

# CONNECT

ENERGYUNITED'S MONTHLY MEMBER NEWSLETTER

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**MAY IS NATIONAL  
ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH**





# A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO H. WAYNE WILKINS

## STRENGTH, UNITY AND STABILITY IN THE FACE OF CHALLENGE

*As our state, nation and world have taken extraordinary measures to stop the COVID-19 pandemic, I am proud of the unity, resolve and strength of the shared response in our community. We are in this together, and by working together we will overcome these challenges and find new ways to take care of each other during this critical time.*

*As your local power partner and as a part of your community, EnergyUnited is committed to providing the high-quality electric service and support that you count on. Our communities have not been spared the negative impacts of lost wages, school closures and scaled-back commerce. To ease this burden, we are committed to working closely with members facing financial hardship. In addition to providing funds from the EnergyUnited Foundation, we also announced the suspension of all disconnects and that we will be waiving all late fees and penalties.*

*EnergyUnited has several programs in place to make managing your energy use and budget easier, such as Energy Advantage, which allows you to make payments when you can, as you use energy. We also encourage members to take a home energy assessment utilizing the Energy Advisor tool on our website. If you haven't explored these options before, we encourage you to see if they are a good fit for your needs.*

*Just as you have made changes at home, we have also taken proactive steps during this emergency to protect our members, communities and employees and ensure that there is no disruption to our operations or services. By implementing remote working procedures and closing our lobbies to walk-in traffic, we are doing our part to protect our communities while also making sure that key personnel are in place to seamlessly continue operations and provide you with high-quality service. Our member service representatives are available to assist you by phone at 1-800-522-3793. Our field personnel have implemented new scheduling and physical distancing practices as they persist in their steadfast efforts to maintain our critical infrastructure. Equally important, we have coordinated with suppliers and partners to safeguard access to necessary components, materials and support resources. To ensure the power you need is always available, we are in constant coordination with our wholesale power supplier to keep our grid secure and efficient.*

*Much of the impact of COVID-19 remains to be seen. Rest assured that as the situation evolves, we will continue to engage with local emergency management officials and follow the guidance of experts to adjust our response to best support your needs.*

*We are grateful to be a part of your community and honored to provide electricity and services that power your life. While we work together to relieve the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, EnergyUnited is here for you, just as we always have been, and always will be. We look forward to continuing to work together to meet our challenges with strength, determination and unity.*

*To learn more about how EnergyUnited is here for you, please follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram or visit our website at [energyunited.com](http://energyunited.com).*

*H. Wayne Wilkins*

**H. Wayne Wilkins**

# HOME SAFE HOME

WE'VE ROUNDED UP OUR TOP SAFETY TIPS IN HONOR OF NATIONAL ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH.

## INDOORS



- Check electric cords for fraying or cracking. Replace cords that may be damaged, and don't overload electrical outlets.
- Remember extension cords are intended to be temporary; they are not intended as permanent household wiring.
- Don't run cords under carpets or rugs and don't tack or nail cords to walls or floors.
- Keep electric appliances and tools away from water. Never reach for or unplug an appliance that has fallen into water; instead, turn the power off at the breaker before you unplug the appliance or remove it from the water.
- Never put anything other than an electrical plug in an outlet. Use outlet covers or caps to protect children.
- Keep your home's electrical system in good repair. Contact a licensed electrical contractor if you have flickering lights, sparks, nonfunctioning outlets, or need wiring repairs or upgrades.

## OUTDOORS

- Never touch downed power lines!
- Always call your local utility or 911 if you see lines down.
- Watch for overhead lines every time you use a ladder, work on roofs or trees, or carry long tools or loads. Keep kites, model airplanes and metallic balloons away from power lines.
- Know what's below before you dig. At least three days before starting any digging or excavating project, call 811, the National One Call Center, to have underground utility lines, pipes and cables marked for free.
- Avoid planting trees underneath power lines or near utility equipment.





# YOUR CONNECTION

# TO COMMUNITY

## CONNECTING WITH CHAMBER ORGANIZATIONS



EnergyUnited is proud to be a community-based energy services cooperative that supports local business growth and development. We have many tools and resources available to support economic development in the communities we

serve, but the most valuable resources we can leverage are often made possible thanks to our key civic and community partners. Local chambers of commerce are especially helpful in helping us facilitate new relationships that strengthen our communities.

If you are a member of the local chamber in your community, we may have already connected with you thanks to our shared support of your chamber. Many chamber members across our 19 counties are aware of EnergyUnited's chamber connections; however, not as many are aware of the North Carolina Chamber's connections to the electric cooperative industry.

Perhaps the greatest representative of this connection is Ray Starling, general counsel of the NC Chamber and president of the NC Chamber Legal Institute. Ray married the daughter of a former Crescent EMC lineman before the co-op merged with Davidson EMC to form EnergyUnited. His connection to North Carolina's electric cooperatives goes all the way back to his formative years.

He grew up on a farm in Dunn where he learned both the value of hard work and the vital role that rural America plays in driving economic prosperity for the entire country. His local co-op, South River Electric Membership Corporation, helped reinforce this belief. In the early '90s, Ray was selected to represent South River Electric Membership Corporation on the Rural Electric

Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. "The Youth Tour experience really did spark a fascinating series of policy dominos that led me to where I am today," Starling said. "One of the things that was most valuable was the peer group with which we engaged. The lifelong friendships and bonding that happened on the trip was incredible."

Ray has established valuable connections over the past two decades, and he says that it all started with Youth Tour. After he received his J.D., with honors, from the University of North Carolina School of Law, Ray clerked for a State Supreme Court Justice, practiced law at an international law firm, and became the General Counsel to the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

In 2017, Ray was tapped to staff the National Economic Council at the White House as the Special Assistant to the President for agricultural policy. In this role, he was the top agricultural adviser to the President.

Youth Tour gave Ray an exposure to the policy process and to others with an agricultural background—this kind of exposure has proven to be very valuable to cooperatives and rural America since the first nationwide trip was organized in 1964.



For rural America and rural electric cooperatives to work well, we need advocates who are willing to come here and speak up," Ray said. "I've always been proud to be a voice for rural Americans in the policy arena, and now in my role with the North Carolina Chamber of Commerce."

Ray Starling is the perfect example of the strength of our connection to the communities we serve—a connection that wouldn't be possible without outreach programs like Youth Tour and our ongoing support for local chambers of commerce.

**To learn more about Ray Starling, check out his biography at [shortrowsleadership.com](http://shortrowsleadership.com).**

**For more information about EnergyUnited's community outreach and support, visit [energyunited.com/community](http://energyunited.com/community).**

*Photos by Steve Starling.*

## ENERGYUNITED IS PROUD TO PARTNER WITH THESE CHAMBERS:





# SUMMER GRILLING SAFETY

Grilling is a great way to enjoy time outdoors in the warmer months. Need a refresher on some grilling 101? We've got you covered. Check out our eight grill safety tips below to keep your spring and summer grilling safe and fun.

- 1** Grill outside and away from any structures: the NFPA reports that more than one-quarter (27%) of home fires started by outdoor grills began in a courtyard, terrace or patio.
- 2** Make sure your grill is stable and on a flat surface.
- 3** Keep your grill clean by removing grease or fat buildup from both the grill and the tray below the grill.
- 4** Check for propane leaks: Apply a light soap and water solution to the hose and then turn on the gas. If there is a propane leak, the solution will bubble. Other signs of a propane leak include the smell of gas near the barbecue or a flame that won't light. Nervous about performing this task? Call us, we'll be happy to help.
- 5** If the flame goes out, wait to relight: If you are using a gas grill and the flame goes out, turn the grill and the gas off, then wait at least five minutes to relight it.
- 6** Never leave a lit grill unattended.
- 7** Wear the right clothing: Clothing can easily catch fire, so be sure your shirttails, sleeves or apron strings don't dangle over the grill.
- 8** Be ready to put out a fire: Have baking soda on hand to control a grease fire and a fire extinguisher nearby for other fires. Never use water to put out a grease fire.

*Did you know that we sell a range of propane grills to accommodate a variety of budgets and entertaining needs. Contact our Propane team to find the right grill for you! 1-800-522-3793*

## COVID-19 IMPACT

EnergyUnited values the safety and well-being of our members, customers and employees. We are continuously reviewing developments, new guidelines and recommendations regarding the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Visit [EnergyUnited.com/coronavirus](https://www.energyunited.com/coronavirus) for more information and updates.

# ENERGY SMARTS

**Knowing where your energy dollars are going can help save money and energy and make you energy smart! Did you know that there are lots of simple fixes you can do around the house to save energy and money? We've rounded up our top savings tips for spring!**



## USE CEILING FANS

Cooling your home with ceiling fans can bring the temperature down by a whole four degrees—meaning you can run your A/C unit at a higher temperature all while enjoying the same level of comfort.

## OPEN THE WINDOWS

Opening windows creates a cross-breeze, allowing you to cool your house down naturally without switching on the air conditioner.

## SERVICE YOUR AIR CONDITIONER

Easy maintenance such as routinely replacing or cleaning air filters can lower your cooling system's energy consumption by up to 15 percent. Also, the first day of spring could serve as a reminder to check your air conditioner's evaporator coil, which should be cleaned annually to ensure the system is performing at optimal levels.

## USE SUNLIGHT TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

Save electricity for later. Thanks to longer days you can use the light of the sun to brighten your home!

## COOK OUTSIDE

Keep the heat out of your home by using an outdoor grill instead of an indoor oven (which can raise the kitchen's temperature significantly). If you need a refresher course on grill safety, check out our tips on the previous page!



**For more helpful tips, check out our free interactive tool at [EnergyUnited.com/EnergyAdvisor](https://www.energyunited.com/energyadvisor).**

## FEELING ADVENTUROUS?

Going paperless is not only great for the environment, but it's also a great opportunity to win an outdoor adventure!

**Sign up for e-billing by the end of May** and you could win two tickets to the White Water Center. **Tickets will be valid for a full year.**

**Sign up by updating your billing preferences under "My Account" or by calling 1-800-522-3793.**



EnergyUnited offices will be closed for Memorial Day on May 25.

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, and aligns with our core value to create a brighter tomorrow within our communities.

To apply, teachers must explain 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.

**Early bird deadline is August 15, and final deadline is September 15.**

## Keeping You Connected No Matter What

While we're all looking for the light at the end of the tunnel, we're keeping the lights on in the tunnel. We promise to keep all members connected to electricity and propane during this difficult time, even if you're not currently able to make payments due to the coronavirus (COVID-19). The EnergyUnited Foundation is also providing assistance to those struggling to pay utility bills, rent, mortgage and/or fund other necessary expenses.

To find out more or speak to a customer care representative, contact **800-522-3793** or email **foundation@energyunited.com**.

If you would like to make a donation and have the means to cover fellow members' utility, mortgage and rent bills or medical equipment costs, during this difficult time, you may send a check to:

**EnergyUnited Foundation**  
Attn: Debra Citta  
1900 Odell Owen Road  
Lexington, NC 27295

## 2020 BOARD APPOINTED NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Nominating Committee will meet at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, June 9, at the EnergyUnited Education Center located at 182 South Salisbury St., Mocksville, NC 27028

### District 1

**Betty Moring**  
1872 Falls Road  
Moravian Falls, NC 28654  
336-977-7424

**Jerry Ratledge**  
143 Fred Lanier Road  
Mocksville, NC 27028  
336-492-5572

**Johnny Towell**  
408 Stroud Mill Road  
Harmony, NC 28634  
336-492-7707

### District 2

**Archie J. Benton**  
331 Cranford Road  
Denton, NC 27239  
336-247-2192

**Neal Motsinger**  
199 Disher Road  
Winston-Salem, NC 27107  
336-764-0350

**Vinnon Williams**  
101 Warrior Way  
Lexington, NC 27295  
336-596-0504

### District 3

**Gary Powers**  
18621 Rollingdale Lane  
Davidson, NC 28036  
704-895-0926

**Steve Somloi**  
9019 Tartarn Ridge Drive  
Huntersville, NC 28078  
704-948-6891

**Neal Wilfong**  
310 Cook Road  
Cleveland, NC 27013  
704-278-4922



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