

BEACON



Amicalola Electric
Membership Corporation

“Owned By Those We Serve”

Vol 63 | Issue 3 | JUNE 2013

Are we holding your money?

Three months left to claim capital credit refunds

Sept. 1, 2013, marks the deadline to claim capital credit refunds from the period of 1986. If you had electric service with Amicalola EMC during this year, we may have a check waiting for you. The list of names can be found at www.amicalolaemc.com or in person at any Amicalola EMC office.

After Sept. 1, 2013, unclaimed funds will be distributed for charitable purposes in accordance with Georgia unclaimed property laws.



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Comments from the CEO

The power of cooperation

Cooperative businesses like ours are unique. We rise out of community needs. The not-for-profit, consumer-owned cooperative business model can be harnessed by farmers to get fair prices or credit unions to provide affordable financing.

Local farmers and businessmen used the cooperative business model to bring electricity and hope to our area more than 70 years ago. Think about the impact electricity made in rural areas back then. Women lived longer not having to work dusk to dawn at backbreaking chores. Farm production jumped. Things like running water, lights and storing food were possible—and with those leaps, our ancestors' lives were given new challenges and opportunities.

We are still finding ways to use the power of cooperation to make life better for us all. The Operation Round Up® program continues to provide basic necessities for thousands of needy individuals and select 501(c)(3) charitable organizations. Over the past 14 years, by “rounding-up” their bills, thousands of Amicalola EMC members have allowed the Amicalola EMC Trust board to put more than \$1.6 million into our communities. Every penny contributed becomes a donation, and your pennies make the difference between individuals who qualify hav-

ing their basic needs met or not. I cannot think of any other charitable program

where mere pennies can equal the results of the Operation Round Up program. Learn how you can help make a difference in someone's life, and have a shot at a \$100 gift card for yourself, in the article on page 22C.

Summer is here and with it usually comes higher electric bills, but don't let your energy use put a drain on your budget. We've outlined some easy and effective ways to stop summer energy drains in our expanded online version of this issue of “The Beacon” at www.amicalolaemc.com.

Teachers get ready! Our BRIGHT IDEAS teacher grant program is back, and we are looking for your bright ideas. Teacher grants totaled more than \$40,000 in 2012, and we're ready to do the same for 2013. Find details on how to apply and earn cash for your classroom projects on page 22B.

In this issue, our business spotlight continues, and we visit Cherokee County, “Where Metro Meets the Mountains.” See how the entrepreneurs at Sweetwater Growers, Dennis Dault and sons James and Scott, took a small greenhouse, tripled the size and



Charles Gibson
President/CEO
Amicalola EMC

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Community Spotlight

BRIGHT IDEAS is returning Aug. 1, 2013

Beginning Aug. 1, Amicalola EMC is once again looking for BRIGHT IDEAS from area teachers. In its fourth year, Amicalola EMC's teacher grant competition is on the



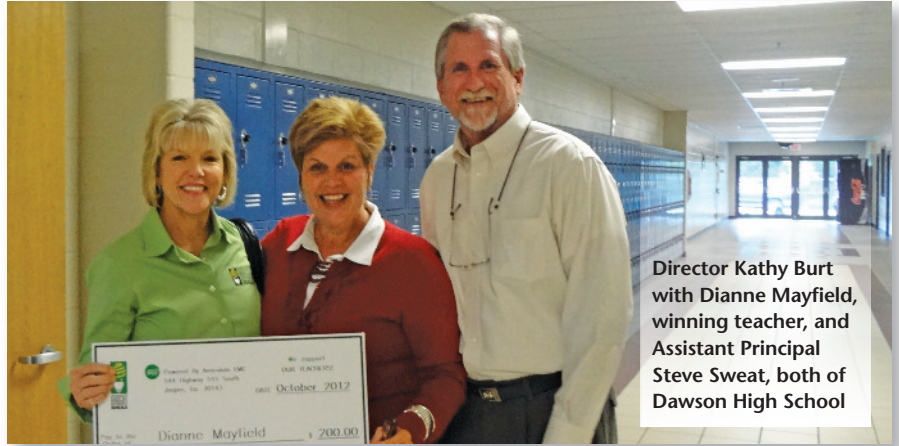
BRIGHT IDEAS

hunt for teachers who provide a creative learning experience for students, above and beyond a typical classroom experience.

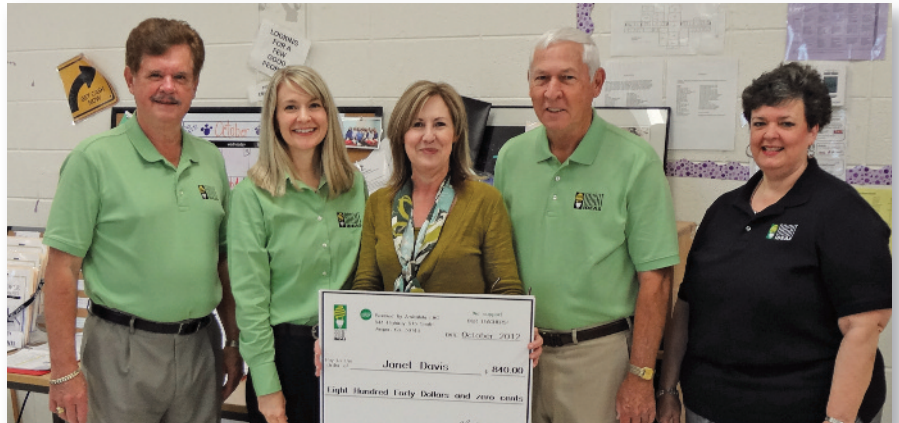
Georgia certified teachers at elementary, middle, high schools and private schools in the Amicalola EMC service area are eligible to

enter. Early bird deadline is Aug. 30; final deadline to enter is Sept. 13. BRIGHT IDEAS is funded using unclaimed property in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 44-12-236.

Complete program details and online applications will be available Aug. 1, 2013, at www.amicalolaemc.com.



Director Kathy Burt with Dianne Mayfield, winning teacher, and Assistant Principal Steve Sweat, both of Dawson High School



Bright Ideas winner Janet Davis, of Gilmer High School, holding check, is shown here with Amicalola EMC representatives: from left, Director David Pierce, Amicalola EMC Board; Kim Martin; Randall Ponder, Amicalola EMC Board Secretary-Treasurer; and Penelope Marshall, Senior VP, Amicalola EMC.

Process for electing directors

Members of Amicalola Electric Membership Corporation (AEMC) are reminded that nominations for the AEMC Board of Directors will be posted July 7, 2013. The Nominating Committee's recommendations for the board will be posted on the bulletin board at the main office in Jasper, Ga., and on the AEMC website.

The Amicalola EMC Bylaws state "that the committee on nominations shall make at least one nomination for each post for director to be voted on at the annual meeting. The committee shall prepare and post at the principal office of the cooperative at least ninety (90) days (July 7, 2013) before the meeting, a list of

nominations for directors, but any fifteen (15) or more members may make other nominations in writing over their signatures no less than sixty (60) days (Aug. 6, 2013) prior to the meeting, and the secretary shall post the same at the same place where the list of nominations made by the committee is posted."

Small change is changing lives through Operation Round Up

Join now and you could win a \$100 gift card

Imagine purchasing a tank of propane gas for an elderly low-income person using the pennies in your pocket. It doesn't seem possible, does it? But it is when you combine your pennies with those of thousands of other Amicalola EMC members who contribute monthly to the Operation Round Up program.

By investing only pennies a month, the members of Amicalola



EMC have collectively donated more than \$1.6 million to needy individuals and certain 501(c)(3) charities throughout our service area since 1999.

Complete and return the form below and watch your small change

begin to change lives through Operation Round Up. You won't even miss those pennies.



(CLIP AND RETURN)

Name _____

Account number _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ ZIP _____ Phone number _____

Return this form with your payment and you could win a \$100 gift card for yourself. Deadline to enter is July 31, 2013. The winner will be announced by Aug. 15, 2013.

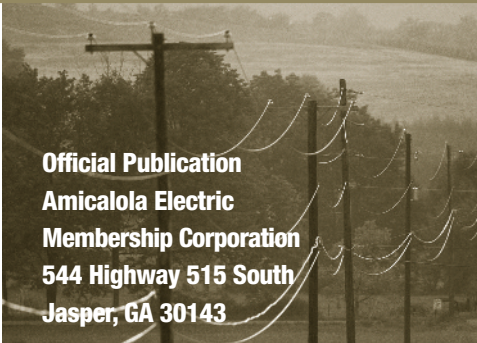
Comments from the CEO, *Continued from page 22A*

turned it into a thriving business. To learn more about Sweetwater Growers and their natural approach to growing herbs and greens, see page 22D.

Cooperatives aren't like other businesses in our community. At Amicalola EMC, we are not focused on making a profit. At our core, we exist to provide electricity at rates you can afford and work toward the sustainable development of our communities. Through

programs like Bright Ideas, Operation Round Up and others, we continue to provide area residents and organizations with the resources to build and strengthen our communities.

Remember to honor the fathers who keep our community strong, too, as we celebrate Father's Day 2013. We're proud to be your electric provider and proud of the positive impact we continue to make.



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Membership Corporation
544 Highway 515 South
Jasper, GA 30143

Charles L. Gibson, *President*

Board of Directors

- Charles R. Fendley, *Chairman*Post #3
- John H. Bennett, Jr., *Vice Chairman* ...Post #6
- Randall Ponder, *Sec.-Treas.*Post #1
- James H. BryanPost #4
- Kathy BurtPost #7
- Travis D. ClinePost #5
- Wm. Leon DavisPost #9
- David J. PiercePost #2
- Reggie StowersPost #8

TELEPHONE NUMBERS TO CALL IN CASE OF POWER INTERRUPTIONS:

Outage Hotlines

- 706-253-0359
- 706-276-0359
- 706-864-0359

Amicalola Electric Membership Corporation

544 Hwy. 515 South
 Jasper, GA 30143
 Telephone: 706-253-5200

www.amicalolaemc.com

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 Dahlonega, GA 30533
 706-864-7979

Northern District Office

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 Ellijay, GA 30540
 706-276-2362

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 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Closed on Saturday, Sunday, and holidays

Beacon Editor:

Stacey Godfrey Fields, CCC

Shining a light on local entrepreneurs

Third in a series of articles highlighting local businesses, this issue spotlights Cherokee County, a father and two sons and how timing is everything.

Sometimes even the smallest coincidences result in life-changing events. Back in 2003, when Dennis Dault and son Scott randomly bumped into a greenhouse owner, an hour or two difference in their timing might have changed everything. Construction workers by trade, the Daults began work remodeling a nearby greenhouse, bartering construction work for part ownership of the business, and eventually became sole owners of Sweetwater Growers in Cherokee County. Dennis, along with sons Scott and James, turned the business into the vibrant, successful entrepreneurship it is today.

Buying local is much more than a farm-to-table dining experience. Buying local is a way to ensure a higher quality of food for your family, as well as a way to strengthen the local economy.

Using hydroponics, a fancy word for growing plants with nutrient-rich



Scott Dault and Stacey Fields, of Amicalola EMC, display fresh basil ready for the market.



Some of the hardest working members of the Sweetwater Growers team are more than 1,000 ladybugs released each week to naturally control insects.

water rather than soil, Sweetwater Growers produces herbs and micro greens that are handpicked daily, packaged on site at a

GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) certified facility and delivered within 48 hours of harvest to ensure freshness. The next time you are enjoying a steak at an upscale restaurant, pay close attention to the garnish. It just might be the fresh, natural micro greens from Sweetwater Growers. They also sell live herbs, with the root bulb still attached, so the consumer can literally harvest the plant as they eat it. It doesn't get any fresher than that.

Sweetwater Growers has two growing facilities: Bowersville, near Lake Hartwell, with 19 employees, and the Cherokee County facility, with 9. If you've never walked into a greenhouse filled with fresh, live basil, you should call them today at 770-331-0667 to schedule a tour. It is a beautiful sight and the smell is amazing. It makes you want to grab some plants, run home and start

cooking up something fresh and delicious. And with the recipes they provide right on the side of the packaging, that is much easier than you would think.

For tips on how to care for your live basil and some delicious recipes, visit www.sweetwatergrowers.com, or find them at www.facebook.com/SweetH2OGrowers.

Members of the Georgia Grown initiative, Sweetwater Growers products may be found in your local grocery store. In addition to fresh, live herbs such as basil and dill, you can also find bibb lettuce and a delicious assortment of naturally infused olive oils. But you won't find them on the regular shelf; remember to look in the produce section for all the Sweetwater Growers products. If you don't find them there, ask for them. Scott, James and Dennis would want you to!

Named for the Cherokee Indians who once inhabited the area, Cherokee County has many unique and locally owned businesses. For more information, visit www.cherokeechamber.com.



A wide-angle view of the Sweetwater greenhouse shows thriving basil plants.

Stop summer energy drains

Summer vacation can be a recipe for high electric bills if kids are home all day. Try these tips to keep costs down when the temperature goes up.

Give your air-conditioning unit a break. More people in the house, doors hanging open from the last trip to play outside, plus high temps equal an air-conditioning unit that has to work harder to cool the house. Adjust settings to maximize efficiency, such as using the “auto” function, instead of keeping the fan running all the time.

Change your air filter monthly, especially during winter and summer. At a minimum, change the filter every three months. A dirty filter will slow down air flow and make the system work harder, wasting energy. A clean filter will also prevent dust and dirt from building up in the system—leading to expensive maintenance and/or early system failure.



Manage your thermostat. Through proper use of pre-programmed settings, a programmable thermostat can save you about \$180 every year in energy costs. Set your thermostat as high as you can while maintaining your comfort level—the smaller the difference between indoor air and the great outdoors, the lower your cooling costs will be. Make sure to rearrange your furniture so appliances that put out a lot of heat aren't near the thermostat.



Avoid 'phantom' load. Get your family in the habit of turning electronics off and on using power strips. Some electronics and appliances draw power even while turned off. A good indicator of this—called “phantom load”—is a light on the device that stays on all the time. Phantom load will add a few watt-hours to energy consumption, but a few watt-hours on each of your many electronic devices adds up.



Don't own your home? You can still save! Even if you rent an apartment, townhouse or a home, you can make a big difference, too! Visit www.energystar.gov for the top 10 renter tips to save energy. If there are things you can't change on your own, share these tips and encourage your landlord to help you make a change for the better.

Close the shades. Last, but certainly not least, remember to close your window shades and drapes to keep out the heat of the summer sun.

As you work this summer to stop energy drains, don't forget about Amicalola EMC's free energy audits. An energy efficiency expert can help you determine the right steps to save energy in your home. You can also visit TogetherWeSave.com or EnergyStar.gov to find out how little measures around the house add up to big energy savings.

Sources: U.S. Department of Energy, Cooperative Research Network; ENERGYSTAR