

# CONNECT

**ENERGYUNITED'S MONTHLY MEMBER NEWSLETTER**



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# BUSINESS TRANSITION PLAN ANNOUNCEMENT

## EnergyUnited Adopts New Plan to Improve Member Service and Reduce Costs

As a not-for-profit electric cooperative, EnergyUnited continually analyzes its operations to identify opportunities to improve our service and reduce operational costs wherever possible; however, COVID-19 ultimately helped shape our perspective on this analysis in 2020. Understanding all the changes we have endured in 2020, we once again asked ourselves, “How can we continue to provide excellent service to our members and do so at the lowest possible cost?”

The answer to our question was not an easy one, but it became clear as the result of a nearly yearlong study. This ultimately led the EnergyUnited Board of Directors to approve the adoption of a new service delivery model for our members, one that will better leverage the use of authorized pay agents in the future for in-person payment transactions instead of maintaining cooperative offices for that service.

Our new model was shaped by many different data points – your feedback on independently conducted surveys, guidelines implemented during most of 2020 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and a study of the utilization of all available payment options used in recent years. The data told us a compelling story. Even before the pandemic began, members’ preferences to pay their bill was by bank draft, by mail, online, over the phone or at any of the authorized pay agents; however, members did not want to pay any processing fees either online, over the phone or with our authorized pay agent options. Meanwhile, the walk-in, in-person transactions at our offices were the least utilized and the most expensive to service.

So, we decided to expand member access to the authorized pay agent payment option by waiving all transactional fees. Now, members can pay their bills via bank draft, by mail, online, over the phone, at any of our payment kiosks or drop boxes, or with any of our authorized pay agents without any associated fees.

In March of 2020, we closed all our front offices due to the COVID pandemic. With the expansion of access to authorized pay agents, making it easier to make payments, we have decided to not reopen our front offices. Under this new plan, all EnergyUnited customer care representatives are now available to answer more phone calls, which enables us to respond to your questions and service requests more quickly. Meanwhile, we will also continue to increase our presence in the community by supporting local organizations and causes.

Going forward, we will continue to analyze our operations to identify opportunities to improve our service and reduce operational costs and implement those as warranted. Our continued ability to deliver safe, convenient service at the lowest possible cost remains top of mind for everyone here at EnergyUnited. As we move forward in 2021, we are excited to implement this new plan and further strengthen your local connection to safe, convenient, reliable and affordable energy services.



H. Wayne Wilkins

A LETTER FROM

OUR CEO H. WAYNE WILKINS





Energy  
United  
Grants

## EU RECOGNIZES 40 TEACHERS FOR THEIR

# BRIGHT IDEAS

We are proud to award over \$43,000 in Bright Ideas education grants to 40 teachers this year. Students at schools in Alexander, Cabarrus, Davie, Davidson, Forsyth, Guilford, Iredell, Rockingham and Rowan counties will enjoy these engaging interactive classroom projects.

This year's winning projects leverage investments in technology and tools that help facilitate social distancing while finding unique ways to achieve desired educational outcomes.

Since the Bright Ideas grant program began in 1994, EnergyUnited has contributed more than \$900,000 to local teachers.

Bright Ideas grant applications are collected each year from April through mid-September, and winning proposals are selected in a competitive evaluation process by a panel of judges. The application process will reopen for interested teachers in April 2021. To find out more information about the Bright Ideas grant program, visit [Energyunited.com/bright-ideas](https://www.energyunited.com/bright-ideas).

### CONGRATULATIONS TO:

**Dana Gillis**, The Brawley School

**Tai McMiller**, American Renaissance Elementary

**Natalie Grant**, North Davidson High School

**Rick Marcy**, Discovery Program at the Springs

**Sarah Bridges**, Oak Grove High School

**Alan Lorne Cook**, Statesville High

**Phillip Haworth**, Charles England Elementary

**Kelly Grant**, Churchland Elementary

**Kelly Hartzell**, The North Carolina  
Leadership Academy

**Samantha Crews**, Douglass Elementary

**Linda Dearman**, Cool Spring Elementary

**Michael Williams**, Crossroads Arts and  
Science Early College

**Tracy Skeens**, Crossroads Arts and  
Science Early College

**Katie Bogle**, A L Brown High

**Shirley Cox**, Davis-Townsend Elementary

**Alesha Spring Roseman**, Overton Elementary

**Corabelle Brindle**, Statesville Middle

**Bleasha A Carroll**, Fair Grove Elementary

**Zachary Richardson**, Wittenberg Elementary

**Jenna Shaw**, South Davidson High

**Desirae Balsamo**, Hanes Middle

**Tammy Shelton**, Silver Valley Elementary

**Joseph Higdon**, Mooresville High School

**Robyn H. Owen**, Colfax Elementary

**Sara Webb**, Lake Norman Elementary

**Tori Cardea**, West Rowan High

**Darlene Marotta**, Union Grove Elementary

**Caroline Stalvey**, Friedberg Elementary

**Courtney Frasier**, The Brawley School

**Jennifer DiFiore**, North Iredell Middle

**Kristi Miller**, West Rowan High

**Casey Mancilla**, William R Davie Elementary

**Danny Lough**, Central Davie Academy

**Tim Hamby**, Statesville High

**Justin Bennett**, Career Academy  
and Technical School

**Royzetta Cokley**, The North Carolina  
Leadership Academy

**Gina McGee**, Konnoak Elementary

**Jennifer Steele**, Pickett Primary

**April Hendley**, Southwood Elementary

# EMPOWERING THE FUTURE STORY

## HOW SOPHIA LEEMAN EMPOWERS THE FUTURE.

How did you hear about EnergyUnited's EMPOWERING THE FUTURE scholarship program? Counselor, parent, website, email?

**I heard about this scholarship program from my high school guidance counselor, Mrs. Smith.**

Tell us about the first year of your college experience? I know you could probably say a LOT as it's been such an interesting year, but maybe share your college name, major, some classes you're taking and highlights of your first semester.

**I am majoring in biomedical engineering at Duke University. This semester, I participated in the Genetics and Genomics focus program at Duke. Another rewarding experience I had was in my engineering design class. My team was tasked with creating an off-the-grid model energy system to power an engineering makerspace at Duke University that would be reproducible for implementation at universities in developing countries. I thought this was fitting considering EnergyUnited was so supportive of my education this year. After teaming up with two other first-year engineering design teams, we were able to design and construct a self-sufficient solar system off the grid to power a makerspace used by Duke students next semester! The best part of my Duke experience, however, has been going on this adventure with my twin sister, Julia. In such crazy times, she is always there with me and that's really special.**

What did getting this scholarship mean to you/your family?

**Receiving this support for my education meant the world to my family and me. I am so honored that this company believes in me and has made such a clear commitment to the community. Even beyond the scholarship, I still keep in touch with representatives from EnergyUnited, who are constantly rooting for me this first year at Duke.**

If you could give future applicants a piece of advice, what would it be?

**I know when applying to scholarships it can be hard to accept that people will choose you out of a large applicant pool just for your true and honest story, and it can get discouraging when applications come back with "unfortunately we were not able to award you the scholarship this year." However, I think the best advice I can give is to write about what matters to you instead of what you think would matter to the people reviewing your application. I promise the people at EnergyUnited are just that: people. They care about everything that makes you unique and genuinely want to help you succeed.**

What are your future goals/career aspirations?

**I am still undecided where my journey will take me after college. As a biomedical engineering major, I have so many options! I might go straight into industry working in a variety of fields from genetic engineering to prosthetic development or cancer research. However, I am also still considering furthering my education to obtain my master's degree or doctorate so that I can fully dive into research, and I still haven't ruled out medical school. Whatever my journey, I hope my career allows me to continue exploring new innovations and giving back to my community.**



## NC GREENPOWER'S

# SOLAR+ SCHOOLS PROGRAM

NC GreenPower is accepting applications for the 2021 Solar+ Schools program beginning January 2, 2021. Any North Carolina K-12 school may apply for a grant of up to \$27,000 toward installation costs. In addition, awardees receive nearly \$14,000 in related benefits, such as donated SunPower solar modules, a STEM curriculum and teacher training.



OPEN YOUR PHONE CAMERA AND SCAN TO WATCH  
**SOLAR ANSWERS:  
IS SOLAR RIGHT FOR YOU?**

VISIT [NcGREENPOWER.ORG/SOLAR-SCHOOLS/](https://www.ncgreenpower.org/solar-schools/) TO APPLY.

EMPOWERING  
THE FUTURE SCHOLARSHIP.

**APPLY NOW  
FOR 2021**

Empowering  
the Future



# START THE YEAR WITH A NEW WAY TO PAY

## BANK DRAFT

Automate your payments

## PAY ONLINE OR VIA APP

Download the EnergyUnited app or log in online

## PAY BY PHONE

Dial 1-800-215-7315 and follow the voice prompts

## 3RD-PARTY PAY CENTERS

Visit [EnergyUnited.com/Pay-Electric](http://EnergyUnited.com/Pay-Electric) to find a popular retail location near you

## PAYMENT KIOSKS OR DROP BOXES

Located at our main offices

Haven't taken advantage of our various ways to pay? Well now's your chance! Our offices may be closed but members will enjoy NO associated fees with any of our payment options! Plus, with so many locations, chances are a way to pay is closer than you think! To find a full list of convenient ways to pay near you, **visit [EnergyUnited.com/pay-electric](http://EnergyUnited.com/pay-electric)**.

## WINTER ENERGY SAVINGS TIPS

Keeping the heat on at full blast is simply not sustainable—and we mean both for your wallet and the environment. Here's how you can save some green this season.

- 1 Every degree of temperature change influences the energy in your home by about 8%—which means if you were setting your thermostat at 72°F but can stand to have it at 69°F, you can reduce your heating costs by around 24%!
- 2 Try to remember to lower your thermostat when you leave the house for anything more than several hours. A smart thermostat like Google Nest can do that for you.
- 3 Set up a profile on EnergyUnited's Energy Advisor, our state-of-the-art tool that helps you understand where you could be saving more energy.
- 4 Shut the window: A typical window left open overnight in winter will waste enough energy to drive a small car over 35 miles.

**These simple tips can make for big savings—for our environment and your finances alike! Check out our Energy Advisor tool at [EnergyUnited.com/save-money](http://EnergyUnited.com/save-money).**

\*Source: Scientific American

# A SMARTER

# 2021

PEAK TIME PERKS

We often see higher energy bills during the chillier months, and many times it's due to heating the house during impractical times, or not being as mindful as we should be. One simple fix for this? A smart thermostat! These high-tech devices bring all the function of traditional thermostats while also allowing you to manage and adjust the temperature from your phone (even when you're out of the house), analyze your energy use, and most importantly, help you save energy and money!

And if that wasn't cool enough, homes with smart thermostats are free to enroll in our Peak Time Perks program as well!

**PEAK TIME PERKS** is a program for EnergyUnited electric residential members that rewards you for allowing us to adjust your Google Nest or Honeywell Home smart thermostat during peak periods. When you sign up, you'll be credited \$50 on your electric bill. And for each year after that, an additional \$20 will be credited to your account.

Find out more about these programs by visiting [EnergyUnited.com/demand-response](https://www.energyunited.com/demand-response).

## MAKE 2021 THE YEAR OF E-BILLING

And why? Not only will signing up help you save time, money and paper but it also comes with some pretty sweet perks.

**Sign up during the month of January  
and earn the chance to win one of three**

# \$1000

Visa® gift cards  
or bill credits

Log in to **My account** and update your billing preferences  
or call 1-800-522-3793 today.



# NEW YEAR **NEW HEALTHY RECIPES**

The Recipe Share Cookbook is back for another month of fabulous recipe submissions from our lovely readers (that's you!). All recipes will be included in the cookbook and photos will be added as space permits.

And if you're starting 2021 with a resolution to make healthier choices and lose a couple of pounds, we've got a great resource for you! Join us for a healthier year by submitting your lean, low-fat, or carb-conscious recipes to **[EU-communications@energyunited.com](mailto:EU-communications@energyunited.com)**.

**Please submit your recipes no later than January 20.**

*If you don't have access to email, please send a typed version of your recipe with your first and last name to:*

*EnergyUnited: Cookbook Collection*

*P.O. Box 1831*

*Statesville, NC 28687*

*P.S: All of these recipes will soon be available on our digital cookbook! Check them out at*

**[Energyunited.com/2021-cookbook-collection](https://Energyunited.com/2021-cookbook-collection)**.