is now accepting applications for full scholarships to basketball camps at two of North Carolina's top universities this summer.

Union Power will select one young man for a scholarship to attend the Roy Williams Carolina Basketball Camp at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and one young lady for the Wolfpack Women's Basketball Camp at North Carolina State University in Raleigh.

Campers will work closely with the championship winning college coaches to develop fundamental skills, helping the young athletes perform and excel both on and off the court. The scholarship covers training and overnight stays in the dorms during the camp sessions.



Middle school students at qualifying schools in our service area are encouraged to apply for a scholarship. Applicants will be judged on their academics, extracurricular activities, and an essay. The application period will begin on Jan. 1, with a final deadline of March 31.

To learn more about this program and its impact on local youth or to apply, visit [union-power.com/sportscampscholarships](https://union-power.com/sportscampscholarships).

## How Can a Union Power College Scholarship Help You?

Tuition? Books? Room and board? Financial assistance is often necessary for many college students, especially those planning careers that require many years of education beyond the undergraduate level. By reducing financial concerns, college scholarships make education and career goals easier for students to obtain, granting more opportunities for studying, learning, and other activities that enrich their overall college experience.

At Union Power, our mission is to enhance the quality of life of members in the communities we serve, and providing college scholarships to high school seniors each year is one way we do that.

Seniors can apply for a \$1,000 scholarship to attend an accredited university or community college in North Carolina now through March 18 at [union-power.com/collegescholarships](https://union-power.com/collegescholarships).



Union Power College  
**Scholarships**



### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month:

Maximize your heating system's performance by inspecting, cleaning, or replacing air filters once a month or as needed to reduce energy costs and prevent potential damage to your system. Make sure radiators, baseboard heaters, and warm-air registers aren't blocked so air can flow freely.

Source: [energy.gov](https://energy.gov)



## Practice Safety When DIY-ing

A new year means a new start on home improvement projects, and many of us are ringing in the New Year by sprucing up around the house and finding new, creative ways to enhance our living space. Tackling do-it-yourself (DIY) projects for the home can be fun and cost-effective, so why not roll up those sleeves and get started! Whether you're painting the front door with a fresh hue or finally upgrading those patio lights, successfully completing a DIY home project is incredibly satisfying. But many of these projects do not come without risks.

Here are a few safety tips to keep in mind as you get to work:

**1 Start by selecting a designated work area.** The amount of space you'll need will depend on the size and scope of your project, but make sure you have adequate lighting and ventilation (if necessary). Required tools and equipment should be located in your workspace and organized for easy access.

**2 Personal protective equipment (PPE) is your friend.** We know you're a pro but investing a few bucks in PPE is essential for most home projects. Stock up on safety goggles, dust masks, earplugs (or noise reduction ear protectors), gloves, and any other kind of protection you'll need for your project. Also, remember to wear appropriate clothing and shoes.

**3 Work slowly and clean as you go.** When you rush through a DIY project, you'll likely end up with less desirable results than you intended, or worse, you could make a costly or dangerous mistake. Take your time and remember that you are in control of the project. You should also clean as you go to ensure a safer workspace. Pick up any scrap materials and tools that aren't in use to avoid any tripping hazards.

**4 Be cautious with power tools.** Annually, 8% of electrocutions in the U.S. are attributed to improper use of power tools. The Electrical Safety Foundation International offers the following safety tips:

- Use ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) with every power tool to protect against electrical shock.
- Never use power tools near live electrical wires or water pipes.
- Use extreme caution when cutting or drilling into walls where electrical wires or water pipes could be accidentally touched or penetrated.
- If a power tool trips a safety device while in use, take the tool to a manufacturer-authorized repair center for service.
- Do not use power tools without the proper guards.
- When using a wet-dry vacuum cleaner or a pressure washer, be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions to avoid electrical shock.

If your home is in need of a refresh, there are plenty of projects you can take on, but remember, you should only tackle DIY home projects within your skill and comfort level. By employing proven safety techniques, you can greatly reduce your risk of danger or injury. For projects that require extensive work, we strongly recommend you hire a licensed, qualified professional for assistance. To learn more about electrical safety, visit our website at [union-power.com](https://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 Company, Lewis Tree Service, Lucas Tree Experts, and Xylem Tree Experts.

**Cabarrus County:** Archibald Rd, Boulder Dr SW, Geneva Dr, Hensley Pl, Heron Point Pl SW, Hilliard Ln, Homestead Dr, Lazy Ridge Ln, Lower Rocky River Rd, Mark Dr, Misty Meadow Ln, Mulberry Rd, Nancy Ln, Paul Linker Pl, Pharr Mill Rd, Pine Grove Church Rd, Rebel Dr, River Front Dr, River Hills Dr, Rocky River Rd, Sahara St, Sandy Point Dr SW, Sequoia Hills Dr, Shamrock Rd, Timberwood Dr, Whispering Oak Dr

**Rowan County:** High Rock Rd, Turkey Trot Ln

**Stanly County:** Beaman Ridge Rd, Biles Rd, Canton Rd, Celeste Dr, Five Point Rd, Herb Farm Cir, Millingport Rd, Nada Ln, Ridgecrest Rd, Vintage Ln

**Union County:** Baucom Manor Rd, Carl Polk Rd, Cheraw Rd, Clontz Taylor Rd, Haigler Gin Rd, John Hargette Rd, Jordan Dr, Kelly Autry Rd, Landsford Rd, Philadelphia Church Rd, Riggins Rd, State Line Rd, Sugar and Wine Rd, Tarlton Mill Rd, Vann Sneed Rd, Wallace Branch 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) or Carrie Lorenz-Efird (ext. 3291). Visit [union-power.com](https://union-power.com) for monthly right-of-way clearing updates.



**Our offices will be closed on Monday, January 17 in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.**

**UnionPower Cooperative**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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

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