



## Roanoke Electric **FLASHES**

### The Roanoke Center offers one-of-a-kind benefits

At The Roanoke Center (TRC), our sole purpose can be summed up in one word: Community. Each day, we strive to maximize the benefits of projects and activities that make our community a better place to live and work. How? The Roanoke Center offers one-of-a-kind benefits to our community through a variety of resources and assistance.

#### Member-owners Upgrade and Save with TRC

Like Roanoke Electric, TRC strives to enhance the quality of life of member-owners like you. We recognize the unique challenges some of our member-owners face in trying to pay their energy bills. Fortunately, TRC and your electric cooperative are doing something to help!

As one of the first to receive a \$6 million loan from the Rural Utilities Service, we are offering to make investments in energy efficiency that allow our member-owners to save money on their electric bills through Upgrade to \$ave. Upgrade to \$ave is a new program that finances cost-effective, energy efficiency improvements for member-owners.

Through this program, member-owners will:

- Upgrade their home and lower their bill at the same time.
- Have no up-front payments.
- Never incur new consumer debt obligations.

In turn, participants simply agree to pay a voluntary tariff on their energy bill. For more information about Upgrade to \$ave, visit [www.roanokeelectric.com/UpgradeToSave](http://www.roanokeelectric.com/UpgradeToSave).

#### TRC also offers the following services

**Office space rentals:** Need an office or a meeting space for your growing business? Eliminate the hassle of looking for a space with The Roanoke Center's suitable and convenient offices and meeting room accommodations. Spaces are available for rent so that you aren't overwhelmed in terms of commitment. You'll still have the flexibility in upsizing if needed. Find your office space today by visiting [www.roanokecenter.org/space](http://www.roanokecenter.org/space).



**Access sustainable forestry resources:** Do you desire to bring value to your land? The Roanoke Center and Roanoke Electric Cooperative are piloting a Sustainable Forestry and Land Retention Program. This project will restore and conserve threatened forest land in Roanoke Electric's service area by increasing forest-owner income and land asset values. You'll access outreach and education, technical and legal assistance, mapping, forest management planning and implementation, conservation and restoration, and access to new forestry technologies and emerging markets. Visit [www.roanokecenter.org/forestry](http://www.roanokecenter.org/forestry) for more information on the sustainable forestry project.

Get exclusive updates about all of TRC's efforts at [www.roanokecenter.org](http://www.roanokecenter.org) or feel free to call 252.539.4600.

### STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

Roanoke Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer. The person responsible for coordinating this organization's nondiscrimination compliance effort is Curtis Wynn, President and CEO of Roanoke Electric Cooperative.

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at [www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to the USDA by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

# 2016 Straight Talk forums: Get your questions answered in person

Ever had a burning question that you wanted to ask your cooperative? Your cooperative recognizes that some conversations are better face-to-face. That's why we give our member-owners the opportunity to do that at our series of Straight Talk Forums.

These forums are an opportunity for open and honest dialogue between you and your cooperative staff about topics that are most important to you. We'll dis-



cuss rates, ways we can work together to prevent costly regulations, programs that are exclusively available to member-owners to reduce energy consumption and save you money, the value of being a member-owner, and just about anything else you'd like to ask us.

Did we mention that we'll come to you to have this discussion? We'll be traveling throughout our seven-county service territory in 2016 to hear your concerns. Come to one of the eight sessions near you to give your input and get valuable information about your service. Here are our upcoming Straight Talk Forums for March:

**Thursday, March 24, 6 p.m.,  
REC Headquarters–Aulander**

**Tuesday, March 29, 6 p.m.,  
The Roanoke Center–Rich Square**

Reserve your seat today by calling 252.209.2267 or visiting [www.roanokeelectric.com/straighttalk](http://www.roanokeelectric.com/straighttalk).

## Members-owners get \$500,000 in capital credits Did you receive your refund yet?

Amongst all of the many benefits that come with your co-op membership, capital credits is perhaps the most valued.

### What are capital credits?

Each month, you pay your electric bill and we use that money to finance operations and construction, equipment and system improvements throughout our service area. Every year, your cooperative calculates its operating margins. Margins are the amount by which our revenue exceeds our expenses within a year. Any revenue that isn't needed to maintain the cost of providing you with the safe, reliable and affordable service you expect and deserve is returned back to member-owners like you as capital credits.

### How do we determine the amount of your capital credit refund?

Annually, your Board of Directors evaluates the cooperative's financial position and determines whether the co-op will retire capital credits. If your board determines that your cooperative is in a good financial position, we then return capital credits to each member-owner based on the amount of electricity they purchased throughout the year.

Just last year, your Board of Directors approved capital credits of \$500,000 to be returned to our member-owners.

### Why does your co-op retire capital credits?

You might wonder why we do this. As an electric cooperative, we are here to provide at-cost electric service. We aren't here to make a profit, and we don't have shareholders. As a member-owner of an electric cooperative, you invest in the efficient operation of your co-op. Unlike an investor-owned utility, we don't pay dividends or other amounts to shareholders who don't purchase electricity from us.

Capital credits benefit all co-op member-owners by keeping costs and electric rates as low as possible. And, they ensure that non-customer shareholders don't profit from the cooperative's operations. Capital credit allocations help qualify Roanoke Electric for cooperative status under federal income tax law. Capital credits also help to reduce the amount of debt the co-op has to borrow, which also keeps service costs down.

The bottom line, capital credits are just one of the many benefits of being a member-owner of your cooperative!

### **Not sure if you have any checks on file that may have already been mailed out to you?**

To help ensure you receive your retirement if you leave the cooperative, please provide us your current address after you leave. We also encourage you to check in with us periodically to verify that you don't have any checks on file. Visit [www.roanokeelectric.com/capcredits](http://www.roanokeelectric.com/capcredits) for more information about capital credits or to view our most recent Unclaimed Funds list (on the following pages).

# Understanding energy issues, engaging in democracy creates stronger communities

North Carolina's primary election is Tuesday, March 15, and electric cooperatives, including Roanoke EC, are paying close attention to the candidates' stance on energy issues, as well as other issues that may affect our local communities.

Ahead of the primary, North Carolina's electric cooperatives, including Roanoke EC, are asking all presidential candidates a question important to electric cooperatives and their members — what is your plan for providing Americans with safe, reliable and affordable electricity?

Their answers are contained in a special voter guide in this issue of Carolina Country, as well as in an online voter guide found at [carolinacountry.com/vote](http://carolinacountry.com/vote), available for cooperative members as a resource without commentary or conjecture. It is important for members to have facts because members of Roanoke EC are also *owners*. The cooperative has a board of directors that sets the strategic direction and policies for Roanoke EC, and members, those who receive electric service from the cooperative, elect representatives to that board.

The information within the voter guide will provide cooperative members with the knowledge nec-



essary not only to make decisions about presidential candidates but also to understand more about how energy issues impact Roanoke EC, its members and the local community. Cooperatives are locally owned and operated, and together, the cooperative and its members can navigate the changing energy industry to determine what's best for the cooperative and local community.

Learn more about the NC Primary Election on pages 26-27 in this issue, and visit the online voter guide before heading to the polls on March 15. The online guide will be continually updated as more information involving the candidates and their stance on energy issues becomes available.

## REC member-owners give more than \$9,700 back to the community

Ever wished you could be a part of something that makes a huge impact in our communities, but can't find the time? With Operation RoundUp, member-owners get that chance each quarter. And it only costs them pennies per month!

Member-owners round up their electric bills to the next whole dollar each month and contribute that spare change to Operation RoundUp. Through their generosity, the Roanoke EC Care Trust (RECT) Board was able to recently award \$9,775 to area organizations.

As a result of the RECT Board's meeting on January 20, seven organizations received funding for these worthwhile projects:

**Historic Hope Foundation (Windsor):** \$1,200 to purchase the tarp needed to help preserve the Cashie (St. Lukes) Rosenwald school.

**Bertie County Relay for Life (Aulander):** \$600 to be used for the Relay For Life event in Bertie County on May 13, 2016.

**Bertie STEM High School (Windsor):** \$1,200 to help the school's 4-H Robotics club purchase supplies, equipment, meals and lodging for the First Robotics Competition.

**Woodland Fire Department (Woodland):** \$2,015 to replace old equipment before it expires or is unsafe to use.

**Como Volunteer Fire Department (Como):** \$960 for the purchase vehicle GPS systems.

**Ahoskie Public Library (Ahoskie):** \$2,100 to purchase laptops that will be made available to patrons to checkout in house.

**Rich Square Fire and Rescue (Rich Square):** \$1,700 to purchase new equipment to replace severely outdated equipment.

Your cooperative and the RECT Board thank you for rounding up your electric bills. Your contributions of just pennies a month have proven that putting spare change together can go a long way in improving the lives of those in need of your help within your community.

If you want to participate in Operation RoundUp, call 252.209.2236 or visit [www.roanokeelectric.com/roundup](http://www.roanokeelectric.com/roundup). To apply for a grant, applications are due by 5 p.m. Thursday, March 31.

# Looking for fresh, new ideas? These businesses can help you renew, create

March heralds the end of winter and the beginning of spring. Some will celebrate St. Patrick's Day and plant trees, others will prepare tax returns, begin wedding plans, and prepare for the Easter holiday. Regardless of your endeavors, now is a great time for renewal and starting anew.

We would like for you to check out some fresh and lovely ideas with these Co-op Connections Card businesses: **D's Creations of Aulander** and **Cynthia's What Not Shop of Rich Square**.

Owner Delores Mitchell of D's Creations is excited about meeting and working with brides and grooms preparing for their special day. She can help with the important details of ambiance and elegance in wedding décor. She can assist in designing innovative menus, creating themes for the venue, and making sure that your reception is a success. If you are just looking for floral arrangements, decorations, or special party items, Ms. Mitchell can always add that touch of beauty and renewal.

Cynthia's What Not Shop of Rich Square is always adding new items to the inventory, ranging from toys, clothing and jewelry to crafts, art and furniture, that will keep you returning and seeing what new treasures you can find. Owner Cynthia Chambers



invites you to browse the shop and find great items for you and your home. The shop is open weekly on Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

Remember to show your card and receive the special discounts offered by our Co-op Connections Card participants. The list of businesses continues to grow, so check periodically for new deals, products and services.

To enroll your business in the program, please call our office at 252.209.2236 or email [savings@roanokeelectric.com](mailto:savings@roanokeelectric.com). Our team is eager to answer your questions, listen to your stories, or get you enrolled.

## Co-op Connections card: Don't leave home without it

Be sure to keep your REC Co-op Connections card handy. Do you need a new card or need to replace an old one? You can acquire a new card by stopping by or calling the REC office, or register for one online at [www.connections.coop](http://www.connections.coop).

You can search online to find where discounts are offered locally or nationally. It's easy to spot which businesses are participating. Look for the Co-op Connections stickers in their windows or visit [www.connections.coop](http://www.connections.coop) or [www.roanokeelectric.com](http://www.roanokeelectric.com) to check out the list of participants. We welcome any stories that you would like to share with the REC membership about your experiences using the Co-op Connections card.

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