When it comes to politics, if you’re not sitting at the table, you may find you’ve become part of the day’s menu.

Texas State Rep. Dewayne Burns (District 58) this month addressed United Cooperative Services employees as the keynote speaker at the cooperative’s annual Rural Friends/ACRE luncheon, which is held each year to commemorate the cooperative employees’ voluntary involvement in the grassroots electric cooperative political action committee (PAC).

The PAC supports legislators who have not only demonstrated an understanding of the unique role electric cooperatives have played in the development of rural communities, but who have also been recognized for their commitment to represent the rural interests of electric co-ops and their members.

United sees the effort as imperative, largely underpinned by the belief that accountability is the essence of democracy, and that when citizens do not know what their government is doing, they cannot be truly self-governing.

This year, United’s board of directors, employees, their spouses and co-op members have pledged over $7,755 of their hard-earned dollars to demonstrate how important the political process is in protecting electric cooperatives and the services they provide to their members. Since 2009, United’s involvement in the program has amounted to more than $53,000 in contributions.

And as is often the norm, United was this year again branded with the distinction among Texas cooperatives as having 100 percent employee participation in Rural Friends/ACRE.

“Each of our 152 employees understands that in

Please see RURAL FRIENDS/ACRE, PAGE 6
**Cholesterol 101**

Do you know what the numbers mean?

Cholesterol is a waxy type of fat present in the blood and cells involved in the production of hormones and cell membranes. It is normal to have cholesterol present in the body. However, when excess cholesterol exists, it can build up in artery walls of the heart—a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke. Cholesterol comes from the body and from food.

What are the normal levels for a lipoprotein profile? The American Heart Association has the following guidelines for normal fasting lipoprotein profile results. Use your results from the onsite health screenings held in April and May or at a physician visit to determine your cholesterol health.

- Total cholesterol—less than 200 mg/dl
- HDL (good) cholesterol—higher the better
- LDL (bad) cholesterol—less than 100 mg/dl
- Triglycerides—less than 150 mg/dl

What are the levels of the lipoprotein profile that indicate risk? The American Heart Association lists the following guidelines for normal fasting lipoprotein profile results.

- **Total cholesterol**
  - 200-239 mg/dl at borderline to high risk
  - 240 mg/dl and over high risk

- **HDL (good) cholesterol**
  - If total cholesterol level is 200 mg/dl or more
  - If you are a male over age 45 or a female over age 50
  - If HDL (good) cholesterol is less than 40 mg/dl
  - If you have other risk factors for heart disease and stroke

What are some ways that cholesterol levels can be managed?

- Practice a healthy eating lifestyle.
- Participate in regular physical activity.
- Do not use tobacco or smoke.

For further information on cholesterol, visit www.americanheart.org or the National Cholesterol Education Program (NCEP) at www.nhlbi.nih.gov.

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**Steady Marks Reflect Good Work**

**Co-op’s 2015 Wellness Program is Underway**

Are you taking full advantage of a vibrant, incentive-based health benefit that helps you and your family maintain good health while helping defray out-of-pocket health expenses?

It’s up to every employee to utilize the benefits provided through United’s vibrant Rewards for Life® program. No one can do that for you. Every employee is encouraged to focus on their overall health, and in return, the cooperative will reward you and your family for your efforts in trying to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

By completing only five of the wellness incentives cited below, employees and their spouses can each earn up to $1,000 dollars in incentive points, which can be used to defray out-of-pocket deductible expenses. More than 100 points are available to choose from, allowing flexibility in completing activities that are meaningful to you.

### Rewards for Life – Steps to be Completed by Employee and Spouse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>RESOURCE</th>
<th>POINTS/DOLLARS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete MyHealth Survey</td>
<td>WebMD</td>
<td>20 points = $200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend Health Screening</td>
<td>UCS On-Site</td>
<td>20 points = $200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a Physical Exam in 2015</td>
<td>Physician</td>
<td>20 points = $200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a Dental Exam in 2015</td>
<td>Dentist</td>
<td>20 points = $200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a Flu Vaccine in 2015</td>
<td>Physician/Annual Mtg</td>
<td>20 points = $200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Tobacco User Affidavit</td>
<td>UCS</td>
<td>20 points = $200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skin Cancer Screening</td>
<td>Physician</td>
<td>20 points = $200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**United Welcomes New Employee to the Fold**

United Cooperative Services is proud to announce its new association with Brad Morrow after he this month accepted employment as a Groundman in Meridian operations.

Morrow, who is a resident of Clifton, is single and says he enjoys hunting, fishing and calf roping as his favorite pastime activities.

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**United Cooperatives’ 2015 ACSI Index Marks Good Work**

An employee culture that has been centered for many years on bringing United’s membership the best possible service experience has once more earned the appreciation and validation from members that such a service ethos is commendable and noticed.

United received an 89 out of a possible 100 points when the results of the first 2015 quarterly assessment of the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) were released in April. The 89 awarded in this most recent independent third-party survey complements scores of 91, 89, 88 and 89 previously earned by United employees for the year 2014.

Each member assessment has kept United at the top of the list in national customer satisfaction rankings among municipal electric utilities, investor-owned utilities and other Touchstone Energy electric distribution cooperatives—which typically score higher in customer satisfaction surveys across the national electric utility industry sector.

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**Steady Marks Reflect Good Work**

**United Cooperative Services’ ACSI Index Reflects Steady Marks**

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**Rewards for Life – Steps to be Completed by Employee and Spouse**

- Print a copy of the Preventative Screening Form for the preventative exam
- Have Physician complete and sign the Preventative Screening Form
- Fax or email signed Preventative Screening Form to NRECA/WebMD
- Keep a copy of the Preventative Screening Form for future reference
- Update your MyHealth Survey via WebMD Health Manager to show completion of exam
United Operations Crews Conquer Adversity in Storm Restorations

"Hey, tell your linemen folks I appreciate their work and getting our power back on. I know they take a beating when people lose power, but most don’t appreciate the amount of work and terrible conditions these guys endure so we can be comfortable. Please pass on my thanks!"

— An email message received from Cleburne Fire Chief CLINT ISHMAEL

April showers so desperately needed across drought-ridden North Central Texas finally arrived, albeit with some of the extra big baggage spring storms in Texas often pack.

Some areas in the region reportedly received in excess of six inches of rain from a slow and steady parade of thunderstorms that took a northeasterly route across much of the area at the end of the month, but so too came real evidence the clouds carried golf ball, baseball and grapefruit-sized hail and rain-wrapped twisters—a mixture that inflicted a considerable amount of material damage across the countryside.

The string of storms caused a flurry of power outages across United’s service territory first on April 24, before a second, more violent series of storms hit on April 26. At the height of the second round of storms, approximately 5,500 members were estimated to be without power.

Adding salt to those wounds, the timing of the more violent late evening April 26 storms hampered United’s restorations efforts due to the fact they were successive—storms on top of storms—each laden with intense cloud-to-ground lightning and reported funnels.

Line crews that had begun responding to initial outage reports were recalled for safety concerns.

And operations crews were largely held at bay until weather conditions calmed, a halt that didn’t occur until well before dawn on April 27. Crews then worked around the clock to overcome the difficulty of making complete damage assessments due to low visibility, extensive tree and limb damage and flash-flood conditions in some of the more ravaged areas of United’s distribution system.

By daybreak on April 27, United operations crews faced washed out roads, swollen rivers and creeks, snakes and miles of fallen trees and debris as they worked to rebuild a considerable amount of broken power poles, downed power lines and other damaged infrastructure—most of which was staked in water-logged terrain that was impassable in many instances.

Even though outages were recorded in nearly every sector of the cooperative’s service territory, the brunt of the damage was suffered in the south and southeastern portions of Johnson County. Power losses were reported from Stephenville to Mansfield, but the Grandview/Covington areas suffered the worst tornadoic damage.

Nevertheless, by nightfall on April 28th, the seemingly impossible task of restoring power to so many affected cooperative members was completed—Zero Outages.

"I’m so proud of the dedication and hard work our folks showed throughout this event," said United CEO Ray Beavers. "We know our members don’t like to be out of power and we certainly aren’t big fans of tornados ripping through our system. These men work up to 20-hour shifts, sacrificing time away from their families and loved ones because they are so committed to our membership," he said.

"My words can’t fully express how impressed I am nor how proud I am of every one of them for the incredible effort they put forth to ensure our members had electricity as quickly as possible," said Beavers.

Battle-weary linemen, many of whom had lost track of which day of the week it was when restoration was complete everywhere, were sent home to recover some sorely needed down time.

"Safety is paramount for our organization," said United CEO Ray Beavers. "Our employees showed how to balance that top objective with the other goal of getting power restored as quickly as possible. With all of the destruction and the incredibly tough conditions our guys had to deal with, I thank God for watching over them. These men are husbands and fathers whose families love and depend on them to come home. I’m grateful they got the lights back on and I’m even more grateful that they did it safely and were able to get home to their families after being away for so long," he added.

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It's the uplifting two-word dispatch proclamation that signals the end of every campaign to restore power to members, and the long hours sometimes spent to ensure everything within the cooperative’s service territory has been made whole once more.
RAISING A VOICE: United Cooperative Services employees rally during a luncheon that annually observes their voluntary participation and contribution to Rural Friends/ACRE.

United CEO Ray Beavers champions the cause and effect of the cooperative's longstanding participation in the cooperative political action committee known as Rural Friends/ACRE.

Today's political circle, having a voice with their elected officials is critical, and all of our participation in Rural Friends/ACRE, along with our board of directors and those members who contribute are examples of how to be actively involved in the political process," said United CEO Ray Beavers.

The PAC is open to all people with an interest in preserving their local electric cooperative and promoting the progress and growth of co-ops and the communities they serve.

In introducing Rep. Burns to cooperative employees, Beavers described Burns as a true friend of Texas' electric cooperative program and an advocate for cooperative members.

Rep. Burns, who took his oath of office in January as the Texas Legislature convened for its 84th regular session, serves on the Homeland Security and Public Safety Committee, and the Natural Resources Committee of the Texas House of Representatives.

He cited his involvement in coauthoring House Bill 11—coined as the “Stronger Border, Safer Texas Act”—which is a measure he believes will permanently strengthen the presence of Texas Department of Public Safety Troopers on the border.

“Border security is a federal responsibility, but Texas cannot afford to wait for Washington to act,” said Rep. Burns. “We have to find the means to ensure our Texas border is secure,” he said.

In January 2015, United Cooperative Services collectively has 221 employees, board members, spouses and friends enrolled in the PAC. While they represent a small fraction of the eligible voting population, Beavers praised their involvement.

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"At first, I suppose every freshman legislator looks up and wonders how he got here. I know I did, because I could never have imagined I would have been granted such an enormous responsibility and honor—to try to make a difference as a public servant. "I hope I will always be able to say that I never wasted a single day in honoring my responsibility to represent the constituents I serve," he said. “Legislators deal with many complicated issues, and what winds up getting set into law doesn't always match the original intent of a bill's author(s). That's why your involvement and interest as individuals and as United employees is so important. Without your input on issues that affect you and your cooperative membership, we may not fully understand how a particular legislative action may rub off on you and those you serve so well,” he said. “Your participation in the process is vital and I challenge you to never become complacent in monitoring the works of your state legislature,” he said.

As of January 2015, United Cooperative Services collectively has 221 employees, board members, spouses and friends enrolled in the PAC. While they represent a small fraction of the eligible voting population, Beavers praised their involvement.

"I know Rep. Burns is willing to listen to our concerns, because he’s already opened his door to our cooperative family. I know he also welcomes the opportunity to serve engaged constituents like us who wish only to ensure the political process doesn't one day shackle our ability to meet and serve our membership's best interests,” said Beavers.

We're proud of your achievements and we wish you the very best in your future endeavors!
Uncover Savings Potential Hidden in the Attic

— By JEFF PANNELL —

When making energy efficiency upgrades to a home, it is helpful to understand how the different components of a home work together. The home has many parts and systems, so it is important to think of a home “as a whole” instead of individual units. The expected savings from one improvement could be overshadowed by the inefficiencies in another system of the home if upgrades are not carefully planned.

One area of a home that is most often overlooked is the hottest room in the house, the attic. This area remains out of sight and out of mind for most homeowners, but attics play a major role in the comfort and energy efficiency of the total home. For example, installing a highly efficient HVAC system in a traditional style home will have little to no effect on comfort or on decreasing energy consumption unless the attic is well insulated, the ductwork is sealed and insulated, and there is proper ventilation in the attic.

The attic cavity is typically rich with energy saving opportunities, and when equipped with these three items, it is realistic for homeowners to rest assured they have made the most of the attic’s resistance to heat flow and is measured as R-value per inch. So, knowing the R-value of the insulation product is central to determining its effectiveness. It’s also important to understand that all materials have a different R-value.

United’s Energy Experts recommend installing an insulation R-value of 38, which is equivalent to 17 inches of blown fiberglass or 10 inches of blown cellulose. There are many new homes that fail short of this R-value. Having the proper amount of attic insulation installed in a home is one of the best lines of defense against wasting energy, and one of the easiest ways to save on energy usage. Loose-fill (blow-in) or batt (roll-out) insulation is typically installed in an attic. Loose-fill insulation is usually less expensive to install, and provides better coverage when installed properly because it tends to fill every void or cavity in the attic.

It is important to also insulate and air seal your attic access if it is located in a conditioned space. This can easily be completed by gluing foam sheathing on the backside of the plywood for insulation and applying weather-stripping along the sides to ensure an air-tight seal. Secondly, insulate and air seal any knee walls—vertical walls with attic space directly behind them. If the home has ceiling height changes or cathedral ceilings, knee-walls are most likely present in the attic. Something else to consider, if there is any decking in the attic over conditioned spaces of the home, make sure it is raised above the ceiling joists to leave room for adequate insulation underneath.

It is important to note that United members may qualify for a rebate for improving attic insulation levels. In order to qualify, the home must have less than eight inches of insulation, and the member must also have a free home energy audit performed by one of United’s Energy Experts before the upgrade is made.

“Before insulating the attic, seal any air leaks and make any necessary repairs,” said United Energy Expert Kanyon Payne. “Disturbing the insulation after it is installed will lead to decreased R-values in the foot traffic areas of the attic. For this reason we strongly recommend inspecting and sealing the ductwork to prep for the insulation install.”

According to the Department of Energy, ducts that leak heated air into unheated spaces can add hundreds of dollars a year to a home’s heating and cooling bills. Insulating ducts in unconditioned spaces is usually very cost-effective. Sealing ducts to prevent leaks is even more important if the ducts are located in an unconditioned area such as an attic or vented crawlspace.

Heated or cooled air is forced out of any unsealed joints on the supply ducts, and unconditioned air can be drawn into the joints of the return duct. Mastic, a paint-on substance, should be applied to every duct connection in the attic—on both the supply and the return air ductwork. Mastic is more durable than most tape products and is easy for do-it-yourself applications. For larger gaps, it is best to first use a high quality heat approved tape and then apply a layer of mastic to ensure a long lasting seal.

While proper attic insulation and ductwork is extremely important, they are not the only pieces of the puzzle in protecting your home from the attic elements. It is extremely important to pair these items up with adequate attic ventilation.

According to Payne, “A majority of the homes that we analyze often have insufficient attic ventilation, due to plugged vents or the lack of venting.”

The purpose of attic ventilation is two-fold. During the summer, attic ventilation removes heated air from the attic to help lower the overall temperature, thus reducing the heat transfer and the cooling load inside the home. On the flip side, attic ventilation helps disperse moisture build-up in the attic. If moisture collects in the attic space, condensation will reduce the effectiveness of the attic insulation and could also create an environment for mild growth and decay on the building structure.

There are three common ways to properly ventilate an attic: gravity ventilators, wind-assisted ventilators and power ventilators. The most effective attic ventilation, according to the Department of Energy, is to utilize continuous ridge and soffit vents in a form of wind-assisted ventilation. Gravity ventilators and power ventilators work, but they are only recommended for use in unique architectural circumstances, or when continuous ridge and soffit vents can’t be used.

Continuous ridge and soffit vents work on the basis of two principles. This wind-assisted ventilation system encourages convective airflow to move along the expanse of the roof decking. This airflow is balanced when hot air rises and is forced out of the attic as cool air enters through the soffits. Second, positive airflow across the ridge of the home creates negative pressure also known as the “Venturi Effect,” which pulls air out of the ridge vent while bringing in cooler air through the soffits.

Power ventilators work by having a solar-electric powered fan remove hot, moist stale air from the attic. This form of ventilation is not as efficient as ridge and soffit vents (especially since they both require a form of power), but in some architectural designs it is the only option. Gravity ventilators work on the theory that warm air rises and will exit through vents located on the roof of the home. The warm air is replaced by cooler air that enters through the gable vents.

A good blanket of insulation in the attic, proper insulated and sealed ductwork, and proper ventilation all work together to help keep the home efficient and comfortable, thus decreasing the runtime of HVAC equipment as well as helping consumers eliminate potential mold and rot. Making considerations for these energy efficiency measures will likely lead to lower energy consumption and money saved; something everyone can appreciate.

Call a local United office today to request a free home energy audit. It costs nothing but can often detect sources of energy waste within a residence.
The Mashed Potatoes Oozed Melted Butter

Bono Community kindly rolls out the blessings, the fixings and its affection for United linemen in observance of National Lineman Appreciation Day.

April is a very special time of year for United Cooperative Services and for electric cooperatives across the nation because the second Monday of each April is designated to serve as the day co-ops celebrate National Lineman Appreciation Day. Taking time out of their busy day, members of Bono Baptist Church, as well as a host of community leaders in Johnson County, hosted a celebration luncheon to honor more than two dozen United linemen who work to keep the lights on.

Earlier this month, United CEO Ray Beavers explained why linemen should be appreciated, not just for one day, but for the sacrifices and efforts they make every day. “While it takes all of United’s outstanding employees to meet the needs of our membership, the linemen are the lifeblood of an electric distribution utility and that couldn’t be more true for our cooperative,” said Beavers. “They’re a special breed, who understand their purpose is to be there for our members around the clock, every day of the year, rain or shine, through tornadoes or wildfires. We care deeply for them, as we know all of our United family and membership does, so we ask that you join us in recognizing them,” he added.

Local leaders, including Judge Roger Harmon, Johnson County Commissioner Rick Bailey and Bono VFD Chief Ralph Vaqueria echoed Beavers’ sentiments at the April 16 luncheon held at the Bono Baptist Church community center. “Providing a service with a servant’s heart and attitude is, to me, one of the greatest compliments that could be bestowed on a person, and that is what each of you do every day” said Judge Roger Harmon. “The folks in attendance here today recognize that and I’ve personally witnessed it in the things you do throughout this county,” he added.

A Befitting Feast for Any Lineman

Bono Community residents set out the feed bag this month at Bono Baptist Church for any United lineman who could break away long enough to attend a special luncheon that was held in their honor in observance of National Lineman Appreciation Day. Church Pastor Greg Robinson prayed a blessing over the linemen and invited other community leaders to take the floor and express their personal appreciation for the difficult job United linemen perform every day in their dutiful service to cooperative members. The community’s gesture easily won the heart and the contentment of every attending operations employee—nary a crumb of bread remained after the linemen were turned loose on the home-cooked spread.

Cooperative Spirit Shines Bright in Small North Texas Community

Burleson Senior Foreman Jerry Scott, left, proudly accepts a community resolution honoring United linemen from Bono Baptist Church Pastor Greg Robinson.
Who doesn’t like a pat on the back for doing a great and effective job?

To me, being appreciated is more important than any title, promotion or even pay (well may be not pay). But knowing that those whose expectations you work so hard to surpass appreciate your efforts is important to us all. Each of us have an innate need for acceptance, and a desire to have a sense of accomplishment in what we do. And at United, we get both.

April has been earmarked nationally as a month in which we celebrate Lineman Appreciation Day. Officially, the Senate resolution, which was passed in 2013, is worded as a recognition of linemen, the profession of linemen and the contribution of these brave individuals who protect public safety. But like so many resolutions, it was painted with a broad brush.

We know more about the jobs these folks perform. We know our linemen weather a great many physical challenges and potential hazard to make our record for service reliability to our members the hallmark of quality and the envy of lesser electric utility companies. We know they and their families sacrifice a great deal in fulfilling such a professional calling, but yet they perform their jobs proudly, day-in and day-out.

To that point, our guys again personified the work ethic and passion that makes United so respected among our peers, and our members alike, after they pushed through grueling obstacles and long hours to complete restoration work following our recent bout with tornadoes and severe thunderstorms.

That’s why it is so personally reassuring for me to see the systemwide appreciation they earn from our members. As one recent example: without any prompting from anyone at United, the folks in Bono took it upon themselves to host a luncheon just for our linemen at the community’s First Baptist Church—a sincere way of showing their admiration and appreciation for the jobs they do.

I was out of town at the time, but believe me when I say I have many fond memories of eating at rural church gatherings. That said, you can bet it was great food. It was reported that every community face wore a smile as our linemen came in to eat. And I heard that what made it even more special was that each of our linemen, as further proof of the caliber of people they are, went around the room and took the opportunity to talk to and thank each person who helped provide the luncheon. Folks, you don’t buy that type of appreciation, you earn it.

We also just received our first 2015 quarterly ACSI score and I was rather shocked to see we held on to our high score of 89. The reason I was surprised was because we had a lot of members who complained about their winter bills this year. And we all know high bills sometimes lead to less of an appreciation for the work we do to mitigate their occurrence. Even so, I send a pat on the back to our member service folks, who were three or four short of a full complement of MSRs, but who still managed to work through all the extra calls that came their way. This ACSI score is yours member services group, as well as a pat on the back from our members.

Of course, it takes all of us to make things happen around here. There is not one job that is any more important than the other because we all support each other in accomplishing what is expected of us.

As I write this column, we are heading into our first community meeting in Stephenville, where we will be talking to our members about many issues we will be facing as a cooperative, and where we will also introduce our planned rate adjustment this fall. There might be a lot of questions about the rate adjustment, but I’m certain our members will also take the opportunity to express their appreciation for the way you work and for the great work you do, just as they do without fail at every cooperative meeting.

Enjoy your pats on the back, you’ve earned them. However, because you are as good as you are at what you do, you will have to meet higher standards on a regular basis, which I know you can achieve. You’re good at what you do as employees of United.

Keep it up and enjoy the fruits of your labor. I’m proud of each of you. And as always, I give thanks for my blessings to work with you.
Member Satisfaction Levels Remain High

United members again showed they appreciate the service value they receive when they awarded cooperative employees an 89 in the 4th quarter 2014 American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), the results of which were released at the close of January 2015.

Accompanying survey comments reflected a common perception among United members that the cooperative is a trusted resource in delivering electricity to their homes and businesses, and that United is honest in its effort to keep electric costs as affordable as possible.

A few members expressed they have difficulty in awarding perfect marks to any utility, but they felt United came as close to perfect as any utility could through its consistent service reliability, knowledgable employees and overall service value.

The score of 89 out of 100 possible points in the most recent independent third-party customer satisfaction evaluation inched one point higher than the previous quarterly ACSI assessment.

For the year 2014, United employees earned an average score of 89.25 after recording a 91, 89, 88 and 89 respectively through all quarters.

Such member assessments have kept United at the top of the list in national customer satisfaction rankings among municipal electric utilities, investor-owned utilities and other Touchstone Energy electric distribution cooperatives—which typically score higher in member satisfaction surveys.

“United excels when other companies don’t because our employees have never embraced the notion that improvements can’t be found in every facet of our operation and our service to members,” said United CEO Ray Beavers. “Every time we advance, it becomes a ‘new normal’ for one day. Then we count the days until we can make a jump to the next higher level.”

“Honestly, we’ve been blessed to earn our members’ praise for a great while, but I challenged our employees in 2013 by telling them I sure wished that we could score a 90 in the survey (a mark we had never received) before I retired,” Beavers said. “They earned a 90, then a 91 and then two scores of 92.”

Beavers still pulls out the retirement card from time to time, but for the record, the bar has been set even higher since then.

“Anything is possible when you have the type of employees we have, and when we have the opportunity to serve the type of members we serve,” he said. “I’m grateful our members recognize and appreciate the service quality our employees try daily to deliver,” he added.
United Employees Support  
**GO RED CAMPAIGN**  
February 6, 2015

We all know *Heart-Smart* Food is good for our bodies, but did you know they are also delicious?

Add delicious foods with rich antioxidants to your daily diet to stave off heart disease, diabetes and stroke. For example, try recipes provided by Weight Watchers that showcase veggie and fruits—excellent sources of heart-healthy nutrition. Antioxidants are found in fruits, veggies and grains and carry Vitamins E and C, beta-carotene and trace metal selenium, not manufactured by your body. Antioxidants stop free radicals or oxidants from traveling through your body and ravaging your cells. Eat smart and add strawberries, tomato or sweet potato to a meal and toss a little broccoli into your salad, or just juice it to protect your health.

**WARNING SIGNS OF HEART ATTACK, STROKE & CARDIAC ARREST**

**HEART ATTACK WARNING SIGNS**

▲CHEST DISCOMFORT  
Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.

▲DISCOMFORT IN OTHER AREAS OF THE UPPER BODY

▲SHORTNESS OF BREATH

**STROKE WARNING SIGNS**

▲Face Dropping—Does one side of the face droop or is it numb? Ask the person to smile.

▲Arm Weakness—Is one arm weak or numb? Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

▲Speech Difficulty—Is speech slurred, are they unable to speak, or are they hard to understand? Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence, like "the sky is blue." Is the sentence repeated correctly?

▲Time to call 9-1-1—If the person shows any of these symptoms, even if the symptoms go away, call 9-1-1 and get them to the hospital immediately.

**CARDIAC ARREST WARNING SIGNS**

▲SUDDEN LOSS OF RESPONSIVENESS

▲NO RESPONSE TO TAPPING ON SHOULDERRS

▲ABNORMAL BREATHING

If these signs are present, CALL 9-1-1
Homeowners seeking to waste less energy and reduce costs are often confronted with the tough decision of replacing their windows or going another, possibly less costly, route. While more efficient windows can offer significant energy savings, they can take many years to pay off the up-front investment. When building a new home, it typically makes sense to install energy efficient windows. However, for those who have been in their homes for a number of years and don’t want—or may not have the means—to invest in costly new windows, there are alternatives that don’t have as significant an initial cost as windows, such as solar screens, and that can have immediate return on investment in comfort and on the bottom line.

Solar screens can be applied to most existing windows to eliminate up to 90 percent of the sun’s heat and reduce cooling bills by as much as 25 percent, depending on the shade selected, according to most manufacturers. They’re available in a variety of different shades and colors and solar screens have three important characteristics:

1) **SHADING:**
The amount of shade created between the solar screen and exterior pane of glass

2) **REFLECTIVITY:**
The ability to reflect the sun’s rays of light off of the screen.

3) **ABSORPTION:**
The heat is absorbed and held into the screen material itself, then dispersed back into the air away from the glass.

Mounted on the outside of the windows, solar screens stop the heat before it gets to the glass and increases temperature. Not only can this reduce cooling costs during the summer months, United created a new rebate offering for members, helping to offset some of the initial costs.

**SOLAR SCREENS REBATE:**
**UP TO $50**
- $5 per 3’X5’ window (or, per 15 square feet of installed screen)
- At least 70% solar heat gain blockage required
- Excludes North-facing windows
- **FREE ENERGY AUDIT** required prior to screen installation

Window orientation plays a major role in determining whether all or some of a homeowner’s windows are well-suited for solar screens. Because of the intensity and duration of the sun’s rays on windows that face the South and West, these are the windows that should be targeted first.

“After installing solar screens, the temperature in the rooms facing west were noticeably more comfortable,” said United COO Cameron Smallwood. “So, it was clear that the screens created a significant reduction in solar heat gain, which is a measurement of how well a window can block heat from the sunlight,” said Smallwood.

Solar screens are available in a variety of colors, from beige to black, so matching a screen to the exterior color of a home has not been an issue for most homeowners. From outside, solar screens can give the perception that they’re difficult to see through, one of the questions United’s energy innovation experts often hear when conducting free home energy audits. While they do reduce visibility somewhat, Smallwood and others likened the view to that of looking through sun glasses. Having some flexibility in color and reflectivity has added to the popularity of solar screens, too.

“Our primary goal was to reduce our energy usage and save money so we went with the maximum level of percentage blockage, which was 90 percent,” said Smallwood. “Plus, I used the Co-op Connections card with the vendor who installed ours to get a discount,” he added.

Another benefit of solar screens is their ability to reduce the glare and much of the sun’s harmful ultraviolet rays from entering a residence, making the home more comfortable and protecting indoor furnishings. Most windows can be custom-fitted regardless of their size or shape and solar screens also allow homeowners the ability to detach the screens in winter to capture beneficial sun for heat gain, thereby reducing heating costs. Solar screens never directly contact the surface of the glass, allowing screens to significantly decrease heat before it reaches the window.

Solar screen vendors offering discounts through United’s Co-op Connections Card include:
- **Atlas Solar-Tex**, 817-447-3500, Joshua, TX, 20% off installed solar screens with minimum order of $100
- **Tony’s Screen Repair**, 254-977-3237, Stephenville, TX, 10% off of total install

**BENEFITS OF SOLAR SCREENS**
- EASILY INSTALLED ON THE OUTSIDE OF ALMOST ANY WINDOW.
- CAN BE REMOVED IN WINTER TO LET IN THE SUN’S WARMTH.
- CAN REDUCE FADING OF FURNITURE, CARPETS, FABRICS, AND OTHER MATERIALS.
- SUN SCREENS PROVIDE DAYTIME PRIVACY...YOU CAN SEE OUT BUT THEY CAN’T SEE IN.
Cold Weather Drives Higher Energy Usage

North Texas electricity consumers' heating systems have had to work long and hard from December through February to answer colder temperatures. United Cooperative Services encourages members and the general public to be even more vigilant in determining ways to control their energy usage—and thus hold onto precious energy dollars.

"When we encounter the weather we've seen over the last few months, members ask why the cooperative raised rates," said United CEO Ray Beavers. "It's not that rates have gone up. It's that usage has surged as we come out of traditionally low usage periods in October and November and hunker down to try to stay warm during the harsh, low temperatures from December through February. During these types of weather events, we strongly encourage our members to reach out to us and take advantage of our free home energy audits and all of the resources and rebates United provides to help members waste less energy and control their energy costs," said Beavers.

"To show how weather affects energy usage, we had a great example to show how quickly things can change from one day to the next in the latter part of February," said Beavers. "Looking at the usage chart (at right), you'll see that when the high temperature (red line) on Saturday, Feb. 21, reached 62 degrees and the low (blue line) dropped only to 60 degrees, this member used 30 kWh, or about $3 worth of electricity, that day. Fast forward to Monday, Feb. 23, when the high and low temperatures were only 27 degrees, the same United member used 97 kWh (or almost $10 worth of electricity) as their heating system ran virtually all of that day. It's that usage has surged as we come out of traditionally low usage periods in October and November and hunker down to try to stay warm during the harsh, low temperatures from December through February. During these types of weather events, we strongly encourage our members to reach out to us and take advantage of our free home energy audits and all of the resources and rebates United provides to help members waste less energy and control their energy costs," said Beavers.

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- Ensure attic insulation levels are sufficient and add more, if necessary. United recommends an insulation value of R-38 (United provides rebates on some qualifying attic insulation upgrades).
- Weatherize the home, including caulking around windows and sealing with weather-striping around doors.
- Avoid using electric space heaters, which are energy hogs and can substantially increase electric bills.
- Ensure the fireplace flue is closed when not in use. An open flue allows heat flow out of the home.
- Utilize programmable thermostats to lower the home temperature when not at home and set it no higher than 68 degrees when occupying the home.
- Water heaters should be set to 120 degrees and if the unit is in a garage or another unconditioned space, utilize an insulated water heater blanket (qualifying United members may obtain one during a free energy audit while supplies last).
- Check and or change furnace filters monthly.
- Close drapes at night.

United SERVICE AWARDS
February 2015

Two New Employees Join United Cooperative Services

United recently welcomed Ricky Wofford and Marty Rogers to the cooperative's employee group when the pair joined PK Lake and Cleburne operations, respectively.

Wofford surveyed pipeline for seven years as the employee of a subsidiary of Fort Belknap Electric Cooperative prior to his employment with United as a groundman at Pothom Kingdom Lake. Wofford lists his interests as spending time with family, welding, shooting guns, working on old cars and trucks, wake boarding and going to the ocean.

Rogers joined Cleburne operations as a groundman. He is a Cleburne native and he is married. The Rogers have a 23-month-old son, Waylon, and are expecting another child this summer.

Rogers says he enjoys hunting, fishing and entertaining his son.
We’re in the People Business

I recently attended a national cooperative meeting where it seemed the predominant buzz was about dealing with the changing paradigm of electric power delivery and what the industry might look like in the future. The comments I heard revolved around how it could change the financial picture of our industry—that any change in how we deliver power today, or to our business structure, would be bad. While listening, I couldn’t help thinking that some of these comments were very short-sighted, as well as self-serving.

My opinion is we are not in the wires and poles business; even though our current method of delivering power incorporates that design. No, first and foremost, we are in the people business. And if that means we need to embrace opportunities (changes) to meet our core purpose—providing the best possible service to our members—then we should be prepared to make those changes.

Right now, we buy power from Brazos Electric Power Cooperative. We are part owners in Brazos and we pay to use Brazos’ transmission lines to deliver the power from a generator while we invest in distribution assets like poles and wire to finally get electricity to our members’ homes. Even though this is a very capital intensive means of providing electric power, it is presently the most economical and the most reliable way of delivering power.

When I say we are in the people business, what I mean is that our sole purpose here at United Cooperative Services is only for the welfare and benefit of our membership. Our purpose is not profit, nor is it for the benefit of those of us who are employees of the cooperative. Our solitary purpose is to meet our members’ expectation for having affordable, safe and sustainable power when they want it. A cooperative has no stockholders who make money on an investment in this company. And further, a cooperative is transparent—giving members an opportunity to voice their feelings either through voting or by attending one of the various community meetings that United continues to host every year throughout its service territory.

United demonstrated its “purpose” to the membership when United’s Board of Directors led an effort endorsed by the membership to consolidate two diverse cooperatives, an action which maximized the company’s operational efficiencies and which has saved millions of dollars since the consolidation.

Annually, United continues to study whether there would be any cost savings to the membership if United opted-in to the deregulated market, which would subsequently allow consumer choice. Presently, the cost of opting in would considerably diminish any savings gained by members wishing to have the option to choose a retail energy provider. I was recently informed by an expert of the deregulated market that he would be surprised if we even had three or four retail electric providers try to compete for our members because United’s meter count probably doesn’t represent a large enough profit-potential for most providers.

United has set up energy innovation learning labs at some of its offices where members can do exhaustive studies on solar and wind generation prior to making sizable investments. United even provides home energy audit analyses for members who suspect they are wasting dollars and energy in their homes. Our guys have already helped members by identifying issues with their HVAC systems. And after being repaired by a licensed HVAC technician, the systems began operating correctly and stopped wasting electricity.

United has billing options for members who want to average their monthly electric bills rather than being hit with high bills during extreme weather months. For those members who are having financial difficulties, United provides payment arrangements to all who qualify, and through Operation Round Up, members who need help can get help.

United has a fleet of member service representatives who answer phone calls all day just so members can have the answers members need and want, as well as to provide a host of additional services.

Members have a co-op office located nearby—where they can visit face-to-face with employees who wish only to help in any way they can. All of this service value is available because members of yesterday needed electric service when others weren’t willing to provide it, and because many of today’s energy consumers are still searching for true service value. United’s relevance is this; if there is any better way of providing enhanced member service, the cooperative will find it and implement it.

Poles and wire are what we use today to provide our members’ power, and when technology changes that present delivery landscape, then United will embrace it and continue to meet our members’ expectations.

What will it be like in the future? I have my ideas. But whatever the future brings, we will be at the forefront—ensuring our entire membership is reaping the benefits of change. I can assure every member of that, because we are in the people business and every member is important.
“Everything we do stops for the safety of our employees—everything!” United CEO Ray Beavers emphasized more than once this month in his remarks as one of three cooperative managers who served as panelists during Texas Electric Cooperatives’ 69th Annual Loss Control Conference in Arlington.

The panel discussion on Co-op Safety Culture was one of the leading elements in the assembly’s general session agenda and featured the co-op managers’ personal views and insights about their respective safety programs.

As part of his presentation, Beavers related an early near miss United Cooperative Services had shortly after its consolidation, where line crews had responded to a scene involving downed primary distribution lines.

“The line crew employees got there and found poles and wire down on the ground. Everyone assumed the lines had been de-energized and the entire crew was within arm’s reach of the downed lines when a foreman had the good sense to halt the activity while he confirmed the circuit’s status with dispatch,” Beavers said.

Beavers paused, “Folks, the line was still energized, and only by the grace of God that day did we avoid a human catastrophe. We could have easily lost several people. As soon as management was informed of the incident, we stopped everything. We stopped work everywhere and we pulled everyone in for three days to reshape our focus on safety from the ground up,” he said.

“United’s true safety culture—a culture that every employee embraces and owns, that has teeth and that sends everyone home safely to their families at the end of every work day—began that day,” he said.

Beavers reported to the assembly that Cardinal Rules were put in force to remind employees the cooperative had zero tolerance for safety failures and oversights.

“Since those rules were adopted, we’ve sadly had to end our associations with some good friends and employees because they didn’t demonstrate their ownership of our safety culture, and because I wasn’t willing to let them work another day in an industry they weren’t psychologically suited to be in—an industry that could easily kill or maim them,” he said.

The cooperative’s honest focus on safety, along with employee ownership of enduring safety ideals, has led the cooperative currently to a level of more than 1.2 million work hours without a lost-time accident.

Earlier in 2007, United celebrated a milestone of 1.5 million work hours without a lost-time accident.
Great news—managing your health and retirement benefits just got easier. NRECA is rolling out the first part of a multi-phase redesign of your employee benefits website in March.

It really is all about you

This website puts you first — your benefit plan information, recent plan activity, and education on your benefits are all designed to meet your needs. Once you log in, your benefit plan information is front-and-center thanks to a streamlined design. Easily connect to helpful resources — multiple options for assistance are paired with the site’s page content.

Your website, your content — the site customizes your view based on the benefit programs you participate in, and you can further organize this content by creating “quick links” to suit your preferences.

More information, fewer clicks

Finding what you need just became that much easier. In addition to up-front benefit plan summaries, you will immediately see new tabs, or megamenus, for each benefit plan option under the retirement and insurance categories. These megamenus give you access to available plan overviews, transactions and resources with only one click. From share prices for the 401(k) Pension Plan to your latest insurance claims, your benefit information is right where you need it.

Find it quicker

Regardless of what you are looking for, the new site lets you find information quickly and without hassle. Looking for a specific medical claim? You can sort by patient, date ranges or claim status. Once you’ve found what you want, save, print or just review it online. Retirement plan participants can more easily choose from a variety of transactions as well as check on the status of a transaction currently in process. Researching investment information? Quickly locate detailed investment profiles, the latest share prices and view your account statements from the past three years — all online.

Ready, set, log in!

Check out these exciting improvements (and more) by logging in to Cooperative.com then clicking on “My Benefits.” Not a registered user? Go to Cooperative.com and click “Register.” You’ll be asked to enter information that will connect you to your benefits on NRECA’s systems. Providing this information allows NRECA to create your account and ensure your personal information remains secure.

Have questions?

NRECA is here to help. Call NRECA’s Member Contact Center at 866.673.2299 or email contactcenter@nreca.coop; representatives are available Monday through Friday, 7 am to 7 pm CT.

Did you know?

Did you know that cutting your screen time in half helps you move more and burn, on average, 120 calories more a day? That’s right! Step away from the TV and computer, grab your family and get into active habits together.

Set a Good Example

Explain to your kids that it’s important to sit less and move more in order to stay at a healthy weight. Tell them they’ll also have more energy, and it will help them develop new skills, such as riding a bike or shooting hoops, that could lead to more fun with friends. Tell them you’ll do the same.

Log Screen Time vs. Active Time

Start tracking how much time your family spends in front of a screen, including things like TV- and DVD-watching, playing video games, and using the computer for something other than school or work. Then take a look at how much physical activity they get. Check-out the above PARENT TIPS sample chart from We Can! to see some ways to enhance children’s activity & nutrition.

Maybe It’s Time to Lift Something Besides the Remote Control!

To learn more, go to http://wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov, or call 1-866-35-WECAN

Walk Across Texas!

Start warming up those leg muscles and pull out the sneakers. WalkAcrossTexas! will kick off at United on April 13. More information will be forthcoming in the newsletter.
United Cooperative Services personnel this month proudly opened the doors and welcomed members, elected officials and many other community dignitaries to the cooperative’s newly expanded and renovated Hood County Office (HCO). The event included tours of the building site, which now boasts a host of energy efficient enhancements, renewable energy technologies, an Energy Innovation education exhibit and an open architectural design that makes conducting business seamless and expedient.

Serving areas adjacent to the DFW metroplex has led to significant growth for United. While this growth helps offset the need to raise rates as frequently as other utilities (United hasn’t had a distribution rate increase since 2003), it also requires United to address its most important objective—providing reliable electric service at affordable rates, and while continually seeking ways to increase membership service value.

“Increasing population density and commercial growth, along with projections for that trend to continue, in the central part of United’s territory required the cooperative to take measures to ensure that reliable service remains a constant,” United CEO Ray Beavers told attendees. “We wanted a facility that would also demonstrate to our members that we practice what we preach when it comes to managing energy use, so the facility was built for LEED Silver Certification—not only reducing energy costs for the entire cooperative, but also limiting the footprint this renovation/expansion will leave on our environment.”

The expanded HCO will allow greater operational flexibility in the future in addressing member needs, including a new drive-thru window to allow for easier transactions, as well as a new community room that we hope will be fully utilized by local qualifying groups, said United Board President Patsy Dumas.

“Throughout the project’s planning, the board and management wanted to make sure that the office would be a solid resource for the membership in many interest areas and that it would continue to make the members’ experience more pleasant and convenient,” said Dumas.

United utilized the existing office structure and reused internal elements in the expanded structure. This not only offset new add-on construction expense, but ensured the older, original structure was compliant with present building codes and more energy efficient.

“Increasing the overall efficiency of the building was an important element in the project,” said Ray Beavers. “In addition to lowering energy costs, the building also has a LEED Silver certification. This is a great result for our members, as it demonstrates the value of making energy efficient improvements.”

United has deployed two different renewable energy technologies at the site for energy production, as well as Hood County’s very first distributed generation learning lab—a 1.1 kW fixed solar system and a 2.1 kW wind system. The generation from these two units will cover approximately 2% of the annual energy use of the building. They will also help members and United personnel better understand the technology, costs and the timeframe for which members can hope to benefit.

A significant portion of this project site is open to provide a more flowing experience for members when they visit. This design strategy will also allow further expansion with minimal costs as United's membership grows.

**ENERGY USE:**
- The building is designed to be more than 30% more energy efficient than a standard code-compliant building. This has been accomplished through:
  - High-efficiency HVAC systems
  - High efficiency lighting in 98% of building
  - Use of occupancy sensors on all lighting
  - Use of day lighting to offset artificial lighting

**OPEN ENVIRONMENT:**
- A host of Granbury well-wishers, including Granbury Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors, were on hand to help United board of directors and employees officially celebrate the reopening of its newly remodeled and expanded Hood County Office. In addition to meeting service growth expectations, the renovated facility was designed to earn LEED Silver Certification due to its overall efficiency.

Please see REOPENING, PAGE 8
Label Event Offers Sales Tax Savings on Select Energy Efficient Appliances

By JEFF PANNELL

With Memorial Day fast approaching, many United members will be getting their barbecue grills ready for the extended weekend festivities. Others may take advantage of this time off to catch up on some of the typical household chores—spring cleaning, yard and flowerbed work, or painting.

But if any of these holiday plans include updating an “old” appliance, there is no better time to do it than Memorial Day Weekend. Not only is it a good time to replace energy-hog appliances because hotter weather is on its way, which means increased energy usage, but also because the State of Texas is once again rewarding energy conscientious consumers by offering an Energy Star® Sales Tax Holiday.

In 1992, the ENERGY STAR® program was established by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The purpose of this government sponsored program was to assist consumers in saving money while protecting the environment through energy efficient products and practices. Qualifying products will display the ENERGY STAR® logo, which may appear on the appliance, the packaging or the Energy Guide label. Earning an ENERGY STAR® rating means a product meets strict energy efficiency guidelines set by the EPA and the Department of Energy (DOE). This year’s list of products that may qualify for the exemption are reflected in the chart below.

In a typical home, appliances and lighting can account for up to 25 percent of a home’s energy consumption. With the rising cost of energy becoming a concern for many of the nation’s consumers, Energy Star ratings provide guidance for homeowners in making educated decisions when purchasing appliances. These products convey the same, or better, performance as equivalent models while using less energy and saving valuable energy dollars.

“Every appliance is going to consume energy, but it’s identifying those that use less energy to perform the same amount of work that is critical. It involves doing a little homework, but fortunately for consumers, that’s essentially what the ENERGY STAR® program has accomplished,” stated United’s Energy Expert Kanyon Payne.

As technology continues to evolve and influence the efficiencies of all types of appliances, the result will hopefully help consumers waste less energy, as well as have a positive impact on the environment. To give an example, a 19.0 to 21.4 cubic feet, side-by-side refrigerator built between 1993 and 2000 costs about $98 per year to operate based on an electricity rate of 9 cents per kWh. The same type and size of an ENERGY STAR® refrigerator only costs about $47 per year to operate. That’s a savings of more than $525 over a five-year period. This information was calculated by utilizing the Refrigerator Energy Consumption Guide and entering the appropriate zip code to find the Co-op Deals near you.

Energy Star TAC is another great way to enhance savings. It’s imperative that an HVAC system be maintained properly to maximize the system’s efficiency. Changing filters regularly is a quick and simple way to ensure a system is not wasting valuable energy. By utilizing filterchange.coop, United members can save up to 50% on filters and have them shipped to their home for free.

United Cooperative Services takes great pride in having a membership that is conscientious of their energy consumption. Along the way, United has a team of Energy Innovation professionals to assist members in meeting their energy efficiency goals. To meet with a United Energy Expert and learn more ways to be efficient, please contact your local United office and request a Free Home Energy Audit.

Memorial Day Weekend is a great time to purchase new energy efficient appliances without paying state or local sales taxes on qualifying items.

During the Energy Star Sales Tax Holiday which begins Saturday, May 23, and runs through Memorial Day, Monday, May 25, the tax savings apply to the following appliances and household equipment bearing the Energy Star label:

- Air conditioners priced at $5,000 or less
- Refrigerators priced at $2,000 or less
- Ceiling fans
- Incanescent and fluorescent light bulbs
- Clothes washers
- Dishwashers
- Dehumidifiers
- **Programmable thermostats**

Because these technologies use smaller amounts of energy, ENERGY STAR does not label clothes dryers.

**ENERGY STAR specification of programmable thermostats was suspended on December 31, 2009; however, any existing stock of ENERGY STAR labeled programmable thermostats offered for sale by retailers is still eligible for the exemption.**
United Cooperative Services will send two deserving high school students this June on a weekend trip to the nation’s capital, a privilege that previous delegates have called the experience of a lifetime. This year’s winners, Laura Anderson, a junior at Tolar High School, and Godley High School sophomore Brooklyne Oliveira, won United’s Electric Cooperative Youth Tour competition, earning a valuable opportunity to get a firsthand look at the political process, as well as a chance to interact with lawmakers and more than 1,000 fellow students sponsored by electric cooperatives across the nation. The Youth Tour also gives the students a glimpse for how United demonstrates its commitment to the communities it serves, a distinguishing characteristic of nonprofit electric cooperative utilities.

Following the advice given in 1957 by Lyndon B. Johnson, who said co-ops should send young people to Washington, D.C., to see what the flag stands for, Texas electric cooperatives joined other co-ops from across the country in sponsoring trips to the nation’s capital for young students eager to witness government in action. For decades, United Cooperative Services has played a pivotal role in providing dozens of young people such an outstanding opportunity. “I understand from the judges that it was an extremely close race this year in terms of picking a winner from the applicant pool,” said United CEO Ray Beavers. “All of the applicants did an amazing job and we’re excited to send these two outstanding young people to Washington. I’m sure they will remember the trip for the rest of their lives and that their electric cooperative provided a great learning experience as they take in all of the events, sites and speakers,” said Beavers.

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UNITED PERSPECTIVE • MARCH 2015

OPENING DAY TURNOUT—United Board of Directors, employees, members, chamber representatives and elected officials mingle in the new Community Room, which is now open for public use.

CERTIFIED WOOD: Approximately 50% of the wood used for construction at the project is Forestry Stewardship Council Certified Wood.

SITE SELECTION: Rather than constructing a new structure on a new site, United chose to redevelop its existing office location – which allows undeveloped land to be available for new industry and growth.

SUPPORT OF ALTERNATE TRANSPORTATION: United supports travel to its project by alternate transportation methods such as bicycles and electric vehicles. This facility has a vehicle charging station in front of the building.

ATTENTION TO VISUAL AESTHETICS AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT: United worked to install concrete only as necessary and supports the code minimum for parking as required by the City of Granbury. Additional parking creates more concrete, more cost, more water runoff and offers less area available for landscape and green areas.

PROTECT/RESTORE HABITAT: United worked hard to leave some areas of our property undisturbed, an environmental control that would not have been possible using normal construction techniques. The cooperative also ensured that drought tolerant, native plants and grasses were utilized in all landscaping improvements.

STORM WATER DESIGN: The redesigned project was designed to have no more storm water runoff and offers less area available for landscape and green areas.

AVOIDING LIGHT POLLUTION: The lighting generated on the site does not transfer to neighboring area waterways.

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March 2015 United Service Awards

United Proudly Announces Association with New Employees

Five new faces joined the cooperative’s ranks when Jennifer Gainer, John Huffman, Kanyon Payne, Kennedy Curlee and Maria Perez recently accepted positions in new departmental openings:

Gainer accepted an MSR I position in Granbury. Before moving to Granbury, she had lived in Arlington and Nashville, TN. She has three children; ages 16,14 and 10, and she lists her interests as reading, singing, church activities and horseback riding.

Huffman joined United as a new Information Systems and Technology Administrator. Previously, he was engaged in completing a data center systems and infrastructure installation across the Midwest. A Burleson resident, Huffman is married and has four children, all of which he says are his primary hobby.

Payne, who is a Granbury resident, recently accepted an opening as a United Energy Advisor. He and his wife, Meredith, have one daughter, Kimalee Harper Payne, who was born last November. Payne says he enjoys any activity that involves the outdoors; including fishing, camping, hunting and basketball.

Kennedy Curlee joined United as an MSR I in Cleburne, where she resides. She recently graduated from the University of Texas at Arlington with a finance degree. She lists her interests as reading and writing.

Maria Perez, a resident of Granbury, accepted an MSR I position at the Hood County Office. Prior to her residency in Granbury, she and her family lived in El Indio, TX, located near Eagle Pass. She and her husband, Alex, have three children; Kristella, Alex Jr. and Karla. Attending her children’s school events is one of her favorite activities.

Remembering a Cooperative Friend, Leader

United Cooperative Services employees and board of directors mourned the recent loss of longtime Granbury board director Johnnie Rollins, 82, who passed away Thursday, March 22, 2015, at his home in Acton. Due to health concerns, Rollins retired from his District 6 seat on the United Cooperative Services Board of Directors in 2013.

“We lost a friend, and a man whose leadership was directed toward doing the right thing for our members and for the cooperative,” United CEO Ray Beavers said. “We share our memory of him with his family and his friends, as well as the heartfelt loss of a man who cared a great deal about the co-op and its employees,” he said.

Mr. Rollins had represented members in Granbury and Northeast Hood County since 1987, and was one of only five surviving board members who were instrumental in paving the way for a consolidation between Johnson County Electric Cooperative and Erath County Electric Cooperative in 2000—forming United Cooperative Services.

Mr. Rollins graduated from Granbury High School in 1951, and was a farmer and rancher in Hood County for many years. He had served on the Brazos Electric Cooperative Board of Directors. He was a member of the Soil Conservation Board. He also served on the Granbury Independent School District Board of Trustees and was a past chairman of the Southwest Peanut Growers’ Association.

Not So Long Ago

United CEO Ray Beavers, right, visited with former United Board Director Johnnie Rollins during a reception that honored Rollins’ tenure in the governance of the cooperative. Rollins, who had represented members in Granbury and Northeast Hood County since 1987, resigned from the United Board of Directors in 2013 due to health concerns.
I’m So Proud of Our Frontline People

I can honestly say to anyone that when times get tough our folks answer the call.

When storms hit and we have outages everywhere, our operations guys work day and night to get power restored for all of our members.

When we have a flurry of service order requests, our engineering department gets everyone taken care of in a timely fashion—sometimes working overtime hours to meet members’ expectations.

When we have technology issues, our IS&T guys work throughout the night to get the issues resolved.

When it’s audit time, all of our accounting people work hard and diligently to ensure our auditors have all the information they need to perform a thorough audit of our cooperative financials—a critical process that fulfills our professional responsibility to our board of directors and members to provide a credible review of our fiscal status.

Due to recent events however, it is our member services representatives who I would like to proudly highlight and commend for their dedication to our cooperative purpose.

This past winter was brutal at times, and freezing temperatures resulted in higher-than-normal electric usage by our members. The electric bills that followed the steady cold wave shocked many of those members, who just couldn’t believe they could have used that much power. Naturally in such instances, the phone calls immediately start to trickle in.

Even if the vast majority of our members called only to inquire about the sudden jolt of a higher electric bill, inevitably there are some calls that imply the cooperative is secretly raising rates, or even conspiring to send out faulty bills.

Thankfully, our member services folks do a great job of listening to member concerns and then providing United members with helpful and accurate usage information. And when those steps have been exhausted, they connect our members with other resources and service options.

What made the actions of our member service group so exceptional this winter was due to the fact we, for a variety of reasons, were about four employees shy of having a full MSR team—leaving fewer folks to handle a ton of calls. Just as we would expect of any United Cooperative Services employee, our member services people sacrificed some vacation time and days off to help us meet our members’ calls and take care of their needs.

Several co-ops in Texas have been slammed by bad publicity due to complaints and unrest among their members because of high electric bills during the winter months.

In our case, our member services group stood on the frontline, deflecting the potential for member unrest that has occurred elsewhere around the state. And for that, we all need to say thank you to our MSRs for the great job they do on a daily basis.

Each of you makes us proud, and we each know in our hearts that you make a very significant contribution in helping us earn and maintain the high levels of trust our members have in this cooperative. Thank you all again for what you do and how great you are at doing it—not only for United Cooperative Services, but also for every fellow employee who strives daily to deliver unsurpassed service to our members.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>**NRECA Voting Member Classification *</th>
<th>Distribution Cooperative: 50,001–90,000 meters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>**Category *</td>
<td>5. Best Internal News Publication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Entry Title *</td>
<td>United Perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**I wish to receive Judges' comments on this entry</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Contact's Name *</td>
<td>Mauri Montgomery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Cooperative *</td>
<td>United Cooperative Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Mailing Address</td>
<td>2601 S. Burleson Blvd Burleson, Texas 76028 United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Contact's Email *</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mauri@united-cs.com">mauri@united-cs.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Contact's Phone Number *</td>
<td>(817) 205–2353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Name of entrant as it should appear on the award (if given)</td>
<td>United Cooperative Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is this the first time you've entered the Spotlight competition?</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entrant's Email</strong></td>
<td><a href="mailto:mauri@united-cs.com">mauri@united-cs.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Names of others (freelancers or organizations) involved in the project, if applicable</strong></td>
<td>Marty Haught</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Describe your/the co-op's role in the project</strong></td>
<td>Gathering news, reporting, design and production of all materials, including internal printing and mailing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Describe others' role in the project</strong></td>
<td>Stock photos are used occasionally to compliment news content, but the bulk of graphic illustration and design work, as well as all accompanying editorial material, is produced internally by the cooperative's two-person communications staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Circulation or Number of People Reached</strong></td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Attendees</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Project's Budget</strong></td>
<td>$30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target Audience(s)</strong></td>
<td>United Cooperative Services Employees and Directors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project's Objective</strong></td>
<td>To compliment monthly communications presented first to employees in co-op employee meetings—an effort to make every employee a better internal and external communicator. To engage and inform employees and their spouses about ongoing cooperative initiatives; including health and wellness objectives, employee benefits, the cooperative's safety culture and member service philosophy.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Restrictions/Limitations</strong></td>
<td>There are no restrictions or limitations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Describe why you chose this type of social media and how you used it</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provide a brief summary that states the purpose of the event, how the program was implemented, and results and how they were measured</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provide a brief summary that states the purpose, how the program was implemented, and results and how they were measured using the RACE framework. Each component has its own word limit noted below.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
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