



# Connection

Communicating local energy news to Four County Electric members

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative 

inside  
Four County  
Connection



Help Us Find the Masked Thief.....p.C

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Four County EMC offices will be closed on Monday, July 4, in honor of Independence Day. Have a safe and happy holiday!

## Your Board of Directors Voting Procedures

We are happy to announce that the Annual Meeting will be held at the Duplin Events Center in October, with the exact date and time to be announced in the coming months. The election of three members to the Four County EMC Board of Directors will be held at the 2022 Annual Meeting.



In accordance with the Four County EMC bylaws, the terms of the following directors will expire this year:

- Bertice Lanier, East Pender
- Clayton Hollingsworth, At-Large
- Kenneth Thornton, Jr., East Bladen

The bylaws state that the Board of Directors are to appoint a nominating committee of at least ten (10) people, with the appointments made not less than forty-five (45) days, nor more than ninety (90) days before the annual membership meeting.

The nominating committee will meet and prepare a list of nominations for directors for each directorate district and post that list at least thirty (30) days before the annual membership meeting.

The bylaws state that any fifty (50) or more members, working together, may make additional nominations of quali-

fied candidates by filing a petition. The petition must be on Four County EMC provided forms and be presented to the Cooperative at least thirty (30) days prior to the annual meeting.

The nominating committee will meet on Thursday, August 4th, to establish a list of nominees for Directors whose terms expire this year. The list and official meeting notice will be published on the cooperatives cover wrap of the October 2022 edition of Carolina Country and mailed to all members at least ten (10) days prior to the Annual Membership Meeting in October. Four County EMC will also list the nominees on the corporate website at fourcty.org. These nominees will be presented for election at the Annual Membership Meeting.

There will be no separate mailing with this information. For more information, please call Four County EMC at 888-368-7289.

## Four County Welcomes Lineworker to Rose Hill District

**T**his past November, Hunter Hanchey started with Four County EMC at the Rose Hill district location. Hunter was born and raised in the North East community, near Wallace. After graduating from Wallace-Rose Hill High School, he went to Cape Fear Community College for lineworker training. He has three prior years of lineworker service experience before starting his career with FCEMC.



Rose Hill Operations Supervisor, Wayne Rich, commented that Hunter has an excellent work ethic and has been a great addition to his crew.

When he isn't working, you can find him hunting or fishing. Hunter is devoted to his community and has been on the North East Fire

Department for eight years. Hunter is always volunteering to help in any way he can.

When asked why he came to work at Four County EMC, Hunter stated, "This area is my home, and I want to keep the power on for my neighbors and my local community."



### Calling All Local Teachers: You Have a Chance to Win \$100 for Applying Early!

Apply for Bright Ideas Education Grants by Aug. 15 to have a chance to win one of five \$100 gift cards from the statewide drawing.

The Bright Ideas education grant program, offered by Four County EMC and the other 26 Electric Cooperatives in North Carolina, advances excellence in education and accelerates learning possibilities by providing funds for innovative

projects. Since the program started in 1994, educators have received millions in funding for around 13,000 projects benefiting millions of North Carolina students.

The final deadline to apply for a Bright Ideas grant of up to \$2,000 from Four County EMC is Sept. 15. To learn more about the program and to apply, visit [ncbrightideas.com](http://ncbrightideas.com).



## Thief Caught Stealing from Four County EMC's Corporate Location

A thief broke into Four County EMC's restricted area on Good Friday. Caught on camera in the Burgaw pole yard, this masked man attempted to steal copper wire located in multiple service trucks and other areas on the premises. Four County EMC officials were alerted about the intruder by notifications from motion detection cameras in the middle of the night while it was happening. Thanks to advanced technology, the cameras clearly displayed an individual jumping the barbed wire fence and searching each service truck for items to steal.

The Burgaw Police Department responded quickly, immediately searching and securing the Four County EMC location. The suspect fled the premises on foot. Leaving a vehicle behind in the parking lot, they knew the suspect must be nearby. After an extensive search, the masked man was taken into custody. He was apprehended walking down highway 53.

This instance is not the first time a thief has attempted to steal Four County EMC equipment. Thieves have tried to break into substations, trucks, and other secured structures. Breaking and entering is a crime and a hazard due to the electrical equipment on site.

CEO Don Gatton stated, "Breaking into a substation can be extremely dangerous due to the high-voltage equipment present. Stealing materials in operation can cause system outages and equipment failures. Touching such materials can be harmful and potentially cause death to those in the act." He went on to say that "the safety of our members and employees is our top priority.



We will not tolerate anyone breaking into or stealing from any Four County EMC location. We will ensure all safety measures are in place to deter such crimes from occurring."

Four County EMC offers a \$2,500 REWARD for any information

leading to the arrest and conviction of any individual responsible for breaking and entering, and stealing from any of our properties.

Please call 911 or Four County EMC immediately if any suspicious activity occurs around our electric systems or equipment.



### UTILITY POLES ARE NOT BULLETIN BOARDS

Using nails, staples & tacks to hang signs create dangerous obstacles for lineworkers. Their jobs are dangerous enough-help us keep them safe!

Do not post signs on utility poles!



**CO-OP CONNECTIONS BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT**

# Elizabeth's Pecans

**A**lan Bundy of Turkey, North Carolina, is known for his beautiful pecan trees and delicious, decadently soft pecan brittle. What started as his father's retirement dream plan grew into a lucrative family business. Named after his daughter, Elizabeth's Pecans should be a staple in every home, especially in North Carolina.



Captain Bobby F. Bundy, Alan's father, spent his life working hard. He was a member of the U.S. Naval Reserves, worked at NASA, and later as a contractor. In 1981, Mr. Bobby purchased the pecan farm to have something to do after he retired. He was a do-it-yourself kind of man and established Capt'n Bundy's Pecan Farm to keep him busy and his mind sharp.

In 1989, Mr. Bobby passed away. Alan knew he would keep the farm as it meant so much to his father. Growing up working on his uncle's farm dealing with peanuts and tobacco, Alan was no stranger to the hard labor.

### Growing the Family Business

With around 50 acres, much work goes into harvesting the pecans. Alan told us that the primary season to pick the pecans is in November. It takes approximately seven years to produce pecans if you properly take care of the trees. Alan's trees are pruned and fertilized to ensure the quality of the pecans are top-notch. The wind is not their friend; the trees are vulnerable in the fall due to the constantly changing weather conditions.

Back in the day, Alan and his wife, Maureen, loved going to the Flavor Shows the Department of Agriculture hosted at the Old Raleigh Convention Center. While there, they would snack on pralines that Maureen made. Everyone always talked about how they just loved her pralines. They kept going to the shows, and three or four years later, a friend asked why on earth they didn't sell the pralines at the show.



Alan's reply was simple, "I don't cook. I wouldn't know what to do." The

friend recommended he call The Livingstons, who cater events, they may be able to help with the process.

Alan took the friend's advice and dialed up the Livingstons. They helped without a second thought and didn't even charge him a dime. They worked to help Alan amp up his recipe to be able to make larger batches more efficiently. When Alan asked if there was anything he could do to repay them for their help and advice, they asked him to take an oven they had out of a warehouse they were selling. To Alan's surprise, the stove was brand new and all his.

Shortly after, Alan built a small kitchen and started making his wife's pralines. Alan and Maureen took those delicious morsels to the Christmas Show, and they were a hit. The only thing; many broken pieces of pecans were left after cracking them open to make the pralines, and they didn't want them to go to waste. One of the ladies working for Alan said he should make pecan brittle. Alan thought no way, pecan brittle is hard, and we have many customers who cannot eat stuff that hard. The team thought a little longer and decided to modify the traditional hard brittle into something softer.

### Pecan & Brittle Success

In the summer of 1998, much brittle was ruined to get the recipe just right. After the trial, error, and a lot of taste tests, they successfully made "soft brittle." Now it was time to put the pecan brittle to the test. They took samples to the show at the Old Raleigh Convention Center. By noon on the first day of the four-day show, they had completely sold out of the soft brittle. Alan and Maureen were at a loss for words. They called up their team, and those ladies who worked for Alan whipped him up more brittle and carried it to Raleigh to sell.

After the success of the pecan brittle, and with Alan still working his full-time job, he was busy. His wife had a successful career, and his daughter was growing into



quite the athlete. Between trying to live, working his day job, handling the farm, and being at all his daughter's athletic events, Alan knew he had to make a choice. In 2000, Alan left his day job to pursue the family business full-time.

Alan went to the Department of Agriculture seeking help to grow his family business. He was selling pecans to nine Kroger stores at that time, but he needed to do more to support his family. Alan met with the leader of Kroger and soon decided to become a distributor to make ends meet. Doing this would help enhance his sales as more



places would accept his product from an actual distributor.

He officially established Alans B&B Pecan Processors of N.C., Incorporated. By removing the backseats from his family van, he could deliver his pecans to different store locations, and pecan sales grew. Alan gained access at selling pecans on military bases, Winn-Dixie's,

and more Kroger locations. He now distributes to over 2,000 stores. You can now find his pecans at many Publix, Harris Teeter, Wegmans, Piggly Wiggly, Carlie C's, and Food Lion stores.

The business increased even more as recommendations came in for candy-coated brittle. "We burned a lot of money in chocolate, working it up to get the recipe we have now," Alan said. They use Guittard chocolate, the oldest American chocolate available on the market. This type of chocolate is easy to work with, it doesn't have that waxy taste or feel, and it enables them to offer various flavor options. Now they have many chocolate options, including regular, dark, white, raspberry-flavored, and key-lime. The candy is not available everywhere, so it's a rare North Carolina treat for those who visit the area.

### Support for Local Business

Surpassing his dreams, Alan now has a warehouse, distribution center and a candy store. Elizabeth's Pecan Store is

located in Turkey in the old Douglass Fertilizer Building. Tony Moore, the owner of the building, worked hard to renovate the building while also keeping some of the original structure and flooring.



Alan and Maureen love to shop locally, anyone who visits the store can tell this. All the merchandise available are items they've purchased from local stores in North Carolina. They sell anything from birdhouses, pillows, coasters, grits, tobacco leaf treys, BBQ sauces, pancake mix, pottery, etc. Everyone admires the humbleness this family has in supporting local businesses. When he runs out of his pecans, he even tries to buy from local growers and neighbors in the community with pecan trees.

Alan also helps local businesses with distributing their products. He is open to listening to sales pitches and provide assistance to move their products onto shelves. Initially centered around the pecan business, the distribution center is now a launching pad for small artisan businesses.

When asked about the future of the business, Alan admits he is tired. He looks forward to playing on the pecan farm rather than working hard for countless hours. His son-in-law, Brantley, and his only child, Elizabeth, will take over the farm when the time is right. Brantley will run the operation, and Elizabeth will lend a hand when needed. Alan told us that he knows the business will be in good hands with them taking over. They will keep that same small-town charm without the corporate attitude, as that is how it has always been.

*FCEMC members now receive a Co-op Connections discount! You can get 10% off all Elizabeth's Pecan Products when shopping at the Elizabeth's Pecan Products store at 32 Railroad Street in Turkey off Highway 24. Remember the discount is limited to Elizabeth's Pecan Products only. The Co-op Connection offer excludes the months of November and December, all other months are available for discount. Like their Facebook page and check out their website at [elizabethspecans.com](http://elizabethspecans.com) (use code PECANEMC to get 10% off Elizabeth's Pecan Products) to view all the tasty treats they have to offer!*





## CO-OP CONNECTIONS BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

# Tacos El Jefe



Young business owners and in-laws Jonathan Martinez and Jesele Fertner have known each other for at least a decade. Jesele is married to Jonathan's brother, Elias. Elias and Jesele stay busy with two children they adore. Jonathan works hard operating the Tacos El Jefe truck while studying part-time at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. Jesele markets the business and updates their locations on social media.

Born and raised in Burgaw, Jonathan loves his community. He is a youth leader for Christ Gospel Church of Burgaw, and plays the piano at the church. He has a big heart and loves to influence the church's youth to be ambitious and mentor them to do the right thing.

Ambition helped build a business. When COVID-19 hit, Jonathan began to have a lot of free time, and he wanted to put it to good use. Jonathan enjoyed cooking and made different assortments of taco combina-

tions. One thing led to another, and before he knew it, he was selling tacos right out of his home.

Jesele and Elias thought his recipes were delicious, which motivated him to take a more authentic approach. A few months ago, Elias helped Jonathan invest in a trailer that he pulls behind his 3500 black Chevrolet truck.

You can find the Tacos El Jefe trailer on Tuesdays and Thursdays at lunchtime, and Fridays from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. at the Christ Gospel Church of Burgaw, located on Fremont Street. They relocate near Mojotone at 137 Worth Beverage Drive in Burgaw on Thursday afternoons. On the weekends, they provide catering for private events. The team sets up the trailer for birthdays, weddings, schools and community events. They are open to serving their community in any way possible.

Tacos El Jefe recently held the grand opening of its first-ever restaurant in downtown Burgaw, located at 118 West Fremont Street. The restaurant offers take-out only, but plan to establish a dine-in option soon.

Jonathan stated that they take pride in "good quality, and consistency." When he makes a taco or any dish, it's made right each time. The ingredients are measured out to ensure the food always has the same taste. Some of the ingredients, such as Cilantro, are homegrown to ensure freshness. This consistency helps Jonathan provide good quality Mexican cuisine.



*Tacos El Jefe is now a Co-op Connections participant! Four County Electric members can save 10% on any taco of their choosing.*





# Pole Top & Bucket Rescue Training Company-Wide



**C**ooperatives adhere to a set of seven principles that guide all decisions made. One of those principles includes education, training, and information. Four County EMC provides education and training for their members, board of directors, and employees to contribute effectively to their development.

The cooperative provides education and training for members through avenues of community meetings, festivals, and other activities. Elected representatives are also trained to help better serve our members. All 10 of Four County EMC's board members have achieved the NRECA's gold director certification, which is a high honor.

Another critical group of individuals the cooperative sets out to train are those working so hard to keep your service reliable, our lineworkers. As an OSHA-mandated safety requirement, the lineworkers are trained to rescue an injured or stranded team member in the month of April.

Each lineworker must radio signal for help, put on pole climbing and safety equipment, climb up a 20-foot utility pole, and lower a mannequin weighing 170 pounds

down the pole. Once the mannequin is safely lowered to the ground, the lineworker must perform CPR. This process must be completed within five minutes for the individual to pass their training.

Four County EMC is exceptionally proud of each crew as every lineworker completed their training successfully. We all hope this training is never used in the field, but each line worker must be well equipped if one of their crew members needs assistance in this stressful, life-threatening situation. These lineworkers take their work seriously, and they train hard to ensure that they will be there for another when needed.

A special congratulations go to those who completed the training the fastest. The sooner life support is offered, the better chance the individual will survive this life-threatening situation.



*(Left to right, top to bottom): Brendan Bolio, Caleb Scholar, and Lee Bain posted the quickest times.*

Four County EMC's top three company-wide employees to complete their training in the quickest time-frame are Brendan Bolio (2:27.08) and Caleb Sholar (2:28.19), both from the Elizabethtown District; and Lee Bain (2:46.98) from the Burgaw District.

Winning  
from the editor  
Recipe



**Ingredients:**

- 2 heads of broccoli, chopped
- 1 red onion, diced
- 1 lb. bacon, cooked & chopped
- ½ cup sharp cheddar cheese, shredded
- ¼ cup raisins

**For the Dressing**

- 1 cup mayo
- ½ cup sugar
- ⅓ cup red wine vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. bacon fat

**Broccoli Salad**



Whisk all ingredients for the dressing until combined. Set aside.

In a large bowl, mix your salad ingredients together. Pour the dressing on top. Cover and sit in the fridge for at least four hours.

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

**The Deadline is Almost Here:  
Submit Your Pictures ASAP to be Featured  
in the 2023 Four County EMC Calendar**

Don't forget to submit your scenery, structure, or power line equipment photos that you have taken for the 2023 Four County EMS Calendar Photo Contest.

Please submit entries **no later than August 1** to [marketing@fourcty.org](mailto:marketing@fourcty.org). The 12 selected submissions will win a prize. Be sure to use the following guidelines:

- Photos must be taken in the Four County service area by a Four County member.
- Submitted photos must be a high-quality JPEG image.
- Only landscape (horizontal) photos will be considered.
- Scenic or nature photos only (no individuals in the photo).
- Up to three entries per member.



*"Just Passing Through" by Nola Croom, one of last year's selected photos.*

\*By submitting a photo entry to this contest, you are granting FCEMC permission to use the image in any and all of its publications, including internal and external newsletters and website entries, without payment. However, photo credit will be given. FCEMC reserves the right to disqualify any photo deemed inappropriate or offensive.

**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**

Published monthly by Four County Electric Membership Corporation, P.O. Box 667, Burgaw, NC 28425, as a service to our members.

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