NOVEMBER 2021

# UNITED NEWSLINE

Information for the members of United Power, Inc.



The electrification of America is one of the most significant achievements of all time. More than 100 years ago, the most prominent population centers across the country were granted access to the valuable resource and quickly began to grow and prosper. Over the past century, access to electricity has expanded to include all parts of the country, especially thanks to the development of member-owned and operated rural electric cooperatives.

Today, the industry is one in the midst of an overarching transition. The retirement of coal plants, relative affordability of renewable energy and advancements in technology have primed electric utilities to power the movement toward beneficial electrification.



www.unitedpower.com

Report an Outage 303-637-1350 Customer Service 303-637-1300 TO QUALIFY AS BENEFICIAL ELECTRIFICATION, ELECTRICITY MUST BE USED TO POWER DEVICES WHERE AT LEAST ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS IS SATISFIED WITHOUT ADVERSELY AFFECTING THE OTHERS:

- SAVES MONEY OVER TIME
- REDUCES ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
- IMPROVES QUALITY OF LIFE
- INCREASES GRID RESILIENCY.

As we're moving closer to an electrified future, renewable energy sources are becoming as affordable or more affordable than traditional fossil fuels. Electricity generated from renewable sources also produces zero carbon emissions and the movement toward electrified "smart" devices utilizes energy more efficiently.

Beneficial electrification, then, is electricity produced by environmentally friendly means that saves money and/or improves quality of life. This is also known as "strategic" electrification because it targets the most practical and valuable fuel switching opportunities, such as electric vehicles and lawn equipment, traditionally powered by gas engines.

#### **Saves Money Over Time**

New energy efficient technology that saves consumers money over time is being developed

# IN THIS ISSUE

Unclaimed Capital Credits
Medical Devices for Outages4
Youth Trips & Scholarships
System Reliability
Hybrid Bucket Truck Joins Fleet

## **IMPORTANT DATES**

NOVEMBER 25-26

DECEMBER 23-24

DECEMBER 30-31

> APRIL 13, 2022

Thanksgiving Holiday
Offices Closed

Christmas Holiday

Offices Closed

New Year's Holiday

New Year's Holiday Offices Closed

Annual Meeting & Director Election

every day. From regularly used appliances in your home or kitchen to the construction of new homes, efficiency is key for both cost savings and environmental impact. Although there's usually a higher initial investment, it pays for itself over time. For example, electric vehicles are priced above their gas engine equivalents, but because there are fewer moving parts and less standard maintenance, owners will realize greater savings over the life of the vehicle. That's without considering rebates and the significant price gap between electricity and gas.

Consider heating and cooling your home, as well. Energy used for heating and cooling account for more than half the average consumer's energy costs. A solution to reducing these costs are air source and ground source heat pumps, which are so efficient they actually provide more energy than they consume. Smart thermostats can regulate energy use whether you're home or away, analyze your usage and make recommendations. Energy efficient lighting is brighter, lasts longer and uses just a fraction of the energy as traditional incandescent lighting.

## **Improves Quality of Life**

We don't often purchase devices or appliances that make our lives more difficult. Many of



# **Along These Lines**

## A Message from United Power's President & CEO



Mark A. Gabriel
President & Chief Executive Officer

#### **Have Feedback For Us?**

Submit your questions, comments, concerns or general feedback at www.unitedpower.com/CEO.

At the turn of the past century (1900, not 2000) there were as many electric vehicles as gas powered cars. The EVs of the day were more expensive, but quieter, cleaner and easier to start and drive. Now, 120 years later, EVs are becoming increasingly popular, with nearly 4,000 United Power members driving one, and the numbers are growing.

With an electric grid in its infancy and before the creation of rural electric cooperatives, most of America outside of its cities would not be fully electrified for another 25 years. Gasoline became an essential commodity. Although it was dirty, noisy and somewhat flammable, it was also portable and easy to move across great distances in bulk, allowing for rapid expansion.

I had the opportunity to drive many of the early EVs on the market during my time at the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) 20 years ago – the ill-fated EV1, an all-electric RAV4, a converted S-10 pickup and an experimental Honda. They all shared similar benefits to today's EVs: rapid acceleration, amazing handling – due to the weight of the batteries – and were eerily quiet. I also clearly recall taking the pickup to my daughter's school for a show and tell, driving across the San Mateo bridge to my home in Pleasanton, Cali. and nervously watching the battery meter drifting toward zero.

My, how has the world changed. An expanding electric grid has made electricity the commodity, EV battery life is now up to 300 miles or more and we have 49 publicly available "Level 2" chargers and seven DC Fast Chargers (two owned by United Power) in our service territory. The network is rapidly expanding across Colorado and the U.S. Now, with most charging taking place at home, United Power will soon begin offering a leasing program for home chargers to our members.

I have been driving an electric vehicle almost daily for the past seven months and have learned much in that time. The Tesla Model 3 I drive is a pleasure and nothing short of a modern engineering miracle – an iPhone on wheels. But it is different in other ways too, some of which take getting used to versus traditional internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles.

First and foremost, more planning is involved for long trips. I made a journey to Wyoming for a Tri-State meeting, a distance of about 250 miles. Although the car would have made it on a single charge there were no fast chargers available at my destination. So, my car instructed me to stop at Laramie for a 15-minute charge coming and going. This means not pushing on to the next gas/charging station since that might be miles away. Secondly, since most people charge at home and "filling up" at 120 volts takes a long time, United Power's upcoming Level 2 leasing progam targets the length of time it takes to charge while adding sophistication to the timing of the charge for better bill management.

There are four key questions to ask as you consider an EV for your next ride:

- Does it meet my needs? My other vehicle is a 4WD Ford- F-250 with a 7.3-liter gas engine since towing my camper, heading to the woods for hunting or even making it up to my house on the mountain at 9,000 feet in the winter would be a challenge.
- Do I like it? As with any automobile purchase, our cars reflect our personal tastes. Early EVs were, well, not exactly "attractive" to most of us. The "geek look" worked for some, but not all.
- Can I afford it? The total cost of an EV is much less expensive than an ICE with no tune-ups or oil changes and fewer mechanical things to go wrong. There are roughly 30% fewer parts in an EV. However, some of the initial costs may be higher.
- How can I fuel it? For apartment dwellers or renters, charging at home might be a challenge.
   For homeowners, it might require an additional 240-volt service on your electric panel. The great news is that the availability of public charging is dramatically increasing.

As your electric cooperative we are here to help answer your questions. You can find information online at www.unitedpower.com/chooseEV or by calling 720-685-5644.

Come join the EV revolution!

# We May Have Money for You

United Power is attempting to issue unclaimed capital credit refunds to members who received electric service from the cooperative prior to 2018. If you were a member up to December 31, 2017, you may be eligible to receive a capital credit refund.

## **What Are Capital Credits?**

Cooperative members periodically receive capital credit refunds, based on their electric use during a specified time period. The amount you will receive is based on the amount of power you used and the rates paid for the time period being retired. If the customer is deceased the credits may be claimed through the estate.

# Who May be Eligible for a Refund?

- If you were a United Power member for any period of time through December 31, 2017 and have moved out of the United Power service territory.
- Accounts of a deceased member may have funds due and the credits may be claimed by the estate.
- Current members may be eligible, but all current members are encouraged to look at the list, especially if:
  - \* You have recently moved;
  - \* Changed your name;
  - \* Added your name to an existing account;
  - \* Did not cash a capital credit check issued in 2016 or earlier.

# How Can I Find Out If I Am Due a Refund?

Visit www.unitedpower.com and click on 'My Cooperative.' Look for the 'Capital Credits' page to view the entire list of unclaimed capital credit accounts. Lists will also be posted in the lobbies of offices in Brighton, Carbon Valley and Coal Creek Canyon.

Please visit www.unitedpower.com/contact-us for office hours and addresses.

# My Name is On The List. How Do I Claim My Money?

If you find your name on the list of unclaimed capital credits on our website, download and complete the **Patronage Capital Refund Request form**. If you do not have internet access, call our Capital Credit information line at 303-637-1200, leave a message with your name and mailing address and we will mail you the request form. Please complete this form and mail it back to United Power in order to have your account researched.

Forms must be received by United Power by April 29, 2022.

# 2022 ANNUAL MEETING & DIRECTOR ELECTION

# WEDNESDAY APRIL 13, 2022

The 2022 Annual Meeting will be held as a hybrid event. Members may participate online or attend in-person.

#### **IN-PERSON MEETING**

#### Riverdale Regional Park & Fairgrounds

9755 Henderson Road, Brighton, CO 80601

#### VIRTUAL MEETING

#### www.unitedpower.com/annual-meeting

**4:30 p.m.** In-person Registration, Balloting &

Dinner

**6:30 p.m.** Online & In-person Meeting Begins

United Power is monitoring COVID-19 restrictions, and in the event conditions do not permit an in-person event, the virtual format will still be available.

#### **BALLOTING DEADLINES**

Balloting in the 2022 Director Election will be conducted by both electronic & paper balloting.

#### **FEBRUARY 11. 2022**

Director Nominations by Petition Deadline at 4 p.m.

#### **MARCH 18, 2022**

Electronic balloting opens & paper ballots are mailed to members

#### **APRIL 12, 2022**

Mail-in ballots must arrive at the P.O. Box by 12 p.m. Electronic balloting closes at 11:59 p.m.

#### **APRIL 13, 2022**

In-person voting open from 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.

#### **CANDIDATE FORUMS**

Every March, the cooperative holds candidate forums in each of its four director districts for members to meet candidates vying to serve on the Board of Directors, hear their vision for the cooperative and ask questions.

Meet the Candidate events are free to members and RSVPs are not required. Light refreshments will be served.

Watch for event announcements in upcoming newsletters or on our website at www.unitedpower.com.

# **Exclusive United Power Member Coupon**



# **Electricity-Dependent Medical Devices**

United Power strives to provide reliable power to its members. At times, however, circumstances may arise that lead to an interruption in power, such as standard maintenance improvements to our system, or an outage, caused by a number of events such as severe weather. When an outage does occur, the cooperative is quick to dispatch line crews to safely restore power to its members as quickly as possible.

Some outages, however, can create situations that require an extended time to resolve. These kinds of outages can be especially worrisome for members with special medical needs. If you use life-sustaining medical equipment that depends on electricity for operation, such as oxygen generators, kidney dialysis machines or respirators, it's important to put together a plan for a power outage before it happens.

## **Have a Backup Plan for Prolonged Outages**

United Power can't guarantee your service won't be interrupted by scheduled maintenance or an outage. In the event of an outage, we recommend you plan for how to respond.

**Register with United Power.** United Power can place a flag on the accounts of members who utilize special medical equipment, allowing us to contact you in an unplanned outage and before a planned outage.

**Have a Power Backup.** Outages can happen at a moment's notice and without warning. Though the cooperative makes every effort to quickly restore power, we cannot provide a specific time frame for when your power will be restored. If you use medical equipment, consider obtaining a power back-up, such as a battery or generator, in the case of an extended outage.



**Plan for Evacuation.** In the worst case event, such as a significant weather crisis like a blizzard or flood, prepare to evacuate to an alternate location. These events can result in outages lasting several days.

## **How You Can Help**

If you do experience an outage or other electrical emergency, always report it. Do not assume United Power knows about your outage. You can report your outage by logging into our online portal available at www.unitedpower.com or by calling our outage reporting line at 303-637-1350.

More information about medically necessary devices can be found online at www.unitedpower.com/medical-devices.

#### READER REWARDS

# Three Winners Every Month! 1st place: \$100 Bill Credit

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**NOVEMBER** 

2021

2<sup>nd</sup> place: \$50 Bill Credit (two winners)

#### Submit Reader Rewards Online www.unitedpower.com

Visit **www.unitedpower.com** and click on 'News & Community' to enter Reader Rewards online. Answer the question below with your online entry:

#### Do you participate in Round-Up? If so, tell us why!

By submitting this entry I agree to allow United Power to publish my name in subsequent issues of United Newsline if I am selected as a winner.

#### Members may also enter by mailing the following entry form to:

United Power • Reader Rewards • 500 Cooperative Way • Brighton, CO 80603

Name:	
Address:	
Dhono:	

#### UNITED POWER PRIDE



#### **United Power Pride Photos**

Snap a photo with the United Newsline and you'll get a \$100 bill credit if we print it. Submit your photo along with your name, address, email and a description of the photo online at www.unitedpower.com/unitedpowerpride.

# **Youth Trips & Scholarships**

# **Youth Tour & Youth Leadership Camp Return for 2022**

The past couple years have looked different for United Power and its youth opportunities. Due to the unexpected COVID-19 pandemic and its continued impact on communities through this summer, United Power not been able to send student on the Youth Tour or Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in both 2020 and 2021. While in hiatus, though, the cooperative has continued to award scholarships to outstanding students at high schools in its service territory. For this upcoming year, United Power is proud to announce both the return of its youth leadership trips and a new scholarship opportunity for nontraditional students. Learn more and apply online at www.unitedpower.com.

#### **2022 Scholarship Opportunities**

#### Scholarship Applications Due: January 28, 2022

Each year, United Power awards nearly \$20,000 in academic scholarships to outstanding senior high school students who are dependents of members served off its lines. Scholarships are awarded to students who show academic excellence and are involved in extracurricular activities and in their community. Scholarships include awards for students attending an accredited university or college in Colorado or pursing a specific degree program, as well as 11 book scholarships. This year, United Power is also awarding one scholarship to a nontraditional student pursuing a post-secondary education.



#### **Electric Cooperative Youth Tour**

#### Tour Dates: June 12-19, 2022 **Application Deadline: January 19, 2022**

The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour has been a proud tradition among cooperatives since 1957 when Lyndon B. Johnson, speaking at the NRECA's annual meeting, suggested sending youth to the capitol to see "what the flag stands for and represents."

Students explore Washington D.C. with peers from across the country and learn about American history and the cooperative business model while developing leadership skills. Each day is packed with memorable moments.



## **Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp**

#### Camp Dates: July 16-21, 2022 **Application Deadline: January 19, 2022**

The Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp isn't a camp in the traditional sense. There are no tents, no campfires, no s'mores. Students spend a week near Steamboat Springs establishing and managing their own cooperative, including the election of directors, to learn the value of cooperative principles.

In between, days are filled with cooperative-focused activities, leadership training seminars and collaborative group projects. However, being part of a cooperative isn't all business. Campers enjoy fun activities like rafting down the Colorado or exploring Fish Creek Falls and an end-of-week celebration.



Youth Tour and Youth Camp are subject to cancellation dependent upon local COVID-19 protocols.

#### RECIPES



#### **Cheesecake Pudding**

2 1/3 cup whole milk 1/3 cup heavy cream Zest of 1 lemon (about 1 Tbsp) 1/4 tsp fine sea salt 3/4 cup granulated sugar 1/4 cup cornstarch 4 large egg yolks 12 oz cream cheese, at room temp 2 tsp vanilla extract

In medium saucepan, whisk milk, cream, lemon zest, salt and 1/4 cup sugar until combined. Place saucepan over medium heat and bring to simmer. While heating, whisk remaining sugar and cornstarch in medium, heat-safe bowl. Add egg yolks and whisk until mixture forms paste.

When milk mixture comes to simmer, remove from heat. Whisking constantly, gradually add about a third of the hot milk to egg mixture in slow, steady stream until combined. Transfer bowl contents to saucepan. Whisk to combine. Heat over medium-low until mixture begins to thicken and comes to a slow boil Remove from heat

Whisk in cream cheese and vanilla Strain mixture into bowl. Place plastic wrap directly on surface and refrigerate until chilled.

#### **Share Your Recipes**

Earn a free gift if we publish your recipe.

ONLINE: www.unitedpower.com

MAIL:

**United Power Recipes** 

500 Cooperative Way Brighton, CO 80603



# **Automated Devices for Better Reliability**

## **How Components Work to Reduce Outage Times and Improve Reliability**

United Power's outage restoration system is among the most advanced and innovative in the country. While the cooperative has a national reputation for its forward-thinking beneficial energy projects, behind the scenes it has also dedicated significant resources to improve system reliability and reduce member outage times. The result is one that utilizes a sophisticated network of automated field devices that allow system operators and line crews to respond and resolve outages more quickly while often also preventing larger outages affecting more members.

Automated field devices fall into a varying spectrum from simple to complex, but they all work in conjunction to identify, isolate and, when possible, resolve "faults." A fault is when the flow of electricity is abnormal or interrupted and can be caused by any number

of incidents, such as weather, vegetation or equipment failures. Automated devices detect these faults and respond to them. Each type of device has a different response but all have the same purpose – to keep your lights on.

Fuses are not automated, but they are the simplest and least expensive means of protecting the cooperative's system from fault damage and preventing larger outages. Fuses are "sacrificial" devices used to isolate small areas. They blow quickly in response to a fault, usually resulting in a relatively small outage impacting only a handful of members while maintaining service to any remaining members downstream of the fault. Line crews are able to quickly and easily replace these devices to restore power. Think of fuses like GFCI outlets in your home. When they detect an abnormal current, they shut off power to protect you.

The next level of protection against faults are reclosers and breakers. Although reclosers and breakers are technically separate devices, they function in similar ways. They protect much larger service areas and can respond to a fault in just a few seconds. This fault response is the most common cause of power "blinks." When your house lights dim temporarily or you lose power briefly, this is caused by a breaker detecting a fault and responding. Breakers will attempt to reclose automatically to determine if the fault is still present. In the event of a sustained fault, system operators can reclose some breakers remotely once the fault has been cleared, limiting outage times for members impacted. While fuses in your home will shut off power to a single outlet, a breaker will shut off power to entire section of your home when it detects an overloaded circuit.

Switches are another remote device United Power system operators can use to quickly restore power to members affected by an outage. They are used to reroute the distribution of power to restore members while isolating the segment of line with the fault, also known as a redundancy, or the ability to serve members from more than one substation. Before remote switches. lineworkers had to manually activate switches, which required a lot of manpower and guesswork. In most cases, rerouting power with a switcher can restore power to most members within minutes or even seconds. In a few cases, it can restore power to all members. United Power is in the process of upgrading more switches to remote field devices.

System redundancies allow United Power to serve approximately 90 percent of its members from at least two different substations or circuits. The cooperative is continually looking for solutions to construct backup facilities serving remaining members but have been limited by geographical challenges. The approach to installing automated and remote field devices is a strategic method that allows the cooperative to better serve members, resulting in fewer outages where possible, shorter outages where not and improved overall system reliability.

"What we're doing with automated devices is well ahead of your average electric utility," said Engineering Director Robert Maxwell. "We've been continually reviewing our system and its performance to identify where installing automated devices would best serve our members."



## **ENERGY SAVERS**

#### **Watch that Thermostat**

Don't let the winter weather keep you from remembering to watch your thermostat. When you're home, find a low, but comfortable, temperature. Turn the heat back 10-15° when you're asleep or away to save around 10% on heating bills.

# **Beneficial Electrification Reduces Environmental Impact & Saves Money**

the same devices that provide us with energy savings also improve our quality of life, satisfying two criteria for beneficial electrification. Consider electric vehicles again. Much hesitancy surrounding EVs is related to perceived quality of life – range anxiety and access to a sufficient charging infrastructure. However, range is increasing, charging infrastructure is growing and initial cost of investment is dropping. Vehicles powered by electricity are also quiet, more capable and, depending on who you ask, more fun.

Smart meters allow the cooperative to provide members with aggregate data about their energy use in 15-minute segments using Power Portal, a free tool available to all members. This data, like other smart devices, provides a detailed review of behaviors that have the greatest impact on their energy use. Using this data, members can make small changes to realize instant energy savings.

Devices that are able to provide consumers with energy use data or learn our habits to optimize energy use in a way that fits our lifestyles ultimately means increased savings, more freedom and less anxiety about your energy bill.

## Reduces Environmental Impact

The first two criteria reflect how beneficial electrification has a positive effect on consumers, but electricity has to be produced before it can be used. As more coal plants are retired, they are being replaced with renewable alternatives like wind or solar, and the technology used to capture renewable energy generated from these sources is also advancing. These advancements allow us to take greater advantage of renewable resources.

United Power has brought on more than 40 megawatts of solar energy since 2012 and has also debuted alternative renewable projects, like its methane capture project at the Erie landfill. Capturing methane produced in landfills and using it to generate electricity helps reduce its effect on climate change.

## **Increases Grid Resiliency**

Research at Darmouth College earlier this year found electric grids with more renewables were more robust and reliable. As United Power has grown, it has added additional renewable projects to its system.

Load control methods, especially ones that shift energy use away from peak demand periods, have also shown to increase grid resiliency. United Power offers a Time of Day rate that encourages members to shift usage to off-peak periods and its Rush Hour Rewards provides incentives to let the cooperative adjust energy usage on hot days during peak periods. Upcoming cooperative programs will also utilize load control incentives to shift at-home EV charging to off-peak hours.

United Power has demonstrated its leadership in beneficial electrification through a commitment to renewable energy and energy efficiency incentives that save money and improve lives for both it and its members.

# **United Power Debuts Hybrid Bucket Truck**

## Hybrid Bucket Truck Cooperative's First with Electric Bucket and Jib

United Power debuted the cooperative's first hybrid bucket truck at the 2021 Utility Expo in September in Louisville, Kentucky. The new truck is United Power's first hybrid model bucket and uses battery power to raise and lower the bucket. The truck is also the first model nationwide to use battery power for both the bucket and the bucket jib – a small crane attached to the bucket that allows line crews to lift heavy materials to the height of the bucket.

The Dodge Ram 5500 is equipped with an ETI (A Palfinger Company) utility aerial lift system with a Volta Power Systems electric bucket and jib. Operating an electric boom and jib rather than the traditional diesel boom provides a cleaner, quieter idle time for crews, improves safety conditions, reduces idle time on the truck engine and will save diesel fuel.

"Using this new electric technology means the truck will idle cleaner and offers a savings on diesel fuel for us, but a major safety benefit of an electric bucket is quieter truck operation while crews are working," said United Power Fleet Manager Bill Hottell. "The crews in the bucket should have a much easier time communicating with crews on the ground. And our mechanics and lineworkers are excited to be among the first in the country to give this new technology a true test in the field."

With new equipment comes new opportunities for United Power line crews and mechanics to learn more about the different maintenance requirements of a hybrid model and to test any



limitations due to weather conditions or normal wear and tear in utility response situations. The first-of-its-kind bucket truck will be assigned to our Carbon Valley Service Center, providing service and responding to outages to members in the west side of the service territory. It was branded with green lightning so you can tell the difference from our traditional bucket trucks. Watch for it in your community.

# **Inside This Issue**

#### NOVEMBER 2021





## **Youth Trips & Scholarships**

United Power is now accepting applications for its youth trips and scholarships.

Page 5



#### **Automated Field Devices**

Automated devices in the field help reduce outage times and improve reliability.

Page 6

## We May Have Money for You You

United Power is attempting to issue unclaimed capital credit refunds to members who received electric service from the cooperative prior to 2018 but are no longer served by the cooperative. You or someone you know may be eligible. Read more inside.

Page 3

# STAY CONNECTED WITH YOUR CO-OP

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online.....www.unitedpower.com

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Member Services 303-637-1300
Outage Line 303-637-1350

#### **CONGRATS READER REWARDS WINNERS**

1st Place: Mary Lee Culligan, Golden
2nd Place: David Snyder, Hudson
Page 1 Suprin Finances

Bonnie Curtis, Firestone

See your name? Call 303-637-1325 within two (2) months of the issue date to claim your Reader Rewards.

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Information for the members of United Power, Inc.

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