



Roanoke Electric **FLASHES**

Roanoke EC annual meeting provides useful information, new summit for teens

Roanoke EC celebrated its 75th Annual Meeting and Member Appreciation Day on Saturday, August 24, at Hertford County High School in Ahoskie. This year's event was filled with the excitement of new agenda items to commemorate this milestone.

This year's theme, "Remembering the Past, Embracing the Future and Moving Forward," acknowledges Roanoke EC's 75-year journey in delivering reliable, safe and affordable electricity to our members and sets the tone for a successful many years to come.

More than 1,000 members, spouses, guests, community organizations, friends, supporters and employees gathered to enjoy the festivities. To add to the excitement, Roanoke EC debuted its Teen Summit session for teens ages 13-18. Teens came out to learn about the cooperative way of doing business, scholarship and youth leadership camp opportunities, and energy conservation.

Alton Perry, forest management-land retention consultant



for Roanoke EC's Sustainable Forestry and African-American Land Retention project, and NC State University representative Mark Megalos also spoke with teens concerning the vast career and training opportunities in the agricultural and forestry industries.

Keeping with the meeting theme of "moving forward," Roanoke EC's forward-looking progress was publically acknowledged when CoBank, AgFirst Farm Credit Bank and AgCarolina Farm Credit presented a \$72,000 check to go toward Roanoke's

Sustainable Forestry and African-American Land Retention project through 2014.

Roanoke's efforts in providing reliable and affordable service as safely as possible were also acknowledged when Nelle Hotchkiss, NCAEC senior vice president of corporate relations, presented the co-op with a Certificate of Safety Achievement.

Gardner's Caterers from Rocky Mount served a delicious turkey barbecue and fried chicken lunch. Members also enjoyed 75th anniversary cupcakes, courtesy of

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Roanoke EC annual meeting highlights (continued from page 21)...

Sinfully Sweet in Ahoskie. More than 30 organizations showcased their specialties, and future members enjoyed the “Kidz Carnival,” an annual meeting staple.

Additional special guests were 2013 NRECA youth tourist Shavanda Rountree and 2013 Roy Williams Basketball Camp winner, Derrin Mallory. Montrell Wilson, 2013 REC Scholarship winner, appeared via Skype video.

Perhaps the most exciting event was Roanoke EC’s grand prize car giveaway. The co-op rotated its 2003 Ford Taurus out of its fleet and gave it away as one of the many prizes attendees could win. Ernest Simpson of Tillery won this year’s grand prize.

The cooperative’s general counsel, attorney Everette Winslow of Winslow-Wetsch of Raleigh, presided over the program. Allen Speller, chairman of the board of directors, gave the invocation and Dr. Michael D. Perry, superintendent of Hertford County Schools, welcomed everyone to the school site. Speller also welcomed all in attendance.

The State of Roanoke EC

In his “State of the Co-op” address, president and CEO Curtis Wynn focused his remarks on electricity costs, a top-of-mind concern for members. Specifically, these questions were addressed:

- ? What causes my electric bill to be so high?
- ? What can I do to lower my bill?
- ? What is Roanoke Electric Cooperative doing to help me?
- ? What does it mean to be a cooperative owner?

“It seems like the cost of everything from gasoline to groceries is going up and unfortunately, our industry is not immune. The cost of doing business and supplying electricity to our members is rising as well,” said Wynn. “It is our mission to deliver reliable, safe and affordable electricity to our members and to do so at the lowest possible cost. Roanoke Electric is working hard to keep these costs down, but there are several issues far beyond our control that are having a direct impact on your electric bills — now and for years to come.”

Wynn highlighted the importance of attending the co-op’s Straight Talk About Electricity forums in facilitating “healthy dialogue regarding our industry and the impact that legislation and regulation have on the cost of electricity.”

Wynn said today’s electric utility industry faces multiple challenges and that these factors are the reasons for cost increases:

Aging infrastructure: Some of our wires, substations, power plants, poles and meters have been around for many decades. Like anything else, however, we know



Ernest Simpson of Tillery won this year’s grand prize, a 2003 Ford Taurus recently rotated out of the Roanoke EC fleet.

that nothing lasts forever and “...today there is a rapidly growing need to replace much of the old material that has allowed electricity to reach your homes,” said Wynn.

“The need to use renewable sources of power to protect the environment is an important part of this scenario as well.”

Wynn further said that by 2030, the electric industry will need to make a total investment of about \$1.5 trillion – which includes all generation, transmission and distribution companies like your co-op. These investments will be made to:

- ✓ Replace aging material and equipment
- ✓ Respond to environmental regulations
- ✓ Improve reliability
- ✓ Include renewable energy as another source of power
- ✓ Meet new customer expectations

New Regulations: 00126691001 Although our governmental structure remains consistent to its purpose, government policies and regulations often change over time. “Government regulations have gotten tighter and the timeframe to comply has gotten shorter,” said Wynn. “This means, in some cases, we will not be allowed to wait 15-20 years; the government is saying make changes NOW or you will be violating the law.”

As new laws and regulations are put in place, we are being told to quickly upgrade an electrical system that it has taken us 75 years to build. As a result, forcing electric companies to replace or add facilities and equipment on an accelerated schedule increases costs.

Changing Consumer Needs & Expectations: Another pressure is meeting the demands of a younger generation that expects the power to never go out, no matter what – hurricane, tornado or ice storm. Also, we are expected to provide more communication options, such as Internet, Facebook, Skype, Twitter and e-mail; more billing options like cards, pre-pay and time-of-day rates, and we are now expected to buy power

from customers who might generate their own power with solar panels. Wynn stated that the cooperative is committed to meeting the needs of all of its customers and the only issue, he continued, is that everything costs and we are managing that as effectively as possible.

As a result of anticipated increases due to regulations, expectations, and inflation, Wynn stated that your co-op anticipates its cost of wholesale power for 1,000 kilowatt-hours to increase about 16 percent over the next three years. In addition to this rise, local costs have to be added to these numbers to determine your actual cost for 1,000 kilowatt-hours, which is now roughly \$145 per 1,000 kilowatt-hours.

Wynn then discussed what we can do to soften the blow of inevitable rising costs. "The answer to that question has been a big part of an ongoing discussion we've been having with our members during a series of Straight Talk discussions," said Wynn. Some of the major topics have been:

Analyzing Your Electric Bill: It is of great importance to us that you understand the information we send you on your electricity bills. We have attempted to make sure there are no surprises about what you owe for electricity and that you are able to track how much electricity you use on a daily and even hourly basis right on your bill. Having good information allows you to make the necessary adjustments when you see that your monthly costs are accumulating to be more than you can afford. We encourage you to call us if there is anything you don't understand about your bill.

Energy Efficiency: Our Energy Efficiency program is designed to help homeowners with energy-efficiency tips, and cost efficient measures to help you lower your electric bill. We can analyze your bill, conduct surveys and then schedule and perform individual energy audits. We hope that if you haven't already, that you will take advantage of these services. With the exception of repairs, we provide these to you at no additional cost.

On Bill Financing: Our Energy Efficiency Loan program is coming soon. This program focuses on homes wasting the most energy and have unusually high energy bills. It can help you reduce energy use up to 20 percent. There are no upfront costs and the low-cost loan is paid back on your utility bill.

Member Engagement Programs: Your co-op is constantly working hard to provide ways to help our members, not only with managing your electricity cost so that it doesn't exceed your budget, but through other means such as the Cooperative Connections Card. The Cooperative Connections Card offers a number of dis-

counts for you to enjoy. Two of the more popular areas that members have enjoyed savings are for prescription drugs and eye care. We have given a card to every member.

Helping home owners and land owners

Another very exciting program Roanoke EC has initiated to improve the well-being of our members and to be good stewards of the environment is the newly launched Sustainable Forestry and Land Retention program. The program was designed to assist landowners in our service area to increase their household incomes by: reducing the tax burden associated with maintaining your property and helping landowners determine the absolute best way to utilize existing programs designed to help them manage and maintain the forestry-based assets on their land.



CoBank, AgFirst Farm Credit Bank and AgCarolina Farm Credit presented a \$72,000 check to go toward Roanoke's Sustainable Forestry and African-American Land Retention project through 2014.

Wynn ended by reassuring members that, despite that rising costs, the cooperative is a tremendous benefit to them. "Being a part of a cooperative is similar to being a member of a family," said Wynn. "As a matter of fact, we have the word 'family' as a part of our mission statement."

The mission of our cooperative family is to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity, while enhancing the quality of life in the diverse communities we serve. Good families stick together in good times and bad.

Other business matters included voting Columbus Jeffers, Kenneth "Ken" Jernigan, and Chester Deloatch to retain their seats, serving three-year terms for districts 1, 5, and 9 respectively.

The official meeting adjourned and the day ended with the door prize segment and a delicious lunch. The cooperative thanks its vendors for providing prizes won by lucky ticket holders.

Roanoke EC and Max Finberg make initial site visit for Sustainable Forestry Project

As a way to demonstrate your co-op's undying commitment to providing you with the best quality of life, Roanoke EC continues to make leaps and bounds with its Sustainable Forestry and African American Land Retention Project.

On August 16, Roanoke EC hosted Max Finberg, head of StrikeForce – the USDA program on focus Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Forest Service and Farm Services Administration programs in rural areas – and key USDA officials in North Carolina.

The visit's agenda detailed an overview of Roanoke's Sustainable Forestry and African American Land Retention Pilot Project, a US Endowment Grant funded project aimed solely at assisting homeowners and landowners in improving their land's value and stabilizing their home and land ownership.

Other topics for discussion came from forest consultant Alton Perry, Roanoke EC president & CEO Curtis Wynn, vice president of U.S. endowment forestry and communities Alan McGregor, executive director of heirs' property preservation Dr. Jennie Stephens and director of sustainable forestry program Sam Cook.

At the visit's close, the Roanoke staff and special guests journeyed to the residence of a potential candidate for the Sustainable Forestry project: Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Pettiford, who may receive resources and support through this project. During the site visit, Roanoke staff and special guests were able to tour the Pettifords' forest land property and gather critical



Joe Pettiford (second from left), co-owner of Pettiford Farms, talks with Alton Perry, REC's forestry management consultant, about sustainable use of his farmland as Alan McGregor (left), vice president of U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, and Max Finberg (far right), senior advisor with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, take part in the site visit.

information that will better help us meet their need.

We encourage all homeowners and landowners to take advantage of the resources we have to offer through our Sustainable Forestry and African American Land Retention Pilot Project.

For more information, please call (252) 209-2236.

Congressman G.K. Butterfield visits Roanoke EC office

Congressman G. K. Butterfield joined Roanoke EC officials and other surrounding co-op representatives to discuss issues that are important to you. Your cooperative constantly makes an effort to reach out to those in Congress who have the power to make governmental decisions that best benefit you. The issues currently on electric cooperatives' agenda in the U.S. Congress include:



- Making sure the Environmental Protection Agency considers a well-balanced approach when enacting Greenhouse Gas Emission reductions
- Non-hazardous regulation of coal ash
- Passing a Five-Year Farm Bill that makes it easy for you to invest in energy efficiency improvements

In attendance were representatives from the N.C. Association of Electric Cooperatives, Albemarle EMC, Edgecombe-Martin EMC, Halifax EMC and Tideland EMC.

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