



Roanoke Electric **FLASHES**

Co-op membership has its privileges

By Curtis Wynn, President and CEO
I'm often asked why we call those who purchase electricity from Roanoke Electric Cooperative "members" and not "customers." The answer is simple.

Some of my friends are members of Rotary and Kiwanis clubs. My sons are active members of Boy Scouts of America. And you're a member of Roanoke Electric Cooperative.

Service clubs have a common mission—together the club accomplishes more than an individual could 120891-001. The same holds true for any club or organization—they pool resources and work together to help each member succeed.

Membership at Roanoke Electric Cooperative offers many of the same benefits as clubs do, but with a big extra. You and the rest of our 14,000-plus members own the co-op! That means we answer to you, not investors who've never walked our streets or spent time in our schools. This structure harks back to our origins.

Roanoke Electric Cooperative was organized by farmers and

rural residents from this area in 1938, with support from the federal Rural Electrification Administration (REA). At that time, investor-owned utilities said there wasn't enough profit to be made to warrant the expense of building power lines into the countryside.

REA offered low-cost loans for bringing electricity to unserved homes and farms. So folks began forming electric cooperatives to meet the need. A fee of \$5 was collected from each family—making them co-op members and owners—to generate capital for borrowing. The rest is history.

You should be proud of what Roanoke Electric Cooperative has accomplished. We are an economic driver in the communities we serve. A 2009 study funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture found electric co-ops across the U.S. employ 130,000 Americans, both directly and indirectly, with revenues topping out at \$45 billion.

Best of all, every co-op operates on a not-for-profit basis. Roanoke Electric Cooperative doesn't offer

profits to investors—we return money over and above operating costs to you, our members, based on electricity consumption.

Annually, electric co-ops nationwide return \$545 million to members through this "capital credits retirement" process. Last year Roanoke Electric Cooperative members received more than \$750,000 from capital credits retirement.

Electric co-op membership remains as important today as it was in the late 1930s. And all of the nation's 900-plus electric co-ops in 47 states share a common mission: to keep energy safe, affordable, and reliable.

Working together through efforts like the Cooperative Owners for Political Action grassroots awareness campaign, we're keeping our needs at the top of Congress's agenda. We're part of something special—a nationwide network owned and controlled by people like you and me. That's why membership matters.

The Roanoke Electric Cooperative family remains honored to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity, while enhancing the quality of life in the diverse communities we serve.



Curtis Wynn



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

The Roanoke Center: At your side in 2012

For the past eight years The Roanoke Center (TRC) has been committed to making the community and region a better place to live and work. It is a community and business resource that offers access to a wide array of programs and services. TRC strives to help individuals, families, and businesses access academic, vocational, and economic opportunities that enhance their ability to strengthen their communities, succeed at school and work, raise healthy families, and become engaged members of the community.

Here are services and programs offered at The Roanoke Center:

Payment Location: For your convenience Roanoke Electric's utility bills can be paid at TRC. Payments to accounts are posted the same day. The night deposit box is available for member payments at night and on weekends.

Business Development and Enrichment: Microenterprise Loan Program The Microenterprise Loan Program helps individuals become self-sufficient by providing opportunities for self-employment and small business growth. It provides loans to assist entrepreneurs who are starting a new business, growing a business, or striving to improve an existing business. The program provides loans from \$500 up to \$25,000.

Technical Assistance, Education, and Training Referrals The Roanoke Center provides educational and outreach opportunities at business events, meetings, and workshops. In addition, we are a referral source to clients seeking free and low-cost educational, technical or management assistance.



Those who work for Roanoke Electric are committed to making The Roanoke Center an effective community and business resource. Front row (left to right): Diana Mitchell, Sarah Ivey. Back row (left to right): Liberache Harris, Sarah Clark, Johnetta Chavis, Berly Brill, Sondra Dickens.

Co-op Connections Program By being a participating business in the program, your business is exposed to thousands more new customers while strengthening relationships with your current customer base. It benefits cooperative members by offering valuable discounts from participating businesses.

Sites Across America This is a national clearinghouse of available commercial and industrial sites and buildings served by Touchstone Energy Cooperatives. If you have property to lease or sale, The Roanoke Center can help market it locally and nationwide at no cost to you.

Public Internet Access: TRC offers free access to computers and the Internet during regular business hours. All users must agree to abide by The Center's internet policy in order to use the computers.

Services, Equipment, and Amenities: The Roanoke Center allows clients and members to do business in a cooperative environment and work more efficiently and profitably than in a traditional space. Some of the many benefits, amenities, and onsite services include:

- Training partnerships
- Low lease terms on office space
- Fully furnished offices
- Fax and copying services
- Computer training lab
- Conference room or meeting space
- High speed Internet communications
- Fully equipped kitchen
- No utilities fees
- Janitorial services
- Low-cost administrative services
- Accessible location near major highways

Business-to-Business Services: The Buyer Supplier Network (BSN) assists small businesses and entrepreneurs to market and promote their products and services to the general public, larger corporations, governmental entities, and other buyers in the region by using The Roanoke Center's Internet-based solutions. The BSN Central system will serve as a primary conduit through which larger corporations and public agencies will identify qualified locally owned suppliers and service providers to fulfill their business opportunities. Suppliers and contractors interested in selling products and/or services are highly encouraged to register in the BSN. To learn how these services can benefit your organization, visit www.bsncentral.com.

Energy Services: This program provides a home energy assessment to determine ways of saving energy or making a home safer. If repairs or

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Do you have old photos or memorabilia to share?

Roanoke Electric Cooperative was organized by farmers and other residents back in 1938, with support from the federal Rural Electrification Administration (created in 1935).

Next year, in 2013, Roanoke Electric Cooperative celebrates its 75th anniversary. We would like to celebrate all of our territory and its rich history over the past 75 years, and we need your help. Do you have old photos or memorabilia of Roanoke Electric Cooperative and its service area?

Please send your photos, old membership cards, old electric bills, or any of your memories related to electrifying the Roanoke Valley and Roanoke Chowan regions to:

Roanoke Electric Cooperative
75th Anniversary
Attention: Robin Phillips
P.O. Drawer 1326
Ahoskie, NC 27910

If applicable, we will scan your materials and use them for our anniversary celebration.

Please indicate whether you are donating your photos or if you would like them returned. Please include a full name and an address for those materials that must be returned.



The Roanoke Center (continued from page 31) ...

renovations deem necessary, The Roanoke Center can assist with completing a pre-qualification application for submission to USDA. The USDA Section 504 loan/grant program helps very low-income owner occupants of modest single family homes in rural areas repair their homes. Loan funds are available for repairs to improve or modernize a home, make it safer or more sanitary, or remove health and safety hazards.

The Roanoke Center staff works diligently to connect REC members to funding sources most suitable for any home improvement project. They can also assist with a 75 percent matching grant for commercial and agricultural members toward the purchase of a comprehensive energy audit.

Community Engagement: By never losing sight of community and collaboration, TRC has launched phase II of its coalition of community partners—Roanoke Chowan Partners for Progress 2 (RCPP2). RCPP2, a regional consortium of individuals and

community-based organizations, is back with a new focus and name. TRC values the power of unity to effect positive changes and build stronger communities in northeastern NC. RCPP2 invites you to any of our meetings hosted at Roanoke Electric Cooperative's office in Ahoskie.

The best way to get a real feeling for what The Roanoke Center is all about is to visit our location. We also invite you to visit our website at www.theroanokecenter.org. We look forward to serving you.

Contact Information:
The Roanoke Center
409 N. Main Street
Rich Square, NC 27869
Office (252) 539-4600
Fax (252) 539-4611
Hours: 8 a.m.–5 p.m., Monday–Friday

Are you using your Co-op Connections card?

The Co-op Connections Program is just one more program that Roanoke Electric offers that puts savings at your fingertips. ***This member benefit program is absolutely free!*** It offers a variety of discounts at participating local and national businesses. And those businesses benefit from increased customer visits by Co-op members 9306-001.

Roanoke Electric has distributed discount cards like the one shown to thousands of members and participants. Our goal is to connect our members and businesses while offering

money saving discounts and to emphasize the value of being a member-owner of Roanoke Electric. So be sure that you or a family member carry the Co-op Connections card and take it wherever you go. We are always looking for ways to provide additional value to our members, businesses, and community.

Where can I use the card?

Look for the card logo at local businesses or ask at check-out before your purchase. Hundreds of cooperatives across the state and country offer discounts in their areas and will honor the REC card as well.

One of the major savings that our members have received since we launched the program three years ago is prescription medication savings. Based on

Connections Card Business Spotlight

Sylvan Heights Bird Park is one of the businesses in the Co-op Connections Program. The 18-acre facility features large, walk-through aviaries displaying birds from South America, North America, Europe, Africa, Asia and Australia. Tranquil gardens and lush natural areas enhance the beauty of the birds on exhibit.



"We not only seek to entertain and engage visitors, but to inspire and educate our visitors about the importance of waterfowl, wildlife and wetland conservation," stated Brent Lubbock, membership and development projects manager. The Bird's Nest Tree House and Beaver Pond Blind, showcase the fascinating world of Eastern North Carolina's native animals and plants, and the habitats they live in.

Sylvan Heights, located at 500 Sylvan Heights Parkway in Scotland Neck, is open Tuesday through Sunday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission to the park is established for children, seniors, and adults. Just show your card when you visit the Park and the Co-op Connections discount will be honored.

members' feedback and inquiries, here are three tips that may help when visiting your pharmacy:

- ❑ The prescription discount program is not insurance and cannot be used with any other prescription discount or insurance plan.
- ❑ Prescription prices and availability vary with each participating pharmacy.
- ❑ Be sure to have your Co-op Connections card with you when you go to the pharmacy. They will need your "Group" and Member" information to process your prescription and verify your discount.

How can a business join?

Enrollment is free and open to businesses willing to offer discounts or services to cooperative members. The only cost is the value of the discount and a minimum enrollment period of 12 months.

Participation is easy and will give you a marketing advantage with our membership in addition to thousands of Touchstone Energy Cooperative members nationwide. It's free media exposure for your business!

If you are a business owner interested in offering a deal through the program, please email dmitchell@roanokeelectric.com or call (252) 539-4601.

For a list of participating businesses, visit www.roanokeelectric.com and click on the Co-op Connections Program icon.

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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
Visit our web site at:
www.roanokeelectric.com

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The power of human connections®

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Office closed for holiday

Roanoke Electric Cooperative office will be closed on Friday, April 6, in observance of the Easter Holiday. For emergencies, call (800) 358-9437.