

# Along the LINE

**JANUARY 2026**

For members of  
Edgecombe-Martin County EMC

## Racing to the Rescue

Twenty-five electric cooperative lineworkers from across North Carolina recently put their skills to the test during the 2025 Pole Top Rescue Competition, held in October at Nash Community College.

The event highlights the quick thinking, technical ability, and safety training required of lineworkers who keep our communities powered. Competitors race against the clock—and one another—to safely rescue a fellow “injured” lineworker from atop a utility pole. Each participant, wearing up to 20 pounds of climbing gear, must radio for help, climb 20 feet, secure and lower a 105-pound mannequin then begin CPR—all while being judged on safety, accuracy and speed.

To earn a spot at the state competition, each participant first had to win their local cooperative’s qualifying event. Edgecombe-Martin County EMC was proudly represented by First Class Line Technician, Tyler Perkins, who completed the challenge and demonstrated the skill and dedication that define our crews.

“Every line technician hopes they’ll never have to use this type of rescue,” said Perkins. “But this competition is an important way to practice and build confidence, so if the situation ever arises, we’re ready to respond.”

“Our line technicians train year-round to be prepared for any situation,” said CEO Winston Howell. “This competition is a great way to showcase their expertise and the commitment it takes to safely serve our members every day.”

The biennial event, hosted by North Carolina’s Electric Cooperatives, is judged by members of its safety and training team. All electric cooperative line technicians must be able to perform this same rescue in under five minutes to maintain their certification to work on power lines—proof of just how prepared they are to protect one another and the communities they serve.



### Holiday Closing

Edgecombe-Martin County EMC will be closed on Thursday, Jan. 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 1-844-967-2463 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 2026 Annual Meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, March 26, 2026.

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

# Welcome Barkley to our Team

Edgecombe-Martin County EMC is excited to welcome Reginald Barkley to our team as our new Custodian

Born and raised right here in our service area, Reginald is a familiar face to many in the community. He's excited to join the cooperative family and looks forward to learning more about our members and the work we do to serve them every day.

Outside of work, Reginald enjoys bowling and pressure washing, two activities that fit perfectly with his energetic and hands-on personality. Since joining the team in October, he's already made a positive impact through his strong work ethic and great attitude.

Please join us in giving Reginald a warm Edgecombe-Martin County EMC welcome!



## First Responder and Community Safety Training

Edgecombe-Martin County EMC will host our annual First Responder, Farm and Contractor Safety Training on Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2026, at 6 p.m. This free event is designed to strengthen safety awareness and provide valuable, hands-on training for those who regularly work around electricity.

### Protecting First Responders

Firefighters, law enforcement officers, and EMTs are often first on the scene when electrical hazards are present. This session will cover how to safely approach downed power lines, respond to electrical fires and recognize potential dangers in emergency situations. By understanding the risks, first responders can better protect themselves and the people they serve.

### Promoting Farm Safety

Farmers face unique hazards when operating large machinery near overhead or underground lines. Several farm-related electrical accidents occurred in our area last year, leading to outages and serious safety risks. This year's training will highlight real-life scenarios, safe work practices, and how to react quickly and correctly if equipment contacts a line.

### Educating Building Contractors

Contractors will also benefit from this year's program. Whether lifting materials, using cranes, or moving heavy equipment, understanding the dangers of working around power lines is critical. The training will include best practices for maintaining safe distances and preventing accidental contact.

### Building a Safer Community

This combined event replaces individual department



visits to bring everyone together for a stronger, community-wide focus on electrical safety. Attendees will take part in live high-voltage demonstrations, learn about common hazards, and explore effective strategies to prevent accidents.

Dinner will be provided and training certificates available for attendees. We encourage all first responders, farmers and contractors to join us for this important event. Help us spread the word to your local fire departments, farming families and building crews.

To RSVP or for more information, contact Monica Speight at 252-641-9502 or [monicas@ememc.com](mailto:monicas@ememc.com). Please confirm your number of attendees by Friday, Jan. 30, 2026.

## Rebuilding for Reliability: Mayo-Dunbar Substation Upgrade

As part of our continued commitment to provide safe, reliable and affordable power to our members, Edgecombe-Martin County EMC is investing in an important infrastructure project — the rebuilding of our Mayo-Dunbar Substation. This project has been in the planning stages for quite some time, and over the past several months, we've begun taking major steps toward making it a reality.



The current Mayo-Dunbar Substation has served our members well for many years, but its location has presented growing challenges. Situated in a low-lying area, the site has become increasingly prone to flooding — a risk that can threaten essential equipment and disrupt service. With reliability as one of our top priorities, we made the decision to relocate the substation to higher ground located just behind the existing site. This move will help protect critical infrastructure from flood damage and ensure that our system remains strong and dependable, even during severe weather events.

Substations like Mayo-Dunbar are the heart of our distribution system. They contain protective devices, voltage regulators, and transformers that step down electricity from high-voltage transmission lines to levels that can safely power homes, farms, and businesses. Every improvement we make at this level of our system has a direct impact on how efficiently and reliably power reaches our members.

Beyond simply replacing what's already there, this new substation will also increase our system's capacity and strengthen our ability to meet the area's growing energy needs. As new development and industrial growth continue across our service territory, the demand for reliable electricity grows right along with it. One upcoming project, a new natural gas pumping station being built by Piedmont Natural Gas, will be served by this upgraded facility. By planning ahead and designing the substation to carry additional load, we're making sure our system remains equipped to support both current members and future growth.

Projects like this don't happen overnight. They require careful planning, coordination and investment — all guided by our cooperative principles and our responsibility to you, our members. Relocating and rebuilding this substation represents another step forward in our long-term strategy to modernize our electric system, improve reliability, and prepare for the future.

At Edgecombe-Martin County EMC, we take great pride in being your local energy partner. Every upgrade we make is done with your best interest in mind, ensuring that our system remains strong, resilient and ready to meet the needs of our communities for generations to come.

Cooperatively,

*Mike Johnson*

Mike Johnson



***The current Mayo-Dunbar Substation underwater during Hurricane Matthew.***

# Agriculture & Manufacturing Tax Exemption

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.

Because every situation is unique, we encourage members to consult their tax advisor or accountant to determine how this exemption may apply to their individual circumstances.

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 your benefits continue without interruption. Please note that a



separate form must be on file for each account to qualify for tax exemption. If your tax exemption status changes, notify us promptly so we can assist you in updating your records and maintaining compliance.

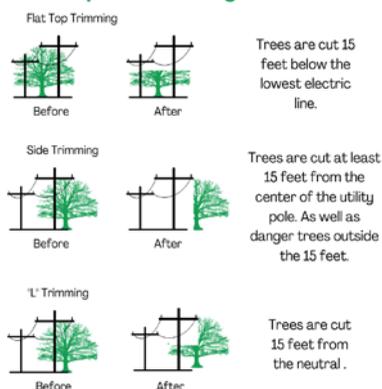
## January Rights-of-Way

As we step into 2026, we're moving into new areas to ensure your electric service remains safe, affordable and reliable. This year, our teams will focus on maintaining rights-of-way around power lines served by the Rocky Mount and Mayo Dunbar substations.

Maintaining these rights-of-way is critical for preventing vegetation from interrupting service. Our vegetation management efforts include pruning, brush cutting and removing trees and other growth that could pose a risk to the system. These proactive measures help us minimize outages and improve overall reliability for our members.

In January, Lucas Tree Experts will work in the Rocky Mount area, focusing on Springfield Road and other hotspots across the system. Crews will utilize equipment such as the sky trim, bucket trucks and bush hogs to effectively clear these areas.

### Examples of trimming methods



## Along The LINE

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