



**Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.**

**We are members of NC  
811. Call 811 or 1-800-  
632-4949 three business  
days before you plan to  
dig.**

## Albemarle Sounds

is published monthly by  
**Albemarle Electric Membership  
Corporation**

P.O. Box 69  
Hertford, NC 27944  
(252) 426-5735

**Gary Ray, General Manager  
Chris Powell, Editor**

Website and member portal:  
**www.aemc.coop**

Outages:  
**1-800-274-2072**

24-hour payments:  
**(252) 426-4419**

*Albemarle EMC is an equal opportunity  
provider and employer.*

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative   
The power of human connections®

## West Albemarle Substation Now Online



*Lineman Apprentice Alex Aydlett replaces arrestors on the Edenton Substation, while it was de-energized.*

The West Albemarle Substation was recently brought online, providing the foundation for more robust electrical infrastructure for Chowan County.

The West Albemarle Substation is located in Chowan County, near the co-op's existing Edenton Substation. Equipped with two, 40 megavolt-amp transformers, the substation is a transmission facility that feeds the existing Edenton Substation and will eventually feed the Bethel Substation, which should be completed in the next couple of years. The West Albemarle Substation will also feed a future substation in Chowan County that will replace the existing Edenton Substation.

"This is the first step in a long-range plan to provide increased reliability and capacity to that part of our service area," said Albemarle EMC General Manager Gary Ray.

## Certificate Earned



*Congratulations to Albemarle EMC Board Director Thelma Finch-Copeland. She recently completed coursework to earn her Board Leadership Certificate from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. Albemarle EMC Board President John Spence presented the certificate to her during a board meeting.*

## Co-ops Support Businesses

**Business owners:** You are encouraged to advertise your business with Touchstone Energy's Co-op Connections program.

It is free to advertise, and you can design promotional offers to be mutually beneficial to your customers and your bottom line. To advertise visit [connections.coop](http://connections.coop).

# Statement of Nondiscrimination

Albemarle Electric Membership Corporation (AEMC) is a recipient of federal financial assistance from the Rural Utilities Service (RUS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and is subject to the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture which provide that no person in the United States on the basis of race, color, national origin, age or disability shall be excluded from participation in, admission or access to, denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any of this organization's programs or activities.

The person responsible for coordinating this organization's nondiscrimination compliance effort is Gary Ray, general manager of Albemarle Electric Membership Corporation. Any individual, or specific class of individuals, who feels that this organization has subjected them to discrimination may file a written complaint with this organization; or the Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250; or the Administrator, Rural Utilities Service, Washington, D.C. Complaints must be filed within 180 days after the alleged discrimination action, or by such later date to which the Secretary of Agriculture or the Administrator of the Rural Utilities Service extends the time for filing. Identity of complainants will be kept confidential except to the extent necessary to carry out the purpose of the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

## ACT Grants Awarded



photo credit: Elizabeth Mitchell

*Boys and Girls Club members Lyonna Rayner (left) and Leandrea Simons will be among those children who will benefit from a recent ACT grant.*

Several local organizations were recently approved to receive Albemarle Community Trust grants.

The Perquimans County Fire Marshal's Office received \$1,000 to help purchase fire safety educational materials that will be distributed to local schools. The Fire Marshal's Office was created by the Perquimans County Board of Commissioners in 2019 to promote fire safety, inspections and education

throughout the county, according to Barry Overman, Perquimans County fire marshal.

The Durant's Neck Volunteer Fire Department was awarded a \$2,000 grant to purchase fire fighting turnout gear consisting of bunker pants and helmets.

The Dream Hunt and Fish Program was awarded \$3,000 to help support their educational events, dream hunting and fishing trips and at-risk youth camps.

"Our programs are geared to youth ages two to 18 and specifically youth with medical issues, disabilities or those identified as being at-risk," said Terry Boyce, director of the Dream Hunt and Fishing Program.

The Boys and Girls Club of the Albemarle, Inc. received a \$2,000 grant to help purchase two ping-pong tables, paddles and ping pongs for the clubs in Edenton and Elizabeth City.

# Youth Tour Goes Virtual

Each year, Albemarle EMC joins with other electric cooperatives across the state and nation to sponsor the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, an annual trip that gives exceptional high school students the opportunity to experience the sites of Washington, D.C., meet with elected officials and learn more about how they can make a difference as young leaders.

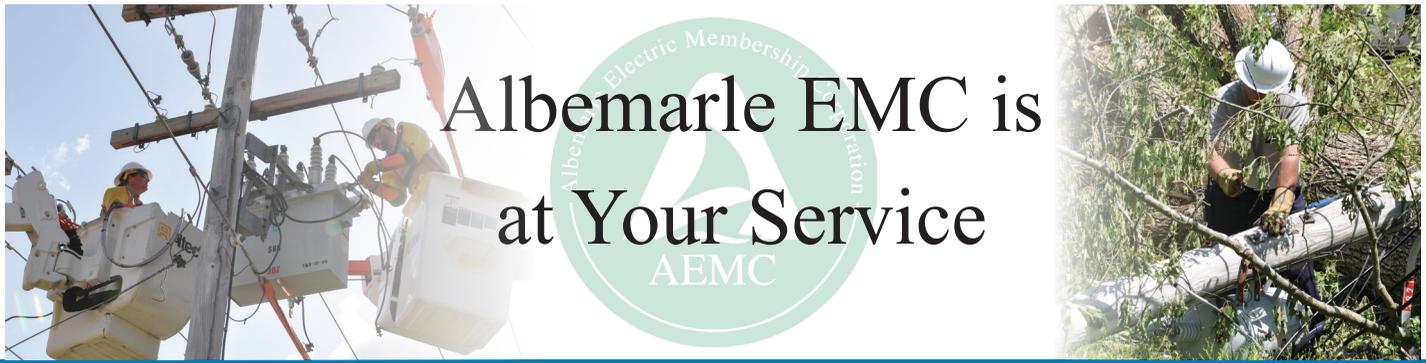
The 2020 Youth Tour trip was cancelled due to COVID-19 concerns, and the tour will be held virtually this June to ensure the safety of all involved. Youth tourists will still be able to participate in a rewarding experience that brings them together with other young leaders from across the country to learn more about their government and electric cooperatives, network with their peers and strengthen their leadership skills. As in years past, tourists will also be eligible to apply for several college scholarships.

While 2021 will look a little different, Albemarle EMC is proud to continue the long-standing cooperative tradition of the Washington Youth Tour.

## Service Pins Awarded



*The employees (from left) were presented with service pins at the company Christmas luncheon. Customer Service Representative Valerie Roundtree, 15 years; Apprentice Lineman Austin Cooke, five years; and Information and Billing Specialist Bridget Sawyer, 15 years. Not pictured are Lineman 1st Class Aaron Pippen, 15 years; and AEMC Board Director L.A. Harris, 45 years.*



# Albemarle EMC is at Your Service

How Albemarle EMC works to provide its members with the highest-quality service possible.

## Helping the Co-op Helps Members

by Chris Powell, coordinator of public relations

As a consumer of power from Albemarle EMC, you are automatically a member and an owner of the cooperative. The cooperative and the members cannot be separated; they are one in the same. So what is good for the member is good for the cooperative and vice versa. That's why we go to great lengths to delay rate increases for as long as possible. Rate increases are necessary when the cost of wholesale power rises beyond the amount the co-op receives through its rates. As a not-for-profit electric cooperative, rate increases benefit the co-op only in that it enables the co-op to pay for the power provided to members. If wholesale power costs were to unexpectedly drop following a rate increase, margins would be returned to the members through wholesale power cost adjustments or capital credits.

We have not had a rate increase since 2012. To try to delay the next rate increase for as long as possible, Albemarle EMC has initiated a Beat the Peak program. Your co-op can save considerable money on its wholesale power costs by reducing peak demand monthly. Peak demand occurs when a majority of members' residences and businesses use high amounts of electricity simultaneously. Additional power generation must be brought online to meet the spike in electricity use. The additional, short-term generation adds considerably to the cost of the wholesale power that Albemarle EMC must pay. If the cooperative can lower that peak each month, the demand rate will be lower, and the savings could potentially be considerable. Anything that lowers the cost of wholesale power also helps the co-op delay a rate increase.

The Beat the Peak program involves members being alerted by text message when a peak time period or time of high energy use across our co-op is expected. Peak-use times are typically a few hours and occur only a few times a month. We will ask our members to join our efforts to lower costs by reducing their energy use during those peak times, which are often in the mornings or evenings. Energy reduction methods include

reducing the use of hot water, delaying the use of a stove or adjusting your thermostat.

Members who prefer not to participate in the Beat the Peak program may opt out by replying to the Beat the Peak text notification with the word "quit."

### Beat the Peak Through the Time-of-Use Rate

Another way members can help their co-op lower peak usage

is by switching to a time-of-use rate. Most residential members are on the basic residential rate, which is what we call a blended rate. The actual cost of power does not remain the same throughout the day. The cost increases during periods of high demand and decreases during periods of low demand. To formulate our basic residential rate, we blend those costs together to come up with one single residential rate, which is currently 11.43 cents per kilowatt hour (kWh). So regardless of what time of day the power

is consumed, the member will pay that one set rate. However, the time-of-use rate changes throughout the day as power is consumed. Members who opt for the time of use rate can achieve significant savings on their power bills by using power during the times of the day when power costs are the lowest, called "off-peak." The current time-of-use off-peak rate is 5.52 cents per kWh, which is about half the residential rate. The on-peak rate is 27.6 cents per kWh, which is more than double the residential rate. From October to April, on-peak hours are from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. Monday through Friday, and off-peak hours are all other times. From April to October, on-peak hours are from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday and off-peak hours are all other times. Designated holidays are also off-peak. So with a little diligence, members can plan their power use for off-peak times and achieve a significant savings on their power bill.

This helps Albemarle EMC beat the peak, put lower pressure on wholesale power costs and hopefully delay the need for a rate increase. Indeed, what is good for the member is also good for the cooperative. That is the cooperative difference.

