



Roanoke Electric **FLASHES**

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CEO Quarterly Report: **Goals include managing costs, preparing for growth**

By Curtis Wynn
Executive Vice President and CEO

The year 2009 promises to be one of the most challenging years in electric cooperative history. With all of the issues facing our country, developing a sound energy policy ranks among the top of the list along with the economy, healthcare and national security.

Through the Our Energy, Our Future campaign, Roanoke EC, along with more than 900 electric cooperatives across the country, will continue to engage our members and communities in a dialogue with our President—elect and Congress that encourages them to take deliberate steps as they develop laws and policies to protect our environment. We will continue to remind them that access to affordable and reliable electricity cannot be compromised.

Unfortunately we are already seeing signs of rising costs. Operating costs, including those related to purchased power, material and supplies and labor, are continuing to rise rapidly. NCEMC, our wholesale power supplier, forecasted a wholesale power cost increase of 11.7 percent. This increase will be reflected in a 7 percent retail rate increase, which is necessary to produce operating margins, tier and debt service coverage that will satisfy our existing loan covenants. We anticipate that this increase will be implemented in April 2009.

The 2009 Goals and Objectives will concentrate on managing the work

and related cost for system growth and improvements, along with completing work identified during an organization assessment project that was conducted last year. This year we will invoke a new strategic plan that will guide our efforts from 2010 to 2014.

We are well under way with the construction of a new headquarters facility in Ahoskie and anticipate an October 2009 moving date. Operating from a well-designed and centrally located office will bring about a number of operating efficiencies for many years to come. Another of many exciting projects on tap for 2009 is the implementation of pre-paid metering. With this new technology, we will offer our members another payment option that can help them better manage their utility cost and avoid falling behind on their payments.

Our system has seen early signs of significant growth that have been recently hampered by an economic downturn and other unforeseen circumstances. In anticipation of an improved economy and a pending purchase of the Roanoke Rapids Theater, we will plan and prepare for eventual growth in certain areas of our service territory. We will work closely with developers to obtain reasonable forecasts of new loads that will be coming online with projects such as Carolina Crossroads, Halifax County Airport Corporate Park, Innsbrook, Bal Gra and others that are either already under way or being discussed.

While maintaining effective core operations of the parent organization, significant energy will continue to be devoted to enhancing operations of the for-profit subsidiary, Roanoke Energy Resources, Inc. Additionally, we will continue to incorporate The Roanoke Center activities into the cooperative's core operations by providing our members with energy efficiency and money management programs that will help them meet the increased demands that higher electricity costs are putting on their budgets.

In addition, your cooperative staff will remain engaged with allied organizations that support and complement the operations of the cooperative and its subsidiaries.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and our dedicated employees, we are humbled to work for you. Our commitment is to remain consistent with our mission to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity, while enhancing the quality of life in the diverse communities we serve. As we move into another year of challenges and opportunities, we will keep you posted on our progress.

We all wish you a Happy New Year!



Curtis Wynn

Prepare now in case of ice storm outages

January is usually one of the coldest months in our state, and the month's cold weather can lead to ice storms that produce power outages. Freezing temperatures, slick conditions and power outages can be burdens to North Carolina residents, but proper winter weather preparations can make for a much easier experience.

To prepare for ice storms, make sure that you have all necessary supplies to live without power for a few days. Batteries and flashlights are important to have on hand. It is also a good idea to have a battery-powered radio so that you can listen for warnings or forecasts. Pack extra clothes and blankets in your emergency kit to stay warm if the heat goes out, and be sure to have a first-aid kit. Cordless phones will not work if the power goes out, so it's a good idea to keep one corded phone in your home.

Many grocery and convenience stores may be closed or inaccessible after an ice storm, so stock up on non-perishable foods before the storm arrives and

make sure that you have a manual can opener. Keep plenty of bottled water in your home. Fill up your gas tank before the storm hits, and if you take any prescription medications, be sure to have at least one week's supply available. Having all of these supplies on hand before an ice storm or power outage will make the experience less stressful.

Your personal safety should be your top priority. Ensure that all of the batteries in your smoke alarm are working properly. Also, be sure that you have fire extinguishers in your home and teach each resident how to use them.



Take care when disposing of CFL bulbs

Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) contain approximately 3–5 milligrams of mercury. Although the amount is small, a 100 million of these small amounts do become a significant issue. Mercury is a



Shirley White, an employee at The Roanoke Center, holds a CFL recycling bin. Bins are located at Roanoke Electric's main office and The Roanoke Center.

powerful toxin that contaminates earth, air and water and accumulates in animal tissue. CFLs do not release mercury as long as they are intact.

However, it is important to exercise caution when disposing or recycling any CFL bulbs as mercury shouldn't end up in a landfill at any time or at any level.

Roanoke Electric Cooperative provides a responsible and environmentally safe channel for disposing of CFLs. Currently, recycling bins are located at the main office where customers pay their utility bills and at The Roanoke Center. If you have a blown CFL, wrap it in a crush-proof container or in several layers of newspaper to avoid bulb breakage and deposit it in one of the bins located at REC.

In the event you have a broken CFL bulb, take these steps when cleaning it up:

- Open a window to air the room for approximately 15 minutes.
- Always wear gloves.
- Use a disposable brush to sweep—DO NOT VACUUM. Vacuuming may cause mercury to spread into the air.
- Use a moist paper towel to pick up tiny fragments.
- Wrap bulbs, fragments in newspaper and place in a sturdy, sealable bag or container, along with clean-up materials such as gloves and paper towels, and drop it in one of our recycling bins.

Making a difference: Roanoke EC awards teachers for bright ideas



**BRIGHT
IDEAS**

Education becomes a hot topic during an election year, and candidates work hard to keep it on the forefront of their political agendas. However, even after the spotlight dims, North Carolina's teachers will continue to put in countless hours of work and spend money from their own pockets to make instruction exciting for our state's students.

In an effort to help these teachers bring innovation to their classroom and to improve education in our state, North

Carolina's electric cooperatives created the Bright Ideas education grant program 14 years ago. The Bright Ideas program gives certified K-12 North Carolina teachers the opportunity to apply for grants of up to \$2,000 for classroom-based projects that would otherwise not be funded.

These creative projects engage students, encourage increased class participation and foster an affinity for learning.

Roanoke Electric recently awarded \$8,008 in grants to area teachers as part of its annual Bright Ideas grant program. "Our judges stressed that it was tough deciding who to fund because all of the projects had merit," said Marshall Cherry, vice president of Member Services and Marketing at Roanoke.

This year, Roanoke Electric awarded a total of six Bright Ideas education grants in Bertie, Northampton Halifax and Hertford counties. Judges from each school district in Roanoke Electric's service territory were represented. Teachers submitted applications detailing innovative classroom/schoolwide projects that are typically not able to be funded by school systems. Receiving grants this year are:

- **Edna Harvey** of Lawrence Academy, Merry Hill, Bertie County Schools, \$1,850 for "I See!"
- **Shervi Barnes** of Squire Elementary, Gaston,

Northampton County Schools, \$1,400 for "Fueled by Fitness."

- **Vickie Watford** of Askewville Elementary, Askewville, Bertie County Schools, \$1,820 for "Increasing Success through the Extended Classroom."

- **Retha Smith** of Bertie Middle, Windsor, Bertie County Schools, \$645 for "Real Men do Read and Succeed!"

- **Pamela Flack** of Chaloner Middle, Roanoke Rapids, Halifax County Schools, \$398 for "Book Commercials—"Take One!"

- **Emily Lloyd** of Hertford County Middle, Murfreesboro, Hertford County Schools, \$1,895 for "Navigating in the 21st Century."

These are just a few of the endeavors Bright Ideas will make possible in the 2008-2009 school year.

Since its inception in 1994, Bright Ideas has awarded more than \$5.9 million in grant money to North Carolina's teachers, to sponsor more than 5,500 projects touching the lives of nearly 1 million students across our state.

North Carolina's electric cooperatives are dedicated to providing affordable and reliable electricity to more than 2.5 million people in 93 counties throughout the state. Above and beyond keeping the lights on, the cooperatives are committed to bettering the communities they serve and Bright Ideas is just another example of that commitment.

For more information, North Carolina teachers should go to www.ncbrightideas.com.



Pictured are teachers who won Bright Ideas grants, along with Roanoke Electric staff.

Don't leave space heater unattended (and other tips)

Many people turn to space heaters—both electric models and those powered by kerosene or even wood—as a convenient source of warmth in winter months. However, space heaters can be dangerous if not used properly.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimates that more than 25,000 residential fires every year are associated with space heaters. More than 300 people die in these fires. In addition, an estimated 6,000 people annually receive hospital emergency care for burn injuries connected with space heaters.

Space heater hazards stem not just from fires caused by contact with or close proximity to heating elements. They also include fires started by flammable fuels used in the heaters; defective wiring in the appliance; and carbon monoxide poisoning caused by improper venting or an incomplete fuel combustion.

Here are some safety tips:

- Keep the heater at least 3 feet from flammable items such as curtains, furniture, or bedspreads.
- Select a space heater with a guard around the heating element.
- When buying a heater, choose one that has been tested and certified by a nationally recognized testing institution such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL).
- Buy a heater that can handle the area that you want to heat.
- Read and follow the manufacturer's instructions.

- Keep children and pets away from space heaters.
- Never leave a space heater unattended.
- Never go to sleep with a space heater on.
- Never use or store flammable liquids near a space heater.
- Do not use a heater in a bathroom—it's a high-moisture area that could cause damage.
- Keep heaters away from water to prevent electrocution.
- Do not use an extension cord with a space heater.
- Do not use the heater to dry clothes.
- Be sure the heater's plug fits snugly in an outlet. The cord and plug may feel warm when operating since the unit draws so much power, but they should not feel hot. If they do, unplug the heater and have a qualified repair person check for problems.
- Do not attempt to repair a broken heater yourself. It should be checked and repaired by a qualified appliance service center.



For additional safety tips on using space heaters that use wood or kerosene, visit the CPSC's Web site at www.cpsc.gov/CPSCPUB/PUBS/463.html

Sports camp scholarships: Apply starting January 5!

North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives, including Roanoke Electric Cooperative, are

providing all-expenses-paid scholarships for 27 deserving young women to attend the Kay Yow Basketball Camp in Raleigh and 27 deserving young men to attend the Roy Williams Basketball Camp in Chapel Hill this summer. Both camps will work closely with each camper to develop fundamental skills to help the young athletes excel both on and off the court.



Rising sixth through eighth graders are eligible to apply and the cooperatives will begin accepting applications on January 5. Deadline to apply is March 27. Applicants will be judged on their academics, extra-curricular activities and accompanying essay. Students can download an application at www.ncelectriccooperatives.com.

For more information, visit www.kayowcamps.com and www.roywilliamsbasketballcamp.com.

The Touchstone Energy Sports Camps program provides a unique educational and athletic opportunity for outstanding students and is yet another way cooperatives demonstrate their commitment to North Carolina communities.

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