



Roanoke Electric **FLASHES**

Remembering the past, embracing the future and moving forward

By Curtis Wynn, *President and CEO*

September 30, 2013, marked Roanoke Electric's 75th year. Those years have seen your co-op providing members with the safest, most reliable and affordable electricity while enhancing the lives of those in the diverse communities they live in and work in.

Leading to this joyous occasion has caused me to study the history of electric cooperatives in more detail, and I have heard some amazing stories about how they came to be. Typically, the original incorporators would scour the countryside trying to convince their neighbors to sign up for service. I read of one account, which involved a husband and wife arguing about whether they would have electricity:

The husband said, "We can't afford it." His wife responded, "We are going to have electricity." The husband insisted, "No we aren't." The wife then said, "I'm not going to cook or wash your clothes until we have electricity." Finally, the husband said, "Where do I sign?"

Not many of us can remember the day the lights came on, but this account alludes to the significance rural electric cooperatives would have on our everyday lives almost a century later.

The federal government, through the REA, loaned money that helped the fledgling cooperatives get established. It's important to point out that this was a loan. These loans were a hand up, not a hand out. In true rural fashion, they have always been paid back, with interest. To this day, the U.S. treasury benefits from the interest payments made by electric cooperatives.

There's an old saying that electric cooperatives were born in politics, and they will die in politics. From the beginning, your electric cooperative has had to fight to stay alive against those who would have rural citizens remain second-class citizens.

One hallmark of those early pioneers was their willingness to get involved in this fight, whether

it was taking on a governor or senator who tried to introduce

legislation harmful to the cooperatives, or some state bureaucrat whose actions threatened to increase rates. They wrote letters, made phone calls and even showed up in person to rally behind their electric cooperative.

Today's electric cooperatives face similar challenges, particularly in Washington, D.C. It's a fact that most of the rate increases you have seen in recent years have been the result of new regulations affecting power supply.

Despite those challenges, for the past 75 years, your electric cooperative has held true to the efforts of those early pioneers who believed in doing our part to "improve the quality of life for the citizens we serve throughout



Curtis Wynn

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Remembering the past...(continued from page 25)

this seven-county region.” In fact, here’s a quick snapshot of what Roanoke Electric Cooperative has done in the community since 2000:

- ❑ We’ve awarded 87 Bright Ideas education grants to area school teachers, totaling more than \$101,000.
- ❑ Roanoke Care Trust, through our Operation Roundup program, has funded more than 100 projects for area non-profit organizations for more than \$500,000.
- ❑ We have provided 13 Youth Scholarships to areas students to further their education, totaling \$13,000. We also sponsor basketball scholarships and the Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.
- ❑ Through the NCEMC and USDA REDLG Business Development Loan programs, nine businesses and agencies have received grants or zero-interest loans to support business development initiatives for a total of \$3.5 million; these loan and grant dollars have been leveraged by county governments and other local, state and federal funds for millions more dollars that more than quadruple the amount we’ve invested.
- ❑ Private foundations and other granting agencies such as Duke Endowment, Z Smith Reynolds foundation, The North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center, North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation, the Golden LEAF Foundation, CoBank and more recently the U S Endowment for Forestry and Communities and the US Forest Service have granted us more than \$5.2 million to support economic development and wealth creation activities in the region.

- ❑ Additionally, Roanoke Electric Cooperative supports numerous organizations through golf tournaments and other sponsorships to strengthen their causes.
- ❑ Finally, let’s not forget the numerous volunteer hours our employees give to chambers of commerce, economic development boards, charitable and other agencies regions – with the support of the cooperative.
- ❑ Oh, I forgot to mention that your cooperative contributes to the local tax base by way of an average annual payroll of more than \$3.5 million and property tax payouts of more than \$500,000 annually to local municipalities and county governments.

While we marvel about our recent accomplishments, let’s ask ourselves if we would have the strength and courage to do what those pioneers started in 1938 and carried forward to more recent years? Would those of us here today turn darkness into daylight by wiring the countryside, even in the face of naysayers who said the job couldn’t be done?

Today, I want to challenge you, both members and community leaders, to be like those rural electric pioneers who rallied behind their electric cooperatives when called to do so. We are building a grassroots Army that can be called on to ask our state legislators, Congress, the Environmental Protection Agency and anyone else who threatens the price you pay for electricity to remember the person at the end of the line, whether it’s the residential member or the next industrial client we are recruiting.

If you believe your Roanoke Electric Cooperative is a relevant part of this community, even if you are not a cooperative member; we ask that you help in our charge to manage the severity of the impact that new laws and regulations will have on the rates rural citizens and businesses must pay for electricity.

When challenges come our way – and they will — we are going to include you in our Call to Action for keeping rural electric service reliable and affordable, while we continue the work we are doing in this community. Together we are strong — that’s the cooperative way.

On behalf of all of our employees and our board of directors, we appreciate the opportunity to serve you. And, we look forward to the next 75 years.



Roanoke EC hosts 75th anniversary celebration

Roanoke Electric Cooperative celebrated 75 years of service with members and special guests on Friday, September 27. Members were served lunch and registered for prizes in the office lobby from 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. A smaller ceremony was held in the warehouse where county commissioners, legislative representatives, district judges, county managers, surrounding school personnel, retired Roanoke EC employees and other community leaders gathered to celebrate the joyous milestone.

Eugene Brown Jr., former general manager of Roanoke Electric from 1980 until 1997, gave remarks recalling the “good old days” and commending the powerful efforts of Roanoke’s employees both past and present.

Curtis Wynn, president and CEO of Roanoke Electric, followed Brown’s remarks, equally praising the efforts of the early pioneers of the rural cooperative movement and Roanoke Electric’s employees.



Former Roanoke EC general manager Eugene Brown Jr.



Roanoke president and CEO Curtis Wynn

The Hertford County High School band performed the National Anthem and Robert E. Sessoms Culinary/Hospitality Institute students catered the event.

RCPP2 continues efforts for progress

The Roanoke Chowan Partners for Progress 2 (RCPP2) conducted its third quarter meeting on Friday, September 13, at the co-op office. RCPP2 is a coalition of efforts for the economic development of non-profits, local governments and community development within the Roanoke Chowan and Roanoke Valley regions.

Focus area teams gathered to address the challenges of four priority areas of interest, including healthcare, capacity building, education and economic development. In addressing these challenges, partners anticipate developing an economic development plan that will be executed in 2014.

This year has been the year of strategic planning for the coalition of partners in the development of the initiatives. September’s meeting set the stage for the

implementation phase of the full-scale 2014 economic development initiative. Teams were challenged to develop ideas of priorities to work into the execution of a sample small scale project. The ideas generated from the dialogue concerning that small-scale project will be used to write a more comprehensive strategy execution plan in the December meeting.

Almost 40 attendees gathered to contribute to the meeting’s fruitful dialogue and engagement. Among those who attended was a representative from the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) – the newest partner on board with the initiative’s effort. Friday’s meal was sponsored by the EDF as well. 00011389003

To learn more about the efforts of RCPP2, please visit www.roanokecenter.org/rcpp2

Senate representative honors REC with U.S. flag

Betty Jo Shepard, eastern regional field representative of Senator Richard Burr’s office (center), was on hand to present the U.S. flag to Roanoke Electric’s board of directors and staff at their September 27 anniversary celebration. The flag was flown over the U.S. Capitol on September 18, 2013, to commemorate Roanoke Electric’s 75th Anniversary.



Roanoke EC announces EE loan program

In an effort to lessen the burden of homeowners making needed home energy efficiency improvements and to help offset the costs associated with their utility bills, Roanoke EC, the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), and Generations Community Credit Union (GCCU) have partnered to begin an Energy Efficiency Loan Program that will serve REC members.

Our partnership seeks to enable homeowners to reduce energy usage by up to 20 percent. There is no up-front cost to the borrower, and the low-cost loan will be paid back through the electric bill. A member who is a homeowner can enroll by simply calling the office or going to our website online to submit an interest form. 00008706002 From there, a team member will be back in touch with the member and one of our field representatives will perform an energy audit to assess your needs for different energy measures including:

- Leak Sealing (caulking and spray foam to fill gaps around windows and walls)
- Duct sealing (closing gaps in ductwork connections)
- Attic insulation to reach a R-30 level
- Hot water pipe insulation
- Water heater blanket and temperature adjustment
- Replacement of incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs
- Low-flow hot water shower and faucet fixtures
- Programmable thermostat



After your audit is conducted, a representative from Roanoke EC will assist you in completing an application with Generations Community Credit Union. After the application is processed, a qualified contractor will complete the improvements. Roanoke EC will pay the contractor upfront and members will be billed their monthly loan payment. Loan rates are as low as 3.5 percent.

Typical savings are around \$40 per month and typical loan payments are around \$37 per month. Savings will absorb the loan payment over a five-year term. After the loan is paid off over that five-year term, members can still reap the savings long after the loan is paid off.

We encourage members to call our office or visit our website today to submit the interest form.

“We find this program to be one that will help our members – particularly those who have higher electric bills during the winter months,” says Marshall Cherry, vice president of IT, marketing and member services. “This is an effort to allow Roanoke to fulfill its mission in providing safe, reliable and affordable electricity. The more we can provide ways to encourage wiser energy consumption, the better it will be for our members,” Cherry continued.

For more information, please call (252) 209-2236 or (800) 433-2236 and use reference code EELP or visit www.roanokeelectric.com/eeloan.

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Roanoke EC office closed

November 11 for Veteran's Day

Thursday, November 28, and Friday, November 29,
for the Thanksgiving holiday.

