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Proudly serving the members of Albemarle Electric Membership Corporation

## Albemarle Sounds

is published monthly by  
**Albemarle Electric Membership  
Corporation**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative   
*The power of human connections®*

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*Albemarle EMC is an equal opportunity  
provider and employer.*

## Director Appointed

Linda Felton has been appointed to the at-large seat on the Albemarle EMC Board of Directors.

Felton assumes the term of former director Virgie Whitehurst, who passed away in 2022. Felton is the granddaughter of the late Estelle Felton who served on the board from 1984 to 2013.

“I want to carry on the legacy of my grandmother’s service to the community,” Felton said.

She is the daughter of Henry and Joyce Felton and has one son, Kaleb. She was raised in Hertford. After high school, she earned a degree in business administration from Elizabeth City State University.

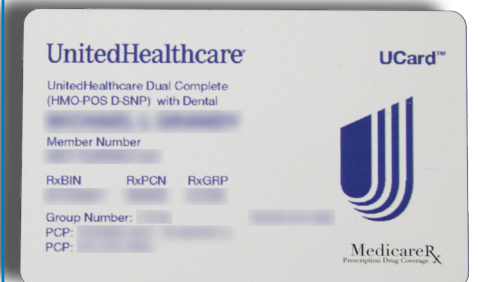
Felton currently works at AFLAC, where she is a licensed benefits advisor.



## Proper Ucard Use Explained

Several Albemarle EMC members have received a United HealthCare UCard in the mail and have tried to use the card to pay their power bills.

Because the UCard is not Mastercard, Visa or Discover, Albemarle EMC cannot accept the card as a form of payment. To use Ucard money to pay a utility bill, members must do so through the Ucard hub on their plan’s website, or they can call 1-833-853-8587. United Healthcare mails bill payments to the co-op, so members should be mindful of due dates.



## AEMC Golf Tournament Moved to April

Typically held each September, the Albemarle EMC Light Up Christmas Golf Tournament has been moved to April.

“The change will shift the tournament out of hurricane season, which is always a concern for us,” said Albemarle EMC General Manager Gary Ray.

The 15th annual tournament will be held Friday, April 28 at The Sound Golf Links, at Albemarle Plantation. Anyone who would like to enter a team can do so by contacting Chris Powell at [chris.powell@aemc.coop](mailto:chris.powell@aemc.coop) or (252) 426-2586. All proceeds from the tournament will go toward the Light Up Christmas Toy Drive.



# Deadline Approaching for Sports Camps

Do you have a rising sixth or seventh grader who dreams of playing basketball on a college campus? Albemarle EMC is once again partnering with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and N.C. State University to make that dream a reality for two lucky students in Chowan, Perquimans, Pasquotank, Camden and Currituck counties.

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, which will be held June 18-22. Young men can apply for a scholarship to attend the Carolina Basketball School which will be held June 17-21 at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



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.

To apply, please visit [ncelectriccooperatives.com/community/sports-camps/](http://ncelectriccooperatives.com/community/sports-camps/). Students must complete and submit the online application by March 31. Eligible applicants must be in sixth or seventh grade during the 2023-2024 school year.

More than 50 students will be awarded Touchstone Energy Sports Camp Scholarships from electric cooperatives in North Carolina. Now in its 20th year, the scholarship program demonstrates the electric cooperatives' commitment to building a brighter future through continued support for education and community programs.

## ACT Grants Awarded

Three local organizations were recently awarded grants from the Albemarle Community Trust.

Perquimans County 4-H received



*Perquimans County 4-H Youth Development Director Asheton Smith receives an Albemarle Community Trust grant.*

\$500 for a program that partners with the Perquimans County Schools Exceptional Children's Department. The funds will be used to purchase interactive butterfly life-cycle kits. Students with special needs will experience real-world life cycles and ecosystems through a butterfly life-cycle project.

The Camden County 4-H Shoot Sports Club received a \$2,700 grant to

purchase a skeet thrower. Among many other activities, the Camden County 4-H teaches hunter safety classes and competitive marksmanship.

The Dream Hunt and Fish Program recently received a \$5,000 ACT grant to help support its educational events, dream hunting and fishing trips and adventure camps. The outings are designed for youth ages two to 18, specifically those with medical issues, disabilities or who have been identified as at-risk.



*Terry Boyce, director, and Renita Spence, volunteer, were recently presented with a grant check for the Dream Hunt and Fishing Program.*

Matthew 25: 35-36 Ministries was awarded \$2,500 to purchase clothing for children ages newborns to teens. The ministry also provides diapers and other items for infants. The ministry can be reached at [didituntome@gmail.com](mailto:didituntome@gmail.com).

## Cold Weather Can Cause Outages

The extremely cold temperatures that members experienced this past Christmas caused extreme stress to North Carolina's power grid.

The demand was so excessive that Duke Energy was forced to conduct rolling blackouts. Rolling blackouts are a way to temporarily limit the amount of power being used in portions of a grid to avoid a potentially larger outage across the whole grid.

To reduce the chance of our system needing rolling blackouts, Albemarle EMC asked its members to voluntarily reduce power during the extreme cold snap.

"What occurred was not a case of us trying to reduce peak load to save money," said Albemarle EMC General Manager Gary Ray. "Instead, this was a case of power providers trying to protect their systems from potential damage caused by overload."

Thankfully, our region was spared the need to participate in the rolling blackouts. But next time we may not be so fortunate. When your co-op asks you to reduce usage or even turn off certain appliances, please do so. It helps all of us.



# Albemarle EMC is at Your Service

## Communication with Members is Essential

by Chris Powell, coordinator of public relations

As a member and an owner of Albemarle EMC, you need to be kept abreast of your co-op’s activities. Whether it involves co-op governance or changing business practices, it is essential that you be kept in the loop. To that end, we utilize multiple lines of communication designed to reach members in the way they most prefer.

### Albemarle Sounds

First and foremost is the flagship of our communication effort — the “Albemarle Sounds” newsletter, which you are reading right now. This newsletter is embedded in each *Carolina Country* magazine that arrives monthly in members’ mailboxes. Members continue to indicate a strong preference for receiving information through the magazine. The annual Cooperative Difference Survey revealed the following:

- 90 percent of members think the magazine is a must-read.
- 86 percent have read three out of the last four issues.
- 80 percent took action as a result of

reading an article.

- 63 percent read co-op news each month.
- 96 percent prefer the print magazine over digital versions.
- 100 percent are aware that *Carolina Country* is provided by their co-op.

We’ll continue to deliver a high quality publication to your mailbox each month. In each issue, you can expect to find the latest news on infrastructure improvements, energy efficiency, technological implementations, member meetings and much more.

### Fast Information

The co-op has been increasingly using text messages to communicate with members about time-critical information. Members with mobile devices have probably noticed Beat-The-Peak notices advising members to curb power usage during extreme hot and cold temperatures.

We also utilize Facebook, which is a form of social media. Members who have a Facebook account can find our Facebook page by typing Albemarle Electric Membership Corporation in the Facebook search box.

Once at our page, click *like* to receive regular updates. Facebook is where members will find concise pieces of information that are typically very current.

Also, when the co-op needs to broadcast information quickly, we utilize a phone system called Telelink, which enables Albemarle EMC to send out prerecorded messages

to all members or to a specific area of members.

Our Internet website ([www.aemc.coop](http://www.aemc.coop)) has timely information published on the home page as well as outage information. In addition, much of what you need to know about your cooperative can be found by exploring the menu links across the tops of each web page. The member portal, which is also available through the website, gives members the ability to make payments as well as access power usage history and account information. Members can also set up alerts, so they are automatically notified when their power usage exceeds a certain limit.

### Annual Meeting

In addition to participation in the cooperative’s governance, the company’s Annual Meeting provides an excellent opportunity for two-way communication. Each September, the membership meets in Hertford to conduct the co-op’s business. Most years, we have energy efficiency displays, informational videos, handouts and a question-and-answer table staffed with employees from each department.

### Lines of Communication

Of all the methods we have to reach members, my personal favorite is the one that begins with a greeting, a smile and my undivided attention. Two people meeting as equals to exchange information and ideas — I doubt a better method will ever be developed.

