



# Cooperative review

August 2007

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative   
The power of human connections®

A Newsletter for Members of Union Power Cooperative

## Easy Ways to Manage Your Union Power Account

**W**ant to save time and money? Choose one of the many ways Union Power Cooperative offers you to pay your electric bill and get information on your account.

**Electronic funds transfer** allows members to authorize withdrawal of funds from a checking/savings account or a credit/debit card to pay the amount due by the due date of each month and make paying bills worry free. Call and speak to one of our customer service representatives today to set up your electronic draft.

**Pay Online** - With the click of a mouse, you can view and pay your bills on our secure site, [www.union-power.com](http://www.union-power.com), using your credit card, debit card, or by electronic check without ever touching a piece of paper or spending money on stamps.

Paying bills online requires that a member have their account number(s) and a password. Call our Customer Service Department at 04-289-3145, option 3, to obtain your initial password. This secure site also allows you to keep track of how you use electricity by viewing an 18-month historical usage. Your last four bills can also be viewed online.

**Pay by Phone** using our FREE automated system at 704-289-3145 or 1-800-922-6840. You can pay with a debit or credit card. We accept MasterCard, Visa, and Discover card. Eliminate check writing and postage by paying your electric bill over the

phone with your personal check information. To pay with a check over the automated system, you must first call our office to have a profile set up for you.

Beginning August 1, a \$5 service fee will be applied to bill payments made through our Customer Service Representatives.

**Pay by mail or in person** - Visit one of our two locations in Monroe or Oakboro. Our offices are open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., excluding major holidays. You can also drop it off after hours in our night drop box.

Note: A late payment fee of 1.5% or \$5 (whichever is greater) will be applied to your bill if payment is not received by the bill's current due date.

### Do you budget monthly bills?

If budgeting your bills is important, we can set up your electric bill on our Levelized or Budget Billing payment plan. This can help you plan your annual budget and ease the bill payment process each month.

**Levelized Billing** - Members normally experience seasonal fluctuations in electrical use throughout the year. The levelized bill will be based on the average electrical use for the most recent 12 months. The bill is averaged so the amount does not stay the same, but increases or decreases slightly as consumption changes.



**Budget Billing** - Based on the previous 12-month history, the Cooperative determines a fixed dollar average. The average is billed each month until November. A new average is calculated each November with any debits or credits figured into the new average.

**E-Bill** - Go paperless! Have your power bill sent to you via email. Sign up online at [www.union-power.com](http://www.union-power.com) or by calling one of our customer service representatives.

*For more information,  
visit our web site at  
[www.union-power.com](http://www.union-power.com) or call  
704-289-3145 or 1-800-922-6840*

in this  
issue

page 22  
Electricity Theft

page 23  
Disaster Safety

page 23  
Union Services

page 24  
Tree-trimming

## Electricity Theft and Vandalism

# Pose Safety and Financial Concerns



**T**heft involving electricity and related materials is a problem all electric utilities face — and it's a problem for electricity customers, too. Since Union Power Cooperative is member-owned, electricity theft could end up costing you money.

Compensating for electricity theft drives up prices for everyone involved.

Theft of electricity also puts your personal safety at risk. Tampering with an electric meter can make it unsafe and unstable. When people steal electricity, they put themselves, their neighbors, family, and pets all at risk for electric shocks, power surges, sparks, and fire from exposed voltage. Stealing electrical related materials can also pose a significant risk to the culprit, resulting in injury or even death from exposure to live electricity.

Electricity theft isn't isolated to rural areas or to big cities. It's a problem utilities encounter from agricultural operations to housing complexes to business offices from coast to coast. Although electricity can be easily acquired through a utility, some people are still willing to risk physical damage or loss of life just for the sake of some free kilowatt-hours. Others may not realize the serious legal and potential

health implications. Stealing electricity is illegal under North Carolina law and violates electrical codes.

Keeping power safe and affordable is a priority for Union Power. That is why we routinely inspect cooperative meters and equipment, to ensure we're doing our best to protect you from the risks of electricity theft. We take a proactive approach to this serious problem, eliminating theft and reducing related costs.

You can also play a role in this process by immediately notifying us if you suspect someone is gaining access to our power supply without paying his or her fair share of the costs or by tampering with the equipment. If you have information related to electricity or materials theft, please call us at 704-289-3145. Rest assured we'll keep your name anonymous. Because you share in the ownership of Union Power, when people steal from the cooperative, they're stealing from you, too!

## Union Power Cooperative's 68th Annual Membership Meeting



**Saturday, October 13, 2007**  
**Wingate University**  
**7:00 a.m.–Noon**

- ☛ *Breakfast*
- ☛ *Health Fair*
- ☛ *Kids Festival*
- ☛ *Entertainment*
- ☛ *Member Dividends*



## Electrical Safety Precautions During Disasters

At the peak of a storm's fury, it may be difficult to think through electrical safety precautions, but if you understand such precautions before a storm, you and your family will be better prepared to prevent injuries, death, and property damage.

### Flooded Areas

Stay away from flooded areas! Submerged outlets or electrical cords may energize the water, posing a lethal trap.

### Wet Electrical Equipment

Do not use electrical appliances that have been wet. Water can damage the motors in electrical appliances such as furnaces, freezers, refrigerators, washing machines, and dryers. For electrical appliances that have been submerged under water, have them reconditioned by a qualified service technician.

### Portable Generators

Portable generators are a good source of alternate power if an outage occurs, but they should only be used in emergency situations. If a generator is improperly installed or improperly operated it can be deadly. Have a qualified, licensed electrician connect it to the home's main electrical supply. Generators are dangerous to work with; power from generators can back feed along power lines and electrocute anyone who comes into contact with them. Notify Union Power Cooperative before you have an electrician connect your portable generator. Contact Union Power Cooperative for more information about the proper use of generators to



minimize the risk of electrical hazards, dangerous carbon monoxide levels, and fire hazards.

### Downed Power Lines

The chance of a downed power line increases during severe storms, and it's important to remember that power lines on the ground can still carry an electric current strong enough to cause serious injury or death. Here are some tips that can keep you safe around downed power lines.



- If you see a downed power line, move away from the line and anything that may be touching it. Immediately call Union Power Cooperative or 911 to make them aware of this hazard.
- If you see someone who is in direct or indirect contact with a downed power line, DO NOT TOUCH the person; call 911 instead.
- Do not attempt to move a downed power line or anything in contact with the power line by using another object such as a broom or stick. Even materials like wood or cloth, if slightly wet, can conduct electricity and then electrocute you.
- Be careful not to put your feet near water where a downed power line is located.
- If you are in your car and it is in contact with the downed power line, stay in your car. Tell others to stay away from your vehicle, and call 911.
- Do not drive over downed power lines.



# Union Services

*A Union Power Company*



## Heating, Cooling & Electrical Services

- Certified Trane Comfort Specialist
- Heat Pump Financing Available
- Generator Installation Available
- Free Estimates for Heating and Air
- Easy Payment Plans

**704-283-9047 or 800-922-6840**



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, Stanly, and Cabarrus Counties:

New Hope Church Rd.	Winchester Road	Smith Road
Sugar and Wine Road	Griffin Greene Blvd.	Honeycutt Road
Tarlton Mill Road	Buster Road	Pine Bluff Road
Olive Branch Road	Harris Road	Love Mill Road
Lucy Shortcut Road	Ledbetter Ford Road	Brooks Road
New Salem Road	Lighthouse Road	Highway 200
Lawyers Road	Saddle Club Road	Hahn Road
Mills Harris Road	Big Lick Road	Bowman-Barrier Rd.
Phifer Road	Strawberry Lane	Lambert Road
Secrest Short Cut Rd.	Polk Ford Road	Highway 73
Scott Long Road	Renee Ford Road	Dutch Road
Sardis Church Road	Talley Road	

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 (ext. 3291).

Cooperative Review is published monthly by



Union Power Cooperative  
P.O. Box 5014  
Monroe, NC 28111-5014

**Tony E. Herrin**

Executive Vice President and General Manager

**Carrie A. Cameron**

Editor

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

- B. L. Starnes**, President
- William R. Wilson**, Vice President
- Jan Haigler**, Secretary-Treasurer
- Dent Hall Turner, Jr.**, Asst. Secretary-Treasurer
- Neil W. Hasty**
- Jim T. Hartsell**
- Vann W. Hilton**
- Ralph E. Johnson**
- Juanita Poplin**
- Rufus N. Reid**
- Richard Simpson**

**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 62,000 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

**Correction: In the last issue the pictures of these two scholarship winners were inadvertently switched. We apologize for this mistake.**

**Catherine Alicia Howell**



Catherine is the daughter of Cathy Howell of Concord. She recently graduated from Central Cabarrus High School. She plans

to attend UNC Charlotte this fall where she will study Civil or Biomedical Engineering.

Catherine's hobbies and interests include playing soccer, diving, and playing the piano. While in school she was involved in many clubs. Among them were National Honor Society, Beta Club, Key Club, Bible Club, and Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

**Jessica Alisha Mullis**



Jessica is the daughter of Charles and Lisa Mullis of Monroe. She recently graduated from Forest Hills High School. She plans

to attend UNC Charlotte this fall to pursue a career in Psychology.

Jessica's hobbies and interests include tutoring elementary school students and participating in church activities. She was active in the marching and concert bands, Beta Club, and National Honor Society.