



Coweta-Fayette



powerlines

COWETA-FAYETTE EMC EMPLOYEE RESCUES DROWING MAN FROM GULF WATERS

Save a life, make a friend. That describes Coweta-Fayette EMC journeyman Dustin Arrington in the wake of his dramatic June rescue of a drowning man in a rip tide in the Gulf of Mexico off Panama City Beach, FL.

Arrington received a Life-saving Award from Georgia Electric Membership Corp. (Georgia EMC) during the state association's annual meeting recently in Savannah.

The 15-year Coweta-Fayette EMC veteran recalled just stepping onto the beach that fateful June 23 morning with his wife and daughter when he heard a commotion and people congregating on one part of the beach. He saw three men in the water before a sandbar, screaming for help.

Despite having no water rescue training, Arrington put his daughter in his wife's arms, emptied his pockets and went into the water.

"Before I realized it, I was with the biggest man," Arrington says. "He went under one time and came back up. I put his arm on my arm and started for shore. He weighed 300 pounds and was unconscious."

Arrington treaded water until his toes hit the sand, then started dragging the man. He was later helped by two other men who dragged the man to safety.

The other two people, the man's son and nephew, made it back to shore after a cabana boy swam out to them with life jackets.

"There's no doubt God had his hand on us that day," says Arrington. "I felt the rip current and waves and thought to myself, 'You're gonna drown.'"



CFEMC Lineman Dustin Arrington (pictured left) has a friend for life in firefighter Steve Ellison

The man, a firefighter from Murfreesboro, TN., was in the ICU for two days. Arrington and the man met on the beach following his release from the hospital, and the two have become quick friends. Arrington notes that the man was trained in swift water rescue but had driven seven hours after working the night shift and went immediately to the beach with his son and nephew.

"We talk pretty regular, and he says we're part of his family now," says Arrington, adding they are planning to get together either in metro Atlanta or in Tennessee.

CFEMC CEO Chris Stephens said he wasn't surprised to hear one of

our own was willing to respond in a time of need.

"Linemen are first responders," Stephens said. "Whether they are restoring power during inclement conditions or helping someone in need, they are always the first to assist. Dustin's heroic effort is a perfect example of who linemen are, brave men and women who put others first. I am extremely proud of Dustin but not surprised by his actions."

Arrington is among 14 employees from five EMCs in Georgia to be recognized with a Lifesaving Award, which recognizes EMC employees whose quick thinking and actions are instrumental in safeguarding others from dangerous or potentially deadly situations.

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Our office will be closed on December 25th and 26th so that employees can enjoy the Christmas holiday with their families.
In the event of an outage, please call 770-502-0226.



WASHINGTON YOUTH TOUR A TRIP OF A LIFETIME

Standing at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery, 2019 Washington Youth Tour delegates watched in complete silence as four delegates walked up to place a wreath at the tomb.

EMCs from all over Georgia sent youth delegates on the week-long trip to meet with one another and learn about our nation's government, which gives electric cooperatives the freedom to thrive.

Delegates visited places like the Smithsonian Museums, Mount Vernon, the National Archives, the Capitol Building, and Congress. They saw U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Purdue and met with their representatives. Delegates also enjoyed a live performance of Grease and a riverboat cruise on the Potomac complete with glow sticks, snacks, and Journey's Don't Stop Believin' blasting on deck.

"[Washington Youth Tour] changed my perspective because I really got to see where everything happens and how it works," said Kaitlyn Smith, a 2019 delegate from Northgate High School. After graduation, Smith plans to attend Georgia Tech. "I plan on majoring in aerospace engineering, but after I retire, I plan on going into politics," said Smith.

Jatin Patel, CFEMC's delegate from Fayette County High School said, "The trip made me realize how big of a stage it is on the national level, though every level—municipal, state and national—does tremendous things to help our citizens and our society." Patel also plans to go to Georgia Tech after graduation. While he's undecided about a major, he says the trip opened him up to opportunities at EMCs and NRECA. "I might intern in D.C.," added Patel.

CFEMC Communications Coordinator Katie Norris went as a chaperone for the 2019 tour. "I loved seeing the kids' faces as they got to experience our Capitol and actually walk through places they'd only seen in pictures." Norris also noted how some of the delegates were shy at first but blossomed by the end of the tour. "One of our delegates, Jatin Patel, was a little quiet when I first met him. By the end of the tour, he was friends with everyone and couldn't stop talking about what he loved on the trip."

Patel spoke on stage at Coweta-Fayette EMC's Annual Meeting this past October about his experience as a 2019 delegate. Even though he is undecided about what he'd like to accomplish in life, Patel said, "After seeing so many people invested in the welfare of our country, I can't help but think I'd like to do the same." Patel reflected that how he will "join the ranks of Youth Tour alumni who would go on to change the world."

Washington Youth Tour is much more than an educational trip. It is a fun and action-packed experience that is cultivating the next generation of leaders.

The next Washington Youth Tour will take place June 18-25, 2020. Coweta-Fayette EMC is now accepting applicants for the 2020 cycle. The deadline to apply is February 7, 2020.

Applications can be found in guidance offices at local high schools and students are welcome to submit a digital application at <https://utility.org/my-community/washington-youth-tour/>.



CFEMC Communication Coordinator Katie Norris is pictured with 2019 Youth Tour participants: Kaitlyn Smith, Northgate High School and Jatin Patel, Fayette County High School.



The President's Message

Chris Stephens
CEO

It's the time of year when many of us are spending time with family and friends over the Christmas holidays and reflecting on life and looking ahead to the New Year.

It's also the time I reflect over the years Coweta Fayette EMC has been providing affordable, reliable energy to this area. Since our founding in 1945, by a group of citizens who banded together because of their desire to improve the life of their neighbors and friends, I feel we've made a positive impact on the lives of our members.

I've been blessed to work my way up the ranks at the EMC and today serve as CEO of this organization. Our company values of honesty, integrity, teamwork, communication and community involvement are still as important today as the day we were founded. It is what makes us who we are, and I could not be prouder to be surrounded by so many great employees who share these values. I never take that for granted. We have a culture that continually tries to improve for the betterment of all our members.

Our members are a key element in this as well. Over 32,000 of you participate in our Operation Round Up program and round up your power bill to the next dollar each month for an average of \$6.00 per year. Since the program began in 1993, CFEMC has put over \$5 million back into our community. The money collected is awarded to various local individuals and organizations in need. This year alone, we were able to give over \$52,000 in scholarships to area students.

Our employees take giving back seriously too. Just a couple of months ago, we finished our first ever Habitat for Humanity build. Ninety-nine employees put in 984 hours over three months to help a deserving family construct a new home. They're also busy working around the community, lending a helping hand during this holiday season with a local VA clinic, One Roof, Corinth Personal Care, Real Life Center and Insignia Nursing Home.

I am very thankful for all our employees, our members, and the many community organizations and industries we serve. It is because of this that makes our service area a great place to call home. It is a blessing to work with, and for, each of you. Thank you and may you all have a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year!

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