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"OWNED BY THOSE WE SERVE"

# Financial Assistance Available to OREMC Consumer-Members

Are you having trouble paying your OREMC bill? There are a number of agencies that offer assistance to OREMC consumer-members experiencing a financial hardship. The complete list has recently been updated with links and phone numbers and can be found online at [oremc.com/energy-assistance](http://oremc.com/energy-assistance).

For consumer-members living in Camden or Glynn counties, we suggest first calling The Salvation Army.

Camden County Salvation Army call between 9:30-11:30 a.m. 912-882-6658

Glynn County Salvation Army choose Option 1/Social Services 912-265-9381



When you call, state that you are an OREMC/Okefenokee REMC consumer-member. Information they will need from you includes:

- State Issued ID
- Social Security Cards or Birth Certificates for everyone in the house
- An OREMC billing statement showing your account number and has your name and address on it
- A few forms you must fill out as well in order to complete the process.

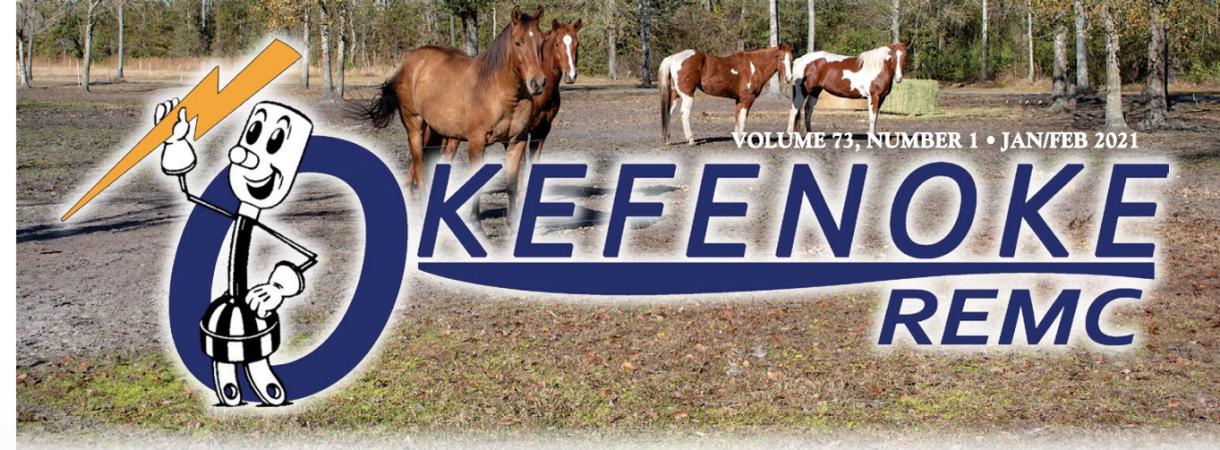
## Getting SMART *Continued from Front*

Lee demonstrated a self-healing line in action at OREMC's simulation lab. It was instantaneous, such that in the field, members downline from a fault outside of the section where it is located, would likely not even experience a power blink.

"The distribution automation project completed between the Hoboken and Nahunta substations, and what Kane demonstrated in the lab is phenomenal engineering at work," states OREMC Director of Engineering Darren Crews. "It is going to take some time to integrate system-wide, but Kane's work is a game-changer for system reliability."

Lee is quick to point out it is a team effort, not just within the engineering department, but staking, operations and IT. He says, "It is a collaborative process that I initiate in the lab, but requires input from those: building the lines, maintaining the lines and managing the communication systems that enable the automation, to make sure what is proposed not only works, but is configured the best way possible and does what is expected."

The next distribution automation project supporting OREMC's SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely) goal of greater reliability will be between the Crooked River and Hi-Hat Substations on the Laurel Island Parkway circuit in Kingsland. This combined with other engineering initiatives to update technology on breakers and in substations, all work together to enhance load capacity and system integrity to meet increasing demand to power the lives of OREMC consumer-members every day.



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## Getting SMART with Reliability

Keeping the lights on. In 2021 that is OREMC's primary mission. Eighty-two years ago, it was to "bring the lights," as Pearlie Mae Edwards of Folkston, Georgia, would say, to people in the rural farming communities of Southeast Georgia and Northeast Florida. However, the "internet of things" that keeps us connected at home, work and in-hand requires ready power. While the means of delivering power—poles and wires—has not changed over time, equipment and technology has evolved to make the distribution system smarter: more reliable and less susceptible to power disruptions.

"Obviously the goal is zero outages," says OREMC Engineer Kane Lee, "but the reality of zero power disruptions isn't realistic due to weather, wind, wildlife, trees and accidents (i.e., car hits a pole). Therefore, our focus shifts to reliability and having outages impact the fewest number of members for the shortest amount of time."

In 2018, OREMC went live with SCADA, a series of intelligent electronic devices (IED) installed in each of its 18 substations, combined with an integrated communications network, enabling system operators to recognize and assist with power restoration via remote operation of substation equipment. This was a first step toward initializing distribution automation. With distribution automation IEDs are installed along the power lines. Doing so sectionalizes the line by isolating the location of a fault (power disruption) to a certain section of line. This makes outage response time quicker, shortens the duration of the outage

and affects the fewest number of people.

Lee explains, "When SCADA sends a notification of a fault, the system operator can communicate to linemen a more specific location of the fault on the line, keeping them from having to patrol the whole line to locate the cause of the outage. From there the system operator can remotely reconfigure the flow of power such that only the meters within a specific line section are affected by the outage, not everyone along the line."

OREMC's first distribution automation project was just completed before the new year between the Hoboken and Nahunta substations on the power line from running from Caney Bay to Hickox. On January 2 it was put to the test when a fault occurred on Caney Bay Rd. Instead of the outage impacting 256 consumer-members, linemen were quickly able to locate the fault, the line was reconfigured to isolate it and the outage only affected 43 members.

"We understand no one wants an outage," acknowledges Lee, "but as this outage demonstrated, we were able to more quickly locate the outage, isolate it, impact significantly fewer members and restore power more quickly. Where we are headed with distribution automation is a self-healing system enabled by device-to-device communication that will detect a fault, self-isolate and reconfigure automatically."

*(Continued on Back Page)*



### Oven Roasted Chicken Thighs with Shallots and Scuppernongs

Recipe from Georgia Grown  
Serves 4

#### INGREDIENTS

- 2 ½ pounds Springer Mountain Farms bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs, or chicken drumsticks
- 2 teaspoons fresh thyme, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon apple cider or white wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 3 tablespoons of olive oil
- 1 pound of shallots, quartered, about 3 cups
- 1 cup of halved white muscadines (scuppernongs), seeds removed with the tip of a paring knife



#### Chicken Marinade

In a bowl, whisk mustard, garlic, thyme, and white wine vinegar together. Gradually stream in olive oil while whisking constantly until all the olive oil has been incorporated and the marinade is emulsified. Season with cracked black pepper. Place half of the marinade in a large bowl and set aside.

Pat chicken dry with paper towels. Gently loosen the skin of each piece of chicken and season liberally with salt underneath, and all over any exposed flesh. Use a spoon to dollop some of the remaining marinade underneath the skin and rub all over to coat thoroughly. Repeat with the rest of the chicken pieces and replace the skin back over each piece. Place on a sheet pan in the refrigerator, uncovered, and let marinate for at least 2 hours.

#### Instructions

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Place muscadines and shallots in the large bowl with the marinade, season with salt and toss to coat.

Transfer muscadine and shallot mixture to a 10 inch cast iron skillet, or a 9x13 inch casserole dish, and arrange in one evenly distributed layer. Place chicken pieces on top, skin side up, and bake for 1 hour, or until the internal temperature of the chicken reaches 165 degrees F on an instant read thermometer. Serve.

### Deuteronomy 32:4 King James Version

4He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.



## Church of the Month

### Sterling Church of God

Sunday School 9:45 a.m.  
(suspended during COVID)

Morning Service 10 a.m.

Wednesday Bible Study 7 p.m.

6670 New Jesup Hwy.  
Brunswick, GA 31523-4100  
912-265-3708

[sterlingcog.org](http://sterlingcog.org) and visit them on Facebook

Pastor: Larry Daughtry

To nominate your church, contact Dewayne Johns at 1-800-262-5131 Ext. 1143 or email [dewayne.johns@oremc.com](mailto:dewayne.johns@oremc.com).

“As the old year retires and a new one is born, we commit into the hands of our Creator the happenings of the past year and ask for direction and guidance in the new one. May He grant us His grace, His tranquility and His wisdom!” —Peggy Toney Horton

#### Statement of Nondiscrimination

Okefenokee Rural Electric Membership Corporation is an equal opportunity provider and employer. If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U. S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S. W., Washington, D. C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

## OREMC Member Spotlight: Johnny Appleseed Organic Beyond Organic: Getting Educated on Food Forestry

Food forest, permaculture, polyculture, sustainable agriculture and Climate Farming™. Not your everyday terminology when you think of the typical gardener or small, organic, hobby farmer. However, the team at Johnny Appleseed Organic™ aims to change that. They are working to put these lesser known practices that promote regenerative agriculture and support clean energy into play at their farming village under development in Folkston, Georgia.

Nestled in the Okefenokee Wildlife Refuge, Johnny Appleseed Organic has begun the process of transitioning the existing, traditional farm to a sustainable, residential teaching village pioneering Climate Farming. On this day I am trying to digest all the head-spinning information being shared with me by Head Climate Farmer Joshua Andersen, Horticulturalist Mikael Maynard and Communications Director Charles Goodin.

Their passion for what they are doing, and desire to share with and educate others, is electric. The reason for the conversation began with their desire to talk about their involvement in OREMC's Cooperative Solar program to power their operations. I understood as organic farmers their pursuit of green energy. What I was about to learn was the climate farming model goes so far beyond being organic—it sequesters carbon emissions, improves the environment and enriches the soil.

Josh explains that their initial focus is to improve the fertility of the soil by planting the right kind of trees and plants that will naturally enhance the topsoil through abscission—the natural shredding of leaves, nuts, flowers or seeds — and allowing it to decompose. This mimics what naturally happens in a forest; each layer (i.e. top or emergent layer, canopy, understory, shrub layer and ground

cover) has a role in “feeding” the other layers for the overall health of the whole forest. The same is true with Johnny Appleseed's syntropic or permaculture approach.

To further explain, Josh referenced his time in Jordan at the Greening of the Desert Project, where he became a student of permaculture design under Geoff Lawton, a world-renowned permaculture consultant. He suggested I Google it and I did. What I found is extraordinary.

In the Dead Sea Valley, 400 feet below sea level, is a river of lush, green vegetation growing out of what otherwise seems to be a barren, rock desert slope. It is a closed loop, self-sustaining system, meaning it feeds and nourishes itself.

Each plant and tree has a purpose: some provide soil hydration; some are for shade so other plants can grow and thrive to provide nitrogen for food; while still others are harvested for “chop and drop” natural mulching to help retain moisture in the root system of trees. No chemical pesticides, herbicides or fertilizer.

Shifting the focus back to Folkston, this is the vision for Johnny Appleseed, to establish a food forest through the implementation of a blend of regenerative, syntropic and permaculture best practices. First coined by Bill Mollison—an Australian biologist credited with developing the theory and practice of permaculture—permaculture is literally “conscious design and maintenance of agriculturally productive systems that are holistic and live in harmony with nature.”

Continue reading at [oremc.com/news](http://oremc.com/news).

JOHNNY  
APPLESEED  
ORGANIC™



### National Engineers Week—February 21-27

Across the globe, engineers' skills and abilities keep us safe and bring wonder to our lives through S.T.E.M. (science, technology, engineering and math). They are often the people working their magic behind the scenes to help us keep power flowing smoothly, safely and reliably. We are especially proud of our engineering team here at OREMC: Director of Engineering Darren Crews, Ernie Thomas, Kane Lee and James Allen.



OREMC is reverting back to modified operations for the foreseeable future. This means the majority of our staff are telecommuting, our line crews are working staggered shifts, and **our lobbies are closed to walk-in customer service. Drive-thru windows remain open.**

This decision was deemed the best option for the health and safety of our employees—so we remain ready to respond in the event of an outage or other emergency—given the rising infection rates of COVID-19, and the anticipated post-holiday spike health officials are warning about.

You can still connect with us online at [oremc.com](http://oremc.com), using the MyOREMC mobile app on your phone or by calling Customer Service at 800-262-5131. Our Customer Service Representatives are available from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday.

We appreciate your patience and understanding as we work to do our part to help prevent the spread of the virus, keep our employees healthy and be there when our communities need us most. **#PowerOn #Allinthisogether**

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Replace standard power strips with advanced power strips to save energy. Advanced power strips look like ordinary power strips, but they have built-in features that are designed to reduce the amount of energy used by standby electronics that consume energy even when they're not in use (also known as phantom load).

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) estimates that the average home loses \$200 annually to energy wasted by phantom load.

Source: [www.nrel.gov](http://www.nrel.gov)



## Joe Loomis Joins OREMC Board of Directors



Local businessman Joe Loomis has been appointed to the Okefenokee REMC Board of Directors to fill a vacancy left by an unfulfilled term for the District 8, Glynn County seat. Loomis and his wife, Amanda, are OREMC consumer-members residing in Brunswick. They own Sonny's BBQ in Kingsland, as well as Hometown Feed & Seed in Kingsland and Brunswick Feed & Seed in Sterling.

Loomis recalls his first interaction with OREMC was catering holiday meals at the Hilliard, Florida, office. He became a consumer-member himself when he rented a house while building one in Woodbine. Needing more space for their horses, they later moved and built their current home in Brunswick. Both he and Amanda grew up riding horses and passed the love on to their daughter, Haley, who barrel races. In addition to the restaurant and running the show circuit, the family's horses needed tending to daily. The feed and seed stores were born out of necessity, as Loomis struggled to find enough supply to keep his horses fed.

“With both the restaurant and the feed stores I've learned a lot along the way about budgeting, minimizing waste, safety and operational efficiencies,” notes Loomis. While he admits he has some things to learn about the cooperative form of business, he is looking forward to applying his broad business experience to his new role as an OREMC Board Director.

Read the full story at [oremc.com/news](http://oremc.com/news).