

Cooperative Review

FEBRUARY 2024



High School Seniors:

Deadline is near, APPLY NOW!

Union Power is offering 10 outstanding students from our five-county service area—Union, Stanly, Cabarrus, Mecklenburg, and Rowan counties—a \$1,000 college scholarship.

To qualify for the scholarship, you must . . .

- Be a child of a Union Power Cooperative member or live in a home served by Union Power Cooperative.
- Be a high school senior in the current graduating class.
- Meet the criteria of 40% need, 30% scholastic achievement, and 30% extracurricular activities in school, civic, and community functions.

- Must attend a North Carolina-accredited college or university.

Students can apply through union-power.com/collegescholarships. All applications must be submitted by March 1, 2024.



Keep Your Home Cozy and Efficient This Winter Season

During this cold winter season, when even more electricity is used simultaneously across the country, Union Power ensures reliability is our top priority. While our reliability rating is 99.9%, snow and ice storms are an unpreventable part of the winter season. These storms can cause downed power lines, dangerous roads, and heating units to operate longer than normal. As your electric provider, we work diligently through vegetation management, equipment maintenance, and most importantly system improvements to prepare for potential outages throughout the year.

Below are a few precautions you can take to prepare for the colder weather:

- **Drop the thermostat temperature.** When it's cold outside, your heating system has to work harder to heat your home. Keeping the thermostat at 68° or lower will benefit your HVAC system and your utility bill. When adjusting your thermostat, make sure to do so in two-degree increments or less.
- **Seal the chill.** Sealing air leaks around windows and exterior doors with caulk and weatherstripping is a great start to having an energy-efficient home. This small gesture is a simple, cost-effective way to increase comfort and save energy.
- **Do not block the heat!** Blocking air vents and heating elements with furniture or rugs will make the system run longer and distribute heat unevenly.
- **Take care of those energy-consumption devices.** Eliminate unnecessary energy consumption by unplugging devices when not in use. Even when electronics are turned off, they can still use energy. Plugging those devices into a power strip allows you to control your energy consumption and turn them on or off simultaneously.



- **Stagger your use of major appliances such as dishwashers, ovens, and dryers.** Start the dishwasher before you go to bed, and use smaller countertop appliances like slow cookers and air fryers to save energy.
- **Take care of your water heater.** Wrapping your water lines and water heater with insulation can reduce heat loss and the risk of pipes freezing and bursting. Keeping your water heater's thermostat at 120° or less and inspect it annually to save you energy.

As we face potential storms, our commitment remains the same—To enhance the quality of life of our members and the communities we serve by delivering on our promise to provide safe, reliable electric power and energy services with exceptional value.



If you are experiencing an outage, call or text **1-800-794-4423**.



Slam Dunk Your Way to a Basketball Camp Scholarship

Union Power is now accepting applications from rising sixth- and seventh-graders for a basketball camp scholarship at two North Carolina universities this summer.

One young girl will participate and play on the court at Wolfpack Women’s Basketball Camp at the North Carolina State University in Raleigh from June 16-19, and one young boy will attend Carolina Basketball School at UNC-Chapel Hill from June 22-26.

Students can apply by visiting union-power.com/sportscampscholarship and submit an application by March 31.



This Valentine’s day, there’s nothing we more than serving our members

Rate Changes to be Implemented April 2024

Effective April 1, 2024, Union Power Cooperative is compelled to implement our first rate increase in five years. The impact to a member served under our General Service rate is anticipated to be less than \$8 per month, on average.

The rate increase is primarily driven by substantial increases in the costs associated with providing service to our members—including the cost of wholesale power, operating expenses, raw materials, construction, and maintenance. The increased costs have only been pronounced by inflationary pressure throughout the industry.

To determine the amount of the rate increase, the Cooperative, in conjunction with an independent consulting firm, recently completed a Cost-of-Service Study involving an in-depth analysis of the costs associated with providing service. The results of the study revealed—or rather confirmed—that our existing

rates are insufficient to keep pace with the rising costs of providing service. The rate increase is necessary in order to make crucial investments in infrastructure to sustain the reliability and resiliency of our growing electric system.

Periodic rate adjustments ensure the financial strength and security of your Cooperative and our ability to provide our members with safe, reliable electric service. More information will be forthcoming.



Four Ways an Energy Audit Can Benefit You

A home energy audit can help determine the overall efficiency of your home or business and ways to improve it. Here are the main benefits of conducting an energy audit.

- Assist in identifying where most of your energy use is going and ways to use energy more efficiently to save money

1

- Determine if appliances and heating/cooling equipment are operating efficiently for the home or business

2

- Identify potential safety issues with home wiring and ventilation

3

- Making changes based on the audit recommendations can potentially raise your property value

4



Contact one of our energy specialists at [704-289-3145](tel:704-289-3145), Billy Brantley (3266) or Chris Love (3245), Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., to help you manage your energy needs.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month:

Looking to use space heaters efficiently and safely: Choose energy-efficient models, ideally those with programmable thermostats and auto shut-off mechanisms. Position your space heater on a flat, non-flammable surface, and maintain at least a three-foot clearance from combustible materials. Use the heater only in rooms you're occupying, and remember to turn it off when you leave the room or go to sleep. This focused use helps conserve energy and reduces your overall electricity consumption.

To calculate usage of space heaters, visit union-power.com/energysavingscalculators to check out our space heater calculator.



Stay Warm Without Worries

Space heaters can be a convenient way to keep warm during chilly days, providing heat when needed. They can be an alternative to warm a small area in your home without turning up the thermostat. However, safety should become a priority when using these heaters.

Here are a few tips to consider when purchasing and using a space heater.

Look for Safety Features:

- **Ensure the heater has a safety certification label** from an independent testing organization, like the UL® mark, the ETL label from Intertek, or certification from CSA International. Most newer models have the UL® (Underwriter's Laboratory) label.
- **Automatic shut off.** This feature will automatically turn off if the space heater falls over. Make sure the heater is on a stable and level surface with minimal risk of getting knocked over.
- **Overheat detection.** When the internal components get too hot, the unit automatically turns off to prevent overheating and fire hazards.
- **A ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) plug.** Most space heaters don't have a GFCI plug, which can prevent electric shock. If the heater does not come with one, you can still purchase it, but do not place it around any area where moisture is present.

Using a Space Heater Safely:

- **Plug electric heaters directly into an outlet.** Plugging an electric heater into an extension cord increases the chance of overheating, fires, and electrical shock injuries.
- **Never leave a heater unattended while in use.** Unplug and turn off the heater when leaving the designated area. Most models come with programmable timers that can switch on and off at set times.
- **Supervise Pets and Children.** Keep children and pets at least three feet away from an electric heater to prevent accidental burns.

By following these safety tips and features, you can enjoy the warmth and comfort of your space heater in your home while minimizing the risk of accidents. Remember, space heaters are designed to be supplemental heaters and not as a primary heating resource.



Visit union-power.com/energysavingscalculators and click on the Space Heater Calculator to learn more about how much your space heater will cost you.

Powering Love This Valentine's Day

As Valentine's Day approaches, hearts are full, and the spirit of love is in the air. It's a time to cherish those around us and celebrate the bonds that bring us together. At Union Power, we embrace this season of affection with our members as they are the heart of everything we do.

A Strong Foundation—Reliability

Reliability is a principle we value the most. As Union Power has a 99.9% reliability rating, we make sure that your power supply is as steadfast and dependable as the love we share within our community. We're constantly innovating and improving our infrastructure to keep your lights on.

Member Support

We're here to listen, assist, and guide you through any challenges. Whether it's understanding your bill, exploring energy-efficient solutions, seeking advice on electric vehicles, or solar. We are always ready to offer a helping hand with a warm smile.

Community of Care

Our commitment goes beyond providing reliable energy services. We support and donate to local charities, schools, and scholarship funds. It's also why we invest in economic development, and our employees volunteer at local schools and other charitable and community events.

Heart of Service

At the heart of Union Power lies a deep-rooted dedication to our members. We're not just a utility provider; we're a community, a family. Each day, we strive to light your homes and lives with electricity, a sense of belonging, and care. This Valentine's Day, we want to remind our members that you are the heartbeat of our operations.

Union Power is more than a service provider; we are a family. As we celebrate the season of love, let's remember that together, we shine brighter. Your trust, support, and engagement fuels our passion for service. Thank you for being a Union Power member, and Happy Valentine's Day!





Right-of-Way Clearing

During the next month, you may see our tree-trimming crews in your neighborhood: Vendors: Xylem Inc.

Union County: Austin Rd, Cherry Laurel Dr, Chestnut Rd, Cheverny Dr, Crane Rd, Dewitt Helms Rd, Fletcher Broome Rd, Gables Dr, Grand Oak Dr, Griffith Rd, Heritage Oaks Ln, Jack Davis Rd, Lancaster Hwy, Lark Hall Ct, Larkridge Ct, Long Hope Rd, Marvin Rd, Meadowlark Ln, Meherrin Ct, New Town Rd, Parkwood Cir, Plyler Mill Rd, Richardson Rd, Saddle Ave, Spyglass Ln, Sweet Shrub Ct, Tara Dr, Torrence Ct, Wade Ardrey Rd, Wingfoot Dr, Wolf Pond Rd, Woodcliff Ct, Woodhall Lake Dr, Woodland Forest

For more information about Union Power's vegetation management program or tree pruning practices, please call Wil Ortiz at 704-289-3145 (ext. 3323) or Carrie Lorenz-Efird (ext. 3291). Also, visit union-power.com/vegetation-management/crew-locations for monthly right-of-way clearing updates and information on our programs.



As a Union Power Cooperative member, you agree to: Comply with all aspects of the service agreement and agree to be bound by the cooperative's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws; and furnish, without cost to the cooperative, all necessary distribution easements, and rights-of-way.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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

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