



## SAFETY: Our Most Important Goal

Your cooperative employees are given a multitude of goals each year to ensure we meet or exceed our Members' customer service and reliability expectations. We create short- and long-range work plans; estimate future wholesale power costs; conduct maintenance operations on existing distribution equipment; and install new poles, lines and utility equipment to meet growth. We also work to keep our right-of-way tree trimming and mowing on a five-year rotation, and we continually look for ways to enhance our already great level of customer service. While all of these are essential goals, there is none more important than the safety and well-being of our employees and Members.

Each month, Georgia EMC's safety training professionals provide our employees with quality classes on subjects like personal protective gear use, safe motor vehicle operation, fall protection, first aid and CPR, electrical grounding and many other courses specific to the electric industry. These programs are often repeated annually to reinforce best practices – in the area of safety training, repetition is important.

At our co-op, we also have a knowledgeable coordinator who makes sure we address all safety and educational needs. He visits crews in the field and employees in the administrative offices to confirm that good safety practices are followed everywhere, and also acts as advisor/mentor to our EMC safety team members. One of the many responsibilities of the safety coordinator is to ensure we meet high safety accreditation standards. We recently received a score of 97 out of 100 during a multi-day inspection of facilities and safety practices in the field and office. We appreciate getting an A+, but in this instance, our ultimate goal is to reach a perfect 100.

Coweta-Fayette has developed an outstanding safety team over the years composed of employees from all departments. This combination establishes a diverse base of experience and also makes a statement that safety is important in every area of our coopera-

tive. I am proud of the dedication and leadership the team has demonstrated; they routinely review safety issues and have made excellent improvement suggestions that were quickly implemented. Getting our employees home every night to loved ones so they may serve YOU for a lifetime is our focus.



Our linemen work on distribution equipment with voltages up to 25 kV (25,000 volts) on a daily basis, often late at night and under severe weather conditions. To many, this may seem like a dangerous occupation. I agree that if strict safety practices and guidelines were not in place, it would be very risky indeed. Our linemen must complete a five-year apprentice program and pass both written and field tests. They work under a crew chief and operation foreman who provide mentorship along the way until they become journeymen and beyond.

Although we have a schedule of safety classes presented each year, we continually assess the current situations and often request programs specific to new equipment, techniques or technology. Excellent safety manuals, internal safety procedures and safety-related co-op policies are in place to provide guidance and direction.

I tell the employees often at safety meetings that our greatest responsibility is to ensure our fellow workers conduct business in the safest manner possible – speed is important, but never at the expense of safety.

The highest degree of safety may be achieved when all employees embrace best practices and exercise personal responsibility. I haven't had the opportunity to meet all of our employees' loved ones, but I know these families would appreciate that at Coweta-Fayette EMC, safety is our most important goal.

For the Team,

*Anthony H. Sinclair "Tony"*

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# EMC's Charitable Christmas Tradition Continues

To celebrate another wonderful time of giving, Coweta-Fayette employees again joined together to make several community benevolent projects successful over the holidays.

EMC personnel have helped make many Christmas wishes come true in the co-op service territory over the past 16 seasons, and this year was no different. Due to a continued shortage of provisions in local food pantries, employees decided once more to contribute by helping stock shelves for and donating funding to three area charitable organizations.

The cooperative-wide project began before Thanksgiving, with the EMC's Employee Benevolent Committee calling for non-perishable food, toiletries, clothing and monetary donations to benefit Newnan's One Roof Ecumenical Alliance Outreach, a coalition of churches bringing spiritual and financial aid to those in need; Angel's House, an emergency shelter for teenage girls; and Meals on Wheels, an organization that provides meals to seniors.

By mid-December, over 1500 items had been counted, sorted, boxed and delivered by EMC volunteers.

Although the atmosphere was festive while employees unloaded donations at One Roof, Angel's House and Meals on Wheels, the reality of hunger, falling on hard times, homelessness and poverty definitely hit home for many participants.

"These amazing organizations and their clients have truly been an inspiration to all of us," said project organizer Marsha McDaniel. "You don't realize how blessed you are until seeing people in our community whose basic needs aren't met."

In addition to helping the charities with food and other items from employees, the Benevolent Committee also donated \$2,250 (matched by another \$2,250 from the EMC) to assist the groups financially.





# Education Spotlight: the College and Career Academy Model

As the need for a strong, qualified workforce continues to build nationwide, two local schools – one a first-of-its-kind, much-emulated model and one a proposed project in the works – seek to close the ever-increasing “skills gap,” or lack of trained employees capable of filling available positions, with a re-conceptualized approach to public education: the college and career academy.

Newnan’s Central Educational Center (CEC), the first facility of its kind in the state, opened over a decade ago and has since grown to such a degree that half of all Coweta students have taken a course there. CEC, a partnership among industry, the Coweta County School System and West Georgia Technical College (WGTC), was created by business and educational leaders to “ensure a viable 21st-century workforce.”

“There has been a misconception about our economy – that we need more people with four-year degrees or higher,” said CEC CEO Mark Whitlock. “Job changes have been in the technical field, yet we push people toward degrees that aren’t technical in nature. That hurts us.”

According to Whitlock, CEC originators wanted to get students focused earlier to maximize their time in high school. It was created to supplement the curricula at East Coweta, Newnan and Northgate High Schools with WGTC programs. CEC allows students to gain advanced

technical education at a younger age by offering “dual enrollment” in WGTC classes in high school.

“We encourage a hands-on curriculum and critical thinking with knowledge and skill retention at its core,” said Whitlock. “Our students are very creative and engaged.”

CEC is built around needs defined by the business community. While that includes better tech training, industry leaders also overwhelmingly cite work ethic as a major priority. Therefore, CEC develops students’ “soft skills,” too, emphasizing attendance, character, teamwork, appearance, attitude, productivity, organizational skills, communication, cooperation and respect.

CEC has been visited by over 500 U.S. organizations and 16 other nations, and it serves as a “Replicable National Model High School.” Most core classes offered by WGTC now transfer to University System of Georgia schools, and an 8th grade program was recently introduced.

In Fayette County, efforts are underway to open a similar facility based on the CEC model. According to Peachtree City Council Member Kim Learnard, an electrical engineer who is spearheading the initiative for the Fayette College and Career Academy, the school’s creation would be “a win for the students, local industries and the community.”

Learnard said a sit-down discussion last year among education, industry and political leaders led to the determination that the skills gap is evident on a local level. “It’s alive and well and thriving in Fayette County industries,” she said.

After securing a consultant and receiving the funding for a needs assessment, Learnard said the next step is reviewing data, meeting with schools, mapping out a program and applying for the competitive Georgia College and Career Academies Project grant. “We want to provide a pipeline of trained, ready workers,” she said. “It’s about having a skill and being employable.”

The Fayette College and Career Academy is proposed as a joint effort among the Fayette County K-12 public school system, local industries, Southern Crescent Technical College and Clayton State University. It would serve students from all five Fayette high schools and focus on career/tech education and dual enrollment.

“Part of the mission of a college and career academy is to provide learning in the context of



*CEC allows students to gain advanced technical education and hands-on knowledge. Pictured above, a local child abuse prevention group presents a simulation doll to nursing students so they may study the effects of shaken baby syndrome on infants.*

real world applications,” said Learnard. “It places heavy emphasis on internships, touring manufacturing facilities, shadowing medical professionals and other types of work-based learning opportunities for students in their areas of study.”

Some say the future success of our country depends upon workforce development today, and that means keeping students plugged-in with a challenging course load applicable to their lives and careers.

“One thing you won’t hear at a college and career academy is ‘I don’t know why I have to learn this!’” said Learnard. “The students are happy to be there, and that drastically reduces drop-out rates. Disillusionment with school doesn’t reflect inability; it shows a lack of relevance.”

Currently, 26 college and career academies are already underway in Georgia, with the CEC in Coweta the longest-running at 13 years.



*Photo provided by the Central Educational Center.*



# Incentives Available for Energy-Efficient Home Improvements

In an effort to encourage money-saving energy conservation and the installation of energy-efficient equipment, Coweta-Fayette is offering incentives to our members. These incentives can assist those of you looking to replace heating and air equipment, water heaters, insulation and windows. If you need help determining what modifications to make in your home, please call our marketing department at 770-502-0226 for assistance. All heat pumps must have a 14.5 SEER or higher energy rating. These rebates are only available for equipment replaced since January 1, 2013.

- ♦ \$275 for gas to electric heat pumps
- ♦ \$150 for gas to dual fuel heat pumps
- ♦ \$75 for heat pump replacements
- ♦ \$500 for geothermal
- ♦ \$500 for electric/gas to solar water heaters
- ♦ \$250 for gas to electric water heaters
- ♦ \$250 for heat pump water heaters
- ♦ \$150 for R-11 to R-38 attic insulation
- ♦ \$90 for R-19 to R-38
- ♦ \$150 for R-13 floor insulation
- ♦ \$25 per window for double-pane or storm windows(up to 8)
- ♦ \$25 per programmable thermostat (maximum \$50 per home)
- ♦ \$75 for New 15 SEER min. Air Conditioning replacement

Additional rebates and incentives are also available for new home construction. Please contact our marketing department for more information.



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## Are you prepared for tornado season?

As spring approaches with its inevitable storms, we at Coweta-Fayette EMC urge our members to take every precaution necessary to ensure personal safety and that of loved ones.

From the spring of 1950 through the summer of 2012, Georgia has averaged 26 tornadoes each year. Although most have occurred across the northern third of the state, 24 of these strong storms occurred in Fayette and Coweta Counties during this period.

In 2013, "Severe Weather Awareness Week" will be observed Feb. 4-8, so be sure to brush up on your tornado safety information ahead of time in case disaster strikes.

**Stay informed and ready to act.** During a storm event, monitor local television and radio stations, or a battery-powered NOAA Weather Radio. You may also check radar and warnings at the Georgia National Weather Service website, [Weather.gov/Atlanta](http://Weather.gov/Atlanta).

**Know your community's warning system.** Many have sirens intended for outdoor warning purposes. Have a safe room in your home already selected for all to gather; this should be a basement, storm cellar or interior room on the lowest floor away from windows. If a warning is issued, take cover immediately.

**Understand "watch" versus "warning."** A tornado watch means that tornadoes are possible in your area. Keep a watchful eye on the sky for threatening weather and stay tuned to a NOAA Weather Radio or your local news media for weather bulletins or possible warnings. Be alert for approaching storms and prepared to take quick action. A tornado warning means



that a tornado has been sighted or indicated by radar. Persons in the path of the storm should seek sturdy shelter immediately.

**Know the signs.** Weather forecasting science is not perfect, and some tornadoes do occur without warning. There is no substitute for staying alert to the sky. Some things to look and listen for are: a strong, persistent rotation in the cloud base; whirling dust or debris on the ground under a cloud base; hail or heavy rain, followed by either dead calm or a fast, intense wind shift; a loud, continuous roar or rumble that doesn't fade in a few seconds like thunder; and at night, small, bright, blue-green to white flashes at ground level near a thunderstorm indicating power lines being snapped.

There is no such thing as guaranteed safety from a tornado – the most violent tornadoes can level almost any house. Most tornadoes in Georgia, however, are actually on the lower EF0 to EF3 scale and can be survived by keeping up-to-date and taking proper safety actions. Stay vigilant this spring, with a disaster plan in mind and survival kit should you need it.