

# Cooperative review

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative   
The power of human connections®

A Newsletter for Members of Union Power Cooperative

## Electricity: A Great Value Any Way You Look At It

**E**lectricity is a very important part of our daily lives that we often take for granted. There's never a value placed on it until it's not there. Electricity makes our lives more convenient.

With other commodities, we often place value on a product by how much it costs. For example, a \$1 item at the grocery store may include a 16-ounce soft drink or a king-sized candy bar. A person may not even get home before consuming these items, yet high value is placed on these things because they fill an immediate need.

But what about electricity? Did you know that through the years, the price of electricity has remained an outstanding value, especially compared to the rising prices of related commodities?

According to the U.S. Department of Labor's Consumer Price Index (CPI), the cost of electricity has increased just 2 percent annually from 1995 to 2005, where cable/satellite service has risen by over 5 percent and gasoline by 7 percent annually during the same time. Electricity is a pretty good bargain if



you consider what you get for what you pay.

Believe it or not, the national cost of electricity today, when adjusted for inflation, is less than what it was in 1980. Very few commodities have remained such a good value.

Union Power Cooperative has seen a substantial increase in the cost of purchased wholesale power over the

past several years. That, along with continually rising fuel costs and cost of materials, makes it necessary to adjust rates effective April 1, 2007. The new rate schedules are included for your review on page 37. If you have any questions concerning the new

rates, please feel free to contact our office at (704) 289-3145 or (800) 922-6840. We will be glad to address your questions and concerns.

At Union Power Cooperative, we work hard to ensure you receive safe, reliable electricity at the lowest possible cost. And, as the cost of other commodities continue to rise, we will do our best to keep electricity a good value.



## Levelized and Budget Billing

*Solution to Budgeting Worries*

Members normally experience seasonal fluctuations in electrical use throughout the year. This change in electrical use may create a budgeting problem for some members. Levelized Billing can help you by making your payments nearly the same each month. This service is available for residential members only.

The levelized bill will be based on the average electrical usage for the most recent twelve (12) months or, for new members, the available electrical use history. This is adjusted monthly until twelve months of history is available. The bill is averaged so the amount does not stay the same but increases or decreases slightly as consumption changes.

Another option to help with your budget is Union Power's Budget Billing. Based on the

*Continued on page 35*

in this  
issue

page 36  
Planting Trees

page 37  
New Rate Schedule

page 37  
Power Points

page 38  
College Scholarships

*Springtime means planting*

## Avoid Tree and Utility Conflicts

Determining where to plant a tree is a decision that should not be taken lightly. Many factors should be considered prior to planting. When planning what type of tree to plant, remember to look up and look down to determine where the tree will be located in relation to overhead and underground utility lines.

Often, we take utility services for granted because they have become a part of our daily lives. For us to enjoy the convenience of reliable, uninterrupted service, distribution systems are required to bring utilities into our homes. These services arrive at our homes through overhead or underground lines. Overhead lines can be electric, telephone, or cable television. Underground lines include those three plus water, sewer and natural gas.

The location of these lines should have a direct impact on your tree and planting site selection. The ultimate mature height of a tree to be planted must be within the available overhead growing space. Just as important, the soil area must be large enough to accommodate the particular rooting habits and ultimate trunk diameter of the tree. Proper tree and site selection provide trouble-free beauty and pleasure for years to come.

### Overhead Lines

Overhead utility lines are the easiest to see and probably the ones we take

most for granted. Although these lines look harmless enough, they can be extremely dangerous. Planting tall-growing trees under and near these lines eventually requires your utility to prune them to maintain safe clearance from the wires. This pruning may result in the tree having an unnatural appearance. Periodic pruning can also lead to a shortened life span for the tree. Trees that must be pruned away from power lines are under greater stress and are more susceptible to insects and disease. Small, immature trees planted today can become problem trees in the future.

Tall-growing trees near overhead lines can cause service interruptions when trees contact wires. Children or adults climbing in these trees can be severely injured or even killed if they come in contact with the wires. Proper selection and placement of trees in and around overhead utilities can eliminate potential public safety hazards, reduce expenses for utilities and their ratepayers, and improve the appearance of landscapes.

### Underground Lines

Trees are much more than just what you see overhead. Many times the root area is larger than the branch spread above the ground. Much of the utility service provided today runs below ground. Tree roots and underground lines often coexist without problems. However, trees planted near



underground lines could have their roots damaged if the lines need to be dug for repairs.

The biggest danger to underground lines occurs during planting. Before you plant, make sure that you are aware of the location of any underground utilities. To be certain that you do not accidentally dig into any lines and risk serious injury or a costly service interruption, call your utility company or utility protection service first. Never assume that these utility lines are buried deeper than you plan to dig. In some cases, utility lines are very close to the surface.

**Call North Carolina One Call at 1-800-632-4949 Before you Dig!**

## Budgeting *Continued from page 35*

previous 12-month history, the Cooperative determines a fixed dollar average. This average is billed each month until November. A new average is taken each November with any debits or credits figured into the new average.

To qualify for this method, you must have a zero balance and must always pay your future bills by the due date. This service is available for residential members only.

Please visit our website at [www.union-power.com](http://www.union-power.com) or call 704-289-3145 to get a Budget or Levelized Billing form. Fill the form out and return it to Union Power Cooperative to be considered for these programs.

Also, these billing plans can be paid each month by drafting your checking, savings, or credit card accounts. If you would like to be set up on our payment draft option you can find the form on our website, [www.union-power.com](http://www.union-power.com), or you can call 704-289-3145.

# New Rate Schedule *Effective April 1, 2007*

## General Service

Basic Facilities Charge	\$ 12.50
First 1,000 kWh	\$ 0.0952
Next 1,500 kWh	\$ 0.0903
All Over 2,500 kWh	\$ 0.0859

## Residential All Electric Service

Basic Facilities Charge	\$ 12.50
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### Summer (June - October)

All kWh usage	\$ 0.0917
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### Winter (November - May)

First 500 kWh	\$ 0.0917
Next 500 kWh	\$ 0.0865
Over 1,000 kWh	\$ 0.0807

## Commercial Service

Basic Facilities Charge	\$ 35.00
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### Demand

First 25 kW	\$ 0.00
Over 25 kW	\$ 7.35

### Energy

First 3,000 kWh	\$ 0.1098
Next 3,000 kWh	\$ 0.0779
Next 6,000 kWh	\$ 0.0718
Next 12,000 kWh	\$ 0.0560
Over 24,000 kWh	\$ 0.0418

## Outdoor Lighting Service

100 Watt HPS	\$ 8.30
175 Watt Mercury Vapor	\$ 8.65
400 Watt HPS Flood	\$ 20.20
100 Watt HPS Colonial	\$ 11.75

## Power *points*

# Keep Your Home Cool This Summer by Planting Trees



**A**void becoming dependent on your air conditioner this summer by planting trees around your home. Trees are natural air-conditioners that can help you on your monthly utility bill from the shade they provide on your home. Just three trees planted around your home can make a big difference annually in cooling costs and make your home 3 to 6 degrees cooler. In addition to your electricity bill, trees can also help you save money on your water bill. When trees shade your yard, your grass and landscaping will need less watering.

To obtain the best energy savings from the trees surrounding your home, it is important to plant the right tree in the right place. The type and location of the trees you plant will determine how effectively they reduce your energy costs. The east, west, and south walls of your home receive the most sun. On these sides of your home it is best to plant deciduous (leaf-losing) trees. These trees are in full bloom in the summer, providing shade to reduce your need for air conditioning. However, in the winter they lose their leaves, allowing the sunshine to help warm your home. In addition, it's a good idea to plant a deciduous tree that shades your air-conditioner unit as well. This can reduce

the workload on your air-conditioning unit and help save additional money on your utility bill.

When planting trees around your home, be sure to be careful of where you are planting them. Look out for the following areas:

- Don't plant trees or shrubs that will block a driver's view of signs, signals or intersecting streets.
- Don't block windows or scenic views.
- Make sure not to obstruct airflow to chimneys.
- Don't plant large trees in restricted growing spaces.
- Make sure the trees will not overhang onto your roof.
- Don't plant tall trees within reach of overhead power lines. This is dangerous, plus, in later years, they will need recurring pruning.

**Before digging to plant a tree, make sure to call the North Carolina one-call center prior to digging. They can inform you of any underground power lines on your property to avoid. Contact the NC One Call Center at 1-800-632-4949.**

# Right-of-Way Clearing



During the next month, you may see our tree-trimming crews in your neighborhood. Carolina Tree Care and ABC Tree Professionals will be working in the following areas of Union and Stanly Counties:

McIntyre Road	Secrest Short Cut Rd.	Highway 49
Lawyers Road	Myers Road	Frick Road
Mills Harris Road	Highway 74	Millingport Road
Highway 205	Love Road	Kendalls Church Rd.
New Hope Church Rd.	Old Charlotte Hwy.	Old Beatty Ford Rd.
New Salem Road	Highway 75	Goodman Road
Tarlton Mill Road	McNeely Road	High Rock Road
Lucy Short Cut Road	Collins Road	Bear Creek Church Rd.
Willis Long Road	Pleasant Grove Road	

For more information about Union Power's right-of-way program or tree trimming practices, please call (704) 289-3145 and speak with Wil Ortiz (ext. 3323) or Carrie Lorenz (ext. 3291).

## Attention High School Seniors: *Apply Now for College Scholarships*



**N**ow is the time to apply for Union Power's college scholarship. As you know, college is not cheap and Union Power offers scholarships to help their members with this expense.

Union Power Cooperative is excited to sponsor three college scholarships to area high school seniors. Three \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded to outstanding high school seniors planning to attend a

four-year, North Carolina accredited college or university. These students will be chosen from our five-county service area, which is made up of Union, Stanly, Cabarrus, Mecklenburg, and Rowan counties.

Applications are awarded based on 40% need; 30% scholastic achievement; and 30% extracurricular activities in school, civic, and community functions, and judged by a committee that is not affiliated with the Cooperative. You can call 704-289-3145, extension 3265 for an application or get one online at [www.union-power.com](http://www.union-power.com). The deadline for submitting applications is Friday, April 20, 2007. Winners will be notified in late May.

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### Business Hours

8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday  
(704) 289-3145 or (800) 922-6840

[www.union-power.com](http://www.union-power.com)

### 24-Hour Outage Reporting Service and Account Information

(800) 794-4423

### Call Before You Dig

NC One Call Center  
(800) 632-4949

Providing electricity and energy services to over 61,000 members in Union, Stanly, Cabarrus, Mecklenburg, and Rowan counties.

### SERVICE CHARGES:

**Security Deposit**-charges vary  
\$0, \$175, \$375

### Late Payment Charge

1% of the amount of bill

### Returned Check Fee

\$25

### Meter Test

\$75 (refunded if not accurate)

### Dual Meter Comparison

\$50 (refunded if not accurate)

### Field Collection Charge

\$25 (only checks or money orders accepted, no cash)

### RECONNECT CHARGES: (collected in advance)

#### Normal Hours

\$50 (if called in *before* 4:00 p.m.)

#### After Hours

\$100 (if called in *after* 4:00 p.m.)

#### Weekends and Holidays

\$100