



## Roanoke Electric **FLASHES**

The cooperative's office will be closed on Monday, July 6, in observance of Independence Day. Have a safe holiday. For emergencies, call (800) 358-9437.



# The Roanoke Center sows seeds for wealth-building opportunities, and to handle challenges ahead

When we pay our bills every month to service providers in our communities, there's never a thought that our hard-earned money will be returned to our pockets—after all, we're paying for a service.

But in the world of electric cooperatives, reinvesting in local communities to build a better way of life for members is not unusual at all—their business model puts members first. For electric co-ops like Roanoke Electric, it's a logical concept that it believes will reap long-term benefits—when a customer can afford to pay his or her bills, businesses and communities win.

### A day of celebration and recognition

April 28 marked the fifth anniversary for The Roanoke Center in Rich Square, which is a subsidiary of Roanoke Electric, where business, faith-based, and community leaders were in attendance to celebrate the Center's many wealth-building initiatives and achievements.

The Center and partnering organizations have made it their aim to help local businesses and residents “get-a-leg-up,” by creating income and educational opportunities, without duplicating present services that existing organizations provide to the region.

Roanoke Electric Cooperative Executive Vice President and CEO

Curtis Wynn presented several of the Center's highlights over the years and challenges ahead. Wynn began his presentation by recognizing his staff and public and private partners across the state, all of whom had a critical hand in creating economic opportunities in and around Bertie, Gates, Hertford, Northampton, and Halifax counties.

### Economic impact

Roanoke Electric has endowed almost \$6.3 million into its local economy as part of meeting the Center's objectives; \$1.5 million into Workforce Development, almost \$3.7 million into Business Development, \$413,000 into Community Development, and \$722,000 into Financial Literacy.

In all, almost 200 jobs were created in the Tier 1 region, a designation by the state that identifies the northeast region as one of the more economically distressed regions in North Carolina.

“Over the years the biggest blessing of all was the people we were able to work with at the local and state level. This, I believe, will continue to benefit



*Folks gathered to celebrate the Center's economic and educational achievements.*

us,” said Wynn.

The Northampton County Chamber, one of the Center's partners, has seen growing business participation over the past five years—an unusual trend given its rural demographic location. In the last two months they've brought on ten additional businesses, bringing their total membership to 130.

“Our relationship with the Center has been extremely valuable for what we do,” said Judy Collier, who heads the Northampton County Chamber of Commerce.

### Fundamental for success

In the early stages, back in 2003, Roanoke Electric Cooperative Board of Directors approved using space at

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## The Roanoke Center (continued from page 17...)

one of the company's onsite facilities to map out future plans and write grants to support its programs.

Upon submitting two Empowerment Zone applications for federal funding, the Center received the designation of being a "Champion Community." Wynn recalls the grants as being "very competitive."

The Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation issued Roanoke Economic Development, Inc. (The Roanoke Center) its first grant to help formulate organizational planning. Today, the Center is one of seven business and technology telecenters in the state funded by the e-NC Authority, a state organization that links rural communities to commerce, healthcare, education, and government resources, mainly through Internet Access.

It operates on a set of fundamental principles: coming together, staying together, building new partnerships, unleashing creativity and innovation, valuing relationships and learning together. Part of its thrust is not just creating and increasing jobs and income opportunities for residents. It also builds local capacity for businesses, nonprofits, grassroots and community-based organizations by promoting and facilitating the use of technology, and encouraging achievement among youth through the Communities In Schools initiative.

"This Center has moved us from the planning and development stages to really putting our hands to the plow. It's a hands-on approach," said Wynn.

### Helping the community

The Center, in collaboration with neighboring counties, offered relief to victims of Hurricane Floyd by providing housing assistance. A Hertford County emergency demonstration project was developed to ensure that members and residents are prepared for future emergency disasters. Also the Center

provides free income tax filing services to residents and businesses, discounts prescription drugs for members through Co-op Connections, promotes financial literacy with help from faith-based organizations, offers onsite computer and Internet access, provides office space for small businesses, and helps members return to the workforce through workforce development projects. It is currently working closely with Roanoke-Chowan Hospital to prepare more qualified nurses, radiologists, and respiratory therapists to fill a void in area hospitals. The Center gives training and certification to construction contractors and connects them to business opportunities through its affiliate, the Roanoke Construction Group.

Heaton Construction Incorporated, a Roanoke Rapids-based construction company, is one of several area companies whose workers have benefited from seminars and classes offered at the Center.

"We've met a lot of people and have made good contacts that have opened doors for us in expanding our business," said Paul Heaton, President of Heaton Construction Inc. Today, Heaton Construction is a prime contractor for major projects around the state, including construction of the new town hall in Wake Forest, N.C.

The Center facilitates grant writing services and business loans, which are offered through the North Carolina Rural Center's microenterprise loan program. Its online business-to-business portal, RFQ Hosting, identifies business opportunities for construction and professional services companies by not only enabling companies to post opportunities, but to submit bids.

### Energy conservation and a greener future

The North Carolina General Assembly passed a bill in 2007

(Senate Bill 3) that establishes a 10 percent renewable energy and energy efficiency portfolio standards (REPS) for the state. In effect, the mandate forces electric utilities to assist in reducing the amount of carbon emissions generated from coal and nuclear power plants in an effort to stave off global warming and the need for building additional plants.

This means that 10 percent of Roanoke Electric's energy must come from renewable energy sources, or "green" power, over the next 10 years. Promoting and encouraging energy conservation measures among members also qualifies as a REPS measure.

Already, Roanoke Electric has been hard at work helping members reduce their energy consumption—and for good reason. In some cases, some of the smallest homes have seen monthly energy bills ranging anywhere from \$400 to \$500—an astronomical amount of money given the size of these homes. Through the Roanoke Construction Group's Energy Efficiency and Renovations Repair Program, upon qualifying, old houses and commercial buildings are being repaired with help from local construction contractors.

With the mandates set by Senate Bill 3, Wynn says he and others in the industry anticipate bills to rise even higher, and this is why the energy efficiency program is so vital. "We're seeing as much as a 40 percent hike in the future," said Wynn.

"That's just unacceptable when you start looking at the proportion of total household incomes and people on fixed incomes."

To learn more about services and programs offered by The Roanoke Center, contact Diana Mitchell at (252) 539-4600, ext. 601, or visit the Web site at

[www.roanokecenter.org](http://www.roanokecenter.org).

—Charles S. Martin writes about issues relating to North Carolina's electric cooperatives.



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# New charge to meet Renewable and Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standards

Due to a law adopted August 2007, Renewable and Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standards (REPS), Roanoke Electric Cooperative (REC) members will see a new charge on their utility bills. This charge will appear as a line item labeled "Renewable Energy Charge" beginning August 2009. This charge will offset Roanoke Electric Cooperative's investments in "clean and green" technologies. Ten percent of REC's entire portfolio must come from a renewable source of energy and energy efficiency initiatives that will reduce energy by 2018.

There is a maximum annual spending cap that can be assessed to each class of members based on the type of service—the charge is assessed per meter. The following is Roanoke Electric's schedule of charges to meet the mandate:

Revenue Class	Monthly Charge
Residential	\$ 0.20
Commercial	\$ 1.01
Industrial	\$ 10.14

A detailed description of the above information will appear in the cooperative's rate schedule in August. REC will work to keep this low by using resources available

## Annual Meeting and Bylaws information

Roanoke Electric will host its 70th Annual Meeting and Member Appreciation Day on August 22, 2009, at Hertford County High School located in Ahoskie, North Carolina.

The three-year terms for districts 3, 4, and 7 will be up for election. Directors currently serving these districts are Carolyn Bradley, Robert Riddick, and Darnell Lee respectively.

from its non-profit affiliate, The Roanoke Center.

REC has joined forces with other cooperatives in the state to invest in renewable technologies. REC also administers energy efficiency initiatives to meet the mandate. Some of the programs currently being promoted are as follows:

- Community Efficiency Campaign
- Rebates on Energy Efficient Equipment
- Power Cost Monitoring
- Water Heater Efficiency Kits
- Compact Fluorescent Lights

Helping members save energy saves the cooperative money and helps REC meet the REPS mandate. Again, this mandate is in effect as North Carolina law. A pending federal bill is currently being discussed and REC will strive to work closely with Congress and other groups in an effort to keep electric bills as affordable as possible. The cooperative still encourages its members to help Find a Balanced Solution. Call 1-800-40BALANCE (1-877-40-225-2623) and tell our elected officials to vote for energy solutions we can afford or visit [www.findablancedsolution.com](http://www.findablancedsolution.com).

The Cooperative's Bylaws require that a director must:

- Be a member of the cooperative receiving service there from his/her primary residential abode.
- He/she must be a member in good standing and cannot be a close relative of an incumbent board member or an employee of the Cooperative.
- He/she must be 18 years of age and not employed by or have any financial interest in a competing enterprise, or an enterprise that does business with the cooperative or sells electrical or plumbing supplies, appliances, fixtures and wiring primarily to cooperative members.

The Bylaws establish two methods for nominating board members:

- By Nominating Committee or
- By signature petition of 15 or more members at least 35 days before the Annual Meeting.

The 2009 Nominating Committee consists of: Robert G. Clark (Dist. 1), Kathy W. Knight (Dist. 2), Kenneth A. Pernell (Dist. 3), Enos Holloman (Dist. 4), Reba Green-Holley (Dist. 5), Sonya Trotman (Dist. 6), James T. Heckstall (Dist. 7), Irving Coggins (Dist.), and Venus Michelle Spruill (Dist. 9). The Nominating Committee meeting is scheduled for July 16, 2009.

For further information, please contact Roanoke Electric Cooperative at (252) 539-2236.

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Curtis Wynn

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*vice president*

Delores Amason,  
*secretary-treasurer*

Johnnie P. Garner,  
*assistant secretary-treasurer*

Carolyn Bradley

Chester Deloatch

Kenneth Jernigan

Millard Lee

Darnell Lee

Teachers who apply for a Bright Ideas grant before August 17 are eligible for an early bird prize drawing—a \$500 Visa gift card! Applications and information about this program are at [www.ncbrightideas.com](http://www.ncbrightideas.com), or visit the Roanoke EC office.

