

# Along the LINE

**FEBRUARY 2026**

For members of  
Edgecombe-Martin County EMC



## Join us for the 89th Annual Meeting of Members

Edgecombe-Martin County EMC invites members to our 89th Annual Meeting, Thursday, March 26, at the Cooperative from 11 a.m. until 6 p.m.

The Annual Meeting of Members serves as an opportunity to share important updates with our members, including information about state and national issues impacting the co-op, as well as a review of the previous year's financial performance and our outlook for the year ahead.

For the past five years, Edgecombe-Martin County EMC has embraced a drive-through format for the Annual Meeting, a change initially prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This shift has allowed us to continue engaging with our members in a safe, efficient way, and your feedback and participation

have shown your appreciation for this more convenient approach.

This year, we will once again host the meeting in a drive-through format from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., with the business meeting taking place at 6 p.m. in our main office lobby.

Members can enter through the receiving entrance, where they will be able to submit their ballots. By doing so, you'll also be entered into our prize drawing—no need to be present to win!

We look forward to seeing you and thank you for your continued support.



**Ronald  
McDonald  
House®**  
Eastern North Carolina

You can make an impact at the Ronald McDonald House of Eastern North Carolina by donating items on the House's wish list at our Annual Meeting.

Please remember the House is just like your home and can use many of the same items you use each day.

For the health and safety of House guests and volunteers, items should be new. Due to stringent health codes, please do not forget to check expiration dates.

Listed below are the most needed items at the Ronald McDonald House of Eastern North Carolina.

- **Bag of Chips**
- **Pack of Nabs**
- **Bags of Popcorn**
- **Canned Pasta**
- **Seasonings**
- **Baking Mixes**
- **Fruit Cups**
- **Puddings**

## Local Student Blaine Dawes Earns Spot on Washington Youth Tour

Blaine Dawes will attend this year's Washington Youth Tour in June. The Washington Youth Tour is a program offered by electric cooperatives nationwide to high school juniors from their co-op membership. Each year, a winner is selected through an essay contest, where applicants choose one of five available topics to write about.

The Youth Tour gives high school students the opportunity to network with more than a thousand students from across the country. Participants will come together in our nation's capital to see the legislative process in action while learning about electric cooperatives and the vital role they play in the communities they serve.

Blaine attends Hobgood Charter School and is the son of Shawn and Jason Dawes of Edgecombe County. He is actively involved in his community and enjoys participating in sports. In his free time, Blaine loves swimming and playing basketball.

"I'm excited about the opportunity to attend the Washington Youth Tour and learn more about how electric cooperatives serve their members and communities," Blaine said. "Getting to see our nation's capital and understand how decisions are made that impact local communities will be an experience I'll never forget."

The Washington Youth Tour reflects the Cooperative difference by investing in local students and helping develop future leaders through education, engagement, and community involvement.

Congratulations to Blaine on this exciting achievement!



## Middle Schoolers: Apply for a Sports Camp Scholarship to Attend Basketball Camp this Summer!

Edgecombe-Martin County EMC is now accepting applications for scholarships to attend basketball camps at two North Carolina universities this summer.



COOPERATIVE  
**ALL-STARS**  
Sports Camp Scholarships

Young men can apply for a scholarship to attend the Carolina Basketball Camp which will be held June 27-30 at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Young women can apply for a spot at the Wolfpack Women's Basketball Camp which will be held June 14-17 at NC State University in Raleigh.

The scholarships cover all expenses at the overnight camps, which provide a glimpse into life on a college campus. Campers stay overnight 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.

To apply, students must be a sixth or seventh grade student during the 2026-2027 school year. The application opens this month, and it must be submitted by March 31. To learn more and apply, visit [ncelectriccooperatives.com/sports-camps](https://ncelectriccooperatives.com/sports-camps).

Power outages can happen when we least expect them. You may be going about your normal routine when the lights suddenly go out, leaving you wondering what caused the interruption—especially when there’s no storm nearby. While severe weather is often the most noticeable culprit, the reality is that many different factors can impact electric service throughout the year.

In total, Edgecombe-Martin County EMC experienced 424 outages across our system throughout 2025. Each outage, whether large or small, helps us better understand where our system is vulnerable and how we can continue improving reliability for our members.

The most common cause of outages this year was trees and vegetation, which accounted for 158 outages. Trees do not have to fall during a major storm to cause problems. Overhanging limbs, dead or weakened trees, and natural growth near power lines can interrupt service on otherwise calm days. This is why vegetation management is an ongoing, year-round effort for the cooperative, helping reduce outages before they occur.

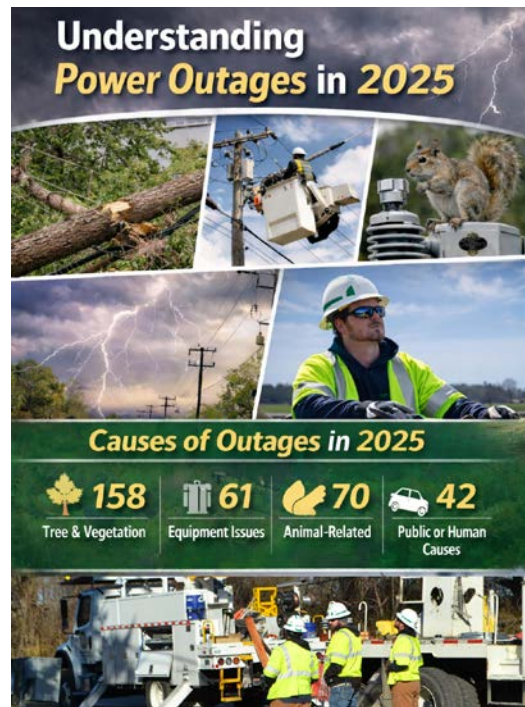
Weather-related outages accounted for 46 outages throughout the year. Lightning strikes, strong winds, and other weather events can quickly damage lines and equipment. While these outages are often unavoidable, our crews are trained to respond safely and efficiently, restoring power as quickly as conditions allow.

Equipment and system-related issues were responsible for 61 outages. Although our crews regularly inspect, maintain, and upgrade equipment, some components naturally wear over time or fail unexpectedly. Planned outages for maintenance and system improvements are also included in this category and are necessary to strengthen the system and reduce the likelihood of larger disruptions in the future.

Animals and wildlife caused 70 outages this year. Small animals and birds can come into contact with electrical equipment, creating faults that interrupt service. We install protective devices whenever possible to limit these incidents, but wildlife continues to be an unpredictable challenge across the system.

Public and human-related activities resulted in 42 outages. These include vehicle accidents, construction and maintenance-related errors, fires, customer-caused incidents, and interactions with farm equipment. Many of these situations cause damage that requires extensive repairs, which can sometimes extend restoration times.

Additionally, 47 outages were classified as other or unknown causes. In some cases, even after careful



inspection, the exact source of an outage cannot be clearly identified. These incidents still help inform future planning and system improvements.

When outages occur, our crews follow a structured restoration process, focusing first on safety and then on restoring power to the greatest number of members as quickly as possible. If you see our trucks driving through your area, they may be searching for the source of the problem before repairs can begin.

At Edgecombe-Martin County EMC, we remain committed to providing safe, reliable, and affordable electricity every day of the year. By tracking outage trends and learning from each event, we can continue making smart investments and improvements that strengthen our system and better serve the communities we call home.

Cooperatively,

*Mike Johnson*



# Why Changing Your Home's Air Filters Matter

Changing your home's air filter is one of the simplest maintenance tasks you can do, yet it often gets pushed aside. This small step has a big impact on indoor air quality, monthly energy costs and how well your heating and cooling system performs over time.

HVAC professionals generally suggest replacing filters about once a month to keep systems running at their best. When filters are clean, your HVAC system doesn't have to work as hard to circulate air throughout your home. This improves efficiency and helps maintain comfortable temperatures while delivering cleaner, fresher air. Proper filtration is especially important for households with allergy or asthma sufferers, as filters capture common airborne irritants like dust, pollen, pet hair and mold spores before they spread indoors.

Indoor air quality matters more than many people realize. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency notes that air inside our homes can be significantly more polluted than the air outdoors, making regular filter changes an important part of maintaining a healthy living space.

Failing to replace dirty filters can create unnecessary strain on your system, leading to higher energy usage, uneven airflow and avoidable wear on components such as the blower motor and coils. Over time, this extra stress can result in breakdowns or expensive repairs. Staying on top of filter changes helps your HVAC system operate smoothly, extends its lifespan and can even help delay the need for a costly replacement — all while keeping energy bills in check.



## Along The LINE

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

### Board of Directors

Bert Pitt, President  
Jimmie Jernigan, Vice Pres.  
Wayne Harrell, Treasurer  
Norman A. Roberson, Secretary  
Billy Trevathan  
Rejeanor Scott  
Harold Thompson  
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

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 or you may choose to utilize the convenience of online bill-pay by logging on to [ememc.com](http://ememc.com)

## February Rights-of-Way Schedule

In order to provide safe, affordable, and reliable electrical service, we maintain the rights-of-way under and around our power lines. Maintaining these rights-of-way is critical to prevent 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 February, Lucas Tree Experts will be working in the Rocky Mount area, including Springfield Road, Leggett Road, and other hotspots across the system. Crews will utilize equipment such as a Sky Trim, bucket trucks, and bush hogs to effectively clear these areas.

