



January 2021

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Albemarle Sounds

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Youth Tour Applicants Sought

Albemarle EMC is planning to send one junior or senior to this year's Washington Youth Tour.

The Youth Tour is an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. June 20-26, 2021. The deadline to apply is Friday, Jan. 15. To apply, please visit www.aemc.coop/content/washington-youth-tour-online-form and fill out the online form. A letter of recommendation from the student's principal, teacher or guidance counselor must be either mailed to Chris Powell, Albemarle EMC, 125 Cooperative Way, Hertford, NC 27944 or emailed to chris.powell@aemc.coop. Applicants must be between the ages of 16 and 18 at the time of the trip and enrolled as a junior or senior at a

high school in the counties of Chowan, Perquimans, Pasquotank, Camden or Currituck. COVID-19 safety precautions will be in place.

"The coordinators of this trip at the

N.C. Association of Electric Cooperatives are taking every precaution to ensure a fun, safe experience for this year's Youth Tour delegates," said Albemarle EMC General Manager Gary Ray. "This is an outstanding opportunity to learn how government as well as co-ops function."

Youth Tour delegates from across the state will

meet in Raleigh, then board two buses for Washington, D.C. The delegates will meet with legislators and tour many of the museums, memorials and monuments.



*Applications are being accepted
for this year's Washington,
Youth Tour.*

Help Delay Rate Increase

On Jan. 1, Albemarle EMC will launch its Beat the Peak program.

Members who participate will be alerted by text message when a peak time period or time of high energy use across our co-op is expected. Peak-use times are typically a few hours and occur only a few times a month during extreme outside temperatures. Albemarle EMC will ask members to join our efforts to lower costs by reducing their energy use during those peak times, which are often in the mornings or evenings. Energy reduction methods include reducing the use of

hot water, delaying the use of a stove or adjusting your thermostat.

"A large part of our power supply cost is determined by power used during high-energy use times," said Albemarle EMC General Manager Gary Ray. "If we can reduce the energy use during those few hours, we can lower our power costs and save members money."

Members who prefer not to participate in the Beat The Peak program may opt out by replying to the Beat The Peak text notification with the word "quit."

Toys Delivered to Local Schools



Albemarle EMC employee Ruben Chavez helps bag toys for the Light Up Christmas Toy Drive.

Toys were recently delivered to close to 700 children in the Albemarle EMC service area.

Though the co-op's charity Light Up Christmas Golf Tournament had to be canceled, sufficient funds were able to be raised through the generosity of the co-op's corporate partners and one individual. To maintain safety protocols, the toys were purchased online, and personal protection equipment was worn by Albemarle EMC employees who assisted with sorting and bagging the toys.

The names of children as well as any siblings were received from school coordinators. The toys were then bagged for each family and delivered to the schools. School personnel coordinated delivering toys to the families.

"We are grateful to all of the companies who helped us with this year's toy drive," said Albemarle EMC General Manager Gary Ray. "We are also thankful to the school personnel for their continued assistance."

ACT Grants Awarded

Albemarle Community Trust grants were recently awarded that will benefit local organizations.

The Durants Neck Volunteer Fire Department received \$2,000 to purchase turnout gear, consisting of bunker pants, coats and helmets.

The Edenton Farmer's Market received \$2,000 to fund their Double Bucks Program. The program enables low-income families to purchase fresh, healthy food for half the cost.



Image by Janet MacKenzie

The Edenton Farmer's Market was approved for an ACT grant.

"The market has noticed a large increase in customers that have EBT/SNAP benefits due to layoffs and businesses being temporarily closed or permanently shut down because of COVID-19," said Janet MacKenzie, market manager.

The Special Olympics North Carolina received \$2,750 to help purchase

health and fitness equipment for athletes to use at home as well as awards, personal protection equipment and other items.

Payment Assistance Available

Albemarle EMC recognizes that people sometimes need a helping hand.

To that end, your co-op would like members to be aware of a government program that offers assistance. The North Carolina Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) helps eligible households pay their heating bill. This program is administered through your county's Department of Social Services. LIEAP provides a one-time vendor payment to cover a heating bill, Dec. 1 through March 31 each year. Priority is given for households with an elderly person 60 and over, or a person receiving disability benefits. They are eligible to apply between Dec. 1 and Dec. 31 each year. All households can apply from Jan. 1 through March 31 or until the funds are

exhausted.

To be eligible, a household must be considered vulnerable at the time of the application. A household is vulnerable if it is subject to the rising cost of heating, has a heat source and is billed separately for the heat expense. Households must meet income eligibility. If the total household members' countable income for the month prior to the application is equal to or less than 130 percent of the current poverty level, and the household members' countable resources are \$2,250 or less as of the date of application, the household may be eligible for LIEAP.

If a household is found eligible for assistance through LIEAP, vendor payments will be paid directly to the heating source provider.

Thanks to Toy Drive Sponsors!

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Happy New Year!





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

Wayne Baker to Retire

Wayne Baker will retire this month, after serving more than 42 years for Albemarle EMC. Working as a lineman for the Town of Hertford, he was hired by Albemarle EMC in 1978. During the course of his career he has held the positions of first class lineman for 14 years, service representative for 23 years and senior staking technician for five years. He worked through outages caused by numerous hurricanes, ice storms, thunderstorms and even tornadoes.

While his years of service speaks for itself, his dedication was also evident in his willingness to volunteer his own time to help with the co-op's numerous charity programs. He could always be counted on to help with shopping for the Christmas toy drive, along with his wife, MarySue. He participated in Relay for Life, helping to sell chocolate Easter eggs and countless other community-support efforts the co-op has conducted through the years. But he will mostly be missed for his easy going nature and sense of humor that could bring levity even during the most stressful of times.

The following is an interview I was able to conduct with Wayne before he retired.

What was it like when you first came to work at the cooperative?

There was one crew with five men, two men on the bucket truck doing maintenance work and two servicemen. There was one line truck and one bucket truck. The line crew and servicemen were required to climb every day since they did not have access to a bucket truck. We also only had one hand trencher. There were four substations and two metering points. All communication was done with truck radios. Later, pagers were also used. Staking sheets were drawn by hand.

How has work changed since you first started?

There are now twice as many men on the line crew. And there are three line trucks, six bucket trucks and three service bucket trucks. Now there are seven substations and five metering points. All of the trucks have air conditioning, something that we didn't have when I started. We have four

trenchers and one track hoe. Truck radios and cell phones are used for communication, and the staking sheets are drawn on computer.

Looking back on your career, what are you most grateful for?

I am grateful that I was hired 42 years ago and made a career with Albemarle EMC. The opportunity for advancement and the benefits are why I chose this career.

What was the biggest challenge of your career?

I would have to say working in extreme weather conditions. Record breaking highs and freezing low temperatures make this type of work challenging. Especially during hurricanes and ice and snow storms.

What was the strangest experience you recall?

During a winter storm helping Roanoke EMC, I witnessed a strange sight. We were several miles away from the substation in the pitch dark, and the sky lit up like daytime. It actually flashed three times because ice was on the insulators, causing the power to track over, which made the substation kick out.

What accomplishments are you most proud of?

I am most proud of the work and jobs that I have held during my 42 years. I am proudest of my work relationships, coworkers as well as the consumers in the counties we serve. The proudest moments are those when we get the lights back on. The consumers are always so appreciative, and you realize it's more than just a job. It's about them and their families.

What will you miss most about working at the cooperative?

I will miss our Albemarle EMC family and the daily interaction with the consumers. During my career, I have been fortunate to meet and make many new friends.

If you had any advice for a person just starting work at the cooperative, what would it be?

Learn the job, take your time, work safely and know it's important to try to get along with everyone. Albemarle EMC is a great place to start a new career.

What are your plans after retirement?

Golf, golf, golf. But seriously, spending time with my family, especially my two sweet granddaughters.



Senior Staking Technician Wayne Baker will retire after 42 years of service with Albemarle EMC.