



Connection

Communicating local energy news to Four County Electric members

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative 

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Four County
Connection



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Get the Scoop

Don't forget to spring forward on March 14! Set your clocks ahead by one hour.



Celebrating Agricultural Partnerships

Electric cooperatives like Four County EMC were founded by farmers, and we continue to work closely with our state's agricultural industry to build a brighter future for our rural communities. National Ag Day is March 23, but we are thankful every day to serve our agricultural members by helping them save money, improve efficiency and achieve sustainability goals.

It was with this in mind that Four County EMC and the rest of North Carolina's electric cooperatives recently developed a new initiative called BEST Solutions, which offers a wide range of customized electric tools and technologies related to Beneficial Electrification (BE) and Sustainable Technologies (ST) that can meet the needs of agricultural, commercial and industrial businesses.

New electric technologies are emerging rapidly and are making processes, devices and equipment cheaper, smarter and cleaner than ever. Using electricity instead of fossil fuels – what we call beneficial electrification – can yield benefits that include cost savings, higher productivity and reduced emissions. Examples include electric irrigation, electric equipment like forklifts and transportation refrigeration units and indoor agriculture.

Sustainable technologies are also growing in popularity as many farms and businesses strive to meet clean energy goals, and we can apply our expertise and resources to help you adopt the right technologies to meet your needs. Increased demand for low-carbon energy sources and a decline in the cost of solar and energy technologies are creating more options for businesses interested in utilizing diverse power



sources. Potential sustainable technology solutions include solar power and energy storage devices, microgrids that integrate renewable and conventional generation sources, and Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) programs.

All these technologies and solutions play a part in achieving our vision of a Brighter Future for the people, businesses and communities we serve. This vision includes a voluntary goal of reducing our carbon emissions by 50 percent from 2005 levels by 2030 and achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050, along with a continued commitment to delivering reliable, affordable electricity, investing in innovative solutions and technologies, and enriching our local communities.

Thank you again to our farmers and agricultural members for the vital ways you support our daily lives. We are proud to serve you and look forward to continuing to partner with you to enhance your operations and our communities.

BOARD SPOTLIGHT *by Janet Smith*

Eugene Jordan

“Your attitude, not your aptitude, will determine your altitude.”

This quote from motivational speaker, Zig Zigler, is one of Eugene Jordan’s favorite sayings.

These words have inspired him in the military, throughout his career, and as a Four County EMC board member, where he has served since 1999 and is the current Secretary/Treasurer.



Jordan and his brother and two sisters were born in Pender County and, although they moved around a lot when he was young, they always stayed local. His family’s roots in Pender County, specifically the Stag Park area, go back several generations. Jordan’s great-great-grandfather was a traveling clergyman, known as a circuit rider, who started Jordan’s Chapel United Methodist Church in Stag Park on the banks of Burgaw Creek. Jordan’s sister and several cousins still live near the family church. He remembers his family not having an automobile for many years but says they got along just fine. His father would catch a ride to work, and his grandfather would pick them up on Sunday mornings and take them all to the family church.

Jordan reflects on his family and says, “My dad was the best man I ever knew.” When Jordan was born, his father, an electrician and plumber, worked at the Wilmington shipyard. Jordan said his father received a deferment during WWII due to his occupation—the country’s greater need was for Jordan’s dad to stay at the shipyard, wiring ships for the military.

When Jordan turned 14, he started his first job working Saturdays at Wilson’s Food Town in Burgaw, and remembers earning \$7/day. After graduating from Burgaw High School, Jordan went to work for Carlisle Poultry & Egg, while at night, he attended UNC-Wilmington. Working a full-time job and carrying a full course load became too much, and Jordan quit school. Soon after, he received his invitation from the U.S. Army.

As soon as Jordan passed his physical, he joined the Naval Reserves so he could finish school while serving his country. After graduating from Miller-Motte College with a degree in accounting, Jordan went on active duty. The Vietnam War was raging, but Jordan was ready and willing to go, volunteering twice to go to Vietnam. The Navy, however, had other plans for Jordan. His first orders sent him to Morocco in North Africa. Jordan says it was a dangerous place at that time, and they couldn’t wear their uniforms in public. He remembers not speaking to his family for an entire year, but they could receive letters. Jordan recalls with a smile, “The sweetest thing

in the world was getting a letter from my mama. She would kiss the back of her letters with her lipstick, and I still have some of those letters to this day.”

Jordan’s next orders sent him to Jacksonville, FL, where he was attached to an attack squadron flying F100’s on carriers. Jordan’s job was to pay the squadron, which, at that time, was done in cash. Jordan would order \$40,000, which arrived on a little C-47 plane. Jordan laughs and says, “I was the man who paid them and, boy, those guys looked after me!”

When the squadron received orders for Vietnam, Jordan asked to go, but his duties required him to stay in Jacksonville with the pay records. Jordan says, “I enjoyed the military and have such respect for those who did go to Vietnam. They just didn’t choose me.” After three years of active duty, Jordan left the Navy as a petty officer, 2nd class, and continued to serve in the reserves for another eight years. He continues, “I love my country and it was an honor to serve it.”

Once Jordan left active duty, he returned to Carlisle Poultry & Eggs, selling eggs to military bases in the southeastern U.S. A friendly, outgoing person, he was a born salesman, and it wasn’t long before Farm Bureau Insurance Company in Burgaw lured him away to sell for them. Jordan remembers the insurance company didn’t offer training at that time, so he asked them how he was supposed to learn. Jordan says, “They told me all you have to do is run your mouth, and my answer was, sign me up!” The rest, as they say, is history. Jordan loved selling insur-



ance and dedicated himself to the job, staying with Farm Bureau for 35 years. Not only did he love it, but he was very good at it, winning numerous awards over the years. While he doesn't know if there's a connection, Jordan recalls interviewing the local Nationwide insurance salesman for a high school assignment. Jordan laughs and says, "I kept seeing people come in and give him money, and I thought, man, this is the kind of business I want to be in!"

While Jordan may be retired from the insurance industry, he has stayed active in the community he loves, serving on numerous boards and committees. In addition to representing western Pender County on the Four County EMC board, Jordan serves on

the boards of Pender County Soil & Water, Smart Start of Pender County, Black River Health Clinics, and the Pender County Voluntary Ag District.

When asked why he wanted to serve on the Four County board, Jordan answers, "Electricity is the most important commodity we have. From producing gasoline to running our computers, we all need electricity." He remembers the impact of a conversation he had with his grandmother when she was in her 80s. He asked her, "You've seen so much in your life—the automobile, two world wars, a man on the moon. What made the biggest impression? 'Electricity,' was her immediate response. She talked about how amazing it was when electricity came to the Stag Park area. She remembers pulling the chain that first time and seeing the light come on.

Jordan says it's rewarding to be a part of Four County EMC and he's very proud of everyone on the board. "Every Four County EMC board member works hard and has earned Director Gold Certification from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association," Jordan says. This training certification is the highest that can be achieved for a cooperative board. Jordan continues, "It is my duty to understand the industry so that I can do my best to represent the members and

“Electricity is the most important commodity we have. From producing gasoline to running our computers, we all need electricity.”

Four County's employees. After all, I'm a member too." Jordan talks about the outstanding programs offered by the cooperative. With Operation Round-Up, Bright Ideas education grants, youth leadership programs, and the REDLG program, which promotes rural economic development, Jordan says Four County is here for the community. He also has high praise for the employees, saying, "Four County's employees are the most dedicated of any organization I've been affiliated with. It's reflected throughout the ranks and I'm proud to work with all of them."

In his spare time, Jordan enjoys his farm, cooking, his horses, tinkering with his antique cars, and boating at Topsail Island. He says he had opportunities to leave Pender County over the years but he turned them all down. Jordan says he couldn't leave this area. "I've visited about every state in the U.S. and traveled all over the world and there's no place that compares to Southeastern North Carolina. We have it all right here – the ocean, rivers, hunting lands, and salt-of-the-earth people. I'm living where I want to live and doing what I love to do. Not many people can say that."



Jordan with his dog, Wolfe



Save Money While Doing Laundry

While it's no one's favorite activity, there's no denying the convenience of a washer and dryer in your home, especially when most of us do several loads each week.

And while it is cheaper per load to do your laundry at home, there are ways to save more money in your laundry room.

- Wait till you have a full load to wash. Your washer is using about the same amount of energy no matter the size of the load.
- Use the cold water setting so you're not spending money heating the water.
- Dryer balls help separate the clothes allowing more air to go through them, cutting drying time.
- Clean the lint out of your dryer between loads.
- When purchasing a washer or dryer, consider an ENERGY STAR version, which uses less energy than traditional models.

DID YOU KNOW? With documentation and proof of purchase of a qualified ENERGY STAR appliance, Four County members are eligible for a \$50 rebate per appliance! Call us at 888-368-7289 for more information.



Three Easy Ways to Save Energy in the Kitchen



1

When possible, cook with smaller countertop appliances.



2

Unplug gadgets and appliances that consume energy even when they're not in use.



3

Only run full loads when using the dishwasher.



CO-OP CONNECTIONS BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Westside Creations

Westside Creations, owned by Jason and Holli Sholar, is located on Main Street in downtown Wallace. The shop offers handmade and custom-designed wreaths, decorations, door hangers, drinkware, ornaments, and other home decor items.

Holli laughs and says, “We opened the shop back in April 2017 when Jason decided my crafting was taking up too much room in the house.” Holli runs the business while Jason is a transportation manager for Smithfield Foods.

Everything in the store is handmade and Holli says many of her items are custom-made. People will visit the store and see something they like but may want different wording or a different color theme, and Holli is happy to oblige. She keeps the shop stocked with Christmas ornaments and says they are a big seller all year-round.

Westside Creations, located at 132 W. Main Street in downtown Wallace, is open Wednesday–Saturday, 10:30 am–5:30 pm. You can also shop online at westsidecreationsnc.com.

Westside Creations is part of the Four County Co-op Connections program, where Four County members save money when they shop locally. The shop offers a 10% discount on Thursdays using 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.



Monica Rich (left) and owner Holli Sholar (right)

Shop local and save!

Monica Rich of Clinton identified the store in our January Facebook contest and won a \$100 gift card to Westside Creations. Congratulations Monica! Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter and get ready for the next contest!

Member Spotlight:

The Art of Eden Mills

by Janet Smith



“**W**hat do I want to do with my life?” Most teenagers ask themselves this question at some point. It’s the fortunate individuals who have a clear direction when they’re young. A blessed few not only know their passion and purpose but are doing it by the age of 19. Eden Mills is one of these people.

At the age of 19, Eden has an art studio in downtown Burgaw where she runs her business, Art of Eden. There, she creates her art on jewelry, ornaments, canvas, and more.

Eden says she spends at least 40 hours a week in her studio, working on commissioned work and creating items to sell on her website and Etsy store. Her biggest sellers are her ornaments, which she handpaints and can customize. Eden says the ornaments were an unexpected success, and she’s already received orders for next Christmas. Her commissioned paintings are a big hit as well – she’s already booked through spring.

An Early Passion Leads to Career

Raised in Burgaw, Eden lives at home with her parents and younger brother. While her brother has the athletic talent, Eden got her artistic abilities from their mom. Mrs. Mills was a graphic designer, attending the North Carolina School of the Arts and the Maryland Institute College of Art.

Growing up, Eden participated in the usual activities—dance and sports—but she was always drawing, creating fashion sketches, and doodling on her tests and schoolwork. Her talent wasn’t limited to drawing, however. At the age of 12, Eden was already selling



her hand-made pottery at local festivals. But Eden says she didn't take art seriously until high school. That's when she fell in love with painting.

In her junior year at Heide Trask High School, she told her art teacher, "I think I'm going to be an artist. I think it's what I'm called to do." Then, at church one Sunday, she felt God speak to her, urging her to go after what she wanted and get a studio. Shortly after that, she had her own little studio space above The Burgaw Antiqueplace on S. Wright Street. While it started as a place to store her art supplies, it quickly blossomed into much more.

She laughs and says her first commissioned painting was of her friend's truck, which led to other vehicle paintings. The owners posted photos of their truck paintings, and word spread. Eden says old-fashioned organic word-of-mouth is how she's obtained most of her commissions—from the truck paintings to custom painted ornaments to her murals. Three downtown Burgaw businesses proudly display Eden's hand-painted murals: The Old Farm Shed Boutique, Brown Dog Coffee Shop, and the Pender County Humane Society. She says The Brown Dog Coffee Shop is her biggest project to date. Laughing, she says, "That mural is 150 square feet, and it took me five days to complete!"

So what are the future plans for this talented young lady? She wants to complete her fine arts degree at Cape Fear Community College, expand her online presence, and get better at the marketing side of running a business. She has no plans to leave the area, though. She says, "I love Burgaw. It's not about the money; it's about putting yourself out there. I'm following my passion, and I love every second of it."

Visit Art of Eden at artofeden.net, etsy.com/shop/GardenArtofEden, facebook.com/artofedenmills and instagram.com/eeden.art/.

*Art of Eden is a participating business in the Co-op Connections program where cooperative members save money while supporting local businesses. Four County members save 15% when ordering from Eden's website or Etsy store. Use code **CONNECTIONS15** to receive the discount.*



How to Check Circuit Breakers

Parts of your home—including outlets and entire walls—can lose power when circuits are overloaded. When the power goes out to an area of your home, it's often just a temporary power surge. If your power goes out unexpectedly, consider checking your home's circuit breakers before calling to report an outage.

- Find your electrical panel or breaker box. Inside, you'll see black switches. These are the circuit breakers.
- A tripped circuit breaker may appear to be in the same position as the others, but it won't be pushed fully to the ON position.
- Find the affected breaker and flip it to the OFF position. If you don't think there is an electrical overload, try flipping it back to the ON position. If you do suspect an electrical overload, unplug any appliances or other items in the area not receiving power, then flip the breaker back to the ON position.
- Wait a few seconds, then slowly begin plugging in and turning on the electrical equipment to determine which item is causing the overload. If the circuit trips again, that item is causing the overload. Try moving it to a different outlet in your home.
- If the circuit continues to trip, or if it won't flip to the ON position, stop trying to reset the breaker. There may be a fault in the circuit, or the breaker is now defective and needs to be replaced.



Winning **Recipe**
from the editor



For the mashed potatoes:

- 2 8oz. bags of instant potatoes
- 4 tablespoons (½ stick) butter
- ¼ cup sour cream
- ¼ cup milk
- Salt & pepper to taste
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese

For the filling:

- 1lb. ground beef
- ½ yellow onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 can peas & carrots
- 1 can corn
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1 cup beef stock
- 1 teaspoon rosemary
- ½ teaspoon thyme

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Brown the ground beef on medium-high heat. Once cooked, drain excess fat from the pan. Add onions and cook with ground beef until they turn translucent. Add garlic,

(Cam) Shepherd's Pie



rosemary, thyme, can of peas and carrots, and can of corn and cook for 2–3 mins. Sprinkle flour on top and mix until combined. Stir in beef stock and cook uncovered on medium heat until the mixture has thickened. Prepare mashed potatoes. While the mixture is still hot, add sour cream, milk, salt and pepper until melted and combined. Pour mixture into a deep 9x13 dish. Spread the mashed potatoes on top and sprinkle cheese on top of the mashed potatoes. Bake for 30 minutes.

Watch this month's episode of Cooking with Cam to see Cameron Shepard make this month's recipe. Follow us on Facebook so you never miss an episode!

Four County Connection

Janet Smith, Editor

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Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Don't keep your refrigerator too cold. The Department of Energy recommends a temperature setting of 35 to 38 degrees for the fresh food compartment and zero degrees for the freezer. Make sure the refrigerator doors are sealed airtight to maximize efficiency.

Source: energy.gov

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

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

We believe in the Power of Human Connections

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