

CONNECT

ENERGYUNITED'S MONTHLY MEMBER NEWSLETTER

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LINEMEN APPRECIATION

SPRING SAVINGS

YOUTH TOUR WINNERS

WE LOVE OUR
LINeworkERS



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO **H. WAYNE WILKINS**



There are several things that set us apart as your local connection. Like our commitment to providing reliable energy at one of the best values in the state, our dedication to the community, and of course, the friendly voices and smiling faces that are eager to assist you in your energy needs at every step of the way. All of this, however, is made possible by one crucial group of people: our linemen.

These are the individuals who are working around the clock to keep your lights on and your life empowered. The crew, which is around 60 people, is based on trust and integrity. Within the team, there's an understanding of camaraderie, that every single person will complete their role well, and that everyone is working with safety ever at heart. In many senses it's a community of men and women that feels like family, and to some—they actually are family. In this edition of Connect, you will read about three father-son duos who work as linemen all around our service areas. And while there is a strong sense of pride and community within this group, there is also tremendous rigor.

After all, power outages aren't a nine-to-five thing, and our team of linemen and women are on call 24/7 to make sure that if you're ever left in the dark, you don't stay that way for long. It's a trying job that exposes these individuals to the elements, high voltage and dangerous environmental situations. Many times, that means tending to the lines in inclement weather, on precarious and slippery grounds, or in the pitch-black dark.

That's why in honor of North Carolina's Lineman Appreciation Day on April 13, we pause to express our gratitude to those who keep us connected to one another, our comforts and our resources. It's with tremendous joy and appreciation that we dedicate this month's issue to the linemen who make our everyday lives enriched.

My hope is that you too will recognize their hard work with a simple thank you. Whether you're moved to do so on Facebook, Twitter or even via a handwritten card dropped off at your local EnergyUnited office, I know our linemen will appreciate the gesture. And to our linemen, from the bottom of our hearts: thank you for everything you do.

H. Wayne Wilkins

H. Wayne Wilkins

CELEBRATE EARTH DAY APRIL 22!

We're always looking for ways to be greener, like our paperless e-billing initiative and electric vehicle charging stations.

How will you be greener today? Let us know on social media!



MAKING ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

HOW ENERGYUNITED IS LOWERING COSTS THROUGH OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES.

Everything we do is in an effort to be the leading energy services provider for our members across our service area. But with changing technologies, our methods must adapt. We are currently in the process of changing all 130,000 of our meters to AMI (Advanced Metering Infrastructure). We have already upgraded 40,000 to AMI and have seen benefits. This system allows us to:

- Quickly pinpoint the location of outages. The meters send alarms that let us know when the power is out and when it is restored. This allows us to more quickly respond during normal conditions and better understand the outage severity during larger storms.
- Beware of inconsistencies, such as blinking lights, low voltage and power theft.
- Communicate with other devices. Having the ability to read information from downline devices such as reclosers, capacitors and regulators allows us to make more informed decisions about the system.
- Track power usage across the system. AMI gives us real-time usage information down to the meter, which we can then use to evaluate where problem areas of our system may be.

Our Distribution Automation and Field Asset Inventory (FAI) enables us to more quickly route crews to the problem area while allowing us to remotely reconfigure the system to get as many people online as possible.

This FAI project not only gave us the opportunity to take stock of our field assets, but also to update our mapping system. In this inventory we've:

- Tagged over 180,000 poles.
- Labeled 32,000 pieces of underground equipment. These included padmount transformers, secondary pedestals and underground switching cabinets.
- Identified over 135,000 service locations.
- Added over 340,000 photographs of our system.

We have already seen benefits from this system, such as:

- Quicker response time during outages—by having more accurate information and tags on all equipment in the field we are able to more quickly route resources.
- Quicker navigation across the system—Now that our system is within the GPS system, our lines better match up with map backgrounds, which allows lineworkers to see exactly how far off the road a line is and how to access the line more quickly.
- Better information across our whole system has allowed us to model our system more accurately than we ever have in the past, which will help us with planning.



THE LINEMEN THAT EMPOWER YOUR COMMUNITY

Electrical line work is more than just a job to those in the field—it's a fellowship built on trust, confidence and knowing that someone's got your back all along the line. Many describe it as a family, and for some, it is, like the Chapman, Fagan and Myers families, who seem to carry the tradition of linework in their genes.

Guy Chapman, Sandy Fagan and Chris Myers collectively have more than 90 years of experience as electrical linemen. Most of that experience came while they have been with EnergyUnited, and their sons Cory, Levi and Zach have followed in their footsteps and are working as linemen for EnergyUnited too.

These fathers had to find peace in their sons' decisions since they were aware of the risks associated with the job. For Sandy and Guy, that peace came from their personal experiences and the trust they have in the crew leaders with whom their sons are now working. Chris Myers' personal experiences, however, initially left him feeling conflicted.

In October of 1998, Chris went to work on a 7,200-volt underground primary line. Chris was still holding the line that day as it was energized.

"I was in the hospital for a couple of days after the accident and suddenly had this unbelievable feeling," Chris described. "I felt this cool breeze in my heart and this awareness of all the people who were praying for me, then I immediately sat up in my bed. I took one step out of my bed and continued to take one step after another," Chris recounted. "A few days after I started walking again, I was discharged. I returned to work two weeks later."

He knew he was fortunate to be alive and was prepared to quit his job. In fact, if it wasn't for Robert Owens, Regional Line Manager I (Yadkin River Region), he believes he wouldn't be where he is today. Robert helped him cope with the trauma that resulted from the accident, and in doing so helped him find peace with his son's decision.

The Myers, Fagans and Chapmans all have their own role models and leaders like Owens who they looked up to as they gained experience as linemen. And it's that shared respect for the job that plays an essential role in reinforcing a culture of safety. Though parental fears and trepidations may never truly dissipate, the feelings they experience most are a sense of pride in their sons, in the integrity of the job, and in the knowledge that together their work is truly empowering.



CHRIS & ZACH MYERS

"I always admired my dad for his great work ethic when I was growing up," said Zach Myers, Apprentice Lineman III (Lake Norman). "Even when I was really young, I knew I wanted to pursue the same career path."



GUY & CORY CHAPMAN

Cory Chapman, Apprentice Lineman III (Lexington), explains: “My dad (Serviceperson, Taylorsville) was a huge influence for me when I was growing up. Just watching him go out on calls made a huge impact. It really inspired me to get into this line of work.”



SANDY & LEVI FAGAN

“Most people would be timid to have their son working in this field, but the history we all have together makes a huge difference,” Sandy Fagan noted. “No matter where Levi goes, it feels good to at least be able to say I know and trust the people around him, because I’ve worked with them too.”

SPRING IS IN BLOOM

BUT WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR YOUR ELECTRICITY SOURCE?

While warming weather and longer days may have you excited to plant new vegetation, there are several best practices we'd like to remind our members of. The small trees we plant today seem harmless, but as they grow and their branches expand over the years, they can cause damage to the power lines and disrupt your access to reliable electricity.

When trees come into contact with power lines, they are causing a "fault," which in turn causes line breakers to trip, fuses to blow, lights to blink on and off, and power outages to occur. By selecting your tree species and planting location carefully you will prevent pruning and power disruptions in years to come. We've compiled a helpful chart to help you plan proper tree planting this spring.

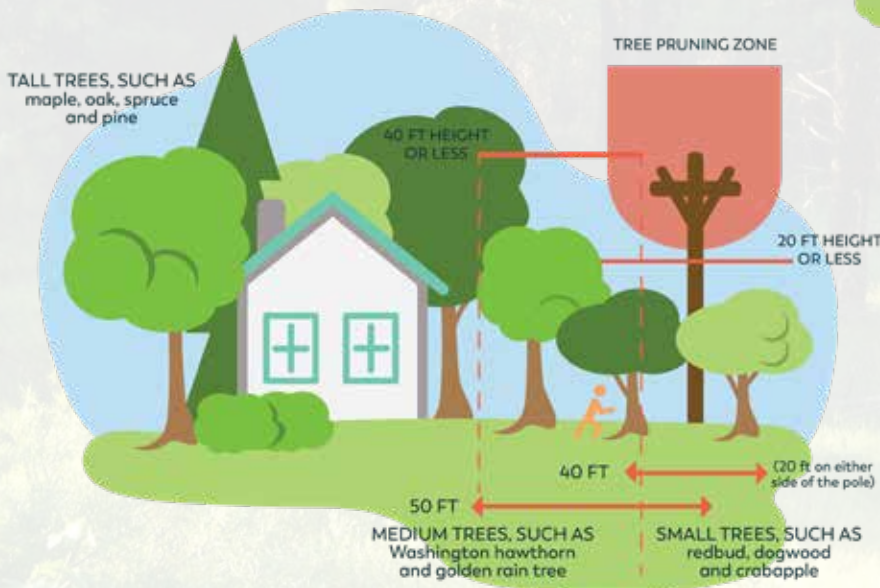
Small trees that have a mature height of less than 20 feet (like redbuds, dogwoods and crabapple trees) are the easiest to manage close to a power line.

Tall trees that reach a mature height of 60+ feet should remain at least 50 feet away from power lines and at least 35 feet away from your house to ensure proper root development and minimize any damage to your house. Remember, evergreens should be separated by 6 to 10 feet, while deciduous trees should be 4 to 8 feet apart.

Our crews routinely inspect trees along the right-of-way corridors for potential hazards such as dead or leaning trees, or limbs that have grown into the power lines. Those trees are trimmed and/or removed if they pose a threat to the power lines of the community. These actions enabled us to achieve a reliability rating of 99.98% in 2018.

PLANT THE RIGHT TREES IN THE RIGHT PLACE

Plant taller trees away from overhead utility lines



For more specific planting information based on tree type, height and shape, we recommend doing your research via arborday.org



Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

ENERGY ADVISOR SPRING SAVING TIPS

Energy Advisor is a tool that was created to help you manage energy and costs year-round. Here are some tips for saving money and energy this spring.

1 SMART THERMOSTATS

Setting your smart thermostat to “eco” can help save you significant amounts of money and energy. Set it when you leave for work in the morning and enjoy the benefits of environmental and financial savings.

2 AI HOME DEVICES

Linking your Google Home, Amazon Alexa or Apple Siri device to household appliances is another great way to be more eco-friendly. Tell your AI home devices to turn off the lights, set the thermostat or even give a reminder to monitor energy spending with our state-of-the-art tool, Energy Advisor, at energyunited.com/EnergyAdvisor.

3 ECO-FRIENDLY APPLIANCES

Making sure you're investing in energy-saving home appliances is another critical piece of the puzzle. Time for a dishwasher, clothes washer/dryer or toilet upgrade? Why not choose a greener option that could end up saving you significant amounts of money.



ON YOUR MARK, GET SET... WIN!

*Congratulations to our January winner:
Michele Bushey of Huntersville.*



Sign up for e-billing for your chance to win two tickets to the Coca-Cola 600!

Sign up by updating your billing preferences under My Account.

2020 YOUTH TOUR WINNERS



We are proud to announce this year's Youth Tour representatives: Gavin Gallimore of Lexington, N.C., and Toni Winiker of Davidson, N.C.



Gallimore, 16, is a junior at Central Davidson High School. In addition to serving as the Junior Class Secretary, Gavin is also a member of the Central Davidson FCA, FFA, National Honor Society and track and cross-country teams.

Seventeen-year-old Winiker is a junior at William A. Hough High School and currently serves as HOSA Junior Class Representative. Her academic achievements include her participation in the school's AP Capstone Program, National Honor Society, Math National Honor Society and the AP Ambassadors program.

The two students will join over 1,500 students for a one-week, all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C. While on Youth Tour, students will have the opportunity to learn more about electric cooperatives, meet and interact with congressional leaders and visit historical monuments. Congratulations, Gavin and Toni!



Bright Ideas **KICKOFF** EDUCATION GRANTS

EnergyUnited's Bright Ideas program has expanded learning opportunities for students and teachers for over 25 years by awarding grants to North Carolina teachers to support innovative, classroom-based projects that wouldn't typically be funded by schools. Sponsored through North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives, Bright Ideas supports teachers who believe enhanced education inspires young minds, which is similar to EnergyUnited's core value to create a brighter tomorrow within our communities.

Since 1994, EnergyUnited has funded more than 12,300 projects statewide, impacting nearly 2.5 million students.

To apply, teachers must submit their innovative classroom ideas with an explanation of their goals, creative elements, implementation and the budget of the project. Grants up to \$2,000 are given to teachers who are accepted into the program.



**APPLICATIONS ARE OPEN
APRIL 1 - SEPTEMBER 15, 2020.**

VISIT [ENERGYUNITED.COM/BRIGHT-IDEAS](https://www.energyunited.com/bright-ideas) TO APPLY.



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1-800-522-3793