



Coweta-Fayette



powerlines

FROM SINGLE-WATT BULB TO EMC BOARD: ELWOOD THOMPSON TELLS HIS STORY

A winter storm caused Coweta-Fayette EMC's Board of Directors to take notice of Elwood Thompson.

"The whole EMC area was out of electricity for about a week's time," said Thompson. Thompson, who had a pole down in his pasture, wondered why the EMC had not come to fix the problem. "So I decided I would write a letter to the paper," said Thompson.

Before putting pen to paper, Thompson took out his short-wave radio to see if he could hear communications between EMC linemen and dispatch. To his surprise, he learned Coweta-Fayette EMC was working much harder than he expected.

"I heard one crew call into dispatch, and then ask dispatch if they could get something to eat...it was 10:30 that night," said Thompson. He heard the crew say they had not eaten since daybreak. Thompson heard another crew, when they called in about 4 AM. "They said they were ready to come back to work," he said. The crew told dispatch they only had four hours of sleep the night before.

In his letter to the paper, Thompson



Elwood and Mary Jane Thompson

wrote how the line crews were working in freezing cold "doing the best they can, and they're not getting any sleep." A couple of the board directors read the letter and called Thompson to thank him. When a director passed away, the Board asked Thompson to fill the vacancy for the rest of the term. Coweta-Fayette EMC members voted for Thompson to continue serving as a director.

Reflecting on the 35 years he served on Coweta-Fayette EMC's Board of Directors, Thompson said, "I've had three passions

"I've had three passions in my life: one is my family, two is my church, and three is my Coweta-Fayette EMC."

Elwood
Thompson

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Born in 1934, Thompson started his life in Moreland without electricity. Thompson remembers the night in 1941 his home got electricity: "I had been getting my lessons at the kitchen table with a [kerosene] lamp. That night, when we turned that single-watt light bulb on above our table, it was so bright that I remember all of us squinting trying to see," he said.

Later, the Thompson family purchased their first electric appliance: a used refrigerator. The Thompson family started to add more electric appliances. "We finally got Mama a washing machine." The family also got an electric butter churner, electric blankets, and then an electric radio.

Life after electricity became a lot easier, especially for Thompson's mother who did all the washing, cooking and cleaning by hand. However, right after electricity came to Moreland in 1942, the United

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States entered World War II.

"During the war, when everything was rationed, a lot of people in town were literally hungry," said Thompson. After the war, the community prospered. "Cotton went to a dollar a pound. The rationing was over, and people in town were hungry for meat," he said.

During this time of post-war prosperity, Thompson married his wife of 61 years, Mary Jane. They bought their home on Bexton Road. Including Thompson, three EMC board directors have lived in that house. Eugene Evans, an original director, served on the board from 1945-1960. Evans' son, Lee, who grew up in the home, also served as director from 1960-1985.

Throughout his life, both on and off the board, Thompson has served his community. As a member of White Oak Presbyterian Church near Moreland, Thompson has served as a deacon, elder and congregational chairman. He's also been a Sunday school teacher for 55 years. Around the community, Thompson has served on the Newnan-Coweta Planning Commission, the Coweta General Hospital Authority Board, and the Civitans Club.

Fellow board director, Therol Brown, said Thompson became a mentor whose wisdom is irreplaceable. "Most leaders make enemies sometimes," said Brown, but "I don't know a single person who doesn't like and respect him."

Throughout his service to Coweta-Fayette EMC, Thompson said, "there were two or three things that I was really proud of doing." First is the decision to start a natural gas subsidiary. True Natural Gas has been successful in providing affordable gas service to members and beyond. Second, Thompson is proud of the managers and employees who keep rates low and serve the community. "Your employees are what makes any business...I'm proud of every one of them."

Thompson said, "I enjoyed every minute of my 35 years, and not many people can say that about many things."



The President's Message

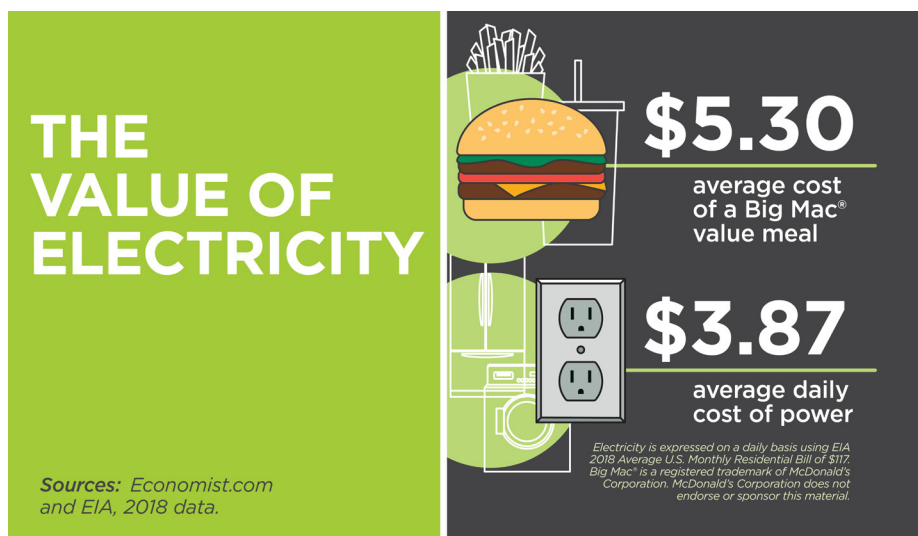
Chris Stephens
CEO

Our life is influenced by many things. These influences include situations, experiences and other people and can be both positive or negative. I have certainly had my experience with both. But personally, most of my positive influences have been people.

Like many, my greatest influencers are my family, especially my parents and grandparents. They taught me so much and instilled in me great values and a strong work ethic. Educators were another source. I learned how to research, find the correct answer, and not accept just what I had heard. Throughout my career I've been influenced not only by people I've worked with or under, but others have offered valued guidance as I've strived to lead this great organization. One is, the recently retired, Director Elwood Thompson.

As an employee of CFEMC for nearly 25 years, I have had the opportunity to get to know Mr. Thompson. Elwood always demonstrated strong leadership, compassion and integrity. His love for the cooperative, its members and employees, was evident. He always went out of his way to greet you and let you know he cared. He is a man of great wisdom and common sense. One of Elwood's greatest attributes is his ability to listen. When he speaks, people listen because they know what he has to say is important. I got to see this firsthand, and it has certainly influenced me and helped shape who I am today. It is no doubt that his passions, in order, are his family, church and the co-op. You always know where he stands on an issue.

It was difficult to learn of Mr. Thompson's retirement, but like him, CFEMC is fortunate to have eight other directors who are certainly passionate about this cooperative and the members. They are all influencers to me in their own right. In fact, they recently appointed Elwood's replacement, Mr. Lee Hunter. Lee is a man of outstanding intelligence and incredible integrity that I know will carry the same passion as Elwood. I look forward to working with Lee in the future as I know he, and all the directors of CFEMC, will continue to make decisions that are in the best interest of the cooperative and our members. I am blessed to have these influencers in my life.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Routinely replace or clean your air conditioner's filter. Replacing a dirty, clogged air filter can reduce your air conditioner's energy consumption by 5 to 15 percent.

Source: energy.gov



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