



Connection

Communicating local energy news to Four County Electric members

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative 

inside
Four County
Connection



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Get the Scoop

Four County EMC will be closed Thursday, Nov. 26 and Friday, Nov. 27, in observance of Thanksgiving. Have a safe and blessed holiday.



Capital Credit Refunds Exceed \$2.1 Million

Each year, the Four County EMC Board of Directors evaluates the financial condition of your cooperative to determine whether a refund is warranted. In September, the board authorized the retirement of over \$2.1 million in capital credits for 2020.

Eligible Four County members will receive refund checks in December. The refund represents 100% percent of each member's share of the remaining margins for 1996 and 10% of 2019. Any member whose share of the refunded margins is less than \$25.00 will not receive a check; instead, the amount will be credited to their electric bill in December.

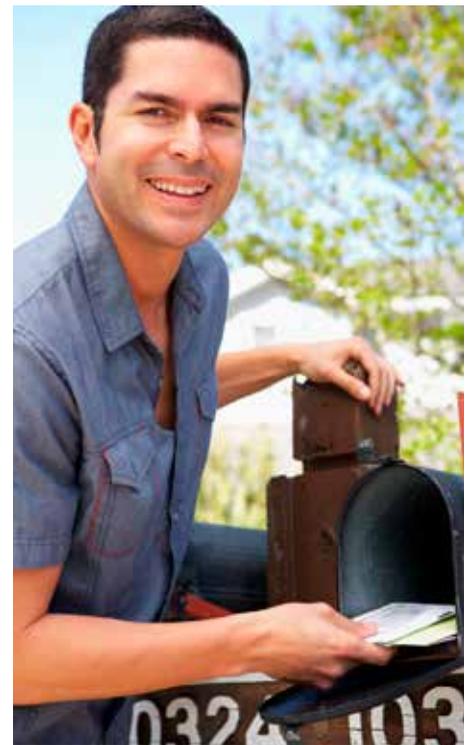
Each month when you pay for electric service, Four County uses that money to

“The amount in your capital credit account is determined by the total amount of the bills you paid during those years.”

The amount in your capital credit account is determined by the total amount of the bills you paid during those years.

Member-furnished capital is used mainly to upgrade the electric system which

pay expenses. At the end of each year, any money remaining above expenses is credited to patronage or capital accounts.



reduces the need to borrow funds from our bankers. The investment represents the member's equity in the cooperative. Over the years, Four County has made refunds of more than \$48 million to its members.



A Season of Gratitude

As we enter this season of Thanksgiving, Four County EMC is thankful for you, our members.

During a year of unforeseen challenges, all of us worked together in many different ways to exhibit the spirit of cooperation.

We want to extend a heartfelt thank you to all our members who helped us provide critical aid and support to our community in response to COVID-19. Through the generosity of those who participate in our Operation Round Up program, we awarded \$27,000 in grants to organizations providing COVID-19 related assistance to families in need. Organizations include Pender County Christian Services, Gateway Community

Church Outreach Food Program, Enlighten the World Community Assistance Program, Duplin Christian Outreach Ministries, Baptists on Mission, and Bladen Disaster Recovery Team.

And, we thank you for participating in innovative energy programs like Beat the Peak, Energy Alerts and Energy Star Rebates. These programs bring us together in new, innovative ways and expand our capabilities to continue to deliver reliable, affordable and sustainable power, now and for generations to come.

As a community-led cooperative, our mission is to build a brighter future for the people, businesses and communities we serve. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve you, and we couldn't achieve our mission without your support.

NC Co-ops Vote: Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 3

This year's Election Day will be held Tuesday, Nov. 3, and North Carolina voters will have the opportunity to vote for president, governor, members of Congress and state legislators, as well as other races.

In recognition of the importance of making your voice heard at the polls, North Carolina's electric cooperatives have launched NC Co-ops Vote, a non-partisan effort to provide relevant information to co-op members and encourage them to vote. Like NC Co-ops Vote on Facebook and follow them on Twitter using @NCCoopsVote and #NCCoopsVote #CoopsVote to learn more.

Voters are also encouraged to visit the North Carolina State Board of Elections at <https://vt.ncsbe.gov/RegLkup/> prior to Election Day to check voter registration details, find their Election Day polling place, and view election districts and a sample ballot (when available), among other information.

- ✓ CHECK YOUR VOTER REGISTRATION
- ✓ LEARN WHAT IS ON THE BALLOT
- ✓ MAKE A PLAN TO VOTE
- ✓ REMEMBER TO VOTE

CO-OPS VOTE
A PROGRAM OF AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES
WWW.VOTE.COOP

**ELECTION DAY
NOVEMBER 3RD, 2020**



Local Educators Receive Bright Ideas Grants

New creative learning projects are brightening this school year for students near you! This month, Four County EMC is awarding \$19,860 in Bright Ideas education grants to exceptional local teachers in Bladen, Duplin, Pender and Sampson counties. These grants are awarded each year to K-12 educators for innovative projects that enhance student learning.

Typically, these grants bring creative projects to life inside classrooms. However, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Four County EMC has been flexible with the types of projects awarded to ensure that all students are able to benefit, whether they are in the classroom or learning remotely. Grants are awarded for projects in all subject areas, such as music, art, history, reading, science, math, and more.

Since 1944, Four County EMC has awarded almost \$500,000 to creative projects benefiting local students. Statewide, North Carolina's 26 electric cooperatives have collectively awarded more than \$12.9 million for 12,359 projects benefiting 2.5 million students.

Follow Four County on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn to see how programs, such as Bright Ideas, are impacting local students and communities. To learn more about Bright Ideas grants, visit ncbrightideas.com and follow @NCBrightIdeas on Facebook and Twitter.

Comfort Loan Program

With winter approaching, now is a good time to ensure your home will be comfortable during the chilly winter months. To assist with this, Four County offers a Comfort Loan program that aids qualifying members in making energy improvements to their homes. This program gives homeowners a cost-effective way to purchase a high-efficiency heat pump, central air conditioning or to add insulation to their primary residence.

Depending upon the improvements, loans can be up to \$6,500 and members can take up to five years to pay off the low-interest loan.

In addition, rebates are available for any member who installs a 16 SEER or greater heat pump. The rebate is \$100 per ton and applies to new construction or retrofits.

For more information on Comfort Loans or rebates, please contact us at 1-888-368-7289. Four County EMC has offered this valuable program for 29 years and has provided over \$6 million to members for home energy improvements. The Comfort Loan program is one more example of how Four County is empowering the people and communities we serve.





Holiday Energy Savings

Here are some ways you can save while enjoying time with family and friends.

- Turn the thermostat down when you have guests—the extra warmth from extra bodies and cooking means everyone will still be comfortable.
- Choose the smallest appliance that will do the job—use a microwave or toaster oven instead of the oven whenever possible.
- Bake several dishes at the same time—your oven uses the same amount of electricity to heat a full oven or just one dish.
- Combine errands to reduce the number of trips you take—as the to-dos and shopping lists pile up, this will save you time and fuel.



CO-OP CONNECTIONS BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

The County Seat

The County Seat is one of downtown Burgaw’s newest businesses. They opened in early May, and while starting a business during the coronavirus pandemic sounds challenging, manager Kellie Jobin said that did not slow the store down. She said the people of Burgaw have come in and embraced the new boutique, which offers something for everyone.



The store carries women’s apparel from sizes 2 to 3x, jewelry,

handbags, shoes, wedding gifts, home décor and men’s clothing. Their brands include Kancan Jeans, L & B Plus Sizes, Umgee, L Love, Corky’s Shoes, Scout Bags, Mud Pie, Tyler Candles, Glamorous Wash, and made-in-NC merchandise including Audra Style Art & Accessories, Five Fins, and East Coast Waterfowl.

The County Seat is part of the Four County Co-op Connections program where Four County members save money when they shop locally. The store offers a 10% discount when you use your Co-op Connections card or mobile app. Go to fourcty.org/co-op-connections or use the Co-op Connections mobile app to view participating businesses. For more information or to request a card, call Four County at 888-368-7289.

In our September Facebook contest, Bertie Larimore of Watha identified the store from this photo and won a \$100 gift card to The County Seat. Congratulations Bertie!



Follow us on Facebook and get ready for the next contest!



November 30 is Small Business Saturday

We support our local communities when we support local businesses! And you can save money when shopping locally at participating Co-op Connections businesses. Show your Co-op Connections card or use the mobile app at the following local businesses and SAVE!



Bladen County

Cape Fear Vineyard & Winery, Elizabethtown
910-645-4291 | capefearwinery.com
10% off one entrée

Fisher's Women's & Men's Apparel, Elizabethtown
910-862-3718 | fishersapparel.com
15% off regularly priced item

Kinlaw Furniture & Appliances, Elizabethtown
910-862-3325
10% off appliances on Thursdays

Leinwand's Department Store, Elizabethtown
910-862-3772 | leinwands.com
15% off retail

Lu Mil Vineyard, Elizabethtown
910-862-5979 | lumilvineyard.com
10% off in gift shop

Ray's Furniture, Jewelry & Custom Framing, Elizabethtown
910-862-2586
10% off retail

Duplin County

Art of Hope, Fine Art & Custom Framing, Wallace
910-285-4940 | hopegsmith.com
10% off one in-store item

Duff's Café, Beulaville
910-298-9121
\$1 off meal purchase

Duplin Winery, Rose Hill and N. Myrtle Beach
800-774-9634 | duplinwinery.com
10% off wine purchases

Muddy Creek on Main Boutique, Beulaville
910-375-8053 | muddycreekonmain.com
10% off

R & S Auto and Truck Repair, Wallace
910-679-7191
randsautoandtruck.shop
10% off professional body services and paint and 10% off any mechanical service over \$50

The Glass Slipper Boutique, Wallace
910-665-1668
10% off on Wednesdays

The Pink Monkee Boutique & Gifts, Beulaville
910-298-6006
15% off on Wednesdays

Pender County

America's Best Choice Windows & More
910-443-2919 | abcwinwilmington.com
50% of all window accessories and glass upgrades with a 6-window minimum order

Brown Dog Coffee Co., Burgaw
910-259-3349 | browndogcoffeeco.com
15% off bagged coffee purchased in-store

Carolina Sisters Monograms & Boutique, Burgaw
910-663-5403 | carolinasisters.net
15% off on Tuesdays

Fat Daddy's Pizza, Burgaw
910-300-6350 | fatdaddysburgaw.com
10% off

House of Gains Gym & Physical Fitness Center, Burgaw
336-602-3094 | houseofgains.net
15% off one-on-one training for the first two months

Southern Chic's Treasures, Burgaw
910-789-5003
southernchicstresures.com
10% off

The County Seat Clothing, Jewelry, Home Décor, Burgaw
910-389-3921
10% off

The Garden Center at Johnson Nursery, Willard
800-624-8174 | johnson-nursery.com
10% off

The Old Farm Shed Rustic Décor & Clothing, Burgaw
910-465-7868 | oldfarmshed.com
10% off

Utopia Day Spa, Burgaw
910-300-6281
10% off any chemical service for hair

Tin City Western Wear, Wallace
910-285-2617
50% off EVERYTHING!



**Member Spotlight:
The Flag Man
of Bladen County**

Sergeant Gause has placed 167 flags at Bladen Memorial Gardens.

Oliver Gause was born and raised in Bladenboro. The son of hardworking mill workers, Oliver and his family lived in an area of town referred to as The Cotton Mill Hill. This “hill” was, in reality, a village containing company-owned houses that were home to hundreds of mill workers and their families. While hardworking and responsible people, the Hill residents were often looked down upon by the wealthier areas of town.

Growing up, Oliver admitted he did just enough to get by in school, but he knew in his gut, “I was going to grow up and do something.” In 1968, just days after graduating from Bladenboro High School, Oliver was drafted into the Army, leaving behind The Hill and Ellen, his high school sweetheart.

Like many of his peers, Oliver was sent to Vietnam, where he spent 12 months as an RTO (Radio Transmitter Operator). During the Vietnam War, odds were not on a radio operator’s side. Between the radio and the batteries, the radiomen carried an extra 30 pounds on their backs. The antenna added an additional problem. While they weren’t heavy, they did paint a target on the operator. Oliver said the enemy kept an eye out for those antennas because, “the enemy knew if the radioman was there, an officer was nearby. And if you



Sgt. Oliver Gause

take out the radioman, you remove the ability for the unit to communicate.”

Oliver finished his term in the military in 1970 as a Sergeant E-5 and married Ellen a few months later. Eventually, he attended Bladen Community College for law enforcement, where he excelled. Oliver worked for several law enforcement agencies during his career, ultimately becoming the Chief of Police in White Lake. He then served as the magistrate of Bladen County, where he retired in 2010.

In addition to his law enforcement career, Oliver served 12 years in the North Carolina National Guard and was Post Commander of VFW Post #8062. He now serves as a trustee for the VFW Post and is an active member of the Disabled American Veterans, Ch. 99.

As Memorial Day 2016 approached, Oliver, relaxing in his recliner, suddenly thought: “What can I do for those veterans who passed on and their families?” That was the beginning of Oliver’s mission to ensure all



veterans buried in Bladen County have an American Flag placed at their gravesite.

His friend, Layton Dowless, the “Tombstone Man” of Columbus County, helped him procure the government-issued markers and the journey began. Oliver started by visiting cemeteries, clipboard in hand, recording names and service information about every veteran he found. There are now over 2,000 graves in Bladen County marked with the American Flag and his search continues. He finds them

“Oliver said he keeps a steady supply of flags in his truck so he’s always ready to replace one when necessary.”

through obituaries, by word of mouth, the historical society and from walking the cemeteries or “grave-yarding” as he calls it. Documenting these veterans is a family project—Oliver brings home his handwritten notes and Ellen maintains the meticulous records in her spreadsheets and in the growing stack of binders.

Maintaining these 2,000 sites is an ongoing process. The flags only last 3–4 months, deteriorating from constant exposure to rain, sun, and wind. Oliver said he keeps a steady supply of flags in his truck so he’s always ready to replace one when necessary. The flags are relatively inexpensive, costing \$1.75 each, but it does add up. Funding for the flags comes from churches, businesses, and individuals.

Oliver said he was once approached by a woman who said, “Are you the flag man? If so, I want to give you some money because I appreciate what you’re doing.”

While there’s no doubt this project is a blessing to those families whose loved ones now have a flag flying proudly over their gravesite, Oliver says it is a constant blessing to him as well. While it’s difficult for him to speak about his time in Vietnam, he calls this project his therapy. “It is my way to honor those who gave everything.”

For information on how to donate to this program, please contact Janet Smith at Four County at 888-368-7289.



Honoring Veterans

On Wednesday, November 11, Americans will honor the millions of active-duty and former service members across the nation. We must never forget their dedication and the sacrifices they make to defend our country and protect our freedoms every day.

Four County EMC salutes and extends our sincere gratitude to those who have served or are currently serving as members of the United States Armed Forces.

Winning
from the editor
Recipe



Casserole Ingredients:

- 3 cups mashed sweet potatoes
- 1½ cups sugar
- 2 eggs
- ½ cup milk
- 1 tsp. vanilla

Topping Ingredients:

- ⅔ cup light brown sugar
- ⅓ cup flour
- 1 cup chopped pecans
- ⅓ cup butter

Watch "Cooking with Cam" on our Facebook page to see how this dish is made.

Sweet Potato Casserole



Preheat oven to 350 degrees and grease a 9x13 baking dish. Mix casserole ingredients together and pour into baking dish. For the topping, cut butter into the sugar, flour and nuts and add the mixture to the casserole. Bake for 30 minutes.



CHANGE
YOUR
CLOCKS

Four County Electric

Our Mission

To provide highly reliable electric service, innovative energy solutions and outstanding service to our Members and Communities.

Our Values

- Respect
- Integrity
- Trust
- Teamwork
- Commitment
- Excellence

Our Vision

To be an advocate for our Members by:

- Exceeding members' expectations
- Utilizing well trained, motivated employees
- Achieving excellence
- Operating efficiently
- Maintaining hometown values

Four County Connection
Janet Smith, Editor

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A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

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