

# Along the LINE

**MARCH 2021**

For members of  
Edgecombe-Martin County EMC

## 2021 Annual Meeting Notice

Dear Member:

The 84th Annual Meeting of Members of Edgecombe-Martin County Electric Membership Corporation will be held on Thursday, March 25 (with an inclement weather date of Wednesday, March 31), at the headquarters facility, NC Hwy. 33E, Tarboro, from 10:00 a.m. until 5 p.m.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Edgecombe-Martin County EMC will hold another drive-thru annual meeting. Use the concrete driveway to enter the drive-thru annual meeting registration. Registered members and their immediate families are invited to attend.

The purpose of this meeting is: (1) the presentation, consideration of, and action upon reports by officers, directors, and committees, (2) the election of directors and, (3) the transacting of any other business that comes before the meeting. The board president and CEO will make their annual reports to the membership on the state of the Cooperative. Please mail questions pertaining to your cooperative prior to March 2, to Winston Howell, CEO, P.O. Box 188, Tarboro, NC 27886, so

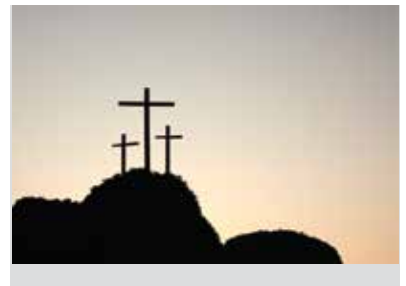
we may have time to compile any information or data your request may require.

The business agenda for the meeting is located on the inside cover page and highlights on the nomination for a director are included on page 18. If you do not plan to be present and wish to cast a vote, please complete, sign and return the proxy form on the inside front cover of this magazine by mail to the address noted.

Electric bill credits will be drawn the next business day. Registered members and their immediate families are invited to attend.

The business session will begin at 4 p.m. Those who wish to attend the business session will be allowed to park your car and listen to the business session from the radio. For those who do not wish to stay for the business session we will Facebook Live this event. We look forward to seeing you there.

Yours Truly,



### Holiday Closing

Edgecombe-Martin County EMC will be closed on Friday, April 2, in observance of Good Friday.

Payments after office hours and on holidays can be made at the kiosk under the drive thru canopy, by calling our automated telephone service at 1-855-356-6358, placed in the night deposit box or you may choose to utilize the convenience of online bill-pay by logging on to [ememc.com](http://ememc.com)

To report an emergency after hours, please call 1-800-690-0657

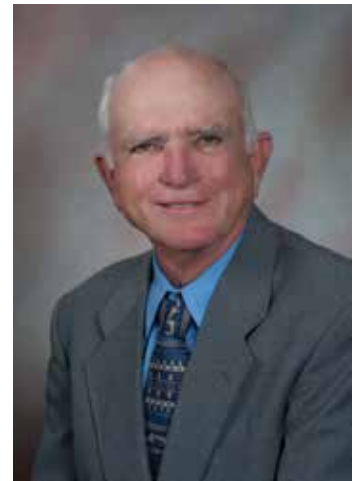
# Nominee for Director

## Joe Suggs (E-1) Nominated by Committee

Joseph A. (Joe) Suggs is a member of the Cooperative's Board of Directors and has served on the board since June 1992, representing directorate district E-1.

Mr. Suggs is a graduate of West Edgecombe High School and earned an Associate's Degree in Agricultural from NC State University. Suggs is actively engaged in farming in the northwestern area of Edgecombe County, and strives to promote all farming operations as well as environmental issues and fair-land management. Suggs indicated that farming has become increasingly difficult throughout eastern North Carolina with the many government changes and policies over the years. Mr. Suggs recently served on the board of supervisors of the Edgecombe County Soil and Water Conservation District, and on the board of directors for Edgecombe County Farm Bureau.

In September 1999, he was awarded the Credentialed Cooperative Director certification from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) and in 2017 was recognized for 25 years of service as an Edgecombe-Martin County EMC board member. Mr. Suggs has been a member of Edgecombe-Martin County EMC since 1975 and is glad to have his sons, Chad and Adam, helping with the family farming operations. Mr. Suggs resides near Whitakers.



## Remote Options to Make Paying Your Bill Easier

The lobby is still closed due to COVID-19 but Edgecombe-Martin County EMC offers a variety of ways to help ease the process of paying your electric bill.

**Pay by Phone:** Members can pay their monthly bills via phone using our free automated system. Pay by phone is available 24/7 and accepts Visa, Mastercard, and Discover. To pay by phone, call 1-855-356-6358 and have your account number ready.

**Automated Bank Draft:** Members can choose to have their monthly power bill automatically deducted from a designated bank account each month. Once the bank deducts the amount of your bill from your account,

that money is automatically credited to your account. Account drafts usually take place 5 days before the due date indicated on the front of your statement. To set up automatic bank draft, you can use the SmartHub App, or mail or bring a voided check into the office.

**Online Bill Pay:** You can conveniently pay your bill online by logging on SmartHub or ememc.com. Once logged in, you can pay your bill, check your energy usage, or update your information.

**Kiosk:** Pay with cash, debit or credit card, any time of the day, seven days a week. Payments are applied to your account immediately and there are no additional fees.

**Mail/Night Deposit/Drive-Thru Window:** Members always have the option of mailing in their payment, using the night deposit drop box, or the drive-thru window. At the drive-thru members must pay with cash or check only.



It PAYS to be a member-owner of Edgecombe-Martin County EMC! Earning and receiving capital credits is just one of the benefits of being a member.

When you signed up to receive electric service from Edgecombe-Martin County EMC, you became a member of a not-for-profit, member-owned electric cooperative. Electric cooperatives are the only electric utilities where every member is part-owner of the business. That makes us unlike any other form of electric utility. Municipal utilities and power districts are government entities, while stockholders own investor-owned utilities. Only electric cooperatives return margins—similar to profits—to the members who used electricity. That's the Cooperative Difference!

Every business needs a source of funding, or capital, to operate efficiently. Our largest source of capital is generated from the sale and distribution of electricity to you, our members.

Since we operate on a non-profit basis, we treat our year end equity different than a for profit business. We are required to allocate our annual margins to members based on the patronage associated with their energy consumption.

Capital credits are allocated annually after our financial records are closed and audited. We then use the capital to fund general operations, improvements in service, and technology upgrades. Using member capital to finance these types of projects also helps reduce the need for borrowing long-term funds.

Since each member is an owner and has an economic stake in the Cooperative, they are also entitled to a return of their investment. To accomplish this, a general retirement is declared by the board of directors to distribute patronage capital back to the members on a reasonable and systematic basis. Management and the board of directors evaluate the financial stability of the Cooperative and verify that the Cooperative is complying with applicable federal regulations before the board of directors approves a plan to retire capital credits.

We have traditionally retired patronage capital on a 20-year cycle using a hybrid method so that our long-



term members are consistently receiving a portion of the capital they invested many years ago. However, this method also returns a small portion of the more recent members' investment and reduces over all patronage accounts so the total retirements aren't excessively large in the future. This year, our board approved retiring 40% of the remaining patronage capital from 1998 and half of a percent of all remaining years' patronage capital through the year ended December 31, 2019.

Checks and bill credits will be issued in the first week of March to members that have been allocated patronage through December 2019. Because of the costs associated with processing and mailing, we do not issue checks for less than \$10.00. If you are a current member and your retirement is less than \$10.00, it will appear as a credit on your bill.

It's very important to keep your member profile up-to-date so that your patronage capital retirements can follow you if you move. Each year, hundreds of checks are returned because the addressee has moved and left no forwarding address. We produce a report that we post on our website each year, to help identify these "unclaimed" retirement checks.

For more information concerning Capital Credits, or to update your mailing address, call our Member Services Department at 252-823-2171.

Cooperatively,

*Melinda Nimmo*

Melinda Nimmo

# Right-of-Way Maintenance Program

While Edgecombe-Martin County EMC cannot control the severe weather that sometimes causes power outages, we work year-round to reduce the frequency and duration of outages through our right-of-way maintenance program.

Having a proactive tree-trimming and right-of-way maintenance program is crucial to the cooperative's mission of delivering reliable power to our members. However, even with a proactive right-of-way maintenance program, major storms often cause trees outside the right-of-way to make contact with the lines and cause outages.

Tree trimming and various forms of vegetation management are essential to ensuring reliable electric service. With more than 1,400 miles of electric line stretching across seven counties, there are many opportunities for tree limbs to come into contact with electric lines. Tree limb to electric line contact is the primary cause for electric blinks

and power outages. Vegetation management is so important to your service reliability that it is one of Edgecombe-Martin County EMC's largest annual expenses.

Edgecombe-Martin County EMC uses various techniques for actively managing our right-of-ways. Our right-of-ways are managed on a three-year rotation, so we can continually address vegetation growth across our entire distribution and transmission systems.

A large part of our distribution system right-of-way is cut using bucket trucks and personnel that are trained in cutting around power lines. This same method is used for trimming around service drops on a member's property. You may see some tall equipment being used for trimming as well, which is called sky trimming. This equipment allows the tree trimmers to work in the most difficult terrain where only climbing crews could go before.

Another method we use to manage our right-of-ways is the spraying of herbicides. Contract crews that are licensed and experienced will spray areas to help reduce the need for cutting and mowing right-of-ways in specific areas.

Remember to contact Edgecombe-Martin County EMC if you will be removing trees in close proximity to power lines. The Cooperative will provide assistance if necessary to prevent damage to our facilities and possible safety hazards associated with tree removal along the power line right-of-way.

## Along The LINE

[ememc.com](http://ememc.com)

### Board of Directors

Bert Pitt, President  
Jimmie Jernigan, Vice Pres.  
Joseph Suggs, Secretary  
Billy Trevathan, Treasurer  
Rejeanor Scott  
Norman A. Roberson  
Wayne Harrell  
Edward B. Simmons, Attorney

### CEO

Winston T. Howell

### Editor

Monica Speight

Hwy. 33 East, P.O. Box 188  
Tarboro, NC 27886  
252-823-2171 • 1-800-445-6486  
Office Hours: 8 a.m.–5 p.m. (M–F)

### After Hours Outage Reporting 1-800-690-0657

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