

Roanoke Electric FLASHES



Welcome to 2012: The International Year of Cooperatives

By Curtis Wynn, *President and CEO*

The United Nations General Assembly declared 2012 as the International Year of Cooperatives, highlighting the contribution of cooperatives to worldwide development. This is an acknowledgement by the international community that cooperatives drive the economy, respond to social change, are resilient to global economic crisis and are serious, successful businesses creating jobs in all sectors.

A cooperative is an independent, voluntary association of people who unite for common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations, through a jointly owned and democratically controlled organization. This was the case in the 1930s when rural Americans didn't have access to electricity thus creating the need for rural electric cooperatives such as Roanoke Electric Cooperative (REC).

As we celebrate this milestone along with the world, I'd like to share our 2011 accomplishments along with our endeavors to make 2012 another banner year.

2011 accomplishments

Last year was an exceptional year for the company, as we operated as a much leaner organization. Our staff reductions through

special early retirements in 2010 afforded the opportunity to do "more with less" ultimately reducing the company's overall expenses. Our staff responded to the challenge to maintain superior service by utilizing technology available to meet your needs.

The year 2011 did not pass without its challenges. For the first time in the known history of the cooperative, we had to reschedule the Annual Meeting due to Hurricane Irene making landfall on the same day as the meeting's standing date. By the time the storm left REC's service area, over 90 percent of the system was without power. We do thank you all for your cooperation during the recovery process which lasted five to six days.

Some of our internal accomplishments that strengthened our value to you are as follows:

- ❑ Improving accounting procedures
- ❑ Creating an emergency response plan for employees
- ❑ Establishing a safer work environment for all employees
- ❑ Submitting a Construction Work Plan with major system improvement projects being performed during the years 2011 through 2014. This work will boost reliability of the system and reduce outages.

We've worked actively over the years to keep you engaged with any regulations that could

adversely impact the way we do business. Likewise, it is very important for you to know



Curtis Wynn

your value as a cooperative member. We enhanced our message in 2011 through conducting a series of community meetings in each of your board members' districts called "Together We Save" Community Awareness Forums. These forums gave you the opportunity to meet your director as well as hear timely industry information from staff.

We also launched a new website with tools to make it easier to navigate and do business with the cooperative and a Facebook page that feeds critical company information. The website also has an outage map viewer that allows anyone to track the outage restoration in real time.

We also began a series of messages via email to quickly provide important industry news to you. In communicating the value of membership, your cooperative embodied the principle "Member Economic Participation" by proportionately

...continued on page 18

International Year of Cooperatives from page 17...

distributing \$750,000 in capital credits. This is the largest one-year payout to you in the history of the organization.

Your loyalty and involvement are very critical to the success of this organization. Therefore, we developed an improved method of measuring how well we serve you with a new satisfaction tracking survey program. Twice a year we're contacting some of you to rank us in a number of different categories. This well-timed feedback equips us with information to adapt to your needs. You gave us very good marks overall in 2011 and the feedback was been very helpful as well. We encourage you to complete these surveys if you're randomly selected.

The "KiloWatcher" prepaid metering program has continued to grow in numbers and value to its users. We upgraded this program to start sending email and text alerts and performing automatic reconnects on suspended accounts when the payment is applied. Daily usage is now available on the Internet for any prepaid user accessing their account.

Your cooperative continues to offer a number of energy efficiency programs and we added more programs last year. One additional program is the Fridge & Freezer Farewell program where the cooperative offers rebates for the removal of operational second refrigerators and freezers. Call us today to inquire about this and other programs as well as energy audits that we can perform at your home.

The cooperative's non-profit affiliate, the Roanoke Center, had another successful year by leveraging the cooperative's energy efficiency programs, providing technical assistance to small businesses in the region, and teaching the citizenry about wealth creation and asset building.

On the horizon

While we celebrate this year as being the International Year of Cooperatives, it is worthy to note that we'll be laying the groundwork this year for a major REC milestone in 2013—the 75-year anniversary. We'll be soliciting your assistance this year in putting together a documentary covering the first 75 years. The plan is to have the material completed this year. You'll be hearing from us on ways you can help.

The cooperative will continue its work to be an integral part of the region's economic development efforts. There will be funds from a revolving loan fund managed by co-op staff available for economic development projects. We will also continue to work with local developers to promote our service area as a business-friendly locale.

With the completion of the 2011-2014 Construction Work Plan last year, we'll be performing a significant portion of the work outlined this year. Additionally, we're doing a complete inventory of all services on the system. This project will make the process of predicting and assessing outages as well as dispatching to each individual location much more efficient.

We will continue to build on our communication efforts established last year to you in 2012. We're exploring other sources of social media to communicate and will adapt to your needs through your feedback. You can also be on the lookout for information being made available to you about your energy usage, whether through our website or by talking to a staff member.

Please join us as we celebrate 2012 all year long as the International Year of Cooperatives and prepare for REC's Diamond Anniversary. As we do this, we will always be mindful to demonstrate the co-op's mission to provide safe, reliable, and affordable electricity while enhancing the quality of life in the diverse communities we serve. We look forward to serving you in 2012.



Member claims her Roanoke Bucks



Congratulations to Ms. Sandra Person, who spotted her account number in the September edition of the *Flashes* newsletter and didn't waste any time claiming her \$25 Roanoke Bucks. Thank you, Ms. Person, for being an eagle-eyed member of Roanoke Electric Cooperative.



Find your account number in this newsletter, contact us and win \$25 Roanoke Bucks!

Roanoke Electric Cooperative to sponsor campaign academy

Roanoke Electric Cooperative announced recently that it will co-host a Campaign Academy in Hickory on Tuesday, January 31, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel; one also in Fayetteville on Wednesday, February 1, at the Doubletree Hotel; and another one in Rocky Mount on Thursday, February 2 at the Doubletree Hotel for individuals interested in running for public office this fall.

The Campaign Academy was created by electric cooperatives to help prospective candidates for school board, town or county council, state or federal office or any other elected position sharpen their political skills and prepare for the rigors of the campaign trail.

“The Academy is an intensive learning experience for any candidate hoping to win and serve their community,” said Marshall Cherry, Vice President of Members Services/Marketing. “By offering this training, we believe both the candidate and the

community are better served. Some of the best candidates just need to know how to run.”

The school is open to candidates of any political party and will feature seasoned campaign veterans and professionals focusing on the following core areas: fundraising, campaign strategy, message development and communication skills.

“There just isn’t enough training given to local candidates who are willing to step forward and serve our communities,” Cherry said. “This program meets that need.”

Attendees will also learn about campaign rules and regulations from State Board of Elections representatives. “The skills one learns here are applicable to any campaign,” added Cherry.

Those interested in the Campaign Academy are asked to contact Robin Phillips, (252) 209-2259 to learn more about the Campaign Academy.

Roanoke EC employees help raise money for those in need

On December 2, 2011, Roanoke EC employees volunteered to be bell ringers for the Salvation Army for the day.

The “miracle” of Christmas is repeated over and over again through the joy of caring and sharing. The traditional Salvation Army red kettle is an integral part of the Christmas scene, with millions of dollars donated each year to aid needy families, seniors and the homeless, in keeping with the spirit of the season.

Donations provide Christmas dinners, clothing and toys for families in need. Financial assistance also helps with basic necessities. Volunteers distribute gifts to shut-ins in hospitals and nursing homes, and shelters are open for sit-down dinners.

Many families are people struggling with difficult family, emotional or employment problems. The money raised, almost \$600, by the bell ringers and other Salvation Army efforts provide for those in the Roanoke EC community who need a helping hand.



Roanoke EC employees accepting a donation from Roanoke EC member Lina Gatling is Ricky Robinson (left) and Lillie Wilder (right).

Electrical fires: Where they occur, how they start, how to prevent them

According to the U.S. Fire Administration, there are approximately 28,600 home electrical fires each year. Winter months are the most dangerous for electrical fires because indoor activities require additional lighting, heating and appliance use.

Most electrical fires are the result of faulty outlets and old electrical systems, but cords, plugs, receptacles, switches, light fixtures and bulbs are also likely causes. The bedroom is the leading area for electrical fire origin.

Routinely follow these safety precautions in order to avoid an electrical fire in your home:

- ❑ Check electrical appliances and wiring often.
- ❑ Replace all worn, old or damaged cords immediately.
- ❑ Replace any electrical tool or appliance if it causes even small electrical shocks, overheats, shorts out or gives off smoke or sparks. This is a sign that the tool is faulty and could cause a fire.
- ❑ Keep electrical appliances away from wet floors and wet counters.
- ❑ Make sure to only buy electrical products evaluated by a nationally recognized laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratory (UL).
- ❑ Keep clothes, curtains and any other potentially combustible items and liquids at least three feet from all heaters.
- ❑ Never force a three-prong plug into a two-slot outlet or extension cord.

- ❑ Do not allow children to play with or around electrical appliances like space heaters, irons or hair dryers.
- ❑ Use electrical extension cords wisely being careful not to overload sockets or cords.
- ❑ Never run electrical cords under rugs.



If an electrical fire does occur in your home, remember to NEVER use water to put it out. By the time you see smoke coming out of the outlet 107044-001, a fire has most likely already begun and is spreading within the walls and up to the attic. Always have a class ABC fire extinguisher, which uses dry chemicals to put out fires, ready for this type of situation.

If it is safe to do so, turn off all power in the house, exit and call 911 be sure to tell them it is an electrical fire. After having an electrical fire, call a certified electrician to determine what needs to be replaced or what you can do to avoid another occurrence.

Tips to reduce water heater cost

Roanoke EC has useful suggestions to reducing water use. When it comes to hot water, it's the shower that keeps most people raising the dial on water heaters. If you want to conserve water, use low-flow showerheads, take quicker showers, turn off the water when you are soaping up, and stick with mild, lukewarm water 101555-001.

It's really not so bad trying to change your shower habits. Try going without a water heater at all, and you'll realize you need a lot less hot water than you think.



Office closed for holiday

Roanoke Electric Cooperative offices will be closed Monday, January 2, 2012, for New Year's Day, and closed Monday, January 16, 2012, for the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. For emergencies, please contact us at (800) 358-9437.

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P.O. Drawer 1326,
Ahoskie, NC 27910

Office: (252) 209-2236
or 1-800-433-2236

For outages call: 1-800-358-9437

For electronic bill payment:
www.roanokeelectric.com

We accept VISA, MasterCard
& E-check.

Editor: Robin Phillips

President and CEO

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