

## Reliable power for today ... and tomorrow

BY CHRIS FETTES, CEO AND EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT



Chris Fettes

**R**inging in a new year sparks a sense of renewed hope and optimism about the future. As the CEO of Coastal Electric Cooperative, it's a time to reflect on where we are and where we're going. At the heart of this reflection, I think about ways we can better serve you, the members of the cooperative.

Our team at Coastal Electric is always looking ahead, exploring ways to innovate and utilize new technologies to improve our services. As our nation increasingly relies on electricity to power the economy, keeping the lights on has never been more important. We're committed to powering—and empowering—our community at a cost local families and businesses can afford.

So how are we working to ensure reliable and affordable power while adapting to a changing energy landscape and our community's evolving needs?

One critical component of reliable power is the mix of energy resources used to generate the electricity that keeps the lights on across coastal Georgia. You may not realize it, but Coastal Electric doesn't generate electricity (not counting our few small solar arrays). Instead, we purchase the majority from our energy provider, Oglethorpe Power Corp., and from there, we distribute it to homes and businesses throughout our community. Our current energy

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resource mix is made up of natural gas, pumped-storage hydro, solar, coal and a growing supply of emissions-free nuclear, thanks to the addition of Plant Vogtle Unit 3, and soon, Unit 4.

We're increasingly using more electricity generated from renewable energy sources, but we still depend on a diverse energy mix to ensure reliable power that's available to our members whenever they need it.

In addition to managing a reliable energy mix, Coastal Electric uses technology to enhance our local grid, limit service disruptions and improve outage response times.

Advanced metering infrastructure,

also known as AMI, enables two-way communication between the co-op and consumers. In the event of a power outage, AMI helps pinpoint the exact location of the outage and can even analyze damaged or tampered meters. AMI helps Coastal Electric save money with real-time data and, ultimately, improves power reliability for our entire community.

Proactive tree trimming is another way we limit service disruptions. Scheduled trimming helps keep power lines clear from overgrown limbs that are likely to fall. Regular inspections of lines and vegetation have allowed us to reduce labor and equipment costs while bolstering reliability.

One of the best methods for improving our services to you is monitoring trends and leading practices from other electric co-ops in Georgia and across the country. Learning from other co-ops is one of the many benefits of the cooperative business model because for us, it's about cooperation, not competition.

As we turn our focus to 2024, Coastal Electric will continue working to provide the reliable, affordable electricity you expect and deserve—for today and tomorrow.

# It's scholarship season!

Don't miss these opportunities to fund your future!

Visit [www.CoastalElectric.Coop/scholarships](http://www.CoastalElectric.Coop/scholarships) for more info and to apply.



## Washington Youth Tour Scholarship

**Deadline:** Jan. 26

**Purpose:** One-time \$2,500 scholarship for Washington Youth Tour delegates and one-time \$500 scholarship for alternates

**Eligibility:** High school juniors attending school in south Bryan, Liberty and McIntosh counties may apply to attend the 2024 Washington Youth Tour, an all-expenses-paid leadership trip to Washington, D.C., and the scholarship.



## Walter Harrison Scholarship

**Deadline:** Feb. 1

**Purpose:** One-time \$1,000 scholarship for undergraduate studies

**Eligibility:** Residents of south Bryan, Liberty and McIntosh counties pursuing an undergraduate degree to an accredited Georgia school are eligible to apply. The recipient's primary residence must be the household of a Coastal Electric member or employee.



## Coastal Electric Cooperative Foundation Academic Scholarship

**Deadline:** March 25

**Purpose:** \$5,000 renewable scholarship for undergraduate studies

**Eligibility:** Graduating high school seniors who are residents of Liberty, Long, McIntosh and south Bryan counties are eligible to apply.



## Coastal Electric Cooperative Foundation Technical College Scholarship

**Deadline:** May 1 for summer semester, July 15 for fall semester,

Dec. 5 for spring semester

**Purpose:** Renewable scholarship amounts determined by number of credit hours for the next semester enrolled in technical college or lineman school

**Eligibility:** Scholarships are available to students of all ages pursuing a diploma, degree or certificate program from any of Georgia's technical colleges or recognized lineman schools. Applicants must have a home mailing address within Liberty, Long, McIntosh or south Bryan counties.



Educational opportunities like these are funded by Georgia's electric cooperatives and Coastal Electric members who want to invest in local students because they see the value they bring to the community. Funding for foundation scholarships comes from Coastal Electric members who allow their electric bills to be rounded up to the next dollar through Operation Round Up. Those nickels and dimes are pooled together and invested back into the community through the Coastal Electric Cooperative Foundation.

# Coastal Electric's workplace safety saves lives and money

Coastal Electric Cooperative was recently recognized for 10 years without any employee missing work due to an injury on the job—an impressive accomplishment, given the complexity and inherent dangers of the electricity industry.

“Our business inevitably involves risks from energized wires, working high off the ground and moving heavy items like poles—not to mention being out in storms to restore power,” says James Thomas, Coastal Electric Training and Safety Coordinator. “We strive every day to minimize these dangers by investing time and attention to safety measures and careful work practices.”

To acknowledge the co-op's robust safety program, Coastal Electric was presented the No Lost-Time Award by Georgia EMC during its annual meeting Nov. 6 in Savannah. The award recognizes electric cooperatives that have outstanding work habits, resulting in no lost-time accidents during the preceding year.

Nationally, electric linemen suffered 18.6 fatalities for every 100,000 hours worked in 2020, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, compared to



just 3.4 fatalities per 100,000 hours for the average American worker.

For the last 10 years, Coastal Electric boasts no fatalities or injuries at all requiring employees to miss time from work.

Advances in equipment and safety techniques, safety regulations and oversight lead to fewer accidents and less time away from work than in the past, according to Harry

Reeves, Georgia EMC Vice President of Training and Safety. Still, the nature of the business makes avoiding injuries a challenge, no matter how many safety practices are in place.

“It's a testament to all our employees,” Thomas says. “Our success and safety depend on all of us following carefully designed safety precautions to ensure we return home to our families at the end of each day.”

While protecting the safety of employees and the public is the primary goal of workplace safety and training, Coastal Electric's stellar safety record also translates into significant savings for the cooperative and its members.

When an injury does occur, the costs go beyond emergency room visits and doctor appointments. Indirect costs, such as administrative time dealing with the injury, increases in insurance premiums, hiring replacement employees and even loss of reputation can add up to four times the direct cost of the injury.

So safety is not only good for co-op employees, but it is also beneficial for co-op members and the community.



# CONNECTIONS

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## Business office hours

Open 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday  
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on Friday, except for holidays.

## Report outages

Call us at (800) 421-2343

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*Coastal Electric Cooperative,  
your Touchstone Energy® Partner,  
is a not-for-profit, member-owned  
power cooperative providing  
electricity to the people of Bryan,  
Liberty, Long and McIntosh counties.*



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*The power of human connections*

# Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

During winter months, ensure your home is well sealed and properly insulated to reduce the need for excessive heating. Seal air leaks around your home and add insulation where needed to save up to 10% on annual energy bills.

Install weatherstripping on exterior doors and apply caulk around windows. Check attic insulation levels and hire a qualified contractor if additional insulation is needed.

Source: [www.energy.gov](http://www.energy.gov)



# MLK Day closing

Coastal Electric offices will be closed Monday, Jan. 15, in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day. As always, you can manage your account or report an outage by using the MyCoastalEC app or the member portal online at [www.CoastalElectric.Coop](http://www.CoastalElectric.Coop), or by calling (800) 421-2343.

