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Michele Hutchins, Editor

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phone Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

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“OWNED BY THOSE WE SERVE”

The Season of Giving

As the holiday season envelops us and the air turns crisp, we're reminded that this truly is the season of giving. It's a time for gratitude, generosity and looking out for one another—and at OREMC that's something we take to heart year-round.

You've probably heard us talk about our concern for community. It's not just a nice phrase—it's one of the core principles that makes electric cooperatives like ours



different from other utilities. We're not just here to keep the lights on (though of course, we're always working hard to do that). We're here to make life better for the people we serve—our members, our neighbors and our friends.

Over the years, we've faced challenges together, and every time, our co-op family has stepped up. We've come together to support those in need, to keep our community strong and to build something better for the future. That spirit of generosity is never more evident than during the holiday season.

Take our OREMC Foundation, for example. Since its inception four years ago, the OREMC Foundation has awarded 200 grants totaling more than \$700,000 to qualified organizations supporting education and addressing our communities' needs including: food insecurity, foster care, veterans, arts education, homelessness, childhood literacy, access to healthcare, agricultural education, preserving history and supporting at-risk youth.

We're also proud to support local students through the Youth Tour program, where we send some of our community's brightest young people to Washington, D.C., to see democracy in action and dream big about their futures. That's giving in the most meaningful way—by investing in tomorrow's leaders.

And because we care deeply about safety, we also spend time visiting schools throughout the communities we serve, holding safety demonstrations and talking about careers in the electric utility industry. We believe knowledge is a gift too—and we love sharing it.

You'll also find our team out in the community beyond work—coaching youth sports, volunteering at local events, serving on non-profit boards, and partnering with our Chamber of Commerce to keep our local economy strong. Because when you're part of a co-op, giving back isn't a requirement—it's just what you do.

At OREMC we believe concern for community is more than a value—it's the heart of who we are. And during this season of giving, we're especially grateful to be part of such a caring, generous community.

From all of us at OREMC we wish you and your loved ones a joyful, safe and bright holiday season.



Schooling Teachers at OREMC

Teamwork. Communication. Family. Hero.

Those are the words five teachers from Glynn and McIntosh County schools best summed up the culture and employee interactions they observed on day one of their Externship at OREMC. This was the fourth year OREMC has participated in the Connect Glynn Teacher Externship Program as a host site. The goal of the program is to connect classroom learning with workforce needs and skill sets.

Participating in this year's program from Glynn County Schools were Lindy Helms from Sterling Elementary; Gisha Dudley from Brunswick High School and Eric Wetzel from Burroughs Molette Elementary. From McIntosh County were Teressa Simmons from Todd Grant Elementary and Heather Spannuth from McIntosh Middle School.

They began their day with an overview of the history of electric membership co-ops and the advantages of the cooperative form of business. The OREMC leadership team then met with the teachers to share their OREMC stories over their combined 200 years of service. Family and service to members and community were key touchstones of each leaders' experience and commitment to OREMC.

Those messages were further enforced as the teachers toured the Nahunta headquarters and met with employees from various departments, learning about the specific skills, education/training and experience different jobs require. As Apparatus Technician Omar Garay was sharing his career journey, he explained he first wanted to join the Air Force and be a hero. When that didn't quite go as planned, he got into linework, working for a contractor, but regularly dropped in the Kingsland office of OREMC to see if any job opportunities had opened up. Eventually one did and he hired on as a lineman, earning his Journeyman Certification.

His comment about wanting to be a hero came back around as the teachers went out into the field later in the afternoon to observe a line crew construct a new service. It was as they were watching the crew work on a "hot" line, and then energize the new line, that McIntosh Teacher Teressa Simmons commented, "Omar said earlier he wanted to be a hero. These guys are heroes."

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John 3:36, ESV

“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains upon him.”

“ **Blessed is the season which engages the whole world in a conspiracy of love.** ”

– Hamilton Wright Mabie

Schooling Teachers

Continued from Front

What also impressed them, was the wide variety of jobs at OREMC, and the number of employees who began their careers as work-based learning students. All agreed their eyes were opened to the career opportunities that exist in their “own backyard” at OREMC; not all jobs require college degrees; and the growth potential each individual employee has once they become part of the OREMC family.



Day two of their externship had our teachers meeting with our Kingsland crew, getting a feel for the job by trying on some of the gear, handling an extendo stick and watching a climbing demonstration. From there it was off to get an up close and personal look at the 3.5 miles of line that serves Cumberland Island and was rebuilt in 2019. They heard all about working conditions the marsh presents and how 45 poles were set by helicopter in just one day. Wrapping things up, they met with Engineer James Allen who discussed power transmission and capacity needs.

Lend Your Voice for Cooperative Power

Tell your representative to support the FEMA Act of 2025

Right now, a critically important bill is before Congress that would provide the most robust reform of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and federal disaster assistance programs in decades. **But we need YOUR help to make sure the bill passes Congress!**

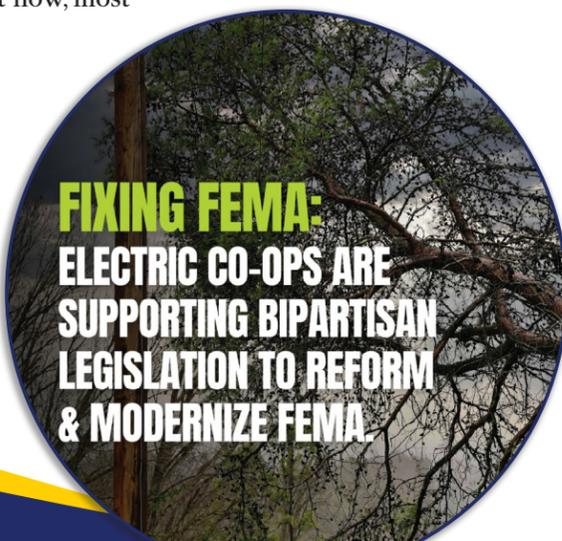
When a natural disaster strikes, electric cooperatives are on the front lines working to restore power—most recently for OREMC that includes Hurricane Helene and Winter Storm Enzo. FEMA is a critical partner in these efforts. However, FEMA reform is needed to better address the needs of rural Americans after a disaster occurs.

The Fixing Emergency Management for Americans (FEMA) Act of 2025 would keep in place FEMA’s essential Public Assistance program, which provides money to co-ops to restore power and rebuild their systems after natural disasters. Without those funds, rebuilding would take much longer and raise costs sharply for rural communities.

Specifically, the FEMA Act would direct the FEMA administrator to reimburse co-ops for emergency work no later than 120 days after it submits a request. The president would first need to determine that at least 90% of estimated costs are eligible for reimbursement, said Will Mitchell, a NRECA legislative affairs director who lobbies Congress on FEMA issues.

For longer-term projects to rebuild or replace infrastructure, the bill would require FEMA to review within 90 days a co-op’s cost estimate of the work that needs to be done, Mitchell said. After that, the agency would have 30 days to disburse the funds for the project. “That would be a huge change in the timeline,” Mitchell said. “Right now, most co-ops are waiting years for reimbursement.”

So what can you do help? Send a letter to your representative asking them to vote YES on the FEMA Act of 2025 (H.R. 4669). Sending a letter takes less than two minutes! Visit voicesforcooperativepower.com to learn more and send your letter.



MAKE YOUR MARK!



High School Juniors! Every generation leaves behind a legacy, footprints that shape the future. **National Washington Youth Tour** is your chance to do the same. It’s more than a trip to Washington, D.C.—it’s an opportunity to step into history, discover your voice and begin writing the story only you can tell. It’s a trip of a lifetime! Delegates selected from OREMC will join more than 1,800 students from across the country in Washington, D.C., June 12-19, 2026.

Apply today! To learn more about the program, you can check out our website at oremc.com/youth-tour. **Application deadline is January 14, 2026.**

OREMC Scholarship Applications Now Being Accepted

OREMC annually awards 10 scholarships in the amount of \$2,000 each. Applicants for the OREMC Scholarships must reside in one of the eight counties included in OREMC’s service area. **Deadline to apply is January 21, 2026**

- The OREMC Scholarship funds may be used at any accredited college, university, or technical school (not restricted to Georgia) in the U.S.
- Applicants may be either a high-school senior or an undergraduate college or vocational/technical student. Non-traditional students are also eligible to apply.

More information and application is online at oremc.com/scholarships.

January 9 Next OREMC Foundation Grant Application Deadline

The OREMC Foundation is now accepting applications the first quarter of 2026. The deadlines for qualified organization to submit their application is Friday, January 9. Application and detail available at oremc.com/foundation.

Established four years ago and funded by unclaimed capital credits, the OREMC Foundation has awarded 200 grants totaling more than \$700,000. Grants help address education initiatives and community needs in OREMC’s eight-county service area in Southeast Georgia and Northeast Florida.



Capital Credits Checks Mailing in December

For the 64th consecutive year, Okefenokee REMC will be issuing capital credits to our consumer-members. OREMC’s Board of Directors have authorized the refund the balance of patronage capital from 1998 and a portion from 1999 totaling \$1,669,986.28, as well as an estate allocation of \$295,000 for a

total of \$1,964,986.28. Checks will be mailed to members in December.

Note: not all current members will receive capital credit checks in December.

- Refunds are only to consumer-members who received electric service from OREMC between 1998 and 1999.
- Refunds of \$100 or less will be made as an account credit instead of by check.
- Please be advised Capital Credits will be live on your account (reduce your total amount due) on November 21.
- However, an actual line item indicating your Capital Credit Refund will not appear on statements until bills due after December 9.
- Refunds of less than \$5 on inactive accounts will be held and refunded at such time the total refund is more than \$5.

Checks issued to deceased members should be forwarded to heirs or an estate administrator. They can work with our Member Services Department to determine eligibility for a lump-sum payment of all accrued capital credits based on OREMC’s Estate Refund policy.

Call Member Services at 800-262-5131 for more information or clarification on your current amount due.



Church of the Month

Live Oak Baptist Church

36178 Congregation Lane
Callahan, FL 32011-6410
904-879-3400

Sunday School	9:45 a.m.
Sunday Morning	11 a.m.
Sunday Evening Bible Study	6 p.m.
Wednesday Evening	7 p.m.

Member Benefit

OREMC has returned \$30.6 million in patronage capital to members since 1960—\$1.9 million in 2025. Because electric co-ops operate at cost, any excess revenues are allocated and retired to our members in the form of capital credits.

