

# BEACON

## *Comments from the CEO*



**Todd Payne**  
President/CEO  
Amicalola EMC

### **Amicalola EMC's rates remain competitive during record inflation**

It should come as no surprise that according to data released by the Bureau of Labor and Statistics, Georgians are paying more money today for the same amount of goods and services. The Joint Economic Committee used the September 2024 Consumer Price Index to estimate that the average Georgia household spends \$1,078 more each month compared to January 2021. Overall, the average household in Georgia has spent an additional \$29,580 due to inflation since January 2021.

Energy, however, is one of those services that has remained relatively cost-stable even amidst rising inflation. As a member-owned cooperative, Amicalola EMC does everything in our power to ensure your costs

stay reasonable and that electricity is reliable for our members. It's not always easy, as there are several factors beyond inflation that impact the price of electricity.

The cost of electricity can fluctuate due to supply and demand, infrastructure investment, maintenance and operational expenses. Weather patterns also contribute, affecting both demand and generation capabilities, with extreme conditions leading to heightened energy use or disruptions. Government policies, such as subsidies for renewable energy or taxes and regulations on emissions, shape electricity costs as well. Amicalola EMC considers all these aspects when adjusting rates, and because we're a cooperative, we consider the impact of

those costs on our members as well.

We have been analyzing the impacts and expect a change in our rates for early 2025. Amicalola EMC's rates have been competitive and will continue to stack up well against the other electricity providers in the region.

As our community continues to rely on electricity for nearly everything in our homes, schools, hospitals and businesses, we need it to be reliable and affordable. You can be assured, Amicalola EMC always puts you top of mind and works each day to ensure electricity remains the best value for your money.

## **Retirements**

**C**ongratulations to Stacey Fields and Barry Satterfield on their retirements. Thank you for your years of dedicated service to the members of Amicalola EMC.



**Stacey Fields**  
*37 years of service*



**Barry Satterfield**  
*6 years of service*

## 2025 scholarship and Washington Youth Tour deadline

It's scholarship time! The deadline to apply for the 2025 Amicalola EMC scholarship (high school seniors) and the 2025 Washington Youth Tour (high school juniors) is Jan. 31, 2025. Students must live in an Amicalola EMC household to be eligible. To apply, go to [www.amicalolaemc.com](http://www.amicalolaemc.com), Community.

For more information, please call Kadie Shaw at 706-253-5285.



## AEMC Board of Directors return \$2.6 million in capital credit refunds

*Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of the cooperative.*



In September, our board of directors approved a refund of more than \$2.6 million for members who had service during the year 2003. From left: Amicalola EMC Board Members Reggie Stowers, Vice Chairman Travis Cline, Shelley Cantrell, David Pierce, Chairman Charles Fendley, CEO Todd Payne, Edward Tucker, Attorney Phillip Landrum, Kathy Burt, Secretary-Treasurer Randall Ponder and John Bennett.

## Annual Meeting wrap-up

The 83rd Annual Meeting of the Amicalola EMC membership was held on Saturday, Oct. 5, 2024. More than 200 members and guests were in attendance.

The entertainment was provided by Daily Bread, a local Southern gospel trio. Attendees received gift bags and snacks. Many lucky members won prizes.

The employees who were recognized for 30 years of service or more were Johnny Parris (30 years) and Tony Helton (35 years). John H. Bennett Jr. was recognized for 40 years of service to the board of directors. All other employee service awards will be presented at a later time.

Board members David J. Pierce (Post 2—Gilmer/Fannin counties), Travis D. Cline (Post 5—Cherokee County) and Reggie Stowers (Post 8—Dawson/Lumpkin counties) were re-elected.



Steve Chance was the lucky winner of the grand prize at this year's annual meeting.



# Amicalola EMC donates \$638,000 for education and community development

**A**s a not-for-profit cooperative, Amicalola EMC's business model differs from most companies. Once the cooperative covers essential operating expenses, any remaining monies are returned to the members in the form of capital credits. In 2024 our members received over \$2.6 million in capital credits refunds.

Sometimes these funds go unclaimed, and after a mandatory five-year waiting period, we can spend them locally in accordance with Georgia's unclaimed property laws. Prior to 2005, these funds would have to be returned to the State Department of Revenue. Now, thanks to a change in state law, we can help our local communities with donations for education, economic development and some 501(c)(3) charities.

In 2024, grants awarded from these unclaimed funds totaled more than \$600,000 and went toward funding high school scholarships, Bright Ideas teacher grants, local fire depart-



Amy Palmer from The Place of Forsyth accepts an unclaimed capital credits donation from CEO Todd Payne at our Eastern District Office in Dahlonega.



Representatives from Cherokee and Pickens Chamber of Commerce offices, development authorities, food pantries and other organizations received donations provided by unclaimed property funds.



CEO Todd Payne, left, and CFO Penelope Marshall, far right, along with members of the Board of Directors David Pierce and Randall Ponder, present Principal Mary Pierce with unclaimed capital credits funds to benefit North Georgia Christian Academy.

ment projects, economic development projects, chamber of commerce initiatives, local rotary club projects and to help stock local food pantries. CARES in Pickens County received a \$20,000 donation from Amicalola EMC and a matching \$10,000 donation from CoBank, a national cooperative bank

serving industries across rural America.

As a member-owner of Amicalola EMC, you can take pride in the cooperative's commitment to delivering safe, reliable and affordable electricity, while also fostering development and enhancing the quality of life for local residents.

# Do we have your number?

No one likes power outages, but when they do occur, reporting it through our automated outage reporting system is the fastest way to get your information to us. Having your primary telephone number in our system means reporting it will go faster and smoother. By calling from the primary number listed on your Amicalola EMC account, the outage system will automatically identify your account.

Update your account information today, using one of the following:

- Use our member portal at [www.amicalolaemc.com](http://www.amicalolaemc.com), Account Log In (upper right), then sign in (or create an account).
- Call your local office at 706-253-5200, 706-276-2362 or 706-864-7979 and speak to a member service representative.
- Stop by any of our office locations.
- Email your information to [memberservice@amicalolaemc.com](mailto:memberservice@amicalolaemc.com). Be sure to include your account number for verification.



## Holiday office closings

Our offices will be closed on Tuesday, Dec. 24, and Wednesday, Dec. 25, so our employees may celebrate Christmas with their families. We will be closed on Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2025, for New Year's Day. Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

## Holiday fire safety tips from Gilmer County Fire and Rescue and Pickens County Fire and Rescue

Gilmer Fire & Rescue and Pickens Fire and Rescue would like to wish everyone a happy holiday season and share some important fire safety tips to help keep your family safe during the holidays.

- Check to make sure your smoke alarms are working. Change batteries twice a year, and replace smoke detectors every 10 years.
- Do not overload electrical outlets.
- Use battery-operated candles.
- Check decorations for a certification label.
- Keep combustibles at least 3 feet away from heat sources.
- Never leave a fire or heat source unattended.
- Properly remove ashes from a fireplace or wood heating unit by placing in a metal container.



DO NOT place in a combustible container like a plastic bucket or cardboard box.

- Never use gas- or charcoal-fueled devices inside.
- Turn off, unplug or extinguish all decorations when leaving or going to sleep.
- Close doors while sleeping.

We wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!