

MARCH 2022

CONNECT

ENERGYUNITED'S MONTHLY MEMBER NEWSLETTER

**KEEPING
COSTS LOW**



**THROUGH
INNOVATION**

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& CHOPLIN'S RESTAURANT

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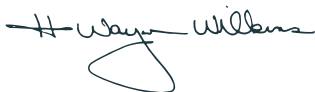
A LETTER FROM **OUR CEO** **H. WAYNE WILKINS**

When the electric cooperatives that formed EnergyUnited were founded over 80 years ago, we looked to align ourselves with the seven cooperative principles we still see and know today. And though each individual principle holds a different value for our members, they all share the same core impetus: looking out for our members' best interests. Although many things have changed over the course of our cooperative's existence, we have continued to look out for one another, and have searched for innovations to help usher in cost savings and a greener energy future. This month I'd like to turn our focus to the ways in which we strive and succeed at providing members with reliable and low-cost energy with the technologies that power it.

Through initiatives like our Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI), Field Asset Inventory and Distribution Automation Switching, we've increased meter reads to a 99.7% success rate over the past 18 months, added nearly 7.2 million data points to help communicate outages, and put systems in place to help get your lights on sooner. In fact, the grid has evolved and adapted so much within these past several years that we've created a full-time position for these shifting and changing technologies: Manager of Grid Modernization.

The team member in this position is responsible for finding ways to evolve practices, implement energy-saving technologies and look for crucial cost savings for our members. Change can sometimes be scary, but we're finding more and more that with the right tools and technologies in place, we can save you, our members, even more money. And that's something we are very proud of.

Sincerely,



H. Wayne Wilkins



NOW IS YOUR FINAL CHANCE **TO EMPOWER THE FUTURE**

The **Empowering the Future Scholarship** is open to high school students in our 19-county service area. **Two students** who are planning to attend a college, university or technical school during the 2022-23 school year will be awarded a **\$5,000 scholarship**. To be eligible, students must receive service from EnergyUnited at home **or** attend a school that is served by EnergyUnited, and complete an application on our website.

Don't miss out on your chance to win \$5,000! The deadline to enter is March 31, 2022.

Visit EnergyUnited.com/empowering-the-future-scholarship-application/



FINAL CHANCE TO APPLY FOR TOUCHSTONE ENERGY **NC SPORTS CAMP**

Each year, one girl and one boy are selected to attend basketball camp at two prestigious North Carolina college campuses. The all-expenses-paid scholarships, sponsored by North Carolina's 26 Touchstone Energy cooperatives, provide funding for more than 50 middle school students across the state. Young women can apply to attend the Wolfpack Basketball Camp at North Carolina State University, and young men can apply to the Carolina Basketball Camp at the University of North Carolina.

Students must be enrolled in fifth or sixth grade at a qualifying North Carolina school within EnergyUnited's service area.

**The application deadline is March 31, 2022.
Camps are held in June 2022.**



Touchstone Energy®
**Sports Camp
Scholarships**



CORNELIUS

NORTH CAROLINA

Nestled on the banks of beautiful Lake Norman, the Town of Cornelius offers the perfect opportunity for visitors, newcomers and residents to participate in the lake-living lifestyle of a small town, while enjoying the vitality of a growing and diverse community.

Cornelius, located just outside Charlotte, provides residents with a window on the past and an eye to the future. The lake is home to the land where the Catawba Indians once walked, and the early European settlers made their stand. Today, it is home to gorgeous county parks (Jetton, Ramsey Creek and Blythe Landing) and vibrant retail businesses. New neighborhoods have emerged and families have relocated to the region, making the Town of Cornelius and Lake Norman one of the fastest growing regions in the country.

The town, home to 32,000 residents, boasts 74 miles of shoreline. Residents and guests can take part in the many water activities the lifestyle offers: boat and ski rentals, chartered cruises, watersports, fishing and guides, as well as waterfront dining at Port City Club or Hello, Sailor! Cornelius, home to fine dining, is really becoming renowned for its cocktail destinations and independent breweries.

Three-term Mayor Woody Washam points out that the best is yet to come with the introduction of Charlotte's Olde Mecklenburg Brewery expanding into downtown Cornelius, and with it, a large outdoor biergarten to cater to residents and patrons in early 2023.

Perhaps the real jewel is a state-of-the-art \$25 million Performing and Visual Arts Center, which is slated to open in December 2022. "Our new Cain Center for the Arts will feature a 400-seat theater to showcase live performances, gallery space for visual arts, event spaces, three classrooms, community green space, an outdoor plaza, plus parking and pedestrian access," states Washam. The Center is already planning and presenting classes and programs for adults and children of all ages.

Visitors and residents can browse VisitLakeNorman.org for more information on dining and entertainment, and newcomers and prospective businesses can find out more about the region at LakeNormanChamber.org. Again, on behalf of our business community and the Town of Cornelius: Welcome to Lake Norman — a great place to live, work and visit!

Information courtesy of the Lake Norman Chamber of Commerce, Visit Lake Norman, and the Town of Cornelius.





FOOD, FAMILY AND **FRIENDS**

CHOPLIN'S RESTAURANT IN CORNELIUS!



Choplin's Restaurant opened its doors in 2010, fulfilling Wes Choplin's lifelong dream of owning a fresh local eatery in his home state of North Carolina. It all started when he was a young boy watching his grandmother in the kitchen, when he quickly realized his passion for cooking. After working in various high-end establishments, Chef Wes, as he is fondly known in the industry, opened Choplin's Restaurant.

Today, Choplin's Restaurant is a standard for excellence in the Lake Norman community and surrounding areas, not only as an establishment where you can enjoy a world-class dining experience, but also as a platform to give back to the community. Chef Wes channels his passion for preparing delicious meals not only for his customers, but for those in need. Choplin's Restaurant works with Watchmen of The Streets throughout the year to feed the homeless, and Chef Wes pursues his own efforts to assist anyone in need. At the height of the pandemic, Chef Wes started a feeding program for kids, preparing over 800 weekly lunches.

We invite you to visit Choplin's Restaurant at www.choplins.com to find out more about this gem in the community!



Next up, we're highlighting Taylorsville-area spots! Submit your favorite Taylorsville cafes, bars, restaurants and bakeries no later than **MARCH 20** to EU-Communications@EnergyUnited.com.



A SPOTLIGHT ON **WAYNE WILKINS**

As many of you know, our current CEO Wayne Wilkins has announced his retirement. After 50 years in the energy cooperative space, and nearly 40 as our CEO, he sat down with us to discuss his career, his learnings and his plans for retirement.

Looking back on your resumé, you've had quite the impressive career! What are some things that you felt particularly aided you in your role as CEO?

As I look back and ask myself the question of what I would do different, I don't think I could've picked a better business to be in. There are just so many incredible people and facets within this job that have pushed me and grown me as a leader, a friend and even a father. One of the most critical pieces that I would say aided my role as CEO is the employees who came to me with a growth mindset. Seeing them think of an idea and then watching them do it. It's a very profound experience to watch people that you work with set out to succeed and push others to join them. It's contagious! Another huge piece is my extended co-op family within the state and nation, including our members! Being able to meet leaders and cooperative boards from across the country provided and prepared me in understanding the very real concerns and interests of our members. The fact of it is, there have been so many who have helped me in my role, it's impossible to name just one or two!

What are some of the things you will miss most about EnergyUnited?

Working with employees and seeing they are interested in and proud of what they do is something that I will definitely miss. I'll also really miss my team — I have a really strong leadership team. I will miss my board and their insights; talking with members at the annual meeting; speaking about the difference that EnergyUnited has made in the community, and witnessing it unfold in real time. In the early days I used to be really stressed but relying on my team and listening to EnergyUnited members really helped me ease some of those feelings. It's amazing what surrounding yourselves with the right people will do for you.



Who are some of the people that helped prepare you for this role today? And how did they help?

Former CEO Hugh Kegler, of Davidson EMC, was a very good mentor. He helped put me in a variety of positions that I could learn in. My professional peers have always been a good source of education, and of course I would be remiss in not mentioning the support and care of my family, especially my wife. As someone who works at an energy company, you don't get many days that you get to play out in the snow with your kids — because you're at work! But my kids understood that, and my wife helped them too. She really carried a lot of responsibilities that I couldn't take on and I'm grateful to her for that.

How has your role as the CEO of a local cooperative rippled into bigger-picture thinking? Do you find that the work you've done through your career has (and continues) to have a large state impact, or even nationwide?

I've spent a lot of time volunteering and engaging with energy committees, other cooperative leadership and local legislation. The impact in



working together with other folks from across the state (and the nation) to usher in new bills, new technologies and new infrastructures was incredible. Those moments took a lot of hard work and a few sleepless nights but were always well worth it. Progress, especially when it comes to new technologies, takes time. And it can be a large undertaking to try and communicate, especially to members who might be hesitant to that type of thing, but allowing them to feel heard, evaluate the nuance of it and hold a little compassion was a valuable piece. That might seem like a small thing, but it often holds a big impact. When adversity and change face us it really helps us step back to understand the influence of what we do.

As a father and grandfather, how have you felt that your career shaped your children's upbringing?

Well, some would describe me as a bit of a “workaholic” and I think for better or worse that has rubbed off on my two sons. They are both very dedicated to their jobs. As a person who went to school and has spent his life in engineering and energy, it's probably no surprise that one of my sons also decided to walk that path with his career. My other son works in law enforcement, and though I don't have a history in that, I have spent my life working with people on a day-to-day basis and solving problems, and that's exactly what my youngest does too in law enforcement.



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Who are some of the people that you will miss the most?

My board and my executive team. They've all been so helpful with the freedom to disagree and challenge each other. They hold the power to get things done and search for solutions. Mac Shoaf also really helped me out when he was here. He was a farmer who had a way of telling you everything without saying anything. He spoke his mind but allowed me the freedom to do it my way. There are many folks that have retired who I will miss, like retired attorney Bob Bowers, Roy McDonald and R.B. Sloan.

I imagine there have been a few laughs along the way — can you share one of the funniest memories you might have from your tenure?

When you're with employees and talking about things there are just little silly things that come up. Paul Parts comes to mind. He was a region line manager and a hard knocks kind of guy, but he knew how to build and maintain the line to get things working. And there were many times early on that I would go out to learn and observe with him and would also have quite a few laughs. Though it's hard to really put my finger on any specific moment, this career has shown me that there is joy to be found anywhere you look.



“

It has been a pleasure and honor to serve as President of the Board alongside Wayne during his tenure as CEO for approximately 20 years. Over the course of his storied career in the energy industry, Wayne was continually committed to supporting member and community service initiatives that positively impacted so many people. EnergyUnited has been successfully positioned as the leading energy services provider in North Carolina thanks to his leadership and dedication. I am incredibly thankful to have had the opportunity to serve with Wayne and sincerely appreciate all that he has done on behalf of EnergyUnited members.

— Dr. Max Walser

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Do you have a proudest accomplishment?

The consolidation of Crescent and Davidson EMC into EnergyUnited in 1997 was a huge task. R.B. Sloan and I embarked on this journey to consolidate, and it's probably where I grew most of my white hair. It was a huge amount of work. We both knew our strengths and we took paths to pull the full power of those strengths. We both had the vision and understanding of why it was beneficial. It took years to fully transition, to usher in change and to adopt new skills and methods. What I used to hear often was, “Well, we did it this way before...” and in changing you learn to challenge these previous conceptions and work toward a better way. And that continued on with technology implementation, like our smart grid, EV chargers and Advanced Metering Structure. It's really been an exciting thing to experience and achieve in my career — and I'm really proud of that.

What are some things that you found surprising when taking on this role?

I wouldn't really say “surprising” so much as I would say “satisfying” but I've always been amazed to watch employees tackle a problem. It's a very satisfying thing to watch.

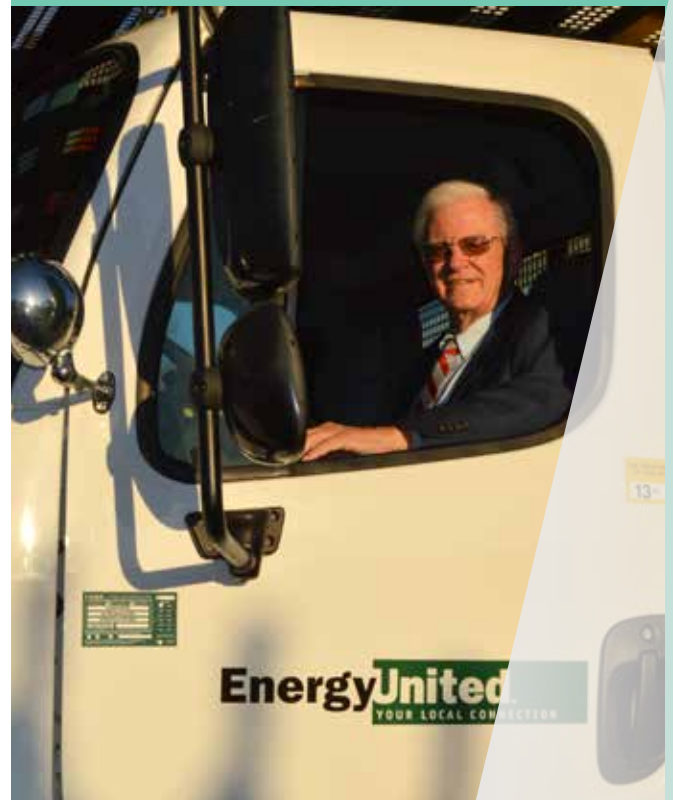


What would you tell the next CEO of EnergyUnited — any words of encouragement?

Really understand where your employees are coming from. Dig into what the member interests are and know that you're really here to serve people. This is not a business that you go into for yourself, you have to understand your end-user and what motivates them. Something that I've found rewarding is to look ahead, through things like strategic planning and envisioning what something will look like, which allows you to have some good conversations about what could happen and brainstorm about what would happen then. Holding these visions in your mind's eye can really help keep you on track. I would also say: Understand how technology can improve members' lives and the cooperative as a whole. Learn to embrace change and encourage people to look outside the window to get the bigger picture. There's enough to keep us all busy. But keeping an eye on the primary groups and listening to their concerns is number one.

Any other thoughts you'd like to share?

This has been a tremendous career for me. Being at EnergyUnited for as long as I have obviously demonstrates that I've really loved this. I could not have picked a better career than this, but with all that said, I had committed to myself that when I reached 70 I would reevaluate — and I did. My grandkids are such a joy to me and I just can't enjoy them enough. I'm so excited to spend time with them, to enjoy time at our cabin in Virginia and just find time to enjoy and experience the people that matter most to me in my life.



LANDSCAPING YOUR YARD

Leave a Buffer Zone Around Electrical Equipment

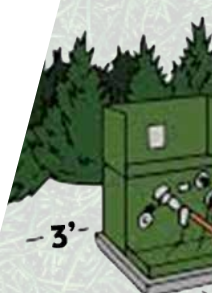
As spring arrives, EnergyUnited would like to remind members about our rules for planting around power equipment to ensure the vegetation does not affect your power.

In many situations, property owners plant shrubs and plants to screen pad-mounted transformers and cabinets. The cooperative reminds property owners not to plant too close to the underground facilities. Trees with surface roots or deep spreading roots can cause damage to the equipment. Also remember to consider the trees' and shrubs' mature width prior to planting. EnergyUnited requires a 3' buffer on three sides and 12' buffer in the front of the transformers and cabinets (padlock side of the cabinet). This is necessary to ensure that crews can access the transformer and cabinet for maintenance and/or service restoration.

We appreciate your cooperation in supporting our vegetation management plan. 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 shrubs and plants contribute to our daily lives.



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**



YARD WORK **MADE EASY**

Keeping your gardens looking their best and your lawn perfectly trimmed takes a lot of time and effort. Luckily, smart technology can transform your outdoor space into a smart yard, completing some of the more time-consuming tasks for you. Sounds pretty great, huh?

Learn more at the QR code below!



MY E
MY



DAVIE COUNTY'S **NEW BUSINESS**

There's an exciting new neighbor coming to Davie County:
Palltronics, and we're proud to provide them the energy
services they need to power their business!

Palltronics is a smart pallet manufacturer that is bringing 200 new jobs to Mocksville and plans to invest \$40 million in upfit, equipment and personal property at the new location in SouthPoint Business Park. Headquartered in Michigan, Palltronics has developed the first fully trackable, long-life shipping pallet made of a durable wood substrate and embedded with technology that allows customers to track shipments in real time. The information gathered by these pallets conveys temperature, humidity, location and other factors that may impact product integrity.

The Mocksville facility is set to be up and running within the next six months and we're proud to help empower this technology, the company, and the benefits this product will provide to customers nationwide.



Take control of your communications including outage alerts, tips on saving money on your energy bill and more. Register for My EnergyHub — it's how you access your EnergyUnited account.

**ENERGYHUB
=
ACCOUNT**

DECEMBER PEAK TIME PERKS **GIVEAWAY WINNERS**

Mike Overholzer

Chris Ingram

Robert Conaway

Ben Tingey

Phillip Goodwin

Ryan Rowell

Rocky Thompson


All received a \$100 Visa gift card just for signing up.



**PEAK TIME
PERKS**



99.9% RELIABILITY RATING



From our innovative technology to our dedicated employees, everything we do is to bring safe, reliable and quality power to our members.

EnergyUnited
YOUR LOCAL CONNECTION

**KEEPING
EVERY DAY**
EMPOWERED



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