

# Cooperative review

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative   
The power of human connections®

A Newsletter for Members of Union Power Cooperative

## Hazard Tree Program Ensures Safety and Reliability

**V**egetation management, more commonly known as right-of-way maintenance, is essential in providing safe and reliable electric service. Union Power works hard to ensure that rights-of-way are properly cleared of trees and limbs that could present a possible safety or power reliability hazard.

Last year, Union Power Cooperative began a Hazard Tree program to cut the number of outages related to dead or dying trees that could fall across power lines possibly causing a power outage or a safety concern. This program focuses on the removal of trees outside the right-of-way that contribute to 81% of tree-caused outages on the system. During 2007, the Cooperative removed more than 4,000 hazard trees across the system but still experienced 192 outages throughout the year due to dead or dying trees falling on lines.

Most of the hazard trees in this area are pine trees, showing the first signs of trouble through their browning needles beginning at the tips and moving inward. The bark will also start to shed and will very likely spread to surrounding trees. The most common cause of these dying trees is bark beetles. The drought compounded with a mild winter stresses the trees where they can't defend themselves against these beetles.

Members can help in identifying these hazard trees when they first see signs of browning needles. Reporting these trees and removing them in a timely manner can help ensure safety for our members and our workers as well as maintain power reliability. These trees must be removed before they are fully dead to ensure safety.

By our members reporting these hazard trees to Union Power, they are spared the cost of having them cut. Please call Union Power at (704) 289-3145 and speak to one of our certified arborists, Wil Ortiz (ext. 3291) or Carrie Lorenz (ext. 3323), if you see a hazard tree near power lines.



*If you see hazard trees like these near power lines, with no needles and peeling bark, please call Union Power to report them.*

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**Tony E. Herrin**  
Executive Vice President  
and General Manager

## The Value of Electricity

**D**id you know that through the years, the price of electricity has remained an outstanding value, especially compared to the rising prices of related commodities? At Union Power Cooperative, we work each and every day to keep electricity a great value, even as the costs of other commodities continue to increase.

With other commodities, we often place value on the item by how much it costs. For example, a \$1 item at the local grocery store may include a 16-ounce soft drink or a 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.

Electricity not only keeps the lights on in your homes and businesses but it is required for so much more. Over the past 25 years, the average household's

electric usage has increased by nearly 25%. Among the reasons for this increase is the fact that we have so many more appliances and new conveniences today than we did 25 years ago. We all charge our cell phones, digital cameras, laptop computers, and MP3 players. All of these items have become essential to our day-to-day lives.

Electricity has remained a good value over the years despite ever-increasing demand and the rising costs associated with generating and distributing power to your homes and businesses. As the demand for energy continues to rise and the costs of fuels increase, Union Power Cooperative remains committed to providing safe and affordable electricity at the lowest possible cost: a value we can all fit into our budgets.



## Now Serving . . .

For the cost of lunch, most of our members get all the convenience and comfort of electricity for an entire day.

A Union Power Cooperative member consuming an average of 1,350 kilowatt-hours of electricity a month is powering his or her home for only \$4.78 per day.

**Electricity.  
A Great Value.**

## Electricity Theft and Vandalism

# Pose Safety and Financial Concerns

Theft 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!

## Transition Towards More

# Energy Efficient Security Lights



**T**he Energy Policy Act, signed by President George W. Bush in August 2005, is a national energy plan that promotes energy efficiency and conservation from power generation to individual consumption. In accordance with this Act, manufacturers cannot make or import ballasts for mercury vapor lights after January 1, 2008. Mercury vapor security lights are being phased out to protect the environment and to promote energy efficiency in lighting. Union Power will begin the transition away from using

mercury vapor lights and start replacing them with high-pressure sodium fixtures or metal halide fixtures. High-pressure sodium lighting is 2½ times more energy efficient while metal halide is twice as efficient as mercury vapor.

Union Power will not be installing any new mercury vapor fixtures. In compliance with the act, we can continue to use the mercury vapor lamps, when available, as maintenance replacements for existing security and streetlights, but inevitably the mercury vapor fixtures will be phased out as the existing ballasts and fixtures fail. Beginning November 1, 2007, when existing ballasts or fixtures of this type fail, a new energy-efficient fixture of similar type fixture and light output (lumens) will be installed in its place at no cost to the member.

No action is required on your part. Those members with security lights will see a slight change, depending on the fixture replacement, in the security light charge on your monthly electric bill because of these changes.

Union Power Cooperative will continue to meet the outdoor lighting needs of its members. If you have any questions about this law or this phased change-out, please visit our web site, [www.union-power.com](http://www.union-power.com), or call our customer service center at (800) 922-6840 or (704) 289-3145.

# 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 Cabarrus Counties:

Fowler Secrest Road	Monroe Olive Branch Road	Flowes Store Road
Secrest Short Cut Road	Mills Harris Road	John White Road
Fowler Road	Lawyers Road	Cal Bost Road
Poplin Road	Phifer Road	Barkley Road
New Hope Church Road	Austin Grove Church Road	Highway 601
New Salem Road	Lucy Short Cut Road	Helmdale Road
McIntyre Road	Ellis Griffin 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 Middle School Students:

Visit [www.union-power.com](http://www.union-power.com) for guidelines and an application for the Kay Yow or Roy Williams Basketball Camps. Click on the **In the Community** tab. *The deadline is March 28.*

## Attention High School Seniors:

*Apply Now for College Scholarships*

Now is the time to apply for Union Power's college scholarship.

Union Power Cooperative is excited to sponsor three \$1,000 college scholarships to area 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 18, 2008. 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 63,000 members in Union, Stanly, Cabarrus, Mecklenburg, and Rowan counties.

### SERVICE CHARGES:

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

**Connection Fee**  
\$25

**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