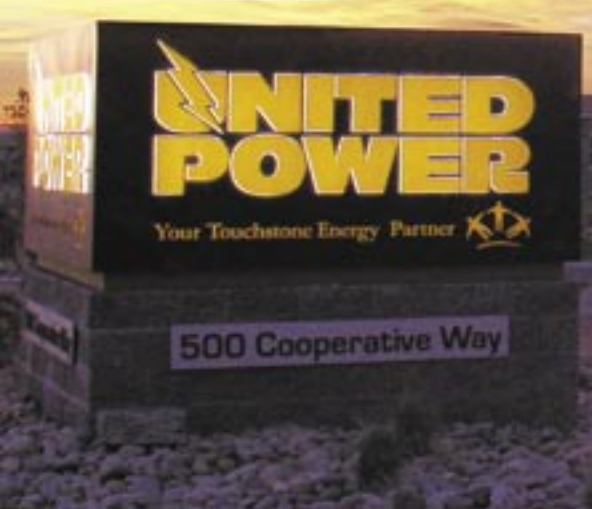
Exploring New Energy Options

United Power provides power to more than 62,000 homes and businesses in Colorado's northern front range. We purchase our power through Tri-State Generation and Transmission, a generation cooperative, headquartered in Westminster, Colorado. Tri-State is responsible for building, operating and maintaining the power generating facilities that provide power to our customers.

Currently, the majority of our electricity is generated through coal – about 67%. Federal hydropower, a renewable resource generated by the nation's largest dams, accounts for an additional 14%. Small allocations of green power and other power sources are purchased through Basin Electric Power Cooperative, and less than a percent is generated from gas and oil.

Tri-State's future resource planning includes a comprehensive set of generation and efficiency programs to help meet the current and future energy requirements with reliable, cost-efficient power. Future generation resources include natural gas, renewable energy and baseload generation projects.

Tri-State also promotes energy efficiency programs that help consumers better manage their energy use and help achieve a balanced approach to energy needs.

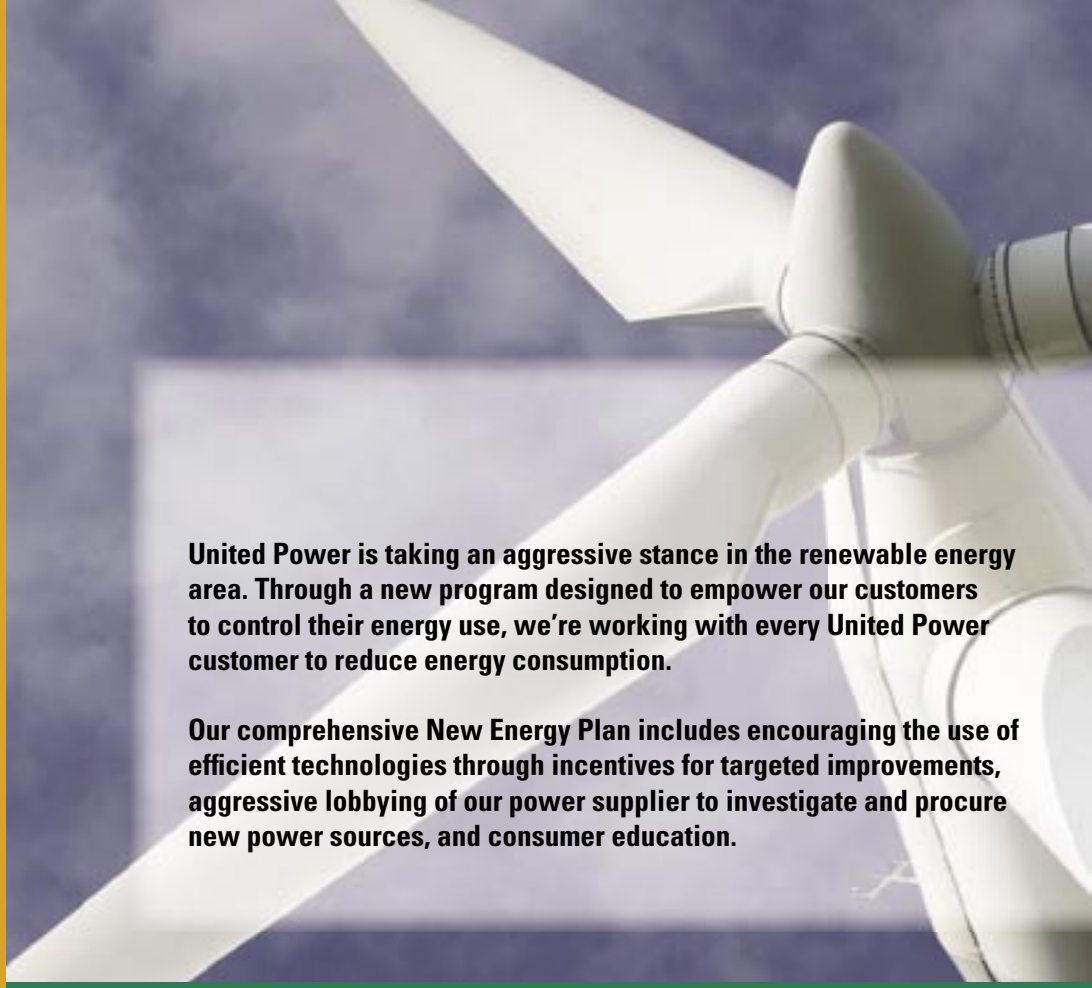


United Power Now Included in Colorado's Green Legislation

Two years ago the Colorado legislature passed sweeping legislation that required electric power suppliers to procure an increasing amount of their power from new, renewable power sources. The legislation encompassed investor owned utilities and larger cooperatives, while exempting municipal utilities. In recognition of the cooperatives self governing structure, the legislation specifically allowed qualifying cooperatives to hold elections to ask their members is they would rather "opt out" of the legislation.

After carefully studying the election results for our service territory, United Power's board decided to allow our members to voice their opinions through an election. The election, held in 2005, attracted a record vote of more than 27% of our membership, and an overwhelming majority wanted the cooperative to be exempted from the legislation. The following year, the legislature revised the initiative requiring United Power to be under the original guidelines, and increasing the requirement for investor owned utilities. The initiative mandates that 10% of our energy comes from renewable sources by 2020.

United Power, working with Tri-State Generation and Transmission, worked with the legislature on the new renewable power initiative to assure that the goals were attainable, and that specific special interest requirements were not included. As renewable energy sources are added to Tri-State's power portfolio United Power will report on the developments in our monthly newsletter, United Newsline, and on our website at www.unitedpower.com.



United Power is taking an aggressive stance in the renewable energy area. Through a new program designed to empower our customers to control their energy use, we're working with every United Power customer to reduce energy consumption.

Our comprehensive New Energy Plan includes encouraging the use of efficient technologies through incentives for targeted improvements, aggressive lobbying of our power supplier to investigate and procure new power sources, and consumer education.

Green Power Partners Program

While United Power is working hard to add renewable energy to our mix of power sources, customers can help directly by investing their dollars into United Power's Green Power Partners Program. Through the program customers invest $1.25 above their regular cost for each block of 100 kwh of electricity. Customers can purchase one or several blocks of power each month, and the surcharged amount is used to purchase additional green power resources on the open market.

While customers can opt in or out of the program at will, United Power makes a three-year commitment to Tri-State for every block we purchase, so on occasion we may over collect. Those additional dollars are then donated to research and development in new, clean energy sources. Since the inception of the program United Power has made two grants to the Colorado Energy Science Center to support educational and informational programs.

Addressing Renewable Energy

While investment into new, clean energy technologies is a sound strategy, it must be matched by aggressive education into the impact of reducing power consumption at even the household level. Education is the cornerstone of this strategy. We provide the expertise and information – being careful to provide a spectrum of solutions in terms of time and dollar investments – and allow our customers to find ways to control their own energy use.

Compact Fluorescent Lighting Promotions

United Power has already made a huge impact in our service territory by distributing more than 3,500 bulbs. With the help of our power supplier, Tri-State Generation and Transmission, United Power will be able to more than double this amount by year's end.

Tri-State already provided United Power with 1,000 bulbs to help this effort, and is providing United Power with additional incentives to purchase more bulbs for distribution. The bulbs have been distributed at community events, through local home owners associations and police departments, and at United Power sponsored events like our annual meeting.

In August we kicked off an exciting new promotional program for the fall lighting season. By giving all of our members a coupon for one free CFL and the opportunity to purchase up to four additional bulbs for just $1 each, we hope to help our customers take control of their energy consumption.

In addition, each of the three United Power offices is now an official CFL recycling site. Each bulb contains a small amount of mercury, and should be safely recycled to protect our environment. Since there were no local recycling spots, United Power has stepped up to the challenge by becoming an official recycling center.

Testing New Technologies

United Power recently added its first hybrid vehicle to the company's fleet. The vehicle is clearly marked, and has been featured at a number of recent local events to showcase this exciting new technology.

The Ford Escape Hybrid utilizes a full-hybrid power train that is regulated by an automatic control device. This allows the vehicle to choose the best power source available in response to different driving conditions. When the vehicle accelerates it uses the combined power of electricity and combustion. This provides the Ford hybrid SUVs with acceleration comparable to a conventional V-6.

When the hybrid travels at lower speeds or when the vehicle is not moving, the gas engine will shut down for optimum efficiency and reduced emissions. At higher cruising speeds the gas engine provides the power, and the electric generator recharges the battery.

The board and staff are currently looking at adding more hybrid vehicles to the fleet in the coming year. The mechanical staff at United Power is currently monitoring this first hybrid vehicles reliability, fuel efficiency and operational costs.

Educational Programs for Employees

United Power is making a significant investment in training our employees to be energy experts. Particularly those employees that handle the majority of customer inquiries.

While we provide energy audits and in-depth information for many customers every year through our Energy Management group, this program will help us to disseminate information to more customers, in a more concise manner.

It is our goal to make all our customer contact employees more educated about the use of electricity, and the potential savings in programs we promote.

Home Energy Makeover

We have launched our search for two homes to become our Home Energy Makeover demo projects. By September, two homes in our service territory will have been selected for targeted home improvements.

The home improvements will be documented, and the energy use will be followed for a year. By publishing the energy use information in our monthly newsletter we hope to share our energy saving ideas with our members in an intimate and pertinent way.

Home Energy Expo

Our second Home Energy Expo will take place on Thursday, September 6th. Once again, Doug Rye – a nationally recognized energy consultant – will present easy ways to save energy to our members. While in town, he will also be giving two educational presentations for employees of our company. He is an engaging and interesting speaker who has a knack for audience involvement, and making energy improvements simple to comprehend.

Manufacturers of energy-efficient technologies will also be on hand at the Energy Savings Expo to answer member questions.

Online Tools

United Power recently launched a new website that includes a wealth of information to help our members reduce energy use, manage their accounts and learn more about the cooperative.

At the new www.unitedpower.com, customers can conduct an online Home Energy Audit, calculate the savings of using CFLs, and find information and resources on the energy efficient appliances that United Power promotes and provides rebates for installing.

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