



Plugged in to Altamaha EMC

FEBRUARY 2017

The Official Newsletter of Altamaha Electric Membership Corporation

Serving: Toombs, Montgomery, Emanuel, Treutlen, Laurens, Johnson and Tattnall

Reaching Out by Rounding Up



On August 1, 2017, Altamaha EMC will join the nationwide Operation Round Up program. Operation Round Up is an innovative program that provides funding for various charitable organizations in our own community. Through Operation Round Up, the Altamaha EMC Foundation will be able to assist with charitable needs within our service territory. Through Operation Round Up, participating members will allow Altamaha EMC to "round up" their monthly electric bills to the next whole dollar amount.

Below is more information about the Operation Round Up program.

What is Operation Round Up?

Operation Round Up is a program to generate and collect voluntary donations that are used to benefit organizations in Altamaha EMC's service area for the purpose of improving the quality of life of our members and their communities.

How did it get started?

The program was created by Palmetto Electric Cooperative in South Carolina in 1989, and since then it has been adopted by more than 250 electric cooperatives nationwide. Since its introduction, Operation Round Up has raised more than \$50 million for cooperative communities.

How does it work?

Each month, the electric bills of participating Altamaha EMC members are rounded up – increased to the next dollar amount. If a member's bill is \$124.50, it's rounded up to \$125. Fifty cents is deposited in a separate bank account for the Altamaha EMC Foundation. The maximum a member would contribute to the program yearly would be \$11.88. The average contribution per member per year would be \$.6. Small change indeed, but it makes a huge difference in the lives of many.

What is Altamaha EMC's goal for this program?

Our goal is to improve the quality of life for the communities we serve. Cooperatives are governed by seven principles, the seventh principle being Concern for Community. Altamaha EMC has a long history of community involvement and support of charitable and community organizations, from youth programs to shelters for battered women to food banks and many more. Many of these organizations have seen their need for outreach grow in recent years, while funding sources haven't kept up.

Operation Round Up provides Altamaha EMC with a tremendous opportunity to demonstrate and extend its commitment to its members and their communities. Operation Round Up is an example of people coming together and pooling their resources to accomplish a greater good, much like residents of this area did 80 years ago when they formed Altamaha EMC to bring electricity to rural homes, farms and communities. It was something they couldn't accomplish individually, but as a group it was achievable. Now, through Operation Round Up, local residents can come together to create change and provide assistance in their communities through a foundation – something they couldn't do individually on this scale.

Do other cooperatives participate?

There are currently about 250 cooperatives participating in Operation Round Up nationally, 29 of them in Georgia.

Why is Altamaha EMC automatically signing up all members?

We believe our members would want their Foundation to have as much positive impact in the community as possible. Based on the experience of other cooperatives that have introduced Operation

Round Up, we anticipate participation in the program to be between 75-90%. To ensure that our members understand what Operation Round Up is and why we're implementing it, there will be a six-month long communication campaign prior to the start of the program. During this period, members will be given an opportunity to decline participation in Operation Round Up.

What if a member doesn't want to participate?

Even after they are signed up for Operation Round Up, members may leave the program at any time simply by contacting Altamaha EMC. This voluntary program is designed so that it's easy for members to opt out.

What is the Altamaha EMC Foundation?

The Altamaha EMC Foundation is a 501(c)3 organization set up to represent the members of Altamaha EMC and the funds collected through Operation Round Up for charitable purposes. The mission of the Foundation is to distribute money collected from Altamaha EMC members through Operation Round Up to worthwhile, charitable and educational purposes that will improve lives and respond to immediate needs within the counties where the cooperative provides electric service.

Are contributions tax-deductible?

Yes. Each January bill will have a summary of donations for tax purposes.

How do I opt out of Operation Round Up?

You can opt out of the program by calling our office at 912-526-8181 and speaking to a customer service representative.

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Area Students Participate in EMC/FFA Wiring Contest

The Area 4 EMC/FFA Agricultural Education Career Development Event (CDE), an annual competition in which agriculture students learn about the safe, efficient use of electricity while also sharpening their wiring skills, was held in November 2016. Jackie Swaringim from Toombs County High School and Mason Grant from Swainsboro High School represented Altamaha EMC in the competition.

Mason Grant finished third in the region competition. Jackie Swaringim had an impressive performance and finished first in the region. As the Area 4 winner, he earned a \$500 scholarship. He advanced to the state contest which was held in January 2017 where he finished in the top ten.

The Electrification CDE, also known as the EMC/FFA Wiring Contest, is a unique way to encourage high school students to learn about electricity. Any active FFA member enrolled in a 9th through 12th grade high school agriculture education class is eligible to participate. As an added incentive to boost participation, for help with for use at any

students also vie college scholarships college, university or

vocational school in Georgia.

During the CDE, students are tested in three key ways: 1) they complete a multiple choice exam, 2) they complete a hands-on, practical wiring exercise which tests their knowledge of the National Electric Code, and 3) they explain in detail the steps needed to complete a specific electrical task.

"We're pleased to play a part in offering the electrical wiring contest and a hands-on learning experience for students,"

says Van Henriott, Altamaha

EMC Member Services

Representative. "Educational programs aimed at students to promote the safe, efficient use of electricity are a natural fit for us."

According to Henriott, during the course of the competition, students have the opportunity to demonstrate the skills they previously learned

in class and labs and take pride in their accomplishments. "The lessons learned from the competition are skills that students can apply in any number of situations," he notes.

Over the years, Altamaha EMC representatives and students have grown to appreciate equally important benefits of participating in the wiring competition. In some cases, participation in the wiring contest has served as a catalyst for students considering academic and career goals. In fact, a number of former CDE participants decided to pursue degree programs in the electric industry or agriculture. Some have graduated with engineering degrees, completed electrical courses at technical colleges and eventually landed jobs in their area of study.



Toombs County High School student Jackie Swaringim earned first place in the Area 4 wiring contest.



Mason Grant, representing Swainsboro High School, placed third in the Area 4 wiring contest.



Altamaha EMC Directors, Bob Youmans (left) and Alex Grindler (right), congratulate Bill Kennedy on his promotion to District Manager.

Bill Kennedy Promoted to Swainsboro District Manager

Bill Kennedy has been promoted to Swainsboro District Manager, a position formerly held by Dale Moore who retired in 2015.

Bill has worked for Altamaha EMC for 29 years. Before coming to work for Altamaha EMC, he worked with Eastern Utilities for 2 years. Bill began his career with Altamaha EMC as an apprentice lineman. Over the years, he has served as a groundsman, journeyman lineman and serviceman.

As Swainsboro District Manager, Bill's duties will include overseeing the daily operations of the Swainsboro office, supervising the construction and maintenance jobs in the Swainsboro district, and staking all new construction jobs.

Altamaha EMC CEO/General Manager Romanous Dotson states, "Bill Kennedy has proven himself to be an experienced and dedicated employee. I am confident in his ability to serve the members of Altamaha EMC."

When talking about his new position, Bill said, "Emanuel County is my home and I am thankful for the opportunity to continue working with the members of Altamaha EMC in this area. I will continue the tradition of excellent service and reliable electricity that the people of Emanuel County have always experienced with Altamaha EMC."

Bill and his wife, Gina, live in Swainsboro. They have two grown sons, Luke and Landon.

HOLIDAY CLOSING NOTICE

The offices of Altamaha EMC will be closed
Monday, February 20th in observance of
Presidents' Day.

In the event of a power outage or related problems, standby personnel will be on duty. You can report power outages by calling (912) 526-8181 or (800) 822-4563.

Electric Cooperatives—Ready to Work With Elected Officials

As the nation welcomes a new Congress and Administration, America's electric cooperatives are ready to welcome back old friends and introduce ourselves to newcomers.

The co-ops' message to elected officials, both old and new, Republican and Democrat, will be the same: we all need to work together to protect consumer access to safe, reliable and affordable electric service.

We have reason to believe this message will be well-received. After all, co-ops speak for more than 42 million electric consumers nationwide, a sizeable constituency by any measure.

Moreover, whatever you thought of the 2016 campaign, one message came through loud and clear: many, many people don't believe their concerns are being heard. For Altamaha EMC and our fellow member-owned cooperatives, listening to people is at the heart of our business model. And we carry our members' concerns to public officials every day.

As co-ops reach out to engage with elected officials, they will build on the strength of Co-ops Vote, the grassroots initiative to reverse declining voter turnout in rural areas. Co-ops Vote did more than register voters. This initiative sent a strong message to the country's elected officials that rural electric consumers matter. Co-ops will be reinforcing this message with a request that policymakers keep the needs of consumers front and center. Needs such as funding for infrastructure—especially transmission lines and

access to natural gas. Increasing the efficiency of the electric system. Determining the future of hydropower and nuclear energy. Elected officials will be making decisions affecting every aspect of the electric system.

Advocating for these issues is nothing new. In fact, we've been doing it for years. And we're ready to continue the fight on your behalf. The time is now to reach out to all elected officials, new and returning.

Here at Altamaha EMC, we will be reaching out to local, state and federal officials. In initial conversations with legislators, we will be explaining the unique member-owned, not-for-profit co-op business model. And we will be reminding long-time politicians of our co-op's commitment to its members.

In Washington, D.C., our national trade association, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, will be conducting similar introductions, speaking with key agencies and departments within the new Administration. It is likely many of these new policymakers will know little or nothing of the co-op model.

Forging an energy future that serves rural consumers, and protecting access to safe, reliable and affordable electric power will be a bipartisan effort. Electric co-ops are optimistic. As we work with our elected leaders, we hope to renew a spirit of cooperation in the nation's Capital and in statehouses across the country.

After all, cooperation is what co-ops do best!





Member RECIPES

Ultimate Strawberry Cake

Ingredients

1 (18.25-ounce) box white cake mix
1 (3-ounce) box strawberry-flavored instant gelatin
1 (15-ounce) package frozen strawberries in syrup, thawed and pureed
4 large eggs
1/2 cup vegetable oil
1/4 cup water



Frosting

1/4 cup butter, softened
(8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened
(10-ounce) package frozen strawberries in syrup, thawed and pureed
1 teaspoon strawberry extract
8 cups confectioners' sugar

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 F. Lightly grease 2 (9-inch) round cake pans. In bowl, combine cake mix and gelatin. Add pureed strawberries, eggs, oil, and water; beat at medium speed with an electric mixer until smooth. Pour into prepared pans. Bake for 20 minutes, or until a wooden pick inserted into cake comes out clean. Let cool in pans for 10 minutes. Remove from pans and cool completely on wire racks.

Frosting: Beat butter and cream cheese at medium speed with electric mixer until creamy. Beat in 1/2 cup of the strawberry puree and the strawberry extract. Gradually add confectioners' sugar, beating until smooth. Add more puree as needed. Then, spread frosting in between layers, on top and sides of cake. Garnish with sliced fresh strawberries, if desired.

-From the kitchen of Anita Shepherd

Each month, our newsletter features recipes submitted by our members. If you have a favorite recipe and would like to share it with other readers in the Altamaha EMC service area, send a copy, complete with name, address and daytime phone number to: Tammye Vaughn, Altamaha EMC, P.O. Box 346, Lyons, GA 30436. Each month, a recipe will be selected for publication. The member who submitted the featured recipe will be given a \$10 credit on their next Altamaha EMC bill. Due to limited space, not all recipes received will be featured. Recipes printed in *Plugged In* are not independently tested; therefore, we must depend on the accuracy of those members who send recipes to us.