

# UNITED NEWSLINE

Information for the members of United Power, Inc.

## IN THIS ISSUE

- Member Choice Grants.....2
- Safe Tree Trimming .....4
- June Derecho: New State First...5
- Announcing Youth Winners.....6
- Energy Efficient Appliances .....7



## Hard at Work For Our Members

## IMPORTANT DATES

SEPTEMBER  
7

Labor Day  
United Power Offices Closed

### Operations at United Power have Continued Despite COVID-19 Pandemic

It's been more than three months since United Power closed its office locations to walk-in visitors and moved over half of the co-op's employees to remote work locations in an effort to mitigate the risk of catching or spreading COVID-19 to both members and employees. The preemptive nature of the cooperative's office closure allowed it to continue operations at a safe distance while many other businesses were temporarily closing or stopping nonessential services. Over the past few weeks, many businesses have been able to gradually reopen in phases as virus numbers started to drop in Colorado, but

United Power has continued to work hard on behalf of its members throughout this time.

As the summer inches to a close and the beginning of a new school year approaches, uncertainty remains, especially as coronavirus cases are again on the rise across the country. United Power continues to closely monitor the situation and plan carefully for the future, remembering to put members' needs at the forefront of decision-making processes. Here are just a few of the many essential functions the co-op has continued to provide members.

#### Get Cooperative Updates on the Website

The United Power website exists as a free resource to learn more about the cooperative, its activities and opportunities available to you and your family as a member. It's also been a tremendous resource for members to get updates about the cooperative's response to the coronavirus pandemic. Regular updates containing pertinent information detail how United Power is taking actionable approaches to the situation. Members can learn more about the United Power coronavirus response at [www.unitedpower.com/coronavirus](http://www.unitedpower.com/coronavirus).

In addition to timely updates about pandemic response, the website connected members to the cooperative's first-ever virtual annual meeting and to assistance and resources for members who have been economically impacted. For members seeking the most up-to-date and relevant information from United Power, the cooperative's website has answers to many of your questions and is also updated with new information as it becomes available.

#### Shopping For A New Appliance?

Lots of time at home may have given you ample opportunity to consider whether to replace an old appliance, such as a dishwasher or refrigerator. Certain ENERGY STAR appliances qualify for exclusive member rebates through United Power. (Confused about shopping for the most energy efficient appliances? Learn more about navigating the process on Page 7.) Rebate applications must be returned within 120 days of purchase, but United Power has you covered. Our online rebate application is quick, simple and delivered directly to the cooperative's energy management team. All you need is a little



[www.unitedpower.com](http://www.unitedpower.com)

Report an Outage 303-637-1350  
Customer Service 303-637-1300

# Members Prioritize Mental Health & Outdoor Recreation for Grants

United Power introduced its new Member Choice Grants program earlier this year, asking members to nominate a nonprofit organization in its service territory they would like to see the cooperative help support.

These grant nominations allow United Power to provide support for causes and organizations members truly care about. During the first round of nominations, members recognized food banks for meeting the needs of others during this time, awarding the Fort Lupton Food Bank and Carbon Valley Help Center with grants.

Members focused again on relief for the community during this time, with a number of nominations for two organizations that support mental health and recreation. United Power is happy to announce the two nonprofits receiving \$1,000 Member Choice Grants.

## Richard Lambert Foundation



The foundation provides care, support and essential resources for bereaved children and adults, allowing them to create a foundation for hope, healing and survival. The grant will be used to ensure mental health and grief support is accessible.

## Barr Lake State Park



Barr Lake State Park is a quiet lake just northeast of Denver. There's something for every type of outdoors person at Barr Lake, from fishing and bird watching to boating and kayaking. Grant funds will be used to support Lake Appreciation Day on July 11.

Nominations are **now open** for the third round of Member Choice Grants, which will be announced in the next *United Newsline*. To submit a nomination, fill out the form on our website at [www.unitedpower.com](http://www.unitedpower.com) and provide a brief reason why you feel the organization should receive the grant.



## ENERGY SAVERS

### Replace Old Appliances

Refrigerators manufactured before 1993 use twice the energy of newer models.

ENERGY STAR refrigerators use less energy than a 60-watt bulb running continuously and 20 percent less energy than federal standards require.

## Update Your Contact Information Don't Miss Important United Power Notifications

United Power has been using recorded phone messages to let members know when a preplanned outage has been scheduled in their area for maintenance work. As new software becomes available, the cooperative may have more options to send important communications to members electronically.

Electronic communications are tied to individual member accounts and use the phone numbers and/or email addresses the cooperative has on record. If the contact information on record isn't up-to-date, you may be missing out on important notifications from United Power.

You can check your contact information and make necessary updates using the free online payment portal, SmartHub. To set up an online account, go to [unitedpower.com](http://unitedpower.com) and click on **Online Account Services**

under **My Account**. Contact information can also be updated by calling the Member Services Team at 303-637-1300.



## Looking Out For Member Needs, Even In Uncertain Times

information about your new appliance and a few photos to confirm it meets ENERGY STAR requirements.

More information about appliance rebates and qualifying products can be found at [www.unitedpower.com/appliances](http://www.unitedpower.com/appliances). For a full list of available rebates, go to [www.unitedpower.com/rebates](http://www.unitedpower.com/rebates). Don't forget other energy management services are also still available, which can be found on the website.

### Growing Rapidly

United Power has experienced unprecedented growth in the past few years. The cooperative has continued to outpace nationwide growth averages and is one of the fastest growing co-ops in the country, due in large part to its location in relation to Denver. It provides power to some of the nation's fastest growing suburban communities, as well as several fast-growing industrial corridors. In 2019, the cooperative added 5,999 new meters and

is on pace for another strong year in 2020. While many business have been impacted by the current pandemic it has not slowed the growth of construction projects in the cooperative's service territory.

The new construction team at United Power continued to process and design applications for new service throughout the pandemic.

### Convenient Ways to Pay

Although United Power office locations remain closed at this time, members who prefer cash payments may still do so using payment kiosks in Brighton, Carbon Valley and Coal Creek. Any member, however, may also take advantage of a half dozen alternative payment methods United Power offers. Payment options include Auto Pay, ensuring your payment is made on-time every month, and Pay Now, a quick way to make a one-time payment using just your account number and a form of payment, among others. A full list of available

payment and billing options is available at [www.unitedpower.com/payments](http://www.unitedpower.com/payments).

### For Account Assistance, Call Member Services

United Power's Member Service Representatives have continued to work regularly scheduled hours for member convenience throughout the pandemic. Spending more time at home during quarantine means you've likely become even more aware of energy needs in your home. If you have questions about your account, are interested in available member programs and rebates or need to report an outage, representatives are available to take your call during business hours Monday – Friday at 303-637-1300. Outages can be reported via the phone line even after hours.

For further COVID-19 updates, check the United Power website regularly.

# Beware of Scam Communications

Today, we use technology to power our lives more than ever before. While technology has become a helpful way to navigate everything from news and current events to shopping and vacation planning, there are some who use it for more deceitful means - scamming.

Phone scammers attempt to impersonate a representative from a respected organization, such as the IRS or United Power, to gain information or payment from a victim. Many of these scams are elaborate and sophisticated, even using spoofing software to disguise their phone number so that it appears to be coming from a recognized number ("caller ID spoofing"). Email scammers may use hacked email accounts or attempt to mimic a credible person, such as a friend or representative from a company. It's important to be cautious when you

receive an unexpected request for payment.

Recently, residential and business members on United Power's lines have reported receiving notifications about "past due" amounts on electric bills. Notices may be demanding, and often insist that members make an immediate payment using a prepaid debit card.

In an effort to protect you, we want to remind members how United Power communicates past due account balances and collects payment.

### Know How United Power Does Business

- **United Power does not collect payments at member homes or businesses.** Never give money to people who may be posing as utility workers. If you are not sure about an employee's identification, ask the employee for identification or call United Power at 303-637-1300.
- **United Power never calls members in person to collect overdue electric bills.** Notice of delinquency or disconnection is sent by mail and then United Power will follow up with our automated phone system. A recorded message will instruct you to initiate a payment.
- **United Power will never require prepaid debit as the only form of payment.** Members may initiate payment in a variety of ways: online through the SmartHub portal; by phone, mail or in person using cash, check or debit.

### When in Doubt, Check it Out



Verifying the status of your utility accounts is your best defense against scam attempts. To keep up with the current status of your electric account, reference your monthly billing statement from United Power, check your account via SmartHub or call United Power's Member Services Department at 303-637-1300. If you are ever in doubt about a potential scam call, hang up and call United Power and don't open suspicious emails.



# Safe Tree Trimming

## Observe Ten-Foot Rule to Safely Trim Trees Near Power Lines

Were you aware tree limbs may become a safety hazard when in contact with power lines? Did you know attempting to trim a tree in contact with a power line puts you in danger of electrocution? Have you ever been uncertain about when and where to trim your trees located near power lines?

The warm weather of summer has already started to arrive. As trees begin to grow and bud, they may come in contact with power lines, creating confusion about responsibility and concern about member safety. United Power wants to make sure you know the answers to your questions so you can safely tackle your summer yard work.

For quick reference about who's responsible for maintaining trees near power lines, please check our "Who's Responsible" sidebar.

When you encounter a tree in the vicinity of a primary power line, immediately contact United Power. Avoid trimming when you encounter the following: tree limbs in direct contact

with a power line, dead tree limbs hanging near power lines, tree limbs growing toward power lines.

Observe the Ten-Foot Rule to safely trim trees on your property located near power lines. This means anything inside that radius may put you at risk. For your safety, United Power will disconnect secondary lines when notified in advance of any tree trimming activity at no cost to the member. Remember to trim only from a steady, level surface, removing small, easy to manage sections. Large tree/branch sections may fall unexpectedly and risk taking down power lines and causing potential injury. If this is not possible, contact a professional tree trimmer.

When in doubt about safety or responsibility, please contact United Power at 303-637-1300. We'll be happy to send out a troubleshooter or one of our tree contractors to assess the situation and keep you safe.



## Who's Responsible?

United Power has an aggressive tree trimming program to reduce the number of tree related outages. However, in some cases, the homeowner may be responsible for keeping a line to their home clear of trees. Here is how it works:

- **United Power is responsible for trimming around primary lines.** These are lines running from pole to pole. United Power maintains these lines because they are higher voltage and require special handling from a qualified tree trimming crew.
- **Members are responsible for obstructions in secondary lines.** These are typically single lines stretching from our pole to a member's home - often seen in backyards, crossing from the main electric line to the home.

## READER REWARDS

JULY/AUGUST  
2020



### Three Winners Every Month!

- 1<sup>st</sup> place: \$100 Lowe's Gift Card  
2<sup>nd</sup> place: \$50 Lowe's Gift Card (two winners)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail entry form to: United Power • Reader Rewards  
500 Cooperative Way • Brighton, CO 80603

## Reader Rewards Online

[www.unitedpower.com](http://www.unitedpower.com)

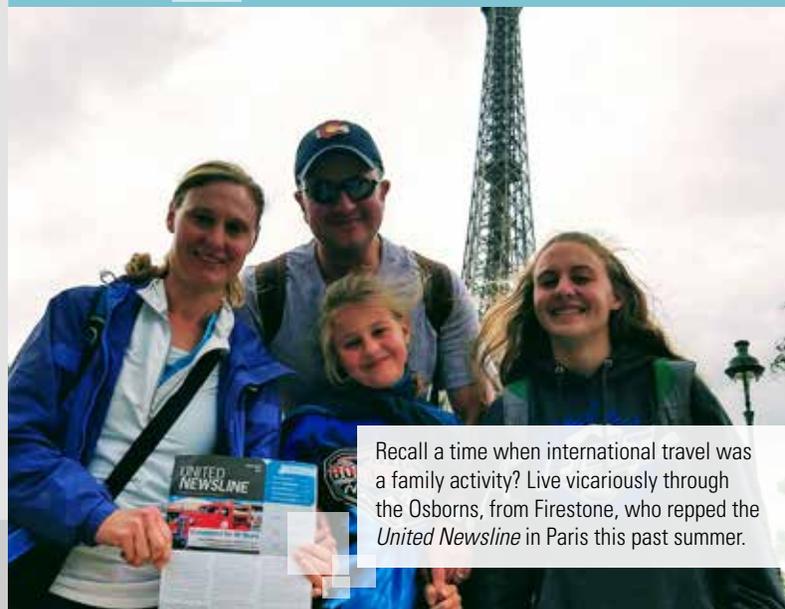


Save a stamp! Visit [www.unitedpower.com](http://www.unitedpower.com) and click on 'Co-op & Community' to enter Reader Rewards online. Answer the question below with your online entry:

## What nonprofit would you nominate for a Member Choice Grant?

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.

## UNITED POWER PRIDE



Recall a time when international travel was a family activity? Live vicariously through the Osborns, from Firestone, who repped the *United Newsline* in Paris this past summer.

## 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](http://www.unitedpower.com/unitedpowerpride).

Despite Colorado's proclivity for spring storms, an unusually calm season may have caught many members off guard. In early June, a stretch of severe storms and strong winds blew through Colorado, leaving thousands without power. When large storm systems come through the state, United Power usually has enough forewarning to prepare its crews. With June's windstorm, known as a "derecho," the cooperative had little to no advanced notice.

Derechos are fast-moving bands of thunderstorms featuring hurricane- or even tornado-like winds. A storm system qualifies as a derecho when it sustains wind gusts of at least 58 miles per hour over a path measuring 250 miles or more. June's derecho was Colorado's first and also one of the strongest on record. Before dispersing over South Dakota, the storm had left a 600-mile stretch of damage. Wind gusts, reaching 78 miles per hour at Denver International Airport and 110 in the mountains, were the strongest for a day since 2004.

Derechos cover a lot of ground over a relatively small period of time due to their rapid movement. The result is a storm that hits hard, leaves behind significant damage and is over quickly.

"It was clear a storm was moving in, and we were prepared for that," said Ken Christensen, United Power foreman. "Then the storm was on us one minute and gone the next. It was over as quickly as it happened. It was difficult to imagine it doing that much damage."

The earliest storm-related outages were triggered near Thornton when high winds blew a light pole into a stretch of line powering several homes in the area. As the storm moved through the territory, it found weak tree limbs and other unsecured – or weakly secured – objects to blow into power lines. The most extensive damage occurred east of the Platte River. North of Fort Lupton, a sheet metal shed took out power to a large industrial site and several homes. In Brighton, a trampoline was tossed into lines nearly 50 feet above the ground and strong winds toppled a beloved evergreen near Historic City Hall, traditionally decorated to celebrate Christmas.

"With all the downed tree limbs, it can take us longer to diagnose the cause of an outage because we have to cut our way in to find it," said Jason Roberts, journeyman



lineman. "Then, after that, we have to actually make the repairs to restore power."

Extensive damage was particularly problematic in Brighton, where several members were without power for an extended period of time. Linemen from the Carbon Valley and Coal Creek offices were dispatched to the eastern territory to assist with restoring power to more than 10,000 members who had lost power during the storm and in its aftermath.

"Thunderstorms and windstorms aren't uncommon for this time of year," said Mike Robinson, a safety specialist at United Power and former lineman. "But as far as windstorms go, this was the worst we've seen in several years."

While storms and strong winds temporarily impeded progress throughout the weekend and into Monday, linemen were able to complete most repairs and restore remaining members early Monday.

More than 40 linemen from United Power and its contractor, Ward Electric, responded to outages following the storm and throughout the weekend to restore power as quickly and safely as possible. During the restoration process, more storm-related damage was found. Nearly 40 poles were snapped either by wind or objects the wind had picked up and tossed into poles and line. Many linemen worked extended hours throughout the night.

"I'm sure we got lots of calls from members wanting to know when their power was going to be turned back on," said Roberts. "But we also encountered several members who wanted to help, either by bringing us food and water or coming out with saws and axes to help us clear debris. We appreciate their patience and assistance."

## RECIPES



### Mexican Street Corn Salad

- 2 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 4 ears fresh corn, kernels removed
- 2 Tbsp mayonnaise
- 2 oz feta or Cotija cheese, finely crumbled
- 1/2 cup finely sliced scallion greens
- 1/2 cup fresh cilantro leaves, chopped
- 1 jalapeño pepper, finely chopped
- 1-2 medium garlic cloves, minced or grated
- 1 Tbsp fresh lime juice
- Chili powder, to taste
- Kosher salt, to taste

Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet or wok over high heat until shimmering. Add corn, season to taste with salt. Toss once or twice, and cook without moving until charred on one side, about 2 minutes. Toss and stir and repeat until charred on second side, about 2 more minutes. Continue tossing until charred all over, about 10 minutes total. Transfer to large bowl.

Add mayonnaise, cheese, scallions, cilantro, jalapeño, garlic, lime juice and chili powder and toss to combine. Adjust seasons with salt and chili powder to taste.

*Recipe from seriouseats.com*

### Share Your Recipes

Earn a free gift if we publish your recipe.

- ONLINE: [www.unitedpower.com](http://www.unitedpower.com)
- MAIL: United Power Recipes  
500 Cooperative Way  
Brighton, CO 80603



## Pastor's Pantry Receives Round-up Grant

Over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, the United Power Operation Round-Up Foundation has responded to the needs of many nonprofits in the cooperative's service territory. With many individuals and families economically impacted due to workplace shutdowns, the board has given above and beyond its normal contributions to area food banks to help meet the needs of those impacted in various corners of the territory.

The Operation Round-Up board recently announced a \$3,000 donation to Pastor's Pantry, which operates out of Whispering Pines Church in the Coal Creek Canyon. Founded in 2001, Pastor's Pantry is an available resource for anyone in need in the canyon, and provides both food and essential items, such as toiletries and paper products.

While the food bank has remained open, donations from food sources decreased as a result of diminishing overstock at places like King Soopers. The Round-Up donation will be used to restock shelves with essential items.

Pastor's Pantry is open every Thursday from 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. or by appointment for emergency needs. Individual donations are also being accepted via a donation box outside the church, 73 Gross Dam Road.

In May, the foundation committed \$20,000 to food banks in the cooperative's territory.

Operation Round-Up is funded by members who voluntarily elect to have their bills rounded up to the next whole dollar, on average just \$6 per year. Members may enroll in the program by going to [www.unitedpower.com/round-up](http://www.unitedpower.com/round-up).



Miss out on these opportunities? Don't worry, students are invited to apply for the Youth Tour and Cooperative Youth Camp each year. Watch our website and Facebook page at the end of this year to learn more about 2021 youth trips, or go to [www.unitedpower.com/youth-trips](http://www.unitedpower.com/youth-trips).

# Leaders Aren't Cancelled

## Pandemic Concerns Cancel Summer Youth Trips

United Power had the privilege of selecting six outstanding students for two unique youth leadership experiences this summer. Unfortunately, the cooperative also had the task of letting them know about trip cancellations in light of growing health and safety concerns during the coronavirus pandemic. Despite cancellations, the cooperative recognizes their achievements and congratulates them for being selected as this year's representatives at the 2020 D.C. Youth Tour and 2020 Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp, respectively.

## 2020 D.C. Youth Tour Delegates

Local electric cooperatives throughout the country sponsor approximately 1,500 high school students from small towns and cities for an incredible week in the nation's capital. The objective is providing an educational experience on the organization and operation of a cooperative. United Power selected three local students to represent the cooperative in D.C. before the Youth Tour was cancelled.

**Xavier Galyardt** recently graduated from Mead High School, where he played soccer and ran track. Xavier also played violin in the Longmont Youth Symphony. His future plans include becoming a professional pilot and obtaining a degree in unmanned aerial systems.

**Audrey Thompson** is a swimmer and honor roll student at Prospect Ridge Academy. Audrey volunteers at the Children's Hospital and is a lifeguard and swim instructor in Broomfield. She plans to study pre-medicine and become a physician's assistant.

**Alexander Juenemann** is active in a variety of clubs, organizations and leadership groups at Erie High School and in Boulder County. Alexander plans to pursue a degree in computer science and hopes to contribute to the field of cyber security.



## 2020 Youth Camp Winners

The primary objective of the camp is to provide an educational experience for youth on the organization and operation of a cooperative. The camp strives to help develop leadership skills that will assist students with challenges they will face in the future.

**Christian Brooks** will be a junior at Erie High School in the fall, where he runs cross country and serves as under secretary in the Model United Nations. Following high school, Christian plans to attend college and enlist in the Marines.

**Owen Clementson** attends Frederick High School and is active in both football and baseball, while also maintaining membership in the school's National Honor Society. Owen plans to attend a military academy before enlisting to serve the country.

**Carter Green** is going into his junior year at Brighton High School in the fall. He's active in both Boy Scouts and Eagle Scouts and plays sports through the high school.





# Choosing Energy Efficient Appliances

The new reality for many of us during this COVID-19 pandemic has been more time at home this spring and summer, which may also be the reality heading into the fall. If you and your family have found it more difficult to get out of the house for socially distanced activities, you may have noticed another impact, this one on your monthly energy usage. Some of that use could be mitigated through replacing old appliances or avoiding appliance stacking. (For more information on appliance stacking, see the May/June United Newsliner.)

If you're holding on to older household appliances, now may be a good time to consider swapping them out for newer, more energy efficient ENERGY STAR models. Older appliances are among the biggest consumers of energy in your home, but as technology evolves, so does energy efficiency. A new ENERGY STAR appliance can be operated using as much as 75 percent less energy than an outdated model.

For example, old refrigerators are often the biggest culprit of excessive energy usage among daily household appliances, costing upwards of \$16/month to use. With more frequent snack visits while your family is home, this cost could only increase. Newer models, however, may cost as little as \$4/month. Newer, high-definition LED TVs also use a fraction of the electricity older liquid-crystal displays (LCD) and plasma screens do. And don't forget other appliances and electronics you use daily.

Not only can new appliances save big on energy usage, but they may also qualify for exclusive member rebates from United Power. Select

ENERGY STAR appliances are eligible for rebates but must be requested within 120 days of purchase. For more information about rebates, contact the energy management team at 303-637-1300 or go to [www.unitedpower.com/rebates](http://www.unitedpower.com/rebates).

## Tips for Purchasing New Appliances

Navigate the confusing information about energy efficient appliances using the tips below or at [www.energystar.com](http://www.energystar.com):

- Look for the ENERGY STAR logo. ENERGY STAR-qualified products exceed federal minimum standards for efficiency and quality, meaning they'll use less energy over their lifetimes than other models.
- Carefully review the EnergyGuide label. This yellow label provides information about how much energy an appliance uses compared to other models. Compare labels on ENERGY STAR models with nonqualified models to see how much you could be saving.
- Consider purchase price and operating cost. These prices are important because you may be paying for the appliance's energy use over the next 10 or more years, depending on when you choose to replace it again.
- Compare prices. Keep in mind, many retailers will match a lower price offered by competitors. Keep looking until you find the right appliance for the right price.

# United Power to Resume Disconnects

The past few months have been unprecedented in the history of the cooperative and the history of our country. As the coronavirus pandemic slowly began spreading across the country, United Power quickly realized its potential economic impact on members and suspended disconnections for nonpayment earlier than many other state utility providers.

Since the start of the pandemic, United Power has worked to support families and businesses throughout the communities it serves. Suspending disconnections due to nonpayment was among the many steps the cooperative took to reduce stress on members and provide some certainty during an uncertain time.

Much of the state has begun a slow phase-in of various services as it enters a period of recovery. United Power has also started making plans to resume normal business functions. On July 1, the cooperative resumed disconnections for accounts with past due balances.

Cooperatives like United Power are not-for-profit and have no shareholders, routinely returning excess revenues to members. This structure, and the desire to keep energy costs low, means co-ops have limited reserve margins to sustain high rates of nonpayment.

As Colorado slowly phases in general business activities, we understand some members may

continue having trouble paying electric bills on time. United Power wants to help its members avoid any interruption in service. If you have missed payments and a past-due balance, please contact us to discuss payment options and energy management plans. If you're still unable to pay your bill, please contact a Member Services Representative at 303-637-1300 as soon as possible to discuss your options.



# Inside This Issue

JULY/AUGUST  
2020



## Member Choice Grants

Second round of grant winners have been announced.

Page 2



## June Storm Hits Co-op

State's first-ever derecho rips through United Power territory.

Page 5



## Youth Winners Announced

Recognizing and celebrating this year's student selections.

Page 6



## Energy Efficient Appliances

Navigate the confusing landscape of efficient appliances with our help.

Page 7

### STAY CONNECTED WITH YOUR CO-OP

**email**.....UnitedNewsline@UnitedPower.com

**online**.....www.unitedpower.com

**f**.....facebook.com/UnitedPower

**t**.....twitter.com/UnitedPowerCoop

**Member Services**..... 303-637-1300

**Outage Line**..... 303-637-1350

### CONGRATS READER REWARDS WINNERS

**1<sup>st</sup> Place:** Jonathan Lederhos, Frederick

**2<sup>nd</sup> Place:** Jenna Bryant, Fort Lupton  
Cynthia Nowik, Henderson

See your name listed as a winner? Call  
303-637-1248 to claim your Reader Rewards.

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# UNITED NEWSLINE

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