



Roanoke Electric **FLASHES**

Member value: Six benefits to add cash to your pockets!



Since the announcement of your cooperative's five-year strategy execution model,

you've received updates about these efforts:

- ▼ controlling the costs necessary to provide you with your service,
- ▼ improving overall safety in delivering your service,
- ▼ improving the reliability of the service you receive, and
- ▼ improving your satisfaction with the quality of service

Not only will you benefit from these efforts, but your cooperative desires that members also reap immediate benefits from six initiatives that add cash to your pockets each month:

- ▼ Members will no longer have to pay their outdoor light pole charge. You will reap monthly savings of \$2.15.
- ▼ You will also see an additional reduction in your outdoor light charge through your cooperative's Bright Savings program. The new lights are more energy efficient and cost the cooperative less money to maintain. As a result we are passing those saving on to you, the member. How much savings will you receive? A \$2.30 per month savings to every member who has outdoor lighting.
- ▼ Participating in the Upgrade to Save program allows members to make energy efficiency upgrades to their homes while reaping \$32 -\$90 in monthly savings.
- ▼ Members will also benefit from an upcoming wholesale power cost adjustment. The decrease is expected to begin in November, and some members may see savings on their bills ranging from \$50 to \$75 during the winter months.
- ▼ Have you received your capital credits check from us? Your cooperative recently retired \$500,000 in general retirement checks to its members. Checks were mailed out to members in August. Please feel free to call 252.209.2236 to see if you have a capital credits check on record.
- ▼ Members also receive a net benefit by choosing to participate in our Community Solar program. Members receive an estimated credit to their electric bill of approximately \$32.26 per year.

On average, that's a total of more than \$48 that members can save on their electric bill! For more information about these initiatives, call us at 252.209.2236 or visit www.roanokeelectric.com.

It's Co-op Month!

Members, feel free to stop by our office each Friday in October to enjoy snacks on us!



Roanoke EC members make 77th Annual Meeting

The weather was perfect as members, guests, community organizations, friends and employees gathered for the 77th Roanoke EC Annual Meeting and Member Appreciation Day event. More than 500 people traveled to Hertford County High School in Ahsokie on Saturday, August 22, to enjoy festivities, food and fellowship and to celebrate the event's sole purpose — you, our member.

This year's theme continued the idea that your cooperative is still "Responding to the Call to Serve" its membership.

"Hands down, members are the most valuable asset for their cooperative," states Curtis Wynn, president and CEO. "Consequently, when it comes to ensuring that they're always the first to know the strides their cooperative has made to improve their service, Roanoke Electric Cooperative proudly answers the call."

There was an obvious "member-value" message throughout the day's agenda. All members in attendance received free gifts from Roanoke Electric — including a free backpack and a \$10 bill credit on their next utility bill.

Members were also able to take advantage of various service offerings and/or free gifts from more than 20 local vendors and organizations, including BB&T and Sylvan Heights Bird Park. In addition, some members won door prizes ranging from gift cards to \$275 cash.

The cooperative's general counsel, attorney Everette Winslow of Winslow-Wetsch of Raleigh, presided over the official business meeting. Members then approved the nominating committee's recommendation to re-elect the following board members to serve an additional three-year term:

Carolyn Bradley (District 3)

Robert (Nat) Riddick (District 4)

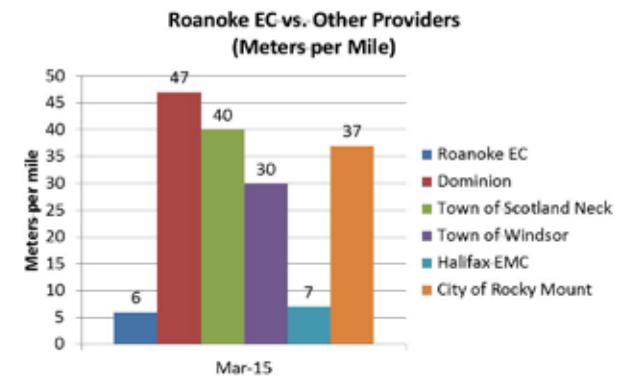
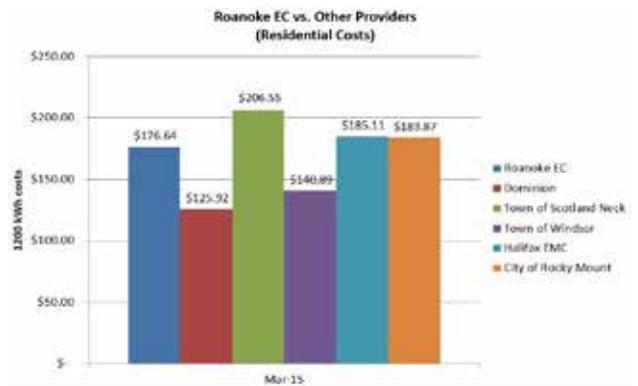
Darnell Lee (District 7)

The State of your Cooperative: A strategy for member value

Members listened attentively as Wynn focused remarks on members' rates and how their cooperative has improved its response to your call to serve them better and more affordably.

Wynn shared a shocking fact obtained through member surveys: 46 percent of members have a monthly average electric bill of \$201 or more in comparison to the national average of 17 percent.

"Why are these numbers like this?" asked Wynn. "Many think that it is because we charge more for electricity, but the main reason these numbers are what they are is because most of our members use more electricity than the national average," he



continued. Specifically, the primary reason for this discrepancy is largely due to extreme waste of electricity because of inefficiencies around the home.

Nonetheless, rates are a huge concern for members. When members are asked why they believe their bills are higher than the average national benchmark, they often point to the rate charge. Consequently, members were shown how their cooperative's rates and electricity costs compare to other electric utilities.

A prominent electric utility that Roanoke EC is often compared to is Dominion. Wynn openly acknowledged to the crowd that Dominion's electric rates are lower than Roanoke's. Why?

"At our Straight Talk Forums, we talked about line density," Wynn continued. "That is a fancy way of describing how many members we serve for every mile of line we own," he explained.

The chart here demonstrates that for every mile of line owned by your cooperative, only about six members are being served. Members were able to see why Dominion's rates were lower.

"Here's one of the reasons why," Wynn stated. "[Dominion] serves around 47 customers for every mile of line they own compared to our six," he continued. Ultimately, that means your cooperative has to spread operation costs across a smaller group.

"That shows that cooperatives are very efficient," Wynn commented. Unlike other utilities, Roanoke is not out to make a profit to pay stockholders. Your cooperative pays the costs to run day-to-day opera-

and Member Appreciation Day event a success!

tions and returns what's left to the membership by way of capital credits.

Wynn said that, regardless of the reason, the difficult fact remains that members' electric bill takes up too much of their money each month and that Roanoke Electric doesn't take that problem lightly.

Members can breathe a little easier knowing that their cooperative has focused its entire planning process around its initiative, "Responding to your Call to Serve." The comprehensive strategy, aimed at serving members better and more efficiently, consists of:

▼ **Core Values:** These are the things about your cooperative that never change, no matter what. They include being cutting-edge, competent, trust-worthy, friendly, adaptable, demonstrating teamwork, taking safety and wellness seriously, and always having a members-first mindset.

▼ **Engaged workforce:** "To serve you better, everything starts and ends with your team of employees," Wynn said. A strategy map has been created so that every director and every employee that serves you is engaged and extremely involved. Your team is willing to go above and beyond the call of duty to provide you with the highest level of service possible.

▼ **Improve Reliability/Leverage Technology/Build Member Value:** Your cooperative's employees and directors are working toward strategies to improve reliability and build member value.

▼ **Goal of Low Cost:** Your cooperative also wants to give you more enhanced value for the dollars you spend by lowering its cost as much as possible.

▼ **Cooperative Difference:** "Finally, the part that matters most is that we improve the quality of your lives just like we did over 75 years ago when cooperatives were created," Wynn concluded. Our mission is accomplished when we know that you are satisfied with our service and you are willing to give us high marks when asked how we are doing.

Wynn also noted that the loudest response your cooperative received from you was that you want the cooperative to lower its costs. Members were shown how they'll reap savings, thanks to three specific cooperative programs:

▼ **Community Solar:** "You've all probably heard that solar is a cheaper form of electricity," Wynn

noted. "Some of you might have heard that solar is free. Don't believe it, it's not," he said. Currently, solar power ranges from slightly higher to about the same price as the traditional form of electricity. While it isn't cheaper now, it could very easily be in



the future. That's why members now have this green option available through the Community Solar project launched in 2014.

▼ **Upgrade to \$ave:** With this program, members pay nothing upfront, benefit from an immediate improvement in their cash flow, have a fixed charge placed on their bill that is significantly less than the estimated energy savings from the energy efficiency measures performed, and will not incur any debt or liens. Typical efficiency improvements members receive include insulation, duct sealing, heat pump upgrades, water heater wraps and LED lights.

▼ **Bright \$avings:** With this program, members are receiving new LED outdoor lighting. "The new lights are more energy efficient and cost less money to maintain," Wynn said.

"At the end of the day, it's all about member value," Wynn emphasized. He shared how your cooperative is planning to enhance the quality of life for members in the region. Through Roanoke Connect, your cooperative will be installing a fiber network to meet its internal needs of managing its utility system. Consequently, there will be several member benefits as it:

▼ Connects critical electric distribution services to address operational needs of the electric industry.

▼ Connects other community enhancing opportunities.

▼ Reduces operating costs for all.

▼ Creates a foundation to support global competitiveness.

Your cooperative's Sustainable Forestry and Land Retention Project was also a value item mentioned. As

...continued on page 20

Member e-newsletter provides valuable information

On average, our members are exposed to thousands of messages from hundreds of organizations each day. That's why it's critical for your cooperative to ensure that we're interacting with you through various forms of effective communication.

Last year, you were able to communicate with us 30 different ways. Since then, your cooperative has expanded its communications tools to include a bi-weekly e-newsletter known as *The Call*. This e-newsletter keeps you informed about the many programs and services you have access to, as well as provides you with valuable news and information that may impact your electric bill.

You can also benefit from tips on energy efficiency and safety and learn of progress on strategic initiatives.

To receive this newsletter via email, please visit www.roanokeelectric.com/e-news.



Annual meeting and member appreciation day (continued from page 19)...

landowners, members receive free education on measures to help prevent them from losing their land and gain access to services like estate planning, establishing wills, heirs' property management and clearing titles.

A Call to Action: The power belongs to you!

You play a major role in ensuring that your cooperative can continue to provide projects that enhance your member value. How? "By getting politically engaged," said Wynn. One hundred percent of your employees and directors have done that by joining your co-op's

REAP and ACRE political action committees.

"Our goal is to get 10 percent of our members to become ACRE Members and we are well on the way, folks!" Wynn exclaimed. The purpose is to help keep the voice of rural electric cooperatives heard in the political process. "As cooperatives, our voice is getting weaker and weaker and we badly need to reverse this trend and to do it quickly," said Wynn.

To reiterate the necessity for member participation, Wynn introduced Julie Barkemeyer, Senior Principal, Legislative Affairs with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). Although Barkemeyer lives in Washington, D.C, she works for rural citizens. She spoke to the crowd about the importance of their political engagement when it comes to lawmaking. Members can elect federal lawmakers who make sure officials of our nation's capital know what their needs, concerns and wishes are.

"Members, we have to stay connected," Wynn also noted. Members now live in a time when information flows very quickly. Whether you like to read on your computer or prefer printed material, catch quick notes on your bill statement or receive a telephone call reminder, catch a short tweet on your cell phone or want more detailed information; your cooperative is constantly providing you information. (See the article about our e-newsletter above.)

Wynn personally thanked the entire membership. He closed by saying, "As your president and CEO, I can assure you that your elected board of directors, who I work for - have your best interest at heart. Collectively, with the support of each and every one of our employees, we thank you for this opportunity to serve as your electric cooperative."

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