



The Official Publication for Members of Habersham EMC

Northeast Georgia Surprised by December Snowstorm

An early December snowstorm caught many in Northeast Georgia by surprise. Many weather models predicted only a dusting of snow, but some communities within Habersham EMC's service area received 13 inches! Events, even some high school football championship games, were canceled throughout the northern half of the state.

"There was an initial snow that Friday afternoon, with temperatures hovering around freezing," says Brad Hicks, HEMC President/CEO. "We had outages then due to tree limbs being weighed down and pushing lines together. If lines touch, an outage occurs as a safety mechanism.

"Friday night, another wave of snow came through and dumped more snow," adds Hicks. "Temperatures didn't warm up much on Saturday. However, the additional snow weight resulted in more outages as it pressed overhead lines together."

Snow also knocked out power as large chunks fell off trees and hit power lines, causing them to bounce and touch.

During the restoration efforts,



it became apparent that issues with HEMC's outage reporting system and phone system had not been fully resolved following Tropical Storm Irma. While efforts were made to address these problems, we could not fully do so while dealing with the large number of outages.

HEMC is committed to providing excellent service to our members and has taken the following steps toward that goal:

- The telephone system was upgraded in January 2018. During the highest call volumes, members could not get through to report their outages. The upgrade provides more incoming lines and should substantially limit or eliminate that problem in the future.

- After an initial evaluation of the

outage reporting system, it was determined that the online form was not operating as efficiently as possible. That form has since been disabled.

- A thorough evaluation of the current outage management system began once all power was restored.

We sincerely apologize to our members. Please bear with us as the HEMC staff investigates the causes and potential solutions to improve the system. This process will take some time.

To further ensure reliable service to our members, HEMC will cut 350 miles of right of way along primary overhead lines in 2018. By implementing a ground-to-sky initiative, limbs overhanging power lines will be removed to increase reliability.

Right of way along the service lines to meters will also be trimmed. These steps will set HEMC on a five-year right-of-way maintenance cycle and reduce controllable expenses over time.

For more information about the areas included in the 2018 right-of-way initiative, please visit habershamemc.com.

Let Us Introduce You ...

Habersham EMC hired seven new employees in 2017 to fill positions vacated over the past few years. Brad Hicks, HEMC President/CEO, and Mike Roberge, HEMC Vice President of Engineering, have been featured previously in *GEORGIA Magazine*. Now, we'd like to introduce the five other employees who joined HEMC in 2017.

Josh Newsom, a Forester, lives in the Fairview community with his wife, Candace, and sons Easton, 5, and Chasen, 6 months. The family attends Hollywood Baptist Church. The Habersham native attended lineman school at North Georgia Technical College. He previously worked for an electrical contractor and was produce manager for a chain of grocery stores.



Neal Hencely, Maintenance Helper, lives in Clarkesville. The Habersham County native enjoys playing guitar (he played with a band around the Southeast while in college), hunting and fishing in his spare time. He previously worked as a mechanic and a lineman at another electric utility.



Dustin Watts is a Warehouse Clerk at HEMC. Watts and his wife, Kayla, reside in Clarkesville with their infant son, Griffin. The family attends Cool Springs United Methodist Church. His hobbies include hunting, fishing and playing golf. He formerly worked for a farm machinery manufacturer.



Cheryl Kendrix is a part-time Customer Service Representative. She resides in Demorest with her husband, David. They have five adult children and seven grandchildren. Kendrix comes to HEMC with a banking background. Her hobbies include hunting, riding four-wheelers and motorcycles as well as going to flea markets.



Adam Wheeler, Apprentice Line Technician, lives in the Fairview community. The Habersham County native attended lineman's school at North Georgia Technical College. He previously worked as an electrical lineman for a utility contractor. In his spare time, Wheeler enjoys hunting, fishing and camping.



Mark Your Calendars

The 2018 Annual Meeting will be held on Thursday, July 19, at the Habersham Ninth Grade Academy in Mount Airy. Karen Peck and New River will be the musical entertainment.

Statement of Nondiscrimination

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In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, and employees and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

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- (1) MAIL:** U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for
Civil Rights
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) FAX:** (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) EMAIL:** program.intake@usda.gov

Habersham Electric Membership Corporation is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Board of Directors: *Chairman, Rick Wood; Vice Chairman, George Fry; Secretary-Treasurer, Jeff Ferguson; Billy Cantrell, Dustin Hulsey, Frank McCrackin, Kenneth McEntire, Dan Thurmond and David Wall.*

Staff: *President/CEO Bradley H. Hicks; Director, Marketing & Communications, Nicole Dover, CCC.*

EMERGENCY SERVICE: *Call (706) 754-2114 or (800) 640-6812.*

TELEPHONE: *Clarkesville Headquarters, (706) 754-2114 or (800) 640-6812; Cleveland Branch Office, (706) 865-4362 or (800) 640-6812.*

OFFICE HOURS: *Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. -5 p.m.*

OFFICE LOCATIONS: *Headquarters, 6135 State Hwy. 115 West, Clarkesville; Branch Office, 897 S. Main St., Suite 9, Cleveland.*

SERVICE AREA: *Serving members in Habersham, Hall, Lumpkin, Rabun, Stephens and White counties.*

MAILING AND SHIPPING ADDRESS:
6135 State Hwy. 115 West, Clarkesville, GA 30523

WEBSITE: www.habershamemc.com

ONLINE CHAT HOURS: *Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.*

EMAIL: forinfo@hemc.coop

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Winter Weather Tips

Know winter weather terms

- **Watch:** Winter storm is possible in your area. Follow local officials and media for tips and updates.
- **Advisory:** Conditions expected to cause major delays and may be hazardous. Use caution.
- **Warning:** Winter storm is occurring or will occur soon in your area.

Winter storm tips

- Prepare for possible power loss: add warm clothes to emergency kit, check flashlight (never use candles) and radio batteries, charge mobile devices, fill car tank, withdraw cash (ATMs may not work).

- Only use generators in open areas away from windows and home to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Bring pets/animals inside and move livestock to sheltered areas with non-frozen drinking water.
- Travel only if necessary. Keep an emergency kit in your vehicle.
- Let family and friends know where you are. Check on neighbors before, during and after a storm to make sure they are OK.

FOLLOW DIRECTIONS FROM LOCAL OFFICIALS.

Habersham Electric Membership Corporation

BYLAWS Regarding Members – Meeting of Members – Directors

ARTICLE I — MEMBERS

1.01 Eligibility for Membership. Any person, as that term is defined by the Georgia Electric Membership Corporation Act, who may lawfully receive electrical service from an Electric Membership Corporation is eligible to become a member of Habersham Electric Membership Corporation, referred to in these Bylaws as “Cooperative.”

ARTICLE II — MEETING OF MEMBERS

2.01 Annual Meeting. The annual meeting of the members shall be held in the months of June, July, September or October of each year, at such place within a county in which electrical service is provided by the Cooperative, as shall be determined by the Board of Directors and designated in the notice of the meeting. The annual meeting shall be for the purpose of electing directors, passing upon reports covering the previous fiscal year and transacting such other business as may come before the meeting, except matters which, under these Bylaws, the Articles of Incorporation or the Georgia Electric Membership Corporation Act are required to be, but have not been, stated in the notice of the annual meeting. Failure to hold the annual meeting shall not work a forfeiture nor such failure affect otherwise valid corporate acts.

2.04 Quorum. Attendance in person of at least 150 members of the Cooperative shall constitute a quorum for any meeting of members. A majority of those present may adjourn the meeting from time to time whether or not a quorum is present. When a meeting is adjourned to another time or place, it shall not be necessary to give any notice of the adjourned meeting if the time and place to which the meeting is adjourned are announced at the meeting at which the adjournment is taken; and at the adjourned meeting, any business may be transacted that might have been transacted on the original date of the meeting.

2.05 Voting. Each member shall be entitled to only one vote upon each matter submitted to a vote at a meeting of the members. At all meetings of the members, the spouse of a member when the member is absent, shall be entitled to vote in place of the member. At all meetings of the members at which a quorum is present, the affirmative vote of a majority of the members represented at the meeting shall be the act of the membership unless the vote of a greater number is required by these Bylaws, the Articles of Incorporation or by law; provided, however, when a quorum is once present to organize a meeting, the members present may continue to do business at the meeting or at any adjournment thereof, notwithstanding the withdrawal of enough members to leave less than a quorum.

The Board may authorize a return-mail balloting process for the casting of votes on specific business matters in addition to or in place of voting for such matters at a meeting of the members. In such cases, the Board shall cause to be printed and mailed to all members, return-mail written ballots for voting on matters authorized by the Board. Instructions as to how the ballot(s) may be voted shall be printed thereon, and an explanation as to how the ballot may be returned and the deadline for return shall be enclosed therewith. The ballot shall be issue-neutral.

2.05A Absentee Voting. Members who are unable to attend the meeting of the members shall be provided the opportunity to vote an absentee ballot on all contested elections or other business matters appearing on the official ballot. The absentee ballot may be obtained at and returned to the office of the Cooperative, or through the mail using return-mail written absentee ballots during the period of not more than fourteen (14) days and not less than two (2) business days prior to the meeting of the members. The Credentials and Elections Committee, or a subcommittee thereof, shall qualify, count, and retain all return-mail absentee ballots prior to the meeting of the members. The results shall not be revealed to anyone until the appropriate time at the meeting of the members. Any member who votes by absentee ballot as above provided and then attends the annual meeting shall not be allowed to vote on any matter during the meeting and shall not have the privilege of receiving door prizes or other benefits at such meeting. The Board of Directors may adopt policies, rules and regulations governing the casting of absentee ballots and the delivery of such ballots to the place of the annual meeting.

2.07 Credentials and Election Committee. The Board of Directors shall, at least 60 days before any annual meeting of the members, appoint a Credentials and Election Committee composed of members who are not officers or directors of the Cooperative or candidates for such positions nor employees of the Cooperative, which shall be responsible for supervising the procedures for election of directors, the counting of all ballots or votes cast and for ruling on the effect of any ballots or votes irregularly marked or cast and on all other questions that may arise relating to member voting and the election of directors, including but not limited to, the validity of petitions of nomination or qualification of candidates and the regularity of the nomination and election of directors. Any committee member related within the second degree by affinity or consanguinity, computed according to the civil law, to any candidate for director shall refrain from participating in any deliberation or vote of the committee concerning such candidate. The Committee shall be composed of not less than five (5) nor more than fifteen (15) members.

The Credentials and Election Committee shall meet within five (5) days after the deadline for filing petitions to pass on the validity of petitions, qualifications of candidates, and carry out other duties.

2.08 Robert's Rules of Order. Parliamentary procedure at the annual meeting of the members shall be governed by the most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*; except to the extent such procedure is otherwise controlled by law or the Articles of Incorporation or these Bylaws. Any failure to conduct the meeting in compliance therewith, however, shall not render invalid any action taken at the meeting unless objection citing such failure is made at the time such action is taken.

ARTICLE III — DIRECTORS

3.02 Election of Directors. At each annual meeting, directors shall be elected by

the members to serve for a period of three (3) years and until the third succeeding annual meeting of the members after each director was elected or, notwithstanding the foregoing, until their successors shall have been elected and shall have qualified. Election of directors shall be by secret ballot unless there is only one member nominated for each seat coming vacant on the Board of Directors and the membership votes at the meeting to waive election by secret ballot.

Districts. The Board of Directors shall create four (4) member Districts to be established generally and equitably such that each director shall represent an approximate equal number of members. The Districts shall be represented by a map on file with the corporate records at the main office and available for inspection or copy upon request by any member. The Board of Directors shall name each District and shall have the duty of informing each and every member of the Cooperative of the District divisions. Each District shall have at least one (1) director on the Board during any given term. The Board of Directors shall on a regular basis, but not less than once every three years, examine the district boundaries and make changes as needed to ensure fair representation as the geographical distribution of the membership changes.

3.03 Qualifications of Directors. No member shall be eligible to be elected, remain, or be re-elected a director of the Cooperative unless such member meets the following qualifications:

(a) Such member is a natural person of the age of 18 years or over;

(b) Such member has been a member of the Cooperative and has resided within the HEMC district of which he or she would represent for at least one (1) year prior to the date on which he or she would take office;

(c) Such member is receiving service from the Cooperative at his primary residential abode unless temporarily prevented from doing so by causes reasonably beyond such member's control. The filing of a claim for homestead exemption shall be conclusive proof of the place of primary residence; proof of place of primary residence of a person who does not claim a homestead exemption shall be made by such evidence as shall be satisfactory to the Credentials and Election Committee;

(d) Such member is not in any way employed by or financially interested in an enterprise competing with the Cooperative. As used herein, “financially interested” shall mean ownership of more than a five percent (5%) interest of any sort in any such enterprise;

(e) Such member is not an employee of the Cooperative;

(f) Such member is not related to another director of the Cooperative in the first or second degree by affinity or consanguinity; and

(g) Such member is not the spouse of or otherwise related to a permanent, full-time employee of the Cooperative in the first or second degree by blood or marriage. A Board member who becomes related to another director or permanent employee as provided herein may complete his or her term on the

Board but shall not be eligible for re-election so long as the relationship exists. Notwithstanding the requirements of this paragraph, any duly elected director in office as of January 1, 2006, shall be eligible for re-election to the Board in any subsequent year as long as all other qualifications are met.

(h) Such member has not been employed on a part-time, full time or contract basis, by the Cooperative within the previous thirty-six (36) months.

(i) Such member is not a former employee currently receiving employment-related benefits from the Cooperative, e.g. retirement, medical insurance benefits, etc.

(j) Such member shall not have ever been convicted of a felony crime.

(k) Such member shall not have ever filed for personal bankruptcy.

(l) Such member shall not have been disconnected from electric service for failure to make payment within the previous five (5) years.

(m) Candidate affidavit. The member seeking election to the office of director shall provide a signed affidavit, in the form provided by the Cooperative, confirming their qualifications as outlined in this section for consideration as a director and authorizing the Cooperative to conduct criminal background checks and credit reports in accordance with applicable statutes.

3.04 Nominations by Nominating Committee. It shall be the duty of the Board to appoint, not less than 95 days before the date of each annual meeting or other meeting at which directors are to be elected, a Nominating Committee whose members shall be selected by the Board so as to give equitable representation to the geographical areas served by the Cooperative. No Board member shall be appointed to the Nominating Committee. It shall be the duty of the Nominating Committee to meet at least fifty (50) days prior to such meetings and to nominate one or more candidates for the directorships that are to be filled at such meetings.

3.05 Nominations by Petition. Other nominations for such elections may be made by written petition signed by not less than fifty (50) members which shall be submitted to the Secretary of the Cooperative or his nominee not less than forty-five (45) days prior to such meeting.

3.07 Election. Directors will be elected at large. An immediate drawing by lot shall resolve, where necessary, any tie votes.

3.10 Compensation. Directors as such shall not receive any salary for their services, but by resolution of the Board of Directors, an allowance for insurance, a fixed sum paid on a per diem basis and expenses associated therewith may be allowed for attendance at:

(a) Each meeting of the Board of Directors.

(b) Each meeting of a committee of the Board of Directors.

(c) Each state, regional or national meeting, convention, seminar, institute or clinic, provided that such attendance has been previously authorized by the Board of Directors.

(d) Any other meetings at which attendance is specifically authorized by the Board of Directors.

A complete set of bylaws is available at the Habersham EMC offices in Clarkesville and Cleveland.