



May 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**

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

**Gary Ray, General Manager
Chris Powell, Editor**

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®

Co-ops Address Concerns with Legislators

Representatives from Albemarle EMC and other eastern North Carolina electric cooperatives recently met remotely with state legislators to discuss issues that could affect members.

The legislators included Sen. Bob Steinburg, Rep. Bobby Hanig, and Rep. Ed Goodwin. Rep. Howard Hunter could not meet with the group due to a scheduling conflict.

Energy policy and subsidization of cable company broadband costs were the two main topics discussed. The meetings with legislators were an attempt to get in front of bills that will likely be filed during this session of the General Assembly.

During the meeting, it was stressed to legislators that any changes to energy policy should not impair co-ops' abilities to deliver on our Brighter Future goals. These goals focus on affordability and innovation. North Carolina co-ops are working towards net-zero, carbon-neutral power delivered at the lowest possible cost by 2050 as well as a 50 percent reduction in carbon emissions by 2030.

Regarding innovation, electric co-ops were some of the first in the state to develop prepay programs, which offer needed flexibility to members. Co-ops are also developing a network of electric vehicle charging stations. In addition, every co-op is implementing new technologies that deliver reliable electricity across cooperative-operated electric distribution systems, while maintaining affordability and reliability.

Legislators were reminded that

electric cooperative support of energy policy changes is dependent on whether our members are held harmless.

"Costs matter, which means the details and pace of any changes must be carefully considered for their impact on co-op members," said Albemarle EMC General Manager Gary Ray.

There is currently an urgency to deploy broadband in unserved areas, and considerable federal grants have been made available to North Carolina broadband providers. Albemarle EMC supports cable companies providing broadband to unserved areas. However, we strongly oppose any attempt by cable companies to pass along costs associated with upgrading our utility poles to accommodate their broadband equipment.

When telecommunication companies want to attach their equipment to a utility pole, sometimes the pole first must be changed out for a taller pole to meet safety requirements. Typically, the company attaching the equipment has paid for pole-upgrade costs. Electric cooperatives believe that practice should remain. We do not believe those costs should be shouldered by our members.



Bright Ideas Applications Now Being Accepted

Local educators can now apply for a Bright Ideas grant from Albemarle EMC.

The grants, offered annually to teachers, bring creative classroom learning projects to life, support innovative projects that energize classroom learning and enhance student success. Educators can learn more and apply online at www.ncbrightideas.com.

“As students and teachers face the challenges of the past year, we’re pleased to continue our long history of supporting them with grants that fulfill needs in local classrooms,” said Albemarle EMC General Manager Gary Ray. “As a community-focused organization, we are committed to building a brighter future for our students and our region, and we encourage all educators with ‘bright ideas’ to submit an application.”

Albemarle EMC expects to award more than \$13,000 total in Bright Ideas grants this year to K-12 teachers across its service area in Chowan, Perquimans, Pasquotank, Camden and Currituck counties. Grants of up to \$1,500 max are available in all subject areas, and teachers

can apply individually or as a team.

Applications will be accepted through Sept. 15, 2021. Teachers who submit their application by the early bird deadline of Aug. 15 will be entered to win one of five \$100 Visa gift cards.

To apply, teachers must include a

budget; explanation of implementation, goals, creative elements and evaluation of the project. Applicants should also have approval from their

school’s principal. Applications will be judged through a competitive evaluation process, with judges looking for projects that feature inventive and creative approaches to learning. Grant-writing tips can be found at www.ncbrightideas.com.

For more than 25 years, Albemarle EMC has joined North Carolina’s 26 electric cooperatives in offering Bright Ideas grants to teachers. Since the program began in 1994, educators statewide have received more than \$13.6 million in Bright Ideas grant funding, and more than 2.7 million North Carolina students have participated in close to 13,000 Bright Ideas-funded projects.



Filing Period Open for Prospective Nominees



The Albemarle EMC Board of Directors during the cooperative’s 2019 Annual Meeting.

Anyone wishing to be nominated to run for a seat on the Albemarle EMC Board of Directors has until July 1 to inform the co-op of their intention.

Qualifying members who wish to be considered for nomination should notify Public Relations Coordinator Chris Powell by email (chris.powell@aemc.coop) or by addressing a letter to Chris Powell, Albemarle EMC, P.O. Box 69, Hertford, NC 27944. The prospective nominees will be given the name and address of the nominating committee members they will need to contact. The nominating committee will meet in mid to late July. Up for election this year are board of directors seats for the counties of Camden and Pasquotank as well as one at-large seat for all counties. The co-op’s Annual Meeting is tentatively scheduled to be held in-person on Saturday, Oct. 2.

May is Electrical Safety Month

As your local energy partner, and in honor of National Electrical Safety Month in May, Albemarle EMC is encouraging members to take time this month to talk to your family about safe electricity practices. You can start by sharing these simple tips:

Inside:

- Never put anything other than an electrical plug in an outlet. Use outlet covers to protect children.
- Examine electrical cords often for fraying or cracking, and throw away any worn cords.
- Extension cords are for temporary use. They are not intended for use as permanent home wiring.
- Don’t run cords under carpets or rugs.
- Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) outlets should be used in any area where water and electricity could mix—including kitchens, bathrooms, garages and outdoors—and should be tested monthly.
- Never touch electrical appliances with wet hands or use them near sinks, tubs, toilets or showers.
- Don’t use extension cords or multi-outlet converters for appliances. All major appliances should be plugged directly into a wall outlet.

Outside:

- Never go near or drive over a power line. If you encounter a downed line, stay far away and notify Albemarle EMC at 426-5735.
- Keep kites, model airplanes and metallic balloons away from power lines.
- Watch for overhead lines when using a ladder, working on a roof or carrying a long tool.
- Call 811 before any digging project.
- If it is necessary to use a portable generator, always operate the generator outdoors in an open area. Use an extension cord to connect the generator directly to the appliance, and ensure the extension cord has three prongs and is rated for the amount of power used by the appliance. Do not connect generators directly to household wiring unless the work is completed by a licensed electrician. This prevents back-feeding, which could electrocute utility workers.

Albemarle EMC is at Your Service

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

Co-op Has Many Lines of Communication

by Chris Powell, coordinator of public relations

Hopefully by now you have had a chance to visit Albemarle EMC's new website (www.aemc.coop). Considerable thought went into making the new site as user-friendly and enjoyable as possible. Echoing the nautical theme of our new logo, the site's main colors are baby blue, presenting a softer, cleaner feel. We have also used a larger text font throughout the site to lessen eye strain. With the new design, we are now able to bring news items to be prominently displayed on the home page. Also on the home page, a slideshow presents automatically changing information.

The site utilizes component design, which enables every piece of the site to be fully responsive and functional on all devices. We are also proud that the entire website is TTY compliant. People with disabilities, such as visual impairment, are now able to interact with the website, using screen-reading devices.

Albemarle EMC's new website is just one part of our commitment to the seven cooperative principles, which includes sharing information. Members are also owners and, as such, deserve to be kept in the know regarding co-op activities. We have several lines of communication that we utilize to ensure members receive timely information in the manner of their choosing.

Albemarle Sounds

The flagship of our communication effort is the "Albemarle Sounds" newsletter, which you are reading right now. In each issue, you can expect to find the latest news on infrastructure

improvements, energy efficiency, technological implementations, member meetings and much more. In an increasingly digitized world, the Albemarle Sounds is still the undisputed champion when it comes to reaching members. We are all so connected nowadays, that we are saturated with



Albemarle EMC recently unveiled its newly redesigned website.

digital media that competes for our attention, usually on a smart phone. However, the Albemarle Sounds, which is embedded in the Carolina Country magazine arrives in members' mailboxes. From there, the magazine likely ends up on a kitchen table or counter, patiently waiting for members to thumb through its content. Survey after survey has revealed high levels of readership of the Albemarle Sounds among the membership.

Digital Information

Some members prefer to receive their information through a screen. In addition to the website, we also cater to those members by utilizing social media.

Members can find our Facebook page by typing Albemarle Electric Membership Corporation in the search box, then clicking *like* on our page. Facebook is where members will find concise pieces of information.

Phone

On occasion, we also utilize a phone system called Telelink, which enables Albemarle EMC to broadcast important information in a timely manner. The cooperative's Beat The Peak program has the ability to text our members during times of peak power usage. The texts encourage members to reduce power consumption, which can delay the need for the next rate increase.

Annual Meeting

In addition to participation in the cooperative's governance, the company's Annual Meeting provides an excellent opportunity to receive information. Whether remote or in-person, the Annual Meeting is an opportunity to learn about the financial health of the cooperative as well as current issues and future trends that affect the cooperative's ability to provide reliable, affordable power.

In-Person

My personal favorite communication method is the one that begins with a handshake, a smile and my undivided attention. That has certainly been missing during the past year. My hope is that soon we will be able to meet again in person. I doubt any better method of communication will ever be developed.