

BEACON



Amicalola Electric
Membership Corporation

"Owned By Those We Serve"

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When was the last time a utility company paid you?

For members of Amicalola EMC who had service during 1992, the answer is now. As a member-owned electric cooperative, Amicalola EMC refunds monies collected over and above operating costs to you, the member-owner. If you had service during 1992, look for a credit on your September electric statement.



Scan this QR code with your smartphone to learn more about capital credits, Bright Ideas, and other programs and services offered by Amicalola EMC.

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Comments from the CEO

Loyal connections

Loyalty is a prized virtue—to country, community and family. We keep those ties strong throughout our lives. We proudly fly the American flag and wear our school colors long after the commencement speeches have been delivered.

At Amicalola EMC we have loyalties—to our members and the communities we serve. We have deep connections here because North Georgia is our home, and you are our neighbor.

When you signed up for service with Amicalola EMC, you became a member—not a customer—and each of our 38,772 member-owners owns a portion of the utility. Following the cooperative business model, we return capital credit monies to you. For members who had electric service during 1992, look for a credit on your September electric bill.

We care about improving the quality of life in the areas we serve. We use unclaimed capital credit funds to provide thousands of dollars in scholarships for high school students and assist local food pantries and volunteer fire departments. Amicalola EMC invests in the people and places where you live and work.

We take our jobs seriously, but we also take our community roles seriously, too. We fund dozens of classroom projects each year through our BRIGHT IDEAS program and send high school

juniors to Washington, D.C., every summer to learn about history and government.



Charles Gibson
President/CEO
Amicalola EMC

We work to promote economic development too; and in this issue, we continue with Part 4 in a series on local entrepreneurs. Dawson County and Pickens County share more than a geographic boundary. They are both home to the oldest and largest underground electric distribution system in a subdivision in Amicalola EMC's territory—Big Canoe. Many homes in that subdivision have been furnished in rustic elegant décor with treasures from nearby Lakota Cove, a home furnishings store specializing in rustic elegance. Discover why your next shopping trip should be to our beautiful mountains and Lakota Cove in the article on page 20D.

Take a few minutes to read the online bonus material for this issue at www.amicalolaemc.com for some timely information about solar energy and the factors involved.

At Amicalola EMC, we exist to provide you with safe, reliable and affordable electric service—in a way that makes things better for future generations. By doing so, we are not only powering our communities, but empowering our members. Thank you for allowing us to be your electric provider.



Community Spotlight

BRIGHT IDEAS 2013 schedule



**BRIGHT
IDEAS**

Aug. 1 Amicalola EMC will begin accepting applications. Apply online only at www.amicalolaemc.com/my-community/Bright-Ideas/.

Aug. 30 Early-bird deadline. Submit your application on or before this date and be entered to win **one of several** \$50 gift cards.

Sept. 13 Application deadline.

All grants will be awarded in October.

For more information on Bright Ideas, scan this QR code with your smartphone.



Holiday office closing

Our offices will be closed on Monday, Sept. 2, in observance of Labor Day.



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

When shopping for a new appliance, consider lifetime operation costs as well as the up-front purchase price. Refrigerators last an average of 12 years, clothes washers about 11 and dishwashers about 10. Check the ENERGYguide label for the appliance's estimated yearly operating cost. Look for ENERGY STAR units, which usually exceed minimum federal standards for efficiency and quality. To learn more, visit EnergySavers.gov.

—Source: U.S. Department of Energy



Renters have the power to save electricity too

If you rent your home, it often seems that you can't do much to control your electric bills. But, in reality, there are lots of low- or no-cost tricks that can cut down on electricity use.

Appliances—If an appliance needs to be replaced, ask your landlord to purchase an ENERGY STAR model. Visit energystar.gov for more information on particular products. Use your vacuum to clean coils in the bottom panel of your refrigerator. Keep your dryer vents clean.



Visit www.amicalolaemc.com and click on the Energy Saving Tools Tab to help you save energy, including an appliance calculator.

Weatherization—A roll of weather stripping and a tube of caulk can go a long way in saving energy and money. If you can see daylight through gaps around doors and windows, ask if you can seal cracks to reduce air flow. Home improvement stores offer kits to replace weather stripping around doors and to seal windows if drafty. Check the insulation in the attic and if lower than R38, ask the landlord about adding insulation. Your landlord might pay the cost if you do the labor. Curtains can also help—close them in the summer to block sunlight, and



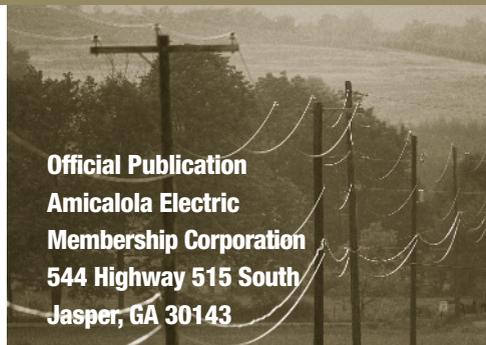
open them in the winter to let in the warmth.

HVAC—Make sure the heating and air system is serviced at least every two years and keep filters changed monthly during high-use seasons such as summer and winter. Don't allow furniture to block air vents.

Well pumps and water heaters—Make sure well pumps are not running excessively and check for water leaks, especially hot water leaks. Set the temperature on your water heater at not more than 130 degrees Fahrenheit.

Lighting—When lightbulbs burn out, replace them with compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs). They use less energy and last longer.

Call us—Remember you're not alone when trying to save energy and money; call 706-253-5200 or your local EMC office to schedule a free energy audit.



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Where Decorating Your Mountain Home Becomes a Journey

There are times when you reach a destination and realize it is so much more than you expected. Lakota Cove is one such destination. The peaceful sounds of a nearby creek and other sounds of nature begin to speak to you from the moment you arrive.

More than a home furnishings store, Lakota Cove (which translates to “friendly village”) is an art gallery. Always on exhibit in the inviting 12,000-square-foot showroom is heirloom quality art and fine craftsmanship of more than 400 artists from all across the country.

Linda Magness, owner of Lakota Cove, says she began her business with \$5 and a bird feeder; she has come a long way since then. More than 10 years ago, when Fulton County chose the Magness’ property as a site for a new high school, she and her family relocated to the mountains near the communities of Bent Tree and Big Canoe in Pickens County. An established interior designer, the move gave Linda the push she needed to build Lakota Cove, something she had planned and dreamed of for many years.

Set on 26 beautiful acres, Lakota



Cove is indeed more than a retail store, it is a destination. It is designed to give inspiration to clients who want to design or decorate their own home. The heart and soul of Lakota Cove is the work of the artists on display. Each painting, sculpture or piece of handmade jewelry conveys a little piece of the artist who created it. Each custom handcrafted table or custom designed bed frame is like an extension of the individual artist. That is evident as you wander from section to section, almost like taking a journey, realizing the time, effort and skill it took for the end result to be as stunning as each one is.

Linda believes she has more than a vendor-retail store owner relationship with her suppliers. In her words, she has relationships with the artists whose work she displays, some that have spanned many years, and they work together to provide beautiful,

creative custom pieces for her clients.

Lakota Cove offers design and build services. They also offer interior design and window treatment services. Existing home owners love Lakota Cove as well, and use their services to find just the right piece for a foyer, special room or rustic basement design.

The “Lakota Cove look” is well-known and sought after in North Georgia, across the state and across the country. Linda, as lead designer, along with Melissa Yarbrough and a full staff of talented designers and artists, have a most impressive list of showcase homes they’ve decorated, which include a model home in Big Canoe’s Choctaw Village, currently on display.

If you’re going to be in the area, give Linda a call, and she’ll be glad to arrange a viewing for you. A redesigned website, www.lakotacove.com is a great way to get to know Lakota Cove and sign up for their newsletter and emails. Be sure to check the Events tab on their Facebook page for the scheduled events held at Lakota Cove throughout the year. Make all your design dreams come true; the rustic elegance of the mountains starts at Lakota Cove.

Scan this QR code with your smartphone to learn more about Lakota Cove.



Lakota Cove
Elegant Mountain Furnishings
770.893.3495 • LakotaCove.com

230 Old Mill White Rd. Ext. Jasper, Ga. 30143 • Hours: Monday thru Saturday 10 to 6, Sunday 1 to 5



Sunlight is free ... solar power is not

Georgia's energy outlook BY HILL BENTLEY AND GREG MULLIS, TRI-COUNTY EMC, AND BILL VERNER, GEMC

House Bill 657 was introduced in March 2013, self-titled the “Rural Georgia Economic Recovery and Solar Resource Act of 2014.” The bill purports to expand solar electric generation in Georgia, creating a monopoly “community solar provider” from which an electric utility¹ would be required to purchase a set minimum amount of energy at rates² established by the Public Service Commission (PSC).

Georgia's electric membership cooperatives (EMCs) encourage the smart implementation of renewable energy. In fact, Georgia's electric co-ops were the first utilities in the state to offer renewable energy through Green Power EMC. But creating winners and losers through legislative action like HB 657 is the wrong approach.

Solar power is one of the oldest productive sources of energy, so why isn't it utilized more in the generation of electricity? Most electric utilities, whether owned and operated by a municipality for its citizens, an investor-owned utility like Georgia Power or a member-owned electric cooperative, often are criticized for not using enough “free” solar energy to power the grid.

There are major questions that must be addressed when solar power is compared to nuclear, coal and natural gas as a viable alternative. For instance: Who pays for the necessary

backup generation for solar power to ensure an uninterrupted supply of electrical energy?

Obligation to serve

Critics typically fail to acknowledge a fundamental statutory requirement for all electric utilities: the *obligation to serve* reliable and affordable electricity 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. This *obligation to serve* requires electric utilities to provide safe, reliable electric service to all customers without discrimination. In addition, utilities must have an infrastructure plan in place to meet projected demand up to 20 years into the future. The remarkable success in meeting this obligation for more than 70 years has unfortunately lulled most of us to take for granted what is required to provide electricity for our homes and businesses.

Solar power is being responsibly incorporated into utility scale generation portfolios and at hundreds of small-scale locations throughout the state, but more importantly, all consumers are paying for their utility to keep the lights on whether or not the sun is shining.

Marginal value at peak demand

Solar power is only available for a few hours on sunny days. In winter, consumer demand for most Georgia EMCs peaks in the morning hours before the sunrise. In the summer, EMCs' peak consumer demand is greatest from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., when solar power makes its daily decline toward zero. Simply put: For every kilowatt of solar panels installed, consumers are paying for almost a full kW of backup generation for when the sun isn't shining. Natural gas-fired turbines are the preferred backup

source for solar generation, as they can be turned on quickly to meet demand, but these turbines and the fuel they use aren't free, and all consumers foot the bill to ensure they are ready when needed.

Solar power doesn't count (significantly) to meet required generation reserves

Utilities are also required to maintain a margin of surplus generation reserves—roughly 10-15 percent—to prevent interruptions to power supply, and these reserves are paid for by consumers in monthly power bills. Intermittent resources like solar cannot count toward a utility's reserve margin in a meaningful way since it cannot be *turned on* at a moment's notice. In a nutshell, having solar power on the grid does not eliminate the need for investment in reliable, 24/7 resources like coal, nuclear and natural gas.

We hope this article has shed some light on the realities of solar power, and helps explain our headline “**Sunlight is free ... solar power is not.**” Cooperatives have two purposes: to provide safe, reliable electric energy to their members and to keep the cost for that energy as low as possible for all.

Look for more discussion on solar power in *GEORGIA Magazine*, and visit the Georgia General Assembly's website, www.legis.ga.gov, to read HB 657. Visit www.georgiaenergydata.org/solarmap to see how solar is progressing remarkably well in Georgia without legislative intervention.

Go to www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/gemc/2012energyreport to learn more about how you can make your home or business a good steward of energy resources, and, as always, contact your local EMC for help as well.

¹ HB 657's proponents claim the legislation only applies to Georgia Power, but there are significant ramifications to all electricity customers and to sound energy policy in Georgia.

² HB 657's “community solar provider”—a de facto solar monopoly—selected by the PSC would be guaranteed a profit under terms established by the PSC. A law that requires a minimum purchase of solar energy at a price that guarantees a profit will be a great deal for the lone “community solar provider” selected should HB 657 become law, but we are at a loss to understand how such a proposal will benefit consumers.