



President to Member

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The right building at the right time

BUILDING EXPANSION AND RENOVATION WILL SOLVE SPACE CRUNCH
AND AID OUR MISSION TO SERVE OUR MEMBERS

It doesn't seem that long ago, but it's been 20 years.

It was 1987. I was one of 22 employees of Union Rural Electric who moved into this office building when it was new, back when the cooperative only served 3,778 meters. The day we would reach the building capacity of 30 employees seemed as distant as the moon but the additional office space built for future employees only lasted 5 years.

Time flies, doesn't it? Today we serve more than 8000 meters. Our 43 regular full and part-time employees share offices and work from makeshift desks set-up in warehouse storage rooms. Most of the engineering department is housed in one large office space built in the warehouse taking up two valuable warehouse vehicle bays. A temporary office trailer houses the operations department in our back lot.

That isn't the end of it, though. Projections for Union County tell us that URE has the potential to double the number of members again in the next ten years. In our 2005 strategic planning session, the Board and management identified office space as a top priority for our current employees and to prepare for growth.

Suffice it to say, we've long run out of office and storage space and now is the time to act. We will be expanding the office to almost triple the current building size.

Making smart business decisions

I hope you've seen our news stories here in Local Connections. During the past year we have been investigating our building needs and how best to serve them. Investing in a building expansion is serious business.

Yes, we want to create the kind of working environment where our employees will enjoy coming every day.

But we also know that our members expect us to be practical and reasonable about our spending, especially on a project this size.

The best news for our members is that there will be no direct affect on your bill as a result of this building.

That is not to say that your energy costs won't go up in the next few years. In fact, we fully expect that the costs of wholesale power will continue to go up gradually.

Remember, though, that your electric bill is made up of both local charges (distribution) and the cost of power (generation & transmission.) At URE we control the distribution costs through smart investment and management.

It is our challenge every day to make the best decisions that will ensure we are prepared to serve our members with the financial resources we have available. I'm proud to say that financing this building fits well within our overall strategy. I feel confident we can take on this project comfortably.

Serving our members and the community

Best of all is what a larger building will allow us to do for our members and the community as a whole.

Energy efficiency and environmental awareness seem to be on the tip of the tongue these days. Maybe you heard about Honda R&D's energy efficiency project at their building that earned the LEED designation?

We are pursuing the same energy efficiency designation for our building renovation. LEED stands for "Leadership in Energy and Environmental De-

sign." It is a national standard for developing high-performance, sustainable ("green") buildings. If interested, you can learn more about LEED certification by going to www.usgbc.org/LEED/.

We have some really exciting innovations planned that will not only help preserve the environment, they will all pay for themselves in energy savings within five years. That's smart investment.

You can look forward to learning how to apply some of these technologies to your own homes and businesses with our help. In fact, we are planning features throughout the building that will

help us with our mission to educate and inform our members. It means we will be encouraging our members to make the most out of YOUR building. This is a place where you will be welcome and encouraged to take part

in the management of your cooperative and the development of your community.

Frankly, what I am looking forward to most is the day when all our employees will be back in one building together again. Even better, we are taking the time to make sure that everyone has an organized space with the right resources to do their jobs more efficiently. And we'll finally have a meeting space large enough that I can bring all the employees together in one large room instead of meeting in our warehouse in the cold of winter or heat of summer.

The payback is better service for our members. When an efficient team of people have what they need to do the job and a positive environment to do it in, I know the members will benefit.



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