

# Along the LINE

**JANUARY 2023**

For members of  
Edgecombe-Martin County EMC



## Annual First Responder and Farm Safety Training

Edgecombe-Martin County EMC will host our annual First Responder and Farm Safety Training on Tuesday, Feb. 28, at 6 p.m.

Edgecombe-Martin County EMC understands the importance of teaching electrical safety. The goal of our First Responders and Farm Safety Electrical Hazards Training is to help first responders and farm equipment operators work safely in emergency situations where electric utility lines are involved. Firefighters, Police, EMTs and others, who are typically first on the scene in an emergency, face the greatest risk from electrical contacts and fires. It's also important that those who live and work on farms know the risks and understand how they can unknowingly come into contact with electricity. Understanding the potential dangers and learning how to deal with them correctly keeps everyone safe.

In the past, Edgecombe-Martin County EMC would visit each local fire department to do our high-voltage demonstration for their firemen and discuss safety around electricity. Over the past few years, Edgecombe-Martin County EMC has decided to have one large event a year for all first responders and farm equipment operators to attend.

The training is intended for all first responders and farm equipment operators and will cover a variety of electrical hazards that you could encounter. Dinner will be provided. This training is provided at no cost by Edgecombe-Martin County EMC. Please take advantage of this opportunity to update your department's training. RSVP to Monica Speight at 252-641-9502 or [monicas@ememc.com](mailto:monicas@ememc.com). Please provide a number of attendees by Friday, Feb. 17.



### Holiday Closing

Edgecombe-Martin County EMC will be closed on Monday, Jan. 2, 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 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 2023 Annual Meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, March 23, 2023.

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

## Welcome Thompson to District E-1

Harold Thompson of Whitakers has been appointed by the Edgecombe-Martin County EMC Board of Directors to fulfill the unexpired term of Joe Suggs. He will serve as a director for District E-1.

Thompson is an Edgecombe County native who grew up on a farm and is currently owner and operator of Air-Ag, Inc and H.B. Thompson Farms, Inc. He holds an Associate Degree in Agriculture from NC State University. Thompson is currently the Chairman of the Tarboro-Edgecombe Airport Authority. He has been a member of the cooperative for 30 years.

Thompson enjoys NASCAR and spending time on the farm growing popcorn and pumpkins. He and his wife, Debra, have one daughter, Mikayla, who is also a NC State graduate and teaches Agriculture Education at NECP. Thompson is a member of Speights Chapel Methodist Church.

We are excited to have Thompson join our board and look forward to his insight on how we can make our cooperative even better for our members.



## Middle Schoolers: Apply Now for Scholarship to Attend Basketball Camp

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



Touchstone Energy®  
**Sports Camp  
Scholarships**

Young men can apply for a scholarship to attend the Carolina Basketball School which will be held June 17-21 at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Young women can apply for a spot at the Wolfpack Women's Basketball Camp in June 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 2023-2024 school year. The application opens this month, and it must be submitted by March 31.

We rely on electricity to power our lives. Whether at home or work, at the gas pump or grocery store, we need safe, reliable and affordable electricity.

Unfortunately, real-world conditions affect the price of electricity. While the energy we use every day remains a tremendous value—especially compared to the skyrocketing prices of other common goods and services—the cost of producing and buying that energy is rising.

Everyone is experiencing higher costs for just about everything these days, and your electric cooperative is no different. US prices for energy commodities such as crude oil, natural gas, gasoline, and diesel have increased significantly over the past year.

Edgecombe-Martin County EMC has felt the effects of rising inflation, like many of you. Despite the efforts Edgecombe-Martin County EMC has made to manage costs responsibly, the price of keeping the lights on continues to rise. For electric utilities, the rising costs have dramatically increased over the past several years—especially the cost of fuel. Natural gas is a large part of our generation, so extreme volatility in that market has impacted our electric rates.

Global supply chain disruptions, combined with labor shortages and skyrocketing inflation have dramatically increased the cost of goods and services across our country. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, as of June 2022, the consumer price index had risen 9.1% over the past year, the highest increase since 1981. Like the households and businesses we serve, the electric utility industry has not been immune to the impact that inflationary pressures have had on the prices of good and services.

As you may remember, supply chain challenges started two years ago during the pandemic, initially affecting many household products. Those challenges are affecting the utility industry. For many years, electric cooperatives have had equipment and supplies readily available to them from their vendors. But in these unprecedented times, cooperatives are facing inventory shortages, supply chain disruptions and extended lead

times on material and equipment.

At Edgecombe-Martin County EMC, we strive to provide exceptional service and safe and reliable electricity to power your home, business, and life at the lowest cost possible. We have been able to avoid a rate increase for the past five years as a result of favorable wholesale power costs, and internal cost controls. In the coming months, we will be re-evaluating our cost of service to ensure our rates are generating the necessary revenue to meet our required financial metrics. We will keep you informed as we work through this process.

Cooperatively,

*Winston Howell*

Winston Howell III





# Utility Bill Assistance Programs

There are helpful organizations that provide assistance to members of our community. If you are in need of assistance, make sure to consider these options:

## LOW INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIEAP)

LIEAP is a federally funded program that provides for a one-time vendor payment to help eligible households pay their energy bills

- The applicant must meet income criteria and be responsible for heating costs.
- Households including a person aged 60 or older or disabled persons receiving services through the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services are eligible to sign up for assistance from Dec. 1–31. All other households may apply from Jan. 1–March 31 or until funds are exhausted.

Contact your county's Department of Social Services to apply for these programs.

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 (CIP)

CIP is a federally funded program that assists individuals and families who are experiencing a heating or cooling-related crisis

- A household is considered to be in a crisis if it is currently experiencing or is in danger of experiencing a life-threatening or health-related emergency and sufficient, timely and appropriate assistance is not available from any other source.
- Applications are taken throughout the year.

## 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

1-855-356-6358, 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)

## January Rights-of-Way Schedule

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 brush to prevent vegetation from interrupting your electric service.

Throughout January, Lucas Tree Experts will be trimming out of the Davistown-Mercer substation in the Pinetops area, and various hotspots on the system.

