

BEACON



Amicalola Electric
Membership Corporation

"Owned By Those We Serve"

Vol 67 | Issue 5 | DECEMBER 2017

Comments from the CEO

2017 in Review

December is a great time to look back and review accomplishments for the year. 2017 has been an extremely busy year for Amicalola EMC, and one we are very proud of.

Our rates have remained low and capital credit refunds continued, with \$1.8 million refunded in September. Unclaimed capital credit refunds (previously paid to the state) are now being spent locally toward education, economic development and 501(c)(3) charities. In this issue, we've highlighted some of this year's recipients.

In September, Tropical Storm

Irma, a storm that will not soon be forgotten, brought widespread destruction to our entire service area, resulting in more than \$2 million in damages.

Much-needed maintenance work on our headquarters office in Jasper began in October. If you've been by, you may have seen the ongoing construction. Work has also begun on the site of the new Dahlonega office, which is scheduled to be completed by the summer of 2018.

The new Round Top substation in Gilmer County is scheduled to go online soon, bringing increased

reliability and shorter outage response times to members in that area.

During this time of year, we are reminded that there are those less fortunate. Operation Round Up is a great way for you to donate to charity, easily and efficiently. Information on how to join is on page 22D.

The board of directors, management and staff of Amicalola EMC wishes each of you a Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy 2018.



Todd Payne
President/CEO
Amicalola EMC

Tropical Storm IRMA

A tropical storm in north Georgia? Sounds strange, but that's exactly what happened on Monday, Sept. 11, 2017. Heavy downpours and sustained winds were reported at around 50 mph with gusts up to 60 mph. These tropical-force winds caused severe, widespread damage.

This was no normal storm. It was a historic weather event and is certainly the highest volume and most geographically widespread electrical outage caused by a single weather event in Georgia history. All 41 EMCs in the state

reported damage and power outages. The only other weather event in which this occurred was during the Storm of the Century in 1993, also referred to as the Blizzard of '93.

We were able to secure contractor crews and crews from sister EMCs in Georgia, as well as Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Maryland and Tennessee.

We want to extend a special word of appreciation to you, our members, for your patience and understanding during this extended power outage. The

restoration was a difficult task, but as always, we strive to get all power restored as soon as is safely possible.

Hurricane IRMA stats:

Total number of member outages:

- **27,583**, more than half of our system
- Number of outside crew members brought in: **200**, in addition to **100** Amicalola EMC crew members.
- Number of meals served: **5,400**
- Number of hotel rooms: **475**
- Broken poles: **154**
- Counties affected: **10**
- Days to restore all power: **6**

A tribute to the men who keep the lights on



A storm moves in, a tree falls on a power line and the lights go out. A call is made and somewhere a lineman prepares to head out.

What does it take to become a lineman? It's not easy. Highly skilled, highly trained employees, they must successfully complete a six-year on-the-job training program (the Georgia EMC Linemen Apprentice Program, offered in conjunction with the Northwest Lineman College) and have good personal skills such as dedication, loyalty and perseverance.

Once certified, the training never really stops. Industry changes and emerging technologies require them to continue their education through industry publications and recertification classes.

When they're not restoring power outages, they are busy with the normal daily requirements of building and maintaining 5,500 miles of distribution power lines across 1,100 square miles of service area. They build new lines, perform routine maintenance and complete system upgrades to existing lines and substations to accommodate the ever-growing need for more and more electricity.

The worst part of storm work? The unknown. When linemen go out at night, in total darkness, they never know what they will find. Much like first responders, linemen must assess the damage first, then formulate a plan and put it into action. Burdened with worry and concern for our members' safety, as well as their own, safety is their No. 1 priority.

The best part of storm work? Seeing the lights come on. They know the members are inconvenienced as they realize how much we've all come to rely on electricity. Amicalola EMC is locally owned and operated, and many Amicalola linemen are your friends, neighbors or family members.

Why do they do it? It's their way of serving the public. Their compensation goes way beyond a paycheck. The satisfaction they get when they see the lights come on and electricity restored to a community is the reward. They know the members are depending on them.

Annual Meeting winner

Wanda Thomas, of Dahlonega, was the \$500 grand-prize winner at the 2017 Annual Meeting. Apparently it runs in the family, as her mother, Mrs. Lois Thomas, was the grand prize winner three years ago!

Attendees were treated to gift bags, snacks and entertainment by The Inspirations. Approximately 400 were in attendance and Directors Randall Ponder (Post #1 – Gilmer-Murray counties), Charles Fendley (Post #3 – Pickens County) and John H. Bennett, Jr. (Post #6 – Cherokee-Bartow counties) were re-elected.

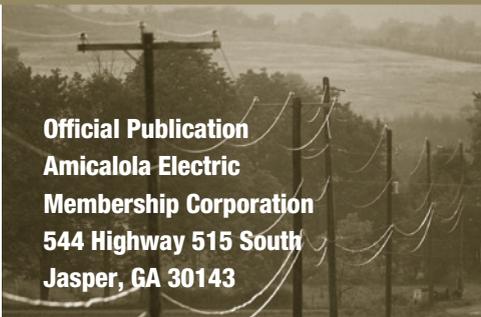


Wanda Thomas with President/CEO Todd Payne.



Lois Thomas with retired President/CEO Charles Gibson in 2014.

Amicalola EMC provides \$294,000 for education and local nonprofits in 2017



Official Publication
Amicalola Electric
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544 Highway 515 South
Jasper, GA 30143



Jennifer Painter and Dale Alsobrook of Mountainview Elementary in Gilmer County are among 79 Bright Ideas teacher grant winners this year. Just over \$48,000 was awarded to winning teachers in 28 schools across the Amicalola EMC service area. Congratulations to all the winners!

Todd Payne, *President/CEO*

Board of Directors

- Charles R. Fendley, *Chairman*.....Post #3
- John H. Bennett, Jr., *Vice Chairman* ..Post #6
- Randall Ponder, *Sec.-Treas.*Post #1
- James H. BryanPost #4
- Kathy BurtPost #7
- Travis D. Cline.....Post #5
- Wm. Leon Davis.....Post #9
- David J. PiercePost #2
- Reggie StowersPost #8



TELEPHONE NUMBERS TO CALL IN CASE OF POWER INTERRUPTIONS:

Outage Hotlines
 706-253-0359
 706-276-0359
 706-864-0359



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 Telephone: 706-253-5200

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 706-864-7979

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 706-276-2362

Office Hours: Monday through Friday
 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
 Closed on Saturday, Sunday, and holidays

Beacon Editor:
 Stacey Godfrey Fields, CCC



Shown here, local chamber of commerce representatives receive \$20,000; the Gilmer County Food Pantry receives \$10,000 (\$5,000 from unclaimed refunds and a matching \$5,000 from CoBank, a national cooperative bank serving industries across rural America); and the Gilmer County Fire Department Auxiliary receives \$15,000. Total 2017 Donations include \$43,000 to fire departments in the Amicalola EMC service area; \$131,000 to high school students for college scholarships; \$48,000 to the Bright Ideas teacher grant winners; and a grant to the Pickens Veteran’s Memorial Park.





Give to those less fortunate this holiday season



As you cross names off your holiday shopping list, don't forget those less fortunate. One of the most inexpensive, yet effective, ways to donate is through Amicalola EMC's Operation Round Up program. Every penny is donated to qualifying individuals or local charities.

Call 706-253-5200 or return this form with this month's electric statement to join. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you and yours!

Sign me up for Operation Round Up!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ ZIP: _____

Amicalola EMC account number: _____

Clip and return coupon to Amicalola EMC with your bill payment.

2018 WYT and scholarship deadlines

The deadline to apply for the Amicalola EMC scholarship (for seniors) or the Washington Youth Tour (for juniors) is Jan. 31, 2018. Students must live in a household served by Amicalola EMC to be eligible. To apply, go to www.amicalolaemc.com.



Christmas and New Year's office closings



Our offices will be closed Monday, Dec. 25, and Tuesday, Dec. 26, so our employees may celebrate Christmas with their families.

We will be closed Monday, Jan. 1, 2018, for New Year's Day. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all!

The Georgia Agriculture Tax Exemption program

The Georgia Agriculture Tax Exemption program (GATE) is an agricultural sales and use tax exemption certificate issued by the Department of Agriculture that identifies its user as a qualified farmer or agricultural producer. GATE was created through legislation that offers qualified agriculture producers a sales tax exemption on agricultural equipment and production inputs. The program replaced the Agricultural Certification of Exemption (ST-A1) form. Registration is available today at forms.agr.georgia.gov/GATE (link is external).

GATE cards expire Dec. 31 and must be applied for every year. We must have your current GATE card on file before Jan. 1, so there is no lapse in your tax-exempt status. Once taxes have been assessed on your account, we cannot remove them because those funds have already been allocated to the state of Georgia.

GATE

Georgia Agricultural Tax Exemption
GEORGIA DEPT of AGRICULTURE