



Roanoke Electric **FLASHES**

Roanoke Connect: Bringing broadband to Roanoke Electric's members

Roanoke Electric Cooperative (REC) is taking steps to bring its communities into the 21st century, in terms of technology. REC executives recently explained how the cooperative will bring broadband technology to this rural area. The search engine www.bing.com defines broadband as “the wide bandwidth characteristics of transmitting or sending information, and its ability to send multiple signals and types of traffic at the same time.” In this case, the medium to be used is optical fiber, which makes high-speed Internet access more available throughout the region.

“REC’s motivation for providing broadband service to our area is to take care of internal, operational needs,” said Curtis Wynn, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Roanoke Electric Cooperative. “We want to make sure that all 12 substations can communicate with each other to do a better job of predicting and managing outages, protect our substations and metering equipment from vandalism and theft, and be more proactive in communicating with individual members regarding usage.”

A secondary but major benefit of this project will be the opportunity for other companies to subscribe to the cooperative’s underutilized fiber and offer high-speed Internet access to individual consumers. “This

will be convenient for the Internet service provider (ISP) to access. REC will not actually provide it, but we have contracted an engineering firm to lay this out. The engineering firm has identified the route,” said George Stamper, Vice President of Engineering at REC.

“Roanoke Connect is a \$4 million investment that will help bring broadband services to our members,” Wynn said. “REC will not provide the service but will enable it.” REC will provide access to its infrastructure, or its fiber network, and this will enable the technology service providers (such as internet service providers or ISPs) to provide the services to the REC members.

Enabling telecomm services

REC will directly enable telecommunication services for hospitals and schools in their service area. The cooperative will attempt to communicate with ISPs and cell phone companies. “For example, we have been talking with Gates County Schools,” Wynn said. REC will provide telecommunications companies with access to its infrastructure.

Wynn said that REC will lease the broadband services to other businesses, like schools, but will own the infrastructure. Implementation of this project will occur in phases. “We expect

to complete this project within a 24-month period, with the project beginning during the first quarter of 2015,” Wynn said.

e-rate program

REC will also investigate the concept of e-rate. Information on the Federal Communications Commission’s website, FCC.gov, explains e-rate as a program that connects the nation’s schools and libraries to broadband.

This website also states that the e-rate program “makes telecommunications and information services more affordable for schools and libraries in America. E-rate provides discounted telecommunications, Internet access, and internal connections to eligible schools and libraries, funded by the Universal Service Fund (USF)” (www.fcc.gov/guides/universal-service-program-schools-and-libraries). Successfully securing these funds will provide support to the cooperative’s investment in this project.

It’s possible that other industries will join the Roanoke Connect project in the future, Stamper indicated. REC members can receive information on Roanoke Connect by visiting www.roanokeelectric.com/connect. The Roanoke Connect project holds promise for a bright future in terms of technology for REC members!

—Cheryl DeLoatch

Father competes against son in Statewide Pole Top Competition

Charles Bryant of Roanoke Electric Cooperative joined 23 other electric cooperative line workers from across the state for the Pole Top Rescue Competition. This competition was held in Raleigh on Thursday, October 16.

The Pole Top Rescue competition pits line workers against both the clock and each other as they display essential lifesaving skills. Each participant had to win a local competition to advance to the championship in Raleigh. "I won for Roanoke EC," Charles said. Charles competed against his son, Chad Bryant. Chad is a lineman for Halifax Electric Membership Corporation, headquartered in Enfield.

The Pole Top Rescue Competition involves several steps. First, a line worker must perform in a scenario in which he finds a fellow worker unconscious atop a utility pole. Second, while dressed in full climbing gear, the lineman must radio for help, then scale 20 feet up a utility pole. Next, the competitor must rig a rope, lower a 105-pound mannequin and begin CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation).

Previous winners have completed this competition in less than two minutes. There were two competition categories, with each competitor receiving prizes for first, second and third place.

"I competed in the personal fall restraints competition, the first competition, and finished in two minutes twenty-nine seconds," Charles said. "Chad competed in the lifeline and life hook, the second competition. He finished in two minutes fifteen seconds. "I was mighty proud to compete against my son," Charles said.

"We're trained to do the pole top competition in less than five minutes," Charles said. "We make it a little friendly competition." Charles is unsure whether he will take part in future competitions. "There's always a chance," he said. "There are a lot of young guys who might want to compete, though."

Charles shared this perspective on the annual Pole



Roanoke EC's Charles Bryant (right) competed in the Statewide Pole Top Rescue Competition.

Top Competition. "It's a special time to meet with the other co-ops and talk about the electric industry. We hope that we never have to use the skills to rescue guys from the utility pole, though."

Chad Bryant added this comment regarding the Pole Top Competition. "I could always tell that my dad (Charles) was proud of his work as a lineman, and that's why I decided to follow in his footsteps. I wanted to make my dad proud," the younger Bryant said. He watched his father all his life performing the duties of an electric lineman. Chad is currently standing out at a young age as a top performer in this field.

"Roanoke Electric Cooperative is very proud to have Charles' talent and experience in serving the cooperative's members," Chief Operating Officer Marshall Cherry said. "Charles is able to transfer his skills to our younger line crew members, in addition to his son."

Congratulations to Charles Bryant for representing Roanoke EC at the statewide competition!

Editor's note: For more about Chad and Charles Bryant and the Pole Top Rescue Competition, see pages 12-13 in this issue of Carolina Country magazine.

—Cheryl DeLoatch

At the Statewide Pole Top Rescue Competition held in Raleigh, Roanoke EC's Charles Bryant (right) competed with his son, Chad (left), who works for Halifax EMC.



Roanoke EC concern for community:

Local organizations receive more than \$8,000 through Operation RoundUp

Your cooperative takes pride in knowing that we're a part of a unique network of cooperatives and members who make up what we call "the cooperative difference." Cooperatives believe in promoting the interest of not only the members we serve, but also in improving the diverse communities in which members live and work. One of Roanoke EC's guiding cooperative principles is "concern for community," which means that while we have a member-first mindset, we also work to achieve sustainable development of our diverse communities.

But Roanoke EC knows that we can't do this alone. Thanks to your generous contributions to our Operation RoundUp program, your cooperative is able to turn our guiding principles into a reality. By rounding up your electric bills to the next whole dollar each month, your spare change goes a long way in improving the lives of those in need within your communities.

The Roanoke EC Care Trust (RECT) board meets quarterly to award the funds you have contributed to area organizations including fire and rescue. At its October 15 meeting at the co-op headquarters, the board awarded more than \$8,000 in fourth quarter Operation RoundUp funds to five local organizations.

Those organizations are:

Conway Severn Rescue Squad (Conway): \$1,200 to purchase LED flashlights for each of their ambulances.

Historic Hope Foundation (Windsor): \$2,500 for partial funding of a new roof during the restoration of the historic King Bazemore House on its property in Bertie County.

Mill Neck Missionary Baptist Church (Como): \$1,500 to help obtain the services of an experienced consultant to submit the necessary information for a Study List Application for historic recognition of the Old Mill Neck School building to the N.C. State Historical Preservation Office.

KIPP Gaston Preparatory (Gaston): \$2,500 to help fund its College Tour program.

WCS on behalf of RRVEC (Warrenton): \$1,000 for their Roanoke River Valley Education Consortium (RRVEC) project.

Your cooperative and the RECT board would like to personally thank all members who are helping us serve our community by rounding up your electric bills each month. Your simple acts of kindness have proven to be priceless resources that enhance the quality of life in your communities.

If you'd like to join other members who are making a big difference through Operation Round-Up, call (252) 209-2236 or visit www.roanokeelectric.com/roundup.

We are responding to the call to serve!

It pays to be a cooperative member

Not only are you a part of something unique, but did you know that it also pays to be a part of this unique relationship? And we're not only talking about the priceless benefits of having access to resources beyond safe, affordable and reliable electricity. As a member, you are periodically paid money in the form of capital credits.

How does this work exactly? Well, as a member, you are an owner of Roanoke EC. As your electric cooperative, Roanoke EC doesn't technically earn profits like many other organizations do. Don't believe it? Actually, any revenues above the costs of doing business are considered "margins." These "margins" are considered to be an interest-free loan from you to your cooperative. Unlike many investor-owned utility companies that take these margins and give them out as dividends to their owners, this money allows Roanoke EC to finance operations and — to a certain extent — construction, with the intent that this money will be repaid to you in later years.

How are these refunds calculated? Your cooperative calculates capital credit refunds for everyone who purchased electricity during a year in which the utility earned margins. Fortunately, you do not have to perform any special action to start a capital credit account. Your membership activates your capital credits account automatically. Then, annually the board of directors assesses the cooperative's financial ability to pay out capital credits to members like you. When Roanoke EC is in good financial standing, the cooperative typically mails a capital credit check in August.

Want to know if you have any capital credit checks waiting for you? We also encourage you to please check in with us periodically to verify that you don't have any checks on file that have already been mailed out and have not been cashed.

For more information, feel free to contact us at (252) 209-2236 or visit www.roanokeelectric.com/capcredits.

Warmest wishes and great thanks to our participating businesses!

Use your Co-op Connections Card and save during this holiday season online at www.connections.coop and at the following local businesses:

A Catered Affair – Littleton, NC
AFLAC – Weldon, NC
A-1 Unlimited Bail Bond Services – Windsor, NC
Amaz'n Buys – Weldon, NC
Benford's Insurance Agency – Rich Square, NC
Blue Front Shoppe Vintage Collectibles – Murfreesboro, NC
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Brabble Insulation, Inc. – Ahoskie, NC
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Energy Resources Contracting – Pendleton, NC
Exquisite Touch Cleaning Services – Rich Square, NC
EPV & Associates – Murfreesboro, NC
Flair Jewelry – Roanoke Rapids, NC
Garner's Nursery – Roanoke Rapids, NC
Historic Hope Foundation, Inc. – Windsor, NC
Internal Links, LLC – Murfreesboro, NC
Janet's Bookkeeping Service – Gates, NC
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Kee Builders – Murfreesboro, NC
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Northco Plumbing, Heating & Air – Pendleton, NC
Phillips Lawn Service – Rich Square, NC
Roanoke Cinemas – Roanoke Rapids, NC
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Ron Properties – Windsor, NC
Secure Solutions, Inc. – Roanoke Rapids, NC
Sylvan Heights Waterfowl Park – Scotland Neck, NC
Taylor Recording Studio – Jackson, NC
Watson Steam Cleaning – Garysburg, NC
White Motors, Inc. – Roanoke Rapids, NC
Young's Plumbing & Sewage – Aulander, NC



Join the Co-op Connections Card Program

For more information, call 252-209-2236 or email savings@roanokeelectric.com.

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REC closed for holidays

Roanoke Electric Cooperative will be closed for the Christmas holiday on Wednesday and Thursday, Dec. 25-26. Happy holidays from your REC family!

