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Published for Member/Owners of **EnergyUnited**

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National Lineman Appreciation Day

You have seen it around your community: large white EnergyUnited trucks with augers and buckets on large booms, men rising up into the air, carefully making repairs to power lines and damaged utility poles. And since 2012, National Lineman Appreciation Day has been designated each year at the state and federal level to recognize and celebrate the dangerous and hard work done by electric linemen. But what makes a lineman?

Linemen are the people who have made it their life's work to ensure that the power streaming to your home stays safe and reliable. National Lineman Appreciation Day is April 11. In celebration of this day, we spoke to a lineman in each of our three regions to better understand a day in the life of a lineman, not only for these three, but for all 75 linemen who work for EnergyUnited.

"My day-to-day work has pretty much stayed the same, which is nice," said John. "I enjoy my work as a lineman, and being able to work outside with my hands. As my dad used to say, 'What's more fun than going outside and playing with big trucks?' I like knowing that what I do has a real impact. Everyone loves when the power comes back on."

One of John's favorite on-the-job memories comes from an outage restoration in a coastal community: "A group of us went to help restore power after a hurricane in Mann's Harbor, on the East Coast of North Carolina. It was hard work, but I was touched when we were able to get power back to a local fire station that night. The community was flabbergasted that we got the power on so fast in their little town. They even hosted a fish fry to honor the lineman, it was pretty special."

When asked about his future plans John said, "I'm just going to keep running that bucket truck, and maybe one day I'll finally retire."

Chris Hill, Lineman for over 30 years

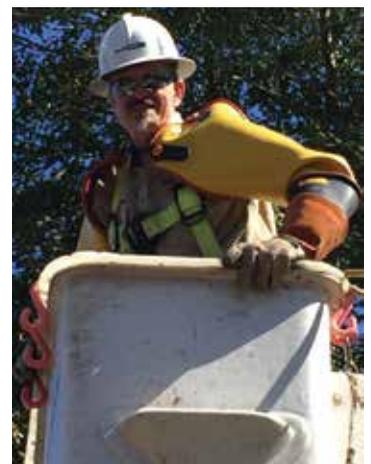
"The best thing about being a lineman is the people that I've met throughout the years.



John Hazen

John Hazen, Lineman for almost 40 years

"I grew up around linemen," John said. "My father and grandfather were in the business, and I always liked working with trucks and poles, rather than being inside all the time." Early experience with linemen led John to begin work with the Georgetown municipality as a lineman and licensed electrician. "I learned to be a lineman by working hands-on with other linemen like my father and grandfather. Then, when I started with Sandler Regional Line Company in Massachusetts, I learned how to use a bucket truck and really got my start as a lineman."



Chris Hill

continued on next page

National Lineman Appreciation Day, continued

Not only do I consider them friends, but they have become my family," said Chris Hill. This is a sentiment that we heard from many of the linemen. There is a special bond that's formed working in dangerous situations and through long nights to get power restored to a community.

"I became a lineman in 1989, because I wanted a job where I could do something different everyday and spend a lot of time outdoors," said Chris. "Almost all of my training has been on the job. I started with Fitton and Pittman, and then finished my training with Pike Electric when they took over the Duke Energy contract years ago. This job is all about adapting to situations, and getting out in the field is the only way to truly understand how everything works together." While at Pike, General Foreman Tom Nugent was a big role model for Chris. "He taught me to 'keep it simple and always give respect,' and that's one thing I try to do every day."

Chris' most memorable moment came in 2004, when he had the opportunity to assist with power restoration following four hurricanes that struck Florida. "I feel like we made a huge positive impact during that time, the damage was severe, and I'm glad we could help get the lights back on."

"I'd like to thank God for giving me the opportunity to do what I do for a living, and for giving me the strength to continue to do it," said Chris. When asked if there was anything he would change about his job he said, "Oh yeah, the weather. If it were up to me, it would be 75 degrees and sunny every day!"

Austin Story, Lineman 4½ Years

Austin Story, one of our youngest linemen, knew he wanted to become a lineman right out of high school. "I had an internship with Blue Ridge EMC the summer after my senior year. I was able to see the day-to-day life of a lineman. I fell in love with the job and wanted to be up there climbing poles one day," he said. After his internship, Austin went through the lineman program at Nash Community College in Rocky Mount, NC, before returning to EnergyUnited to finish his on-the-job training.

Check the List for Unclaimed Capital Credits

As a member of our electric cooperative, you are more than just a customer. Unlike investor-owned utilities, which return a portion of profits to shareholders, cooperatives operate as a not-for-profit. This means that instead of returning leftover funds to distant investors, we allocate and periodically retire capital credits. Allocations are based on the length of time a member has been served by EnergyUnited and how much electricity that member has purchased.

In December 2015, we returned over \$3.5 million in capital credits to current and former EnergyUnited members. Many of those members received a credit on their bill as part of the capital credits retirement. Residential refunds of \$15 or more were mailed directly to members. We also mailed checks to those who are no longer part of the cooperative.



Austin Story

Austin enjoys all of the people he gets to meet and help each day as a lineman. "I love everything about what I do, from the work, to the trucks, to the places we get to go. It's always great to be doing something for other people," he said. In fact, Austin's favorite moment as a lineman came after an especially severe storm struck our service area, "We worked throughout the night to get the lights back on. As soon as we would get a line back on you'd see all the houses in the neighborhood light up. It was a very rewarding feeling."



Austin Story

Austin and his fellow linemen are all thankful for those who came before them, and those who helped them along the way. When you become a lineman, you become part of a legacy that has been around for generations, and all of us at EnergyUnited are proud to support these hard-working individuals. We hope you take some time during this month to thank the linemen in your community for ensuring you have safe and reliable power everyday.

Because our formula for capital credits distribution is based on previous years, often members who are entitled to capital credits have moved away from our service area and are difficult to locate. When this happens, the capital credit checks are returned back to us, and we make every effort to locate the person entitled to the refund. If we cannot find the individual's current address, the money goes into what is called an "escheat" fund in the State Treasurer's office and is put toward the North Carolina education system.

We encourage our members to check our returned checks list at EnergyUnited.com/electric/capital-credits-check for family members and friends who may not have received their capital credits. If you see anyone you know on this list, please have them call **1-800-522-3793** for more information.



EnergyUnited is Maintaining Current Rates

At EnergyUnited, providing you – our members – with safe, affordable and reliable energy services is the cornerstone of our operations.

At EnergyUnited, we work hard to keep rates low for our members, while guaranteeing a stable supply of electricity. Periodically, we conduct a cost of service study to ensure that the amount we collect overall is adequate to support our operations. As a cooperative, our rates are based on two main components – the actual cost of the wholesale power we buy from the company that generates electricity, which is set by our power provider, and the cost for us to get that power to you. Proving reliable services takes the dedication and skill of our knowledgeable employees, the use of up-to-date technology and a continuous investment in the electric system.

We are happy to report that at this time, we are not increasing our rates. As you've probably noticed, fuel prices have remained low and stable for some time now. This has a significant impact on the cost of the wholesale power we buy, and allows us to keep our rates low and stable as well. As long as the fuel prices stay steady, we should be able to continue maintaining our rates and avoid raising them.

As another way of maintaining our rates, EnergyUnited has entered into several long-term wholesale contracts. This helps to keep our costs predictable, which in turn means that our energy rates can stay predictable for you, too. One of the biggest advantages of being served by a cooperative is that we

work only for you, and we always have your best interests in mind as we make decisions that affect our cooperative.

The cost of providing power represents operational costs including the expense of adding and maintaining poles, lines, transformers and meters, cost and maintenance of trucks and buildings, employee's salaries and the costs associated with maintaining records, such as the printing and mailing of bills. Our cost of service study showed that these costs are being covered adequately, which contributed to the decision to leave our rates unchanged.

Over time, energy costs will fluctuate, and technology and infrastructure repairs and improvements will always be necessary. To keep up with a changing world, our rates will be evaluated on a regular basis. We believe in taking a proactive approach to maintaining the integrity, quality and reliability of our systems, while being mindful of managing costs and watching expenditures. We think this is the best way to ensure we continue to serve you, our member-owners, in the most effective way possible.

SUBMIT YOUR BRIGHT IDEAS APPLICATIONS!

ncbrightideas.com



APPLY BY SEPTEMBER 16

EnergyUnited is accepting Bright Ideas education grant applications from April 1 through September 16.

Created in 1994, the Bright Ideas program is designed to enhance education by engaging students in meaningful projects that encourage creative approaches. The grant recipients use the money to fund creative, hands-on classroom projects that fall outside of traditional school budgets.

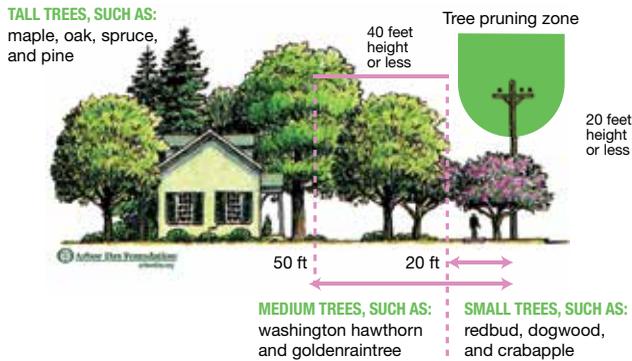
In 2015, EnergyUnited granted over \$40,000 to 27 local teachers, and we plan to fund a similar amount again this year. Bright Ideas grants are available to K-12 teachers for innovative projects in any subject. Educators are encouraged to apply individually or as a team by visiting EnergyUnited.com/bright-ideas-program. The early bird deadline to apply is August 12, and the last day to submit applications is September 16.

Trees Touching Power Lines Contribute to Power Interruptions

Spring is here, prompting many EnergyUnited members to begin their annual planting and gardening. It's also time to remind *Connect* readers to make the right decisions about planting the right species in the right location. Selecting the right species today will prevent pruning in years to come. With careful planning, trees can be planted below and adjacent to the power lines without causing future problems.

PLANT THE RIGHT TREE IN THE RIGHT PLACE

Plant taller trees away from overhead utility lines



Before you plant, you should always look up and down to determine where the trees will be located in relation to overhead and underground utility lines. In addition to causing power interruptions, a tree planted too close to an overhead power line will require costly pruning. Before you plant, discuss with a local nursery the mature height of the trees. There are numerous low growing species that will not reach the wire zone at maturity. Some online resources are:

- Arbor Day Foundation – arborday.org
- International Society of Arboriculture – treesaregood.com
- North Carolina Urban Forestry Council – ncufc.org
- NC Cooperative Extension – horticulture.ces.ncsu.edu

In 2015, we had a reliability rating of 99.98% for the system. Tree-related outages made up 25% of our total outages. When trees encroach into the right-of-way area around the powerlines, EnergyUnited must trim or remove them to ensure the safety and reliability of our system. We schedule tree trimming in your area every six to seven years, adhering to the industry "best practices." The cooperative prides itself on performing line clearing practices that are recognized by national and international standards. It is very important to balance the health and vitality of the vegetation and the clearance requirements defended in the national electrical code to ensure safety to our members, the general public and our line crews. Prior to trimming trees, members are notified by door hangers or the right-of-way staff.

We only use highly skilled contractors that are Line Clearance Certified to trim trees within close proximity to energized power lines. OSHA requires all construction crews to be Line Clearance Certified to work within 10 feet of any energized power lines.

The cooperative does not trim trees along service drops from the last pole to the member's home. Most of these wires are insulated and wound together. The cooperative does trim trees on less-common open secondary wires which are a type of non-coated wire. If you want to cut a tree along the service wire, EnergyUnited can drop the service wire and allow you to cut the tree at no-cost.

In many situations, property owners plant shrubs and flowers to screen the view of padmount transformers and cabinets. However, we request that you maintain a 3' buffer on three sides and 12' buffer on the front of the cabinet. The front is the lock side of the cabinet.

SERVICE AREA ZONE



We take our job of providing safe and reliable electric service to you, our members, very seriously. One tree-related outage can affect hundreds of our members. We appreciate your cooperation in supporting our vegetation management program. By working together, we can help control the cost of your electric service, reduce the possibilities of power interruptions to your neighborhood and still enjoy the positive qualities that trees contribute to our daily lives.

If you have questions about our vegetation management program, please contact EnergyUnited at 1-800-522-3793.

The cooperative has several ISA Certified Arborists on staff who will be glad to discuss your specific situation.

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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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

