



Co-ops Hit Hard by Hurricanes

Hurricane season took its toll on the Caribbean and southeastern U.S. this fall, with two named storms battering millions in a huge swath of destruction from the islands to the Carolinas. The resulting aftermath and its burden on Georgia's EMCs, who sprang into mutual-aid action to assist with equipment, supplies and personnel (including Coweta-Fayette linemen), carried weight beyond the borders of individual service territories and highlighted the beauty of cooperation among cooperatives.

In early September, category 1-strength storm Hurricane Hermine prompted states of emergency in 56 Georgia counties and left tens of thousands of consumers in the dark. Five of our crews quickly headed south to help those affected.

Little did we know then, Hermine had a big brother storm lurking behind her. Originating from a wave off the coast of Africa in late September, Hurricane Matthew developed into a tropical depression that experienced explosive intensification while crossing the Caribbean. After leaving disaster and death in its wake there, the storm paralleled the U.S. coast for 36 hours, wreaking further havoc and taking more lives stateside.

At peak intensity, Matthew reached category 5 status—the first storm that powerful since 2007—with 160-mph winds and flooding rains. More than 1,600 estimated deaths are attributed to the storm, including anywhere from 546-1,600 in Haiti and 49 in the U.S.,



making it the deadliest Atlantic hurricane since 2005. With damages estimated above \$10.5 billion, it's the costliest storm since Sandy in 2012.

In Florida, more than 1 million people lost power; 478,000 went dark in Georgia and South Carolina. Once the storm passed, EMC personnel around our state began assessing the damage.

Remote locations, standing water, street debris, ground saturation, damaged transmission lines/substations, widespread outages and hundreds of downed trees/poles made restoration especially difficult. The affected EMCs also serve enormous land areas with far fewer consumers/mile of line (an average of 10) compared to IOUs (34) and municipals (48).

When all was said and done, EMCs restored service to nearly 100,000 members in Georgia; almost

continued inside





The President's Message

*Chris Stephens
President and CEO*

As we enter the holiday season, please be aware of potential scams and those attempting to take advantage of you for personal gain. In November, utilities across the U.S. and Canada joined forces to protect consumers from long-running fraudulent schemes targeting our specific industry and those it serves.

Some scammers in our area have made calls claiming to be a representative of an EMC or other utility and warning the consumer that power will be disconnected if payment isn't made immediately. These criminals have even duplicated businesses' phone numbers so that return calls appear legitimate.

Insisting money change hands within the hour, requiring the use of a debit card for payment and providing a specific mailbox as an immediate drop-off location are just a few of the red flag requests to watch for. These people are very convincing—don't be one of the unsuspecting thousands misled across our nation each year.

Your Coweta-Fayette EMC bills can be paid in several legitimate ways: online, over the phone, via au-

tomatic draft, through the mail or in person. A member with a past-due account will receive a notice on his or her bill, a delinquency letter showing the actual disconnect date and an automated phone call reminding the consumer that power will be disconnected in two days if the office is not contacted immediately. We never call out of the blue or show up without notice demanding money.

If an EMC employee comes to your home, he or she will have the proper cooperative identification and credentials, and we encourage members to call our office if there are ever concerns or doubts. We want to ensure all members have an enjoyable holiday season and not get taken advantage of by scam artists.

We have local offices near you in Palmetto, Newnan and Fayetteville with concerned employees who can help with this type of situation or any other. Your friendly EMC neighbors are here to serve you, so give us a call or drop by any time.

It is my sincere wish that each of you has a wonderful, safe holiday season and a happy new year.

Linemen Help Co-ops Weather Storms *continued*

400 crews worked non-stop for a week, often sleeping on thin floor pallets after 16-18 hour work days.

"We got a little bit of sleep the first few nights on a church gym floor or in the parsonage," said Lineman Bubba Proctor. "The ladies there fed us, washed our clothes and provided snacks—everyone seemed grateful for our help."

He said the biggest difference wasn't lack of sleep, but unfamiliar terrain... and animals. "We worked part of the time in marshes between Cumberland and Jekyll Islands, and it was swampy and flat, with gnats, mosquitoes, snakes and alligators," he said. "I still enjoyed it, though—going somewhere different, with new experiences and people. But it's rough leaving home and my family."



On the cover:

Hurricane Relief Workers

Helping Okefenokee REMC in Nahunta and Excelsior EMC in Metter were Wes Abbott, Jason Edmondson, David Sales, Bubba Proctor, Curt Baker, Corey Hendrix, Lee Sewell, Doug Worley, Holland Brown, Terry Jones, Bobby Smith, Andrew Collins, Dell McWaters and Brandon Smith. During Hurricane Matthew, they were gone for six days

Pictured at left:

Helping Palmetto Electric in Ridgeland, SC for six days were Ben Daniel, Andrew Betts, Josh Minnifield, Robert McDonald and Ben Young.

Meet our Bright Ideas Winners for 2016!

Thanks to Operation Round Up, 28 teachers in our service area received grants for special teaching projects.



Robin Goad
Arbor Springs Elementary School
Foot Golf: Fight Against Obesity
\$1,185.00



Laura Brown
Braelinn Elementary School
Ozobots
\$401.61



Tracy Arnold
J.C. Booth Middle School
No Worries! We Got This!
\$1,500.00



Dr. Sheila Barnes
Amall Middle School
Teaching Physical Science
Phenomena with Gadgets
\$1,035.00



Michelle Owens
Brooks Elementary School
Reaching All Readers
\$549.75



Stephanie Lemons
Kedron Elementary School
STEM and Blinky LED Projects
\$825.00



Jessica Pope
Atkinson Elementary School
Ending Summer Reading Loss by
Building Home Libraries
\$950.40



Kathryn Clark
East Coweta Middle School
Hands-on Job Training
\$1,467.07



Tyler Martin
Kedron Elementary School
Incubator Habitat and Composting
\$500.00



Susan Boyd
Bennett's Mill Middle School
I Have Something to Talk About!
\$1,240.00



Tammy Hyder
East Coweta Middle School
Here Comes the Sun
\$1,500.00



Judy Linzie
Konos Academy
Diversion en español Spanish Fun
\$1,500.00



Kimberly Walden
Bennett's Mill Middle School
STEM: Scientific Thinking
Engages Me
\$550.00



Catherine Cathey
Eastside Elementary School
Classroom Garden
\$1,100.00



Grace Cannon
McIntosh High School
Seeing the Invisible X 100
\$720.00



Beverly Harris
Braelinn Elementary School
Innovative Seating for First
Grade Classrooms
\$1,000.00



Kristin King
Flat Rock Middle School
Improving Reading and Writing
in a 21st Century Classroom
\$1,462.25



Josette Nase
Moreland Elementary School
Make It Happen With MakerSpaces
\$1,480.27



Deborah Dunham
Braelinn Elementary School
Picture Me as an Active Learner
\$1,500.00



Kathryn Floyd
Huddleston Elementary School
Rolling With Robots
\$1,394.90



Chrissy Greenberg
Oak Grove Elementary School
Flexible Learning for Exceptional
Students
\$649.00

Bright Ideas



Monica Thomas

Peeples Elementary School
Build Reading Skills Using
Headsprout
\$199.95



**Victoria Underwood
Saxon**

Peeples Elementary School
Flexible Seating for Flexible
Learners
\$900.00



Jane Warner Allen

Poplar Road Elementary
School
Tranquility Cabin
\$1,200.00



Kelly Gallman

Sandy Creek High School
iPads for Music Classes
\$1,500.00



Amanda Foiles

Welch Elementary School
Robots and Simple
Machines
\$510.00



Paula Marie Corley

White Oak Elementary
School
iWrite, iCreate, iLearn
\$1,500.00



Valerie Mallon

White Oak Elementary
School
Inventing in 3D
\$1,500.00

Chris Stephens, President and CEO
C. Bradford Sears, Jr., Attorney
Douglas B. Warner, Attorney

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Bundle Up for Potential Winter Storms

As temperatures finally begin to drop, be sure to prepare for winter's cold grasp. Being ready makes a world of difference with snow/ice, and Coweta-Fayette EMC recommends the following tips to help you plan for any eventuality:

Winterize Your Home

Winter storms can wreak havoc upon a residence. By winterizing your living space, you'll be prepared for extreme cold and hazardous conditions.

- Maintain and inspect heating equipment and chimneys every year to ensure safe/proper functioning.
- Caulk and weather strip doors and windows to make the most of your heating system.
- Insulate pipes and allow faucets to drip. Consider covering windows with plastic (from the inside) to keep the cold out.
- Make sure everyone in your family knows where a fire extinguisher is located and how to use it. House fires occur more frequently during winter months, as people tend to use alternative heating methods that may not be safe.

Prepare a Winter Survival Kit

Severe winter storms may bring heavy accumulations of ice and snow, which can lead to downed power lines and extended outages.

Coweta-Fayette EMC crews will work hard to restore power, but having a winter survival kit on hand is a smart idea.

- Food: Collect non-perishables and keep a large supply of water on hand (five gallons/person).
- Medication: Be sure to refill all prescriptions in the event of a major power outage.
- Identification: Keep all forms of ID handy; bank account info and insurance policies are also good to have on hand.
- Other items: First aid kits, blankets, flashlights, battery-powered radio and extra batteries.

Stay Warm and Safe

If an outage occurs, you should plan for an alternate heating source (fireplace, propane space heater or wood-burning stove). Be sure to ventilate properly and check carbon monoxide/smoke detectors. If you decide to use a portable generator during an outage, ensure it is placed outside the home. Be careful not to overload it, and use appropriate extension cords that can handle the electric load.

Follow these tips, and your family will stay warm in the event of a power outage. For more information on winter storm prep, visit Utility.org or Ready.gov.