

Habersham EMC's 2025 Annual Report Inside

pages 22A-22H

SEPTEMBER 2025

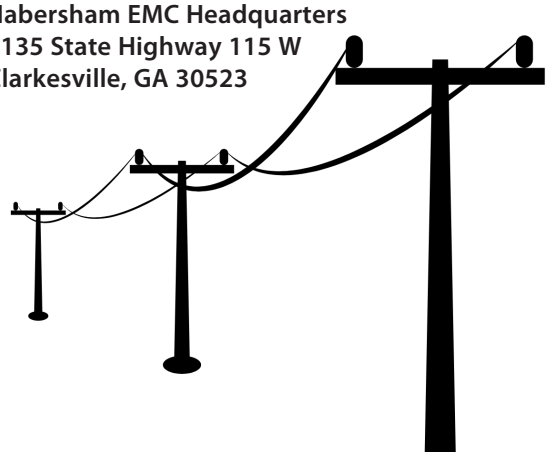
OFFICIAL REGISTRATION CARD

HEMC members: Please bring this card with you to the meeting for faster registration.

Habersham Electric Membership Corporation
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

2025 Annual Business Meeting
Thursday, September 25, 2025
Registration and voting begin at 4 p.m.

Habersham EMC Headquarters
6135 State Highway 115 W
Clarkesville, GA 30523



Representation Affidavit

If you plan to represent a business, church, school, corporation, association, etc., please bring this completed form to the meeting.

This is to certify that (Name of Representative) _____ _____ is the official representative of (Church, School, Corporation, Association, Etc.) _____, Account No. _____, and (he/she) is authorized to register for said business, church, school, corporation, association, etc., in order to vote on any matter pertaining to the Annual Business Meeting of Habersham Electric Membership Corp. on Thursday, September 25, 2025. To be eligible to receive door prizes, the member must register to vote.

_____
(Church, School, Corporation, Association, Etc.)

_____
(Authorized Signature and Title)

Witness: _____

Date: _____

Voting

Members may vote for **one (1) East District director and two (2) West District directors** at this year's Annual Meeting.

Absentee Balloting

Habersham EMC members may vote by absentee ballot September 11 through September 22, 2025. Ballots will be available in the Clarkesville and Cleveland offices.

To request that a ballot be mailed to you, please call (706) 754 - 2114.

Annual Business Meeting Schedule

Thursday, September 25, 2025
Habersham EMC Headquarters

4 - 6 p.m.
Registration and voting will begin at 4 p.m. Members are then welcome to enjoy barbecue with all the fixings and visit the demonstrations.

4 - 6 p.m.
Demonstrations

6 p.m.
Annual Business Meeting
Door prizes

A detailed agenda is on the back cover.

Directions

The Habersham EMC headquarters is located at 6135 State Highway 115 W, Clarkesville, GA 30523.

From Georgia Highway 365:
From Georgia Highway 365, turn onto Demorest Mt. Airy Highway. From there, turn right onto Historic 441 N. This will bring you to the Clarkesville Square. See directions below.

From the Clarkesville Square
From the Clarkesville Square, turn onto State Highway 115 W toward Cleveland. HEMC is about 1 mile down on the right just past Clarkesville Elementary School.

GEORGIA MAGAZINE 80 YEARS of EXCELLENCE

Celebrating the Georgia lifestyle

GEMC Georgia® MAGAZINE

Acts of kindness
page 18

Seafood recipes
page 38

SEPTEMBER 2025



Wild West sites

page 28

Tiny Stitches supports struggling parents
page 16

How to help monarch butterflies
page 24

www.georgiamagazine.org

FIND YOURSELF.
FIND YOUR SPIRIT.

VISIT Cherokee NC



Hike ancient trails. Float cool rivers. Or take the thrills indoors, at one of the largest casino resorts in the Southeast. In Cherokee, NC, every adventure brings you closer to what moves you.

Plan your trip today at
VisitCherokeeNC.com

Contents

SEPTEMBER 2025 • VOL. 81, NO. 9



ISTOCK.COM/EHUGHES

24

16 Made with love
Tiny Stitches supports struggling parents with essentials for newborns.
By Rosalyn Dunn

18 Acts of kindness
Letter to *Georgia Magazine* kicks off new series of reader stories.

20 Bound by books
Friends groups hold sales, events to support local libraries.
By Pamela A. Keene

24 Monarchs on the move
Learn how Georgians can help this butterfly's journey.
By Tom Oder



S. DAVID PENTICUFF

36



FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY MILNER

20



COURTESY BOOTH WESTERN ART MUSEUM

28

On the cover
The Booth Western Art Museum in Cartersville is featured in this month's Around Georgia article. Opened in 2003, the museum is the world's largest permanent exhibition space for Western art. (Photo courtesy of the Booth Western Art Museum.)

4 MAILBOX
6 PICTURE THIS?
8 GEORGIA NEWS
10 CALENDAR OF EVENTS
14 CURRENTS
News from Georgia's EMCs
26 COOPERATIVE CONCERNS
Electric co-ops' eyes in the sky
28 AROUND GEORGIA
A taste of the frontier at Wild West sites
36 GEORGIA GARDENS
Planting a moon garden
38 GEORGIA COOKS
Seafood recipes
40 TRIVIA CONTEST
42 HOMETOWN HEROES
Benjamin Martin provides a lifeline during, after Hurricane Helene

Woodstock's blue T. rex

In July's issue, the Picture this? contest featured a photo of a blue T. rex statue named Anni, who is stationed outside the Animal Atlanta pet-supply store in Woodstock. More than 280 readers submitted answers to the contest, and many shared photos of themselves posed with the dinosaur.

To see this month's Picture this? contest photo, turn to page 6.

—Lindsay Penticuff



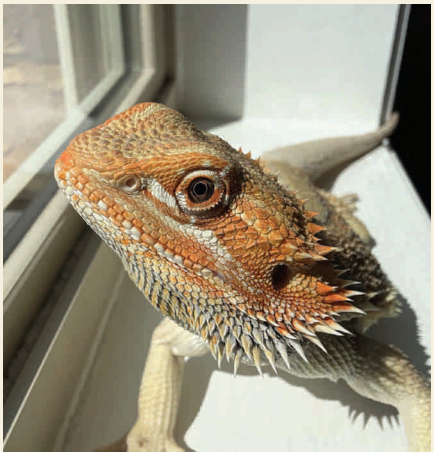
Connor Bagwell, a 6-year-old from Canton, poses for a photo with Anni while visiting his "pop pop" Ed Lynch.



Christina Gregory's children, Travis, 10, and Kaitlyn, 17, visit Animal Atlanta weekly to see the rabbits, birds, snakes and tortoises.



Emily, Joanna and Logan Simanski are the grandchildren of Cynthia Little of Woodstock. "We specifically drove over [on June 26] to see if the dinosaur in your magazine matched our dinosaur down the road," Little says. "We thought [Animal Atlanta] was a vet, but it's actually a bird and reptile pet store, and we had so much fun there. The owners were so nice and told us about all the animals."



Nichole Shields of Marietta buys pet supplies from Animal Atlanta for her critters at home, including Spike the bearded dragon.

July issue notes

I was delighted to see the Green Power EMC ad in the July 2025 issue showing solar energy. Thank you for promoting it. I do, too, whenever it is appropriate.

I also appreciated the World Snake Day article in the same issue. [See "World Snake Day honors misunderstood reptiles," page 18; ***bit.ly/snake725***.] I say "yuck" about snakes, but we all need to be educated.

—Donna Blackburn, Darien

This is a great magazine, especially the recipes!

—Carol Kania, via email



Encouraging young readers

My 9-year-old granddaughter, Lemon Jean Berry, found all of the June trivia contest answers by herself. She had a ball and learned lots!

—Tammy Lowry, Thomaston

Thank you so much for running the trivia contest. My son had fun reading and finding the answers in August's magazine.

—Jacklyn Ether, via email

My 7-year-old played the trivia contest in August's magazine and loved using his reading skills to help find the answers. Thank you!

—Keith Hutchison, Kathleen

Share your thoughts. Email us at ***magazine@georgiaemc.com***. Please include your name, address and phone number. Letters may be edited for clarity and space.





Explore New England

with the Leader in U.S. Cruising

Immerse yourself in the sights, sounds, and tastes of New England. From quaint island villages to the breathtaking beauty of the coastline, summer in New England is a truly delightful experience. Discover the region's rich maritime heritage, savor a traditional Lobsterbake, and marvel at grand mansions of the Gilded Age. Return to the comfort of your onboard sanctuary and bask in the warm camaraderie of fellow guests and crew.

Your Grand New England Cruise Includes:

- ★ 15-days/14-nights on board the ship
- ★ An exploration of 15 ports of call, with guided excursion options at each
- ★ All onboard meals and our signature evening cocktail hour
- ★ Full enrichment package with guest speakers and nightly entertainment
- ★ All tips and gratuities

Call today

800-459-2596

to request a
free Cruise Guide

Small Ship Cruising Done Perfectly®



Picture this?

Guess where this is and you could win a $25 gift card!

The reader whose photo is published in **"Picture this?"** wins a $25 Target gift card—as does the person who correctly guesses what the photo is and where it was taken in Georgia. The winner's name (drawn at random from correct guesses) and the answer will appear in a future issue. The winning photo selected by our staff will be published in exchange for a gift card. Georgia EMC claims no right to and will ultimately destroy or delete all photos that are not selected.

If you're ready to guess or have taken a photo for us to consider, email ***picturethis@georgiaemc.com*** or mail to *Georgia Magazine*, Picture this? Contest, P.O. Box 1707, Tucker, GA 30085. Submissions should be 300-dpi photos of locations in Georgia that are accessible to the public and easy to identify. Please send photos and guesses separately.

Guesses for the September contest must be received by Sept. 22, 2025. With all correspondence, please include your name, mailing address and phone number.



JULY 2025

Our winners from July 2025 are Laura Cronan of Gainesville, who submitted the photo, and Debbie McMichen of Woodstock, who correctly guessed it is a picture of a blue T. rex sculpture named Anni outside Animal Atlanta pet-supply store in Woodstock. We received 282 correct answers!

Celebrating the Georgia lifestyle
GEMC Georgia MAGAZINE

2100 East Exchange Place, Suite 510, Tucker, GA 30084
(770) 270-6500; in Georgia, (800) 544-4362
Website: ***www.georgiamagazine.org***
Email: ***magazine@georgiaemc.com***

Georgia Magazine, the largest-circulation monthly magazine in the state, is published by Georgia Electric Membership Corp. (GEMC), the trade association for Georgia's 41 consumer-owned electric utilities. On average, more than 560,000 members welcome the magazine into their homes each month. Georgia's not-for-profit electric cooperatives provide reliable, safe and affordable electric service to more than 73 percent of the state's land area, serving 5 million residents. For more information, visit ***www.georgiaemc.com***.

EDITOR Jennifer J. Hewett, CCC
MANAGING EDITOR Amy Schneider
PRODUCTION MANAGER Gayle Hartman
ASSOCIATE EDITOR Jim Jess
ASSOCIATE EDITOR Lindsay Penticuff
ASSOCIATE EDITOR Katie Cowart
STAFF ASSISTANT Mae Coleman
EDITORIAL INTERN Yasmin Cowan
ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVE
Harold Chambliss, (678) 906-4050

NATIONAL ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVE
American MainStreet Publications,
(800) 626-1181

DESIGNERS Trudie Thibodeaux, Kerstin Weis

Georgia Magazine (USPS-473120, ISSN 1061-5822) is published monthly by GEMC, P.O. Box 1707, 2100 East Exchange Place, Tucker, GA 30085. Periodicals postage paid at Thomaston, GA, and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Georgia Magazine*, P.O. Box 1707, Tucker, GA 30085.

Acceptance of advertising by *Georgia Magazine* does not imply endorsement by the publisher or Georgia's electric membership corporations of the product or services advertised.

GEORGIA MAGAZINE'S LIABILITY FOR ERRORS IN, OR OMISSIONS OF, ADVERTISEMENTS, WHETHER IN CONTRACT OR IN TORT, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO DAMAGES TO THE ADVERTISER'S BUSINESS, SHALL IN NO EVENT EXCEED THE AMOUNT OF CHARGES FOR THE ADVERTISEMENT THAT WAS OMITTED OR IN WHICH THE ERROR OCCURRED.

Georgia Magazine assumes no responsibility for unsolicited materials. Manuscripts, photographs and artwork must be accompanied by self-addressed, stamped envelopes to be returned. *Georgia Magazine* reserves the right to edit any material published.

How to get in touch

Change of address: If you personally subscribe, mail your address change to *Georgia Magazine*, P.O. Box 1707, Tucker, GA 30085. If you receive the magazine through your electric co-op, please contact that office directly.

Subscriptions: Contact your electric cooperative first; they may send the magazine by request. Or send check or money order made payable to Georgia EMC for $12 (12 issues) or $20 (24 issues) to Georgia EMC, P.O. Box 117757, Atlanta, GA 30368-7757. Allow 4-6 weeks for first issue.

Article submissions or story ideas are welcome for review. Guidelines also are available. Email ***magazine@georgiaemc.com***.

Visit ***www.georgiamagazine.org*** for more of everything you love about Georgia!

Georgia grown Founder's Circle · American MainStreet Publications · Alliance for Audited Media · MPA The Association of Magazine Media · SEA

America's Most Trusted Gutter Protection!

Leafguard
a **Great Day Improvements** brand



Clog-free, maintenance free gutters!

Call now for your FREE estimate
1.470.253.9878

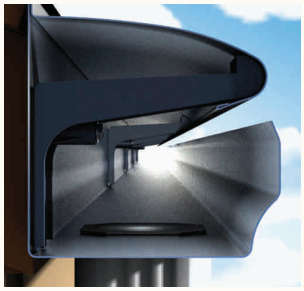
Summer Savings:
Exclusive Deals on Leafguard Gutters

75% OFF installation*
+
an additional $200 OFF*
for our Summer Savings Special
+
18 months no interest**

We can only offer these special savings until 10/31/25



Eliminate Ladder Accidents



No Leaking or Water Damage



Professional Custom-Fit Installation

"I am very pleased with the quality of the work they performed installing the new gutters."

Curtis E.
Newark, DE

Cynthia F.
Dayton, OH

See How We Outperform Other Gutter Options

Benefit	LeafGuard	Gutter Filters & Mesh Toppers	Hoods, Covers and Helmets	Open Face Gutters
Keeps Out Debris	✓	✓	✓	✗
Eliminate Leaks	✓	✗	✗	✗
One-Piece Design	✓	✗	✗	✓
Customized to Your Home	✓	✗	✗	✗
Never Have to Clean	✓	✗	✗	✗
No Clog Guarantee	✓	✗	✗	✗

GOOD HOUSEKEEPING Since 1909 — MADE IN USA — BBB A+ rating — **25+ Years** — **500,000+ Satisfied Customers!**

*See details at www.leafguard.com/offers

**See details at www.leafguard.com/financing/disclaimer Financing available to well qualified buyers on approved credit only. Appointment must be scheduled by 10/31/25 to take advantage of offer. Not valid on previous orders or orders in process. Valid on initial consultation only. Cannot be combined with other offers. Various city and state licenses available on request.

+ Guaranteed not to clog for as long as you own your home, or we will clean your gutters for free.

Leafguard | Great Day Improvements

Leafguard is a **Great Day Improvements** brand

Stair climbs **honor 9/11 first responders**

On Sept. 11, 2001, New York City firefighters raced up the burning twin towers of the World Trade Center to save trapped people during the deadliest terrorist attack on U.S. soil. In the effort, 343 firefighters died.

To honor those heroes, communities throughout Georgia hold 9/11 memorial stair climbs, paying tribute one step at a time.

The events challenge participants to climb 2,200 stairs—the equivalent of 110 floors—to reflect on what New York firefighters faced that day. Each climb offers its own way of remembering the fallen.

At the University of Georgia (UGA) in Athens, the climb begins at 6 a.m. Sept. 11 at Sanford Stadium. This is UGA's second annual climb, open to ROTC cadets and local first responders, though spectators are welcome at Gate 1.

"I think it's a good tribute as you walk up those steps to think about all the first responders who ventured up those smoky stairwells not knowing if they were going to come back," says Ryan Fagan, cadet battalion commander in UGA's Army ROTC. "While I'm walking, I think of myself being in that position, and it absolutely makes you emotional."

The Atlanta Braves Foundation will host one of the state's largest climbs at Truist Park in Atlanta on Sept. 6. The event is being held in partnership with the Terry Farrell Firefighters Fund of Georgia, the Georgia Fraternal Order of Leatherheads Society and Firehouse Subs.

"To honor the lives of first responders and individuals impacted by 9/11, participants carry photos of those whose lives were lost during the climb, while photos are also shown on the main center-field board at Truist Park throughout the event," says Danielle Bedasse, vice president of community affairs for the Atlanta Braves and executive director of the Atlanta Braves Foundation. "At the end of the climb [there is] a piece of the metal from the World Trade Center that participants can touch and take photos with."


COURTESY ATLANTA BRAVES

The Atlanta Braves Foundation will host one of the state's largest climbs at Truist Park in Atlanta on Sept. 6.

New climbs this year in Columbus and Effingham County are coordinated with the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF), which supports families and helps prevent future firefighter deaths.

"During the [Columbus and Effingham County] stair climbs, the participants carry a badge with a picture and name of one of the firefighters, police officers or EMTs [who] died at the World Trade Center," says Regina Livingston, development program manager for the foundation. "When they finish the climb, they ring the bell, and they call out that first responder's name and read their title."

The Columbus climb is set for Sept. 6 at the Columbus Civic Center, with an opening ceremony at 8:46 a.m.—the time American Airlines Flight 11 hit the north tower.

"It's not only honoring those [who] have fallen," organizer Ken Calain says, "but it's also supporting and assisting those families of the fallen firefighters."

Effingham County's first climb will take place Sept. 14 at 7 p.m. at Effingham County High School. Registration is $30, benefiting the foundation. Participants will climb to actual 9/11 radio traffic from air traffic control (ATC) being broadcast in the venue.

In Marietta, the fourth annual climb at the Marietta Square parking deck is Sept. 7, starting at 9 a.m. The $25 fee supports the NFFF and the Marietta Firefighter Support Fund.

Each climber gets a complimentary bag, lanyard, challenge coin, decals and a raffle entry to win custom door prizes.


MALCOLM TULLEY

Top: *Some participants wear full gear to replicate the conditions faced by first responders in the World Trade Center.* **Above:** *Firefighters replicate the 110-story climb at Enmarket Arena in Savannah last year.*

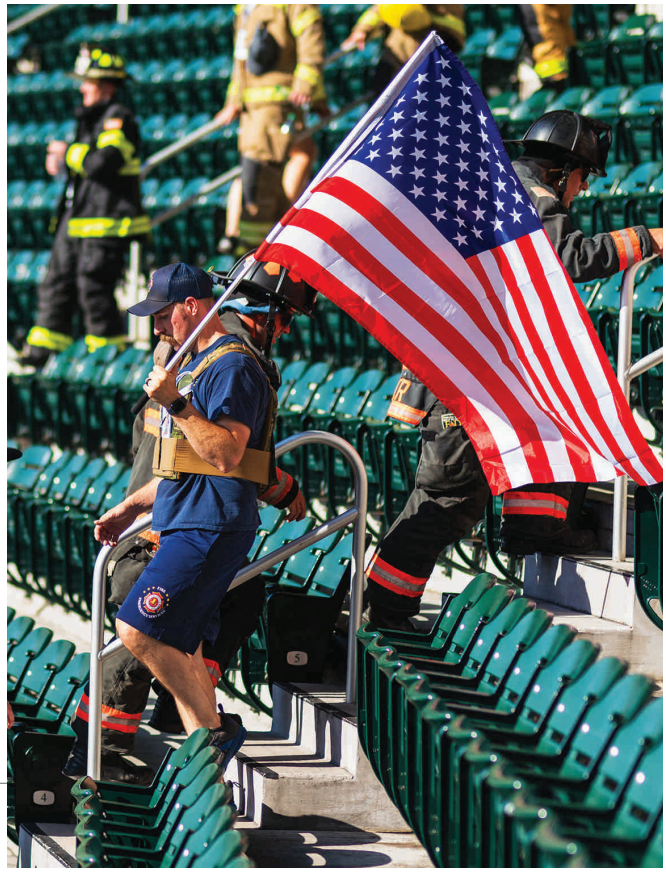
Savannah's climb at Enmarket Arena begins at 8 a.m. Sept. 11. Now in its third year, the free event includes a bagpipe-led opening ceremony, radio traffic from ATC and a ceremonial bell-ringing. Climbers carry lanyards with fallen firefighters' names and photos.

"What happened that day is … [firefighters] would go several stories up, find a victim, walk them back down and then turn right around and go back up," says Mike Thompson, a firefighter and Savannah's event coordinator. "Most of us do [the climb] in gear, but they actually were carrying tools … carrying hose lines … carrying all this stuff."

At Fort Benning, the climb at Doughboy Stadium begins at 6 a.m. Sept. 11 and runs all day. It includes a traditional climb and a 343-rep workout followed by 1,100 steps. Participants get commemorative decals, and fire gear is available.

"If someone wants to really have an understanding of what it felt like to be a firefighter completely suited up, climbing those stairs on 9/11, they have the opportunity … which is also absolutely phenomenal," Fort Benning coordinator Jamie Milburn says. "Even if you can't climb, that's fine. Come out, participate, do what you can … and just be a part of the community event."

—Ellie DeGrace



COURTESY ATLANTA BRAVES

A participant carries the American flag during the stair climb at Truist Park in Atlanta last year.



Explore the historical treasure that is **'Linnentown, The Musical'**

Audiences can experience the annual presentation of **"Linnentown, The Musical"** at Athens' Classic Center Theatre Sept. 12-14. Based on the memoir "Giving Voice to Linnentown" by Athens native Hattie Thomas Whitehead, the play illustrates life in the community of Linnentown in Athens, which was removed because of an urban-renewal project in the 1960s.

"Linnentown was a black community about four blocks from [the University of Georgia (UGA)]," Whitehead says. "It was erased due to UGA wanting to expand their campus, and our community was targeted."

Ticket proceeds will go toward the creation of Athens' first African American history center, Whitehead says.

For more information, visit ***classiccenter.com*** or call (706) 208-0900.

—Yasmin Cowan



MARK SORROW

Please call or check event websites to ensure that these events are taking place before you go.

North Georgia

Moonlight Garden, Sept. 4-Oct. 20, Carrollton Center for the Arts, Carrollton. Silver-gelatin photo prints by Mark Alan Francis portray the changing landscape and the illusion of moonlight using a darkroom process called Mordançage. (770) 838-1083. ***carrolltonarts.com***.

Locals Live Concert: Dakota Dodge & George Britt Band, Sept. 5, The AMP at Adamson Square, Carrollton. Country, classic and folk rockers perform. (770) 832-6901. ***carrolltonga.com***.

"The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe," Sept. 5-7, Holly Theatre, Dahlonega. C.S. Lewis' classic work depicts the magic and mystery of the great lion Aslan, his struggle with the White Witch and the adventures of four children who inadvertently wander through an old wardrobe into Narnia. (706) 530-5162. ***hollytheater.com***.

Emmylou Harris Concert, Sept. 12, Atlanta Botanical Garden Gainesville, Gainesville. Legendary country singer-songwriter performs her hits, including "Together Again," "Beneath Still Waters" and "Tulsa Queen." (404) 888-4760. ***atlantabg.org***.

Hispanic Heritage Festival, Sept. 13, downtown, Villa Rica. Hispanic music, food, vendors, kids' activities. (678) 840-1230. ***bit.ly/villarevnts***.

Hiroya Tsukamoto: A Journey Through Strings and Stories, Sept. 14, Sautee Nacoochee Center, Sautee Nacoochee. Award-winning guitarist and composer blends intricate guitar work with rich storytelling. (706) 878-3300. ***snca.org***.

"Boeing, Boeing," Sept. 19-21, Carrollton Center for the Arts, Carrollton. Three 1960s flight attendants from three different countries all believe they're engaged to pilot Bernard. Find out what happens when they all end up at his apartment on the same day. (770) 838-1083. ***carrolltonarts.com***.

Braselton Brew Fest, Sept. 20, Town Green, Braselton. Music, food trucks, lawn games and samples of beer from Georgia breweries. (706) 654-3915. ***explorebraselton.com***.

50th Annual Rose Lawn Arts Festival, Sept. 20-21, Rose Lawn Museum, Cartersville. Fine arts and crafts from across the Southeast, including oil paintings, watercolors, pastels, and wood, brass and glass sculptures. (770) 387-5162. ***roselawnmuseum.com***.

Taste of Carrollton, Sept. 25, downtown, Carrollton. Sample culinary creations from the city's best restaurants, caterers and breweries. (770) 832-6901. ***carrolltonga.com***.

20th Annual Senoia Car Show, Sept. 27, downtown, Senoia. More than 600 classic and custom cars—vintage cars, muscle cars. hot rods and custom trucks—plus food trucks, valve cover racing and music. (770) 727-9173. ***enjoysenoia.com***.

Gold Rush Festival, Sept. 27, The Mill, Villa Rica. 5K race, parade, food trucks and evening concert with 7 Sharp 9, Lilac Wine and Drivin N Cryin. (678) 840-1441. ***downtownvillarica.com***.

Atlanta Metro

Enchanted Trees by Poetic Kinetics, through Jan. 11, Atlanta Botanical Garden, Atlanta. Eleven colorful tree sculptures—ranging from 9-1/2 feet tall to more than 17 feet tall—with translucent leaves cast dappled light and shadows. (404) 876-5859. ***atlantabg.org***.

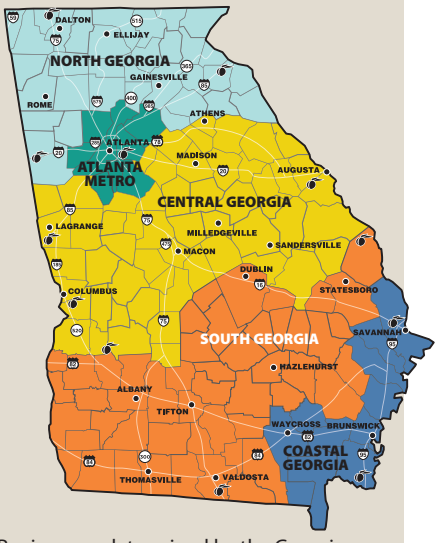
Yellow Daisy Festival, Sept. 4-7, Stone Mountain Park, Stone Mountain. More than 400 arts and crafts vendors, parade, festival food, music, beer garden, Rupert's Orchestra concert



JESS RHODES

"Mollycoddle" by Jess Rhodes

SlowExposures, Sept. 19-21, various historic buildings in Pike County, Zebulon and Concord. Celebrate the rural American South through juried photography displayed in late 19th-century buildings. (770) 841-9268. ***slowexposures.org***.



Regions are determined by the Georgia Department of Economic Development. See its online calendar at ***www.exploregeorgia.org*** for additional events.

Friday night, Kids' Corner. (478) 478-6686. ***bit.ly/smntpk***.

Sawyer Brown, Sept. 5, The Bowl at Sugar Hill, Sugar Hill. GRAMMY-winning country music band performs "All These Years," "Some Girls Do" and "The Dirt Road." (770) 945-6716. ***thebowlatsugarhill.com***.

Atlanta British Car Fayre, Sept. 6, downtown, Norcross. More than 400 British cars and motorcycles, plus British-themed food, beverages and products. (770) 448-2122. ***norcrossga.net***.

Mosaic: Multicultural Festival, Sept. 6, Cultural Arts Center, Douglasville. Performances, foods from a variety of cultures, arts and crafts, music, interactive demonstrations. (770) 949-2787. ***artsdouglas.org***.

Taste of Smyrna, Sept. 6, Village Green, Smyrna. More than 30 restaurants offer samples, plus music and kids' activities. (770) 423-1330. ***smyrnaga.gov***.

9/11 Remembrance Ceremony, Sept. 11, Betty Mauldin Park, Norcross. Community ceremony honors the lives lost and the heroes of 9/11. (770) 448-2122. ***norcrossga.net***.

"The Taming of the Shrew," Sept. 11-14, 18-21, 25-28, Shakespeare Tavern Playhouse, Atlanta. The wild and unwed Katherine is thrown together with the boisterous and charismatic bachelor Petruchio in this high-spirited comedy. (404) 874-5299. ***shakespearetavern.com***.

5th Annual Around the World in the DTL, Sept. 12-13, Lawrenceville Lawn, Lawrenceville. Celebrate global cultures with live music and dance performances, cultural showcases, an international bazaar, international cuisine, crafts and games. (678) 407-6653. ***lawrencevillega.org***.

Dogtoberfest, Sept. 13, Town Green, Duluth. Celebrate all things dog-related with fun activities, games for pets and owners, wiener-dog parade, adoptable-dog showcase and pet-related vendors. (770) 497-5012. ***duluthga.net***.

North Georgia State Fair, Sept. 18-28, Jim R. Miller Park, Marietta. Carnival midway, music, monster trucks and other specialty shows, blue ribbon competitions and fair foods. (770) 423-1330. ***bit.ly/nogastf***.

14th Annual Peachtree Corners Festival, Sept. 20-21, Town Center, Peachtree Corners. Arts and crafts, music, car show and food. (770) 367-3127. ***bit.ly/ptreecorn***.

JapanFest Atlanta, Sept. 20-21, Gas South District, Duluth. Traditional performances, food, crafts and family-friendly activities. (470) 639-8243. ***gassouthdistrict.com***.

Suwanee Fest, Sept. 20-21, Town Center Park, Suwanee. Jurassic-themed parade, entertainment, arts and crafts, games and inflatables. (770) 945-8996. ***suwaneefest.com***.

Central Georgia

Kingdom of Gold, through Sept. 21, Tubman Museum, Macon. Photographs by Ellen Kaplowitz capture Asantahene Otumfo Osei Tutu II, the 16th monarch of the Ashanti kingdom in Ghana. (478) 743-8544. ***tubmanmuseum.com***.

Sunset Blues Festival, Sept. 13, Ellis Field, Culloden. Performances by 803 Fresh Boots on the Ground, Nellie Tiger Travis, Stacii Adams, Sky Whatley and other blues artists. (478) 363-6736. ***visitforsythga.com***.

MORE ▶



CITY OF BLYTHE

Blythe Fever, Sept. 27, downtown, Blythe. Parade, arts and crafts, food vendors, street dance, concert, kids' area with inflatables, rock wall and spin ride. (706) 592-6255. ***blythefever.com.***

Ocmulgee Indigenous Celebration, Sept. 13-14, Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park, Macon. Celebrate Southeastern Native American cultures through traditional dance, cultural crafts, storytelling, educational programs, demonstrations and music. (478) 752-8257. ***ocmulgeemounds.org***.

"Decision Height," Sept. 13-14, 19-21, 26-28, Warner Robins Little Theatre, Warner Robins. Follow a group of women as they train to become WASPs (Women Airforce Service Pilots) and do their part to help win World War II. (478) 929-4579. ***bit.ly/wrltfb***.

C Street Brass Quintet, Sept. 18, Griffin Auditorium, Griffin. Five classically trained brass musicians deliver music from Frank Sinatra, Astor Piazzolla, Billy Joel, George Gershwin and more. (770) 228-3229. ***griffinconcerts.org***.

Barnesville Buggy Days, Sept. 20, downtown, Barnesville. Parade, car show, craft vendors, entertainment and food. (404) 733-7034. ***barnesville.org***.

CSO: Tchaikovsky & Dvořák, Sept. 20, RiverCenter for the Arts, Columbus. Violinist Bella Hristova returns to the CSO for Dvořák's expressive "Violin Concerto," plus works by Brahms and Tchaikovsky. (706) 256-3612. ***csoga.org***.

Still Standing: A Tribute to Elton John, Sept. 20, Monroe County Fine Arts Center, Forsyth. This musical journey brings the singer-songwriter's greatest hits to life, including "Rocket Man," "Your Song" and "Candle In The Wind." (478) 994-2031. ***visitforsythga.com***.

Into the Deep Tour, Sept. 28, The Classic Center, Athens. Country a cappella band Home Free and sea-shanty musical group The Longest Johns blend heartland harmony with maritime melody. (706) 208-0900. ***classiccenter.com***.

South Georgia

Back to School Bash, Sept. 5, Veterans Park Amphitheatre, Albany. Concert by hip-hop, soul and rock band Essence from Tifton, plus food trucks and a kids' zone. (229) 430-5200. ***bit.ly/fntrivec***.

First Friday Sip & Stroll Concert, Sept. 5, Ritz Amphitheater, Thomasville. Bassist Trae Pierce and the T-Stones play funk, rock, hip-hop and blues. (229) 228-7977. ***bit.ly/dtthoms***.

31st Annual Blind Willie McTell Music Festival, Sept. 6, 965 Stagecoach Road N.E., Thomson. Piano legend Chuck Leavell headlines nonstop music in tribute to blues guitarist McTell. Other performers include the Randall Bramblett Band, blues guitarist Monster Mike Welch and bluegrass group The Travelin' McCourys. (706) 595-5584. ***blindwillie.com***.

Brandon Davis, Sept. 6, Burke Office Park Auditorium, Waynesboro. Country artist sings "Hearts Don't Rust," "Forever and Always" and "Pretty." (706) 526-5062. ***burkeconcert.org***.

A Shared Journey of Creativity & Friendship, Sept. 11-Oct. 31, Averitt Center for the Arts, Statesboro. Art educators and longtime friends Tom Cato, a photographer and painter, and Bruce Little, a landscape watercolorist, capture scenes from places they've traveled together with their families. (912) 212-2787. ***bit.ly/avrtctr***.

Music in the Art Park, Sept. 12, Turner Center for the Arts, Valdosta. Singing duo Kerri Kent and Jolyn Smith of 2River Station play a mix of blues and soul from several decades. (229) 247-2787. ***turnercenter.org***.

Farm Festival, Sept. 20, Southern Cypress Christmas Tree Farm, East Dublin. Arts and crafts, pumpkin patch, bouncy house, face painting. (478) 279-2528. ***visitdublinga.org***.

Hank & My Honky Tonk Heroes, Sept. 26, Averitt Center for the Arts, Statesboro. Singer Jason Petty pays tribute to 100 years of Hank Williams' music. (912) 212-2787. ***bit.ly/avrtctr***.

Coastal Georgia

"A Few Good Men," Sept. 6-7, 12-14, Historic Savannah Theatre, Savannah. This play by Aaron Sorkin tells the story of military lawyers at a court-martial. (912) 233-7764. ***savannahtheatre.com***.

Music in the Park, Sept. 13, St. Marys Waterfront Park, St. Marys. Kellie Parr & Her Sidecars sing vintage rock, alt-country and rockabilly music. (912) 882-4000. ***visitstmarys.com***.

Savannah Philharmonic, Sept. 13, Lucas Theatre for the Arts, Savannah. The orchestra performs Copland's "Appalachian Spring" Suite, Barber's "Adagio for Strings" and Dvořák's "Violin Concerto," featuring violinist JoAnna Farrer. (912) 232-6002. ***bit.ly/savphil***.



VISIT STATESBORO

36th Annual Brooklet Peanut Festival, Sept. 20, downtown, Brooklet. Celebrate one of Georgia's most popular crops with arts and crafts, tractor races, food, live music throughout the day and the Blue Steele Band in the evening. (912) 842-2163. ***brookletpeanutfestival.com***.

Sons of Sailors: A Jimmy Buffett Tribute, Sept. 19, Tybee Post Theater, Tybee Island. Tribute band performs tropical rock music. (912) 472-4790. ***tybeeposttheater.org***.

Savannah Jazz Festival, Sept. 19-21, Forsyth Park (Friday and Saturday) and Plant Riverside District (Sunday), Savannah. Performances by Savannah Jazz Hall of Fame Band, Armed Forces Band, Jocelyn Gould with the Left Bank Big Band, Spyro Gyra, the Rodney Jordan Quintet and more. (912) 228-3158. ***savannahjazz.org***.

The Buttermilk Barn Sale Vintage Market, Sept. 26-27, 5078 Buttermilk Road, Sylvania. More than 170 antique and home goods dealers and collectibles vendors, plus music and food trucks. (904) 814-7628. ***bit.ly/butrbrns***.

56th Annual Art Under the Oaks Fine Art Festival, Sept. 27-28, Postell Park, St. Simons Island. More than 60 regional juried artists and skilled artisans offer sculpture, jewelry, ceramics, photography, textiles, wood, metal and glass. (912) 638-8770. ***glynnvisualarts.org***.

Events for the November 2025 issue are due by **Sept. 15**.
Email ***calendar@georgiaemc.com***. See more event listings at ***georgiamagazine.org.***


These are "The Good Old Days"
Childhood doesn't last forever, but the memories you make can. In Ellijay, your kids can play in the woods, chase fireflies, explore the great outdoors, and so much more. Come create memories that last a lifetime in our corner of the world.
SCAN HERE
FOR FAMILY TRIP IDEAS
PICK ELLIJAY GEORGIA

EMCs champion literacy through book donations

Georgia's electric membership corporations (EMCs) support their youngest members in a variety of ways, including by helping them develop their reading skills with educational books.

Every year, Tucker-based Georgia EMC partners with the Georgia Foundation for Agriculture and the Georgia Farm Bureau and its local affiliates to provide each of the state's libraries with a copy of the Book of the Year chosen by the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture.

Electric cooperatives statewide participated by distributing this year's book, "The Soil in Jackie's Garden" by Peggy Thomas, to libraries in their service territories during Georgia Agriculture Awareness Week March 17-23. Nearly 400 public libraries in Georgia received the book, the latest selection in the program that is aimed at educating children about agricultural topics.

EMCs also provide books that improve children's understanding of how an electric cooperative works. Sawnee EMC in Cumming donated a copy of "Cat & Duck and the Electric Cooperative" to the school library in each of the 36 elementary schools in its service territory.

The book was written and illustrated by Patrick Wood of Co-Mo Connect, a broadband services co-op of Co-Mo Electric Cooperative in Tipton, Mo. Wood shared the book with electric cooperative communicators nationwide, with the option of printing copies branded with local EMCs' names. To learn more, read the book and access related coloring pages, visit ***catandduck.org***.

The Thomaston-based Upson EMC Foundation recently donated $10,000 in Operation Round Up funds to the Pine Mountain Regional Library System, based in Manchester. The money will be used for Wonderbooks, which promote early literacy by combining a printed book with an included audiobook, and leveled reader books.

Sometimes cooperatives promote a love of books simply by going into classrooms or libraries and reading to children.

EMC representatives participate in National Read Across America Day events in March, but reading events also crop up throughout the year. For example, Zach McNeese, safety coordinator at Vienna-based Middle Georgia EMC, stopped by to read "The Polar Express" to a cozy class of second graders enjoying their Pajamas Day on Dec. 6 at Hawkinsville Elementary School.



COURTESY MIDDLE GEORGIA EMC



COURTESY SAWNEE EMC



COURTESY TROUP COUNTY FARM BUREAU

Top: ***Zach McNeese visited Hawkinsville Elementary School in December to read "The Polar Express" to a class of second graders.*** **Above left:** ***Mandy Love (left), director of marketing at Sawnee EMC, gives copies of "Cat & Duck and the Electric Cooperative" to Lisa Newberry, district media specialist for Forsyth County Schools.*** **Above right:** ***Troup County Farm Bureau Office Manager Anna Rogers (left) and Diverse Power Member Relations Advisor Logan Gann (right) present "The Soil in Jackie's Garden" to Pauline Abidde, interim library director at the LaGrange Public Library.***


COURTESY CARROLL COUNTY SCHOOLS

Carroll EMC donates $200,000 to boost school safety

Carroll EMC President/CEO Tim Martin (center) met with members of the Carroll County Board of Education to deliver a donation for school-safety initiatives.

Carrollton-based Carroll Electric Membership Corp. (EMC) recently donated $200,000 to local schools and school systems to support safety initiatives.

The largest amount, $97,500, went to Carroll County Schools. Tim Martin, president and CEO of Carroll EMC, presented the check to the Carroll County Board of Education at its meeting on April 17.

"We are honored to partner with Carroll County Schools in a shared mission to provide a safe, nurturing and empowering environment for all students," Martin said. "It is our hope that this donation will contribute meaningfully to that mission and support any measures deemed necessary to enhance the safety infrastructure and preparedness across your schools."

The other schools and systems receiving donations were Bremen City Schools, Carrollton City Schools, Haralson County School System, Heard County School System, Paulding County School System, Polk School District, Troup County School System, Oak Grove Montessori School, Oak Mountain Academy, Holy Ground Baptist Academy and Liberty Eagle Academy.

The funds for the donations came from unclaimed capital credits.

"As a member-owned cooperative, Carroll EMC is committed to serving not just the energy needs of our members but the broader well-being of the communities we call home," Martin said. "Our board [of directors] recognizes that the safety and security of students, faculty and staff are vital to the success and sustainability of our region."

Senator earns award for co-op advocacy



COURTESY GEORGIA EMC

State Sen. Steve Gooch (R-Dahlonega) was presented with the inaugural Georgia EMC Electric Cooperative Champion Award at the Georgia Rural Electric Managers' Association (GREMA) conference in Hilton Head, S.C., on July 14. The award, presented by Tucker-based Georgia Electric Membership Corp. (EMC), honors a policymaker who has gone above and beyond in his or her efforts to promote safe, reliable and affordable electricity for the 5 million Georgians served by electric cooperatives. Among Gooch's achievements in the General Assembly was spearheading the 2019 legislation that enabled EMCs to provide broadband services. From left are Todd Payne, president and CEO of Jasper-based Amicalola EMC; Gooch; and Gary Miller, president and CEO of Hiram-based GreyStone Power Corp.

SHORTTakes

Hospital help: The Reynolds-based Flint Energies Foundation recently donated $7,500 to the Piedmont Columbus Regional Foundation. The funds will be used for technology and equipment at the Bill and Olivia Amos Children's Hospital in Columbus. The new hospital, which opened in October, aims to provide specialized care for children in an area that previously was underserved so that families do not have to travel great distances to get needed services. The donations came from Operation Round Up, in which members opt to round up their monthly bills and the difference goes into a fund that supports charitable causes in the community.

Building leaders: Eight electric cooperatives were represented in this year's Co-ops Lead program, which Tucker-based Georgia Electric Membership Corp. (EMC) provides to help co-op employees develop the tools, resources and best practices to drive positive change in their cooperatives and the communities they serve. The 12 program graduates work at Cobb EMC in Marietta, Colquitt EMC in Moultrie, Diverse Power in LaGrange, Flint Energies, Go Energy Credit Union in Tucker, Southern Rivers Energy in Barnesville, Sumter EMC in Americus and Walton EMC in Monroe.


COURTESY GEORGIA EMC

Technological support: Southern Rivers Energy donated $5,000 in Operation Round Up funds to Gordon State College's Laptop Lending Program last year. The program allows students in need at the college, which has campuses in Barnesville and McDonough and offers online courses, to borrow laptop computers if they cannot afford to buy their own.



COURTESY SOUTHERN RIVERS ENERGY



Volunteer Afia Nyarkoa pins the side seams of a gown during the July meeting of the Cobb County chapter of Tiny Stitches.

PHIL SKINNER PHOTOGRAPHY

made with love

Tiny Stitches supports struggling

By Rosalyn Dunn

For many people, the birth of a new baby means a trip to the store for tiny new outfits, blankets and soft toys. But what happens when money is so tight for families that those items are out of reach?

That's where more than 200 crafters with Tiny Stitches, a Gwinnett County-based nonprofit organization, step in. These volunteers turn out booties, knitted caps, quilts and more that are packed into layettes (sets of clothing and accessories for newborns) and distributed to families by local hospitals, women's shelters and resource centers.

Linda Hargis has been a faithful part of Tiny Stitches since she helped found a sewing group at Mt. Zion United Methodist Church in Marietta in the early 2000s. Last year, Cobb County volunteers created more than 2,200 items. As of June, the group had made 893 pieces this year.

"These [moms] don't go into the hospital expecting to go home with a layette," she says. "For many [parents], this is a short-term help. If you're working to put a roof over your head and food on the table, that's what you have to do first before you buy new things for a baby."

Tiny Stitches was founded in 1998 and was incorporated as a nonprofit in 1999. Members meet monthly in sewing groups in Alpharetta, Gainesville, Hartwell, Johns Creek, Lilburn, Marietta and Snellville, where they work on items, drop off completed projects or pick up kits so they can create at home.

All materials for the projects have been donated to the organization by individuals or companies. Tiny Stitches' grant coordinator has received corporate support, including donations from Jackson Electric Membership Corp. (EMC) in Jefferson and Amicalola EMC in Jasper.

Group meetings are open to volunteers who know how to sew, knit and crochet as well as those who want to learn.

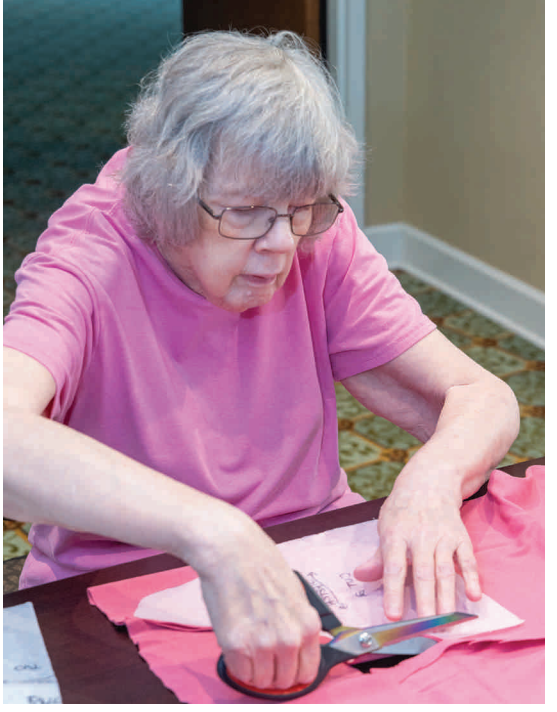
"We don't tell you what to do [at meetings]," says Susan Brunton, who has been president of Tiny Stiches for 12 years. "We ask you, 'What do you like to make?'"

That could be anything that will make up a layette, including quilts,



KATHY JACOBSON

Tiny Stitches provides families in need with a variety of handmade items, including sweater sets and knit caps during winter months. In the summer, the layettes have onesies and diaper shirts.



PHIL SKINNER PHOTOGRAPHY



PHIL SKINNER PHOTOGRAPHY

Above left: *Janet Dressler cuts fabric for gowns, sleepers and T-shirts at the Cobb County chapter's July meeting. The group meets on the third Thursday of each month at Mt. Zion United Methodist Church in Marietta.* **Above right:** *Linda Hargis sews the binding on a gown.*

parents with essentials for newborns



KATHY JACOBSON

receiving blankets, bibs, socks, gowns and washcloths. In the summer, each kit includes a onesie and a diaper shirt; in the winter, those items are replaced with a sweater set, booties, a knit cap and a fleece sleep sack, which Brunton says is her favorite to make. The items are all made in one size intended to accommodate most infants up to 3 months old.

Workshop leaders deliver the completed goods to a warehouse in Sugar Hill, where they are lovingly folded and packed into handmade bags and delivered to hospitals and other locations for distribution. As of June, Tiny Stitches had prepared 9,051 items this year.

By July, Tiny Stitches volunteers had made 58 burial kits this year for families who have lost infants. Each kit includes a gown, a bonnet, a blanket and an envelope to hold a birth certificate or lock of hair—a way to help assuage the unimaginable grief experienced by parents.

Tiny Stitches relies on maternity nurses to know when to offer a layette to a new mother. Storage is tight for the layettes at many facilities, so Brunton always keeps a few on hand at her home.

"Someone called me who was having a baby shower for a mom who didn't have anything," she says. "I met her at a QT. We'll do whatever is necessary. If someone needs it, they're going to get it."

That commitment is common among Tiny Stitches volunteers, who range in age from teenagers to 109-year-old Doris Mahannah of Hartwell, who has been sewing with the group for 13 years.

"She still turns out 30 sleepers a month," Brunton says. "The other ladies cut out the patterns and do the snaps, but she sews them together. They treat her like a queen."

Crafters aren't told who receives the layettes; the idea is for parents to know that there are people who care and are willing to help, Brunton says. But sometimes the truth is unexpectedly revealed.

"We had a member who likes to use her own yarn and was checking out at Walmart with a lot of it," she says. "The cashier asked her what she was making, and she told her [about the layettes]. The cashier says, 'I got one of those bags!'"

Hargis calls the monthly sewing meetings her "therapy," where she can relax, sew and forget her worries for a little while. Even so, she and the other sewing volunteers never lose sight of their mission.

As she works on whichever items are most needed to complete a layette, Hargis says she remembers the words of a hospital nurse who said that if you can keep a baby warm during the first three months of life—especially if that child lives in a home where it's drafty or where the parents can't afford to sufficiently heat the home—the baby will be healthier and have a better chance of staying that way.

"I love doing things for these babies and giving them a chance," Hargis says.

Rosalyn Dunn is a freelance writer based in Atlanta.

To find out more about Tiny Stitches, visit ***tinystitches.org***.

Acts of kindness

Letter to *Georgia Magazine* kicks off new series of reader stories

Compiled by
Georgia Magazine staff

In May, we received an email from reader Asena Mott, a member of Sandersville-based Washington EMC who saw our call for story ideas.

Mott shared her experience of bringing together neighbors in her East Dublin community after Hurricane Helene devastated many parts of Georgia last September.

Mott's letter (at right) reflects the many acts of kindness that Georgians experience every day. We'd love to hear your stories, too!



COURTESY ASENA MOTT

Asena Mott met neighbor Fred Walker when she hosted her first driveway gathering in East Dublin last September after the hurricane.

I read through the latest *Georgia Magazine* and saw the ad for great story ideas. Thought I'd suggest one.

We live in southwest Florida and own a house in East Dublin in Laurens County. Last year, when Hurricane Helene hit East Dublin, we knew immediately that we had to go help.

My family has experienced many hurricanes, and we know how to manage in the days that follow destruction. We were pretty sure our Georgia town did not. After a quick post to social media and some incredibly generous Florida friends, my mom and I loaded the truck and trailer and headed north.

The destruction was widespread, and some areas were hit harder than others. Our East Dublin neighborhood around the lake was no different. The day before we arrived, most of the neighborhood did not have power, but Washington Electric Membership Corp. (EMC) had restored power at our place. This made the next steps so much more doable.

We unloaded the truck and trailer and set up supplies for the neighborhood in our garage and driveway. We started grilling hamburgers and hot dogs. People stopped by for the food and supplies, and many of them sat down for a while. That's when strangers became neighbors.

After a devastating storm, people need food, clothing and shelter. Having run hurricane shelters for many years, I know they also need something else: They need one another.

Fortunate to have electricity, air conditioning and water, we invited people to come sit in the cool, have some good food and homemade pie, and take a shower if they needed one.

For five nights, neighbors met one another while sitting in our driveway, drinking iced tea and having strawberry pie. They charged their phones. They swapped storm stories. They all took a deep breath.

They needed each other as much as they needed the basics of daily life.

An elderly widow needed extra support. Washington EMC said the attempt had been made to restore her power a couple of times, but the road was not passable for large trucks. A few men left our place with chain saws and ropes and cleared her driveway so power trucks could reach her pole. Neighbors continued to check on her daily until her power was restored. She gained a new support system of people who continue to help.

A huge "thank you" to Washington EMC. It's the power of electricity that sparked the power of human kindness.

That spark is still there. Even now, the neighbors who used to be strangers will hold driveway gatherings, enjoy some sweet tea, swap storm stories and offer a helping hand, proving that the power of kindness can't be destroyed by a hurricane.

Thanks to Washington EMC's quick response, we are better than ever!

—Asena Mott, via email

Share your story of kindness!

Send your story of 200 words or fewer (and photos, if available), plus your name, mailing address, phone number, email address and the name of your electric co-op. Email stories and photos (one photo per email, please) to ***magazine@georgiaemc.com*** or mail to: Reader Stories, *Georgia Magazine*, P.O. Box 1707, Tucker, GA 30085-1707. *Georgia Magazine* reserves the right to edit published stories for the purposes of space and clarity.



Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Georgia

Not everyone starts their day at the same time, or in the same way. But no matter when or how, your local Touchstone Energy cooperative is there to help you power every moment of it.

YOUR SOURCE FOR POWER. AND INFORMATION.

Canoochee EMC
Central Georgia EMC
Coastal Electric Cooperative
Cobb EMC
Coweta-Fayette EMC
Flint Energies
GreyStone Power Corp.
Habersham EMC
Hart EMC
Irwin EMC
Middle Georgia EMC
Oconee EMC
Planters EMC
Sawnee EMC
Snapping Shoals EMC
Southern Rivers Energy
Sumter EMC
Washington EMC

BOUND BY BOOKS

Friends groups hold sales, events to support local libraries

By Pamela A. Keene

Every now and then, volunteers with Friends of the Library groups find a real treasure as they prepare for annual book-sale fundraisers. So imagine Pam Yates' surprise when she found a very unusual book among the thousands she was sorting for the April Houston County Old Book Sale.

"A 1946 edition of [Miguel de] Cervantes' 'Don Quixote' with illustrations by Salvador Dalí caught my eye," says Yates, vice president of the Houston County Public Library System's Friends of the Library. "In my years of chairing the vintage book section of our annual sales, we often come across older books, but many of them are not as special as this one was."

After researching the book, Yates and her committee priced the book at $480. The book sold for the asking price; it was the largest single-book purchase of the event this year.

"Typical book prices at the Houston County Old Book Sale are $1 to $1.50, but when a treasure comes to us, we'll price it to reflect its value within reason," says Georgette Lipford, president of the all-volunteer group. "Although it could have brought more money, we decided to make sure the price was within reach to the people who shop our sale."



Left: ***Students with 4-H of Lamar County learn about pollinators at the Milner Community Library.*** **Above:** ***The Friends of the Library Milner Inc. distributes children's books at the annual Trunk or Treat event.***



Members of the Friends of the Library Milner Inc. grill hot dogs for a recent fundraising event.

In the last 20 years, the Houston County Old Book Sale has become the group's major fundraising event.

"We collect, sort and price books in our warehouse from September to April," Lipford says.

The Houston County Friends group annually sorts more than 90,000 books by categories in its book warehouse. They're then transported to the Georgia Grown building at the Georgia National Fairgrounds & Agricenter in Perry for the three-day event.

"Converting to sticker pricing helps expedite checkout," Lipford says. "Employees of Robins Financial Credit Union volunteered at our 2025 book sale. Although they helped in multiple ways, they were key at checkout. The combination of sticker prices and the [assistance from] Robins employees contributed to shorter wait times this year at checkout."

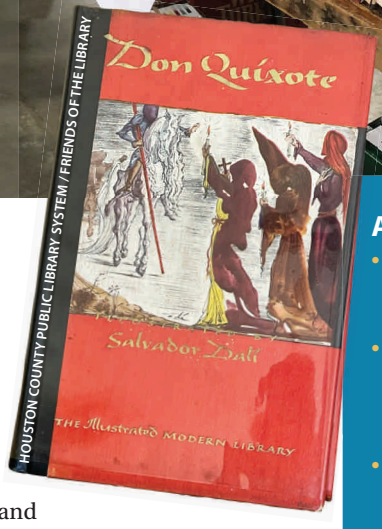
This year, nearly 5,000 shoppers attended; the group donated $45,000 to the Houston County Public Library System.



ISTOCK.COM / ILIJA ERCEG

HOUSTON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM / FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

Airmen from Robins Air Force Base help prepare for the Houston County Old Book Sale. **Right:** *This 1946 edition of "Don Quixote" fetched $480 at this year's sale.*



HOUSTON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM / FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

A few upcoming events

- **Pistons and Pages Classic Car Show**, Sept. 13, Milner Community Library, Milner. Classic cars, music and food. (770) 265-9713. ***fb.com/milnercommunitylibrary***.
- **Molena Bigfoot Fest and Elkins Creek 5K and 1-mile Fun Run**, Nov. 8, 10 Springs Road, Molena. Music, arts and crafts, a road race and walk, speakers and food trucks. (770) 884-9711. ***bit.ly/bigfootfest25***.
- **Houston County Old Book Sale**, April 23-25, 2026, Georgia Grown building at the Georgia National Fairgrounds & Agricenter, Perry. Browse through more than 90,000 books in 60 categories. (478) 923-0128. ***bit.ly/houstonfriendslibrary***.

Since the first sale in 2005, the organization has gifted $584,450 that has been used for new-book purchases and support for the summer Vacation Reading Program.

"Our categories have changed with the times," Lipford says. "When we started, 'vampire and paranormal' and 'chick lit' were unheard-of; these days they are among our most popular. We just go with the flow."

Building a library for the community

In response to a city survey 20 years ago, members of the Friends of the Library Milner Inc. made a grand commitment.

"The survey showed that people [in Milner] wanted a library with a community room," says Cheryl Idol, a longtime member who has held several offices in the group. "When we heard that, we decided that our goal was to help make this vision a reality. Although it took 15 years to raise the money by our group, community leaders, businesses and state grants, our beautiful library opened in 2020."

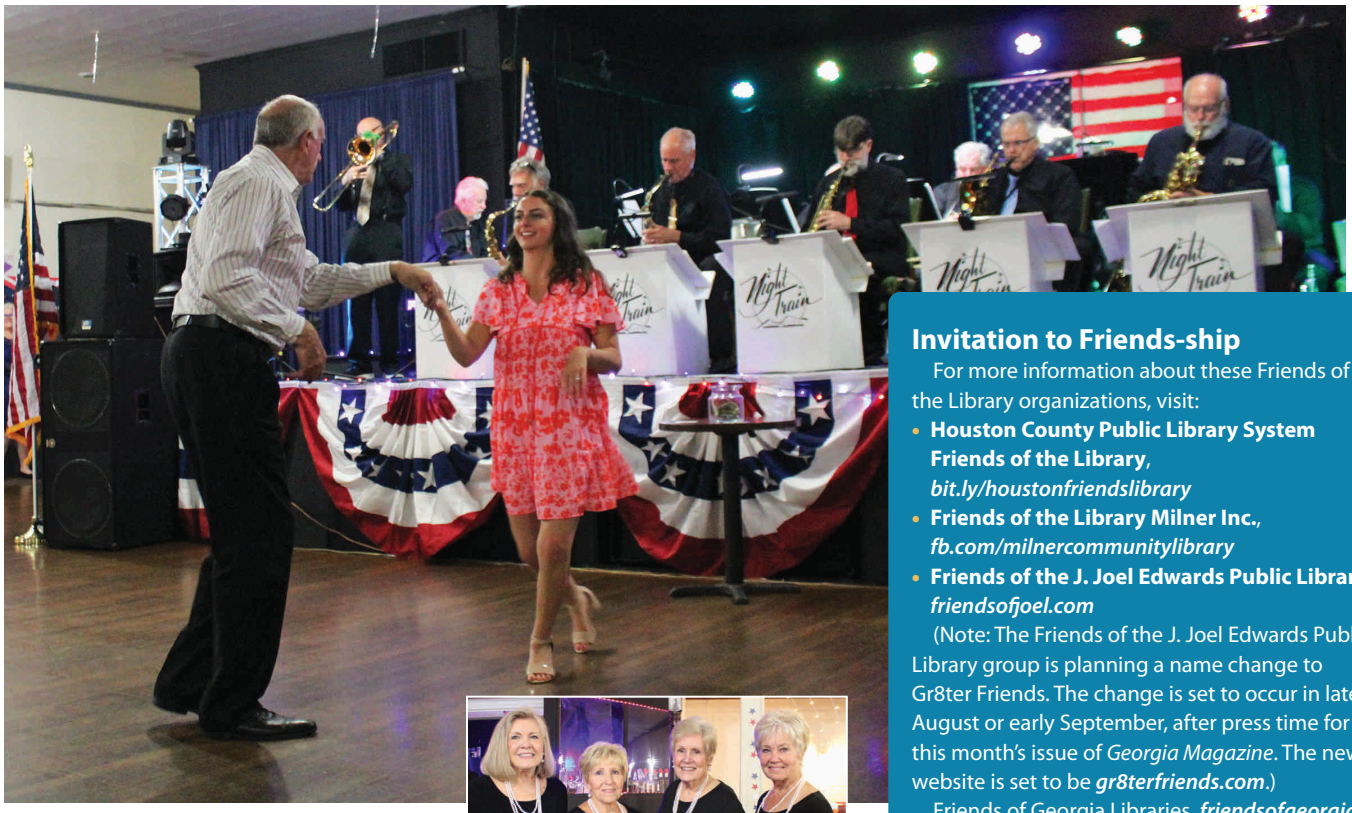
The club set out to create community events, not only to raise funds but also to provide more activities for residents of the town, which has a population of fewer than 900.

"Our Library Friends group was instrumental in getting the Milner [Community] Library built, raising enough money with fundraisers such as pancake breakfasts and book sales over many years to enable us to apply for a state grant. It has been a multigenerational effort," Idol says.

Today, Friends of the Library Milner Inc. and library staff organize the Pistons and Pages Classic Car Show in September, support a summer reading program for kids and youths, stage two community yard sales and produce a holiday golf-cart parade featuring Santa in December. The community room is available at no charge for public events, voting, civic group meetings, city council meetings and gatherings for book clubs, cookbook clubs, sewing clubs and other community groups.

"For a long time, Milner had limited access to the internet, so people had to drive out of town to access service," Idol says.

MORE



BECKY WATTS / PIKE COUNTY TIMES



BECKY WATTS / PIKE COUNTY TIMES

The annual Big Band Swing Dance helps fund projects for the Friends of the J. Joel Edwards Public Library.* Right: *The Atlanta-based NoteWorthy Swing Quartet performed at the organization's dance in April.

Invitation to Friends-ship

For more information about these Friends of the Library organizations, visit:

- **Houston County Public Library System Friends of the Library**, ***bit.ly/houstonfriendslibrary***
- **Friends of the Library Milner Inc.**, ***fb.com/milnercommunitylibrary***
- **Friends of the J. Joel Edwards Public Library**, ***friendsofjoel.com***

(Note: The Friends of the J. Joel Edwards Public Library group is planning a name change to Gr8ter Friends. The change is set to occur in late August or early September, after press time for this month's issue of *Georgia Magazine*. The new website is set to be ***gr8terfriends.com***.)

Friends of Georgia Libraries, ***friendsofgeorgialibraries.com***, is a statewide organization that unites many local Friends groups. Others function independently, so the best way to get involved in your community is to contact your local public library for information.

"Now the library has free Wi-Fi for the community, and it's not unusual to see individuals sitting in the library parking lot or on the porches on their phones and laptops."

The Friends of the Library Milner Inc. has a strong core of 15 to 20 volunteers and the support of the Milner community.

"You know, it is amazing what a small town can do with everyone working together," she says. "Our Friends group is honored to be a part of the Milner community."

Meet Bigfoot and get swing-dancing

For years, Rosemary Bunn managed the J. Joel Edwards Public Library Inc. in Zebulon. Her husband, Bobby, supported the library as one of the first members of the Friends group founded in 2014 by Leslie Ratliff.

Bobby Bunn worked in auto sales for 43 years and made many connections. Those contacts have helped him and the six-member board of the Friends of the J. Joel Edwards Public Library raise funds for programs and purchases not covered by the county or the library's governing board.

"In 2011, our first Big Band Swing Dance in Griffin at the Kiwanis Event Center set the tone for our events," Bunn says. "Our theme is the 1940s at the height of swing, and we often have many veterans attending, many [of them] in uniform or period attire."

In 2022, about 30 cadets from Georgia Military College in Milledgeville were invited to serve as escorts and dance partners for the evening at the event, now held at the Moose Lodge 1503 in Griffin.

"They came to us a few weeks before, and we taught them how to swing-dance and to be proper partners at a social event," Bunn says. "It was good for us and an opportunity for the cadets to build on their social skills."

To foster community goodwill in 2021 and 2022, the Friends hosted free showings of the 1983 TV movie "Murder in Coweta County" starring Johnny Cash and Andy Griffith. It was filmed in and around Zebulon. The screening was followed by a panel discussion with people involved with the film.

In 2022, the Friends group partnered with the town of Molena to create the annual Molena Bigfoot Fest and Elkins Creek 5K and 1-mile Fun Run. The event, which is held on the second Saturday of November, features music, arts and crafts, a road race and walk, food trucks and speakers who share their knowledge about Bigfoot.

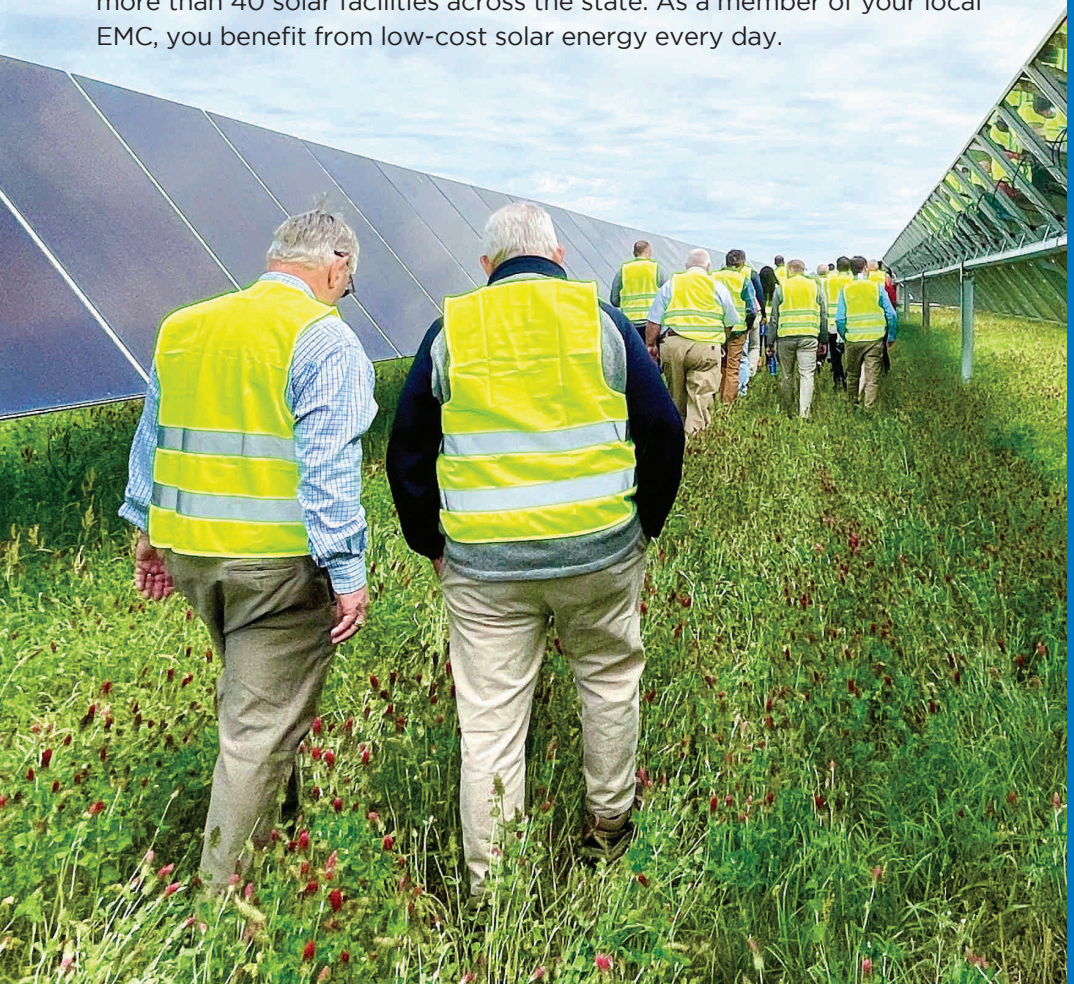
"Last year more than 4,500 people attended the event to connect over Bigfoot stories, explore the mystery of Bigfoot and share a sense of community," Bunn says. "And it's all for a good cause: supporting the J. Joel Edwards Public Library."

Pamela A. Keene is a freelance writer based in Flowery Branch.

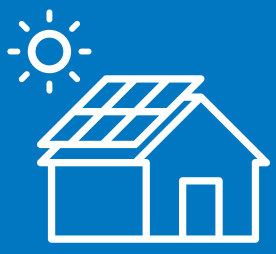
GEORGIA'S EMCs
Powering a Brighter Tomorrow with Solar Energy

As trailblazers of solar energy among electric cooperatives nationwide, Georgia's electric membership cooperatives (EMCs) are leading the transition toward a cleaner energy future.

Georgia's EMCs power more than 4.7 million Georgians with an affordable, reliable and diverse energy portfolio, including energy produced from more than 40 solar facilities across the state. As a member of your local EMC, you benefit from low-cost solar energy every day.



State and local leaders visit the 106-megawatt Clay Solar Project in Clay County, Georgia.



Just as Georgia's EMCs have invested in solar energy, they stand ready to assist you in navigating the benefits of rooftop solar.

Your local EMC can help you understand your current electricity use and what you can expect to gain from a rooftop solar investment. As your neighbor in the community and a trusted energy advisor, your EMC can help you make smart energy investments that align with your electricity needs and help safeguard your financial future.

Visit greenpoweremc.com/solar to learn more and to search for your local EMC.

GREEN POWER EMC
RENEWABLE ENERGY

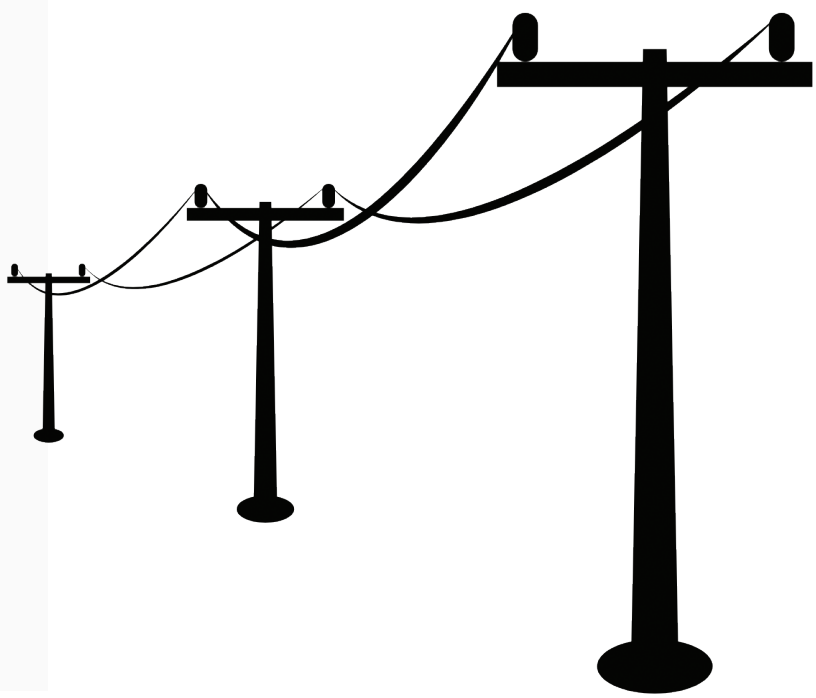
Green Power EMC is the renewable energy supplier for 38 Georgia EMCs.

CONNECTED TO

Habersham Electric Membership Corporation
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

TEAMWORK
BUSINESS
ENVIRONMENT
COMMUNITY
SAFETY
AGRICULTURE
PEOPLE
THE FUTURE
EDUCATION
MEMBERS
TRADITIONS





EXECUTIVE MESSAGE



Bryan Ferguson
President/CEO



Dustin Hulsey
Board Chairman

As we take a moment to reflect on the past year, I want to commend the leadership and staff of Habersham EMC for their outstanding commitment to being Connected To our members. We have intensified our focus on training and information sharing to better serve you, ensuring that every decision we make keeps our members at the forefront.

From our humble beginnings, our mission has always centered around connection - with our members and our community. We are truly honored to serve you. We recognize that you have a lot on your plate, and our goal is to make your power and internet services as seamless as possible. As we continue to stay Connected To our communities, we pledge to keep you informed and work diligently to prioritize your best interests. Our ambition is to foster a prosperous future for our children and grandchildren.

Our employees remain steadfastly Connected To our members, vendors and communities. The objective is clear: to deliver World-Class Service and Reliability to each of you. We take immense pride in our employees and the invaluable work they accomplish each day. We are truly blessed to have such a talented and connected team.

"From our humble beginnings, our mission has always been centered around connection - with our members and our community."

We deeply appreciate our members, our employees and our communities, and we are thankful for the incredible connections we have forged over the past 87 years. As we look ahead, we are committed to cultivating even more wonderful relationships and remaining Connected To you. Every connection we make will always prioritize our members' best interests.

Thank you for the privilege and honor of serving you, and we eagerly anticipate many more years of dedicated service.

Sincerely,

Bryan Ferguson
President/CEO

Dustin Hulsey
Board Chairman

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Dustin Hulsey
Chairman - West District



Billy Cantrell
Vice-Chairman - Central District



Kenneth McEntire
Secretary/Treasurer - East District



David Foster
East District



Jeff Herrin
Central District



Dallas Taylor
North District



Dan Thurmond
West District



David Wall
East District



Rick Wood
Central District

2025 Official Annual Business Meeting Notice

HABERSHAM ELECTRIC MEMBERSHIP CORPORATION

In compliance with the Bylaws, Article II, Section 2.03, you are hereby notified that the 2025 Annual Business Meeting of Habersham Electric Membership Corporation will be held at Habersham Electric Membership Corporation (State Highway 115 between Clarkesville and Cleveland) Thursday, September 25, 2025.

The terms of directors Dustin Hulsey, 294 Pierce Drive, Cleveland, Ga 30528; Dan Thurmond, 378 Wingo Drive, Sautee, Ga 30571; and David Wall, 1205 East Glade Creek Road, Clarkesville, Ga 30523, will expire at this Annual Business Meeting. Therefore, according to the Bylaws, three directors will be elected for a three-year term beginning September 25, 2025.

The Nominating Committee met, in compliance with the Bylaws, on June 17, 2025. The Credentials and Election Committee certified the following nominated members on July 8, 2025, as official candidates for the Board of Directors:

East District

David Wall (Incumbent)
1205 East Glade Creek Road
Clarkesville, GA 30523

West District

Scott Bardenwerper
121 Patrick Lane
Helen, GA 30545

Dustin Hulsey (Incumbent)
294 Pierce Drive
Cleveland, GA 30528

Dan Thurmond (Incumbent)
378 Wingo Drive
Sautee, GA 30571

This will be an informative meeting. Your presence and vote upon the matters of business are important.

Kenneth McEntire
Kenneth McEntire, Secretary-Treasurer

East District **-** Eastern Habersham and Stephens counties
Central District **-** Habersham, Hall and eastern White counties
North District **-** Rabun County
West District **-** Hall, Lumpkin and White counties

NOMINEES
FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
East District



David Wall is a candidate for reelection to the HEMC Board of Directors representing the East District.

A lifelong resident of Habersham County, David is a graduate of Habersham Central High School and Gupton-Jones College. He is a licensed funeral director and embalmer, former partner and Vice President of Whitfield Funeral Homes, and served 12 years as Coroner before becoming Clerk of Superior Court for Habersham County in 2005.

David holds the Carl Vinson Institute of Government certificate for Superior Court Clerks and currently serves as President of the Association of Superior Court Clerks of Georgia.

David is active in the community through Clarkesville Baptist Church, where he is a deacon and trustee, and has long-term involvement with the Cornelia Kiwanis Club, Clarkesville Masonic Lodge and the Northeast Georgia Antique Auto Region. He is past President of both the Georgia Coroners Association and the Academy of Graduate Embalmers of Georgia, and has served on numerous local and statewide boards, including the Habersham Electric Membership Corporation board.

David and his wife, Jody York Wall, reside in Clarkesville.

CONNECTED TO Habersham Electric Membership Corporation
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative
with us

Phone
(706) 754-2114
(706) 865-4362

Chat
Start a live chat with a member of our team online at www.habershamemc.com.

In Person
Visit us in person at the Clarkesville or Cleveland offices.
Drive-thru is available at the Clarkesville location.

NOMINEES FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

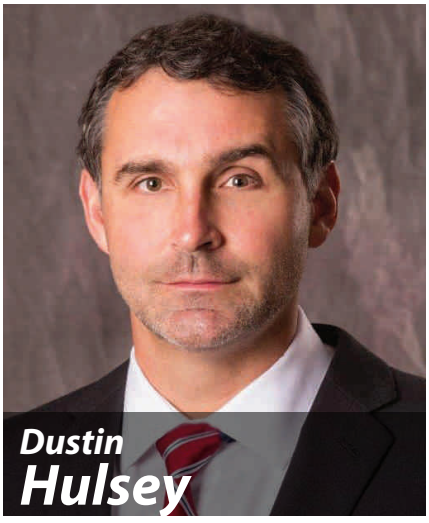
West District



Scott Bardenwerper is a candidate for election to the HEMC Board of Directors representing the West District. He brings decades of leadership and public service experience to this role. Scott retired from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources as Region Supervisor of the Wildlife Resources Division after 34 years of law enforcement and served as Chief of Police in Cleveland, Georgia. In addition, he has also served on several local advisory boards, demonstrating his commitment to public service and community involvement.

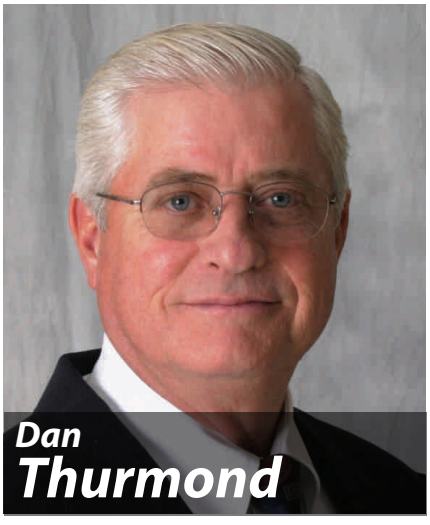
Scott currently works part-time as a Wildlife Technician for the Georgia DNR. He is a graduate of Union County High School, holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminal Justice from the University of North Georgia, and a Master's degree in Public Administration from Columbus State University.

Scott and his wife, Laura, have lived in White County for 37 years and have three sons. He is an active member of Center Baptist Church and serves as Chairman of the Budget Committee.



Dustin Hulsey is a candidate for reelection to the HEMC Board of Directors representing the West District. With 11 years of experience on the board, he has demonstrated a strong dedication to cooperative leadership and development. He holds several certifications, including the NRECA Credentialed Cooperative Director Certification, Board Leadership Certification and Gold Certification. Dustin also earned a Political Science Degree from the University of North Georgia.

Dustin resides in Cleveland with his wife, Stephanie, and their two sons Jude and Jeb Hulsey. He actively attends Chattahoochee Baptist Church and is the owner of Hulsey Tile. In addition to his board responsibilities, Dustin has served on the HEMC Member Advisory Board for several years and currently serves on the board of MyGeorgia Credit Union. He is the Director of the Georgia Energy Cooperative and holds the position of Secretary for the EMC Directors Association, further dedicating his commitment to community service and cooperative governance.



Dan Thurmond is a candidate for reelection to the HEMC Board of Directors, bringing with him 30 years of dedicated service on the Board. Throughout his tenure, he has effectively held the positions of Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary - Treasurer. Dan is also recognized for his professional development, having obtained both the NRECA Credentialed Cooperative Director Certification and the Board Leadership Certification.

In addition to his role on the Board, Dan has served on the Advisory Board of Oglethorpe Power Cooperative for more than 15 years, showcasing his commitment to energy cooperatives and community service.

A lifelong resident of White County, Dan resides in the Sautee-Nacoochee Valley. He and his wife, Andrea, have two daughters, Tammy Jarrard and Robin Shook, and four granddaughters.

Dan is retired from the Georgia Department of Transportation, where he served as the Asphalt Maintenance Coordinator in Atlanta. Active in his community, he and his family attend Crescent Hill Baptist Church, where he serves on the Deacon Board and is also Choir Director.

2024 AT A GLANCE

How we connected last year

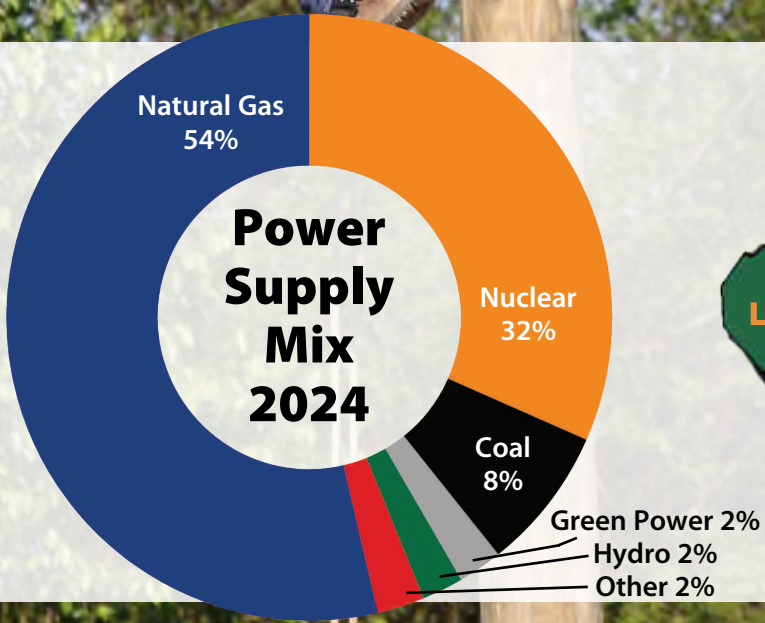
Total members served
28,568

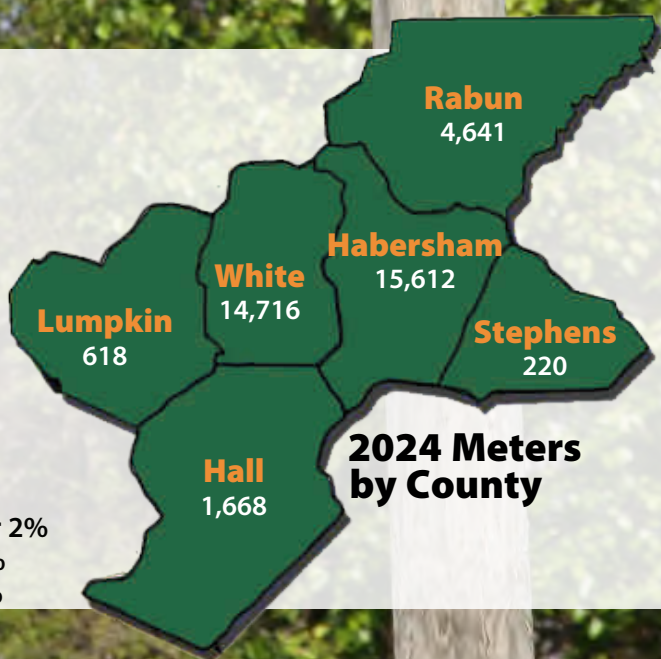
Total meters served
37,475

Miles of line
3,916

Employees
112

New meter growth
1.4%





FINANCIALS

Statement of Revenues and Expenses

FOR YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31

	2024	2023
OPERATING REVENUE:	$ 84,699,016	$ 75,648,282
OPERATING EXPENSES:		
Cost of Power	45,383,972	38,227,272
Operations and Maintenance	12,412,566	12,095,389
Customer Accounts and Service	2,061,566	1,965,660
Administrative	5,439,418	5,647,192
Depreciation	8,559,011	8,731,685
Interest	5,405,178	4,380,100
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES:	79,261,711	71,047,298
OPERATING MARGINS:	5,437,305	4,600,984
OTHER REVENUE:	4,283,838	4,746,990
NET MARGINS:	$ 9,721,143	$ 9,347,974

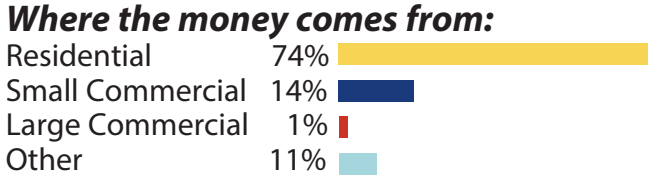
Balance Sheet

FOR YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31

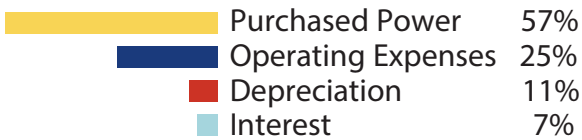
	2024	2023
UTILITY PLANT:		
Electric Plant in Service	$ 263,081,219	$ 238,569,871
Construction Work in Progress	21,309,768	12,638,244
	284,390,987	251,208,115
Accumulated Provision for Depreciation	(100,811,510)	(95,696,285)
	183,579,477	155,511,830
INVESTMENTS:	36,411,040	32,981,188
CURRENT ASSETS:	25,993,870	20,410,940
DEFERRED DEBITS:	1,315,760	1,463,044
TOTAL ASSETS:	$ 247,300,147	$ 210,367,002
EQUITIES:		
Memberships	$ 742,590	$ 769,260
Patronage Capital	72,294,430	62,446,287
Other	2,675,198	4,103,524
	75,712,218	67,319,071
LONG-TERM DEBT:	141,764,641	101,202,852
ACCUMULATED OPERATING PROVISIONS:	3,987,611	4,208,843
CURRENT LIABILITIES:	19,365,466	29,986,769
DEFERRED CREDITS:	6,470,211	7,649,469
TOTAL EQUITIES AND LIABILITIES:	$ 247,300,147	$ 210,367,004

Key Statistics

Where the money comes from:



Where the money goes:



We'd Love to

CONNECTED TO Habersham Electric Membership Corporation

DOWNLOAD THE SMARTHUB APP AND REGISTER FOR 24/7 ACCESS TO ALL YOUR ACCOUNT DETAILS.

HABERSHAM ELECTRIC MEMBERSHIP CORPORATION ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING—SEPTEMBER 19, 2024

The Annual Meeting of the members of the Habersham Electric Membership Corporation was held at the Habersham Electric Membership Corporation Headquarters, Highway 115, Clarkesville, Georgia on Thursday, September 19, 2024. The business session was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairman of the Board, David Wall.

Kenneth McEntire gave the invocation.

Hank Bramlett sang God Bless the USA.

Chairman David Wall announced that 481 members had registered at the meeting which constituted a quorum.

Billy Cantrell, Secretary, Treasurer, read the mailing certification from Quad Graphics.

A motion was made and seconded that the minutes of the September 28, 2023 Annual Meeting be approved as published in the 2024 Habersham EMC Annual Report. Motion carried.

Bryan Ferguson, President/CEO, introduced the special guests.

Bryan Ferguson, President/CEO, gave the annual report to members. He shared that growth in 2024 reflected an additional 552 meters, 450 new members and 23 new miles of line. HEMC's revenue from residential service was 76% compared to 16% from commercial service and the remaining 8% from other services.

Also, Mr. Ferguson reported on the Trailwave Fiber business. He stated that Trailwave has surpassed the 12,000-customer milestone and is well positioned to continue prioritizing our members now and in the future.

The Board of Directors and HEMC Attorney were introduced by Chairman David Wall.

Janney Sanders, Attorney for HEMC, was parliamentarian for the meeting and explained the functions of the committees and the election process.

Attorney Sanders declared registration be closed and a total of 481 members had registered.

Ricky Pruitt, Chairperson Nominating Committee, read the Nominating Committee Report.

The Nominating Committee at a meeting on June 18, 2024, nominated for three-year terms the following members to fill three vacancies due to the expiring terms of Kenneth McEntire, David Foster & Jeff Herrin.

East District
Kenneth McEntire 561 Bethel Temple Spur, Demorest, GA 30535
David Foster 2166 Old Cleveland Road, Cornelia, GA 30531

Central District
Jeff Herrin 230 Wayside Street, Cornelia, GA 30531

Mike Pardue, Chairperson Credentials and Election Committee, read the certification by the Credentials and Election Committee that the following nominees nominated by the Nominating Committee are qualified to be candidates for the Board of Directors:

East District
Kenneth McEntire
David Foster
Central District
Jeff Herrin

Due to an uncontested election this year, there is a provision in the Bylaws of Habersham EMC that by vote of the members the process of secret ballot can be waived and the three incumbents, who were the only candidates, be elected by acclamation. The motion was made by the Credentials and Election Committee and seconded at the Annual Meeting. Motion was carried.

At this time, Attorney Sanders introduced the candidates for the Board of Directors:
East District
Kenneth McEntire
David Foster
Central District
Jeff Herrin

Attorney Sanders declared Kenneth McEntire, David Foster, and Jeff Herrin as duly elected Directors for a three-year term.

Attorney Sanders asked for any unfinished business – there was none.

Attorney Sanders asked for any new business – there was none.

Attorney Sanders asked for any member comments – there was none.

The business session was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Door prizes were awarded at this time.

A Board of Directors' meeting was held during the awarding of door prizes and the following Directors were elected to serve as officers for the next term: Dustin Hulsey, Chairman; Billy Cantrell, Vice Chairman, and Kenneth McEntire, Secretary/Treasurer.

We'd love to
CONNECTED TO Habersham Electric Membership Corporation



CLARKESVILLE HEADQUARTERS

6135 State Highway 115 W
Clarkesville, GA 30523
Phone: (706) 754 - 2114
Hours: Mon - Fri, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.



CLEVELAND OFFICE

1612 U.S. 129 S
Cleveland, GA 30528
Phone: (706) 865 - 4362
Hours: Mon - Fri, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.



The eastern population of monarch butterflies passes through Georgia twice a year on its multigenerational journey between Mexico and Canada.

CLAY BOLT

Monarchs on the move

How Georgians can help their journey

By Tom Oder

When opportunity knocks, you have to be ready, and right now, it's knocking for rural Georgians.

That opportunity is to help save the monarch butterfly, one of the world's most iconic and beloved insects. A nonprofit environmental group, Monarchs Across Georgia (MAG), is urging the state's 4.4 million rural residents to join the effort.

MAG, a committee of the Environmental Education Alliance of Georgia, works with teachers, students and others in the United States and Mexico to study monarchs and restore butterfly habitat. MAG volunteer Susan Meyers says rural Georgians can help by reporting monarch sightings during their spring and fall migrations to Journey North, a nonprofit that tracks wildlife, at ***journeynorth.org/sightings***.

"There are some large gaps in Georgia between coastal areas and Atlanta where we didn't get any reports," Jacob Swanson of Journey North says.

Scientists use the data from reported sightings to monitor monarch habitats and improve land management.

In December, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed listing the North American monarch as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Monarchs once numbered in the billions, but populations have fallen by 90 percent over the last 30 years. The proposal is currently under review.





ISTOCK.COM / LILIBOAS

North American monarchs—the only migratory monarchs in the world—make a remarkable multigenerational journey.

The western population migrates from the California coast to the Rockies and back.

The eastern population, which passes through Georgia, begins each spring in the mountains west of Mexico City and lays eggs in Texas and Southern states. Each generation continues the journey north, eventually reaching southern Canada.

But it's the last generation each year, known as the super generation, that completes the round trip—flying up to 3,000 miles south to Mexico, overwintering there and starting the cycle again in spring.

Help with habitats

The monarch's decline is driven largely by habitat loss, including the milkweed plants they rely on to lay eggs and feed caterpillars.

Meyers urges Georgians to plant nectar-rich flowers, especially milkweed—but only species native to Georgia.

"We just updated our 'Milkweed, Monarchs and Georgia Gardeners' brochure, and we recommend four native milkweeds that are commercially available," she says.

Those species are swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*), butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), whorled milkweed (*Asclepias verticillata*) and smoothseed milkweed (*Asclepias perennis*).

When shopping for plants, use scientific names to avoid confusion with unrelated plants, such as butterfly bush, Meyers says. She also suggests printing out the brochure to take to the nursery. You can find the digital brochure at ***bit.ly/monarchbrochure***.



Monarch butterflies cluster on tree branches in their winter habitat in central Mexico.

CLAY BOLT



Pine saplings grow in neat rows at a reforestation site. Preserving forest habitat is critical to the monarch's survival, especially in its overwintering grounds in central Mexico.

PAUL BETTINGS



Branches bend under the weight of thousands of monarch butterflies clustered together for warmth. The butterflies spend the winter in dense colonies before beginning the journey north in spring.

MONICA ECHEVERRIA

Timing is key

Egg-laying monarchs and their male companions typically arrive in Georgia in late March or early April as they migrate north. They pass through again in September, October and early November as the super generation heads back to Mexico.

"That's when we really need to help them," Meyers says. "Most gardens don't have enough fall nectar sources, and the butterflies need to fatten up for the trip."

She recommends planting fall-blooming flowers, such as blue mistflower, asters, ironweed, Joe Pye weed and goldenrod.

While monarchs tend to stick to coastal areas, they can be seen in every Georgia county. If you see them in spring, watch for their return in fall—timed with Mexico's Day of the Dead (Nov. 1-2), when many believe that the monarchs carry the souls of ancestors.

By planting milkweed and nectar flowers, you can help sustain this "miracle of the monarchs"—a small act of conservation that resonates from rural Georgia to the forests of Mexico.

Tom Oder is a freelance writer who lives in Atlanta.

Learn more

- For more information about the Monarchs Across Georgia organization, visit ***eealliance.org/monarchs-across-ga***.
- To learn more about monarchs, their migration and challenges they face, go to ***ecology.uga.edu/project-monarch-health***.
- For more information about monarch-friendly plants and where to buy them, visit ***gnps.org***.

By Lindsay Field Penticuff

Electric co-ops' eyes in the skies

While unmanned aerial vehicles—or drones—date as far back as the 18th century, the popularity of drones as toys has grown immensely since 2015. Today, many think of drones as just that: toys.

However, drones' capabilities can be extensive, especially when it comes to how they can support the engineering, operations and communications departments at electric membership corporations (EMCs).

Eric Holcombe, a line foreman at Jackson EMC in Jefferson, began working with their drone about two years ago. He earned his license through online classes and training offered by Forsyth-based Gresco Technology Solutions.

"After seeing what Eric has been able to do with the drone, we've been able to change the tone from a drone as a toy to a tool that's really useful in the right hands," says Patrick McAuliff, district director of engineering and operations at Jackson EMC. "Eric is our early adopter. We had slow buy-in, but as other operational districts are hearing about what he's doing, it's piquing interests, and I think there's potential to grow the program."

In the last year, Holcombe has discovered what a great tool the drone is, especially when there's a power outage like the one so many EMC members experienced during Hurricane Helene last September.

"We had an issue where a couple of large trees fell and knocked out a good section of line," McAuliff says. "Eric flew the drone along the line, versus the traditional way of having people walk the area looking for damage."

Holcombe flew the drone about 350 feet into the air, following the whole line and quickly guided Jackson EMC lineworkers and their trucks to the power line issue.

"I was able to pinpoint where we needed to do restoration efforts and tell them what materials they needed," he says. "We were able to cut the outage time down tremendously."

A restoration job that might have taken more than three hours was knocked down to about an hour.

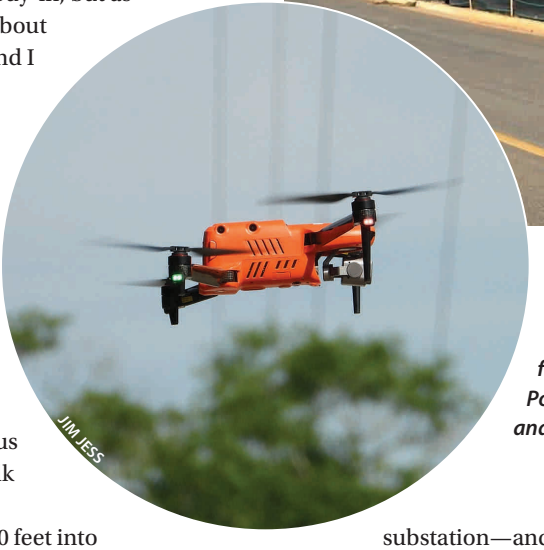
"Now that I've had [a drone] for a year and I always have it with me, I'm finding more and more uses for it, and it's become a great tool to have in my arsenal," Holcombe says.

Michael Martin, manager of information systems at Amicalola EMC in Jasper, was asked by his co-op's CEO if he'd earn his license to get a drone program started.

"I think it is quite extraordinary how a cooperative can take advantage of a drone to do various tasks," he says. "For instance, just being able to pull up to a pole that has a device on it—or a substation—and being able to get a close-up view of one or multiple devices for inspection without having to climb a pole or roll a bucket truck is very beneficial."



GEORGIA EMC



JIM JESS

Above: *Research Analyst That Htoo uses Georgia EMC's drone to get footage of the River Park E-commerce Center and surrounding properties in Butts County for marketing materials.* **Left:** *Diverse Power demonstrated its drone for members and guests at its annual meeting.*

System Operations Supervisor Edward Fowler at Hartwell-based Hart EMC says he's been able to use their drone in a variety of ways to capture images and videos for social media, inspect rights-of-way and facilities, and document damage after severe weather events.

C.J. Howard, interim engineering manager at Coastal Electric Cooperative in Midway, plans to implement a drone inspection program at the co-op.

"We can aid in the reliability of our system by [identifying issues] before they become a problem," he says. "We will also be able to inspect lines that are unapproachable by ground to assess the damage and create a game plan for restoration."

This will be incredibly helpful, as Coastal Electric Cooperative maintains power lines over bodies of water.

'By being able to identify problem areas not visible by the eye, we can aid in the reliability of our system by [identifying issues] before they become a problem.'

—C.J. Howard, fiber engineer, Coastal Electric Cooperative

This drone image taken in Jackson EMC's training yard helps the co-op's training instructors show the importance of having energized lines covered properly while working on them.

JACKSON EMC



JACKSON EMC



CANOOCHEE EMC

Above: *Canoochee EMC Communications Specialist Joe Sikes used his drone to capture this image of a washed-out road in Tattnall County in August 2024.* **Inset:** *Using a drone, the Jackson EMC team was able to identify this damaged power line that was causing outages.*

At Canoochee EMC in Reidsville, Communications Specialist Joe Sikes uses their drone to better communicate with members.

"Now [members] can actually see the damage from our point of view after a major outage," he says. "The images alone help with communications, and I've used the images for other videos as B-roll that enhances any videos we create."

In one drone video from April 2022, Sikes captured the aftermath of an EF5 tornado in Bryan County.

"It was picked up by ***weather.com*** and used for their reporting," Sikes says.

Tucker-based Georgia EMC, the trade organization serving the state's 41 EMCs, has been using drones for about a decade.

Shaun Dodson, manager of site development for Georgia EMC's department of community and economic development, earned his drone license after noticing that site selectors were no longer satisfied with aerial photographs of potential sites. They started requesting drone footage.

"The work that we do with our drone has expanded immensely since we purchased our first drone 10 years ago," Dodson says. "The footage we take using the drone markets available sites and buildings in Georgia to site selectors from all around the world and has led to many new projects locating in Georgia. These projects have contributed thousands of new jobs and millions of dollars of investment into the communities that our member EMCs serve."

Ty King, a transmission line specialist with Tucker-based Georgia Transmission Corp., also began using drones a decade ago. Georgia Transmission, a not-for-profit cooperative, delivers power to Georgia's EMCs.

"Currently, we use our drones to pop up and do quick inspections on hard-to-reach structures; to review various aspects of our right-of-way mowing, danger-tree and side-trimming programs; and various other aspects of our jobs that require a look from above or in difficult-to-reach areas," King says. "We have also used our [drone] to [determine the best access] to rights-of-ways and to patrol our transmission lines after hurricanes and other significant weather-related outages."

Though they were invented more than 200 years ago, drones today are informing electric co-op members and, most importantly, helping keep their power on.

Lindsay Penticuff is an associate editor at Georgia Magazine.

By Kathy Witt



The Doc Holliday Festival each year in Griffin commemorates the city's famous son and includes a show that portrays the famous shootout at the O.K. Corral.

GRIFFIN SPALDING BUSINESS AND TOURISM ASSOCIATION

Wild West

Georgia sites offer a taste of the frontier

Learn about a famous gunslinger's past in Griffin and, in Toccoa, how frontier travelers once slept shoulder-to-shoulder in bed with complete strangers. In Dahlonega, find out why gold-rush fever struck in Georgia long before it hit California, and discover why the 1881 gunfight at the O.K. Corral is re-enacted every year in Cartersville.

Experience a Wild West adventure in the South with visits to Georgia's Western-themed attractions.



GRIFFIN SPALDING BUSINESS AND TOURISM ASSOCIATION

Re-enactors with the group Aces and Eights participate in the annual Doc Holliday Festival in Griffin.

Doc Holliday Self-Guided Driving Tour, Griffin

Decades before meeting fearless lawman Wyatt Earp, a young boy named John Henry Holliday kicked around his hometown of Griffin, possibly attending services at the First Presbyterian Church (now the Griffin Fire Station) where he was baptized and perhaps paying respects at his sister Martha's grave at Rest Haven Cemetery.

These sites are among the seven stops on the Doc Holliday Self-Guided Driving Tour, which features historical markers about Holliday's life in the town. At most of the stops, visitors can park and get out of the car to read the markers and walk around the area.

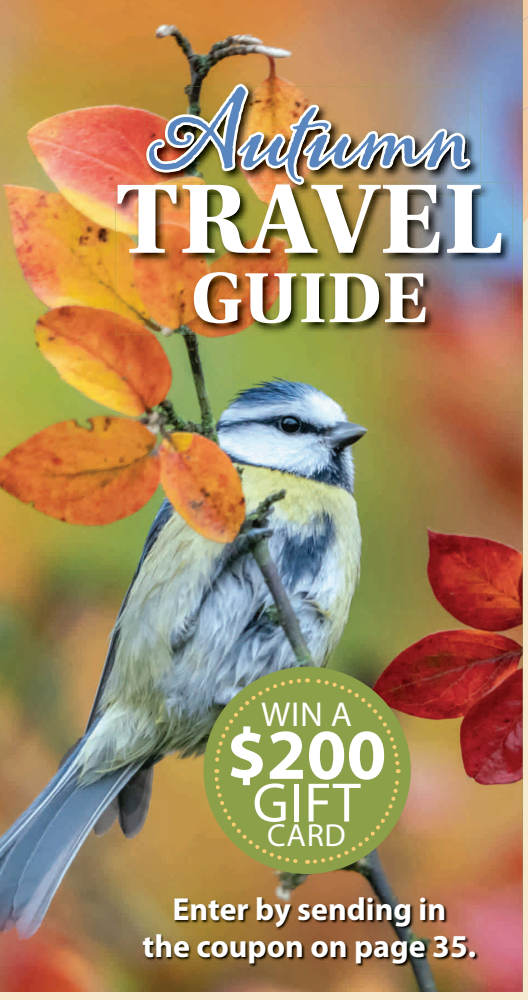
Each stop offers a peek into the life and times of the gunman, gambler—and, yes, occasional dentist—whose derring-do at the infamous 1881 gunfight at the O.K. Corral against the outlaw Clanton gang cemented his legacy as one of the most famous figures of the Old West.

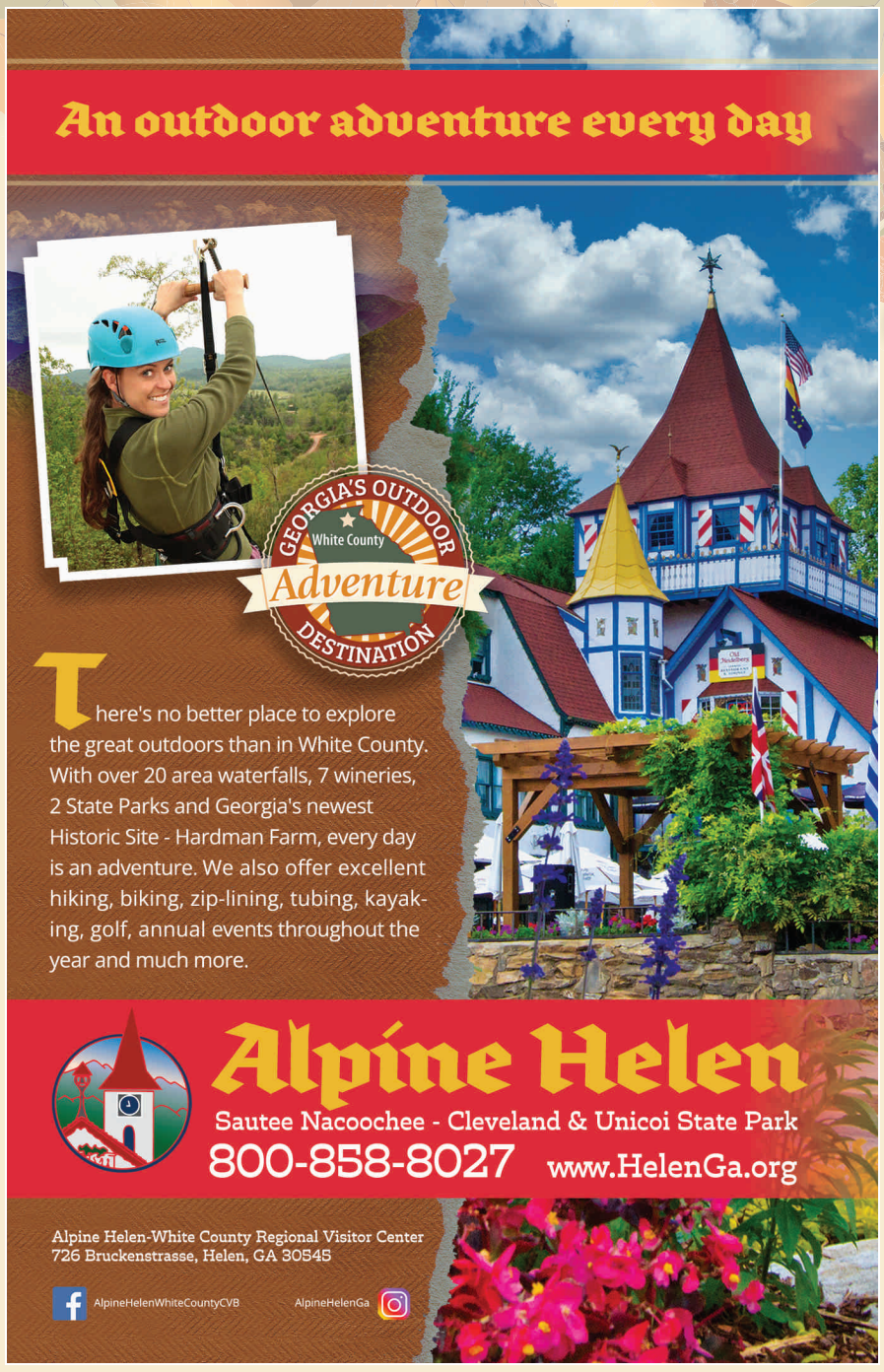
See the 1860 Old Spalding County Courthouse where Holliday's father would have conducted his legal business. Holliday graduated from dental school in Philadelphia and practiced at an office within Griffin's Solomon Street Building.

As for his final resting place? According to legend, it's the Old Oak Hill Cemetery a few blocks from downtown Griffin.

"This tour is for anyone fascinated by the Wild West or the untold

Continued on page 30


Autumn
TRAVEL
GUIDE
WIN A
$200
GIFT
CARD
Enter by sending in
the coupon on page 35.


An outdoor adventure every day
GEORGIA'S OUTDOOR
White County
Adventure
DESTINATION
There's no better place to explore the great outdoors than in White County. With over 20 area waterfalls, 7 wineries, 2 State Parks and Georgia's newest Historic Site - Hardman Farm, every day is an adventure. We also offer excellent hiking, biking, zip-lining, tubing, kayaking, golf, annual events throughout the year and much more.
Alpine Helen
Sautee Nacoochee - Cleveland & Unicoi State Park
800-858-8027
www.HelenGa.org
Alpine Helen-White County Regional Visitor Center
726 Bruckenstrasse, Helen, GA 30545
AlpineHelenWhiteCountyCVB
AlpineHelenGa


Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds
3 DAYS OF MUSIC
THE DAILEY & VINCENT MUSIC FEST
SEPT 25-27, 2025
JOHN CONLEE
RANDY TRAVIS
BRYCE LEATHERWOOD
RHONDA VINCENT
CRYSTAL GAYLE
DIAMOND RIO
Americana, Country, & Gospel
1 Day, 3 Day, and VIP Passes Available!
John Crist: Jokes For Humans
September 28th
7 PM
Tickets range in price from $29.75 - $79.75 each + handling
Georgia Mountain Fall Festival
October 10-12 & 16-18
Live Music, Arts & Crafts, and Carnival Rides!
The North Georgia Mountains are THE place to be this fall!
Appalachian Brew and Music Festival
October 25th
Indulge in great Craft Brews, local Food, regional Arts & Crafts, and Music!
Hiawassee, GA | 706-896-4191
GeorgiaMountainFairgrounds.com


Come take a tour of the garden!
To register, please contact Andrea Fischer at afischer@uga.edu or 706-542-6195.
State Botanical Garden of Georgia
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

The Traveler's Rest State Historic Site in Toccoa offers a glimpse of the rugged life of the frontier. Visitors can see the stagecoach inn, where overnight guests had to sleep beside strangers in the same bed.

Continued from page 28

stories of American history," says Cindy Jones, president and CEO at the Griffin Spalding Chamber of Commerce.

Jones shares a little extra information that is not part of the tour but gives another glimpse into the area's past.

"Beneath the streets of Griffin lies a hidden network of tunnels, once running from the railroad depot to the heart of town," she says. "Back in Doc Holliday's day, these tunnels offered a discreet passage for businessmen arriving by train—allowing them to visit the hotel or 'entertain' company without being seen on the street.

"Later, during Prohibition, the tunnels reportedly found a new purpose: transporting moonshine. Though now sealed [for safety reasons], the existence of these tunnels adds an air of mystery and drama to your walk through history."

Traveler's Rest State Historic Site, Toccoa

The Traveler's Rest State Historic Site near the Unicoi Turnpike once welcomed travelers traversing the Appalachian Mountains during the early 1800s. A National Historic Landmark, it is a rare—and Georgia's last—surviving example of a frontier stagecoach inn.

For the 21st-century visitor, this authentic glimpse into Georgia's untamed past may seem shocking. Accommodations at Traveler's Rest were offered not by the room but by the bed. Overnight guests might have up to four bedmates—strangers who also happened to be in town looking for a place to stay for the night.

"It was a common practice of the time and speaks volumes about the rugged, communal nature of travel in Georgia's frontier days," says Tracy Brooks, assistant manager of Traveler's Rest.

Tour the sprawling, rustic, wood-frame home with its original artifacts and furnishings, stone fireplaces and sturdy pine floors, built on former Cherokee land that was seized by the U.S. government and granted to Revolutionary War Maj. Jesse Walton in 1785.

Walton sold the land to James Rutherford Wyly, who built the main part of the house and in turn sold it to Devereaux Jarrett. That was in 1833, and the Jarrett family not only added onto the existing structure but also owned the property until 1955.

Traveler's Rest is open weekends only and occasionally hosts special events, such as living-history days with re-enactments, demonstrations and storytelling designed to transport visitors straight back to the frontier.

Continued on page 32

Wild West festivals

In Griffin, the free-admission Doc Holliday Festival and BBQ Competition is held annually in Griffin City Park on the weekend after Labor Day. See a show depicting the shootout at the O.K. Corral, purchase a barbecue sampler platter and enjoy live music and arts and crafts. For more information, see ***dochollidayfest.com***.

Every fall, the Booth Western Art Museum in Cartersville holds West Fest, a full day of family-friendly fun that includes a re-enactment of the gunfight at the O.K. Corral, Native American dancers, chuck wagons, vendors and other activities and entertainment. This year's festival is set for Oct. 25. For more information, go to ***boothmuseum.org/west-fest***.



The Dahlonega Gold Museum State Historic Site tells the story of the discovery of gold in North Georgia and the gold rush that ensued, predating the famous frenzy in California.

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES





Upcountry South Carolina
Perfectly Seasoned

UpcountrySC.com
864.233.2690





COURTESY BOOTH WESTERN ART MUSEUM



COURTESY BOOTH WESTERN ART MUSEUM

Left: ***Visitors of all ages can release their inner cowboys and cowgirls at West Fest, held annually by the Booth Western Art Museum in Cartersville.*** **Inset:** ***West Fest includes demonstrations of Native American dancing and culture. This year's event is scheduled for Oct. 25.***

Continued from page 30

Dahlonega Gold Museum State Historic Site, Dahlonega

Here is Georgia's only museum dedicated entirely to the 1829 gold rush—the first major U.S. gold rush and one that beat the California gold rush by two full decades.

Tucked inside the 1836 Lumpkin County Courthouse, one of the oldest courthouse buildings in Georgia, the Dahlonega Gold Museum immerses visitors in the lawless, boomtown spirit that transformed Dahlonega into a bustling frontier town full of fortune-seekers, saloons and Wild West drama—right in the heart of the North Georgia mountains.

Telling the story of this stampede to the South are an award-winning, 17-minute movie; mining equipment, including a large hydraulic cannon and nozzle used to blow up mountainsides; and a complete set of rare coins made by the U.S. Branch Mint that opened in Dahlonega in 1838 and coined more than $6 million in gold before closing up shop in 1861.

Also here is a gold nugget that weighs a whopping 5-plus ounces—an unusually large piece, but not completely surprising in a place where gold lay right on the ground for the taking in those early rush days. Such discoveries probably led to many a rowdy legal dispute, and visitors to the museum can head upstairs to stand in the original courtroom where prospectors would have argued over their claims.

Booth Western Art Museum, Cartersville

A 120,000-square-foot museum and the world's largest permanent exhibition space for Western art, this Smithsonian Institution affiliate treats visitors to a treasure-trove of paintings, drawings, sculptures, photographs, Western movie posters and works in pottery, leather and silver.

The Carolyn & James Millar Presidential Gallery shows off a unique collection of one-page, signed letters from every U.S. president, and the Native Hands Gallery contains more than 150 American Indian artifacts, including textiles, sculptures and pottery.

The iconic cowboy gets his due in a gallery that, through paintings and sculptures, depicts the romance and reality of this uniquely American figure. Throughout the year, 12 to 15 temporary exhibitions cover a variety of Western themes in several museum galleries.

Morgan Huntington, director of marketing, says the Booth Western Art Museum is passionate about ensuring that art is accessible for all.

"That's why we offer Free Family Thursdays on the second Thursday of each month and why children 12 and under are free," she says.

To the delight of these junior cowpokes, the museum's indoor playground, Sagebrush Ranch, has more than 30 interactive stations, including a bunkhouse, a barn, a stagecoach and a chuck wagon—even a life-size horse statue for climbing and "riding." Kids can dress the part in Western outfits as they learn about all the folks who settled the West.

Kathy Witt is a freelance writer based in Kentucky.

When you go

- **Doc Holliday Self-Guided Driving Tour**, Griffin Spalding Chamber of Commerce, Griffin Welcome Center, 143 North Hill St., Griffin. (770) 228-8200; ***ingriffin.com/explorations/doc-holliday***. Pick up the tour brochure at the Welcome Center or download it from the website. The tour takes about two hours.
- **Traveler's Rest State Historic Site**, 4339 Riverdale Road, Toccoa. (706) 886-2256; ***gastateparks.org/travelersrest***. Open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays only. Check the website for special events.
- **Dahlonega Gold Museum State Historic Site**, 1 Public Square, Dahlonega. (706) 864-2257; ***gastateparks.org/dahlonegagoldmuseum***. Open 9 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays and 10 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Sundays.
- **Booth Western Art Museum**, 501 Museum Drive, Cartersville. (770) 387-1300; ***boothmuseum.org***. Open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays and 1 to 5 p.m. Sundays. On the second Thursday of the month, the museum is open 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., with Free Family Thursday (free admission) from 4 to 8 p.m.



Visit Dublin
GEORGIA

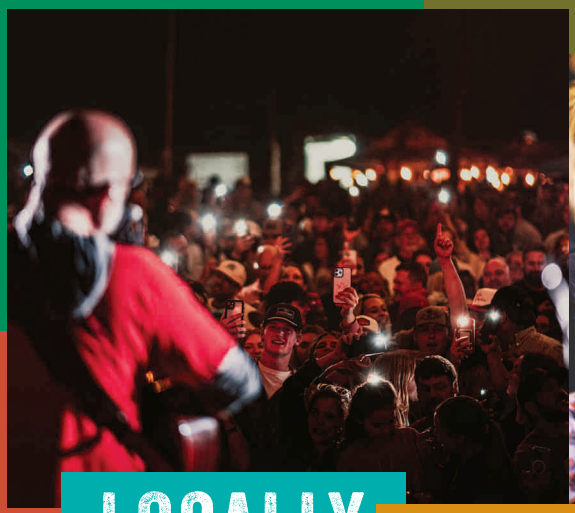
Chili in one hand, craft beer in the other—this is how we do autumn.

From oyster roasts to arts festivals, Dublin, GA packs every weekend with something worth the drive.

Leaf-peep through small-town charm, feast on bold Southern flavor, and dance like nobody's watching at some of the South's best-kept fall events.

Plan Your Trip at VisitDublinGA.org

#DublinGA | #GoodPeopleVisitHere | @VisitDublinGA





LOCALLY GROWN FUN

FROM GEORGIA'S ONLY MUSEUM OF AGRICULTURE TO U-PICK ORCHARDS AND VIBRANT LOCAL FARMERS MARKETS, YEAR-ROUND FARM-FRESH FUN AWAITS! EXPERIENCE LOCAL FLAVOR AT ITS FINEST IN A DESTINATION THAT'S EASY TO REACH —THINK TIFTON!

think TIFTON

THINKTIFTON.COM



ALL OUT Story. ALL OUT Glory.



In Columbus, GA, you'll find history, culture, and Southern charm at every turn. Stroll through Uptown, explore the National Infantry Museum, and savor unforgettable food with serious flavor. No wonder *Southern Living* named us one of the South's **Best Weekend Getaways**.

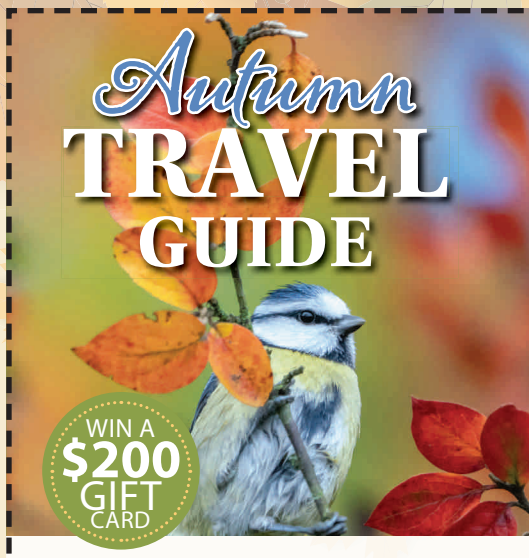
VisitColumbusGA

Go All Out

VisitColumbusGA.com







To get free information about the destinations listed here AND qualify for the giveaway drawing, check the ones you're interested in and clip and mail this form.

Or, enter online by clicking the contest link at ***georgiamagazine.org***

Online responses will be entered in a BONUS drawing for a $25 gift card!

Mail this coupon to:
Georgia Magazine, September 2025 Prize Drawing, P.O. Box 1707, Tucker, GA 30085.

- ☐ **Alpine Helen**
- ☐ **Blairsville Chamber / Union County**
- ☐ **Carrollton Area CVB**
- ☐ **Douglas / Coffee County**
- ☐ **Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds**
- ☐ **Gilmer Chamber**
- ☐ **Lake Chatuge Chamber**
- ☐ **Lane Southern Orchards**
- ☐ **State Botanical Garden of Georgia**
- ☐ **Tifton Tourism**
- ☐ **Upcountry SC**
- ☐ **Visit Columbus GA**
- ☐ **Visit Dublin GA**

Please include your name and address:

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

City: _____

State: _____ ZIP: _____

Email: _____

By providing this email address, you agree to receive email communications from *Georgia Magazine*.

Contest is open to persons 18 and over, except employees of Georgia Electric Membership Corp. and advertising and promotion agencies involved with this promotion. Only one entry per household, please; duplicate entries will be deleted. In order to receive information and enter the drawing, entries must be received by October 15, 2025.

By Pamela A. Keene

Moon gardens

Enjoy the fragrant evening afterglow

Enjoying a garden during the hot summer may seem out of reach, but think again. Dusk and evening visits offer opportunities to relax, connect with nature and experience a garden in a whole new way. In addition to the light show put on by lightning bugs, the evening garden presents a wildlife orchestra of tree frogs, crickets, katydids and nocturnal birds.

"Mother Nature supplies the soundtrack, and the moon provides the mood lighting, so with a bit of human assistance you can create a special place for a peaceful evening," says Suzanne Brosche, owner of Art of Stone Gardening in Dahlonega. "Use white and light-colored flowers and plants with variegated foliage to set the tone for an enchanting retreat after the sun goes down."

Brosche recommends establishing your "evening garden" space a short distance from the house that won't be brightened by indoor lights. Ensure there's a clear path to the site so the walk in the dark is safe. Line the path with solar-powered lights to increase visibility.

"Frankly, there are very few rules about creating your own moon garden," she says. "The idea is to turn your vision of an ideal retreat into a place that's appealing after dark."

She suggests starting with the bones—the foundational elements that create structure—then layering in smaller plants and hanging baskets.

"The bones of a moon garden can be as simple as a grouping of a couple of comfortable chairs or a chaise lounge with a small table," she says. "Or it can be an elaborate setting with a stone patio and a stacked-stone wall to give the surroundings a more defined shape. Add a battery-powered or solar lantern for ambient light that won't distract from the natural elements of the garden."

Should the area be in full sun or some degree of shade?

"It doesn't matter as long as you've chosen the right growing conditions for the plants you select," Brosche says. "The space should be a part of your landscape in keeping with the overall feel of your garden."

What to plant?

Choose plants with white or light-colored blooms or variegated foliage that reflect moonlight after the sun goes down. In addition to pure white, shades of yellow, light pink,



KATHLEEN SCHMUCKER / SOUTHERN LIVING PLANT COLLECTION

PIXABAY-ROBIN16

White roses provide continuous blooms and bright accents against green foliage. **Inset:** *Gardenias bring white blooms and strong fragrance to evening landscapes.*



PIXABAY-NENNIEINSZWEIDREI



KATHLEEN SCHMUCKER / SOUTHERN LIVING PLANT COLLECTION

Above: ***Viburnum flowers open in clusters that stand out in low light.***
Above right: ***White hydrangeas and light-colored blooms in containers can add brightness to a moon garden.***

pale apricot and lavender will glow at night.

Magnolias, dogwoods, Yoshino cherry trees, viburnums (such as the early-blooming snowball variety) and hydrangeas—mophead, Annabelle, oakleaf and limelight—can serve as foundation plants that provide year-round structure.

Many white-blooming plants are fragrant, including '*Little Gem*' magnolia, tea olives and oriental lilies. Moonflower vines open at night and release a pleasant scent. The mock orange shrub is also known for its fragrant white flowers.

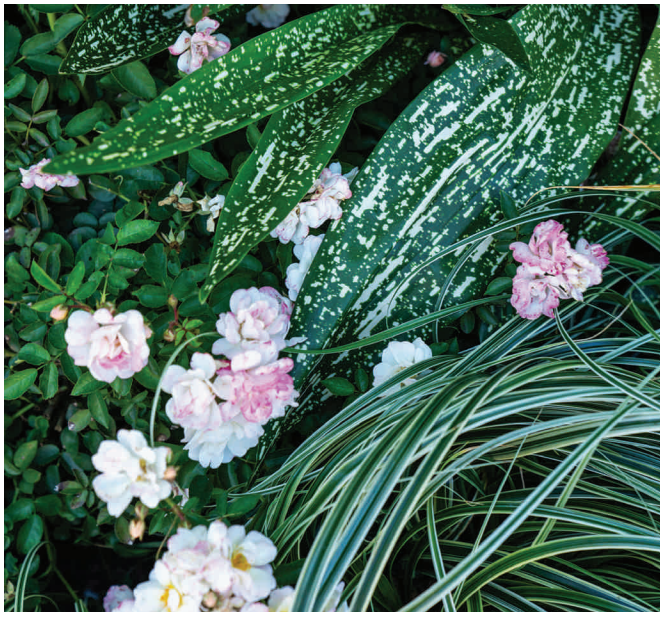
"Gardenias, with many new varieties, can be the stars of the show in a moon garden," Brosche says. "From single-blossomed, low-growing shrubs to the majestic '*August Beauty*,' gardenias are a go-to shrub for moon gardens. Not only do the white blossoms glow [but] their scent reminds me of summer."

Incorporate a mix of textures and heights with a balance of shrubs, perennials and annuals. Vining plants such as star jasmine, moonflowers, hybrid honeysuckle and clematis can climb trellises or spread onto upright trees such as crape myrtles. They grow in a looser structure, allowing the underlying tree to breathe and grow, and are less aggressive than other vining plants. Use low-growing ground covers and mounding plants along borders, with taller ones in back.

Annuals offer pops of color.

"Tall sweet William, fragrant sweet alyssum, trailing petunias, white impatiens and foliage plants—such as dusty miller, lamb's ear, artemisia and hostas—add interest," she says. "Select a range of early, midseason and late bloomers to extend your enjoyment of the space from the early spring through fall."

Attracting pollinators—both day and night—adds movement, sound and life to the garden, creating a richer sensory experience. Bees, butterflies and hummingbirds bring bursts of color and activity during the day, while moths and other



KATHLEEN SCHMUCKER / SOUTHERN LIVING PLANT COLLECTION

Variegated foliage adds texture and contrast and glows softly in evening light.

nocturnal visitors offer a quieter, more subtle presence after dark.

While designed for evening enjoyment, a moon garden also can be inviting during the day. White and light-colored selections help the space stand out in any landscape.

"As you design your moon garden, remember that it's a 24-hour part of your landscape—something that will look appealing during the day and after sunset," Brosche says. "But what will surprise you the most is how the [presence] of sound and fragrance transform that daytime garden into a peaceful private retreat."

Pamela A. Keene is a Flowery Branch-based freelance writer and Master Gardener.

By Joe Engelbird

Hooked on flavor

Reel in these tasty seafood recipes

I have enjoyed fishing all my life. Nothing beats relaxing by the water and reeling in a catch. Well, nothing except the hope of a great meal.

When I get a chance to wet a hook, the fish are in little danger of being caught. Even with a tackle box full of gear and half a dozen rods and reels, I seldom catch enough for a family meal. I have much better luck landing a catch at the local market.

Fortunately, Georgia boasts a great haul of fish and other seafood. Fresh waters teem with varieties of bass, catfish, trout, crappie and many more. Popular seafood from the coast includes blue crab, shrimp, grouper, redfish and snapper.

Whether you catch them yourself or purchase them at the local fish market, Georgia seafood makes a great plate. Blue crabs are ideal for making crabcakes, and wild Georgia shrimp are delicious fried, sauteed or in a Lowcountry boil.

Catfish is easy to pan-fry; pair it with rice and an étouffée (a French word meaning "to smother") sauce, and you've got a satisfying meal.

Here are a few of my favorite ways to serve up Georgia seafood.

Joe Engelbird is a chef and registered dietitian based in Carrollton.



ISTOCK.COM / BREAKINGTHEWALLS

Fried shrimp is a favorite Coastal Georgia dish.



JENNIFER ENGELBIRD

Chef Joe Engelbird enjoys an afternoon of fishing in Carrollton.

FRIED GEORGIA SHRIMP

32 shrimp (size 26-30), peeled, deveined
1 tablespoon Old Bay Seasoning, divided
1 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon salt
3 large eggs
3-4 cups panko breadcrumbs
1 quart vegetable oil
1 lemon, cut into wedges

Place the shrimp in a bowl and season with 1/2 tablespoon of Old Bay Seasoning. In a separate bowl, add the flour and the remaining Old Bay Seasoning and salt. In another bowl, beat the eggs. In another bowl, add the panko breadcrumbs.

Working with 1 shrimp at a time, coat it with the seasoned flour, then dip it into the eggs, then coat it with the panko breadcrumbs. Lay the coated shrimp on a baking sheet, keeping them separated. Repeat these steps until all the shrimp are coated.

Put the vegetable oil in a heavy pot and set over medium-high heat. *Note: The oil temperature should be between 325 degrees and 350 degrees*. Cook the shrimp in small batches of 6-8 shrimp at a time until they are golden brown. *The cook time should be 2-3 minutes per batch.*

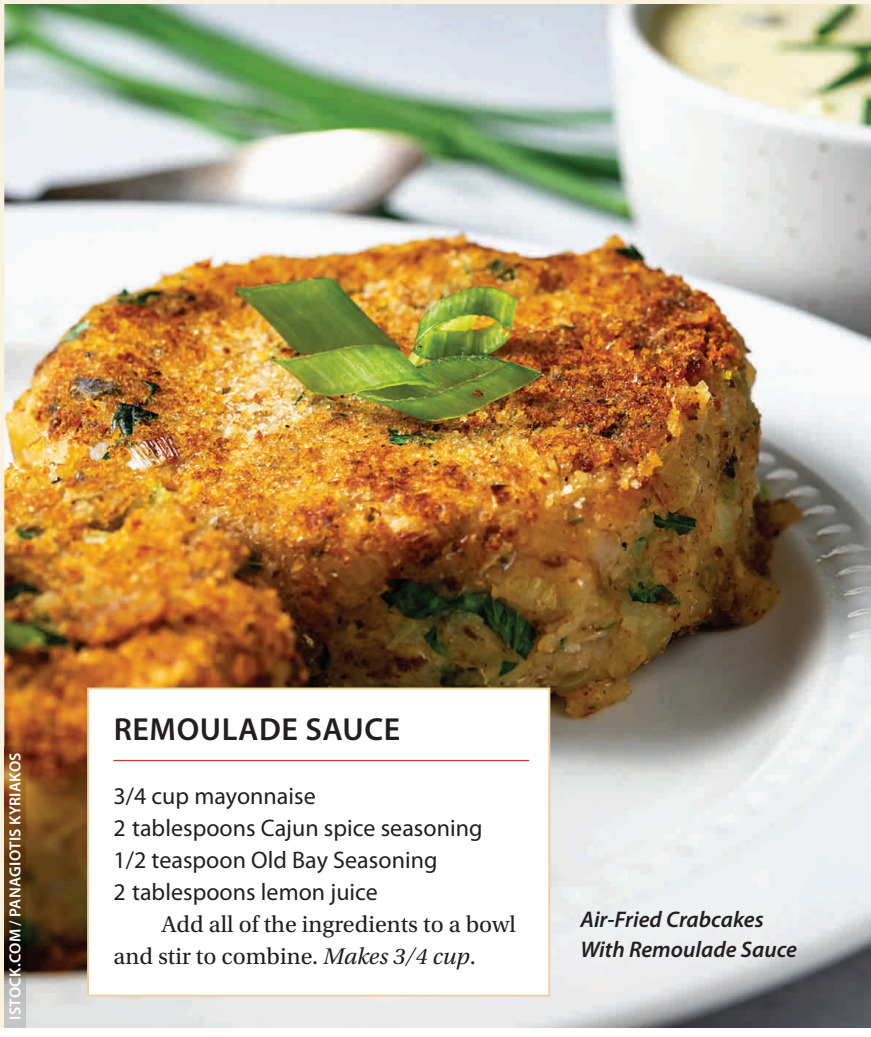
Squeeze lemon juice on the cooked shrimp and serve immediately. *Serves 4.*

AIR-FRIED CRABCAKES WITH REMOULADE SAUCE

2 tablespoons butter
1/4 cup onion, minced
1/4 cup celery, minced
1-1/2 pounds lump crabmeat
1 teaspoon Old Bay Seasoning
1/3 cup Worcestershire sauce
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
1 tablespoon chopped parsley
Salt, to taste
About 2 cups panko breadcrumbs, divided
1 egg, beaten
Remoulade Sauce (recipe at right)

Place a medium-size saute pan over high heat and melt the butter. Add the onion and celery and cook for 2-3 minutes until soft, then remove from heat and allow to cool. To the same pan, add the crabmeat, Old Bay seasoning, Worcestershire sauce, Dijon mustard and parsley. Stir to thoroughly combine. Adjust taste with salt. Add breadcrumbs, as needed, so that the mixture binds together.

Scoop out 2 tablespoons of the mixture and, using hands, form into a small cake (about 2 inches in diameter). Place on a baking sheet. Repeat until all of the mixture has been formed into cakes. Dip each of the crabcakes in egg and then coat with the remaining breadcrumbs. Air-fry at 350 degrees for 10-12 minutes or until well-browned. Serve with Remoulade Sauce. *Serves 4-6.*



ISTOCK.COM / PANAGIOTIS KYRIAKOS

Air-Fried Crabcakes With Remoulade Sauce

REMOULADE SAUCE

3/4 cup mayonnaise
2 tablespoons Cajun spice seasoning
1/2 teaspoon Old Bay Seasoning
2 tablespoons lemon juice

Add all of the ingredients to a bowl and stir to combine. *Makes 3/4 cup.*

RED SNAPPER TACOS

1 (1-pound) red snapper fillet, skin removed
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
1/4 teaspoon onion powder
2 tablespoons chili powder
Juice of 1 lime
2 tablespoons olive oil
8 (6-inch) corn tortillas
Prepared salsa, as needed
Fresh avocado slices, if desired

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Slice the snapper fillet into 1-ounce pieces.

In a medium bowl, combine the salt, pepper, garlic powder, onion powder, chili powder, lime juice and olive oil. Add the snapper to the bowl and stir to coat. Place the seasoned fish on a baking sheet lined with parchment.

Bake the fish for 6-8 minutes until the internal temperature registers 145 degrees. When the fish is cooked, remove from oven and reserve.

Place the tortillas on a baking sheet and bake for 2 minutes. Remove the tortillas and fill each with 2 pieces of fish. Serve with salsa and avocado slices, if desired. *Serves 4.*

SHRIMP AND GRITS

4 tablespoons olive oil, divided
32 shrimp (26-30 size), peeled, deveined, tails removed
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/4 cup chicken broth
2 tablespoons cold butter
2 tablespoons lemon juice
Salt and pepper, to taste
Cheese Grits (recipe on page 40)
2 tablespoons fresh chopped parsley, for garnish

Add 2 tablespoons olive oil to a large saute pan and set over high heat. Place half the shrimp in pan and saute for 2-3 minutes until they turn pink. Remove and reserve the shrimp. Repeat the process with the remaining olive oil and uncooked shrimp.

Return all the cooked shrimp to the saute pan and set over medium heat. Add the garlic. Cook for 1 minute. Stir in the broth and the butter. Once the butter is incorporated, add the lemon juice and season with salt and pepper.

Serve the shrimp with the grits and garnish with chopped parsley. *Serves 4.*

MORE



ISTOCK.COM/ JOHN BAKER

The recipe for "Campfire" Oven Trout harks back to camp cooking in foil packets.

CHEESE GRITS

2 cups water, plus 1/2 cup more, or as needed
1 cup quick grits
1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
1/4 cup heavy cream
Salt and pepper, to taste

Place 2 cups water in a medium-size sauce pot and set over high heat. Bring water to a boil. Add the grits and whisk constantly to avoid lumps. Reduce the heat to medium and cook 6-8 minutes or until the grits are cooked.

Remove the grits from heat and stir in the cheese and cream until combined. Adjust the consistency with water, as desired, and season to taste with salt and pepper. Cover and keep warm to serve with the shrimp. *Serves 4.*

"CAMPFIRE" OVEN TROUT

4 (12x12-inch) pieces heavy aluminum foil
Cooking spray, as needed
4 trout fillets, dressed
4 tablespoons butter, melted
Salt and pepper, to taste
8 lemon slices
4 sprigs fresh thyme
4 cloves garlic, chopped, divided
2 cups zucchini, diced, divided

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Lay out 4 pieces of foil on a flat surface. Coat each piece of foil with cooking spray, then place a trout fillet in the middle of each. Brush trout with butter and season with salt and pepper. Place 2 lemon slices and 1 thyme sprig on top of each piece of trout. Divide the chopped garlic among the 4 fillets and add 1/2 cup zucchini to each. Fold up each piece of foil at the corners to form a pouch and crimp the edges to seal. Place the 4 prepared pouches on baking sheets.

Cook the pouches of trout for 12-14 minutes or until the trout registers an internal temperature of 145 degrees. Unfold each foil pouch to serve. *Serves 4.*

Plugged In Georgia
Powered by Voices for Cooperative Power

AMPLIFYING THE VOICES OF EMC COMMUNITIES ACROSS GEORGIA. ADD YOURS TODAY!

PLUGGEDINGEORGIA.COM

Plugged In Georgia is a grassroots platform that allows EMC members and advocates to get the latest updates on legislation impacting Georgia's electric market. It also allows users to connect directly with their legislators to share input on policy proposals that impact the EMCs' ability to deliver safe, reliable and affordable electricity.

FIND IT THIS MONTH!

Want to win a $25 gift card?

Are you a resourceful reader? One lucky reader who finds and submits the correct answers to these trivia questions will win a $25 Target gift card. All answers can be found in this month's issue.

1. Asena Mott's home in East Dublin is served by which electric cooperative?
2. What high school does Benjamin Martin attend?
3. Drone footage from which Georgia electric cooperative was used in a report by ***weather.com***?
4. What is the name of Tiny Stitches' dedicated 109-year-old volunteer?
5. Re-enactments of the famous shootout at the O.K. Corral are held annually in two Georgia towns. Name one of these towns.

HOW TO ENTER:

Send an email to ***trivia@georgiaemc.com*** with the answers to all five questions by Sept. 30, 2025. Be sure to include your name, address and phone number. (If more than one person answers all the questions correctly, we'll draw from among all correct entries to determine the $25 Target gift card winner.)

TARGET gift card $25

STEEL MOBILE HOME ROOFING

Insurance Credit
Expert Installation
Stop Leaks
Lower Electric Bill
Increase Home Value
Energy Star Certified
Lifetime Warranty



BBB ACCREDITED BUSINESS
ASK ABOUT ENERGY STAR

PERMA-ROOF®
from Southern Builders



Since 1983
roofover.com
800.633.8969

Call for specials!

NATIONAL BARN COMPANY
EASTERN DIVISION

STORAGE BUILDINGS
HAY BARNS
HORSE BARNS
GARAGES

Ask about our do-it-yourself materials kits.



*Custom building shown. Call for pricing.

- Fully Insured
- #1 Metal
- 4/12 Roof Pitch
- Engineered Trusses
- Custom Sizes Available
- Local Codes & Freight May Affect Price

MCELROY METAL

www.nationalbarn.com
1-888-427-BARN (2276)

Are You a Timeshare Victim?



We Will Get Your Timeshare Legally Cancelled!

BBB A+ rating ★★★★★

- Guaranteed Timeshare Cancellation
- 18+ Years of Trusted Experience
- Proven 99%+ Success Rate
- Affordable Payment Plans

800-223-1770
Go to: *TimeShareBeGone.com*
For an instant quote

Grower Direct



Grow Half Dollar Size
Muscadines & Blackberries
Free Catalog
200 varieties fruit, nut trees, vines & berries.

www.isons.com
Ison's Nursery
1-800-733-0324 PO Box 190 • Brooks, Georgia 30205

Your ad in *Georgia Magazine* reaches more than a MILLION potential customers!

For more information, call Harold Chambliss at 678-906-4050.

Share your favorite family recipes with *Georgia Magazine* readers!



Email your recipe (listing all ingredients, quantities and directions), plus your name, address, phone number and the name of your electric co-op, to ***magazine@georgiaemc.com***. Or mail to: ***Georgia Magazine*, Attn: Favorite Family Recipes, P.O. Box 1707, Tucker, GA 30085**.

Have a photo to share?

In our "Picture this?" contest, the reader whose photo of a Georgia place is published wins a $25 gift card.

If you have taken a photo for us to consider, email ***picturethis@georgiaemc.com*** or mail to "Picture this?," P.O. Box 1707, Tucker, GA 30085. Submissions should be 300-dpi photos of locations that are accessible to the public and easy to identify.



ORDER FORM

Send *Georgia Magazine* to a friend!



☐ **Yes!**
Send 1 year (12 issues) for just $12

Please send a subscription to:

Name _____

_____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ ZIP _____

County _____

_____

☐ **Yes!**
Send 2 years (24 issues) for just $20

Please send a subscription to:

Name _____

_____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ ZIP _____

County _____

☐ Please notify the recipient of gift.
Your email address: _____

_____

Please make check or money order payable to Georgia EMC and mail to: Georgia EMC, P.O. Box 117757, Atlanta, GA 30368-7757. Please allow 4-8 weeks. Sorry, credit card orders not accepted.

Teen ham-radio operator provides lifeline during, after Hurricane Helene

As Hurricane Helene ripped across the Southeast on Sept. 27, 2024, damaging winds and heavy rain cut off radio and TV broadcasts, cellphone service, landlines and internet to millions of people.

That night, 15-year-old volunteer Benjamin Martin of Chamblee sat at his ham radio, serving as net control, an operator responsible for managing and directing radio communications during emergencies, for the Atlanta-area chapter of the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES). Ham radios use radio waves and can be powered by batteries, enabling communication even when other infrastructure is unavailable.

From 10 p.m. to 3 a.m., Martin listened to and relayed weather reports as the hurricane raged. When his shift ended, he took a brief nap before returning to his station for another five hours, coordinating damage reports and emergency communications as communities across Georgia and North Carolina assessed the aftermath of the violent storm.

"Most of the messages had to do with weather—damage and flooding," Martin says. "The aftereffects of the storm were shocking."

Martin's mother, Julianne, asked her friends on Facebook whether anyone needed her son's help connecting with loved ones in the most severely impacted areas. Soon after, he began reaching out to other ham-radio operators and requesting wellness checks for individuals who couldn't reach family members.

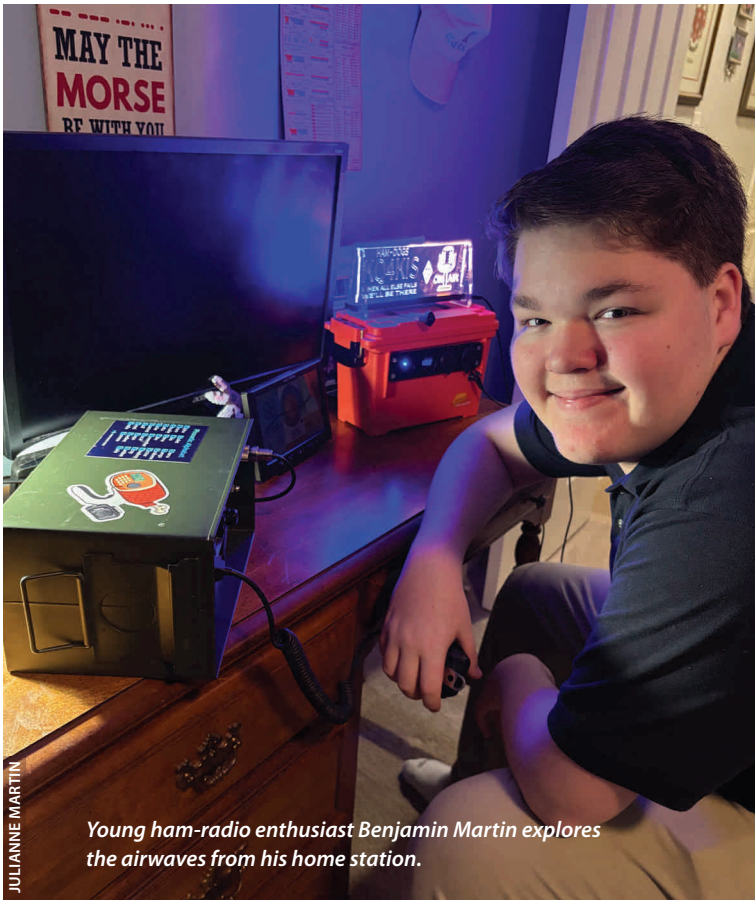
In one instance, he was asked to help locate a North Carolina man in a wheelchair who had lost phone and internet service.

"We knew that the houses in the area where he lived were simply gone," Benjamin Martin says. "His family feared the worst, so I tried to make a connection. Hams everywhere were standing by and helping."

Working with another operator in the affected area, Martin learned that a helicopter was en route to transport the man to safety and communicated this news to a worried family.

For his efforts during and after Helene, Martin received a certificate of commendation from the American Radio Relay League (ARRL), the national association for amateur radio, praising his "generous participation [in] and support of the information-sharing process" that served so many during a time of crisis.

Martin, who earned his amateur radio license when he was 14, has trained with Atlanta ARES and now runs communications for the group once per month. He and other "hams" from the group provided emergency support during last January's winter storm as well as on-course communications relaying information to race organizers and medical personnel during the Peachtree Road Race in Atlanta.



JULIANNE MARTIN

Young ham-radio enthusiast Benjamin Martin explores the airwaves from his home station.

He is a junior at Chamblee High School, a cadet corporal in Junior ROTC and a Life Scout with the Boy Scouts of America. He also knows Morse code.

Martin is interested in becoming a pilot, possibly in aerial firefighting, though he's also considering college programs focused on emergency preparedness.

"Ham radio is a lesser-known hobby to most people, despite there being approximately 750,000 licenses in the United States," he says. "But it's key, especially when [modern-day] technology fails and everything goes wrong. That's one reason why I am working on forming a radio club at the middle and high school levels to train other young people."

For Martin, whose on-air identifier is KQ4KIS, amateur radio is more than just a hobby. It's a passion that connects him to something greater than himself, enabling him to serve his community and beyond.

Amber Lanier Nagle is a freelance writer based in Adairsville.

ADVERTISEMENT

Stay in the home you love with a Stiltz Homelift

Our home elevators can fit just about anywhere in your home

THE MODERN SOLUTION

A Stiltz Homelift is a safe, attractive, & affordable alternative to stairlifts. It requires no special machine room, and no supporting walls.

ECONOMICAL & FLEXIBLE

A Stiltz Homelift can fit just about anywhere in your house. It has a compact footprint, similar in size to a small armchair. A Stiltz Homelift plugs into a standard home electrical outlet, using less power than a coffee maker.

YOUR FOREVER HOME

Avoid the expense and distress of relocating, or the disruption of adapting your home for downstairs living. A Stiltz Homelift helps you live safely and independently in the home you love.

IT'S NEVER TOO SOON

Some Stiltz customers need a Homelift immediately. But others want to "future-proof" their homes for when the stairs become a challenge.

HOMELIFT SPECIALISTS

Stiltz is a world leading Homelift manufacturer, so you'll be in good hands. Your elevator will be installed and maintained by Stiltz trained professionals who truly care about your freedom.



Did you know?

AARP survey data shows that 77% of adults 50 and older want to remain in their homes for the long term. At Stiltz, we're here to help you stay in your home you love. It's easy.

BBB ACCREDITED BUSINESS A+ RATING

"I can't imagine what we'd do without it. I wish we had installed our Stiltz Homelift several years ago!"

– Mr. James, Roanoke, VA

Why choose Stiltz?

- Affordable
- Small Footprint
- Full Safety Features
- Clean, Quiet Operation
- Low Power Consumption
- Freestanding Design
- Wheelchair Accessible
- Carry Laundry or Pets
- Fast Installation
- Full Warranty







For a FREE BROCHURE or no-obligation home visit

Call 1-877-431-4837

or visit StiltzLifts.com

Stiltz™ Homelifts


Artwork by 2024 Best in Fine Art
Winner, Wanda Azzario-Goldberg
CELEBRATING 22 YEARS
ARTS FESTIVAL
of carrollton
50+ fine artists • entertainment • kids activities • food
OCTOBER 11-12
10AM - 5PM
city of CENTER FOR THE ARTS carrollton
CARROLLTON ARTIST GUILD
carrollton center for the arts • artsfestivalofcarrollton.com



2025 Annual Business Meeting
HEMC Headquarters Map

GIVING BACK TO OUR MEMBERS

MORE THAN
$77,000
AWARDED TO MEMBERS IN 2024 THROUGH OPERATION ROUND UP

MORE THAN
$189,000
AWARDED TO VARIOUS AGENCIES AND SCHOOLS IN COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Photo by Wendy McNair

Habersham EMC
87th Annual Business Meeting

Habersham EMC Headquarters
6135 State Highway 115 W, Clarkesville, GA 30523

Thursday, September 25, 2025
4 p.m.

Agenda

(Please note locations)

Registration and Voting
4 - 6 p.m.
Inside Engineering and Operations Building

Barbecue Meal
4 - 6 p.m.
Underneath truck shed (both sides)

Demonstrations
4 - 6 p.m.
Linemen training field and shop
(Look for shuttle stops with carts to demos.)

Business Meeting
6 p.m.
Back of warehouse

Business Meeting Agenda
- Call to order
- Invocation
- Welcome and pledge
- Welcome special guests
- Mailing certification and minutes
- CEO Annual Report
- Introduction of Board of Directors and attorney
- Election process and results
    1. Nominating Committee report
    2. Credentials and Election Committee report of candidates
- Adjournment
- Door prizes (including grand prize)

All HEMC members who register are eligible for door-prize drawings.

Members who register at the meeting will be entered into a drawing for a $500 cash grand prize. You must be present to win.

Members who vote absentee will be entered into a drawing for $100 cash.

CONNECTED TO

Habersham Electric Membership Corporation
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative