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The Tennessee Magazine

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Special Feature:

The Past, Present and Future of Energy Efficiency

Also: Our Overlooked Vacation Spots • Cooking with Herbs



50th
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The funding announcement for the Higher Education Center in Crockett County included two ceremonial check presentations — one for \$1.04 million from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to Gibson EMC and one for \$1.1 million from Gibson EMC to Crockett County government. Among those participating were, from left, Craig Laman, Clint Williams, Harold Nance, Bruce Blanding, Rayce Castellaw, Harold Craig, Brian Collins, Catherine Via, Alpha Worrell (face covered), Melissa Cox, James King, Rita Reasons, Don Leathers, Larry Hicks, Mack Goode, Emily Sullivan, Bobby Patterson, Larry Griffin, Dan Rodamaker, Bobby Goode, John Tanner, Craig Fitzhugh, Matt Varino, Jane Jolley and Van Wylie.

Higher Education Center invests in workers

U.S. Rep. John Tanner recently joined Gibson Electric Membership Corporation President and CEO Dan Rodamaker, U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development Area Director Bobby Goode, Crockett County Mayor Larry Griffin and other local leaders to announce an investment of \$1.1 million for construction of the Crockett County Higher Education Center. The announcement was made March 27 at Gibson EMC's Alamo Customer Service Center.

"This is an important investment in economic development for Crockett County and West Tennessee," said Tanner. "Helping local workers continue their education and training not only prepares them for better jobs, but also will help as we seek to recruit new industry to rural West Tennessee."

The 12,000-square-foot educational facility will be built on U.S. 412 near Bells. It will serve as a satellite campus of the State Technology Center at Ripley and Newbern. The center will partner with local industries to offer students in Crockett, Dyer, Gibson and surrounding counties technical training, specialized classes, career counseling and job-placement services. Classroom space also will be used by Jackson State Community College, University of Memphis and University of Tennessee at Martin.

Goode announced that a USDA Rural Economic Development zero-percent loan of \$740,000 and grant of \$300,000 will be funded to Gibson EMC, which will add a grant match of \$60,000. This will result in a zero-interest loan of \$1.1 million to be funded by Gibson EMC to Crockett County government

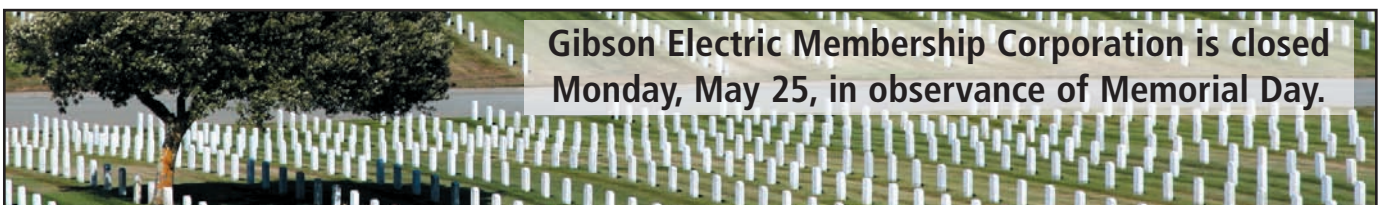
for construction of the Higher Education Center. "Gibson EMC has been a good friend to the community, and we're glad to partner with them to make this investment," Goode said.

The USDA Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program provides funding to electric cooperatives for local business development. The program promotes a healthy economic environment and supports the creation and retention of good private-sector jobs in rural communities.

"Gibson EMC is very pleased to play a part in helping Crockett County acquire funds to develop its area workforce," said Rodamaker. "And we especially are proud to participate in this project because the repayment of a portion of the loan funds will launch Gibson EMC into our own economic development relending program."

"Rep. Craig Fitzhugh kick-started the fund drive some months ago with a \$200,000 state investment," Griffin said. "Then, Crockett County Higher Education Center Committee members, with Clint Williams as chairman, began their work." To date, the committee has raised \$805,250 in local private donations for the project and actively continues to solicit support.

Committee members, private donors and higher education administrators joined many other supporters at the March 27 event. Also in attendance were Rep. Craig Fitzhugh, Sen. Lamar Alexander's Field Representative Matt Varino, Sen. Bob Corker's Field Representative Jane Jolley and Congressman John Tanner's field representatives Brad Thompson and Tom Turner.



Gibson Electric Membership Corporation is closed Monday, May 25, in observance of Memorial Day.

Mike Fraley retires after 39 years of service

After an impressive 39-year career, Line Crewleader Mike Fraley is retiring his pole-climbing hooks.

Fraley first came to work for Gibson Electric Membership Corporation because he needed a dependable job, he says. "I was broke and trying to send my wife to college."

Fraley's first job as line helper paid \$2 an hour when he was hired in 1969. His pay increased to \$4.60 per hour when he started climbing poles in 1971. He continued to advance as he was promoted to apprentice lineworker in 1972, to lineman first class in 1981 and to line crewleader in 1990.

When he first started, Fraley says he trimmed trees for about half of the year and did line work the other half. "We didn't have the equipment then that we have now," he says. "We had to do all of the work manually."

Better equipment today enables crews to restore service more quickly when there is an electric outage, and better training for lineworkers helps keep everyone safe, Fraley says.

Vice President of Operations Barry Smith says Mike sets the example. "He is a natural leader who is serious about getting the job done but more intent on keeping his crews safe. Gibson EMC, and particularly his crews, will miss his strong leadership."

President and CEO Dan Rodamaker agrees. "Mike is an outstanding employee. He has an enormous knowledge, but more importantly, Mike truly cares about the co-op's customers and his fellow employees. He always tries to take good care of people and do the right thing."

Fraley and his wife, Judy, live in Tiptonville. They have one son, Shane, and two grandchildren, Abby, who is 4, and



Line Crewleader Mike Fraley, top, started working at Gibson EMC in 1969. In the middle picture, he gives instructions to Line Crewleader Mark Perry. Above, Fraley and President and CEO Dan Rodamaker watch a lineworker climb a utility pole behind Gibson EMC's Corporate Customer Service Center in Trenton.

McKenzie, who is 7. Fraley plans to stay busy with his grandchildren, Judy's "honey-do" list, hunting and fishing.

"I'll miss helping people in the community, especially the older people," Fraley says. "Anytime you can help people, it gives you a lot of satisfaction."

Fraley says his best memory was after an ice storm in Trenton. "We stopped to restore electricity to a home. An older lady ran out of the house with a robe and no shoes on. Then an elderly man came out wearing just pajamas and a coat. They grabbed and hugged us and said they were so proud to see us. Times like this let us know that we were making a difference."

He adds, however, that he won't miss working those long nights in the rain, lightning and ice.

"He might not have enjoyed them, but Mike was always ready to work when we needed him," Smith says.

While the job certainly called for toughness, others appreciated Fraley's gentler side.

"I've worked with Mike for 26 of his 39 years," says Vice President of Human Resources and Communications Rita Alexander. "Mike has always been willing to voice his convictions, but he's done it with sincerity and in such a kind way that he has made us want to listen and consider his perspective. More times than not, he has brought us around to his way of thinking, but even when

we agreed to disagree, Mike was supportive. He has been a great team member, and we're really going to miss him."

Tiptonville Customer Service Representative Janiece Wray describes Fraley as "a man with a huge heart." She says he has always done good deeds for people he didn't even know.

"Mike always treated people the way he wanted to be treated. He was a hard worker and deserves this long-awaited rest."



Gibson EMC leaders meet with legislators

Gibson Electric Membership Corporation's President and CEO and several trustees traveled to Nashville in March to meet with elected representatives concerning legislation that will affect Tennessee's rural electric co-ops and their customer-owners.

President and CEO Dan Rodamaker and Trustees Mack Goode, Robert Patterson, Don Leathers, Joan Mouser and Rana Buchanan joined other leaders from Tennessee's electric cooperatives at the Legislative Conference of the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association (TECA).

The conference brought more than 200 co-op member-owners face to face with their elected representatives and gave them an opportunity to discuss major issues, including ...

■ **Senate Bill (SB)1508 and House Bill (HB)1743, SB1977 and HB1908:** These bills would establish Federal Communications Commission-type rates for pole attachments and designate the Tennessee Regulatory Authority as the arbiter between pole owners and companies whose lines are attached to those poles. The purpose of both bills is to lower the rates that cable television companies pay to attach to poles owned by electric cooperatives. Co-op representatives asked their state legislators to oppose both bills because lowering pole-attachment rates means greater profits for cable television companies at the expense of rural Tennesseans.

■ **SB1657 and HB1591:** Similar to a bill from last year that required records to be open to members of the cooperative at any time, this bill also requires several more measures, including that public meetings be held before eminent domain proceedings are undertaken. All Tennessee co-ops already have policies that provide an avenue for members to use in addressing their boards about concerns.

■ **SB1089 and HB1518:** While not a TECA bill, Tennessee's electric co-ops are interested in the measure, which creates a new nonprofit corporation to allow Seven States Power Corporation — owned by most of the utilities in the Tennessee Valley — to own and operate electric generation plants.

■ **SJR0086:** This joint resolution expresses the sense that the United States and Tennessee should combat global climate



State Rep. Curtis Halford, left, listens to Gibson EMC President and CEO Dan Rodamaker discuss legislation affecting electric utilities.

change through the adoption of a fair and effective approach that safeguards American jobs, ensures affordable energy for America and maintains America's global competitiveness. While not sponsored by TECA, it echoes the concerns of Tennessee's electric co-ops and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association that Congress consider the affordability of energy when addressing climate-change legislation.

"We simply would not have the support that we have were it not for our grassroots efforts," said David Callis, TECA director of government affairs. "By having the 'folks back home' come to Nashville and meet with the people they elect, it really helps us drive home our stand on the issues. Lawmakers recognize our long tradition of putting people over profits."

TECA represents Gibson EMC and 21 other electric co-ops and one municipal electric system in Tennessee. Tennessee's electric cooperatives provide electricity and other services to more than 2 million residents of the state. Electric cooperatives are not-for-profit utilities owned and governed by their members. You can keep up with current legislative news at www.tnelectric.org.

Customer wins electric bill credit

Margaret Davis of Ridgely, left, receives a \$100 electric bill credit from Customer Service Representative Janiece Wray at the Tiptonville Customer Service Center. Davis won the bill credit when her name was pulled in a drawing from a February promotion that encouraged customer-owners to confirm their telephone numbers with Gibson Electric Membership Corporation.

Even though the promotion is over, we encourage you to continue to update your phone numbers with us. Gibson EMC's outage management system uses caller ID to link phone numbers with service addresses, resulting in quicker power restoration.





Levelized Billing: A great budgeting tool

If you are looking for a way to get a better handle on your monthly expenses, Gibson Electric Membership Corporation's Levelized Billing plan is a great solution.

Jayne and Roger Lowery have been using Levelized Billing for more than 15 years and love how it helps them budget.

"With Levelized Billing, we know what to expect each month on our utility bill," says Mrs. Lowery. "Even before we retired in 2008, it was such a relief to not have a surprise on our electric bill. We definitely do not miss those big bills during the hot or cold months, and we enjoy the benefit of knowing we will be paying about the same each month."

The plan is relatively easy; here's how it works ...

- Call Gibson EMC. To qualify for the plan, you must be a Gibson EMC customer-owner with no outstanding balances. Once approved, Gibson EMC averages your current month's electricity use with the previous 11 months.

- Once your 12-month average use is determined, you will have the benefit of electric bills that are approximately the same each month. While you may see slight fluctuations from month to month with Levelized Billing, that variance is usually no more than \$20.

- Best of all, you get peace of mind knowing that you can better plan your monthly energy budget.

"Levelized Billing is a great option for anyone, regardless of whether you are on a tight budget or fixed income," says Gibson EMC Vice President of Customer Care Kerry Watson.

For more information, contact your local Gibson EMC customer service center or visit www.gibsonemc.com.

You also can sign up by completing the coupon at left and mailing it to Levelized Billing, Gibson EMC, P.O. Box 47, Trenton, TN 38382.

Sign me up for Levelized Billing.

Customer Name: _____

Address: _____

Gibson EMC Account #: _____

Daytime Phone #: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Celebrating Arbor Day

Gibson Electric Membership Corporation observed Arbor Day by donating and planting several trees on the campus of Lara Kendall School in Ridgely.

Gibson EMC's vegetation management program is administered according to standards set by the International Society of Arborists and the National Arbor Day Foundation.

Pictured, from left, back row, are Lara Kendall Guidance Counselor Michelle Johnson, Nursery Owner Sammy Milligan, Gibson EMC Forestry Supervisor Mark Greene, Gibson EMC Forester Matt Prater, Gibson EMC Service Crewleader Teddy Ross, Gibson EMC Line Crewleader Mark Perry and Lara Kendall Assistant Principal Vanessa Garner; middle row, students Jeremiah Palmer, Britton Pitchford and Tyler Ligon; and front row, Gibson EMC First Class Lineworker David Work and students Za'Shiih Coleman, Jessica Colwyck and Cheyenne Deweese.



Local youth attend Leadership Summit

Lake County High School student Adilene Rodriquez and Union City High School student Andrew Speed were among 44 high school juniors representing 22 electric cooperatives who attended the annual Youth Leadership Summit, hosted by the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association (TECA), March 16-18 in Nashville.

“The annual summit teaches students about the important roles of electric cooperatives in Tennessee’s rural communities and provides an opportunity for them to see the legislative process in the Tennessee capital,” says Joe Jackson, TECA director of youth and member relations.

“It’s encouraging to see such motivated students in our service area,” said Gibson EMC Residential Energy Specialist Bud Cole. “These young people will one day be our community leaders, and we are privileged to provide them with this opportunity to learn about state government and rural electric co-ops.”

Rodriquez is the daughter of Rafael and Rocio Rodriquez of Ridgely; Speed is the son of David and Amanda Barnett of Woodland Mills and Chris Speed of Union City. The students live in the Gib-



Students Adilene Rodriquez and Andrew Speed, center, stand with Rep. Judy Barker and Gibson EMC Residential Energy Specialist Bud Cole in front of the State Capitol.

son EMC service area.

The 2009 summit, with the theme “Leadership Rocks,” kicked off Monday evening, March 16, with dinner and get-acquainted and leadership-development activities. After breakfast on Tuesday, students visited the Legislative Plaza to meet their state legislators and sit in on House and Senate committee meetings.

Amy Gallimore, director of leadership with TRI Leadership Resources LLC, talked to the students about leadership, and State Rep. Phillip Johnson of Pegram discussed the legislative process. TECA Director of Government Affairs David Callis explained current bills affecting cooperatives and described what to

expect from the legislative committees they were about to visit.

The students toured the State Capitol and Legislative Plaza. Rodriquez, Speed and Cole visited with Rep. Judy Barker and Rob James, a policy analyst from Sen. Roy Herron’s office.

The rest of the day was spent doing leadership activities at a Nashville-area YMCA camp, taking a night tour of Nashville and ending the day with social activities and ice cream. On Wednesday morning, the students learned more about Tennessee’s electric

cooperatives as they participated in such role-play activities as forming their own co-ops and making decisions on rights-of-way maintenance, bill disputes, power outages and more.

“We offer these educational experiences for our students — our future members — because we want them to understand what makes a cooperative special,” says Gibson EMC President and CEO Dan Rodamaker. “We want them to be able to appreciate their electric cooperative and understand why it was important to form electric cooperatives.”

The Leadership Summit was funded in part by the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation.

Don't miss Gibson EMC's annual meeting

When: Saturday, Aug. 8

Where: Obion County Central High School

Registration: Starts at 8 a.m.

Entertainment: The Standards (at right), performing at 10 a.m. Five brothers, known for their harmony, sing “the standards,” songs that everyone knows.

Activities all morning:

Health fair, energy and vendor exhibits, face-painting and children’s activities

Annual cooperative meeting: 11 a.m.,



presentation on co-op finances and activities

Lunch: Free sack lunches, 11:30 a.m.



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

When washing clothes, use less water by running full loads. You also can cut a load’s energy use in half by using cold water and cold-water detergents because about 80 percent of the energy used by washing machines heats water.

— Source: U.S. Department of Energy