

# The NEWS LINE

RUTHERFORD ELECTRIC MEMBERSHIP CORPORATION  
remc.com

Vol. 29, No. 1

Owned By Those We Serve

January 2026

## Rutherford EMC Celebrates Educators

Rutherford EMC recently awarded 19 educators with over \$15,800 in Bright Ideas education grants to fund innovative classroom learning projects. Students at local schools in Burke, Catawba, Cleveland, Gaston, Lincoln, McDowell, Polk and Rutherford counties will participate in Bright Ideas projects funded by Rutherford EMC this year.

“These Bright Ideas grants always make a tremendous difference for the teachers and classrooms who receive them,” said Jeff Brittain, General Manager of Rutherford EMC. “Educators always have so many creative ideas they cannot implement due to funds, so we’re honored to support them, their students and our communities through this program that makes learning more fun and engaging. Rutherford EMC is committed to providing a Brighter Future to the communities we serve, and we truly believe there is no better way than through the education of our youth.”

Bright Ideas grant applications are collected each year from mid-April through mid-September, and winning proposals are selected in a competitive evaluation process by a panel of judges. The application process will reopen in April 2026, so go ahead and mark your calendars now!

To find out more information about the Bright Ideas grant program, visit [remc.com](http://remc.com) or the Bright Ideas website at [ncbrightideas.com](http://ncbrightideas.com). Become a fan of “Bright Ideas Education Grant Program” on Facebook to receive regularly updated news about the program.

This year’s awards including the names of individual and/or team project winners, their respective schools, and the names of the winning projects are as follows:

### Burke County

- Kristin Wilson of Liberty Middle, Morganton: “Data Detectives”
- Meghan Welty of Freedom High, Morganton: “Leveling the Field”

### Catawba County

- Corabelle Wood of Maiden Middle, Maiden: “From Mud to Meaning: Exploring Cultures in Clay”

### Cleveland County

- Jennifer Elliott and Rhonda Benfield of Crest Middle, Shelby: “Mobile Clothes Closet for Job Shadowing Program”
- Leah Gold, Katlyn Conner and Janet Harrill of North Shelby School, Shelby: “Calming Garden Creation”

### Gaston County

- Candace Ruppert of Webb Street School, Gastonia: “Celebrate the World – One Plant, Many Parties”
- Victoria Kiser of Highland School of Technology, Gastonia: “Creative Cuts: Empowering Student Expression with Cricut Maker 4”

### Lincoln County

- Sandy Richards of Lincoln Charter, Lincolnton: “Cardboard Engineering”
- Lisa Beckham of Asbury Alternative School, Lincolnton: “The Rootin’ Tootin’ Pirate Greenhouse Garden”
- Carrie Munday of Catawba Springs Elementary, Denver: “Botley Bootcamp: Building Coders from the Ground Up”

### McDowell County

- Tosha Ramsey of Foothills Community School, Marion: “Outdoor Classroom”
- Susan M. Higdon of West McDowell High, Marion: “Illuminate Their Minds Through Science”
- Tammy Dayton, Ashley Bagwell, Suni Berryhill and Lily Moore of Nebo Elementary, Nebo: “LEGO Education STEM”



### Polk County

- Eric Eaton of Polk County Middle, Mill Spring: “A History of Color: Indigo and Plant Dyes that Shaped Early America”

### Rutherford County

- Olivia Fagan and Breanne Roach of East Rutherford High, Forest City: “The Fashion + Textiles Studio”
- Tiffany Smith of Rutherfordton Elementary, Rutherfordton: “Seeing is Believing: Using Mobile Microscopes to Explore the Hidden World” (pictured).
- Colby Fagan of R-S Central High, Rutherfordton: “Carpentry Basics”
- Emmaleigh Carpenter of Lake Lure Classical Academy, Rutherfordton: “Model Making Madness”
- Jalyn Whitlock of R-S Middle, Rutherfordton: “Empowering Young Entrepreneurs with the Cricut Venture”

Rutherford EMC congratulates all these Bright Ideas grant winners and sends a special thanks to all the educators who applied this year. The co-op commends you for the level of excitement you have in making your classrooms unique for increased learning opportunities. The application period for Bright Ideas will reopen in April 2026, so start planning now and let us help put your Bright Ideas into action!

## SWAP SHOP

Rutherford Electric Membership Corporation provides Swap Shop ads as a free service to its members. Guidelines are as follows: Ads are published first-come, first-served. When the space allotted for ads each month is full, remaining ads will be held over for the next issue. Ads will not be run more than once unless re-submitted. Commercial ads will not be accepted. We reserve the right to edit, condense or deny publication of any advertisement. Rutherford Electric Membership Corp. assumes no responsibility for the content of any advertisement and does not endorse or warrant any of the goods so advertised. Please include your account number with your ad.

### Mail your ads to:

Newsletter Editor, Rutherford EMC, PO Box 1569,  
Forest City, NC, 28043-1569 or e-mail at [cbailey@remc.com](mailto:cbailey@remc.com).  
No phone calls, please.

## FOR SALE

**Craftsman** riding lawn mower, new carburetor, does need some work, only about 3 years old, \$1,000. 980-241-5263.

**1963 Ford** 2-door hard top, barn find, all original, complete car, all trim is there, all glass is good, seems very solid, 352 engine, automatic transmission, no title, \$5,500. 704-736-9393.

**Horse Hay** – approximately 150 square bales of Mutua/Orchard grass, \$8.00 per bale, 1st & 2nd spring cutting 2025, dry stored, you load and haul, Highway 64 in Cane Creek area. 828-305-8473.

**2000 Harley Davidson** Electra-Glide Ultra Classic motorcycle, one owner, 33,500 miles, red & black in color, only modifications are Samson exhaust, Screaming Eagle air filter, Power Commander, and added chrome parts, \$6,000. Kings Mtn., NC. 704-974-6131.

**1992 rare Harley Davidson** FXLR custom, red in color, 13,200 miles, only modifications are Screaming Eagle breather, performance exhaust and added chrome, excellent condition, \$6,500, Kings Mtn., NC. 704-974-6131.

**4 ft. indoor-outdoor Christmas** wreath, \$50; 7 ft. tall Christmas tree w/stand, lights and storage bag w/wheels, \$75; 16 in. Craftsman scroll saw, like new, \$75; 2 saddle, rack cart, like new. \$100. 864-704-5229

**Very old vanity** with mirror & chair, \$145; genuine stone jewelry sets, starting at \$60; vintage solid wood hutch, \$200; king size adjustable bed frame and all linens, \$500; Randy Jackson guitar, \$200; tap shoes, \$16; towing hitch package for a 2000-2006 Hyundai Sante Fe, \$200; Victrola record player, \$30; vintage tie pins, \$20; (3) pair of satin pj's, \$18; old wooden child's rocker, \$30; vintage ceramic cookie jar, \$42; wood desk, \$60; (5) metal folding chairs, \$48; round solid wood table with 2 leaves & 6 chairs, \$350; Logi webcam, \$35; (7) Debbie McComber paperback books, \$11; (2) hand crocheted afghans, \$20; (6) grill utensils, \$36; Pampered Chef 2 qt. measuring cup w/lid, \$22; (9) Nicholas Sparks books, \$16; cameo jewelry, \$25; lots of Mary Higgins Clark books, \$48; sterling jewelry, starting at \$35; vintage resin bedroom set includes: two dressers, night stand, adjustable king bed frame, \$550, will sell pieces separately; (3) new 10" ridge caps. 828-246-7563.

**(10) vintage silver dollar quarters**, excellent condition, \$100; also have some dime lots on hand. 704-748-3258.

**Roll rubber** – 3 ft. wide rolls, \$100 each; #2 fuel oil in 15-gallon jugs, \$75 per jug; burning barrels in solid or open top, \$100 each; feed barrels, \$20 each; totes, \$10 each. 828-327-4782.

**2006 Mercedes 500 SL** w/retractable hard top, 92,000 miles, loaded with extras, asking \$12,000. 828-368-0656.

**Firewood** – seasoned and unseasoned hardwood, already split, \$40 per pickup truck load, will help you load, located at northern part of Moss Lake. 704-600-8744.

**Oak twin size bed** – has brand new mattress, sheets, spread and pillows (pink), never been slept on, also have curtains to match for one window, \$200; vanity with chair, \$100. Bessemer City. 704-215-6953.

**Black Walnuts** – already shelled, \$4.00 per measuring cup. 704-735-5030.

**New Bifanuo treadmill**, \$200; new four step safety ladder, \$50; like new Greenworks 40-volt 10 in. cultivator tiller with 4.0 battery and charger, \$150. 980-459-9911.

**Yorkie Puppies** in party and traditional colors, AKC registered, \$800 for females and \$600 for males; One Shorkie female - mom is a Shihtzh and dad is Yorkie. Call or text for pictures, located in Kings Mtn. 704-923-5834.

**(2) Huffy XDS 26 in. Rock Creek 18 speed bicycles**, like new, \$400; 4 ft. x 8 ft. tilting utility trailer, no title, \$400. 828-327-4782.

**110-volt Clarke stick welder**, new, \$100; floor jacks, transmission jacks and bottle jacks, plus other tools. 828-327-4782.

**Albino Bristlenose Plecos, Cory Catfish, fancy Guppies.** 704-507-1592.

## MISCELLANEOUS

**For Rent:** February 7-14, 2026 The Christie Lodge – an All-Suite Property at Beaver Creek, located in Avon, CO., dates can be changed, if space is available; this is a 1BR timeshare condo, \$995/week or \$150/daily, sleeps 4, on site & close by amenities, just minutes to Vail, CO., w/easy transportation to/from the Denver Airport. Condo is also For Sale as a deeded property with annual use during Red Winter weeks, (mid-December to mid-April). 704-732-8678. A commission will be paid for assistance with rental or sale.

## WANTED

**20-30 pieces** of used 5V metal roofing, 12 ft. long and in good condition; used battery operated side-by-side, Club Car or another brand. 704-538-8741.

**CB Radio QSL cards**, anywhere from 1 - 1,000; Hudson Drag Strip/Shady Side Drag Strip pictures for a personal scrapbook. 828-448-0338.

## Rising 6th & 7th Graders: Apply for a Cooperative All-Stars Sports Camp Scholarship to Attend Basketball Camp this Summer!

Rutherford EMC is now accepting applications for scholarships to attend basketball camps at two North Carolina universities this summer. Young men can apply for a scholarship to attend the Carolina Basketball School at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill this summer and young women can apply for a spot at the Wolfpack Women's Basketball Camp which will be held at N.C. State University in Raleigh.

The scholarships cover all expenses at the overnight camps, which provide a glimpse into life on a college campus. Campers stay overnight in dorms, learn fundamental skills that will help them excel on and off the court and receive individual and group instruction from Division 1 coaches to enhance their basketball and team-building abilities.

To apply, students must be a sixth or seventh grade student during the 2026-2027 school year. The on-line application period opens Jan. 1, and applications must be submitted by March 31, 2026. To learn more and apply, visit [ncelectriccooperatives.com/sports-camps](http://ncelectriccooperatives.com/sports-camps).



COOPERATIVE  
**ALL-STARS**  
Sports Camp Scholarships

# 2025 Awards Total 520 Years of Dedicated Service

Rutherford EMC recently recognized 32 employees for their service, which totals 520 years of dedicated service to the electric co-op. Each employee received a certificate based upon their five-year interval at an employee appreciation luncheon.

## LINCOLN-GASTON DISTRICT

Tyler Brooks, Jeffrey Cornwell, Nicole Routhier,  
Zolton Thornburg, 10  
John Hughes, 5

## BURKE-MCDOWELL DISTRICT

Jake Wheeler, 40  
David Greene, Brian Street, 25  
Joshua Ballew, Wayne Blackburn, Nathaniel  
Cauthen, Casey Hughes, Austin Wilson, 10  
Jacob Houck, 5

## RUTHERFORD-POLK DISTRICT

Deneen Hamrick, Tommy Chapman, 40  
Scott Murray, 35  
Sheila Guffey, 30  
Benson Freeman, Rick Smith, 25  
Jack R. Crain Jr., Jeff Davis, Ken Hardin, Robert  
Henderson, Chris Kaylor, Donald Tolley, 20  
Vickie Lovelace, Josh Newbury, 15  
Melissa Hamrick, J. Wesley Jones III, 10  
Jamie Caldwell, Daniel Costner, 5

*Join us in congratulating each  
of these service award recipients!*



## Annual NC Renewal Energy Fee Established For 2026

In 2007, North Carolina passed North Carolina General Statute 62-133.8, also known as "Senate Bill 3" with overwhelming bipartisan support authorizing the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard (REPS) to promote the development of clean energy resources in our state. A critical step to expanding North Carolina's energy mix for a secure, affordable long-term energy future, and the REPS law requires electric utilities to generate a portion of their electricity from renewable energy and energy efficiency resources. The NC Renewable Energy Fee line-item on your monthly bill increased on Dec. 1, 2025. North Carolina is one of 29 states with similar portfolio standards.

Members will see the following changes: the residential fee will move from \$1.44 TO \$1.52; the commercial fee will move from \$8.01 TO \$8.44, and the industrial fee will move from \$53.43 TO \$56.28. Rutherford EMC has coordinated with its wholesale power supplier to meet the NC REPS fee in the most efficient manner possible. The expenses to comply with the NC REPS laws fluctuate annually based on the cost of renewable and energy efficiency projects determined by the wholesale power provider.

# Get to Know Your Heat Pump

With the temperatures dropping, it is more important than ever to keep a watchful eye on your home energy usage. The device to watch the closest is the one that uses the largest amount of power, your heating and air system, which is typically a heat pump.

I have gained a love-hate relationship with air source heat pumps through doing energy audits and field checks at the co-op. An air source heat pump, when functioning properly, is “the next best thing since sliced bread.” However, when an air-source heat pump has malfunctioned, members can be blind-sided by a large power bill that is often easily avoidable. If I could offer one piece of advice, it would be to check to make sure that your heat pump is functioning during the months the unit is used for heating your home. A properly functioning heat pump is one in which the outside unit is running. The same device that cooled your home all summer must be running to efficiently heat your home in the winter. **The fan on top of the unit should be turning**, which indicates that the compressor beneath it is working. If you notice that heat is coming from your registers, but the heat pumps outside unit never turns on, you have a problem, and I can almost guarantee you an electric bill that you will look at with disbelief!

To fully understand why malfunctioning heat pumps cause skyrocketing electric bills, we must understand how an air source heat pump is designed to work. A heat pump has two methods of providing heat. It has an outside unit that pumps whatever free heat is available in the outside air into the house. However, sometimes there is not enough outside heat in the air to heat a house. When this occurs, the heat pump automatically reverts to a backup heat system, called auxiliary or emergency heat. The backup heat is a series of metal strips that heat up much like a toaster oven. An air handler then blows air through the heat strips. The heated air comes out of the register at about 120 degrees. This backup system heats a house wonderfully, but the problem is **this is very expensive heat!** So if your heat pump ceases operating outside, your system will continue to function, but with very expensive heat. Another way to tell if your heat pump is inoperable is by looking at the thermostat. Depending on your thermostat, you may see the words *auxiliary heat*, *EM heat*, or an indicator light. However, some thermostats show none of these signs at all. The better approach, in my opinion, is simply to visibly inspect your outside heat pump unit weekly to make sure it is indeed, running.

The next step in making sure your heat pump doesn't consume unnecessary electricity is to keep check on the temperature of the air coming from the vents. This can be done with an inexpensive thermometer that can be purchased at most hardware stores. A thermometer can be placed in a vent on the floor or taped to a vent in the ceiling. A properly functioning heat pump will produce air from about 95 degrees to possibly over 100

degrees. If the air coming from the unit is in the 80s or even lower your unit needs to be serviced or you have significantly leaky ductwork. As discussed earlier, if the heat coming from the vents is around 120 degrees that is a clear indication that your unit is using the backup heat source, or the *very expensive heat*, because the strips are running. This may be normal or abnormal, depending on the outside temperature. If the air temperature is in the mid 30s or lower, there is not enough heat in the outside air for your heat pump to bring into the house. As such, it will use backup heat to make up the difference. However, if the outside temperature is in the upper 30s or higher, your heat pump is not operating correctly and should be checked by a qualified technician.

Rutherford EMC is committed to helping our members use electricity as efficiently as possible. We advocate low-cost methods to save energy for the simple reason that high-cost methods are rarely cost effective over a reasonable amount of time. One of the most valuable things that we give members is the knowledge of where their energy dollars are going. Armed with this information, members can then decide which trade-offs they are willing to make in order to keep their electric bills manageable.

*Original Article by Chris Powell of Albemarle EMC*



## IF YOUR POWER GOES OFF

1. Check your fuses or circuit breakers. If you live in a mobile home, be sure to check your switch box outside (if you have one).
2. Look around and see if you can spot the trouble (for example: fallen trees, broken poles, etc.). Try to find out if any of your neighbors are out of power also.
3. Then call any REMC office listed at right. Phones are answered 24 hours a day.

## REMC OFFICES & PHONE NUMBERS

FOREST CITY  
(828) 245-1621 or  
1-800-521-0920  
(Toll Free)

MORGANTON  
(828) 584-1410 or  
1-800-228-9756  
(Toll Free)

MARION  
(828) 652-2136

CHERRYVILLE  
(704) 435-5401 or  
1-800-228-5331  
(Toll Free)

GASTONIA  
(704) 629-6226

LINCOLNTON  
(704) 735-5381