



Serving members in Baldwin, Emanuel, Glascock, Hancock, Jefferson, Johnson, Laurens, Warren, Washington and Wilkinson counties

# Prosperity plus!

## Economic impact of Georgia's electric cooperatives

From charming cities and peaceful suburbs to rural areas across the state, electric membership cooperatives (EMCs) provide a lot more than energy.

Electric co-ops are not-for-profit, consumer-owned organizations that operate at cost, which means any excess revenue is reinvested in the co-op or returned to the members.

The cooperative business structure is unique. Members of cooperatives have democratic control over policy-setting and decision-making. Co-ops help their communities grow by investing and actively participating in consumer advocacy, economic development, youth and education programs, volunteerism and more.

"Georgia's 41 electric cooperatives are the heartbeat of the communities they serve. They power the homes and businesses of more than 4 million Georgians, so it's no surprise that EMCs' collective annual economic impact is \$8.3 billion," says Dennis

Chastain, president and CEO of Georgia Electric Membership Corp. (EMC) in Tucker.

Together, electric cooperatives in Georgia invest more than \$16 billion in infrastructure improvements each year to best serve their members. At Washington EMC, our team of 61 employees operates 3,200 miles of electric power lines, maintains more than 50,000 poles and serves 13,000-plus members to create a distribution network in our local area that provides safe, reliable and affordable electricity.

Co-ops operate under a set of guiding principles, one of which is "Concern for Community." It is a priority among Georgia's electric cooperatives to promote local economic development.

Businesses that become part of a community served by an EMC enjoy many benefits. Chief among them is having an electricity provider that is uniquely suited to meet local needs and is staffed with employees who are



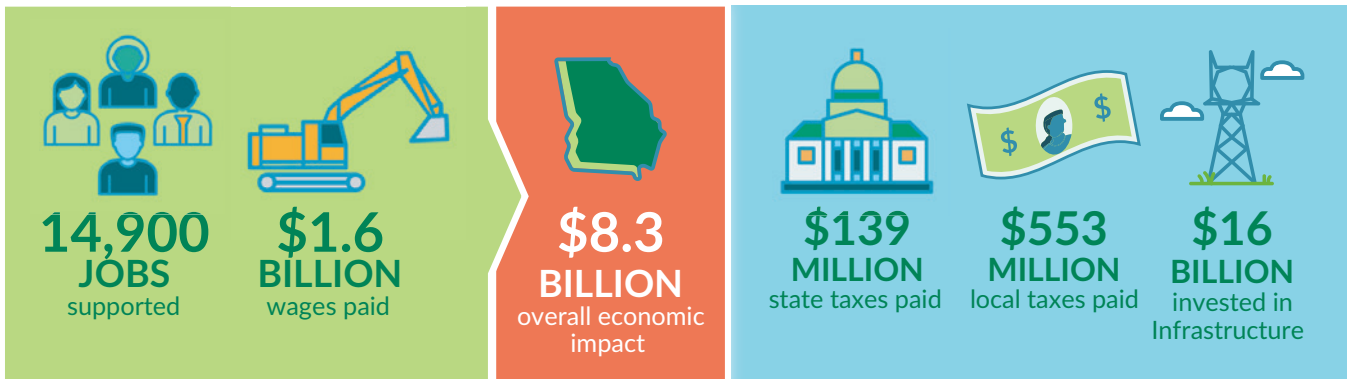
Wendy Sellers  
President/CEO

easily accessible to local companies.

"EMCs create opportunity and provide meaningful work for individuals throughout the state by supporting nearly 15,000 jobs and paying \$1.6 billion in wages each year," Chastain says.

Electric cooperatives exemplify strength in cooperation. Their collective advocacy at the grassroots, state and

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An electric membership corporation

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### 24-HOUR CALL CENTER

To report a power interruption  
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## Prosperity plus!, *Continued from page 20A*

federal levels aims to ensure electric co-ops' ability to provide safe, reliable, affordable electricity and related services. In Georgia, co-ops invest an average of \$4.1 million annually in cost-saving, energy-efficiency programs for their members.

In addition, Georgia's electric co-ops are members of Georgia EMC, the not-for-profit, statewide trade association that works to further the public policy objectives and economic interests of every electric cooperative in the state.

Georgia EMC works directly with the Georgia Department of Economic Development to market the state regionally, nationally and internationally to bring new businesses into communities served by electric cooperatives. The organization utilizes comprehensive information and innovative tools in these recruitment efforts. For example, the team uses drones to photograph structures like industrial buildings that could be used by companies that locate there, or computer-rendering software to

help future businesses envision what a manufacturing facility would look like in the community.

In addition to the direct economic impact, Washington EMC gives back directly to our communities through programs like Operation Round Up, Bright Ideas education grants, Walter Harrison Scholarship, Washington Youth Tour, Veterans Day BBQ and other local sponsorships, just to name a few.

"While electric cooperatives provide electricity and related services at the lowest possible cost, they also contribute more than \$553 million in local taxes and \$139 million in state taxes each year, keeping Georgia's economy strong and supporting a high quality of life for residents," Chastain adds.

EMCs have technologically advanced and sophisticated networks that provide electricity and related services to about 4.4 million people across 73% of the state's land area. They are an essential part of the communities they serve and are a driving force behind economic prosperity for all.

## Holiday office closing

Washington EMC's  
offices will be closed  
Monday, January 20, in  
observance of Martin  
Luther King Jr. Day.



# Walter Harrison Scholarship

**W**ashington EMC is accepting applications for the Walter Harrison Scholarship. High school seniors who reside in the household of a Washington EMC member can apply for the Walter Harrison Scholarship until January 17.

The \$1,000 scholarship may be used at any Georgia accredited college, university or technical school. Seventeen winners will be selected statewide in 2025. Applications can be obtained from your school counselor or by contacting Washington EMC Walter Harrison Scholarship Coordinator Denise Wombles at (800) 552-2577 or visiting [www.washingtonemc.com](http://www.washingtonemc.com).



## Honoring our military veterans



### HONORING THE BRAVE WITH A VETERANS DAY BBQ

Once again, Washington EMC was proud to honor our military veterans and their families on Veterans Day with a barbecue lunch on Monday, Nov. 11.

It was a great day of fellowship in showing our appreciation to the ones we owe so much. Thank you for your service!



WashingtonEMC

## Community news

**T**he Operation Round Up board met October 28 and approved funding for the following organizations: Baldwin County Schools–Program for Exceptional Children, Friends of Hamburg State Park, Georgia Transplant Foundation, Milledgeville–Baldwin County Allied Arts Inc., New Beginnings in Christ, Sandersville Police Department, Special Olympics Georgia and WACO Reads.

We are so proud to be able to give back to the ones making a difference in our communities.

The next board meeting will be January 27 and the next deadline for applications is March 31. For more information, visit [www.washingtonemc.com](http://www.washingtonemc.com).



# WYT DELEGATES

## *Among Georgia's best and brightest*



**G**eorgia's 112 delegates representing 37 electric membership cooperatives (EMCs) were among nearly 1,800 high school students nationwide who visited Washington, D.C., in June for the Washington Youth Tour (WYT).

The event, June 14-21, was the 59th year Georgia's EMCs sent students on the Youth Tour. Once a year, high school students are selected by the state's EMCs to represent Georgia as delegates on the all-expenses-paid trip. Washington EMC was fortunate to have Chloe Bray and Trojan Stapleton, both of Wrightsville, represent the co-op on the trip, as they interacted with students from all over the state. This leadership experience includes meetings with state and national leaders, leadership training and visits to many major sites.

"The Washington Youth Tour continues to bring the best and brightest students from across our state together for a fast-paced week in Washington, D.C.," says Andy



*Washington EMC delegates Chloe Bray (left) and Trojan Stapleton pose in front of the Lincoln Memorial.*



*Chloe Bray (left) and Trojan Stapleton, both of Wrightsville, at George Washington's Mount Vernon during the 2024 Washington Youth Tour.*

Paul, WYT director and public relations representative with Tucker-based Georgia EMC. "Our goal is for Georgia's delegates to learn about history and leadership while on the trip and, most importantly, be excited about returning home afterward to share the cooperative difference within their communities."



## Apply for the 2025 Washington Youth Tour

Washington EMC is accepting applications for the 2025 Washington Youth Tour. To be eligible, students must attend school within the Washington EMC area; be a high school junior; be at least 16 years old by June 14; and have parent or guardian permission to enter and participate.

More information and applications can be obtained from your school counselor or by contacting Washington EMC Youth Tour Coordinator Denise Wombles at (800) 552-2577 or visiting [www.washingtonemc.com](http://www.washingtonemc.com). Applications are due January 17.