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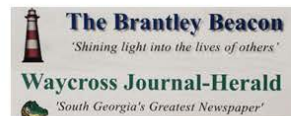
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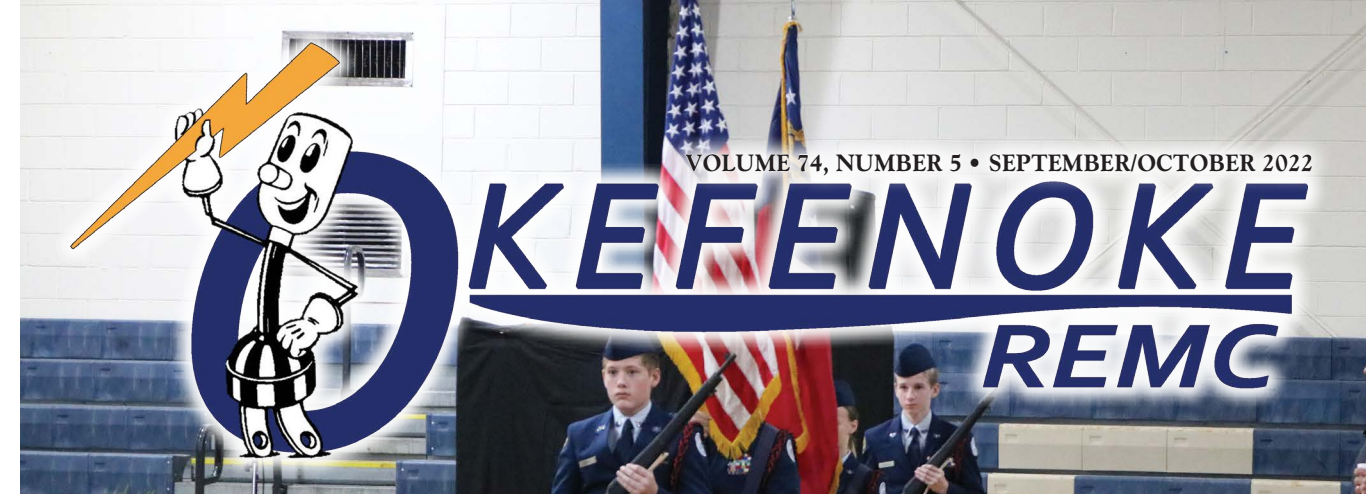
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83rd Annual Meeting Returns to In-Person

For the first time in two years, the Okefenoke REMC's Annual Meeting of Members was in-person at Brantley County High School in Nahunta, Georgia on Saturday, September 10.

Members rolled up through the gates of the school handing in their registration cards as they drove through to pick up door prizes, refreshments and then parked. Once inside there was an opportunity to visit with friends and family, OREMC employees, board directors and check out information tables about OREMC's Cooperative Solar Program, the OREMC Foundation, Ferst Readers and blood pressure checks offered by the Southeast Georgia Health System.

OREMC Board President Mr. Wayne Combs reviewed the challenges and opportunities OREMC has faced this past year with a major focus on system enhancement, reliability and capacity which included: rebuilding the Nahunta substation, upgrading lines on HWY 82 in Georgia and along Route 1 in Florida and constructing two new substations—Kinlaw in Kingsland and Kent in Callahan—which are expected to come online this fall. He also spoke about our residential growth and Youth Tour students finally returning to the nation's capital this past summer for the National Youth Leadership Experience.

But the year hasn't been without challenges, many stemming from COVID. Supply chain issues continue to cause many critical inventory items to be in short supply and/or with longer lead times for restocking. As this is a national issue, demand is greater than current suppliers can deliver causing pricing to increase. Couple that with surging natural gas prices and the need for wholesale power cost adjustment, and the affect on your power bill has not been insignificant. General Manager John Middleton explained how and why natural gas prices were affecting member bills and the continued market uncertainty for the foreseeable future (see story inside).

On a positive note, being in-person meant members had numerous chances to win one of several prizes or raffles. Most Senior Gentleman and Woman in attendance went to Jonathan Carter of Woodbine and Agnes Hickox of Hoboken, respectively. The two \$500 grand prize winners were David Dixson of Waynesville and Rhonda Swinea of Waycross. More than 90 raffle prizes were awarded including gift cards, televisions, small appliances and tool kits.



James 1:5

King James Version

⁵ If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

“**It's worth remembering that it is often the small steps, not the giant leaps, that bring about the most lasting change.**”

—Queen Elizabeth II



Focused on YOU.

Electric cooperatives were created to serve their members—by the community, for the community. Because we are a co-op, we're able to adapt to our communities' unique needs. This is the power of membership.

October is National Co-op Month

Focusing on Membership October is National Co-op Month

Fall is a busy time, and October is a particularly eventful month with school, community and sports activities in full swing. It's also when all cooperatives celebrate National Co-op Month.

When we say OREMC celebrates Co-op Month, it really means we are celebrating *you!* After all, our co-op wouldn't exist without you—our co-op founders, owners and members.

Our core business purpose is to serve as your electricity provider, but the larger mission of the co-op is to help make our corner of the world a better place. "Concern for community" is one of seven guiding principles that all co-ops share.

Similar to how our wires run through our service territory, our concern for community flows through all of our decisions—because being a co-op means being a responsible partner and good neighbor.

OREMC works to help our community thrive through initiatives led by our employees and local board that's comprised of neighbors who live right here in our

community. Because we're local, we understand our community's unique needs and strive to help meet them.

We're proud to support local youth through our Youth Tour and scholarship programs. We partner with education foundations and S.T.E.M. programs at area schools to enhance and advance educational opportunities. We also support other organizations such as Ferst Readers, Kingdom Care, Georgia Lions Camp for the Blind and The ARC. The OREMC Foundation, using unclaimed capital credits, also awards grants to qualifying organizations supporting community development, education, health and safety needs.

The word "cooperative" is close to "cooperation," meaning people working together towards a common goal—mutually benefitting one another and the larger community. That's the essence of the cooperative spirit. Our employees and member-elected board directors are invested in the communities in which they live and committed to powering your life every day.

Power Cost Adjustment Effective September 1

Effective on all billings beginning September 1, a power cost adjustment of \$.017022 per kWh went into effect. It included any August usage billed on or after September 1. Based on 1,000 kWh per month, for example, your OREMC monthly bill will increase by \$17.02. This is in addition to the \$.00781 power cost adjustment that was effective July 1.

We understand this is not welcome news. When we instituted the first power cost adjustment, the hope was that rising natural gas prices would level off. Instead, they have hit recent historic highs (see graph).

What has rising natural gas prices got to do with your power bill? As we explained in our August newsletter (and online at oremc.com/news/2022/06/oremc-rates-q-and-a), OREMC doesn't generate power, we buy it. When looking at our power supply mix, natural gas accounts for 57% of the power generated. Like supply and demand of any product, the price of power can go up or down based on market prices. Several factors are contributing to the increased natural gas prices: inflation, supply chain issues, workforce shortages and



the war in Ukraine. Since OREMC is a consumer-member owned cooperative and doesn't have stockholders, we don't mark up these costs for a profit. The cost is simply passed through to members via the power cost adjustment.

If you have trouble paying your OREMC bill, assistance is available. For a complete list of organizations that may be able to help visit oremc.com/energy-assistance. You can also call OREMC Member Services at 800-262-5131 to discuss billing and payment options.

OREMC Foundation Grant Awards

A total of \$30,300 in grant awards were presented to eight organizations by the Okefenokee REMC Foundation in the third quarter of 2022. Recipients included:

- Glynn County Extension/4-H
- Making A Difference Mentoring
- Miracle League of the Okefenokee
- Northeast Florida Fair Association, Inc.
- Southeastern Educational Services, Inc. (Faithworks)
- St. Marys Little Theater
- Ware Children's Initiative, Inc.
- Waycross Area Shelter for Abused Persons, Inc.

The OREMC Foundation is a launchpad for community development supporting education, community health and economic development in the six Georgia and two Florida counties the co-op serves. Currently, OREMC unclaimed capital credits are the primary funding source. The Foundation Trustees meet quarterly to review applications and make grant awards based on funds available. Visit oremc.com/foundation for specific grant deadlines, application and additional information on organizations eligible to apply.



Improve Your Cyber Security

In today's digital world, cyberattacks are unfortunately nothing new. When we hear about massive data breaches, it can feel overwhelming and lead us to think we're powerless as individuals to stop cyber criminals.

The truth is, there are several practical steps we can take to safeguard our devices and data. Here are four easy ways to boost your cyber security:

- **Enable multi-factor authentication.** Also known as two-step verification, multi-factor authentication adds a second step when logging into an account (to prove you're really you), which greatly increases the security of the account.
- **Use strong passwords and a password manager.** Remember, passwords are the "keys" to your personal home online. Your passwords should always be long, unique and complex.
- **Update software.** It may seem obvious, but regularly updating software is one of the easiest ways to keep your personal information secure.
- **Recognize and report phishing attacks.** Most phishing emails include offers that are too good to be true, an urgent or alarming tone, misspellings and poorly-crafted language, ambiguous greetings, strange requests or an email address that doesn't match the company it's coming from.

Visit www.staysafeonline.org for additional cybersecurity tips.



Church of the Month

Raybon Church of God of Prophecy

Sunday School 10 a.m.
Sunday Worship 11 a.m.
Wednesday Service 7 p.m.

Visit on Facebook @raybonchurch

12749 Hwy. 301 N. • Nabunta, GA 31553
Pastor Paul Rhoden

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