



Albemarle SOUNDS

October 2025

Proudly serving the members of Albemarle Electric Membership Corporation

Albemarle Sounds

is published monthly by

**Albemarle Electric
Membership Corporation**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 
The power of human connections®

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

AEMC to Stop Paying Transaction Fees

Beginning Jan. 1, 2026, Albemarle EMC will no longer pay the transaction fees incurred when members pay their power bills with a credit card or electronic check.

Banks and credit card companies charge transaction fees when credit cards such as Mastercard or Visa or electronic checks are used to settle a transaction. Over time, as more and more payments are submitted electronically, those costs have continued to rise. As such, starting Jan. 1, members who use a credit card to pay their power bill will be responsible for paying their 2.45 percent transaction fee. Members who use an electronic check will pay their \$1 flat service fee.

Because of these changes, members who do not pay their bills with a credit card or electronic check will no longer be subsidizing those members who do. Members who do not use credit cards or E-checks will see no changes. Members can easily avoid having to pay transaction fees using the following methods: paying cash or check in person at our office, mailing in a check payment, or setting up a checking account automatic bank draft.

As a not-for-profit company, Albemarle EMC has a fiduciary responsibility to maintain the financial health of the cooperative. Albemarle EMC's goal is always to provide service for as close to at-cost as possible. This sometimes means making changes to ensure that the cost of service is allocated fairly.



Renewable Energy Option Available

Do you have the desire to use renewable energy, but you don't have the thousands of dollars needed to install solar panels or a wind turbine?

If so, Albemarle EMC has a way for members to promote clean energy without making a sizable investment. The co-op is a participant in NC GreenPower, a statewide program designed to improve North Carolina's environment through renewable energy sources such as wind, solar and biomass. The all-voluntary program allows co-op members to contribute as little as \$4 per month to NC GreenPower, which then uses that money to purchase blocks of green power. A \$4 tax-deductible contribution will add 125 kilowatt hours of renewable energy to North Carolina's power supply. Not only does the contribution help the environment, the money also provides incentives to produce more green power, which costs more to generate than traditional energy sources. To participate, call 252-426-5735.

**Anyone who would like to
contribute to the Albemarle
EMC Light Up Christmas
Toy Drive can drop off new
toys or monetary donations
before Thanksgiving at
our office, located at 125
Cooperative Way, Hertford.**



Three Grants Awarded



Open Door of Perquimans County volunteers Kim Stites (left) and Dina Hurdle were recently presented an Albemarle Community Trust grant for \$2,500.



Pasquotank-Camden Emergency Management Agency Coordinator Brian Parnell (left) and Assistant Coordinator Josh Wyse were recently presented a \$5,000 Albemarle Community Trust grant to purchase a drone.



From left are: Cale Community Foundation Executive Director Ashley Gregory, Adventure Coordinator Parker Long, Camp Cale Executive Director Matt Thomas and Albemarle EMC General Manager Kevin Heath. The foundation was the recipient of an Albemarle Community Trust grant.

Three grants were recently awarded to organizations that benefit the community.

The Open Door of Perquimans received a \$2,500 grant that will be used to purchase food for families in need.

“In 2024, we supported 2,615 households and 6,122 individuals,” said Board of Directors Chairperson Dina Hurdle. “These numbers highlight the depth of food insecurity in our area and our dedication to providing healthy food and personal care items to those in need.”

The Cale Community Foundation was presented a \$2,500 grant. Their funds will be used to construct a sheltered rest area adjacent to the camp’s high-ropes course.

The Pasquotank-Camden Emergency Management Agency received a \$5,000 grant to purchase a drone to replace their older drone, which could no longer receive software updates. The new drone will primarily be used for search and rescue.

Innovating a Brighter Future

October is National Cooperative Month, an annual recognition of the ways electric co-ops such as Albemarle EMC are building a brighter future for our members and communities. Co-op innovation is at the center of these efforts, as we are constantly seeking new solutions and technologies to expand services, find efficiencies and strengthen the electric grid.

Albemarle EMC has made a significant investment in our region’s future, constructing additional substations that strengthen our grid reliability. In addition, we have upgraded distribution lines that allow for more system growth, and we have maintained a robust right-of-way program that reduces the potential for storm-related outages.

Your cooperative continues to support the community in numerous ways. The Albemarle Community Trust grants close to \$60,000 each year to local nonprofits. The Bright Ideas program funds classroom projects for teachers, and our charity golf tournament raises funds to help families during the holidays.

Consider taking advantage of one of these innovative programs:

Prepay Billing – This billing method enables members to pay for electricity prior to using it instead of one time a month. Because electricity is paid for up front, members who participate will pay a lower security deposit. Those who participate will be able to pay for their electricity either directly at the co-op’s office during normal business hours, or 24 hours a day by phone or online. Members will be able to make payments as often as they like and in the amounts they desire.

Power-Use Monitoring and Alerts – Through our online portal (located at www.aemc.coop), you can monitor your energy usage monthly, daily and hourly. You can also set up high-use alerts to automatically notify you by email or text when your usage exceeds a predetermined level.

Reduce Vampire Load

The spooky month of October is a good reminder to be vigilant about vampire load.

Vampire load, also called standby load, occurs when a device continues to use power, even when it is supposed to be off. On average, vampire load costs consumers about \$60 per year.

You can eliminate vampire load by unplugging devices when they’re not

in use. Or better yet, plug multiple devices into a power strip and simply turn off the power strip when use of a device isn’t needed.





Albemarle EMC is at Your Service



Electricity and Human Connections

by Chris Powell, director of public relations

There is an old saying that: “You don’t know what you’ve got ’til it’s gone.”

One could easily apply this to electricity and how it has become such an essential part of our lives. In the grand scheme of things, it has only been a blink of an eye since Americans have gone from a single light bulb in the kitchen to homes wired from top to bottom. The thoroughness in which electricity has come to saturate our lives is common knowledge. However, it bears repeating because we so easily assume its role in modern life.

A typical person wakes each morning to an electric alarm clock, turns on the light to their room, brews a cup of coffee, then checks a computer or mobile device for the day’s news, weather and messages from family and friends. That person then heads to work where they will use an endless array of electrical devices, whether they are in the trades or an office. After work, most will wind down in front of the television or on the Internet.

I could go on, but you get the point. In my opinion, the necessity of electricity now ranks right up there with food, shelter and water in the traditional hierarchy of needs. But it seems to be even more than that. What has changed in recent years is the instant communication that our electronic devices now provide. If a major power outage were to occur, email, social media, wireless phones, the things that keep those most important to us at our fingertips can become unavailable. Not everyone owns a cell phone that can be recharged by car in an emergency. Also outages can take cell towers offline if they aren’t backed up by

generators.

It’s one thing to take a cold shower in a dark house; it’s quite another not to be able to reach an elderly relative who depends on you. Instant electronic communications sustain our lives in a manner similar to oxygen. It’s not unusual for parents to punish a teenager with the loss of a mobile device. That’s how powerful the need for interconnection has become. Perhaps that’s one more reason why Albemarle Electric Membership Corporation employees are so dedicated to maintaining reliable electricity.

During March of this year, tornadoes cut power to our New Hope Substation. When a substation goes down due to equipment damage, it is very serious. Many members are affected, and it often means a prolonged outage. I’ve worked here 21 years and am still amazed at what this co-op team can accomplish when presented with a challenge. Despite severely damaged lines and poles, some in a hard-to-access area, our linemen and servicemen were able to assess the damage, make the repairs and restore power the same day.

During the restoration, we used Facebook and our website to keep members who were affected by the outage updated in real-time. We told members what happened, why it happened and shared pictures of the recovery work as it progressed. The reason we take sharing information so seriously is that we know how vital reliable electricity is to your life. As member/owners of this cooperative, you are also part of the Albemarle EMC team. We understand that getting information to you promptly can ease the stress of being without



power. Real-time information let’s you know we are on the job. It also enables you to make important decisions. We typically can’t tell you exactly how long you may be without power during an outage. However, we do our best to give approximations, with a big caveat that unexpected delays in restoration work do occur. For the member, a short outage might warrant leaving the house to run a few errands, while a prolonged outage might mean borrowing a generator.

Electric cooperatives’ slogan: “The Power of Human Connections” isn’t just a catchy phrase. It is the foundation of who we are. We view members as an integral part of what makes Albemarle EMC possible. We understand the importance members place on electricity and all that comes with it. Affordable, reliable power enables us all to stay connected to those we are closest to. For Albemarle EMC, that is you.