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Proudly serving the members of Albemarle Electric Membership Corporation

Albemarle Sounds

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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 
The power of human connections®

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Albemarle EMC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Directors Elected at Annual Meeting

A total of 212 members recently participated in the 77th Albemarle EMC Annual Meeting to elect a slate of directors and receive an update about the state of their cooperative.

The following board directors were elected to three-year terms on the Albemarle EMC Board of Directors: Michael Whitehurst, representing Camden County, John Spence representing Pasquotank County and Linda Felton representing all counties.

Each participating member received the traditional \$2 bill, an insulated cooler bag and a boxed barbecue and fried chicken plate.

During the business meeting, members listened to speeches from Albemarle EMC President John Spence and General Manager Kevin Heath.

Spence reported that General Manager Kevin Heath had been hired to replace Gary Ray, who resigned to become head of Jones Onslow EMC.

“We received numerous applications for the position, and the board narrowed them down to three finalists,” Spence said. “Of those three finalists, the board unanimously chose Kevin Heath, who has been with the co-op for 16 years, serving as supervisor of engineering and then manager of engineering.”

Spence also reported that former Director Glenn Carey passed away in January, after serving the cooperative for 35 years.

“His extensive knowledge and easy going demeanor are missed by all of us,” Spence said, before asking the audience to join him in a moment of silence.

General Manager Kevin Heath also addressed the audience, giving them an update on the state of the power industry and Albemarle EMC.

“While renewable generation has its place, we also need generation that is reliable and dispatchable that can be called upon any time when we need it,” Heath said. “It was recently announced that Albemarle EMC, through the N.C. Electric Membership Corporation, will be partnering with Duke Energy to construct a new hydrogen-capable natural gas plant in Person County.”

Heath also explained the need for the co-op’s recent rate adjustment.

“Wholesale power costs are, by far, our largest expense, making up over 59 percent of our total expenses,” he said. “Since 2012, we have experienced per kWh increases in excess of 20 percent on yearly cost averages.”



From left: Linda Felton, Michael Whitehurst and John Spence were elected to serve three-year terms on the Albemarle EMC Board of Directors. Each of them would like to thank all of the members who attended the meeting and are appreciative of the votes cast in their support.

Closed for Thanksgiving



Albemarle EMC will be closed Nov. 28-29 for Thanksgiving. We hope you have a happy Thanksgiving.

Members Win Big at Annual Meeting

A total of \$2,000 in prize drawings was awarded during the recent Albemarle EMC Annual Meeting. Fifty-dollar prizes were awarded to the most senior man and woman in attendance. The most senior woman was Myrtle Copeland, and the most senior man was Albert Davis Sr.

Frankie Etheridge was the winner of the \$500 grand prize drawing. The remaining winners were as follows:

\$200 winners — Alice Barr and Elmer Stallings

\$100 winners — Jeneane Raper, Albert Bond, William Williams, William Meiggs

\$50 winners — John Whitehurst, Robert Moyer, Ruby Copeland, Jill Moore, Donald Madre, Thomas and Anita Blanchard, Gladys Griffin, Joyce Ferebee.

\$20 winners — James Burnham, Cora Griffin, Larry and Robin Scruggs, James White, Darrell Eure, Mark and Teri Smith, Larry Chappell, Melissa Oliver, Ethan Gross, Tommy McPherson



Credentials and Elections Committee member Wes Farley Jr. holds a ballot box for a member voting from their vehicle.



Larry Chappell was one of the lucky winners of the cash prize drawings.



A member casts a ballot during the election of Albemarle EMC Board of Directors. Members could vote at the in-person meeting or from their vehicle.



Albemarle EMC Dispatcher Katie Williams hands two meals to a member who participated in the drive-thru voting. Members could choose between registering and voting from their vehicle or attending the in-person meeting inside.



The John A. Holmes Army Junior ROTC color guard rendered colors for the Pledge of Allegiance and National Anthem.

Fundraiser Continues to Light Up Christmas

For the 19th year in a row, Albemarle EMC is conducting its Light Up Christmas fundraiser to help families in need during the holidays.

The fundraiser is mainly funded through the co-op's annual charity golf tournament, which was held this past April. Proceeds from the tournament are used to purchase toys for more than 500 children that have been identified by the school system. Each year, Albemarle EMC employees purchase, sort, bag and deliver the toys to local schools. From there, school coordinators arrange

to deliver the toys to the families.

Since its inception, the fundraiser has raised more than \$263,000, most of which comes from corporate sponsors participating in the golf tournament. However, members can contribute too. Before Thanksgiving, the cooperative is accepting new toys, cash or checks made out to the Albemarle Community Trust. Contributions can be dropped off at our office, located at 125 Cooperative Way, Hertford, NC.



Apply Now for 2025 Youth Tour

Rising high school juniors and seniors can now apply for the 2025 Washington Youth Tour.

The trip will be June 15-21. Students in Chowan, Perquimans, Pasquotank, Camden and Currituck counties can apply by visiting aemc.coop/washington-youth-tour-online-application.

During the trip, youth delegates will meet with legislators, visit the capital and other prominent landmarks as well as be eligible to compete for college scholarships. They will also meet other delegates from co-ops across the country.



Albemarle EMC is at Your Service

Malfunctioning Heat Pumps Can Raise Power Bills

by Chris Powell, director of public relations

A faulty heat pump can take considerable money out of a family's budget during the winter months. Having conducted numerous energy audits, I have encountered a scenario that, unfortunately, is common. Cold weather typically arrives the last half of December. A homeowner notices the bill they receive in January for December's usage has gone up substantially more than they expected. The unsuspecting homeowner attributes the increase to holiday lights, or cooking, so they disregard the increase. Then the homeowner receives their February bill for January's usage, and the bill has increased even more. The homeowner then thinks something may be wrong, but aren't positive. Next, March's bill arrives for February's usage, and the bill is significantly higher again. By now, they are convinced something is wrong. The homeowner contacts Albemarle EMC, and I am dispatched to perform an energy audit. When I notice that a home that uses around \$250 worth of electricity during the winter months has increased to a usage of nearly \$500, I first suspect the heat pump.

Air-to-air heat pumps can malfunction in a number of different ways. Often, the culprit is a unit that has run low on refrigerant. Many people don't realize that a heat pump requires refrigerant to heat as well as cool. When the refrigerant runs low, the heat pump will lose its ability to heat causing it to switch over to heat strips, which are also known as emergency heat and/or auxiliary heat. Heat strips provide good heat, but they are expensive to run.

One good way to tell if your system

is using its heat strips is to look at the thermostat. Thermostats will typically have a light or some sort of LED icon that lets you know that your heat strips are on. If your heat strips are on constantly, that is a good indication that your unit has a problem. However, if the heat strips only come on when the weather outside is below 40 degrees, that is typically normal.

There are three purposes for heat strips. First, the emergency heat setting enables a homeowner to manually turn on the heat strips to provide heat when the heat pump is broken and waiting to be repaired. Second, auxiliary heat enables the heat pump to turn on the auxiliary heat when it is too cold outside for the heat pump to heat the house. Air-to-air heat pumps work by extracting heat from the outside air and pumping it into the house. If there is insufficient heat in the outside air, the heat pump will use the auxiliary heat to heat the house. Third, the heat strips enable the heat pump to defrost the outside unit when it ices up, which is normal. In order for a heat pump to defrost itself, it must work in reverse. Instead of pumping heat into the house, it pumps heat from the house to the outside unit. But in order to do this, it must also blow cold air into the house. So to warm up that cold air before it comes out of your vents, the system turns on its heat strips to raise the temperature of the cold air to about 95 degrees.

Other causes of air-to-air heat pump malfunctions include the following: Heat pump fans will freeze, causing the motors to burn out and forcing the unit to rely on heat strips. Sometimes the thermostats are wired backwards from the first day they

are ever installed. When the homeowner turns the unit on normal heat, emergency heat comes on, and when the thermostat is put on emergency heat, the unit operates in normal mode. Occasionally, all of the heat strips will turn on when they are not supposed to. Other times, only one or two stages of heat strips will turn on, making the problem tricky to diagnose. I've seen thermostats with emergency heat or auxiliary heat lights that turn on when the heat strips are on, and others where the lights never came on, even when heat strips were being used. Some heat pumps will go straight to their heat strips, despite the outside temperature being warm enough for the heat pump to operate effectively. Other heat pumps will run properly for a short period of time, then switch over to heat strips for no explainable reason.

Heat pumps are complicated pieces of machinery and need to be monitored on a fairly regular basis. If your heating system is on, you should check periodically to make sure the fan on the outside unit is turning. If not, your system is using only heat strips. Also, your heat pump should produce air temperatures at the vents that are 95 to 100 degrees when heating. The air temperature can be checked with any thermometer. Your unit will always blow either the hottest or coldest air it can produce.

If you suspect your heat pump is not operating properly, Albemarle EMC will conduct an energy audit to inspect your unit and, to the best of our ability, determine if you should have your unit serviced by a licensed technician. To schedule an energy audit, call (252) 426-5735.