



Roanoke Electric **FLASHES**

Are you a forest landowner? Here's a new funding opportunity to assist you

More than \$300,000 in financial assistance is being offered to local forest landowners through the Sustainable Forestry and African American Land Retention Project, a program managed by The Roanoke Center, a nonprofit subsidiary of Roanoke Electric Cooperative.

In 2012, Roanoke Electric and The Roanoke Center began piloting the Sustainable Forestry and African-American Land Retention Project. This project is a joint venture of the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the U.S. Forest Service. The project is aimed at restoring and conserving threatened African American forest land in Roanoke Electric's service area by increasing forest-owner income and land asset values.

Since its inception, this is the first time The Forestry Project, through its partnership with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), is making funding available to help these landowners implement forestry-related best practices, including tree and shrub establishment and prescribed burning.

"We are pleased to offer this new funding opportunity to members of The Forestry Project," said Alton Perry, program manager. "Before, landowners had to vie for consideration in multiple funding pools, this financial assistance is being offered

specifically for the forest landowners currently participating in The Forestry Project. The likelihood that they could actually receive funding is now much greater."

Local landowners who would like to become members of the Forestry Project may also apply for assistance. As part of this cost-share program, designated funding levels will be based upon NRCS practices rates for projects the approved applicants undertake.

With this financial assistance, forest landowners will get the opportunity to implement management conservation practices in keeping with the state's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). EQIP is a voluntary conservation program designed to assist landowners in addressing natural resource concerns as it relates to forestry and other land uses.

The following are some requirements for eligibility:

- Landowner must be a participant in the Sustainable Forestry and African American Land Retention Project.
- Landowner must own woodland property in Bertie, Chowan, Gates, Halifax, Hertford, Northampton or Perquimans counties.
- Landowner must have established records with the local Farm Service Agency.
- Landowner must meet USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service eligibility guidelines.



Forest landowners learn how to reduce taxes and engage consulting foresters about timber sales through the project.

- Landowner must own one eight-acre woodland property.
- Landowner must have a current or obtain a forest management plan.
- Landowners in Halifax, Northampton, Bertie, Hertford, Gates, Chowan and Perquimans counties are urged to apply. The formal application process begins October 1, and runs through Nov. 30, 2016. However, Perry recommends that those interested in applying begin preparing for the application process now, and urges them to contact his office directly to do so.

Progress report on participating landowners

Currently, there are more than 100 landowners participating in the project. Over the past few years, project staff and partners have conducted more than 90 landowner/partner meetings to assist landowners with program services and technical assistance.

...continued on page 22

Forest landowner funding... Continued from page 21

These meetings provide participating landowners the opportunity to inform the agencies what they want to do with their property (landowner objectives) for the short term and long term. During these meetings, landowners and project staff and partners discuss topics such as forest management plans, engaging consulting foresters to assist with timber sales, how to reduce property taxes through the Forestry or Agriculture Present Use Taxation Program, estate/succession planning, and how to apply

for financial assistance to implement forestry practices.

What have landowners accomplished with information?

Project landowners are implementing sustainable forest management practices on their properties (i.e. aerial application of herbicides to control undesirable brush prior to reseedling after harvest; pre-commercial thinning to reduce the number of loblolly pine trees per acre to encourage optimum growing conditions; and hiring of consulting foresters to assist with timber sales).

Six project landowners have completed their estate/succession plans (wills, trusts, limited liability corporations) with financial assistance through the project's Legal Assistance Cost Reimbursement Program.

Four landowners are in the process of acquiring NC Tree Farm status that will identify them as having certified forests.

For more information about The Sustainable Forestry and African American Retention Project or this new financial opportunity, please contact Program Manager Alton Perry at 252.539.4602.

Local students attend university basketball camps on co-op scholarships

Local middle-school students shot hoops and ran drills at basketball camps hosted by two of the state's largest universities this summer, thanks to Touchstone Energy Sports Camp Scholarships from Roanoke Electric Cooperative.

CulPricey "KK" Squire attended the Wolfpack Women's Basketball Camp June 12-15 at NC State University in Raleigh. CulPricey is the daughter of Shanica Silver of Roanoke Rapids. Ashton Lassiter took to the court June 18-22 at the Roy Williams Carolina Basketball Camp at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. Ashton is the son of Stanley and Helen Lassiter of Ahoskie.

"These scholarships are a fantastic way for young athletes to experience life on a college campus and learn from mentors at their favorite NCAA athletic programs," said Marshall Cherry, chief operating officer (COO) at Roanoke Electric. "At Roanoke, we're proud to continue the tradition of providing outstanding local students, like CulPricey and Ashton, with oppor-

tunities to develop fundamental skills that will help them excel on the court and in the classroom."

CulPricey and Ashton earned the all-expenses-paid scholarships by completing an application that included academics, community involvement and enthusiasm for sports. They are two of 54 students selected in a competitive evaluation process to receive Touchstone Energy Sports Camp Scholarships from North Carolina's electric cooperatives this year.

At camp, students stayed in dorms on campus and worked alongside coaches to hone basketball skills and practice working cooperatively with teammates. The staff of the Wolfpack Women's Basketball Camp included NC State women's basketball coach Wes Moore, and his coaching staff and players. The Roy Williams camp was led by two-time NCAA national champion coach Roy Williams, his staff, and current and past Tar Heel basketball players.

This is the 13th year North Carolina's Touchstone Energy



cooperatives have sponsored young women to attend an NC State women's basketball camp and the 11th year the cooperatives have sent young men to the Roy Williams camp. The co-ops' partnership with universities provides a unique educational and athletic opportunity for our state's youth and keeps with Touchstone Energy's core values of accountability, integrity, innovation and commitment to community.

To learn more about Roanoke's Touchstone Energy Sports Camp Scholarships, visit roanokeelectric.com/bball.

'Techy' tools help member-owners take charge of energy use

Technology is putting consumers in control – of nearly everything, it seems. Sometimes the changes are so gradual that it's hard to notice how far we've come, but consider the way you watch TV. You no longer have to wait to watch your favorite show on a specific day in a specific location; technology has given you control of how, where and when you tune in.

As your energy provider, Roanoke Electric thinks you should have say-so in how, where and when you use energy, too. Technology is allowing us to extend our services beyond providing energy to offer you tools to control the way you use that energy.

The innovations making this possible are occurring in two areas: within electric infrastructure and meters, as well within the development of sophisticated energy management devices for your home. The convergence of these two areas of innovation is allowing Roanoke EC to offer cooperative members tools that enable them to interact with their energy use in real-time and take action to save money.

Examples include

Energy Management Portals & Apps: Online energy management portals and cell phone apps allow member-owners to manage their account and track daily and hourly energy use. The system overlays outdoor factors that can influence energy use including temperature, cloud cover and wind speed. This information can help you make better energy-use decisions.

Usage Alerts: Member-owners can set up email and text message alerts if energy use approaches a designated threshold. This keeps member-owners on budget and eliminates any surprises that could come on the next bill. Go to our website to set up your account alerts today.

Pre-pay or Pay-As-You-Go: This program allows cooperative member-owners to pay up front for electricity with smaller, more frequent transactions rather than waiting for a monthly bill. Similar to a prepaid cell phone, this concept puts members in control of their energy consumption and budgets. Visit roanokeelectric.com/prepaid to learn more.

Internet-connected thermostats: These devices allow member-owners to adjust the temperature in their home anywhere, anytime using a mobile app, giving you control of your home heating and cooling energy use with smarter settings. Visit roanokeelectric.com/thermostat for details.

As technologies evolve, we know there will be even more ways to put you in control of your energy use in the future. In fact, as a cooperative business, we are working with peer electric cooperatives around the state to study practical applications of all types of technologies, including connected water heaters and energy storage solutions. As we learn from these projects, we will continue to innovate and connect you, our member-owners, with services and solutions that give you even greater control of how, where and when you use your energy.

Did you get your capital credit check?

General refunds have been mailed to member-owners

As a member-owner of your cooperative, you're an owner of a unique type of business. As such, any revenues over and above our cost of doing business are considered "margins" and will be repaid back to you in the form of capital credits.

How does this work? In a normal business, these margins are often distributed as dividends to stakeholders rather than customers who use their services. For your cooperative, however, these margins are considered an interest-free loan from you to us. Specifically, these monies allow Roanoke Electric to finance its daily operations and, to an extent, construction. This is done with the intent that this money will be repaid back to you in the years to come as capital credits.

Your cooperative calculates capital credits for every member-owner who purchased electricity during a year in which we earned margins. No additional special action is required for you to start a capital credits account because your membership with Roanoke EC automatically activates your capital credits account.



Each year, your board of directors assesses the cooperative's financial ability to pay out capital credits to our membership. When Roanoke Electric is in a good financial position, checks are typically mailed in August. If you haven't received a check yet, we encourage you to please check in with the cooperative 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, please contact us at 252.209.2236 or visit roanokeelectric.com/capcredits.

Member-owners give more than \$3,000 to local fire and rescue organizations



Like their cooperative, our member-owners believe in having concern for our community. That's why each month they round their electric bills up to the next highest dollar and donate that amount to Operation RoundUp. Each quarter, the board of directors for the program's administrative body, the Roanoke Electric Care Trust (RECT) Board, meets to determine which community organizations will be awarded funds.

When the RECT Board met on Wednesday, July 20, at the cooperative's headquarters to award the third quarter of Operation RoundUp funds, more than \$3,000 was awarded to three local organizations.

Those organizations received funding from the program for a total of \$3,957. They are:

- Northampton County Ext. Dept. (Jackson): \$1,192 to fund a trip for Northampton County students to learn about the agricultural industry.
- Eastside EMS Inc. (Rich Square): \$650 to purchase vests.
- Como Volunteer Fire Department (Como): \$2,115 to purchase structural firefighting boots.

Your cooperative and the RECT Board appreciate all members who have committed to rounding up their electric bills to the next whole dollar to make a tremendous difference in the lives of those in need of your help within your communities. Your contributions are priceless resources that enhance the quality of life in the very communities you work and live.

To join those who are making a big difference with only cents a month through Operation RoundUp, call 252.209.2236 or visit roanokeelectric.com/roundup. Your spare change can equal big change in your community.

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Electrical safety lessons for kids

We all know electricity plays a major role in our everyday lives, and it is a powerful resource that should be respected.

Unfortunately, our children often do not understand the dangers of electricity. At Roanoke Electric Cooperative, we encourage you to share electrical safety tips and lessons with your little ones as often as possible.

One of the most important safety tips you can give your kids is to avoid any downed power lines or low-hanging wire. In fact, it is best to avoid power lines, transformers and substations in general. A downed power line can still be energized, and it can also energize other objects, including fences and trees. Make sure your kids understand this. And, if they encounter a downed power line, ask them to tell you or another adult to call us at 1.800.358-9437.

