

# What is the Co-op Advantage?



**Chris Fettes**

COASTAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CEO & EXECUTIVE VP CHRIS FETTES

Communities come in all shapes and sizes. Some are based on geographical proximity, some are based on shared interests or hobbies and some communities can even be found in virtual spaces like social media groups. Regardless of where or how they are formed, communities

can bring people together and create a sense of belonging.

Coastal Electric Cooperative is deeply committed to our members, and we're glad you are part of the electric cooperative community.

This month, more than 30,000 cooperatives across the U.S. are celebrating

National Co-op Month. It's a time to reflect on all the aspects that set cooperatives apart from other types of businesses but, more importantly,  
*Continued on page 20B*

OCTOBER IS NATIONAL



**This October, we're celebrating more than just National Co-op Month—we're celebrating the power of membership and the many advantages that set electric membership cooperatives apart. Our mission is reliable power. Our purpose is people—the local communities we're proud to serve.**

# What is the Co-op Advantage? *Continued from page 20A*

it's a time to celebrate the power of co-op membership.

Electric cooperatives are not-for-profit utilities that are built by the communities they serve. For Coastal Electric Cooperative, our mission has always been to provide you with reli-

able power. We care about your quality of life, and because we are locally operated, we're uniquely suited to meet our members' evolving energy needs.

Beyond the business of electricity, our employees and directors are equally invested in our local commu-

nity. Why? Because we live here, too. That's why we work hard to support local economic development projects, youth programs and scholarships, charitable giving initiatives and additional programs that make our community a better place to call home.

## THE SEVEN COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

**A**ll co-ops, including Coastal Electric Cooperative, are guided by seven cooperative principles that embody the values and spirit of the cooperative movement. These seven principles are a framework to help all co-ops navigate challenges and opportunities, while also remaining true to our purpose:



### 1 OPEN AND VOLUNTARY MEMBERSHIP

Co-op membership is open to anyone who can use the co-op's services.



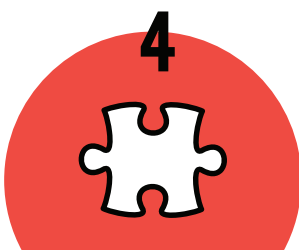
### 2 DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL

Members make decisions that shape the cooperative. Why? Because co-ops are created by the members, for the members.



### 3 MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

Members contribute money to the co-op to make sure it runs smoothly now and in the future. At Coastal Electric Cooperative, this happens through paying your electricity bills.



### 4 AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE

Co-ops are independent and can operate on their own, which ultimately benefits the members.



### 5 EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION

Co-ops continuously focus on education to ensure employees have the training and information they need to serve co-op members well. We are also committed to keeping our members informed about topics that affect you.



### 6 COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES

Co-ops share with and learn from other cooperatives. We help each other out in times of need, such as during storm restoration.



### 7 CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY

All cooperatives work for the greater good of the local communities they serve. Co-ops give back to their communities to help them thrive and grow.



# Local students broaden career opportunities with co-op programs

Lots of students spend their summers working, learning and investing in their futures. Three students, in particular, explored careers in the electric cooperative industry.

Dwayne Mitchell, now a senior at the Bradwell Institute, completed Coastal Electric Cooperative's Learners Today, Leaders Tomorrow summer work study program with the co-op's Safety Department, and Richmond Hill's Jeremiah Hearn in the Operations Department.

Dwayne assisted with HVAC and building maintenance, as well as landscaping. He also assisted line crews with residential service calls.

Jeremiah spent time with Coastal Electric Cooperative line crews—setting poles, pulling wire and helping with service calls. Operations Manager Jake Horton says Jeremiah “worked out very well, and I hope he pursues a career in linework.”

After high school, each student who completes the Learners Today, Leaders Tomorrow program will receive a \$500 scholarship to their university or technical school of choice.

Jolie Claudio, a junior at the Georgia Institute of Technology, completed an internship with Coastal



**Coastal Electric Cooperative HR Coordinator Natalyn Morris (far right) recognizes (l-r) Dwayne Mitchell, Jeremiah Hearn and Jolie Claudio upon their completion of summer student programs.**

Electric Cooperative's Engineering Department. According to Engineering Manager Chris Williams, Jolie spent the bulk of her time working on phase balancing the system, preventing distribution feeder losses and system stability issues. Phase balancing not only promotes Coastal Electric Cooperative's electric reliability, but it also saves money.

Jolie also learned operation and programming of devices Coastal Electric Cooperative uses to protect the electric system.

Part of the students' time working at the co-op was spent showing “Concern for Community,” in the spirit of Cooperative Principle 7. Every week, they devoted time to serve various community organizations.

In July, for example—their last service project for the summer—they assembled race packets for the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Richmond Hill Red Hot Chili Pepper 5K/10K Rally benefiting Family Promise of the Coastal Empire. The mission of



**Engineering intern Jolie Claudio shows off an event shirt as she helps prepare race packets to benefit Family Promise of the Coastal Empire.**

Family Promise is to end family homelessness by providing emergency shelter and basic needs to families with children who are experiencing homelessness and assisting them to find housing.

Know a high school junior who might be interested in applying for the Learners Today, Leaders Tomorrow program or a college student looking for an engineering internship? Follow Coastal Electric Cooperative on social media to find out how to apply in Spring 2025.



**Pictured (left to right): Dwayne Mitchell and Jeremiah Hearn help prepare race packets for a 5K/10K Rally to benefit Family Promise of the Coastal Empire.**

COASTALELECTRIC.COOP



## ALL OF OUR LINES ARE CUSTOMER SERVICE LINES.

Some deliver electricity. Others deliver information. All must deliver on the Coastal Electric Cooperative mission: to provide you with service that's just as dependable as the energy you count on us for every day. Learn more about your locally-owned and operated Touchstone Energy cooperative at [CoastalElectric.Coop](http://CoastalElectric.Coop).



(800) 421-2343  
[www.contact@coastalelectric.coop](http://www.contact@coastalelectric.coop)

YOUR SOURCE OF POWER. AND INFORMATION.



## Work with us!

If you've ever wanted a fulfilling career, excellent benefits and a chance to make a real difference in your community, now might be your chance!

Visit [www.CoastalElectric.Coop/careers](http://www.CoastalElectric.Coop/careers) or scan the QR Code to find out more about career opportunities with Coastal Electric Cooperative.

