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Albemarle Sounds

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Albemarle Electric Membership Corporation
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative
The power of human connections®

P.O. Box 69
Hertford, NC 27944
(252) 426-5735

Kevin Heath, General Manager
Chris Powell, Editor

Website and member portal:
www.aemc.coop

Outages:
1-800-274-2072
24-hour payments:
(252) 426-4419

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Time to Apply for Basketball Camp Scholarships

Touchstone Energy®
Sports Camp
Scholarships

Many young basketball players dream of playing under the bright lights of a college arena, showcasing their skills on the hardwood. Albemarle EMC is helping to make that dream a reality for two lucky students by once again partnering with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and N.C. State University.

Through the Touchstone Energy Sports Camp Scholarship program, Albemarle EMC will provide one young woman with a scholarship to attend the Wolfpack Women's Basketball Camp at N.C. State University, June 16-19. Young men can apply for a scholarship to attend the Carolina Basketball School which will be held June 22-26 at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Eligible applicants must be in sixth or seventh grade during the 2024-2025 school year at a qualifying school. To apply, students must complete and submit the online application by March 31 at ncelectriccooperatives.com/sports-camps.

The scholarships cover all expenses at the overnight camps, which provide a glimpse into life on a college campus. Campers stay overnight in dorms, learn fundamental skills that will help them excel on and off the court and receive individual and group instruction from Division 1 coaches to enhance their basketball and team-building abilities.

Perquimans County Middle School student Emily Russell (first row, center) recently was invited to watch an N.C. State University women's basketball game. Emily attended the game with fellow scholarship winners of the 2023 Albemarle EMC Wolfpack Women's Basketball Camp.

Riddick Promoted to Manager of Technical Services

Travis Riddick has been promoted to manager of technical services. He will also serve as interim manager of engineering until a new engineering manager has been hired.

Riddick will report to General Manager Kevin Heath and be responsible for the maintenance of the cooperative's substations, power lines and control infrastructure.

"Travis has worked as a technician for the cooperative for two decades and knows the cooperative's grid infrastructure extensively," said General Manager Kevin Heath. "The cooperative will be well served with him in his new position."

Several ACT Grants Awarded

Five Albemarle Community Trust grants were recently awarded to organizations that benefit the local community.

The Cale Community Foundation received a $2,500 grant to have retractable stairs installed at the Camp Cale pier.

Girl Scouts of the Colonial Coast were awarded a $2,500 grant to fund their Albemarle Area Community Troops program. The program is for girls grades kindergarten through 12th who live in economically challenging areas. They receive training in STEM fields as well as gain experience in the outdoors, entrepreneurship and life skills.

Camp Cale Executive Director Matt Thomas and Operations Director Erin Thomas were recently presented a $2,500 ACT grant.

The Perquimans County Sheriff's Office received a $3,500 grant. The funds will be used to purchase evidence collection kits, crime scene tape, evidence markers, a guard scene tent and light equipment for the office's four investigators.

Special Olympics North Carolina was awarded a $5,000 grant. Their grant will be used to purchase equipment, attire and trophies for the athletes.

The Open Door of Perquimans County received a $2,500 grant. Their grant will be used to purchase food for the less fortunate.

Service Pins Earned

The following employees and board directors were recently presented with pins for their years of service.

Employees

Clarissa Perry — 35 years
Roy O'Neal — 35 years
Liz Alons (retired 2023) — 20 years
Ken Winslow — 15 years
Kevin Heath — 15 years
Angela Wiggins — 10 years
Kyle Craft — 10 years
Heather Ashley — 5 years
Michele Byrum — 5 years

Directors

Glenn Carey — 35 years
Tony Webb — 30 years
Thelma Finch-Copeland — 10 years

Albemarle Community Trust Board

Jean Bell — 20 years

Operations Manager Roy O'Neal and Corporate Services Manager Clarissa Perry received pins recognizing 35 years of service to Albemarle EMC. Board Director Glenn Carey also received a 35-year pin.

Vehicles Purchased

Albemarle EMC recently purchased a van and a service truck to replace two similar vehicles that will be taken out of service. The van will primarily be used for energy audits and transporting items in inclement weather. The truck will be used to respond to service calls.

Statement of Nondiscrimination

Albemarle Electric Membership Corporation (AEMC) is a recipient of federal financial assistance from the Rural Utilities Service (RUS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and is subject to the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture which provide that no person in the United States on the basis of race, color, national origin, age or disability shall be excluded from participation in, admission or access to, denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any of this organization's programs or activities.

The person responsible for coordinating this organization's nondiscrimination compliance effort is Kevin Heath, general manager of Albemarle Electric Membership Corporation. Any individual, or specific class of individuals, who feels that this organization has subjected them to discrimination may file a written complaint with this organization; or the Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250; or the Administrator, Rural Utilities Service, Washington, D.C. Complaints must be filed within 180 days after the alleged discrimination action, or by such later date to which the Secretary of Agriculture or the Administrator of the Rural Utilities Service extends the time for filing. Identity of complainants will be kept confidential except to the extent necessary to carry out the purpose of the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Albemarle EMC is at Your Service

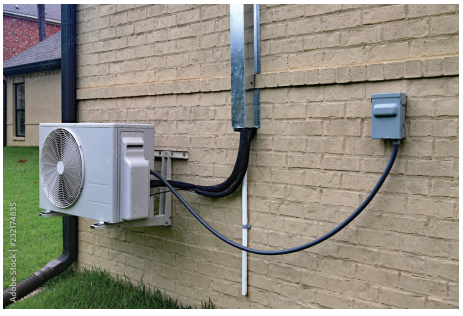
Mini-Split Heat Pumps Deserve Consideration

by Chris Powell, coordinator of public relations

I recently responded to an excessive power-usage situation that was a real head-scratcher. Because meters are automatically read daily, we can typically tell when excessive usage begins and ends. This residence had about a month of exceptionally high usage. Then the high usage abruptly dropped and proceeded to stay within a normal range. In most homes, there are only two things that can cause extremely high power usage, either a heat pump's heat strips or a water heater element that are stuck on. The problem was whatever was causing the high usage had somehow fixed itself, so there was no way to tell which of the two had caused the high usage.

If the homeowner had been heating and cooling their home with a mini-split heat pump, I would have been able to tell immediately that the high usage was due to the water heater element. That is because mini-splits don't have heat strips.

If I was going to build a new home today, I would have mini-split heat pumps installed instead of the typical air-source heat pump with ductwork. Probably the biggest positive that mini-splits have is that they don't have to rely on heat strips when the outside temperature dips below 40 degrees. To compare, traditional central air source heat pumps can't produce adequate heat when the outside temperature is below 40 degrees, so they must be backed up by some sort of auxiliary heat, which is usually electric heat strips. When central systems rely on their heat strips, they become considerably less efficient. However, mini-splits don't have that problem because they use hyper heat. Hyper heat enables mini-split systems to produce sufficient heat, even when outside temperatures are well below zero. I wish I could explain how hyper heat works without droning on about thermodynamics and super-rapid compressor speeds, but I can't. Suffice to say that mini-splits can produce heat even when there appears to be no heat in the outside air. The technology is remarkable.



Mini-split heating and cooling systems offer an affordable alternative to less-efficient air-source heat pumps.

Another huge advantage of mini-splits is that they do not use ductwork. Instead, the refrigerant is circulated from an outside compressor to an inside, wall-mounted blower unit (also called a "head") that produces hot or cold air. The average amount of duct-loss in any home is about 20 percent, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. That is a large percentage of conditioned air to lose in a crawl space or attic each year. However, because the mini-split's blower units are located inside the house, you get almost all of what you are paying for. I say "almost" because there is going to be a very small amount of temperature either lost or gained from the tubing used to circulate the refrigerant from the blower unit to the outside compressor. But that loss is tiny compared to the substantial losses that occur using ductwork.

I also like mini-split systems because each blower unit has its own thermostat, which allows individual spaces in a house to become their own heating and cooling zones. A homeowner can heat or cool the room they are in, while shutting off the blower units throughout the rest of the house. That is simply not possible to do with a traditional ducted system in which a thermostat controls the temperature in large spaces and often the entire house.

Another advantage mini-splits have is that they don't cycle on and off repeatedly like a central system. Central heating and air systems are driven by a thermostat that either turns the unit on when the temperature of a house is above or below a desired level, then turns the unit off once the temperature has been reached. A mini-split stays on almost constantly, but runs at variable speeds to meet the desired temperature. For example, if a homeowner turns on a mini-split system, it will ramp up to meet the desired temperature in a room. However, instead of turning off once the temperature is reached, the system will slow its run speed to maintain the temperature. This manner of operation is significantly more efficient than a central system.

Mini-splits are almost as efficient as geothermal heat pump systems, which are the gold standard of efficiency but cost more. Mini-splits require basic maintenance, mostly keeping the filters and coils clean, which a homeowner can do themselves. With proper care, a mini-split system should last 20 years.

As the cost of power continues to rise, the ductless mini-split system will likely become more prevalent. Not only are ductless systems efficient, they are easy to retrofit to existing homes. When looking to purchase a new heating and cooling system, mini-splits are worth considering.