

BEACON



"Owned By Those We Serve"

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Comments from the CEO



Serving our members during turbulent times



Todd Payne
President/CEO
Amicalola EMC

With the holiday season upon us and the New Year just around the corner, I can't help but reflect on the gratitude I feel for our community. I think most will agree this has been a year like no other—certainly in my lifetime. And while we've seen our share of challenges, I am heartened by the ways in which we have all pulled together to make our community stronger.

Over the past few months, like so many of you, we've risen to meet new challenges and strengthened the safety net for our community, particularly for those who are most vulnerable. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we've made numerous adjustments to programs and operations to maintain business continuity while staying focused on the bigger mission of helping our consumer-members during this turbulent time.

Many local families are still feeling the economic effects caused by

Amicalola EMC's concern for community is a year-round endeavor and giving back is a part of who we are.

COVID-19 quarantines and shutdowns. Businesses were shuttered and business protocols sharply changed, resulting in a loss of revenue for some that has spanned portions of seven months.

This year, Amicalola EMC was able to donate \$390,000 in unclaimed property to local community nonprofits (such as food pantries) to help ease the financial strain brought on by the pandemic (see page 20C for more details). We've also been able to support economic development efforts and community support services such as our fire departments, chambers of commerce and others. Piedmont Mountainside

Hospital in Jasper received a \$20,000 grant to buy needed supplies and equipment (\$10,000 from Amicalola EMC and a matching \$10,000 from CoBank, a national cooperative bank serving industries across rural America).

Now, with the holidays fast approaching, these recent events have made me pause and think about the role we play in our community. While our purpose is to provide safe and reliable energy to you, our members, we also have a greater mission—to be a catalyst for good. Amicalola EMC's concern for community is a year-round endeavor and giving back is a part of who we are. We know that our core job is to keep the lights on, but our passion is our community. We live and work here, too, and want to make it a better place for everyone. We wish you all a very merry Christmas and a safe, healthy and happy new year.

Office closings

Our offices will be closed Thursday, Dec. 24, and Friday, Dec. 25, so our employees may celebrate Christmas with their families. We will be closed on Friday, Jan. 1, 2021, for New Year's Day. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



Amicalola EMC and Ellijay Telephone Company (ETC) announce partnership to expand rural broadband access

With the passage of rural broadband legislation in 2019, Georgia Senate Bill 2 cleared the way for electric cooperatives in the state, like Amicalola EMC, to contribute to the expansion of broadband. Providing broadband to rural north Georgians has been a priority of Ellijay Telephone Company's (ETC) for many years, but numerous challenges exist in making the availability of broadband service a reality in rural areas. Amicalola EMC and ETC have joined forces and are pleased to announce a partnership that will bring greater broadband access to the area served by both providers.

The partnership will give Amicalola EMC improved communications between facilities such as substations and automated distribution equipment and will improve reliability to the consumers served by them. ETC saw the opportunity as a great chance to expand their already substantial footprint for broadband service into new areas. This project will include portions of Cherokee, Dawson, Gilmer, Lumpkin and Pickens counties.



"ETC could not have a better partner who understands the needs of communities and the critical importance of fast and reliable broadband than in AEMC," says ETC COO Jason Smith. "We have joined forces before and are excited to see the positive impact our partnership will create. We encourage residents in these counties who have an interest in internet services to visit www.ETCFiber.com, an interactive website which allows consumers to register their interest."

Todd Payne, President/CEO of Amicalola EMC says, "It is a win-win for our members. We know that a lack of adequate internet access places a hardship on rural areas. We are excited about working with ETC to help bridge that broadband divide, while at the same time improving reliability to our members. We've worked on joint projects for many years, and we are happy to partner once again with a trusted and reliable provider like ETC."



Amicalola Electric Membership Corporation

"Owned by Those We Serve"

Amicalola EMC is a not-for-profit electric cooperative serving over 50,000 locations in north Georgia in portions of Bartow, Cherokee, Dawson, Fannin, Forsyth, Gilmer, Gordon, Lumpkin, Murray and Pickens counties. Founded in 1940, Amicalola EMC has provided electricity and related services to north Georgia for 80 years.



Established in 1903 as Ellijay Telephone Company (ETC), today ETC is a diversified communications company providing internet, telephone, cable television and security services. ETC serves residents and businesses in north Georgia and Tennessee. ETC actively evaluates opportunities to expand broad-



Jason Smith, Chief Operating Officer of ETC, and Todd Payne, CEO of Amicalola EMC, announce broadband expansion partnership.

band in and around its service area. Currently, ETC has 2,708 miles of copper lines, 2,010 miles of coax cable and 652 miles of high-speed fiber.

Local teachers earn \$46,000 for Bright Ideas!

Teachers throughout the Amicalola EMC service area were recently rewarded for their hard work and creative ideas as \$46,000 was distributed to 66 teachers.

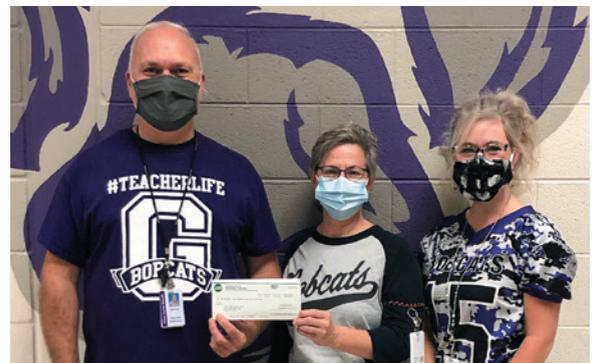
Since its beginning 10 years ago, the Amicalola EMC Bright Ideas teacher grant program has funded 737 projects, for a grand total of \$483,949.16. Congratulations to the hundreds of winning teachers, and thank you for your service to the students in our area.



Tate Elementary School Principal Stephanie Hall, left, congratulates winning teacher Hillary Tatum.



Dawson Junior High School Principal Brody Hughes, left, with winning teachers Kevin Woody, Jason Dyer and Marcia Hughes.



Clear Creek Middle School winning teachers Mark Hyde, left, and Marianne Gudger with Principal Nicole Pike.

\$390,000 for education and nonprofits



Amicalola EMC board members Travis Cline, left, and John Bennett, right, present grant to Cory Steinberg, of Give a Kid a Chance.



Amicalola EMC board member Kathy Burt, left, and Reggie Stowers, right, present a grant to Danny Thompson, of the Dawson County Fire Dept. A total of \$48,000 was given to fire departments across the Amicalola EMC service area.



Randall Ponder, left, and David Pierce, right, of the Amicalola EMC Board of Directors, present \$10,000 to the Gilmer Food Pantry. A total of \$50,000 was given to food pantries in north Cherokee, Dawson, Gilmer, Lumpkin and Pickens counties.

Amicalola holds drive-thru Annual Meeting

History was made at our 2020 Annual Meeting of the Membership. The coronavirus pandemic has overshadowed 2020 activities since March, and the annual meeting was no exception.

For the first time in the 80 years the cooperative has been in business, the annual meeting was held as a drive-thru event to comply with social distancing guidelines. Members were registered and received gift bags as they drove through a designated point. They remained in their vehicles during the entire meeting and listened to the business session over their vehicle radios.

Directors **John H. Bennett, Jr.** (Post 6 – Cherokee/Bartow counties), **Charles R. Fendley** (Post 3 – Pickens County) and **Randall Ponder** (Post 1 – Gilmer/Murray counties) were re-elected. Four cash grand prizes and \$50 power bill credits were awarded.



The Grand Prize winner receives \$500 cash.



Members drive through registration lanes at the 2020 Annual Meeting.



From left: President/CEO Todd Payne, with Amicalola EMC board of directors Kathy Burt, Charles Fendley, Edward Tucker, Attorney Phil Landrum, James Bryan, John Bennett, Travis Cline, Reggie Stowers and Randall Ponder.

IN MEMORIAM

1957-2020



In memory of David Whitaker, who dedicated 44 years of loyal service to the members of Amicalola EMC.

Tropical Storm Zeta

On Thursday, Oct. 29, 2020, approximately 38,000 of the 50,962 meters served by Amicalola EMC were put out of service as Tropical Storm Zeta reached north Georgia. This is the highest number of members without power ever recorded. It is also the second-highest percentage of members without power, second only to the blizzard in March 1993. Wind

gusts up to 60 mph were reported.

Between 8 a.m. on Thursday morning and 6 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 3, our crews responded to 1,022 separate outages. Approximately 124 broken poles were replaced. More than 350 crew members, including outside crews from 16 companies, worked up to 18 hours each day to restore power.

2021 Amicalola EMC Scholarship Program

The deadline to apply for the 2021 Amicalola EMC Scholarship Program (for high school seniors) is Jan. 29, 2021. Students must live in an Amicalola EMC household to be eligible. To apply, go to www.amicalolaemc.com/my-community/amicalola-emc-scholarships.

Due to the cancellation of the 2020 Washington Youth Tour, there will be no selection process this year. For more information, please call Stacey Fields at 706-253-5287.