



THE COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE DEEP DIVE

#5: Education, Training, and Information

By Jesse Singerhouse, General Manager

The Fifth Cooperative Principle focuses on providing education, training, and information to the various stakeholders of the cooperative. The principle itself states:

“Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so that they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public, particularly young people and opinion leaders, about the nature and benefits of cooperation.”

Education and training are critical to many aspects of our lives. The more we learn and seek to understand, the stronger we become as individuals, communities, and as a cooperative. First and foremost is educating our members. That starts with things like this magazine, our newsletter, social media, and all of the various other ways that we communicate with you. Having members who are knowledgeable about the issues the cooperative is facing will only strengthen our business in the future. We also spend a good amount of time educating members about energy efficiency, renewable energy, and how to operate their homes' energy systems. This is done over the phone and through visits to member accounts. As I've said before, you, the member, are the reason this cooperative exists. Our mission is to serve our members and work with them to improve the quality of life in our communities.

We also spend a fair amount of time educating local, state, and federal officials about energy policy. Decisions made about energy policy impact every person across our county. We are all consumers of energy in some way, like electricity, fuel for our cars, and home heating just to name a few. The places we work also consume energy for lighting, manufacturing, and other business activities. So, when there are changes to energy policy, anywhere from the local to the federal level, it can have a serious impact on members. During the last year I've met with several elected officials over Zoom to educate them about Dunn Energy and answer their questions about the cooperative.

Our philosophy has always been to advocate on behalf of our cooperative for safe, reliable, affordable, and environmentally sound electricity.

Training and education for both our employees and directors is vital to making sure we are best prepared to serve the needs of our members. Our line crews participate in safety training each month. Working safely and going home to our families each night is the highest priority I have for our employees. Our office staff have access to training on many aspects of their jobs including communications, finance, accounting, human resources, and information technology. The electric industry changes at a rapid pace, so our goal is to continually invest in our employees to maintain a highly trained and responsive workforce.

Directors participate in the Credentialed Cooperative Director program. This multi-course training educates

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directors on many factors of the electric cooperative business needs as well as good governance practices. Having our directors trained and knowledgeable about the energy business helps them make good decisions about the future of your cooperative.

One other specific group mentioned in Principle 5 is our youth. It's our job to inform the energy users of tomorrow about the benefits of a cooperative business model. Our employees have consistently volunteered in schools and partnered with community groups and other cooperatives on youth education. We also sponsor local youth to attend conferences, camps, and other trainings to learn more about cooperatives. We invest in our youth today, because they are the future of our communities and this cooperative.

Providing education, training, and information to our members, employees, directors, government officials, and most importantly our youth is an investment of time and resources. However, it is truly an investment that will make our cooperative stronger both today and for years to come.



ANNUAL MEETING TO BE HELD JUNE 19, 2021

The Annual Meeting of Members is the most important meeting we hold each year. It plays an important role in how cooperatives operate. Last year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dunn Energy was forced to reschedule the annual meeting. More than once.

We were finally able to hold the meeting in June and it was drive-in style at the cooperative office. The entire format was new to us and, truth be told, it made us a little nervous. We've been hosting the annual meeting in the early spring, with a full sit-down luncheon, for as long as most of us can remember and change can be hard.

After successfully pulling off a very unique meeting, however, the board of directors and staff decided, at least for this year, to keep the meeting in June. We will also continue to host it at the cooperative office. It seemed like a pretty good idea as we don't have a crystal ball and aren't sure what the summer of 2021 will bring as far as large gatherings are concerned. (9834001)

With that said, the 2021 Annual Meeting of Members will be held at the cooperative office on Saturday, June 19, with a time yet to be determined. This decision affords us a little flexibility in how we hold the meeting. We can, hopefully, assume there won't be any snow to contend with. This helps immensely with the planning process. And, if we are able to meet in large groups come June, we'll be able to set up seating in our shop, similar to what we do for the Cooperative Breakfast. If large gatherings are still too unsafe, then we can hold the meeting drive-in style like we did in 2020 without having to cancel contracts or change dates.

We aren't sure what the future will bring when it comes to our annual meeting. Nevertheless, we know that this year we want to err on the side of caution to keep our members and staff safe and healthy.

You can expect more information about the meeting, including the time, financial information, and ballots, in your mailbox as we get closer to the date.



Operation Round Up® uses the power of cooperation to provide much-needed grant dollars for community projects, 501©3 organizations, and non-profit groups within the Dunn Energy Cooperative service territory.

If you, or a group you are a part of, are interested in applying for an Operation Round Up grant, you can find the application and our Giving Guidelines on our website at www.dunnenergy.com or by emailing Jolene for an application at jolene@dunnenergy.com.

Grant applications are due March 31, June 30, September 30, and December 31 and reviewed shortly thereafter.

Thank you for your interest. Let's show the community the Power of Change!



SunDEC Community Solar:

636 MEGAWATT-HOURS OF PRODUCTION

Can you believe it's been three years since our SunDEC Community Solar farm came online? In that time, our local, renewable energy solar farm has generated 636 megawatt-hours of electricity. None of that would have been possible without the support of our members who purchased the energy this array produced.

Purchasing the output of SunDEC is like pre-buying your propane for the winter, but your contract is 25 years instead of just a few months! If you are interested in pre-buying a little bit of green, locally produced electricity, there are a handful of production units for sale and there's still 22 years left on the contract! Don't worry about all those years though. If you move, you can always sell your share back to the co-op or sell it with your home.

Who Should Buy?

- Those who want to help create a greener future
- Those who don't have the space (roof or tree-free area) to install their own solar array
- Those who want solar energy, but don't necessarily want the hassle of maintaining a solar array

If you want to learn more about our SunDEC Community Solar array, give Chris a call at 715-232-6240.

IRRIGATION SAFETY

IT'S FOR EVERYONE



MY CO-OP

Hopefully, this winter is getting close to being behind us for the year. That means spring is right around the corner. And that means our local farmers will be out in the fields, getting ready to plant and, depending on the weather, getting irrigation systems ready for summer use.

There are several types of irrigation systems that many farmers in our area rely on to water crops. The systems typically run on electricity or diesel fuel.

We'd like to take a minute to remind all of our friends and members in the agricultural industry that moving irrigation pipes around power lines can be extremely dangerous.

The watering pipes can be made of aluminum—a great conductor of electricity. If improperly placed, these spans can come in contact with power lines or damage power poles, creating outages and possibly electrocuting anyone who comes in contact with the irrigation system. (8999002)

To avoid injury, we offer up these

reminders before you or your loved one hit the field:

- Always consider your location and the length of pipe you are working with before assembling or moving sections of irrigation.
- Make sure the pipe's long reach will not come near, or into contact with, overhead power lines.
- Make sure to call Diggers Hotline before doing any underground work around your pivot point and control panel.

Installation and Maintenance

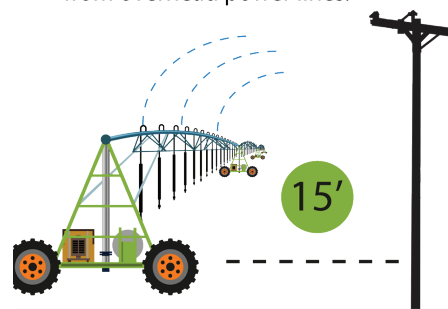
Although farmers are typically adept at fixing just about anything mechanical, it's a good idea to have a licensed electrician install and maintain your irrigation's electrical equipment as it needs to meet the National Electric Code. Hire an electrician who is experienced and well-versed in irrigation systems.

If not wired or grounded properly, your irrigation system could be hazardous at least, and deadly at most.

In general, talk to everyone in your family, teens and kids included, about the dangers of moving your irrigation system near power lines. Teach irrigation safety to all staff and seasonal workers before the season starts. Stay safe out there, and let the harvest be plentiful!

Keep IRRIGATION EQUIPMENT

and [water streams](#) 15 feet away from overhead power lines.



Safe
Electricity.org

research collected from National Agriculture Safety Database



Spring cleaning isn't just for the windows and closets anymore! It's a great time to get your bill payments in order too. Maybe it's time to sit down and set up your SmartHub account. Did you know:

- You can sign up to receive your bill electronically
- Set up an auto-pay or make one-time payments
- See your daily usage
- Communicate directly with the co-op

Sign up for SmartHub by visiting dunnenergy.com and clicking on Pay My Bill. It's FREE!

Questions? Give us a call at 715-232-6240



Hidden Account Numbers

If you find your account number hidden in the pages of this magazine and you call and tell us before the next issue is mailed, we'll put a **\$50 credit** on your electric bill. Happy hunting!

Last month's winners were AJ Morrisette and Bruce & Theresa Keenlyne.

Jesse Singerhouse, Manager

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