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**NATIONAL CONTEST AWARD WINNER AND CANCER PATIENT SPREADS POSITIVITY
DURING VISIT TO LOCAL CO-OP**

STATESVILLE, N.C. – EnergyUnited is pleased to announce Rich Gustin, longtime member of the co-op, has received an Honorable Mention in Touchstone Energy’s 2018 National #WhoPowersYou Contest. Gustin’s story was shared by his wife, Judy, who was inspired by his positive attitude and impact on others amidst a bleak diagnosis of Renal Cell Carcinoma (RCC) in 2012.

The prognosis wasn’t great, as the cancer had metastasized to his pituitary. But Rich was unphased when his doctors only gave him two years to live. In fact, his concern for others around him, especially for Judy, helped shape a completely new outlook on life that resulted in lots of smiles and laughter.

“He started doing crazy stuff to make me laugh when we went to Baptist Hospital and I heard things that would make me cry,” Judy explained. “I have about 500 pictures of him with stuff on his head.”

Judy’s description of Rich’s personality shift was spot-on. The Gustins recently stopped by EnergyUnited to continue telling their story, just one day before Rich was scheduled to undergo Gamma Knife Radiosurgery. Despite the timing of his visit, Rich exhibited the same humorous behavior his wife described, while he used EnergyUnited items as props to show how he continues to spark so much joy in others around him.

Employees who had the chance to meet Rich couldn’t stop smiling when speaking about meeting the inspirational cancer patient.

“Rich is an inspiration to so many people,” said Maureen Moore, Communications Manager for EnergyUnited. “His positive personality and laughter is contagious, which is what the #WhoPowersYou Contest was all about.”

While the contest hoped to reward those who help spread positivity in their communities, Rich believes that the spotlight his story earned thanks to the national contest was the greatest reward.

“While the prize money was great and greatly appreciated, the best part about the recognition is that hopefully through the publicity and sharing of my story, someone will be inspired, and it will make a positive difference in their life or the lives of others. We are not promised tomorrow, so we need to live, love, laugh and find joy in every day and circumstance.”

About Touchstone Energy

Touchstone Energy Cooperatives (www.touchstoneenergy.com) represents a nationwide alliance of local, member-owned electric co-ops dedicated to providing members with safe, reliable and affordable electricity. The #WhoPowersYou Contest was created as a way to honor unsung, local heroes in the community and spread positive energy across the cooperative network. To view contest winners’ stories, visit whopowersyou.com.

About EnergyUnited

EnergyUnited Electric Membership Corporation (EMC) is the largest electric cooperative in North Carolina serving nearly 130,000 metering points. Headquartered in Statesville, EnergyUnited provides electric service in portions of nineteen counties in west central North Carolina which include Alexander, Cabarrus, Caldwell, Catawba, Davidson, Davie, Forsyth, Gaston, Guilford, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Montgomery, Randolph, Rockingham, Rowan, Stokes, Wilkes and Yadkin. EnergyUnited Propane provides products and services to more than 25,000 residential, commercial and industrial customers in 74 counties across North and South Carolina. Visit EnergyUnited online at www.energyunited.com to learn more about our electric and propane businesses.