

# A History of Grassroots



**W**hen several local folks from our communities came together more than 70 years ago to form what is now our local electric cooperative, they were in fact forming a grassroots movement to deliver quality power at a reasonable cost to meet the need of rural Americans.

This progressive characteristic is the backbone of an electric cooperative—a utility owned by its members and guided by a member-elected board. Equally important are the seven founding co-op principles, including cooperation among cooperatives. With these two seemingly diverse qualities—autonomy and unity with others—electric cooperatives utilize their grassroots strength in the best interest of their members. Today our grassroots spirit remains alive as more than 30,000 co-op members and employees from across the country have joined together under the Action Committee for Rural Electrification (ACRE) initiative. Together they have expressed their concerns regarding energy issues, particularly as they relate to reliability and affordability of electric service.

For the past two years, the national grassroots campaign, *Our Energy, Our Future*, has allowed more than 526,000 participants to send messages to members of Congress. Of those, over 1,000 of those advocates are members and employees of CAEC — giving our elected officials the support

they need to debate the issues that may cause electricity bills to drastically rise in cost.

Another—more local—grassroots activity is CAEC's Annual Meeting, scheduled for Aug. 13, which allows you to make your voice heard through democratic member elections - voting for your Board of Trustees. In the center of this magazine you will find your ballot.

I urge you to either mail-in your ballot or attend this year's Annual Meeting and Member Appreciation Day and vote in person on Friday, Aug. 13 (an agenda is located on the next page). More information concerning ACRE and the *Our Energy, Our Future* campaign will be available at this year's meeting, at any service location or on our web site [www.caec.coop](http://www.caec.coop).

Participation is a crucial part of a democracy, and as Thomas Jefferson said, "We in America do not have government by the majority, but government by the majority that participate."

I ask you to take this time now to participate in the grassroots efforts of your cooperative, either by mailing in your ballot or attending Annual Meeting, or by speaking with your elected representatives. After all, it is through member participation that cooperatives have established their foundation of success for the last 70+ years. ☙

Chase Riddle, Chairman Board of Trustees

## YOUR BOARD

Chairman  
Chase Riddle, Prattville

Patsy M. Holmes, Wetumpka

Vice Chairman  
Jimmie Harrison, Jr., Maplesville

Terry Mitchell, Stewartville

Secretary/Treasurer  
Ruby Neeley, Jemison

David A. Kelley, Sr., Rockford

C. Milton Johnson, Statesville

Van Smith, Billingsley

Mark Presnell, Sr., Wetumpka

Charles Byrd, Deatsville

## LOCATIONS

Prattville Headquarters  
1802 U.S. Hwy. 31 North  
(334) 365-6762/(800) 545-5735  
Outage Hotline: (800) 619-5460

Clanton Office  
1601 7th St. North

Rockford Office  
U.S. Highway 231

Wetumpka Office  
637 Coosa River Pkwy.

CAEC Mailing Address:  
P.O. Box 681570  
Prattville, AL 36068

# CAEC Member Appreciation and Annual Meeting

## Friday August 13

Register by mail or in person and receive  
a \$5 credit on your September bill and chances at door prizes  
including a \$500 grand door prize\*

### Special gift for those attending

4:00 p.m.	Registration/Activities Begin	6:30 p.m.	Business Session
5:00 p.m.	Performance by <b>The Men of Music</b>		<input type="radio"/> Statement of quorum
6:00 p.m.	Performance by <b>Prattville High School Show Choir</b>		<input type="radio"/> Audit, officer and management reports
6:30 p.m.	National Anthem <b>Prattville High School Show Choir</b>		<input type="radio"/> Certification of Trustee Election
			<input type="radio"/> Unfinished Business
			<input type="radio"/> New Business
			<input type="radio"/> Adjournment

\*You do not have to be present to win door prizes, including the grand prize. Whether attending in person or not at all, mail in the ballot in the center of this magazine. Your ballot registers you for Annual Meeting, qualifying you for a \$5 credit on your September bill. It also enters you into the prize drawings.

Door prizes



Health Screenings  
and Expo



Food



Children's Activities

## Official Notice of Annual Meeting of the Members of Central Alabama Electric Cooperative

### Annual Meeting

It will be held at the cooperative headquarters, 1802 U.S. Hwy. 31 North, Prattville on Friday, Aug. 13, 2010, at 4 p.m. with the business session beginning at 6:30 p.m. for the following purposes:

- ♦ Presenting reports of trustees, management and auditors
- ♦ Installing trustees
- ♦ Acting upon such other business as may properly come before the meeting.

Ruby J. Neeley, secretary/treasurer

### Election of Trustees

At a meeting of the board of trustees on March 29, 2010, a committee was appointed to nominate candidates for trustees of the cooperative for the coming year (Article IV, Section 4.05 CAEC Bylaws). The following members were nominated by the committee and accepted the nomination as candidates for trustees:

**District 2:** Mark S. Presnell, Sr. of Wetumpka

**District 5:** David Kelley, Sr. of Rockford

**District 9:** Ruby J. Neeley of Jemison

**At Large:** Charles Byrd of Deatsville

# Customer Service--Working for You

We continue our look at the employees who help run your cooperative efficiently by exploring the department most members have contact with—CAEC's Customer Service division.

Greeting people over the phone or in person is the typical picture that comes to mind when you think about Customer Service, but at CAEC, this responsibility is only one aspect of the many activities that our Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) handle on any given day.

## Public Relations

CAEC has four service centers that handle more than 7,500 member visits each month. Located in Clanton, Prattville, Rockford and Wetumpka, these are full-service offices that can meet all your needs as a member of CAEC.

"The CSRs at the front counter of each office are the first people a member meets," said Customer Service Public Relations Coordinator Kim Bavar. "Although we never know what a member's initial request may be, we work hard to make sure those needs are met before leaving our offices."

The primary duties of the public relations staff are to process payments, field questions, handle new service requests and help answer account

and usage questions while also assisting the Call Center in answering phones. "You have to be knowledgeable of all areas of Customer Service when you work the front counter," said CSR Robert Stewart. "Each day is different, but with every day we have the opportunity to assist others and, perhaps, add a smile for them."

## Call Center

Each month, CAEC answers approximately 8,000 calls concerning bill payments, new services, transfers or billing questions. Regardless of where the member's call initiates, CSRs at all four

locations can answer questions, along with fulfilling their other duties.

"Our goal is one-call resolution," said Call Center Coordinator Kecia Cyrus. "We strive to take care of whatever the member may need during that one conversation. Although some cases may require follow-up, we take the members' time into consideration and try to handle their requests in an efficient and knowledgeable manner."



To help CAEC obtain this goal, all CSRs receive training annually to improve their phone skills. These classes educate CSRs on how to appropriately handle a variety of phone situations—from the typical bill payment to someone who may need a new service.

"To process all the different types of calls that come in, we have to be educated not only on the subject at hand, but also on how to communicate effectively for each situation," said CSR Vickie Bowman.

In addition to phone calls, this team works at the front counters of CAEC's service centers when necessary. They also handle any online inquiries that filter through the co-op's web site. By working closely with the Public Relations group, the Call Center Team helps assure prompt service on the phone, at the front counter or online.

## Dispatch

An area of Customer Service that does not get much public interaction is the co-op's Dispatch. This team works to maintain communication with all outside personnel—from linemen and Field Service Representatives to outside contractors—to deliver quality service to the membership.

"We serve as a 'human connection' between outage reporting, the field crews and the mem-

bers,” said Dispatch Coordinator Kristy Seamon. “We’re also here after hours to aid members with payments, service requests and many other inquiries.”

When outages occur, the reports are sent to operation crews via the Dispatch team. As power is restored, this team conducts “spot checks” through our OMS software to ensure power is on before crews leave the area.

“CAEC never wants outages to occur, but if they do, our goal in dispatch is to handle outage calls and keep track of field personnel,” Seamon said. “Our automated outage system can answer more calls simultaneously than any of us can individually. That information feeds into our mapping system, which is then projected onto big screens to help us dispatch our personnel more effectively.”



## Collections

What some may consider one of the toughest jobs in the Customer Service Division, the Collections team does more than just process past-due payments.

“It’s a difficult job, disconnecting power from a person’s home, but unfortunately it’s something that may have to occur,” said Collections Coordinator Allison Ellison. “We try hard to work with members on making payment arrangements or directing them to organizations for payment assistance.”

If a member receives payment assistance through programs such as Project SHARE or LIHEAP, the Collections team ensures that the award is attached to the proper account.

“It feels good when you can help someone work through their problems and come to a solution that benefits everyone,” Ellison said. “It’s a challenging position, but the cases where we can help people are the ones that make it all worth it.”

## Billing

Prior to receiving your power bill, the Billing team checks the accuracy of the meter readings for more than 41,000 accounts each month.

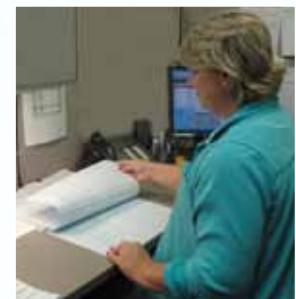
When readings collected from the co-op’s Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) are posted to accounts for billing, pre-billing programs are run against the readings.

“Our objective is to make sure that each member receives an accurate bill in a timely manner,” said Billing Coordinator Christy Hayes. “Whether we find a potential error or if it was brought to our attention by a member, we investigate each situation and work to resolve it as soon as possible.”

## Consumer Accounting

The employees of the Consumer Accounting group ensure that the members’ usage and billing stays in balance on a daily basis. Their other responsibilities include revenue adjustments, reconciling Prepay billing, cash sheets, and daily transactions, consisting of payments, revenue, contracts and billing, and assisting the Call Center by answering telephone calls.

“We strive for perfection in our jobs but occasionally human errors are made. While it is our responsibility to correct any inaccuracies, our main goal is to eliminate them entirely,” said Consumer Accounting Coordinator Brenda Woods.



These Customer Service teams have unique names but are unified in their effort to meet and exceed our members’ needs. Whether it’s opening a new account, making a payment or payment arrangement, reporting an outage or ensuring the accuracy of each member’s billing statement, CAEC’s Customer Service Representatives work together—for you. ☀

# 2010 Board of Trustee Nominees

Below are this year's candidates for trustee election. Remember, every member has the opportunity to vote for each trustee. Your ballot/registration form is included in the center of this magazine.

## District 2: Mark S. Presnell, Sr.



**M**ark S. Presnell, Sr., of Elmore County was appointed by CAEC's Board of Trustees to serve District 2 in Jan. 2010, following the death of Don Whorton.

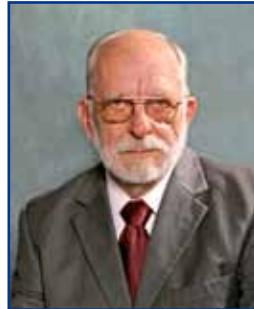
Presnell moved to Elmore County in 1962. As an entrepreneur, he established Mark's Service Center and

Body Shop, Inc. in 1985 and also owns and manages a 62 unit self-storage business in Wetumpka.

He has served on multiple local boards and committees, including the Wetumpka Area Chamber of Commerce, Lions Club, Colonial Bank Board, Planning Board, and more.

He and his wife, Cindy, live north of Wetumpka and are members of Mulder Memorial United Methodist Church in Redland. They have one son, Mark Jr. who is married to the former Andrea Haynes of Wetumpka, and a granddaughter.

## District 5: David Kelley, Sr.



**D**avid Kelley, Sr., of Rockford has served on the Board of Trustees since Nov. 2003. He was reared in the Kelley's Crossroads area of Coosa County where his family were members of CAEC when power was first brought to the area.

Kelley is retired from a career working with the Alabama Highway Department and the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration. He is a graduate of Coosa County High School and Auburn University with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering.

He is a Christian, a former assistant scout master and a member of the Coosa County Historical Society. Kelley and his wife, Lorraine, have three children and one grandchild.

## District 9: Ruby J. Neeley



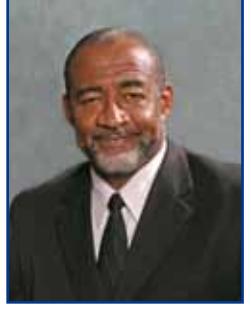
**R**uby J. Neeley of Jemison has served on CAEC's board since August 1979 and is the board's secretary/treasurer. She began receiving electricity from the co-op in 1960. Since October 1993, Neeley has served on the Board of Trustees of the cooperative's power sup-

plier, PowerSouth. She currently serves on the Finance and Audit Committee and the Nominating Committee for PowerSouth, and she is the AREA Representative on the PowerSouth Board.

Once an owner and operator of a rural community store and employee of the USDA Farm Agency, she is retired from Food Fair in Clanton.

She and her husband, Eugene, have one daughter, two grandchildren and four great grandchildren. She is a member of Cedar Grove Methodist Church in Thorsby.

## At-Large: Charles Byrd



**C**hales Byrd, Deatsville, has served as the At-Large Trustee since 2004. A graduate of Clemson University, he holds a degree in Textile Technology. His career has included management responsibilities with Russell Corporation and he was the Plant Manager at

the Frontier Yarns and Coosa River Spinning Plants. Byrd is currently employed with FEMA through the Department of Homeland Security. He also works with Autauga County schools.

His community service includes the Kiwanis Club of Wetumpka as a past club president and the River Region United Way Board.

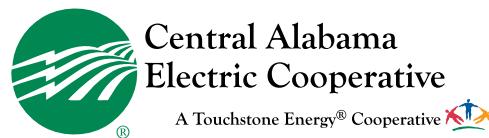
He and his wife, Emma, have six children and eight grandchildren. They are members of Christian Life Church in Montgomery.

# LOOK UP AND LIVE



Avoid electrical hazards! Look for overhead power lines before handling a ladder and never use a ladder near power lines or exposed energized electrical equipment.

The power is in your hands...be safe.



***The power is in your hands.***

# Recipe for Efficiency from CAEC

## Refrigerator Coils

It's an appliance you use every minute of every day, whether you're home or not—your refrigerator. Refrigerators are a vital part of our household, but they can also be significant users of electricity. To help your refrigerator run at its optimal efficiency, you should clean its coils an-

nually, or every six months if you have pets in the home. The coils often trap dust and hair and when this clings to the coils, it reduces your refrigerator's ability to run at its peak performance level, thus using more electricity than it should.

### Utensils (tools):

Screwdriver

Vacuum Cleaner with Brush Attachment

Warm Water

Sponge

### Directions:

1. Unplug your refrigerator and pull it away from the wall for easy access. (Be careful during this process because older models may not have wheels and could tip over.)
2. Locate your refrigerator's coils. In older models they can often be found on the back of the unit. Coils in newer models may be located in the front on the bottom of the unit located behind the kick plate.



3. If necessary, use the screwdriver to remove the back cover or kick plate to access the coils.



4. Inspect coils for accumulated dirt, dust and grime.

5. Use the vacuum cleaner with brush attachment to remove any accumulated dust, hair, debris from the coils.



6. If there is still remaining dirt or grime, use the warm water and sponge to gently remove from the coils.



7. If removed in step three, replace the back cover or kick plate.

8. Plug in your refrigerator and replace to its original position.

With refrigerators comprising an average of 9 percent of a home's energy usage, it's important to keep it running at peak efficiency. Also, remember to keep your refrigerator's temperature setting between 35 and 38 degrees Fahrenheit and your freezer at 0 degrees Fahrenheit to help reduce energy consumption. And if you're looking to buy a new unit, look for the ENERGY STAR label.