

BEACON



Amicalola Electric
Membership Corporation

"Owned By Those We Serve"

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Comments from the CEO

Power in planning — resources to help you get through the winter

It's winter, and when temperatures drop and winter storms move in, it can be challenging to stay safe and warm. Winter storm severity varies depending on where you live, but nearly all Amicalola EMC members are affected by winter storms. We care about your safety, and we want to help. Don't wait until the storm hits to get prepared.

Heavy snow and ice can lead to downed power lines, leaving co-op members without power. During extremely low temperatures, this can be dangerous. During a power outage, our crews will continue to work as quickly and safely as possible to restore power, but there are a few things you can do to prepare yourself.

Stock up

- Stock your pantry with a three-day supply of non-perishable food. Include canned goods, energy bars, peanut butter, water and other essentials (i.e., diapers and toiletries).
- Confirm that you have adequate sanitation and hygiene supplies, including soap and hand sanitizer.
- Ensure your first-aid kit is stocked with medical essentials, and make sure your prescriptions are current.
- Set aside basic household items

The Department of Homeland Security offers several resources to help you prepare for major weather events and natural disasters. Visit www.ready.gov/make-a-plan.

you will need, including flashlights, batteries, a manual can opener and a portable, battery-powered radio or TV.

- Organize emergency supplies so they are together in an easily accessible location.

Safeguard your home

If a severe storm is expected, you may need to take extra steps to safeguard your home. Fully charge all cellphones, laptops and devices so you have maximum power in the event of a power outage.

Important: If you plan to use a small generator, make sure it's rated to handle the amount of power you will need, and always review the manufacturer's instructions to operate it safely. Follow the guidelines on page 22C.



Do not connect generators directly to household wiring. Power from generators can backfeed along power lines and electrocute anyone coming in contact with them, including lineworkers making repairs.

During a prolonged outage

In the event of an outage, turn off appliances, TVs, computers and other electronics, but leave a light on so you will know when power is restored. If using a generator, consider using LED holiday lights to illuminate a living area. A strand of 100 LED white lights draws little energy yet produces considerable light. Solar lights also work if they can receive some sunlight during the day for charging.

After the storm

Avoid downed power lines and walking through flooded areas where power lines could be submerged. Allow ample room for utility crews to safely perform their jobs—including on your property.

Power in planning

Advance planning for severe storms or other emergencies can reduce stress

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Todd Payne
President/CEO
Amicalola EMC

WYT alumna helps rural UGA students find their footing

Briana Hayes, a senior from Baxley, has experienced the isolation that many rural students can feel at the University of Georgia (UGA) in Athens, especially in their first months on campus.

“It’s very hard to plug in and find your people,” she says.

Hayes, who represented Alma-based Satilla Rural Electric Membership Corp. on the 2016 Washington Youth Tour (WYT), even considered transferring at one point. But instead she created an organization to help meet rural students’ need for community. Rural Students Igniting Success in Education, or RISE, officially launched in September 2019, with nearly 50 students at the first meeting.

Enrollment at UGA is about 38,000—many times larger than the population of the rural students’ hometowns. “When you’re from a small town, Athens is culture shock,” says Peyton Lee, of Zebulon, a fellow 2016 WYT alumna (representing Barnesville-based Southern Rivers Energy) and RISE vice president. “It feels so great to walk into a room where people all have Southern accents.”

Within a year of that first meeting, the RISE



Briana Hayes, left, joins fellow Satilla REMC delegates Diego Escobar, Sarah Youngblood and Haley Theis for a photo op in front of the Supreme Court building during the 2016 Washington Youth Tour.

executive board registered nearly 40 new members, secured a \$2,000 UGA Parents Leadership Council grant and established partnerships across the state and campus.

“Since the start of the fall semester of 2020, more students have become engaged in the organization despite personal interaction being limited because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and I attribute that to the heavy building we’ve done,” Hayes says.

RISE works closely with the ALL Georgia Program, which was established by the university in 2018 and is led by a collaborative working group of students, faculty and staff from across the institution. According to its website, bit.ly/ugaallga, “the ALL Georgia Program is dedicated to supporting students from rural areas and ensuring that they achieve the same levels of success at UGA as their peers from urban and suburban regions.”

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 youth tour delegate selection process this year. For more information, please call Stacey Fields at 706-253-5287.

Virtual Program in 2021 Will Recognize Outstanding Youth

While planning large group travel to Washington, D.C., is not a viable option for the summer of 2021, thanks to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, electric cooperatives across the state want to recognize outstanding youth by providing a valuable leadership experience for high achievers in their coverage areas.

Gale Cutler, senior director of the Washington Youth Tour (WYT), says they are in the development stage of creating a virtual program with live guest speakers and networking opportunities focusing on leadership and community development, among other topics.

Keep checking with your local electric cooperative in 2021, either through their newsletter in *Georgia Magazine*, website or social media platforms, for updated information.

Portable generator safety

Portable electric generators provide a good source of power, but if not installed or operated properly, can become deadly. Here are some precautions for safe generator use:

- Contact the power company to disconnect power for a safe installation. **Never** cut the meter seal yourself.
- Contact a licensed electrician to install your generator and make sure an approved transfer switch is installed. Approved transfer switches will allow your home to operate without any chance of electricity backfeeding onto the power lines where lineworkers could be seriously injured or killed. Remember it is illegal to have a generator connected to your home without an approved transfer switch. **Do not connect generators directly to household wiring. Power from generators can backfeed along power lines and electrocute anyone coming in contact with them, including lineworkers making repairs.**
- Make sure your generator is properly grounded.
- Keep the generator dry.
- Make sure extension cords used with generators are rated for the load, and are free of cuts, worn insulation, and



Are you ready for ICE STORMS?

- Trim weak or damaged branches around your home.
- Don't leave vehicle wipers raised.
- Have a week's worth of food and prescriptions.
- Don't park your car under trees.
- Keep devices charged.

have three-pronged plugs.

- Do not overload the generator. A portable generator should be used only when necessary, and only to power essential equipment or appliances.
- Never operate the generator in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces. Generators can produce high levels of carbon monoxide very quickly, which can be deadly.
- Use a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) to help prevent electrocutions and electrical shock injuries.
- Make sure fuel for the generator is stored safely, away from living areas, in properly labeled containers and

away from fuel-burning appliances.

Before refueling, always turn the generator off and let it cool down.

- Turn off all appliances powered by the generator before shutting it down.
- Keep children away from portable generators at all times.

A generator can help you weather some unexpected power outages, but use it carefully and do *your* part to keep *others* safe. For much more on electrical safety, visit the Electrical Safety Foundation International website at www.esfi.org.

Members from 2001 receive \$1.9 million

Are we holding your money?

Local electric cooperatives operate at cost; any excess revenues are returned to member-owners in the form of capital credit refunds. In September, members who had service in 2001 were refunded \$1.9 million.

To find out if you have an unclaimed refund, visit www.amicalolaemc.com. Choose the **Capital Credits** tab on the homepage, and then click on the **Unclaimed Recipients** link. You may also call 706-253-5200 or visit any Amicalola EMC office

After a mandatory five-year waiting period, any unclaimed capital credit refunds are distributed in accordance with Georgia's unclaimed property laws O.C.G.A. §44-12-236.



Pickens High School receives 2019-2020 GHSA Cooperative Spirit Sportsmanship Award



Stacey Fields, of Amicalola EMC, congratulates Pickens High School Principal Chris Wallace on winning the GHSA (Georgia High School Association) Cooperative Spirit Sportsmanship Award. This awards program honors schools that exhibit exemplary sportsmanship during competitive events and is sponsored by Georgia's electric membership cooperatives. Introduced in 2006, the Cooperative Spirit Sportsmanship Award program reinforces GHSA's philosophy which states: "Student athletes, coaches, spectators and all others associated with high school activity programs should adhere to the fundamental values of respect, fairness, honesty and responsibility."

Power in planning, *Continued from page 22A*

and anxiety caused by a weather event and can lessen the impact of the storm's effects. The Department of Homeland Security offers several resources to help you prepare for major weather events and natural disasters. Visit www.ready.gov/make-a-plan.

Sign up for NOAA emergency alerts and warnings. Download the Amicalola EMC app to see updates to the outage map. Visit our website or Facebook page for periodic updates on restoration efforts and other important co-op news and information. Act today, because there is power in planning.

Nondiscrimination statement

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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary
for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.