



Cooperative *review*

May 2008

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 
The power of human connections®

A Newsletter for Members of Union Power Cooperative

Climate Change:

Balancing New Opportunities with Cost Challenges

North Carolina's electric cooperatives and our consumers are facing a monumental challenge—climate change. Many scientists agree that greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide, warm the Earth and are accumulating in the Earth's atmosphere as a result of human activities. However, there is still some uncertainty as to how greenhouse gases actually affect the Earth's climate.

Regardless, our political leaders are currently debating significant legislation that will impact our daily lives. In response, the electric utility industry must be prepared to implement technologies that will slow, stop and eventually reduce the level of greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere. The process of generating fossil-fueled electricity, followed closely by the transportation industry, is the single largest source of carbon dioxide emissions in the United States, representing 40 percent of total carbon dioxide emissions from all sources in 2005. We take our role for responsible action very seriously.

Electric cooperatives, including Union Power, support an aggressive model developed by the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) for reducing greenhouse gases by 2030. This model, called the EPRI prism, recognizes that there is no single solution to climate change and suggests seven technologies that, combined, can reduce greenhouse gas emissions to the benchmark 1990 level. These technologies are: energy efficiency, different sources of renewable energy, nuclear generation, advanced coal generation, carbon capture and storage, plug-in hybrid vehicles, and distributed energy resources.

Researchers recognize that many of these technologies need additional development before they can commercially and economically be deployed. Implementing these technologies before they are fully developed will result in significant cost increases to consumers with minimal benefits to the environment. Electric cooperatives are proponents of financing research and development to



reduce costs to consumers, and employees of your electric cooperative are working hard on Capitol Hill to make sure political leaders hear this message.

Although many of these technologies need further research and development, we all have the opportunity to become more energy efficient. Visit Union Power's web site, www.union-power.com, to receive information about an on-line home energy audit. Home energy audits troubleshoot areas in your home that need repairs or upgrades. Also consider changing your traditional incandescent light bulbs to compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs). Consider upgrading your appliances to newer, more energy efficient appliances, and follow home improvement tips like adding insulation. Many self-assessments and tips are available on our web site.

Union Power Cooperative's goal, providing you safe, reliable electricity at a good value, remains unwavering, even in this new era of balancing electricity demand with rising cost pressures from increased regulation.

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Tony E. Herrin
Executive Vice President
and General Manager

Our Energy, Our Future...

spending a lot of time on. These forces, the desire by government to reduce greenhouse gas emissions quickly, and the growing demand for power by consumers are about to collide.

Some people say we can meet demand through efficiency and renewable energy. The reality is we need all the efficiency and renewable energy we can get, but that will not be enough.

To avert an energy crisis, the federal government must exercise true leadership, the same leadership that got Americans to the moon in the 1960s. Without that leadership—without a sound, responsible plan—government risks not only the reliability of our electric system, but literally the ability of many Americans to be able to afford to pay their electric bill.

We, as electric co-op members and constituents, must call on elected officials to provide this leadership. That's why I want to encourage you to contact your elected officials. Now.

You don't need to be an energy expert to ask questions. Asking questions helps find the answers to solve the problem of balancing climate

change goals with keeping your lights on and your electric bills affordable.

Right now, members of Congress, as well as state elected officials, are hearing from lots of different interest groups who have ideas about how to address climate change. No one is talking to consumers, however. We need a plan people can live with today while we deal with the climate change problem of tomorrow.


To make things easy, we have a web site that will send an email for you. Go to www.ourenergy.coop and plug in your address. There you'll be able to ask a series of questions to your representatives in Washington. We're kicking this effort off with a basic but critical question: What are they doing to make sure we'll have the power we need in the future?

Far too often questions don't get asked by policy makers until plans go wrong. We believe it makes sense to know the answers before the laws are passed. You can help your elected officials and yourself by having this conversation. Please, don't delay. Start the conversation today.

Pressure is mounting in Congress to do something about climate change. And while political debates in Washington, D.C., may seem far away, the outcome will have a direct impact on our cooperative—and on you and other electric consumers.

Climate change is only one aspect of a looming energy crisis created by increasing demand and decreasing capacity to meet that demand. Experts now say some areas of the country will be short of power within one or two years.

And yet energy supply isn't an issue our elected representatives are



Fill'er Up . . .

For the cost of one tank of gas, most of our members receive electricity to keep their homes powered for two weeks.

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

Electricity. A Great Value.

Teachers Can Apply Now For 2008-2009 Bright Ideas Education Grants



BRIGHT IDEAS

North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives have earmarked \$500,000 for classroom-based projects through their funding of the Bright Ideas Education Grant Program for the 2008-2009 school year. Teachers can learn about the program and apply online at www.ncbrightideas.com. Grants up to \$2,000 are available. Teachers who submit their application by late August will be entered in a drawing for a \$500 gift card.

All North Carolina-certified K-12 teachers are eligible for a Bright Ideas grant, the only program exclusively for the state's classroom educators.

Last year, the state's 27 electric cooperatives gave out more than \$525,000 in Bright Ideas grants, benefiting more than 121,000 students. **Union Power alone funded more than \$20,000 to schools in Union, Stanly, Mecklenburg, Cabarrus and Rowan counties.**

Bright Ideas grants finance innovative and creative classroom projects that would otherwise go unfunded. North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives have financed a variety of hands-on projects, including activities in music, art, history, language, reading, science, career-planning and information technology.

Since it began in 1994, the Bright Ideas program has awarded more than \$5.3 million in grant money to North Carolina's teachers to sponsor 5,000 projects benefiting more than 800,000 students. Simplicity is the hallmark of the application process. The primary elements are narratives explaining the project and how it will benefit students. A sample application is on the Bright Ideas web site as well as contact information for teachers who have questions or require more information. You can view a list of Union Power's 2007-2008 Bright Ideas winners at www.union-power.com, then click on **In the Community** tab.

Bright Ideas is part of the electric cooperatives' ongoing commitment to North Carolina communities. North Carolina's electric cooperatives serve more than 2.2 million people in 93 of the state's 100 counties.

Play it *safe*

May is National Electrical Safety month and there's no better time than now to educate yourself and others on the importance of electrical safety.

While electrical fires are the chief electricity hazard, other hazards include the misuse of surge suppressors and extension cords, resulting in electric shock. Fatalities, injuries, and economic losses caused by such dangers can be reduced with education and awareness. From the home to the office, there are many valuable practices that can be followed to ensure year-round electrical safety. Educate yourself and your family by practicing the following tips:

At Home:

- Keep all appliances away from water, including hair dryers, electric toothbrushes and curling irons
- Don't overload outlets, and ensure power strips, cords, and surge suppressors are designed to handle your intended load
- Never unplug or carry any appliance by its cord
- Don't run cords under carpet or furniture, as the cords can overheat and cause a fire

- Unplug appliances before cleaning them
- Inspect all appliances, including power tools, for frayed cords, broken plugs and cracked or broken housing, then replace the damaged equipment or have it repaired by an authorized repair center

At Work

- Conduct electrical safety audits in your office, checking for the safe use and condition of outlets, extension cords and electrical cords
- Be aware of electrical wires in and out of your office building, including power lines, electrical wiring and underground
- Treat all overhead power lines as dangerous, and keep at least 10 feet of space between you and the line

Children

- Teach children to never put their fingers in electrical outlets and appliances
- Keep appliances and cords away from children and use plug covers in outlets



- Make sure children use kites and balloons in open areas. Electricity can travel down the strings if they contact power lines. Always keep metallic balloons indoors, as they are especially conductive
- Teach children to stay away from power lines and substations and make sure they can recognize "Danger-High Voltage" signs
- Don't let children climb trees near power lines

When mishandled, electricity can lead to deaths, injuries, and costly damages. Make sure electrical safety is constantly practiced, whether at home, at work, in school, or in the sandbox. Start this May by making it a year-round priority to practice electrical safety in every aspect of your life.

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Energy Efficiency *Tip of the Month*

A well-designed landscape not only adds beauty to your home, but it can also reduce heating and cooling costs. On average, landscaping for energy efficiency provides enough energy savings to return an initial investment in less than eight years.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy

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Providing electricity and energy services to over 64,000 members in Union, Stanly, Cabarrus, Mecklenburg, and Rowan counties.

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Call Before Dig

NC One Call Center—Dial 811



SERVICE CHARGES:

Security Deposit—charges vary
\$0, \$175, \$375

Connection Fee
\$25

Late Payment Charge

\$5 or 1.5% of past due balance, if greater

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