



Published bi-monthly
and mailed to members of
Okefenokee Rural Electric
Membership Corporation
Nahunta, Georgia 31553

Michele Hutchins, Editor

OFFICE HOURS

8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Monday through Friday

Speak to a Member Service Representative by
phone Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

CO-OP BUSINESS NUMBER

Toll Free 1-800-262-5131

oremc.com

E-MAIL

marketing@oremc.com

John Middleton

General Manager

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

R. Wayne Combs

President

Steve E. Rawl

1st Vice President

Jimmy Woodard

2nd Vice President

Cristi B. Koncz

Secretary/Treasurer

Terrell Brazell

Jamie Giddens

Joe Loomis

Clyde Mizell

Craig Morgan

“OWNED BY THOSE WE SERVE”



OREMC Wins *Best of Camden*

For a second year in a row, OREMC was named Best Utility by our members in the 2024 Best of Camden County Readers' Choice Awards. We are thrilled to once again receive this honor and appreciate the recognition for our dedication to “keeping the lights on.” Our members are the mission. OREMC General Manager added, “I am proud of what our employees do every day to serve our members. We focus on reliability, customer service and maintaining competitive rates. This award validates our members recognize that, particularly in the wake of three major storms last fall. We thank you for your support.”

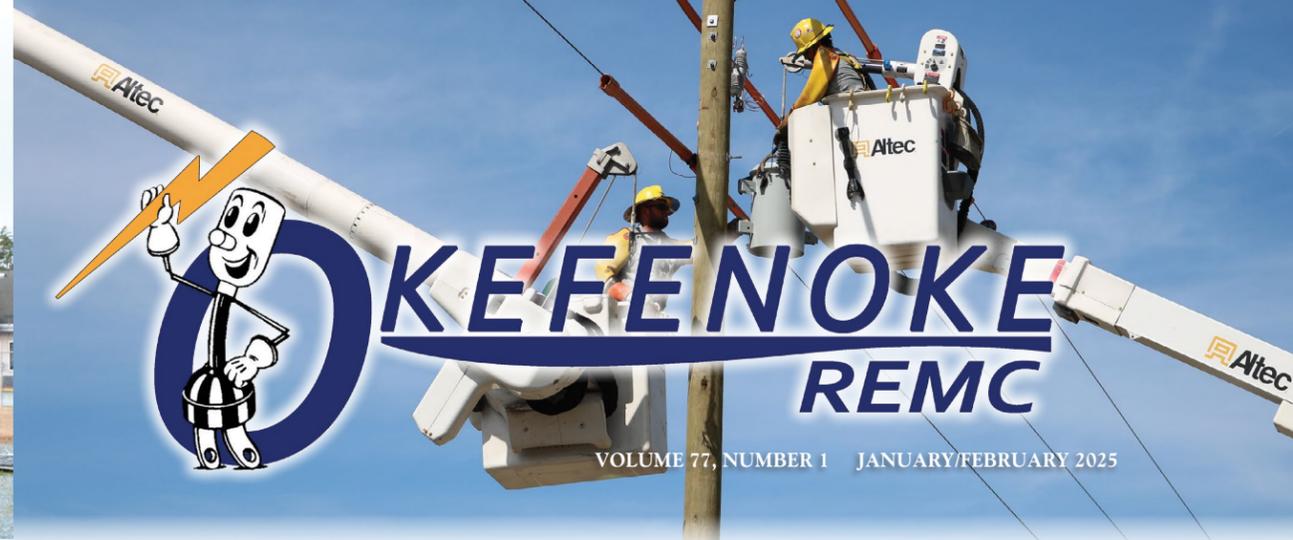
Problem With an Outdoor Light?

Outdoor lights can be installed to enhance your comfort and security at your residential and/or commercial property, provided they are in good working order.

If you are aware of an outdoor light that is not working or malfunctioning, please report it by contacting OREMC Member Services. You can use the online form located on our outdoor lighting page at oremc.com/outdoor-lighting or speak to a representative by calling 800-262-5131.

Some key information you will need to provide for us to address the light in a timely manner:

- Your name
- OREMC account number
- Best telephone number to reach you?
- Email address
- Address where the light is located.
- Description of where the light is specifically located on the property.
- Is the light malfunctioning or failing to illuminate?
- If on a pole, please provide the five- or six-digit number listed on a metal or yellow tag on the pole.
- Will our service personnel have to go through a gate to get to the light? If yes, is it locked? Does it have a code to unlock?
- Is it located near your septic tank?
- Are there any pets/other issues we should be aware of?



Reliability By the Numbers

Reliability. It is part of the three-legged stool that makes up the OREMC mission statement: To provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to our members. We have spoken a lot about reliability, and our focus on enhancing it, over the past several years. So how are we doing?

Operations Manager Travis Page points to the recovery from Hurricane Helene as a benchmark, saying, “We had 85 percent of our system out Friday morning with Hurricane Helene—large numbers of which were the result of transmission outages feeding nine of our substations (meaning those outages we not on OREMC’s system but impacted the delivery of power to our system.) We had the majority of our members back on by Monday afternoon, with the remainder cleaned up Tuesday. As far as recovery from a major storm, this was one of our best.”

The standard rules of measure for system reliability are SAIDI (System Average Interruption Duration Index) and SAIFI (System Average Interruption Frequency Index). SAIDI measures how long members are without power and SAIFI refers to the average number of outages a member experiences. They are cumulative averages per member, meaning it takes the total number of outages and total duration of outages and divides them by total number of members served. For 2024 OREMC’s SAIDI was 200 minutes, and SAIFI was 2.59 outages per member. Three years ago, the numbers were 224 and 3.11 respectively. Twelve years ago, OREMC’s SAIDI/SAIFI was 372/3.43

The numbers indicate there has been steady,

measurable improvement in the last three years, but major advances made in lowering those numbers over the past decade. Right of way maintenance (ROW), system improvements through the construction workplan and technological innovations have all contributed to improved reliability.

“The focus on reliability became an elevated strategic initiative after the impact major storms—hurricanes and ice—had on our system in 2016, 2017 and 2018,” notes Page. “New materials and technologies had become available to better harden electrical systems against power disruptions and we made a plan to implement them into our distribution system.”

Implementing SCADA, or Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition, has enabled OREMC to take steps toward developing a self-healing smart grid in the future. SCADA uses a series of electronic devices that enable system operators at the OREMC Control Center to sectionalize line and isolate an outage, such that it impacts the fewest number of members for the shortest amount of time.

Working in tandem with SCADA has been workplan improvements that: 1.) tie the distribution system together so members can be fed electricity from a different direction when an

Continued on Page 2.



John 6:39-40 NASB

This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day. —Jesus

“Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.”

—Ralph Waldo Emerson



Annual FFA Wiring Practice Session Held

They say practice makes perfect, and for the 10 students representing five different schools at the recent Wiring Contest Practice session held at Brantley County High School and sponsored by OREMC, they couldn't agree more. For senior, —and the first place finisher—Grayson McPhaul from Ware County High School, it all came together. Last year he placed third, but this year, with more hands on experience under his belt, he felt much more comfortable in being presented with the wiring problem and how to proceed. The same was true for his demonstration speech. He felt very comfortable explaining to the judges the wiring example before them and how it all worked.

Second place finisher Zachery Kent from Wayne County agreed, noting, "This was my third year participating in the practice session and it was much easier this year. I've gotten more comfortable with figuring out the wiring problem and doing the demonstrations because I've actually been doing some real world wiring work as a part-time apprentice." He is planning to formally be hired as a journeyman apprentice and wants to earn his master electrician license.

For first-timers Jeremiah Lopez and Yimy Martin from Valdosta High School, they enjoyed the opportunity to figure out the wiring problem and making it work. They likened it to a puzzle. Their Advisor Jarod Wayne said, "Practice sessions like this exposes them to a trade, find out if they like it and learn valuable skills. College isn't for everyone, but the skills they learn here can be a pathway to becoming a helper and eventually an apprentice."

Open to high school students in grades nine through 12, the wiring competition is an Agricultural electrification Career Development Event sponsored jointly by the Georgia FFA Association and the Georgia Electric Membership Corporation representing the state's 41 electric membership cooperatives. The event is divided into three sections: a presentation/demonstration speech, problem solving questions and a wiring problem. Each section is timed and scored based on work completed and competency demonstrated. The top two winners from each of the six regions advance to the statewide competition.

Reliability Continued from Front

outage has been detected and isolated; and 2.) using upgraded materials for new construction and system improvements that better harden—or strengthen—the system. Examples include bigger, stouter poles and heavy-duty aluminum wire that is more resilient to weather and debris.

ROW maintenance has also played a significant role in minimizing damage to the system, and ensuring access to the lines for clean up when damage does occur. OREMC has employed a more comprehensive approach to vegetation management with trimming and spraying that is targeted and longer lasting. There is also a greater focus on identifying and removing potential "danger" trees, or trees that stand outside the ROW but have the potential to impact the system during significant weather events.

"We would love to say our goal is zero power disruptions," insists Page, "but the reality is there are too many contributing factors out of our control. Namely, weather, animals and vehicular accidents. What we can do is work to lower the frequency and duration of outages. For me duration is a focal point because it says a lot about how members are impacted, as well as reflecting system resiliency and restoration efforts."

Addressing Community Needs Through OREMC Foundation

Is your organization dedicated to education, healthcare and/or addressing community needs? If so, you might be eligible to apply for an OREMC Foundation grant. The OREMC Foundation is a community development initiative that supports a wide range of efforts from foster care, food insecurity and at-risk youth, to supporting veterans, arts education and addiction recovery.

Grants are awarded based on funds available and the review and approval of the Foundation Trustees on a quarterly basis. Qualified organizations are invited to apply, and the application and information are available online at oremc.com/foundation. The next application deadline is April 4, 2025.



GOLF REGISTRATION IS OPEN

Register your team today for the 34th Annual OREMC Golf Tournament on Saturday, April 26. The tournament will be held at The Lakes Course at Laura Walker State Park in Waycross. Once again, we are teeing up to raise funds to provide financial assistance to local cancer patients through the Southeast Cancer Unit, Inc. It is a day of fun, fellowship and fundraising that extends OREMC's reach into making a difference in, and supporting, our communities every day. Use the QR code to link to our tournament page where you can register and pay online. We look forward to greeting you on the greens!



Save the Date!
Saturday, April 26, 2025



34th Annual Golf Tournament



Church of the Month

Lakewood Baptist Church

9287 Colerain Rd.
St. Marys, GA 31558
912-576-5269