



# Albemarle SOUNDS

March 2021

Proudly serving the members of Albemarle Electric Membership Corporation



**Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.**

**We are members of NC  
811. Call 811 or 1-800-  
632-4949 three business  
days before you plan to  
dig.**

## Albemarle Sounds

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

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Website and member portal:  
**www.aemc.coop**

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

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

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative   
The power of human connections®

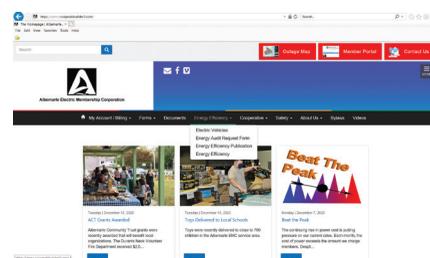
## AEMC Website Redesigned

Albemarle EMC will soon unveil its recently redesigned website.

The new website will utilize the same URL as the old website, [www.aemc.coop](http://www.aemc.coop) and still be hosted by Touchstone Energy at no charge.

The redesigned site utilizes a dramatically enhanced Co-op Webbuilder editing platform. The web editing software enables more creative ways to display information on the homepage. For example, multiple news cards can be displayed that link to pages containing the full articles. Also, the homepage can easily display videos as well as a slideshow. The site will utilize component design, which enables every piece of the site to be fully responsive and functional on all devices.

In addition, the entire website will be TTY compliant. People with disabilities, such as visual impairment, will be able



*Albemarle EMC's new website will feature a sharper look and enhanced accessibility.*

to interact with the website, using screen reading devices.

Popular links such as the Member Portal, Outage Map and Contact Us are located at the top right corner of each web page.

“We hope members find the redesigned website to be easily accessible and even more engaging,” said Albemarle EMC General Manager Gary Ray.

## Tarheel Teacher of the Week Announced



Megan Pennington, a teacher at Pasquotank County High School, was recently honored with the designation of Albemarle EMC Tar Heel Teacher of the Week.

Pennington and her Bright Ideas project “A Brighter Future” was recognized on a radio broadcast during a University of North Carolina basketball game.

## Efficiency Tip



Installing a low-flow shower head will save electricity by using less hot water.

# Members Win Drawing

Congratulations to Terry and Carolyn Nixon, of Chowan County.

They were drawn for a \$100 credit to their power bill. The drawing was held to encourage members to send the co-op their updated contact information. The information will be used to contact members for the co-op's recently launched Beat The Peak Program.



# Thanks for Response

Thanks to all of the members who took the time to return to the cooperative a form with updated contact information.

The form was part of a letter recently mailed to members announcing the launch of the co-op's new Beat The Peak program.

Members who returned the form were entered into a drawing for \$100. A total of 3,654 forms were returned, and the information has been entered into our system.

The updated phone numbers will be used to contact members, primarily by text message, for the co-op's Beat The Peak program. On Jan. 1, the co-op launched the program, with the goal of curbing power usage during peak times. Peak-use times are typically a few hours and occur only a few times a month and occur mainly in the mornings or evenings. Members will be alerted by text message when a peak-time period or time of high energy use across our co-op is expected. Energy reduction methods include reducing the use of hot water, delaying the use of a stove or adjusting a thermostat.

"By lowering usage during peak times, your cooperative can save considerable money and hopefully delay the next rate increase," said Albemarle EMC General Manager Gary Ray.



Albemarle Electric Membership Corporation

January 1, 2021

## Together We Save



Albemarle EMC has been able to operate without the need for a rate increase since 2012. We have accomplished this through efficient business practices, low interest rates and very good fortune. As a not-for-profit electric cooperative, electricity rates pay for the wholesale power we supply to our members as well as all costs required to keep that power available to you.

We are now faced with rising wholesale power costs that are putting upward pressure on rates. To try to delay the next rate increase, Albemarle EMC needs your help. We are launching a Beat The Peak program that involves members voluntarily reducing their energy usage when alerted by text message that a peak-time period of high energy use is expected. Peak-use times occur when a majority of our members use power simultaneously, spiking demand. These peak-use times typically are just a few hours and occur only a few times a month. Because additional generation has to be brought online to meet the spike in demand, Albemarle EMC must pay more for the wholesale power we provide to you during these peak times.

When alerted that a peak-use time is expected, we encourage you to lower energy use during the short time period through such methods as reducing the use of hot water, delaying cooking, only as water or adjusting your thermostat. By participating in the Beat The Peak program, members can play a direct role in lowering the cost Albemarle EMC pays for wholesale power and delaying the need for the next rate increase. To make sure we have your accurate contact information, please take the time to fill out the form below and mail it back to us. Thanks for helping us help you. Beat the peak, together we save.

Sincerely,

Gary Ray  
VP & General Manager

Enter to Win \$100!

Please fill out your contact information below, tear off this form and mail it back to the Cooperative to be entered into a drawing for a \$100 credit to your power bill. The form should be mailed to:  
Albemarle EMC, P.O. Box 68, Hartford, NC 27544-0068.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Land line: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*The above letter with form enabled members to update the contact information the co-op has on file.*

# Agricultural Partnerships Celebrated

Electric cooperatives such as Albemarle EMC were founded by mostly farmers, and we continue to work closely with our state's agricultural industry to build a brighter future for our rural communities. National Ag Day is March 23, but we are thankful every day to serve our agricultural members by helping them save money, improve efficiency and achieve sustainability goals.

It was with this in mind that Albemarle EMC and the rest of North Carolina's electric cooperatives recently developed a new initiative called BEST Solutions, which offers a wide range of customized electric tools and technologies related to Beneficial Electrification (BE) and Sustainable Technologies (ST) that can meet the needs of agricultural, commercial and industrial businesses.

New electric technologies are emerging rapidly and are making processes, devices and equipment cheaper, smarter and cleaner than ever. Using electricity instead of fossil fuels – what we call beneficial electrification – can yield benefits that include cost savings, higher productivity and reduced emissions. Examples include electric irrigation, electric equipment like forklifts and transportation refrigeration units and indoor agriculture.

Thank you again to our farmers and agricultural members for the vital ways you support our daily lives.

# AEMC Quickly Recovers from Snowstorm Outages

Albemarle Electric Membership Corporation was able to quickly restore more than 2,000 outages caused by a snowstorm that crossed the co-op's service area in late January.

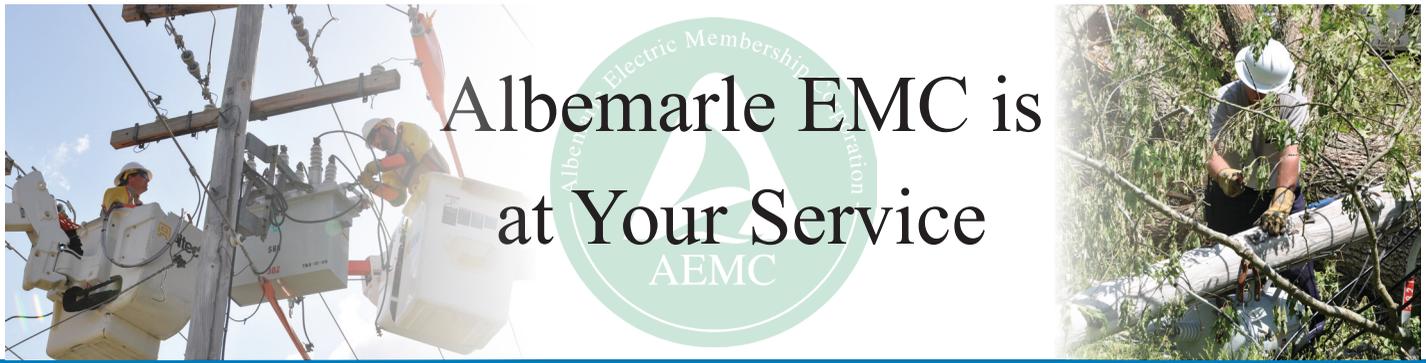
Power was restored to all Albemarle EMC members around 12:30 p.m., Jan. 28, the same day the outages occurred.

About 500 outages occurred early on the morning of Jan. 28, when a limb fell on a Dominion Energy transmission line that supplies power to two co-op metering points in Camden. Another 500 outages occurred in South Mills, due to high winds causing ice-coated power lines to slap together, tripping breakers. The Camden outages were restored around 9:30 a.m.

Also that morning, about 1,300 outages occurred in the New Hope Road area of Perquimans County. The majority of those outages in Perquimans resulted from a bad insulator on the power line feeding the New Hope Substation. Power was restored to most Perquimans members around midday.

"Albemarle EMC personnel did a fantastic job safely restoring power in winter conditions," said Albemarle EMC General Manager Gary Ray. "With the amount of ice accumulation we had on our lines, the outages could have easily been a lot worse."





# Albemarle EMC is at Your Service

How Albemarle EMC works to provide its members with the highest-quality service possible.

## Your Opinion is Important

by Chris Powell, coordinator of public relations

**“You’ll never have a product or price advantage again. They can be too easily duplicated. But a strong customer service culture cannot be copied.” – Jerry Fritz, corporate trainer and professional speaker.**

Albemarle EMC is keenly aware that our success as a cooperative is directly linked to the members we serve. Of course, providing members with a high level of customer service is what should be expected. But beyond that, we want our members to both feel and know that they matter. Because you do! Members come from all walks of life and are way more than a customer. You are a neighbor, a little league coach, a first responder, a cashier, a family member, a community.

But in order for us to best serve you, we first must know where you stand on several key topics. And to do that, one of our most useful tools is the National Survey on the Cooperative Difference your cooperative participates in each year. This survey samples a random selection of Albemarle EMC members, which enables us to gauge your level of satisfaction in numerous areas. It also provides helpful demographic information as well as show trends such as technology adoption. We would like to thank all of you who took the time to participate in the survey. The following are some of the highlights from this year’s results.

### American Customer Satisfaction Index Score

The ACSI is a benchmark of the overall satisfaction of Albemarle EMC members compared to other co-ops and similar industries. Albemarle EMC received a score of 86, which was 11 points higher than the national average for electric co-ops, included in the survey. Investor-owned utilities and the top municipal utilities all scored in the mid to low 70s.

### Member Engagement

Members were asked how they view themselves in terms of engaging with the cooperative. Forty-six percent identified as *Friends Of The Co-op*, 30 percent as *Promoters And Advocates*, and 15 percent as *Better Days Ahead*, and the few remainders fell under *Unhappy Pessimists* or *Disconnected*.

### Service Attribute Performance

On a scale of one to ten, members scored the cooperative on

performance aspects. The highest score of 9.28 went to *Provides Reliable Service*. The second highest score of 8.86 went to *Handles Complaints Promptly*. Members rated *Gives Good Advice On Energy-Related Matters* with a score of 8.19. The remaining scores were 7.68 or above in the categories of *Gives Money Back*, *Helps You Manage Electricity Usage*, *Informs You When Working In The Area* and *Communicates About Important Issues*.

### Community Engagement

Albemarle EMC has a long history of supporting our local community. On a scale of one to ten, members gave a score of 9.02 for *Helps To Prepare For And Responds To Natural Disasters*, an 8.82 for a score of *Supports Services Like Fire And Rescue* and a score of 8.78 for *Provides Support For Education And Local Schools*. Members gave scores of 8.5 to *Attracts Local Businesses And Jobs* and *Advocates For Affordable Energy*.

### Managing Energy Use

When asked where they turn to manage energy use, 24 percent of the members responded that they rely on the Internet. Twenty-three percent responded they rely on their co-op. A small percentage responded that they relied on friends/family, local contractors or the hardware store.

### Communications

Members were also asked if they recall seeing any communications from their electric cooperative during the past six months. Fifty percent responded yes, and 44 percent responded no. Of those that responded yes, 54 percent said they recalled seeing communication from their co-op in *Carolina Country* magazine, 26 percent in a printed newsletter and 17 percent through direct mail/bill. Members were also asked how they prefer their co-op communicate with them regarding matters such as high-bill alerts. Forty percent prefer a text message, 30 percent prefer email, 24 percent a phone call and a small percentage responded website or mobile app.

### Thank You!

Your honest feedback enables us to stay abreast of trends affecting our members. We are committed to staying in step with technological changes, while remaining faithful to our roots.