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Proudly serving the members of Albemarle Electric Membership Corporation

## Albemarle Sounds

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

# Youth Tour Applications Being Accepted

Albemarle EMC is offering two rising high school sophomores or juniors the chance for a trip of a lifetime.

Applications are now being accepted for Albemarle Electric Membership Corporation's Washington Youth Tour. High school juniors can apply online by visiting [aemc.coop/schools](http://aemc.coop/schools) and filling out an online application. The deadline to apply is Friday, Jan. 10. Two students will be selected based on the quality of a written essay and extracurricular activities.

"This trip gives students a behind-the-scenes view of Washington D.C. that few will ever experience," said Albemarle EMC General Manager Kevin Heath.

The trip will be June 15-21, 2025. Youth tourists from across the state will meet in Raleigh, then board a bus for Washington, D.C. While at the nation's capital, youth tourists from across the country will meet with legislators, take a harbor-party cruise, visit museums, memorials, monuments and make many friends. For more information, call 252-426-2586.



# Apply Now for Basketball Camp Scholarships

Albemarle EMC is now accepting applications for scholarships to attend basketball camps at two North Carolina universities this summer. Young men can apply for a scholarship to attend the Carolina Basketball School which will be held at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (dates to be determined). Young women can apply for a spot at the Wolfpack Women's Basketball Camp which will be held June 15-18 at N.C. State University in Raleigh.

To apply, students must be a sixth or seventh grade student during the 2025-2026 school year at a qualifying school. The application opens this month, and it must be submitted by March 31. To learn more and apply, visit [ncelectriccooperatives.com/sports-camps](http://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 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.



**Albemarle EMC will be closed Jan. 1 for New Year's Day. Our payment system will be down New Year's Day for maintenance. Happy New Year!**

# Education Grants Awarded



*Perquimans Central School teacher Emma Swinney is one of the 18 educators awarded Bright Ideas grants. She is congratulated by Assistant Principal Kadejha Elliott (left), Principal Holly Winslow and her students.*

Eighteen Bright Ideas grants totaling more than \$16,000 were recently awarded to educators.

Grandy Primary School teacher Terina Culpeper received \$409.40 for her project “Flexible Seating to Benefit Students.” She will use her funds to purchase an assortment of alternative seating options such as bean bag chairs, wobble stools and floor seating cushions.

Grandy Primary School teacher Beth Norvell received a \$554.59 grant for her project “Learning Through Play, Every Day.” Her grant will be used to purchase several manipulatives and play-based learning games to help with speech therapy for students.

Martha Foster, a teacher at Chowan Middle School, received a \$2,000 grant for her project “Bringing the Sunshine.” Foster will use the funds to promote kindness-projects at her school. Those projects will include events for diabetes and breast cancer awareness as well as several other projects.

Marina Bonomo, a teacher at W.T. Griggs Elementary School, received a grant for 1,988.27 for her project “Stories and STEM/STEAM @ the Library.” Her grant will be used to purchase several science sets as well as arts and crafts supplies to work on creative STEM-related projects.

Sheridan Moore, a teacher at Water’s Edge Village School, received \$2,268.82 for his project “Mini Metropolis Mayhem: Maps, Apps and Drones.” His grant will be used to purchase two Finch Classroom Flock robot kits. The goal of his project

is to improve math proficiency among third-grade students. The robots will be used to teach geometry, patterns, measurements and problem-solving.

Currituck County High School teacher Jennifer Robinson received a \$600 grant for her project “Science in the Kitchen.” Robinson intends to purchase kitchen appliances to teach chemical reactions that occur when cooking.

Weeksville Elementary School teacher Sheila Winslow received a \$1,650 grant for her project “Bulldogs Building a Future in STEM.” She intends to use her funds to purchase a Sphero Indi robot pack that will teach students programming and troubleshooting.

Perquimans Central School teacher Heather Rountree received \$1,116 for her project “Not Just a Reader, I Am An Author Too.” She will use her grant to purchase several sets of books to expose students to different and engaging writing styles.

Michele Swinney, a teacher at Perquimans Middle School, received an \$800 grant for her project “Ocean Action.” She intends to purchase a Density Flow Model Junior to teach students about thermoclines, air masses, weather fronts as well as wind and ocean currents.

Hertford Grammar School teacher Holly Daniels received a \$300.84 grant for her project “Legos, Let’s Learn Math.” She plans to purchase Lego sets and math games to teach math, particularly fractions, multiplication and division.

Asheton Smith, a teacher at Hertford Grammar School received a \$500 grant for her project “Reading Representation - Encouraging Literacy Engagement.” She intends to purchase culturally diverse reading material to help students identify with a wider range of characters and subjects.

Hertford Grammar School teacher

Rachel Plyler received a \$900 grant for her project “Finch Friends - Adventures in Coding, Calculating and Creativity.” She will use her funds to purchase a robot set to teach students programming and problem solving.

Perquimans High School teacher Jennifer Simons received a \$373 grant for her project “Monthly Interactive Library Lessons.” Her funds will be used to purchase wooden car kits, magnet kits and prisms. She intends to use the items to teach STEM subjects as well as the history of the alphabet and how to solve ciphers.

Jenna Caldwell, a teacher at Perquimans Central School, was awarded a \$750 Bright Ideas grant for her project “R.E.A.C.H. Me Kits.” Her grant will be used to create learning kits for exceptional children. Using the kits, the students will be able to work independently as well as in groups to meet learning, emotional and behavioral goals.

Stacey Pierce, a teacher at Perquimans Central School, received a \$478.94 grant for her project “Pumpkin, Pumpkin We’re Hear to Learn.” Pierce plans to purchase educational books, toys and other items about pumpkins, insects and animals.

Perquimans Central School teacher Emma Swinney received a \$659.14 grant for her project “Busy Little Turtles.” She intends to purchase an assortment of educational books, games and kits to teach reading and math.

Silvia Toth, a teacher at Perquimans County High School, received a \$500 grant for her project “Two Language Library.” Her grant will be used to purchase a combination of book genres written in Spanish to aid students learning Spanish.

Perquimans Central School teacher Megan Clayton received a \$300 grant for her project Bright Futures:Enhancing Early Literacy with Science Decodables.” She intends to purchase science decodable readers designed for Kindergarten through second grade to foster an interest in reading about science.

Supported by all 26 electric cooperatives in North Carolina, Bright Ideas grants have contributed nearly \$16 million to North Carolina classrooms, funding more than 14,700 projects. Close to four million students statewide have benefited since 1994.



# Albemarle EMC is at Your Service



## Clarissa Perry Concludes 36-Year Career



**Editor's Note:** Corporate Services Manager Clarissa Perry retires in January after serving Albemarle EMC for 36 years. During her career, she was known for her exceptional attention to detail, adaptability and problem solving. But what she will most likely be remembered for was her ability to handle even the most challenging circumstances with warmth, kindness and quiet resolve. She beamed a positivity that regularly uplifted her fellow employees. Her contributions to Albemarle EMC and its members have been beyond measure. The following is an interview recently conducted with her.

### **Why did you choose to work for Albemarle EMC?**

*The job I had in the loan department at First Citizens Bank in Elizabeth City was being transferred to Raleigh. I was looking for a job close to home in Hertford and heard about an opening at Albemarle EMC. I applied and was very blessed to get the job.*

### **What positions have you held with the cooperative?**

*In 1988 I was hired as a member service representative. About four years later, an employee retirement led to an opening in the Work Order Department, and I became the work order clerk. In 1997, I was promoted to work order accountant and in 2015, I applied for the upcoming manager of corporate services position and was chosen for the job.*

### **What was it like when you first came to work for Albemarle EMC?**

*Thirty-six years ago, everything was done by hand. Orders were handwritten, and our adding machine was our best friend. We formed lasting friendships with our members because they came to the office every month to pay their bill.*

### **Please describe how work was prior to the arrival of computers.**

*Work prior to computers was our way of life for several years. We learned how to do things manually and knew where all the numbers came from. In 1997, we converted to computers. It did make work easier and less time-consuming, but I am grateful that I learned how to do my job without a computer because it gave me a true understanding of the information.*

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

*The wonderful friendships I have made over the years with my co-workers, our members, our board of directors, attorney, and auditors, made a huge impact on my life and will stay with me.*

### **What was the biggest challenge of your career?**

*I have to say the biggest challenge of my career was during Hurricane Isabel. Every employee was at the office when it swept through our area. We had complete territory power outages, and roads were almost impassable. The damage was so widespread that linemen from many other co-ops came to help. Our office staff worked a lot of hours, but nothing compared to the hours our linemen tirelessly worked to restore power. It was one of the most challenging experiences, but also one of the most rewarding. We saw our community come together encouraging our crews with Thank You signs as they drove by. The church community helped prepare a thank you dinner for all the crews working; desserts were made by several director's*

*wives and others in the community. Even though it was one of the hardest times for many, we saw it bring out the best in our members and community.*

### **What was your funniest experience?**

*One of the funniest experiences was the first year AEMC participated in Relay for Life. Each staff member had a "Kiss a Pig" jar, and the one who raised the most money had to kiss a pig. The directors and employees helped fill the jar, wanting to see our staff kiss a real pig. During the relay, not just the one that raised the most money, but every staff member kissed a sweet, live baby pig. It was a memory I won't ever forget.*

### **What will you miss the most about working at the cooperative?**

*I have been so blessed working at the cooperative because I genuinely love my job. My co-workers are like family and many of our members have become lifelong friends. I will miss the amazing people that I have been so blessed to meet and work with over the years.*

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

*You have been given a wonderful opportunity to work at an organization that really cares about the members they serve and their employees. Try not to look at your job as work, but as a way to help people. Work hard and try to learn as much as you can so that you can be the best at what you do. Always have each other's back, whether you are a lineman or working in an office. Our small co-op family has experienced a lot of loss, life is precious, don't take time and each other for granted.*

### **What are your plans after retirement?**

*I am a blessed Mimi with four wonderful grandchildren that I cannot wait to spend more time with.*