

Happy New Year* 2016

Published for Member/Owners of **EnergyUnited**

connect

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Congratulations to the 2015-2016 Bright Ideas Winners!

At EnergyUnited, we understand the importance of supporting both teachers and youth in our communities, which is why we're committed to being a part of the Bright Ideas grant program. In 2015, we received almost double the amount of applications over 2014 and we were able to grant over \$40,000 to 47 North Carolina teachers in the 19 counties that EnergyUnited serves.



Bright Idea Winner, Anthony Johnson, HD Isenberg Elementary, Rowan County

EnergyUnited had the opportunity to honor the 2015 Bright Ideas grant winners at special recognition luncheons during the month of November. Since the winners represented 13 of the 19 counties that EnergyUnited serves, we hosted luncheons in each of our 3 districts.

At the luncheons, each of our winning teachers were presented with a large check that

they could take back to their classrooms and display so that their students and colleagues knew that they received funding for their "bright ideas." We were pleased that nearly all of the award recipients were able to attend the luncheon and learn about one another's Bright Idea projects. The excitement in the room was contagious — it was a great way to share how the teachers are going to use the funding they were granted to bring their innovative projects to life in their classrooms!

Created in 1994, the Bright Ideas program aims to support teachers and enhance education by engaging students in creative and innovative learning projects. To apply for a

grant, educators must fill out an online application which requires the teachers to provide information on the goals and implementation for their project and the budget needed to fund it. The application is submitted for review by a panel of judges, who then decide how much money to grant to each recipient. The application process will reopen for interested teachers in April 2016.

In our 21 years of participation in the Bright Ideas program, EnergyUnited has granted over \$700,000 to local teachers for their classrooms. North Carolina's 26 electric cooperatives collectively have awarded more than \$9.6 million to teachers across the state.

We hope to see a continued growth in the Bright Ideas applications in 2016 and look forward to granting funds again next year to teachers in our K-12 schools for their "bright ideas!"



Bright Idea winner, Brittney Bray, Walkertown Elementary, Forsyth County with EnergyUnited's CEO H. Wayne Wilkins



Bright Idea winner, Amy Goldwine, Southwest Elementary, Forsyth County

Thank you for Being Part of Operation Round-Up!

We want to thank you, our members, for participating in our Operation Round-Up Program in 2015. Your generosity in donating to the Round-Up Program has made a positive impact on hundreds of people in need this past year! You can help us to support community members in need by simply having your monthly electric bill rounded up to the nearest whole dollar. The amount donated is indicated on your monthly bill, with a total of the annual contribution on your January bill. On average, individual donations are about \$6 per year.

We have been fortunate to partner with The EnergyUnited Foundation to assist many individuals and families this past year due to the generosity of our members who donate through the Round-Up Program. A few examples include helping an elderly woman who was disabled and needed a new roof and helping a dad with three young children to assist him with his bills after suddenly losing his job. The Foundation also assisted a mother of two children who is waiting to have a liver transplant and has had difficulty keeping up with her rent and bills. These are just a few of the applicants the EU Foundation has funded thanks to the generosity of our members.



Our Daily Bread Food Pantry volunteers and staff

The donations go directly to the EnergyUnited Foundation, where we give back to the community in a number of ways including giving to various non-profit organizations. In November, we approved a grant for \$10,000 to Our Daily Bread Food Pantry in Advance, NC, thanks to the generous contributions from members who contribute to the Operation Round-Up Program.

If you would like to round up your electric bill each month, please call us at **1-800-522-3793**. The more members that participate, the more we can give back to our community.

Sign up today, your donation can make a difference!



Get to know our 2016 Youth Tour Winners in next month's issue of *Connect*!

Start the year off right and protect yourself from identity theft!

As members of EnergyUnited, we have the utmost concern about your security and are happy to announce that there is now a way to protect yourself from identity theft through the Co-op Connections® Card.

The ID Theft Monitoring Resolution Program for your Co-op Connections Card provides you with the proactive tools and recovery assistance needed to quickly respond to an identity or fraud crisis.

This program helps prevent:

- Tax return fraud
- Medical ID theft
- Bank account hacking
- Stealing mail
- Credit card skimming
- Phishing schemes

EnergyUnited members are eligible for exclusive pricing of \$5/month for individuals or \$8/month for families.

For more information about the program, contact an EnergyUnited Customer Care Representative at 1-800-522-3793, or visit EnergyUnited.com/co-op-connections to sign up for the program.

Now is the time to apply for 2016 Sports Camp Scholarships!



Every year since 2004, EnergyUnited has selected two students, one boy and one girl, to receive a Touchstone Energy Sports Camp Scholarship.

We encourage interested middle school students in our service territory to apply for these all-expenses paid basketball camp scholarships by filling out an online application at www.energyunited.com/sports-camp. Applications will be accepted between January 1 and March 31, and the winners will be announced in early May.

Young men can apply to attend the Roy Williams Carolina Basketball Camp at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and young women can apply to attend the Wolfpack Basketball camp at North Carolina State University in Raleigh.

Students who are currently in fifth, sixth or seventh grade can apply for this scholarship.

To learn more, visit www.energyunited.com/sports-camp. We hope that many of our members family and friends will encourage youth in EnergyUnited's 19 county service area to apply for this unique scholarship opportunity!



Planning for Success in 2016

Happy New Year! It's exciting to be at the start of 2016, thinking about our goals for the future and how we can achieve success over the next 12 months. Being a member-owned cooperative, it's important that you, our members, know about our goals and the direction EnergyUnited will take this year.

As your electric cooperative, a large part of our annual investment goes back into improving our distribution infrastructure for reliability. In this new year, we will sustain our focus on business operations to improve our efficiencies with implementations, such as a mobile workforce management system or an improved routing and scheduling system in propane. This helps to keep our members' rates as low as possible.

We will also cultivate our propane business into an even stronger and more profitable part of EnergyUnited. The success of our propane business and other non-electric sales allows EnergyUnited to maintain our competitive rates. We plan to preserve this focus in the new year as this has been beneficial to all.

Throughout this year, we will also launch updates to our website as we have in the last year, with a focus on offering more features to communicate with our members. If you have not already added your email address to your account information on our website, we encourage you to add it so we can effectively and efficiently communicate important messages with you. In doing so, you will be entered in our drawing to win a dinner and a movie (see details below). In 2015, we redesigned our website to become a more powerful tool that allows you to reference a live Power Outage Map so you will know minute-by-minute where the power outages are and what the estimated restoration time is. Members can also view and pay their electric and propane bills online.

As we make our way through the year, we will carry on our use of technology as a way to communicate with our

members. We currently have an e-newsletter called 'Empower Your World' which is designed to provide our members with articles on energy-related best practices, updates on emerging energy efficiency trends and technologies, and information on our new programs and initiatives. We hope that you will take advantage of these technological communications to stay informed.

As we continue to nurture our technological efforts, rest assured our focus has always been on and will not cease to be on the security of our member information. It's not only the smart thing to do, but also the right thing to do, and that is why it will remain a focus in the new year. Your information is already secure, but we will increase our efforts in this area by researching new technologies to ensure we are doing everything we can to protect our systems and members' information. When it comes to security, we feel it's important to be proactive, so later we won't have to be reactive.

In order to achieve these goals and make 2016 a success, we count on feedback that we receive at our regional Member Advisory Committee meetings, from surveys and in emails and letters that you share with us. Please do not hesitate to let us know how we can better serve you. As always, our goal is to provide excellent customer service and reliable, efficient energy to you. Together, we can make 2016 our most successful year yet.

REMINDER

CLOSED

JAN 1

Our offices will be closed on Friday, January 1, for New Year's Day. We hope you and your family have a wonderful start to 2016!

WIN!

DINNER & A MOVIE FOR 2!

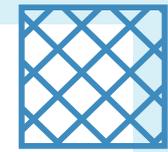
During weather emergencies, it's important for us to be able to contact you quickly to keep you safe and restore power as soon as possible. Having your updated contact information helps us stay connected!

Go to www.energyunited.com/account-information, login and submit your email address by Feb. 15 to be entered to win a dinner and a movie for 2! Members who have already submitted their contact info will be entered in a separate drawing as a thank you.

Contest Ends **FEB 15**

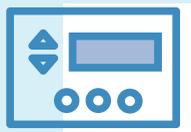
We will not share this information with any third parties.

Stay Warm and Save Energy



CHECK FURNACE FILTERS.

At a minimum, change your heating and cooling system's air filter every three months. A dirty filter clogs the system, making it work harder to keep you warm.



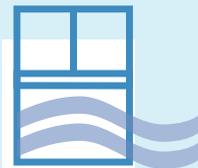
INSTALL A PROGRAMMABLE THERMOSTAT.

Programmable thermostats can knock up to 10% off heating bills with the ability to automatically turn temperatures down 10 to 15 degrees for 8 hours a day.



INSULATE WATER HEATERS AND PIPES.

Wrap water pipes connected to the water heater with foam, insulate the water heater and consider lowering the water heater temperature to 120 degrees.



BUNDLE UP YOUR HOME.

The more heat that escapes from cracks, the more cold air enters, causing your system to work harder and use more energy. Fix air leaks with weather-stripping, caulk, or expandable foam.

Winter Storm Safety

Snow and ice storms are an inevitable part of the winter season. They can lead to downed power lines and outages, which can be dangerous. Remember the following tips to stay safe and warm should you find yourself in the dark after a severe winter event:

- Never touch a fallen power line, and assume all wires on the ground are electrically charged. Call EnergyUnited at **1-800-522-3793** to report it immediately.

- Make sure carbon monoxide detectors and smoke detectors are working properly.
- Do not use a gas-powered oven for heating. A gas oven may go out or burn inefficiently, leading to carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Do not use a gas or charcoal grill inside the home.
- If you use a portable generator to power a heating source, be sure the generator is located outside your house for proper ventilation. Do not use a generator in an attached garage and always follow manufacturer's directions for operating the generator.
- Take special care not to overload a generator. Use appropriately sized extension cords to carry the electric load and make sure the cords have a grounded, three-pronged plug and are in good condition.
- Never connect generators to power lines. The reverse flow of electricity can electrocute an unsuspecting utility worker.
- Keep at least one telephone in the house that does not depend on electricity in case of a power outage.

Ideally, your family will stay warm until the power comes back on. However, keep an eye on family members for signs of hypothermia, which include shivering, drowsiness, and mental and physical slowness. Call 911 immediately if you notice these symptoms.

We hope these tips will help you stay safe this winter!

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is published monthly for its members by EnergyUnited.

Please send questions, comments and story ideas to **Maureen Moore**, Communications Manager at maureen.moore@energyunited.com



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H. Wayne Wilkins Chief Executive Officer

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