

JANUARY 2025

# A ROLE HE WAS BORN FOR

## MICHAEL JENNINGS TAKES THE HELM AT THE CO-OP



Michael Jennings  
Interim President & CEO

PLYMOUTH — Michael Jennings' education about utilities began at his family's kitchen table.

His parents both worked for a utility which meant dinner conversations often involved different aspects of engineering and operations.

"It's always been ingrained in me. It's what I've always

known," said Jennings who, effective Jan. 1, stepped into the role of interim President & CEO at New Hampshire Electric Cooperative. "I'm very familiar with utility work. It's just been part of my life."

In addition to his utility DNA, Mike brings a range of experience and perspective to the role of President & CEO. He has been responsible for almost every department at the utility as well as the launch of NH Broadband.

Prior to joining the Co-op in February 2020, Michael, who is a professional engineer and holds a Master's degree in Corporate Finance, has worked at Eversource in New Hampshire, as well as an electric cooperative utility in Florida. He is driven by the nature of cooperatives.

"Cooperatives are special because we're able to work for the members. We're a non-profit utility so with that, we're not looking to make money for a shareholder or municipality. We do everything at cost for the people we serve," he said.

"Our top priorities are very well set for us right now," he said, noting that the Co-op adopted a five-year strategic plan in 2024 which focuses on reliability, affordability, member experience, employee experience and the broadband build-out.

"We also have a very important initiative to bring broadband to rural New Hampshire where there isn't high speed internet currently. Broadband really fits our company's mission," he said, likening it to the Co-op's foundation in

bringing the essential service of electricity to rural communities. "Broadband is the next essential service."

The broadband build out continues and current plans are expected to be completed by the end of 2026. It will bring high speed internet to 23,259 unserved and underserved addresses in the Co-op's service area.

"We're well ahead of schedule right now and as we near completion, we're going to be looking at other opportunities to expand broadband for areas that don't have it available right now," he said.

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-Michael Jennings, Interim President & CEO

There are other significant capital projects in addition to broadband, including key reliability initiatives involving Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) expansion, the direct-buried cable program and the transformer replacement program all of which are designed to improve reliability and the members' experience.

Jennings said the Co-op is headed in the right direction, something he will focus on maintaining.

"We're on the right course. We have really great employees here, the best I have worked with out of any utility. We can trust them to continue with the good work that we've laid out," he said. "We don't need to reinvent the wheel at this point, we just need to make sure we keep driving forward."

The Co-op will continue, he said, to "balance all of that with affordability because we need to perfectly balance what we invest in the system versus the financial impact to members."



## THIS YEAR, RESOLVE TO BE AN ENERGY SMART CONSUMER

Anywhere energy is used there is an opportunity to be more efficient. There are a variety of steps you can take to maximize your energy savings at home through mindful upgrades and conservation habits that can save you money, while also making your home more comfortable.

In the average New Hampshire home, 59% of energy usage is for heating and cooling, 16% for water heating and 25% for all other appliances, electronics and lighting.

To get started, take inventory of what you have in your home, while keeping in mind that the age, sizing and placement of your current equipment, appliances and other energy savings measures can impact your home's overall efficiency and resulting energy consumption.

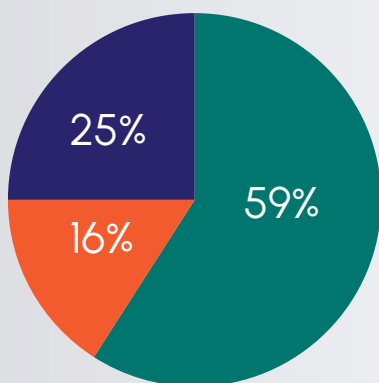
The next step is to make a plan - and NHEC has resources and incentives that can help. A few things to consider as you make your energy saving plan include:

**Sealing air leaks and adding insulation** can save you up to 20% on your annual energy costs while increasing your homes comfort.

Your water heater is the second-highest energy user in your home, **switch to a heat pump water heater** which can be up to four times more efficient than a conventional electric water heater.

**Consider installing a heat pump** - heat pumps can efficiently heat your home in the winter and double as a cooling system in the summer.

**Check out NHSaves.com to see more savings tips and if we have any rebates available that could help towards your next energy efficient upgrade!**



### NH HOME ENERGY USE

- Heating/Cooling
- Appliances, Etc.
- Water Heating

## GOODBYE DVDS, HELLO STREAMING



MOULTONBOROUGH — When Lindsey Balser and her husband bought their house in 2019, they didn't realize that the move here from Florida, where technology and the internet is everywhere, would really not exist in their new location.

"We thought, 'We can figure something out'," Lindsey said. "It's the perfect house."

As it turns out, "We had nothing really before New Hampshire Broadband. We tried to basically use the cell towers and work from a hot spot using our cell phones," she said. "I used to joke to my husband and say, 'Can we return the house?'"

And then came the Facebook posts and word-of-mouth chatter - NH Broadband was coming to Sandwich. The anticipation was building as the pole serving Sandwich was just over the Moultonborough line and just feet away from their home. Lindsey went online and plugged in their address to check to see if NH Broadband service was available.

"It was our turn," she laughed. "It was like Christmas."

Now, after some 15 months of enjoying NH Broadband service, the Balser home is absolutely back to being "the perfect house."

In addition to being the perfect house it wears the distinction of being the first house in Moultonborough to have the internet service. Like the Balsers, Moultonborough residents won't have to wait much longer as more zones will be opening throughout town in early 2025, and then it's on to Tuftonboro.

For the Balsers, they can again stream and no longer have to fall back on their DVDs for entertainment.

"We can watch TV and use the internet all at the same time. And working from home got a lot easier. Things go much faster," said Lindsey, who is an admin in client services.

"It's very reliable. I haven't had an outage," she said, pointing out the other advantages of NH Broadband.

"I'm super impressed that we didn't have to pay any crazy hook-up fee. Our bill is consistent. It remains the same as the promised price. And our electric wires run underground from the street and they ran our internet underground. I'm thrilled," she said.







## ANYONE CAN FALL ON HARD TIMES...YOU CAN HELP

The power of community and the difference we can make when we help one another is at the heart of our Project Care program. Begun in 1990, Project Care has helped thousands of Co-op members pay their electric bill. Whether it's the loss of a job, an illness or any other unexpected setback, Project Care helps local families keep the lights on when they need it most. The truth is – anyone can fall on hard times. The Co-op works with these members to help them in their time of need, but we couldn't do it without you. The program is funded 100% by donations. Thank you to all who have contributed to Project Care. If you haven't yet, and you can do so, please consider supporting Project Care.

Make a difference by donating today:  
[www.nhec.com/donation](http://www.nhec.com/donation)

To apply for assistance:  
[www.nhec.com/project-care](http://www.nhec.com/project-care)

## TIPS FOR STAYING SAFE WHEN THE POWER GOES OUT

Winter is the time of year when weather-related power outages are common. For many, that means using a generator to power some or all of their home while electricity is being restored. It's critical that generators are used properly. Improper use of a generator is not only dangerous, it can be deadly.

First thing to remember is that generator "back feeds" due to improper installation/use are a danger to both line workers and those assessing damage during storm events.

Always read the owner's manual and instructions for your generator before installation. Carefully follow all instructions and warnings to safely start and operate the generator. Do not cut corners when it comes to safety.

Below are some tips to share with co-workers, friends and family to make sure that generators are being used properly at all times. These tips are merely supplemental and are not intended to substitute reading of the owner's manual.



Never connect a standby generator into your home's electrical system.

Set up and run your generator outside the home away from the garage, doors, windows and vents.

Use a heavy extension cord to connect appliances directly into the generator's outlet.

Start the generator first before connecting appliances.

Remember, using a generator indoors can kill you in minutes. The exhaust contains carbon monoxide, a deadly poisonous gas you cannot see or smell. **When using a generator, safety comes first.**

Source: SafeElectricity.org

# YOUR CO-OP, YOUR COMMUNITY

## POWERING OUR COMMUNITIES

New Hampshire Electric Cooperative has the privilege to bring power to the communities we serve, which include many small businesses – the backbone of our state's economy. These locally owned businesses are doing incredible things each and every day. We're proud to partner with them. **Together, we're Powering Our Communities.**

## FROM GIFT WISH TO THRIVING BUSINESS

PLYMOUTH – Angie Miller's inspiration for Plymouth Soap Works on Main Street came from her daughter with a Christmas gift wish: plastic free products. Serving in Americorps, the 25-year-old couldn't afford to buy sustainable products. Angie, a retired public school teacher who had integrated equity and environmentalism into her curriculum, brought these ideas to lather.

In January of 2020, just before the pandemic changed life as we understood it, Angie got her LLC and could open the business. Quickly, she adapted. Lockdown was the mother of invention.

She operated pop up locations, did mailbox drop offs and had a soap truck where people could pick up goods, which at that point largely involved sanitizer spray, which they donated to healthcare and essential workers and drivers. Since then, her business has grown in location and size, now producing more than 100 products.

The themes of her life: having grown up in a house with no running water or cardboard on the walls, becoming a young single mother, utilizing various social services and going on to gain undergraduate and graduate degrees, teaching high school English literature for 20 years, running school recycling programs and integrating equity and environmentalism into her curriculum, all inform the way she runs her business, from where she sources materials, to pricing and making things that are good for the body and good for the environment.



Today, four years later, Angie recognizes even more the importance of community.

"I'm proud of the work I did but I also know that I could have only done that work with the help of my community," said Angie, a long time Plymouth resident. "I have always wanted a way to give back to my community.

"I really want to make sure that we have a space that continues to give to our community and nurtures our community because that's important," she said.

If you are a business owner or know of a small business in our service area doing great things, please contact us at [comms@nhec.com](mailto:comms@nhec.com).