

# BEACON

 Amicalola Electric  
Membership Corporation

*"Owned By Those We Serve"*

Vol 75 | Issue 5 | DECEMBER 2025



## Holiday office closings

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Our offices will be closed Wednesday, Dec. 24, and Thursday, Dec. 25, so our employees may celebrate Christmas with their families. We will be closed on Thursday, Jan. 1, 2026, for New Year's Day. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

## Comments from the CEO

### The season of giving



Todd Payne  
President/CEO  
Amicalola EMC

As the crisp air of fall gives way to the warmth of the holiday season, we're reminded that this is truly the season of giving. It's a time for gratitude, generosity and looking out for one another—and at Amicalola EMC, that's something we take to heart year-round.

As a not-for-profit electric cooperative, our commitment will always be to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity, but we're also here to make life better for the people we serve—our members, our neighbors and our friends. Over the years, we've faced challenges together, and every time, our co-op family has stepped up. We've come together to support those in need, to keep our community strong and to build something better for the future.

That spirit is reflected in programs like Operation Round Up, where members voluntarily round up their electric bills to the nearest dollar. Thanks to your generosity in 2025, we were able to provide \$90,680 to help families and organi-

zations in our service area. A little spare change from many members adds up to make a big impact.

Because we care deeply about safety, we also spend time visiting schools throughout the communities we serve, holding demonstrations and teaching folks of all ages how to stay safe around electricity. We believe knowledge is a gift too—and we love sharing it.

You'll also find our team out in the community beyond work—coaching youth sports, volunteering at local events, serving on nonprofit boards and partnering with our chamber of commerce to keep our local economy strong. At Amicalola EMC, we believe concern for community is more than a value—it's the heart of who we are. And during this season of giving, we're especially grateful to be part of such a caring, generous community. From all of us at the co-op, we wish you and your loved ones a joyful, safe and bright holiday season.



## 2026 Scholarship and Washington Youth Tour deadlines

It's scholarship time! The deadline to apply for the 2026 Amicalola EMC scholarship (high school seniors) and the 2026 Washington Youth Tour (high school juniors) is Jan. 31, 2026. Students must live in an Amicalola EMC household to be eligible. To apply, go to [www.amicalolaemc.com](http://www.amicalolaemc.com), Community, Scholarships. For more information, please call Kadie Shaw at 706-253-5285.



2025 Washington Youth Tour delegates, Cash Williams and Gracie Gaitanoglou, helped out at this year's annual meeting.



## Local Teachers receive \$46,720 in Bright Ideas grants!



Sixty-nine teachers across our service area recently got an exciting surprise! Amicalola EMC board members and staff personally delivered big checks to this year's Bright Ideas grant winners—recognizing their creativity, innovation and dedication to students.

To date, the Bright Ideas teacher grant program has funded 1,084 projects, awarding a total of \$721,194.33. We are proud to support our local educators and the incredible work they do to inspire and empower students every day.



Suzanne Hardison from Hill City Elementary School won a Bright Ideas grant this October and plans to purchase a 3D printer for students to use!



Hollie Kiker from Clear Creek Elementary School is ready to implement some "Crazy Cardio" with her 2025 Bright Ideas grant!

# Amicalola EMC donates over \$490,000 for education and community development

In 2025, we returned over \$2.1 million in capital credits to our members. 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 were returned to the Georgia 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. This year, over \$490,000 in unclaimed funds went toward scholarships, Bright Ideas teacher grants, fire departments, food pantries, economic development initiatives and more. One notable example: The Gilmer County Veterans Memorial Committee received a \$15,000 donation from Amicalola EMC, matched by a \$15,000 contribution from CoBank, a cooperative bank serving rural America.

All of this is possible because of you. As a member-owner of Amicalola EMC, you can take pride in the knowledge that your cooperative is working every day to deliver safe, reliable and affordable electricity—while also enhancing the lives of the people we serve.



Chelly Tetterton, left, and Jessica Wells, right, from the Boys and Girls Club of North Georgia accept an unclaimed capital credits donation from Amicalola EMC CEO Todd Payne.



CEO Todd Payne poses with Joey Leverette, left, with Dawson County Government, and Ben Adams, right, from Dawson County Fire, as they accept a donation from unclaimed capital credits at our Eastern District office.



Representatives from Gilmer County organizations pose for a group photo at our Northern District office after receiving donations provided by unclaimed property funds.

## AEMC Board of Directors return \$2.1 million in capital credits 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 \$2.1 million for members who had service during the year 2004. From left: Attorney Phillip Landrum, Amicalola EMC Board Members Reggie Stowers, David Pierce, Secretary-Treasurer Randall Ponder, Vice Chairman Travis Cline, CEO Todd Payne, Chairman Charles Fendley, Shelley Cantrell, Edward Tucker, Kathy Burt and John Bennett.

## Retirements

**C**ongratulations to Junior Watkins, Gail Stewart and Ray Roberts on their retirements. Thank you for your years of dedicated service to the members of Amicalola EMC.



**Junior Watkins**  
42 years of service



**Gail Stewart**  
24 years of service



**Ray Roberts**  
55 years of service

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

**G**ilmer Fire & Rescue and Pickens Fire & 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 ten 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 them 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!

**I WANT YOU**  
TO KNOW THAT THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION ARE ENHANCING THE HISTORY OF DAHLONEGA BY ESTABLISHING

**DAHLONEGA'S MILITARY HERITAGE MUSEUM**

**AND THEY NEED YOUR HELP!**  
DAHLONEGA IS HOME TO A LONG LIST OF MILITARY HISTORY:

A MILITARY COLLEGE - SINCE 1873  
A JROTC PROGRAM - SINCE 2004  
A RANGER TRAINING BASE - SINCE 1951

VETERANS FROM ALL U.S. WARS REPRESENTED IN OUR CEMETERIES  
1,100 MEMORIAL MARKERS ALONG OUR ROADWAYS  
& MANY VETERANS LIVING IN OUR COUNTY