



# Along the LINE

**SEPTEMBER 2025**

For members of  
Edgecombe-Martin County EMC

## Millwood Supports Operations Behind the Scenes

Thomas Millwood may not always be in the spotlight, but the work he does plays a vital role in keeping Edgecombe-Martin County EMC's system running safely and efficiently. As the Cooperative's Technical Services Coordinator, Thomas oversees a wide range of critical tasks that directly support system reliability for all members.

He is responsible for monitoring and maintaining all substations, ensuring that equipment is operating properly through monthly inspections and yearly oil sampling. He also conducts infrared scans throughout the year, identifying and addressing potential hot spots before they become problems.

Thomas plays a key role during mobile substation deployments and often assists with installation support to neighboring co-ops. He also manages the SCADA communications network, overseeing the installation and maintenance of fiber connections to field devices and ensuring seamless operation across the system.

On the metering side, Thomas coordinates the programming, testing, and installation of meters, including CT metering for large commercial and industrial accounts. He works closely with vendors and

contractors to handle any external projects related to metering or substation infrastructure.

His behind-the-scenes work ensures that the Cooperative's system remains strong, smart, and responsive—and it's all part of his commitment to delivering reliable service to the members we serve.



### Holiday Closing

Edgecombe-Martin County EMC will be closed on Monday, Sept. 1, in observance of Labor 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, the SmartHub app, or you may choose to utilize the convenience of online bill-pay by logging on to [ememc.com](https://ememc.com).

# Teachers: Don't Wait to Apply for a Bright Ideas Grant for your classroom funding

The deadline to apply for a Bright Ideas grant is quickly approaching! Applicants have until Sept. 15 to submit an application. The education grants will support local teachers with creative ideas to engage students and improve learning in K-12 classrooms. To find the application or learn more about the program, visit [ncbrightideas.com](http://ncbrightideas.com).

This year marks 31 years of the Bright Ideas education grant program, with Edgecombe-Martin County EMC and electric cooperatives statewide funding over 15,400 projects with more than \$16.5 million awarded to teachers across North Carolina since 1994. Nearly four million students have benefited from the projects, technology and enhanced teaching methods made possible by Bright Ideas grants.

Teachers in any discipline, from engineering to art, can apply to receive a grant of up to \$1,500.

"At Edgecombe-Martin County EMC, we believe that education is an essential part of building and bettering our community, and Bright Ideas grants enable us to advance excellence in education by helping local teachers who continue to go above and beyond in the classroom," said Winston Howell, CEO of Edgecombe-Martin County EMC. "Edgecombe-Martin County EMC

expects to award \$10,000.00 this fall in our service area, and we look forward to partnering with exceptional educators to accelerate learning this year, and for years to come."

Submit your application today

and help us light up learning for North Carolina students!



## Last Chance for Sporting Clay Fundraiser

There's still time to register or become a sponsor for our upcoming 4-H Sporting Clay Fundraiser on Friday, Sept. 12. The event will feature a 50-target shoot, with registration beginning at 9 a.m. After the competition, participants can enjoy a delicious lunch and a chance to unwind.

Prizes will be awarded to the top three individuals and teams. Gun rentals will be available, and shells can be purchased if needed—please note only 7½ size shot or smaller is permitted. Eye and ear protection is required.

Space is limited to 30 teams, so don't wait! This event supports our local 4-H programs, helping provide meaningful educational opportunities for youth in our community.

To register or learn more, contact Monica Speight at 252-641-9502.





## Veto Overridden: SB 266 Will Save Members and Strengthen North Carolina's Energy Future

Governor Josh Stein recently vetoed Senate Bill 266 – the Power Bill Reduction Act, raising concerns about potential long-term costs. His veto message referenced an independent memo from professors affiliated with NC State that claimed the bill could cost up to \$23 billion. However, this analysis was based on the highest possible natural gas price projections — a scenario experts say is highly unlikely. The data used in the memo has been widely criticized as misleading and not representative of realistic market trends.

Despite the veto, SB 266 maintained strong bipartisan support in both the North Carolina House and Senate, and both chambers voted to override the veto, ensuring the bill becomes law. This is a major victory for cooperative members across the state who depend on affordable, reliable electricity.

North Carolina's energy system is currently facing an urgent challenge. Projected peak electricity demand has surged by 4,000 megawatts in just two years, due to rapid population growth and the state's success in attracting new, energy-intensive manufacturing. At the same time, traditional generation sources are being retired, placing more strain on the grid. The situation demands immediate and strategic action — and SB 266 delivers.

This bill eliminates the interim 2030 carbon reduction target established under House Bill 951 in 2021. That target, while well-meaning, has proven unachievable with current technology and would have required a rapid, expensive buildout of renewable infrastructure and transmission lines. These efforts come with high costs and lack the assurance that power would be available when our members need it most.

By shifting the focus to the long-term, achievable goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, SB 266 supports the continued transition to cleaner energy — but in a way that protects our members from skyrocketing costs and potential reliability issues. According to the non-partisan Public Staff, this change is expected to save North Carolinians **\$13 billion**, by avoiding unnecessary infrastructure investments and unreliable timelines.

At its core, SB 266 is about keeping power affordable and reliable for the people we serve. It allows room for

the development of more cost-effective, dependable solutions, such as advanced nuclear energy, which can play a critical role in meeting future energy needs without placing an unfair financial burden on consumers.

We are grateful to the legislators who supported SB 266 and stood with electric cooperative members across the state. Thank you to Representative Timothy Reeder, MD (NC House), Representative Shelly Willingham (NC House) and Senator Norman Sanderson (NC Senate) for voting in favor of this important legislation. Your support helps protect our members from unnecessary costs and ensures the reliability of our power grid in the years to come.

Unfortunately, not all of our legislators in our service area chose to stand with cooperative members on this issue. Representative Gloristine Brown (NC House) and Senator Kandie Smith (NC Senate) voted against the override, despite the bill's clear benefits to those they represent.

The successful override votes in both the House and Senate reflect a clear understanding among many legislators that our state must take a practical approach to energy policy — one that balances environmental goals with economic realities. For the 2.8 million residents served by electric cooperatives, this bill means continued investment in a stable grid, smarter long-term planning, and protection from unnecessary cost increases.

We thank the legislators who stood with cooperative members to support SB 266 and reaffirm their commitment to an energy future that works for all North Carolinians.

*Winston Howell*

Winston Howell



# Back-to-School, Back to Savings

As the school year kicks off and new routines take shape, it's a great time to build energy-saving habits into your daily life. With a few simple changes, your household can make the grade in energy efficiency — and save money in the process.

Start by turning off lights, TVs, and electronics each morning when the house empties out. Switch to LED bulbs to cut lighting costs — they use up to 75% less energy and last much longer.

Adjust your thermostat while you're away, or install an ENERGY STAR®-certified smart thermostat. These devices learn your schedule, make automatic adjustments, and can be controlled remotely to keep your home both comfortable and efficient.

Unplug idle devices like gaming systems and phone chargers or use smart plugs to reduce “phantom” energy use. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, this simple habit can save up to \$200 a year.

Before you head out in the morning, close the blinds to block the sun's heat and give your air conditioner a break. And when packing lunches, try grabbing everything from the fridge in one trip, each open door lets cold air escape and adds to energy use.

For a deeper look at potential savings, consider scheduling a home energy audit. A professional can pinpoint where you're losing energy and offer custom tips to improve efficiency.

Back-to-school season is a busy time, but it's also the perfect opportunity to fine-tune your habits and set your home up for savings all year long.



## Along The LINE

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## September Rights-of-Way

In order to provide safe, 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 vegetation to prevent interruption of your electric service.

Throughout September, Trees, LLC will utilize the sky trim, bucket trucks and bushhogging equipment in the 64 Alt West near Kingsboro/Melton road service areas and various hotspots on the system.

