

# COOPERATIVE REVIEW

Energy for Today, Power for Tomorrow



## NC's Electric Cooperatives Receive National Recognition for Bright Ideas Grant Program

Few things are more important than educating young minds. Yet in these difficult economic times, many schools have been forced to tighten their budgets by reducing teaching staffs and cutting various programs. Through the Bright Ideas educational grant program, sponsored by NC's Touchstone Energy cooperatives, North Carolina co-ops continue to make a difference in the lives of grateful teachers and students throughout the state. Recently, the Bright Ideas program received national recognition — a National Community Service Award for Youth Programs, presented by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

Begun in 1994, the Bright Ideas educational grant program was established to help improve North

Carolina classrooms by awarding grants to teachers in grades K–12 for their innovative, classroom-based bright ideas that would not otherwise be funded. The Bright Ideas program demonstrates cooperatives' commitment to the communities we serve. "An investment in schools is a long-term investment in the community. North Carolina's electric cooperatives have touched the lives of nearly one million students with Bright Ideas grants and, during this recession, helped to fill a widening gap in rural education budgets," said F. E. Wolski, president of the NRECA board of directors, during the award presentation at NRECA's annual meeting in Atlanta.

Since the inception of the Bright Ideas program, NC's electric co-ops have collectively awarded more than \$7 million to deserving teachers in schools across the state, sponsoring 6,500+ classroom projects. Last year alone, \$580,000 was distributed to NC teachers, turning 570 innovative projects into reality.



### Calling all TEACHERS:

It's time to get those bright ideas rolling! Teachers can apply online now at:

[www.ncbrightideas.com](http://www.ncbrightideas.com)

Union Power Cooperative has proudly sponsored the Bright Ideas program for 16 years and has awarded \$208,000 locally to more than 231 projects in schools throughout our service area. In 2009, we supported 18 winning ventures with a total of \$20,635. Grant monies were awarded in surprise visits to classrooms where teachers were presented a "big check" in front of their students. To view last year's winners, visit [www.union-power.com](http://www.union-power.com) and click on My Community.

It's that time again! This year's Bright Ideas kick off is April 19 — the date that teachers can begin applying for grants on [www.ncbrightideas.com](http://www.ncbrightideas.com). We encourage all our members to visit this web site to watch the short video on their home page — you'll be proud that your Cooperative is part of a program that is making such a big difference in the lives of NC children.



Teacher Kelly Gallagher and her Piedmont Middle School students received a grant in 2009.

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# FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE



Union Power Cooperative offers many convenient ways to pay your electric bill and manage your account 24/7.

### Automatic Draft Payment –

Make paying bills worry free! This option 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. 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 pay your bills on our secure site, [www.union-power.com](http://www.union-power.com). View and select the option to pay using a credit card, debit card, or by electronic check. Paying bills online requires that a member have an online account setup with a username and password. Your initial password can be found on your billing statement. You may go online to set up your account, but you must have an email address on file to complete the activation process. You can contact our customer service department to set up your email address in our online payment system. This secure site also allows you to keep track of how you use

electricity by viewing your 24-month historical usage and billing history.

**Pay by Phone –** Eliminate check writing and save on postage! Use our FREE automated system at (704) 289-3145 or 1-800-922-6840 to pay with a debit/ credit card or check. We accept MasterCard, Visa, Discover, and American Express. To pay with a check over the automated system, you must first call our office to have a profile set up for you.

**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 your payment off after hours in our night drop box at each location.

### Do you budget monthly bills?

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

■ **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 amount.

For more information, visit our web site at [www.union-power.com](http://www.union-power.com) or call (704) 289-3145 or (704) 485-3335.



## Don't Be Left in the Dark about Energy Savings

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

### Do the Math — Our Website Can Save You Money



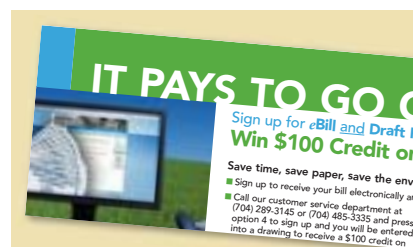
Calculate your home energy usage



Calculators to find savings on lighting, appliances, and more



Learn how energy is used in your home and find ways to conserve



### CONGRATULATIONS

to Judge W. Morgan, Jr. of Oakboro, the winner of the \$100 credit on his power bill.

Thanks to everyone who signed up for e-bill and bank draft during this promotion.

PLAY IT

# SAFE



**Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.**

Hitting an underground utility line while digging may result in serious injury and also disrupt service to an entire neighborhood, which can also bring about costly fines and repairs.

Safe digging is no accident. Did you know that underground utility lines are buried approximately three feet underground? However, this distance doesn't take into account erosion or additional grading done after the lines have been installed. This means that even shallow digging projects can be

potentially dangerous. If you are planning a home improvement project, planting a tree, or installing a fence or deck — always start by calling 811 first. North Carolina law requires you to place this call at least 48 hours prior to digging to ensure that all underground utility lines are marked.

Dialing 811 will forward your call to your local One Call Center. The operator will ask you for the location of your digging project and route all affected utility companies to send a professional locator to mark the lines free of charge. Once the underground lines have been marked, you will know the approximate location of your utility lines. This will protect you, your family, and your neighbors. NC law also requires that you allow a 30-inch buffer on each side of the marked utility line. When digging, use a hand shovel and be sure to dig at least 30 inches away from each side of the marks, not directly on them.

Remember to always call before you dig! For more information, visit [www.call811.com](http://www.call811.com).



## Recognition for our Top Notch Fleet

Impressed with our large and diverse fleet of service vehicles and heavy equipment, ExxonMobil Corporation recently selected Union Power as the subject of a testimonial to the performance of its heavy-duty diesel oil.

Union Power's Director of Fleet Maintenance Ted Price was honored that ExxonMobil recognized Union Power's successful use of its product. "While it is an honor for Union Power to be nationally recognized in this way, our main focus is our members and adding value to the services we provide. Maintaining our fleet helps us provide quick response times and reliable service."



ExxonMobil is publishing a 4-page advertisement that will be used by the corporation and its distributors across the nation. The ad will also be featured on [www.mobildelvac.com](http://www.mobildelvac.com).

Photo courtesy of ExxonMobil Corporation

# RIGHT-OF-WAY CLEARING



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

**Mint Hill/Matthews** — Sam Newell Rd., Northeast Ct., Eastpointe Dr., Rice Rd., Tommy Ln., Hayden Way, Williams Rd., Rondeau Ct., Lakeview Circle, Meadow Ln., Keziah Rd., Hargett Rd., Atrium Way, Ballards Pond Ln., Birchhill Rd., Singletree Rd., Saddlewood Ln., Rising Sun Terrace, Lebanon Rd., Foxcrest Dr., Clubhouse Ct., Pine Lake Ln., Beaver Stream Rd., Clubhouse Ct., Beaver Dam Ln., Foxcrest Dr., Quail Ridge Dr., Golfview Ct., Ginovanni Way, Matthews-Mint Hill Rd., Well Rd., Apple Mint Ct., Mayhew Forrest Ln., and Morris Park Dr.

**Indian Trail** — Ridge Rd., Lawyers Rd., Howey Bottoms Rd., Mill Grove Rd., Noah Helms Rd., Garrett Rd., Twin Oaks Rd., Duncan Rd., Bill Wiley Rd., Earl Duncan Rd., Hwy 218, Berry Mullis Rd.,

Clontz Rd., Cull Williams Rd., Wright Rd., Lazy B Circle, Crowell Dairy Rd., Joe Lee Helms Rd., Old Dutch Rd., Blue Rock Rd., Russell Rd., Rock Hill Church Rd., Tall Oaks Ln., Persimmon Creek Dr., Shepherds Cove, Asheley Glen Dr., Machado Dr., Lester Mullis Rd., Heritage Ln., Heritage View Rd., Duck Creek Ln., Pierce Rd., Jonah Ridge, Brief Rd. West, Mint Lake Dr., Kerr Rd., Langtree Ln., Willis Long Rd., Winchester Rd., Rocky River Rd. (N and S of Unionville-Indian Trail Rd), Creekside Dr., Forest Dr., Unionville-Indian Trail Rd., Kiker Brock Dr., Poplin Rd., Sanctuary Ln., Hartis Rd., Secret Shortcut Rd., Scott Long Rd., Southwind Trail Dr., Faith Church Rd., Arthur Dr., Logan Circle, St. Joseph Dr., Esther St., Iris St., Denise Dr., and Kristofer Dr.

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). For monthly right-of-way clearing updates, visit our web site [www.union-power.com](http://www.union-power.com).

## Spring and summer storms can pop up suddenly, increasing the chance for outages.

If you need to report a power outage and if your phone number is not recognized, you will be instructed to enter additional information to help us identify the location of the problem. You can report your outage by providing us with any one of the following items that are listed on your billing statement:

- phone number
- account number
- meter number

**Call 1-800-794-4423  
to report an outage.**

It is important that your phone number be listed correctly on your account. To add or update your phone number, visit our web site, [www.union-power.com](http://www.union-power.com), or call our customer service department at (704) 289-3145 or (704) 485-3335.

Cooperative Review is published monthly by

# Union Power Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Union Power Cooperative provides safe and reliable power with exceptional value to more than 65,000 members in Union, Stanly, Cabarrus, Mecklenburg, and Rowan counties.

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### Business Hours

8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday–Friday  
(704) 289-3145 or (704) 485-3335  
Toll-free 1-800-922-6840

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

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

1-800-794-4423

### 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)

**Trip Charge**

\$25 (checks or money orders only, 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