



Roanoke Electric **FLASHES**

RoundUp grants awarded 34 Electel Credit Union now available 35
Low-interest loans available 34 REC crews help restore Ky. power 36

CEO Quarterly Report:

REC encourages e-mails, letters on energy issues

By Curtis Wynn
Executive Vice President and CEO

Our mission as your electric cooperative is to bring you reliable electricity at an affordable price. While we work hard at this every day, our costs have increased in recent years. As we have previously explained, these cost increases are a direct result of higher fuel prices and the cost of maintaining our electric system. Also, we understand that due to today's economic recession, many of you are cutting back to save money, and some are having trouble paying bills.

We want to let you know how things look for the future. Our Congressional representatives and senators are discussing possible legislation that will make our country more energy efficient and energy independent. Your cooperative believes that these are worthy goals; however, we are concerned about how that will happen and how much it will cost consumers like you.

There's been a lot of talk in Congress and the news media about making electricity from renewable resources, such as the sun and the wind; addressing climate change by using new technologies to produce electricity;

and changing the ways in which we use electricity. Along with other cooperatives, we have invested in sun and wind energy and are working hard to help you save electricity with energy efficiency advice; but the big question for us is: how can we balance our commitment to provide you with reliable and affordable electricity, while helping the environment at the same time?

Congress is currently looking at some bills that would require your cooperative to invest in additional renewable energy projects as well as take steps to address climate change—all of which will result in increased costs and, thus, higher electricity rates. The pace at which these changes take place will determine the amount and timing of increased costs. For example, past proposals considered Congress last year would have increased your electric bill by an additional \$4 to \$10 a month, or \$48 to \$120 a year. Although the outcome is uncertain and depends on what Congress decides to do, the increases to you, our member, could be even more.

We will continue to keep you informed. To better help us represent your interests in Washington, D.C., please e-mail or write us at the address below to let

us know your views on these very important issues. You may also wish to visit the cooperatives' Our Energy, Our Future website at www.ourenergy.coop for updates and more actions you can take to make your voices heard to your member of Congress.

Your cooperative is looking out for you, as we continue to provide you affordable and reliable service during these challenging times.



Curtis Wynn

Co-op office closed for Easter holiday

The Roanoke Electric Cooperative office will be closed in observance of Easter on Friday, April 10.

For power outages, call (800) 358-9437.



The Power of Pennies: Operation RoundUp contributions help groups serving needy

Through Roanoke Electric Cooperative's Operation RoundUp program, pennies have power.

Operation RoundUp lets members round off their electric bill to the next highest dollar, and donate that amount to the program. For example, if your bill is \$11.85, you could round it up to \$12, and the extra 15 cents would go toward Operation RoundUp.

Each quarter, the board for the program's administrative body, Roanoke Electric Care Trust, meets to determine which organizations will receive funding. It has been estimated that a member contributes on average 50 cents per month—a total of \$6 in a year's time.

For the Meherrin Indian Tribe in Winton, Operation RoundUp helped to construct a longhouse, a Native American single-room wooden structure that resembles original buildings during contact era. Meherrin Indian Tribe uses their tribal grounds to teach grade-school students about Meherrin Indian culture. Hillary Edwards of Most Men Inc., saw a need to tackle youth gang activity—his nonprofit organization in Cofield gets kids off the streets by providing alternatives like mentors and education programs. Some of his young boys, who had no way of getting to and

from programs, now have the convenience of being picked up and transported by van, thanks to Operation RoundUp.

"We're a grassroots organization, so without the support of Operation RoundUp, we couldn't do what we do, said Hillary Edwards, the Executive Director of Most Men.

Fire Chief Ed Johnson oversees two fire stations in Halifax. His fire and rescue team are made up of volunteer firefighters. They needed to upgrade their "Jaws of Life," the hydraulic pressure tool used to disengage crushed car doors resulting from auto collisions. They are usually first-responders to major traffic accidents up and down Highway 95. "With the high cost of operating today, insurance increases and fuel prices, we have to depend on our community to support us," said Johnson.

The main thing that organizations that have benefited from the program have in common is that they are either education, charitable, or economic development organizations helping to meet the needs of underserved populations or geographic areas.

The maximum amount that a member can contribute in a year's time is \$11.88.

For more information about how



Top: Most Men; Center: Meherrin Indian Tribe; Bottom: Halifax Fire Dept.

you can contribute a few pennies to Operation RoundUp, please contact (252) 539-2236.

Source: Charles Martin, who writes about issues relating to North Carolina's electric cooperatives.

Grants, low-interest rate loans available

USDA and REDI-Roanoke Construction Group form partnership
A partnership has been established between the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Rural Development Mission Area and REDI-Roanoke Construction Group.

Due to the partnership, USDA and REDI-Roanoke Construction Group are now accepting applications for their Section 504 Home Repair Loans and the Renovations/Repairs and Energy Efficiency Grant, respectively, for Halifax County residents. The purpose of this partnership is to

improve the quality of life of rural residents by providing them with the financial resources for energy efficiency and the weatherization of self-owned homes.

The federal government loans, through USDA, can be in amounts up to \$20,000, with a repayment term up to 20 years at a one percent interest rate. These one percent loans would be leveraged with a REDI-Roanoke Construction Group Grant obtained through the North Carolina Rural Center.

These loans are available to very low-income homeowners. Common improvements

are window replacement, insulation, roof replacement/repair, new hot-water heater/plumbing, furnace repair or replacement, handicap accessibility and some modernization. The program's main goal is to eliminate any health concerns or local code violations in the home so it can be occupied safely and energy efficiently. To find out more, please call these representatives: Carolyn M. Patterson, USDA Rural Development Group, (252) 583-7171, ext. 4; or Sondra Goffington-Dickens, REDI-Roanoke Construction Group, (252) 539-2236, ext. 282.

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MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY REQUIRED



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REC linemen join member co-ops to restore power to western Kentucky

The convenience of heating and lighting our homes is second nature, like putting on clothes and tying our shoes. Though some of us can remember when electric power was scarce, it's hard for anyone today to imagine life without electricity. But several weeks without electric service were real for folks in parts of Kentucky. No heat, no television or telephones—lights out.

In late January, a devastating ice storm touched down in the Bluegrass State, resulting in widespread power outages from downed trees, communication towers and electric utility poles. It was the worst ice storm Kentucky had ever seen.

Touchstone Energy electric co-ops from all across the country came together, collaborating labor and other resources to bring relief to the storm-ravaged area. Electric cooperatives all share a common bond—to ensure reliable and affordable electric utility service for our members.

Roanoke Electric Cooperative enlisted eight of its line crewman, a couple of bucket and pickup trucks, and a diesel engine, all-terrain Digger Derrick track vehicle. Ed Bethel was part of the REC convoy that headed west to Mayfield, about 20 miles from Missouri, and home of West Kentucky Rural Electric Cooperative (WKREC).

The line crew arrived just after much of the ice had melted away, though signs that a devastating storm had passed were evident. Trees toppled homes and buildings, utility poles were all over the roads



Crewmen who traveled to Kentucky (left to right): Chad Simmons, James Taylor, Jamie Elliott, Ed Bethel, John Pellam, George Cesil, Jason Lassiter and Larry Blount.

for miles, and shelters filled to capacity. “I don’t think I have seen anything like it, said Bethel, who has been with Roanoke EC for about 5 years.

Thousands of WKREC members were without electricity. Carlisle County suffered the worst, with more than 1,200 members still without lights three weeks following the ice storm.

In all, more than 400 linemen, many from different parts of the country, worked together to restore power. They all undergo similar Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) training and safety requirements and certifications. Because electric co-ops operate their systems in much the same way, it makes field coordination and logistics practically seamless for utility crews.

Roanoke EC linemen put in about 16 hours a day, for about two weeks straight. “There’s nothing better than what we do,” said Bethel. “The appreciation you get from people when they get their lights turned on makes our job rewarding.”

Roanoke Electric Cooperative would like to extend a special appreciation to George Cesil, James Taylor, Jamie Elliott, Chad Simmons, Jason Lassiter, Larry Blount, Ed Bethel and John Pellam, for stepping-up-to-the-plate in this critical time of need.

Source: Charles Martin, who writes about issues relating to North Carolina’s electric cooperatives.

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P.O. Box 440,
Rich Square, NC 27869
Office: (252) 539-2236
or 1-800-433-2236

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