

**H. Wayne Wilkins, CEO**

**EnergyUnited's 2020 Virtual Annual Members Meeting**

**September 17, 2020**

Mr. Chairman, EnergyUnited members, and community members: My name is Wayne Wilkins and I proudly serve as the chief executive officer for EnergyUnited. Thank you for taking the time to participate in **EnergyUnited's 2020 Annual Members Meeting, our first ever virtual meeting.**

I trust that you want to learn more about the operations of your electric cooperative and what we've been doing to improve our business processes to ultimately keep costs low while maintaining our core services. I also want to update you on what we're doing as we look to the future. But, before I talk about our business operations, I would like to give up an update on our continued efforts to respond to the public health and economic challenges posed by COVID-19 that has affected all of us during the past several months.

Just before nationwide shutdowns were first announced in March, we recognized the gravity of the situation and took proactive steps to help our members.

Effective March 17, we suspended disconnects and late fees for all members. This decision was made in advance of Executive Order 124, which mandated a moratorium on utility disconnections. As we know, this order was extended through July 30 with Executive Order 142.

During this time, we worked diligently to mitigate the financial impact of the pandemic on our membership and our communities by extending emergency relief through the **EnergyUnited Foundation**.

A mid-year financial report from the Foundation shows that we have already awarded **more than \$170,000 to individuals and nonprofit agencies** in our communities with a majority of these requests related to Covid-19 pandemic financial needs.

Meanwhile, we have also worked to connect members to other nonprofit agencies and programs through the Department of Social Services (such as **LIHEAP and CIP**) that offer utility bill assistance. These key community partnerships continue to inspire optimism in the face of adversity. This optimism is further strengthened by our ongoing efforts to achieve new and ambitious goals.

We want to remind you that **our offices remain closed for your safety and**

**the safety of our employees**, however we continue to offer a variety of payment options. Members can pay online, at authorized payment agents, by dropping off your payment at one of our 7 office location kiosk or drop boxes or by sending a check in the US mail.

In addition, we want to let you know that our **board made a decision to waive all credit card fees**. We hope this makes paying online easier for you, *our valued members*. We will continue to make you our priority as we make decisions as we navigate through this pandemic, and beyond.

Now let's talk who we are as a company and some of our recent successes and future plans. **These important decisions are guided by our identity, mission and core values.**

**Our Vision, Purpose and Mission are clear to us:**

- First, we strive to be the leading energy services provider.
- We work to Improve the Quality of Life for Our Members and Communities, and
- EnergyUnited remains a member-owned business committed to delivering reliable energy services at competitive prices.

More importantly, we strive to deliver on that mission with the foundation of our core values....**Safety, Integrity, Commitment and Excellence.**

These are the characteristics of everything that we do and include them in

every aspect of the business.

These core values guide us as we strive to deliver an exceptional service experience for all our members. We also work hard to preserve and strengthen the communities that joined together to form the business we all know today. To that end, we continue to take our responsibility to serve and preserve during the COVID-19 pandemic very seriously.

Our activities and initiatives change from year to year; however, we remain a goal- oriented organization and to that end, our Top 6 Corporate Goals are:

- **Member Satisfaction**

- Our goal is to have outstanding member satisfaction with every transaction we have with you, from signing up to be a member, to providing safe, affordable and reliable energy, to providing right-of-way services.
- Availability to respond to inquiries – print, voice, website or social media
- We know to provide these services, we must have highly qualified employees and we believe we do!

- **People Development**

- Employee & Talent Skills. We are positioned to serve you better

- Safety is our top priority in all that we do, in the office and in the field.
  
- We achieve adequate **Margins or Monies Left Over** at the end of each year
  - Maintain Financial Stability
  - Our board made a decision to distribute capital credits in August this year, versus in December. In addition, all capital credits were given as a credit on your August bill as we realize many members were in arrears and this helped to reduce their balance.

These are things we're doing because We Care and always *have your best interest in mind.*

- **Reliability**
  - Ongoing Electric System Maintenance & Upgrades
  - Outage Detection & Distribution Automation (Smart Grid & Smart Meters)
  - Right of Way Maintenance – never ending
  - Ability to Effectively Manage Severe Cold or Hot Weather & the Ability to Effectively Manage Significant Storms

I hope our performance during past hurricanes, ice storms and other

weather impacting storms have demonstrated that our team of employees are prepared and ready to respond to large outages and keep you informed as we work to restore power as safely and quickly as possible.

- **Growth**

- Focused on New Growth in the Communities we serve through our engagement in Economic Development efforts
- Sales growth

- **Safety**, which is a continuous and an ongoing focus for our employees, members and the communities we serve.

EnergyUnited is your electric cooperative and we hope you will agree that for the past 80+ years, it makes a real difference in the quality of your lives. *We--the Board, myself and our employees--* are today's stewards to whom you have entrusted the care and well-being of this cooperative.

### **Let's turn our attention to our Corporate Profile**

A summary of our 2019 Year End Financial Statements can be found in your 2019 Annual Report, which was mailed to members in June. An electronic copy of this report is also available to view online.

Expanded financial information can also be found in the report.

I am pleased to report to you that your cooperative remains financially strong and positioned well for the future challenges that lie ahead.

Some good news.....even though power cost has increased over the years and is expected to do so in future years; your cooperative continues to look for & find ways to reduce our other internal operating cost and while at the same time, continuing to provide the customer & reliable service that you enjoy and expect. I am proud to report to you that EnergyUnited's retail rates are among the lowest in this area and across the state.

This does not just happen...It happens because we remain focused on what is important. I think this is tangible evidence that our employees & our board are finding ways to hold operating cost down.

This has been accomplished by Narrowing our focus to Four Key Areas essential to our business.

1. Core Business – Member Satisfaction & Service Reliability
2. Lowest Possible Cost
3. Commitment to Our Communities, and
4. Helping you To Manage and Save Energy

Through a focus on our top goals and the key essential areas, we must maintain being a technology minded business throughout our engagement

and communications with you -- how we strive to make it easier for you to do business with the co-op, and incorporating new technology in how we build and operate the electric grid.

Two great examples of our ongoing efforts to help improve the lives of our members are evidenced by our **Beat the Peak and Peak Time Perks programs which we launched in June 2020**. These two demand response programs build on the success of our past programs and help encourage members to reduce energy use during peak times, when our costs are much higher. This helps reduce the need for expensive energy infrastructure in the future.

Energy costs are likely to continue to rise in the years ahead, so your participation in these types of programs will be increasingly important to help your cooperative continue to manage rising costs.

### **Working Together for You.**

We have members volunteering, involved & engaged in the cooperative

- **The Board** – Nine (9) individuals that share their life and business experiences to make a better cooperative
- **A Member Director Nominating Committee** that works to identify individuals that are qualified to sit as Directors

- **A Member Credentials & Election Committee** that ensures that the process to elect directors is fair and equitable
- **Three Member Advisory Committees (MAC)** that meets in the months of February, June and October to hear about our latest initiatives and services. These members provide feedback on how we're doing serving as their energy services provider so that we can continue to improve. If you are interested in joining one of our three (3) MAC groups, please contact our communications office.
- **The EnergyUnited Foundation**  
Since its inception in 1996 and through today, the **EnergyUnited Foundation Board** has awarded grants totaling over **\$7M to more than 4,300 individuals, families, and non-profit organizations.**

The EnergyUnited Foundation is a charitable organization voluntarily funded by members/customers of EnergyUnited. Grants from the Foundation are evaluated & awarded based on an application process demonstrating need.

Today, **over 71,000 EnergyUnited members 'round up their bills'** to the next highest even dollar amount, averaging \$.50 a month and never exceeding \$.99 a month. If you don't already 'round up' your bill, I encourage you to consider doing so. Simply call our customer care team at 1-800-522-3793 and they would be happy to sign you

up!

**Sustainability and Renewables** Our industry and EnergyUnited specifically is committed to be part of solutions as our industry transitions to new ways to generate electricity & ensure we protect our environment.

We have and remain committed to embrace new forms of energy like renewables such as solar, methane, wind, battery storage. We are committed to new energy technologies that will continually improve our quality of life such as electric vehicles.

We published our first **Sustainability Report** which was delivered to you in June as part of the 2019 Annual Report. I encourage you to read it and learn more about what we're doing in all these areas. You can find it on our website at [www.energyunited.com](http://www.energyunited.com)

We are committed to serving as your energy services provider to help you make your homes & businesses more energy efficient and to help you with managing your energy cost and incorporate new energy technologies.

In closing, we believe that we both should have great expectations for our cooperative. With the continued commitment of our employees, our Board and the support of you, *our valued members*, we will continue to

grow and thrive as your energy services provider.

Remember, you are not just a member and consumer of what we do – you are our member owners!

This concludes my report. Thank you for participating in our 2020 Annual Meeting. We value and appreciate all that you do to support your community and your electric cooperative.