



Roanoke Electric **FLASHES**

Responding to the call to serve through communications and sustainability

At Roanoke Electric Cooperative, we know our goals. In fact, we've spent the past three years striving to reduce our controllable costs, improve service reliability and promote safety. As promised, we've kept you updated on our efforts with the overarching goal of improving service to our member-owners. From unveiling the construction of our 360-panel community solar farm to announcing our plans to construct a \$4 million fiber project, your co-op has always prided itself on keeping its member-owners first.

As we transition into the last quarter of 2016, we're excited to tell you about some new things to increase our communications with you and to ensure the sustainability of our subsidiaries.

There's an app for that! Introducing REC's new mobile app.

In a world where the majority of our daily activities involve some form of technology, your cooperative is proud to say that we're always willing to meet our member-owners where they are — even on their mobile devices.

With the co-op's new app, member-owners can access weather updates, energy savings and other valuable resources.

The app is available for download in Google Play and the Apple App Store.

Have an outage? Want bill alerts? We'll keep you updated via text.

Another way we're improving communications with our member-owners is through our text alerts. Did you know that you can get an energy usage alert daily? In the past, member-owners have had the opportunity to set up email and text message alerts if energy use approached a designated threshold. This helps our member-owners stay on their set budget and helps eliminate potential surprises on their next bill.

This year, your cooperative enhanced its text-messaging system to integrate with its outage management system. This new feature will provide updated outage information via email and text once the outage is logged. Member-owners will be able to report an outage via text and receive an immediate response with important status updates.

This enhanced service also provides important account information for member-owners, such as balance inquiries and paying bills from e-check and credit card profiles already associated with their Roanoke Electric accounts.

For member-owners not already signed up for text alerts, the co-op offers three options to register:

- Call into the office: 252-209-2236.
- Visit the Account Login on our website
- Text "JOIN" to 352667.

Need more information? Visit roanokeelectric.com/text.

You can help keep our subsidiaries sustainable!

Your cooperative has made it a priority to ensure that our subsidiaries are sustainable. Why? Our subsidiaries allow us to provide a broader range of services without incurring additional expenses while also putting us in a position to earn additional non-electric sales revenue.

One subsidiary organization is The Roanoke Center, a 501c3 nonprofit that enables us to obtain grant funding to manage essential programs that enhance quality of life in our region.

We are very appreciative of the support we receive from foundations, grants, and other sources. In addition, your contribution is needed to help TRC advance its mission. That's why we've made it possible for member-owners like you to make donations to TRC via our website.

If you'd like to donate to TRC's cause — including Community Solar, Upgrade to \$ave, Roanoke Connect Phase II — visit roanokeelectric.com/donate.

Stay up to date on our latest projects here: roanokeelectric.com/thecall2018.



Curtis Wynn

2016 Annual Meeting: Roanoke Electric Co-op and 'The Next Greatest Thing'

Despite the early morning rain, more than 600 member-owners, guests, community organizations, and employees gathered Aug. 27 for Roanoke Electric Cooperative's 78th Annual Meeting & Member Appreciation Day. People from near and far traveled to Hertford County High School in Ahoskie to enjoy food, fun and fellowship as they learned about the great things their cooperative is doing to better serve its membership.

This year's theme focused on "The Next Greatest Thing" when it comes to customer service.

"A core value of your cooperative is the ability to be cutting edge and adaptable," said Roanoke Electric president and CEO Curtis Wynn. "That's why, each day, our efforts are aimed at doing all that we can to adapt to our member-owners' changing needs, while ensuring that they still receive the greatest level of service possible."

In keeping with being adaptable, the co-op implemented some changes to this year's annual meeting agenda. This year, the event featured more than 20 local vendors, who gathered on the front lawn of the high school for member-owners to take advantage of various service offerings and free gifts. Vendors included representatives of Native Wings Food Truck and the newly opened Cultivator Bookstore.

The Kid's Carnival also returned by popular demand. Participating children were given the opportunity to take photos at our new "Lineman Photo Booth."

Several member-owners won door prizes, ranging from gift cards, kitchen items and a grand prize of \$275 cash. Additionally, one lucky member-owner also won a \$500 cash prize.

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

- Columbus Jeffers (District 1)
- Kenneth Jernigan (District 5)
- Chester Deloatch (District 9)

Honoring a culture of safety

The business meeting opened with the spotlight on safety. Clifton Neathery, a co-op lineman, provided useful takeaways about hazard identification for our distribution system.

Wynn also called attention to two major accomplishments the co-op has made in safety. "In our business, safety is and will always be a core value that we must embody," Wynn said.

Farris Leonard, the field manager with the North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives Job Training and Safety Program, presented co-op employees and members of the safety committee with the NRECA Safety Accreditation. Commissioner Cherie Berry of the North Carolina Department of Labor also presented the co-op The Carolina Star. This designation recognizes Roanoke Electric as a worksite that is self-sufficient in its ability to control hazards at the workplace.

Addressing pocketbook issues

Wynn then shifted his remarks to focus on how far we've come in the evolution of electricity.

Wynn noted that while having electricity in our homes has become the norm today, our member-owners are just as concerned about the



Above: Member-owners enjoyed fun and fellowship and were updated on new programs and tools to save money and energy.

ability to afford their electric service as they are having it.

He reminded attendees of the finding that continues to show up in member-owners surveys: 46 percent of our member-owners have an average monthly electric bill of \$201 or more, in comparison to the national average of under 20 percent.

“Managing these costs are a huge concern for our member-owners,” Wynn stated. In recent surveys, when Roanoke Electric member-owners were asked how important interactive online tools were in managing their electricity costs, their responses were significantly higher than the national average.

“In order to have access to those useful interactive online tools, our member-owners need adequate broadband connectivity,” Wynn noted.

“It’s evident that our member-owners are looking for ways that we can help them keep their electric bills low,” Wynn stated. “That’s why the board and staff of your cooperative decided to respond to your call for us to better serve you in the most affordable way possible a few years ago.”

Member-owners were reminded of the cooperative’s strategy map which serves as the roadmap for the cooperative’s mission, vision, values, perspectives and objectives. “We’re positioning ourselves to be on track to earn higher satisfaction scores from you,” Wynn stated. “By the end of 2018, our aim is to achieve results that will show that we are one of the highest performing co-ops in the nation.”

Wynn highlighted the following initiatives implemented to address the “pocketbook” concerns our member-owners have:

- **Upgrade to Save:** This program affords member-owners the opportunity to have energy efficiency measures performed at their homes

without paying anything upfront. Member-owners simply agree to have a fixed charge placed on their bill that is significantly less than the estimated energy savings from the energy efficiency measures performed, without incurring any debt or liens. In a sample of more than 50 upgrades performed through this program, member-owners have kept over 50 percent of the savings.



- **Removal of outdoor light pole charge:** In response to member-owners’ concerns about having to pay for an outdoor light pole, the co-op has removed that charge. Member-owners now reap a monthly savings of \$2.15.
- **Bright Savings:** Member-owners also recently received new LED outdoor lighting through this program and are saving \$2.30 per month.
- **Ecobee Thermostat:** The co-op is offering member-owners the opportunity to easily manage their home’s comfort and electric bill through the ecobee Wi-Fi-enabled thermostat. This device offers the potential to provide both energy efficiency and wholesale power cost savings that the co-op can pass on to member-owners. Member-owners agree to allow Roanoke Electric to adjust their thermostat during peak periods and receive a \$4 monthly bill credit.

Wynn pointed out other accomplishments, including the increase in money paid back to member-owners through capital credits, and mentioned other new programs and services, such as the new mobile app, Co-op

Connections Program and Roanoke Rewards Program. “It’s all about the big picture of helping our member-owners,” Wynn said.

Wynn then revisited the need for broadband connectivity in the area. He issued a call to action for all attendees to participate in the survey to help determine if Roanoke Electric should offer high-speed internet service to the

area through a second phase of its Roanoke Connect project. Roanoke Connect is a \$4 million fiber project currently under way. As the co-op moves closer to completing this project in early 2017, it intends to deploy high-speed internet fiber

technology to each of the co-op’s substations to take care of internal, operational needs.

“Right now, we need your help to determine if we can expand Roanoke Connect to bring broadband services to homes and businesses in our region,” Wynn said.

Election 2016: Your vote counts

Wynn drove home the importance of making our rural voice heard. Member-owners also had the opportunity to receive voter registration information for the upcoming election.

“We need you to go out and vote,” Wynn said. Wynn encouraged attendees to take the “Co-ops Vote” pledge as well as to join the cooperative’s Action Committee for Rural Electrification (ACRE) program.

One major initiative is to enroll at least 10 percent of our members into ACRE through the Cooperative Owners program. Wynn recognized the entire co-op staff and directors for 100 percent participation in ACRE.

“The purpose is to help keep the voice of rural electric cooperatives heard in the political process,” he remarked. “Our voice is getting weaker and weaker and we badly need to reverse this trend and to do it quickly.”



Why we celebrate cooperatives

October is Co-op Month

Every October, cooperatives from all sectors across the country celebrate National Cooperative Month including your co-op, Roanoke Electric.

The month is an opportunity to learn more about our unique business model. It's based on the Seven Cooperative Principles: Voluntary and Open Membership; Democratic Member Control; Members'

Economic Participation; Autonomy and Independence; Education, Training and Information; Cooperation among Cooperatives; and Concern for Community.

To highlight the cooperative difference, Roanoke Electric will be offering member-owners like you snacks, information and giveaways every Friday in October. You can also celebrate by purchasing products from other cooperatives and being an active member-owner of Roanoke Electric Co-op.

Do you know ...

that in the U.S., there are more than 29,000 co-ops serving in various industries? You run into their products and services more than you might think. For example, food co-ops include Land O'Lakes, Welch's, Organic Valley, Sunkist and Ocean Spray, all found on grocery shelves.

According to the latest data, co-ops employ more than 2 million Americans.

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