

# Blue Grass Living

The official newsletter of  
**Blue Grass Energy**  
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative   
*Making life better, the cooperative way®*



## Message from the President

# Cooperatives are an important part of our communities

October is National Cooperative Month, and Blue Grass Energy—and all co-ops across the U.S.—are celebrating the benefits and values that cooperatives bring to their members and communities.

While co-ops operate in many industries and sectors of the economy, seven cooperative principles set us apart from other businesses:

- voluntary
- and open

- membership; democratic member control; member's economic participation; autonomy and independence; education, training and information; cooperation among cooperatives; and concern for community.

These seven principles, when paired with our purpose of making life better, the cooperative way, guide our daily decision-making. You, our members, are at the center of everything we do. And that is one of the greatest advantages of being a member of a cooperative.

The principle of member's economic participation ensures we will continue to

offer power to you at our cost. Should profits be earned, those are returned to you in the form of capital credits. We are not pressured by stockholders for large profits and that allows us to keep rates as low as possible and competitive with other area providers.

These principles and purpose also guide us to be involved and support our local communities. We understand our responsibility to help them grow and be healthy. Whether it's through our economic development initiatives or our employees volunteering, we are committed to making life better throughout our service area.



Michael I. Williams  
President & CEO

*Continued on 32D*

# How to plant trees to conserve energy for winter warmth

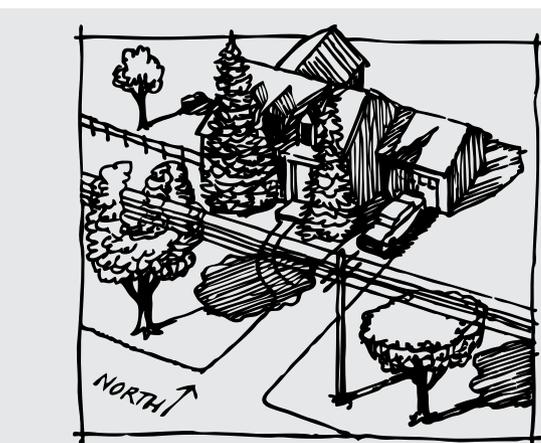
## The Right Tree for the Right Place

Planting the right trees in the right places conserves energy and reduces your energy bills. See how properly placed trees save energy by providing summer shade, winter warmth, and winter windbreaks. (A windbreak is a row of trees that provides shelter or protection from the wind.)

After the leaves fall, the sun pours through tree branches to warm your home in winter.

The sun travels lower on the southern horizon in winter, so you'll want to avoid planting evergreen trees on the south side of your home where they'll block winter sunshine.

Instead, plant an evergreen conifer windbreak on the north and northwest of your home to block cold winter winds.

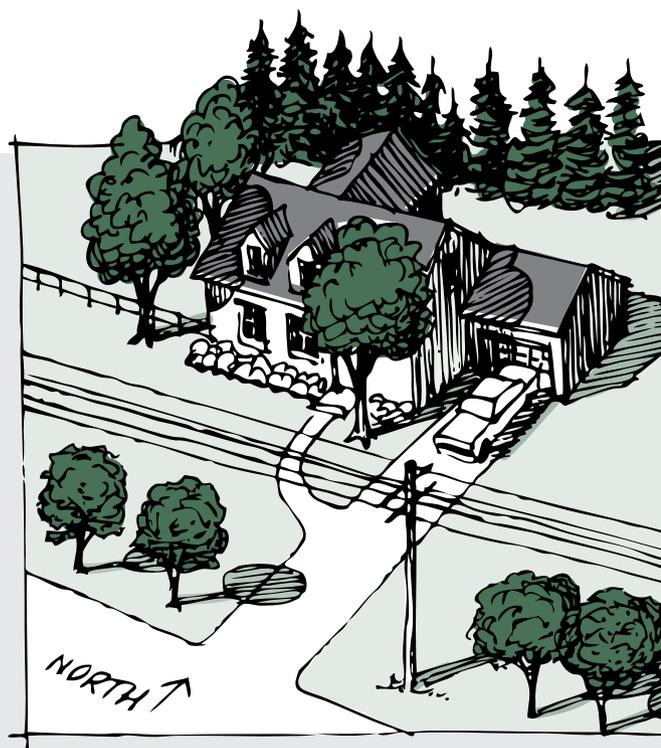


**WRONG** (above)

Planting large trees under utility lines often means disfigured trees. Large evergreens close to the house on the south block warming winter sunlight.

**RIGHT** (right)

Short flowering trees don't clash with overhead utility lines. Large deciduous trees on the southeast, southwest, and west provide cooling shade in summer and don't obstruct the low winter sun. An evergreen windbreak on the north blocks cold winter winds.



Planting a row of conifer trees on the north and northwest sides of your property will create a barrier against cold winter winds.

- Conifer trees planted near your home will help block winter winds and reduce heating costs.
- Use less energy for yourself and your utility company.
- The best protection from wind occurs when the windbreak is no more than the distance of one or two tree heights from the house.

The side downwind of the trees is the side where the most snow accumulates, so you should plant your windbreak a one or two tree-height distance from your rooftop and driveway if possible.

If you have a dead tree in danger of falling on an electric line, please call our office to have it evaluated.

For more information, visit



**Arbor Day Foundation**

at [arborday.org](http://arborday.org)

## Happy Birthday, Willie Wiredhand

“He’s small, but wirey.”

Who? Willie. Willie Wiredhand.

The beloved mascot of electric cooperatives turns 67 this October. It’s a fitting birth date—National Cooperative Month—for the stalwart yellow figure, who became the embodiment of the fighting cooperative spirit and the symbol of dependable, local, member-owned electricity all over the world. (In Latin America, for example, he is known as “Electro Pepe.”)

Willie came to life in 1950, created by the late Andrew “Drew” McLay, a freelance artist working for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), in collaboration with then-*RE Magazine* editor William Roberts.

Since then, Willie has appeared on scores of promotional items—signage for buildings and substations, T-shirts, ball caps, golf balls, Christmas ornaments, beach towels, fly swatters, aprons, night lights, marbles and other toys, and much more.

But Willie had to fight for his right to stand for electric cooperatives.

In 1957, Willie and electric cooperatives won a heated battle with Reddy Kilowatt, “spokescharacter” for the investor-owned power companies. Reddy’s lawyers argued that Willie would confuse the public because he so closely resembled Reddy. “Not so,” said a federal judge. But Reddy and his supporters appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. They lost.

Out of the victory, Willie Wiredhand came to symbolize more than cooperative friendliness—he was now the true embodiment of cooperative spunk, willing to stand up for members in the face of impossible odds against the entrenched might of huge investor-owned utilities. The phrase “He’s small, but wirey” became part of the trademark Willie was granted by the U.S. Patent Office in 1957.

Willie’s role has continued to evolve over the decades. For example, when the 1970s ushered in an energy crisis, he donned a sweater and hopped on a bicycle, caulked windows, and weatherstripped doors in new ads pushing energy conservation and efficiency tips. Later, he became more of a pop-art celebrity, appearing on novelty items like coffee mugs and watches.

But no matter his persona, Willie Wiredhand has been a recognizable and dedicated friend to millions of electric cooperative members, faithful and enduring for decades. Happy birthday, Willie.



Blue Grass Energy

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**Rachel Settles**, Editor



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## President's message (continued)

You'll also notice that one of the principles directs us to provide education and training to our membership. That is why we offer programs such as the Washington Youth Tour, electrician's training, and energy evaluations. We want to give our members, no matter their age, tools that make their life better.

These are just a few of the cooperative differences that make your membership in Blue Grass Energy valuable. While cooperatives are celebrated worldwide this month, just remember your cooperative is still local and providing you the service you deserve.

*Each year, Blue Grass Energy chooses a charity to work with for the year. We partner with a local nonprofit organization that benefits the communities in which we live and serve. Our fundraising efforts for the entire year go to that cause. This year, we are partnering with Make-A-Wish. We are excited about the opportunity of making wishes come true for some of our youngest members.*

### Logan, 18

brain tumor

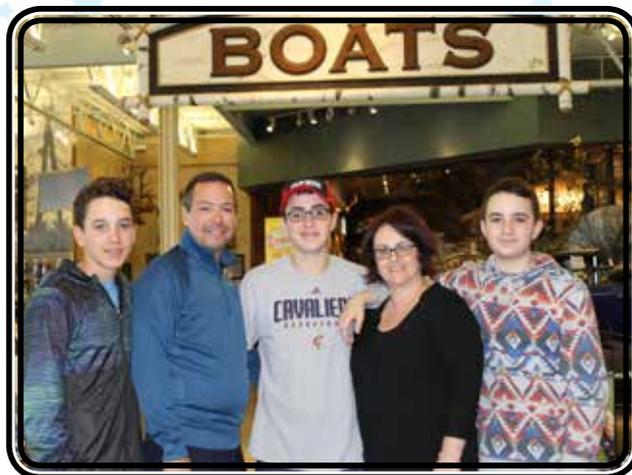
I want a fishing boat

18-year-old Logan visited Bass Pro with his parents and two brothers to "take a look around." The family walked through the rustic entryway and Logan's parents immediately steered them to the back of the store to "check out the boats."

To his complete surprise, Logan entered the special garage area where extended family, friends, and Make-A-Wish supporters were waiting to share in the excitement. It took a moment for Logan to take it all in—familiar faces, Make-A-Wish stars and balloons, and of course, the boat with gear bags and goodies—but when it clicked, a giant smile spread across his face and Logan gave a big hug to his wish-granting volunteers who had been on this journey with him.

Logan's dad later remarked, "Logan has always been a very selfless child. A lot of attention has been focused on him around his condition, but it's always been really important to him to make sure his brothers are cared for just as well. He's more mature than I am half the time! Logan truly deserves this wish. He's gone through so much."

Logan's health status continues to improve, following the surgeries and radiation he's gone through since his diagnosis. He will be attending Akron University in the fall, following the pre-pharmacy track to someday become a doctor.



Logan with his family: Evan (brother), Derek (dad), Logan (wish kid), Debra (mom), and Kaden (brother)