

Here, lineman Brice Long helps to restore power to coastal co-op members after Hurricane Irene. Read more on the next page!

# watts working

The Monthly Newsletter for Members of Randolph Electric Membership Corporation

## Membership... A Matter of Principles

There's something special about the utility that brings electricity to your home: It's a consumer cooperative, and you're more than a customer. You're a member. The hallmark of a cooperative business is its seven guiding principles. They are:

### **Voluntary and open membership**

REMC offers membership to everyone who lives in its service area and wants to join.

### **Democratic member control**

Members of the co-op are eligible to run for a seat on its board of directors and help the management make decisions. Don't have time to serve? Vote for others from your community who run for the seats.

### **Members' economic participation**

You're contributing to the financial health of your electric cooperative each time you pay your bill. In return, your cooperative sends out "capital credits" when it takes in more money than it needs after meeting all of its obligations to you and the community.

### **Autonomy and independence**

Your electric cooperative doesn't sell stock to Wall Street investors—it is owned and controlled by members.

### **Education, training and information**

Your cooperative is committed to keeping its members up to date about what's going on at their utility. It also makes sure that the community members who serve on its board of directors—along with managers, employees and others—are trained and knowledgeable about the business of the cooperative.

### **Cooperation among cooperatives**

If you've ever seen an out-of-town bucket truck after a snowstorm, it's likely from a neighboring electric cooperative that has lent its crews to help out during an emergency. Likewise, your utility pitches in when other cooperatives need help.

### **Concern for community**

The managers and staff who work for your cooperative also live in the community. So the utility takes interest in the economic development and well-being of the neighborhoods it serves.



## Thanks for Being a Member

We're celebrating our members with prize giveaways throughout the month of October.

Come by our office for Member Appreciation Days! Meet some of your co-op employees, have a snack, and put your name in the hat to win one of the many small appliances and gift cards up for grabs.

### in this issue

REMC Helps Restoration After Irene	B
Weatherization Assistance	E
Dale Lambert's AWARE Column	F



# Randolph EMC Crews Provide Aid in the Wake of Irene

**R**andolph EMC crews headed to the N.C. coast on August 27, 2011, to lend a hand to utility workers battling the aftermath of Hurricane Irene that left 152,000 cooperative members without power. Randolph EMC's service territory was minimally affected by the storm, with just a few scattered outages across its five-county service area.

Eighteen Randolph EMC employees, 10 Lee Electric employees, and three Pike Electric employees traveled first to Jones-Onslow EMC in Jacksonville, which had nearly half of its membership without power when crews arrived. REMC employees then stayed in the coastal region to assist crews in restoring power to Tideland EMC, which had 99 percent of its system without power during the height of the storm.

"Cooperatives are one big nationwide family, and the electric cooperatives of North Carolina are an especially close-knit group," said Dennis Mabe, Vice President of Operations. "As we watched the weather models throughout the week, it became clear that the storm was headed for the N.C. coast. We immediately began

making crew assignments to send to our sister cooperatives there so that they would be ready to go at a moment's notice. As soon as our own area was in the clear, the trucks hit the road."

"Tideland EMC had some bad damage. Entire homes were destroyed," said lineman Brice Long.

"We had to collect all of the disconnected meters, and in some cases, we'd have to dig through all kinds of debris to find them. In other cases, the meter base was all that was left," he added.

Randolph EMC's crews spent eight days at the N.C. coast. Dale Lambert, CEO, said, "I'm extremely proud of our crews. They are often the first ones other co-ops call upon for storm work because they are so hard-working and professional. We appreciate all that they do and how they represent our cooperative."



## CONTACT US

### Electric Service:

Asheboro .....(336) 625-5177

.....(800) 672-8212

Robbins Area: .....(910) 948-3401

.....(800) 868-7014

Power Failures: .....(877) REMC-OFF  
 (1-877-736-2633)

Bill Payments: .....(877) 534-2319

### Board of Directors:

Bob Wright .....President

Jerry Bowman .....Vice President

Sue Spencer .....Sec.-Treasurer

Tammie Phillips .....Assist. Sec.-Treasurer

James Andrews Paul Hurley

Delbert Cranford Larry Routh

Steve Harris

### Senior Staff:

Dale F. Lambert .....Chief Executive Officer

Bob Phillips .....Senior Vice President &

Chief Operating Officer

Jay Albright .....District Vice President

Ron Gunnell .....Vice President of Engineering

Adam Hargett .....Vice President of Finance

Dennis Mabe .....Vice President of Operations

Fred Smith .....Vice President of Member

& Public Relations

### Office Hours:

8:00 am – 5:00 pm | Monday–Friday

An Equal Opportunity Employer | M/F/V/H

Jill Vanness .....Public Relations Coordinator, Editor



# Service Your Heat Pump Now for Better Efficiency During Cold Weather



Properly maintaining heating and cooling systems is the key to efficient operation. The difference between the energy consumption of a well-maintained heat pump and a severely neglected one ranges from 10 to 25 percent. It's a good idea to have your unit(s) serviced twice per year—in the spring and in the fall—before extreme temperatures make them work overtime.



## WHAT A PROFESSIONAL WILL DO

- Inspect ducts, filters, blower, and indoor coil for dirt and other obstructions.
- Diagnose and seal duct leakage.
- Verify adequate airflow by measurement.
- Check for refrigerant leaks.
- Inspect electric terminals, and if necessary, clean and tighten connections, and apply nonconductive coating.
- Lubricate motors, and inspect belts for tightness and wear.
- Verify correct electric control, making sure that heating is locked out when the thermostat calls for cooling and vice versa.
- Verify correct thermostat operation.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Clean or change filters once a month or as needed, and maintain the system according to manufacturer's instructions. Dirty filters, coils, and fans reduce airflow through the system. Reduced airflow decreases system performance and can damage your system's compressor.
- Clean outdoor coils whenever they appear dirty; occasionally, turn off power to the fan and clean it; remove vegetation and clutter from around the outdoor unit.
- Clean the supply and return registers within your home, and straighten their fins if bent.

## Even Out Your Payments with Budget Billing

### Q How does the Budget Billing program work?

**A** With Budget Billing, you will know what to expect on your electric bill, because the amount will be approximately the same month after month—even throughout peak cooling and heating periods. It does not reduce your electric bills, but will even out your charges and help you manage your costs. Here's how it works:

- Your total kilowatt-hours (kWh) from the previous year is divided into 12 equal payments based on the current rate structure.
- You then pay that set amount each month for the next 11 months, regardless of the amount of electricity you use.
- In the 12th month, you'll "catch up" to the difference in what you've paid and what you owe. If you have paid too much during the previous 11 months, a check is written out to repay you. If you have paid too little, you must pay the remaining balance to bring your account balance to zero.



# We Need Your Photos, Stories!

Randolph Electric Membership Corp. will celebrate its 75th anniversary in 2013! We're inviting our members to gear up for the celebration by sharing your photographs and stories. Much has changed over this period of time and we'd like to commemorate the integral part Randolph EMC, its leaders, employees and members have played in the development of central North Carolina over the past decades.

We're interested in all your Randolph Electric memories and experiences! Tell us or show us a photo about when the lights came on, a special Randolph EMC lineman or other employee, or about when a storm affected your electricity. Maybe you have a funny experience to share. Let us know how Randolph EMC has helped you or improved the quality of life for this area.

Submissions will be handled with care and returned to their owners. Photos and stories can be mailed to:

**Jill Vanness**  
**Public Relations Coordinator**  
**PO Box 40, Asheboro, NC 27204**

Or emailed to:

**Jill.Vanness@RandolphEMC.com**

## SWAPSHOP

### For Sale

Remodeled furnished mobile homes in Holden Beach, 3 BR 2 BA \$600 per week; 2 BR 1BA \$400 per week, available year round. 910-639-9902 or 910-464-3134.

Hospital bed \$100. Bed lift \$80. Bullet reloading kit. Bought for \$1,000. Will sell for \$500. 919-837-5178 or 919-704-5513.

Rabbits \$5 each. 336-879-3320.

50 lb bag feed wheat \$8.50 per bag. 336-622-2480.

1955 Model 60 John Deere with Model EO80A John Deere Scrape Blade. Fully restored & parade ready. \$6,500. 336-879-3765.

Little Wonder Blower, 3-wheel, 9 HP Honda. Like new. \$950. 336-362-3342.

3,000 Red Sex Link pullets (young, laying age chickens), brown egg layers, vaccinated & debeaked. \$6 & up. 336-708-2998.

Organic square bales of horse quality hay, no herbicides or chemical fertilizers, fescue & coastal bermuda, & fescue & orchard, call for pricing that includes out of field, delivery, & in barn. \$2.95 a bale & up. 336-317-4105.

100' Spot fishing net, used once \$175. 336-879-8294 or 336-460-1075.

Pictures, black & white & color, 8" x 10" \$10 or 10"x13" \$25. All bridges & mills of Uwharrie River including Pisgah Covered Bridge. 336-629-2533.

Members, email Swap Shop items to **General@RandolphEMC.com**

## Did You Know?

### Power Lines Carry More Than Just Electricity with Smart Meters

The data from Randolph EMC's smart meters is sent from your home to the co-op office over the power lines, which is known as Power Line Carrier (PLC) technology. Here are some of the reasons why using the power lines for data transmission is a good idea:

- It's a cost-effective solution because we're utilizing our existing infrastructure
- Meters do not emit any radio frequency using PLC
- Because all data is traveling on the power line, meters do not communicate with anything other than the substation. This keeps information safe and secure.

### OCTOBER SMART METER INSTALLATIONS

Crews will be installing smart meters in the highlighted areas during October.

# Save Time & Money with Our Bank Draft Program

Having your payment automatically drafted from your checking or savings account each month is easy and convenient — no more writing checks, paying postage or forgetting to pay your bill!



**No Checks**



**No Postage**



**No Late Fees**

**Call 1.800.672.8212 to sign up today!**



## Don't Let Electrical Hazards Haunt Your Halloween!

Halloween is the most festively frightening night of the year. But don't make yours fraught with danger. Here are some safety reminders:

- As you're decorating, make sure you check for cracked sockets, frayed, loose or bare wires, and loose connections.
- Make sure decorative lighting is well ventilated, protected from weather, and remains a safe distance from anything flammable like dry leaves and shrubs. Do not coil extension cords while in use or tuck under rugs or drapes.
- Make sure all outdoor electrical lights and decorations are plugged into an outlet protected with a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI). Don't overload outlets with too many extension cords and strands of lights.
- Keep power cords off walkways and porches that trick-or-treaters may use.
- Leave the porch light on for trick-or-treaters, and be sure to turn out all spooky lights and decorations before leaving home or going to bed. This will also save energy!

*Source: Electric Consumer*



## Do You Qualify for Weatherization Assistance?

The U.S. Department of Energy's Weatherization Assistance Program enables low-income families to reduce their energy bills by making their homes more energy efficient.

If your household income is below 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines, you may qualify. Contact your local agency for more information.

### **Alamance**

Alamance Co.  
Community Services Agency (336) 229-7031

### **Chatham**

Orange-Chatham  
Community Action Program (919) 542-4781

### **Montgomery**

Cumberland  
Community Action Program (910) 485-6131

### **Moore**

Cumberland  
Community Action Program (910) 485-6131

### **Randolph**

Regional  
Consolidation Services (336) 629-5141



# a word about Randolph Electric

by Dale Lambert



## Outages Caused By More Than Just Storms

Dear Members,

**Why is my power out?** When things go dark, this is the first question that comes to mind. Many times, it occurs at the most inopportune time—a winter storm on Christmas morning, during the Super Bowl, or just on a typical morning when you and the family are getting ready for work and school. None of us like it when that happens.

As I looked back at the outage reports from August 1, 2010 to July 31, 2011, the past year was “typical” in relation to the number of outages and their causes. A major storm event such as heavy snow, significant ice or a hurricane can have a dramatic effect on those numbers, though. At press time, Randolph EMC has been fortunate that our service territory has not recently experienced one of those events.

This month, I would like to provide you some insight to the types of outages that occur, how many there are in an average year and steps we are taking to reduce them as much as possible.

### OUTAGES AT A GLANCE

What does a typical year look like? For the time period I noted above, there were 1,090 outages on the REMC system. We track the cause of each outage and assign it to one of 46 separate categories. This allows us to clearly identify outage trends over time.

There was at least one outage for each category. For example, we had one outage caused by a member digging into an underground service line. Since Randolph EMC installs all underground cable in PVC pipe, we have very few outages caused by excavating into our underground lines. In another category, there were 11 outages affecting 643 members that involved motor vehicles.

In a typical year, however, there are three main categories the vast majority of power outages can be attributed to: trees, animals and lightning.

#### *Trees*

By far, trees are responsible for the most outages on Randolph EMC’s system. They accounted for 371 outages, or 34 percent, of all outages. Though they

caused only about a third of the outages, trees were responsible for 61 percent of all outage minutes. A tree falling on the line can cause extensive damage, which takes much longer to repair than most other outage related causes.

To help reduce the number of tree related outages, Randolph EMC has an aggressive right-of-way program that seeks to remove as many trees—dead or alive—that could come into contact with a power line as we can. If you see a tree that could cause a problem with the power line, call the office and let us know. With over 4,100 miles of line, it’s hard to catch them all!

#### *Animals*

Animals were responsible for 18 percent, or 199 outages, over the past year. The total minutes our members were affected by animal outages equaled 12 percent of all outage minutes for the year. Normally, we can restore those outages pretty quickly, but they’re tough to prevent. We install protective guards on transformers and equipment, but somehow those squirrels still manage to cause problems. We recently had a squirrel that used the animal guard on the transformer as a place to store its food supply. He got a little too close one day and caused an outage.

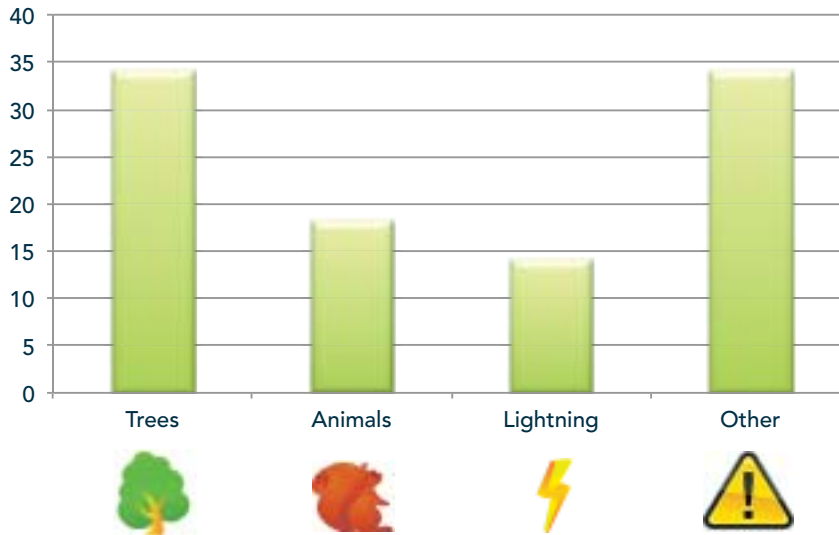
Animal related outages can certainly be unique. We had a member a few years ago who was experiencing a higher than usual number of outages. When we investigated, we found that his large bull had been rubbing against the guy wire in his pasture, causing the conductor to hit together and blow the fuse on his line. To this date, he still thinks I was shooting him a line of—well, you know. But I witnessed things like that with my own eyes back when I worked in the field as a lineman.

Even better, we recently had an outage caused by a beaver. It didn’t climb the power pole, but it cut a tree that fell on the line and caused an outage. Now, which category do you put that outage in—animal or tree?

At another location, we determined that numerous outages were caused by buzzards. No, they weren’t flying into the line. When the buzzard rested on top of



### Causes of Outages



the pole, its droppings would fall onto a fused cutout, causing it to short and blow!

Within the span of two weeks, Progress Energy recently had two outages in one of their Asheboro substations caused by squirrels. Each of those outages caused around 3,700 Randolph EMC members to be without power.

On Wednesday night, August 24th at 8:51 PM, Bear Creek substation, located in southwestern Chatham County, opened causing 1,997 members to be without power. A very long black snake climbed on the energized equipment causing the outage. The equipment did exactly as it was supposed to. The snake didn't. Even though the outage only lasted for 33 minutes, it is one we would like to prevent. Our engineering and operations team are continually looking for new devices to assist us in preventing animal outages and we will continue to do so in the future.

#### Lightning

The third highest category is lightning. Lightning can cause enormous destruction to an electric utility system. The past year, lightning caused 153 outages. This was 14 percent of all outages and resulted in 7 percent of the total outage minutes our members experienced.

Each pole-mounted transformer has a lid held on by a metal strap that is bolted together. I've witnessed several instances where lightning struck a transformer and the top was blown at least 100 feet away. Tops of poles have been reduced to splinters because of a direct lightning strike.

The best protection for lightning is a highly grounded electrical system. Randolph EMC places a strong importance on maintaining a grounded electrical system to provide as much protection as possible. We are continually adding lightning

arrestors to the system to help diminish the impact of lightning.

Last month I wrote about the issues we were experiencing with copper wire thefts from our poles and substations. We now have two documented outages due to these thefts.

On August 6th and August 21st, two of the circuits feeding out of Bear Creek substation were out of power. There was lightning in the area on both occasions. Upon further investigation, however, we were able to determine that someone had stolen all the grounding wires from the breakers. When lightning hit near the substation, it had nowhere to go and caused the equipment to open up. For each outage, 857 members were out of power.

I hope you have a better understanding of why the power may be out. We track all outages closely with the goal of reducing them as much as possible. We certainly do not want your power going out anymore than you do! Our commitment is to deliver the most reliable electric service possible.

Cooperatively Yours,

Dale F. Lambert  
Chief Executive Officer

# Lend a Neighbor a Helping Hand

## When It's Needed Most



## With People Helping People, Small Change Changes Lives

People Helping People is a program which rounds up members' bills a few cents and puts that "spare change" to work in the community. While members who participate probably don't even miss those pennies each month, together, those pennies add up to a significant amount. These funds, in turn, are donated to worthy programs of charitable organizations and to help individuals cope with hardship.

To join the effort, call 1.800.672.8212  
or mail in your completed form.

Yes, I want to join  
People Helping People



Name (as it appears on your bill)

Address

City, State, ZIP

Phone

CIN#

Signature

Mail to: PO Box 40 · Asheboro, NC 27204



Randolph Electric  
Membership Corporation

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative