



Along the LINE

JANUARY 2024

For members of
Edgecombe-Martin County EMC



First Responder and Farm Safety Training

Edgecombe-Martin County EMC is set to host our annual First Responder and Farm Safety Training on Tuesday, February 27, starting at 6:00 p.m.

Recognizing the critical importance of electrical safety knowledge - the primary aim of our First Responders and Farm Safety Electrical Hazards Training is to equip first responders and farm equipment operators with the skills to navigate emergency situations involving electric utility lines safely.

This comprehensive training session caters to firefighters, law enforcement, EMTs, and other first responders who, being the initial respondents in emergencies, are particularly vulnerable to electrical contacts and fires. It's equally crucial for those working on farms to be aware of potential risks and inadvertent encounters with electricity. A deep understanding of these hazards, coupled with proper response techniques, contributes to the overall safety of everyone involved.

Historically, Edgecombe-Martin County EMC used to conduct high voltage demonstrations and safety discussions at each local fire department. However, in recent years, we've transitioned to organizing one large annual event, inviting all first responders and farm equipment operators to participate.

This training session will cover a diverse range of electrical hazards that may be encountered. Dinner will be provided, and the entire training is offered at no cost by Edgecombe-Martin County EMC. We encourage you to seize this opportunity to enhance your department's training. For RSVP or more information, please contact Monica Speight at (252) 641-9502 or monicas@ememc.com. Kindly provide the number of attendees by Friday, February 17.



Holiday Closing

Edgecombe-Martin County EMC will be closed on Monday, January 1 in observance of New Years Day.

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, Smarthub, or you may choose to utilize the convenience of online bill-pay. To report an emergency after hours, please call 1-800-690-0657.



Annual Meeting Date

The 2024 Annual Meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, March 28th, 2024.

More details to come in the February newsletter and on our Facebook page.

Agriculture Tax Exemption Forms

We understand the importance of the farming industry and its impact on the rural communities we serve.

If your agricultural business has been granted a Certified Tax Exemption by the North Carolina Department of Revenue, you may be eligible for a valuable benefit—sales-tax exemption on electricity used for farming and manufacturing purposes.

The sales-tax exemption applies specifically to electricity used directly in agricultural production. This encompasses a wide array of activities, from powering irrigation systems to lighting for greenhouse cultivation. By leveraging this exemption, your farm can enjoy cost savings that contribute to the overall financial health of your operation.

If you haven't already obtained your tax exemption forms, we encourage you to explore the application process with the NC Department of Revenue. This unique identifier not only facilitates sales-tax exemption on electricity but also streamlines various other agricultural benefits.

To qualify, your business must meet the criteria set by the Department of Revenue. Typically, this involves engaging in activities classified as agricultural production and demonstrating compliance with relevant regulations. Once approved, you'll be on your way to reaping the rewards of tax savings.

For those who already have a tax-exempt form on file, remember to update it annually to ensure continued



Welcome Revels and Simpson to Our Team

We are thrilled to introduce our latest additions to our team, Ryan Revels and Gavin Simpson.

Joining us as the Apprentice Line Technician is Ryan Revels. Ryan brings a fresh perspective to learn the ropes of the electric cooperative. As an apprentice, he is eager to absorb knowledge from seasoned professionals, and we are confident that his enthusiasm will be a valuable asset to our cooperative. We look forward to watching him grow and develop into a skilled technician, contributing to the reliable and efficient delivery of electricity to our members.

We are also pleased to welcome Gavin Simpson as our Intern Line Technician. Gavin is embarking on a journey to expand his skills in the electric industry.

As an intern, Gavin will be working closely with our experienced team, gaining insights into the particulars of line technician responsibilities. His dedication and eagerness to learn make him a great addition to the cooperative, and we are confident that he will make the most of this opportunity.

Both Ryan Revels and Gavin Simpson share a common thread with our cooperative—they are proud community members and their commitment to our service area is evident. With their fresh perspectives and dedication, we anticipate great things from these new team members.

Together, we continue to power our community and build a brighter future for all our members.



Ryan Revels & Gavin Simpson

lines

V.P. OF ENGINEERING AND OPERATIONS
MIKE JOHNSON

We know that our members depend on us to provide the electricity they need to power their lives. We believe the best time to fix a power outage is before it ever happens. That's why we design our system with built-in reliability measures, and we conduct routine inspection and maintenance like pole inspections and right-of-way vegetation control.

At Edgecombe-Martin County EMC, we strive to balance maintaining beautiful surroundings and ensuring a reliable power supply by keeping power lines clear in rights of way (ROW). While we recognize and appreciate the beauty of trees, there are three main benefits to tree trimming in ROW areas: Safety, Reliability, and Affordability.

From a safety aspect, overgrown vegetation and trees pose a risk to power lines. For example, if trees are touching power lines in our members' yards, they can pose a grave danger to families. If children can access those trees, they can potentially climb into a danger zone. Electricity can arc, or jump, from a power line to a nearby conductor like a tree. A proactive approach also diminishes the chances of fallen branches or trees during severe weather events that make it more complicated and dangerous for line technicians to restore power.

Of course, one of the biggest benefits of a proactive vegetation management program is reliability. Strategic tree trimming reduces the frequency of downed lines causing power outages. Generally speaking, healthy trees don't fall on power lines, and clear lines don't cause problems. Proactive trimming and pruning keep lines clear to promote reliability. At Edgecombe-Martin County EMC, trees are the number one cause of power outages at 43 percent of disruptions. Following closely behind are animal-related outages at 21 percent, weather-related incidents at 12 percent, and car accidents at 2 percent. Equipment malfunctions account for 10 percent of outages, leaving the remaining 12 percent attributed to miscellaneous reasons.

This breakdown not only underscores the critical impact of vegetation management but also emphasizes the diverse challenges we navigate in ensuring an uninterrupted power supply. By understanding these nuances, we empower ourselves to implement targeted strategies that enhance the resilience and dependability of our power infrastructure.

As you know, Edgecombe-Martin County EMC is a not-for-profit cooperative, and that means we strive to keep our costs in check in order to keep our rates affordable. This extends to our approach to vegetation management. If trees grow too close to power lines, the potential for expensive repairs also increases. Effective tree trimming and other vegetation management efforts keep costs down for everyone.

Edgecombe-Martin County EMC uses various techniques for actively managing our right-of-ways. Our right-of-ways are managed on a four-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 pruned 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 selective 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.

Investing in right of way maintenance is not just about keeping the landscape tidy—it's a strategic effort to ensure a safe, reliable and resilient power supply. By understanding the costs involved and the direct impact on preventing outages, we can make informed decisions that benefit both the co-op members and the communities we serve. By actively managing our right-of-ways through techniques such as tree trimming, sky trimming, bushhogging, and herbicide spraying, we not only ensure the safety and reliability of our power lines but also contribute to cost-effective operations. We recognize the critical impact of vegetation management on preventing outages and lowering the risk of expensive repairs, allowing us to keep our costs in check and rates affordable for our co-op members.

Cooperatively,

Mike Johnson

Mike Johnson

Utility Bill Assistance Programs

Discover these invaluable resources that offer support to members of our community in times of need. If you find yourself requiring assistance, explore the following avenues:

LOW INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

- LIEAP stands as a federally funded initiative designed to alleviate the burden of energy bills for eligible households through a one-time vendor payment. To qualify, applicants must meet specific income criteria and bear responsibility for heating costs. Household units containing an individual aged 60 or older or disabled persons receiving services through the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services can apply for assistance from Dec. 1–31. Other households have the opportunity to submit their applications from Jan. 1 – March 31 or until funds are depleted.

For application submissions, reach out to your county's Department of Social Services through the provided contact details:

Edgecombe County DSS – 252-641-7611

Nash County DSS – 252-459-9818

Martin County DSS – 252-789-4400

Pitt County DSS – 252-902-1110

Beaufort County DSS – 975-5500

Halifax County DSS – 252-536-2511



CRISIS INTERVENTION PROGRAM

- The CIP, a federally funded program, serves as a lifeline for individuals and families grappling with heating or cooling-related crises. A household is deemed to be in a crisis if it is presently undergoing or is at risk of facing a life-threatening or health-related emergency without access to sufficient, timely, and appropriate assistance from any other source. Applications for CIP are accepted throughout the entire year, ensuring that help is available when it's needed the most.

Along The LINE

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January Rights-of-Way

In order to provide safe, affordable, and reliable electrical service, we maintain the rights-of-way under and around our power lines. We do this through rights-of-way and vegetation management. This requires pruning, removing, and cutting brush to prevent vegetation from interrupting your electric service.

Throughout January, Burford's Tree will utilize the sky trim, buckets and bushhogging equipment, out of our Lee-Leggett substation, in the Race Track road, Horse Pen Swamp road, Highway 903, and Prison Camp road areas, and various hotspots on the system.

Examples of trimming methods

Flat Top Trimming



Before



After

Trees are cut 15 feet below the lowest electric line.

Side Trimming



Before



After

Trees are cut at least 15 feet from the center of the utility pole.

"L" Trimming