



80
years



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Cooperative





BOARD MEMBERS

Frank Earle	1937-1967	George W. Engel	1959-1979	John T. Turner	1985-1987
P.A. Bryant	1937-1940	John Weatherford	1967-1976	Harris C. Grant	1988-1994
Alton Hankins	1937-1947	Raymond McMillan	1970-1981	Peggy Vanover Barnes	1988- Present
Frank Hoffman	1937-1945	J.O. Sims	1970-1980	John A. Lee	1989-1990
Thomas L. Steele, Jr.	1937-1957, 1959-1977	Beverly Jennings	1977-1993	Steven P. Brill	1991-2007
Ed Kane	1941-1947	Thomas John Earle, Jr.	1977-1987	Sam K. Smith	1994-1997
John H. Schenk	1946-1978	Cecil Ward	1978	Aubury Fuller	1994- Present
Emmett Gullledge	1948-1958	Percy L. Beech	1979-1984	Tommie Werneth	1995- Present
Jim Swoboda	1948-1976	J. Bruce Childress	1979-1981	Thomas J. Helton	1997-2008
Norman M. McInnis, Jr.	1948-1969	George E. Pratt	1980-1989	J. Thomas Bradley, Jr.	1998-2013
Lee Calloway	1948-1949	Eugene Ingram	1981-1982	Joseph F. Coleman	2007- Present
John J. Lewis	1950-1955	Jack D. Taylor, Jr.	1982-2011	Jimmy A. LaFoy	2009-Present
Liston Cunningham	1956-1969	W.H. Herndon Hodges	1982-1993	Robert Kaiser	2011- Present
Ted Johansen	1958	Fred W. Raber	1982-1996	Chad Grace	2014 - Present

MANAGERS/CEOs

Carl H. Schlich Project Superintendent At least 1939-1941	Albert M. Redd General Manager 1947-1967	Robert S. Mason, Jr. Chief Operating Officer 1998
L.A. Killough, Jr. Project Superintendent 1941-1944	E.E. Thurmond, Jr. General Manager 1968-1969	William “Leon” Richardson Executive Vice President and General Manager 1999 - 2000
William L. DeVaughn Project Superintendent/Project Manager 1944-1946	D.R. “Don” Sutherland General Manager 1969 - 1980	E.A. “Bucky” Jakins, Jr. Chief Executive Officer 2000 - 2015
Frank Schlichting Manager 1946-1947	Elmer G. McDaniel Executive Vice President and General Manager 1980-1997	Karen L. Moore Chief Executive Officer 2015- Present

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PEOPLE BEHIND THE POWER

A visit with the retirees of Baldwin EMC

By TAYLOR STRUNK

Since Baldwin EMC set its first power pole in 1937, the co-op has grown to serve more than 73,000 accounts. Countless employees have played a part in making the cooperative what it is today. Through sunshine and rain, in times of plenty and of want, these are the people who have provided our members in Baldwin and Monroe counties with 80 years of light.

A few times a year, we honor our retirees with a celebratory breakfast and, more importantly, an opportunity for fellowship and reunion. As the coffee is poured, the stories begin. These tales that are told, retold and passed along are the very fabric of Baldwin EMC.

While they may come from different backgrounds, have worked in different departments, and have had careers that spanned different time frames, the common thread our retirees share is that working here felt like family – a family not connected by a bloodline, but by power lines.

Mrs. Georgia McLain Accounting Department, Retired 1988

The first time Mrs. Georgia McLain worked for Baldwin EMC was in 1946, when the co-op was still less than 10 years old. “I had started working at Brookley Field [in Mobile] after high school, but when all the boys came back from the war, we were laid off so they could have those jobs,” she says. “Of course I knew about the co-op and thought it might be a nice place to work, so I applied here and worked as a clerk in the little office that was in Robertsdale. The building’s still there, but it’s a bank now. That was years before these headquarters were built in Summerdale.”

McLain took a hiatus in 1950 to focus on her family, but when her children were grown, she returned to Baldwin EMC in 1972.

“Even in the 70s, all our accounts were still on cards,” she recalls. “We had a little machine to type in the name on the account and then we’d file them away in cabinets. When they started talking about putting all that information on real computers, we told them it couldn’t be done. We never predicted that one day everything would be on computers.”

McLain says she remembers when Hurricane Frederic hit the Gulf Coast in 1979, the beach was “completely destroyed,” but that everyone pitched in to help. “We were trying to get power back on and I don’t think I’ve ever made so many sandwiches, trying to keep our crews fed. It was wonderful how we had so many people come to help us. It was just like a family.”

Mr. Frankie Kucera Manager of Operations and Maintenance, Retired 1993

It was inside the office walls that Mr. Frankie Kucera began his career at Baldwin EMC, even though his plan was to work on the power lines. “When they found out I typed 85 words a minute, they offered me a job as a cashier,” he says. “I started on Jan. 1, 1958, and sat at a desk collecting bills across the counter and sending out past due notices. I enjoyed it, but my goal was to get outside.”

In 1962 his wish came true when he was hired on the line crew. “Once I was outside, I was happy. I loved that every day there was a challenge, that no two days were the same.”

Kucera says he remembers when the co-op first acquired a digger truck and then a bucket truck, forever changing the way the crews worked. “I can remember when we handled the first hot line out of a bucket. I was the one who got to do that, and I was bare-handed. Now [the crews are] protected. We would climb between primary and neutral with no hard hats.”

Over the years, Kucera was instrumental in implementing the co-op’s first safety accreditation program and was there to make sure the employees adhered to the safety rules.

“We all looked out for each other,” he says. “We were like brothers. I remember when we got our 10,000th consumer ... and we had a big open house to celebrate. It was a good place to work over 34 years because I enjoyed working with people, and I still do.”

Mr. Charles Perkins Crew Chief, North Baldwin Office, Retired 2006

Mr. Charles Perkins began working at Baldwin EMC in July of 1966 in the Bay Minette office, where he initially made \$1.67 an hour working on the line crew.

“Back then you could buy two or three bags of groceries for \$10,” Perkins says. “I saved every single pay stub over the course of 40 years. I was 30 minutes early to work every day because I loved my job, and I didn’t ever forget where I came from.”

Perkins says a lot has changed in terms of equipment the line crews now use. “You know, back when I came on board, you climbed every pole, [but] I’m glad I came along in those days. You learned a lot and you learned to respect a lot, too. We had a CEO back then, Mr. Thurmond, who thought we needed some equipment and he saw to it that we got a bucket and a digger – we thought we were in high cotton, then!”

While much has changed, Baldwin EMC still “has a feeling of family, too. That’s the way it’s always been, just like a family.”

Of all his memories, Perkins says the best part of his job was seeing the lights come on in a house for the first time. “I can remember a house, it must have been the late ‘70s or early ‘80s, and the family had never had electricity. When those lights came on, bam, you talk about some happy people. It was so rewarding to see them so happy.”

Mr. Butch Long Warehouse and Purchasing Manager, Retired 2012

Mr. Butch Long started working at Baldwin EMC in February of 1979 and had six months to learn his job before Hurricane Frederic hit the Gulf Coast.

Recalling his first days on the job, “I had always wanted to work for the co-op and finally made it,” Long says. “I thought I wanted to be a lineman, but the warehouse wound up being a good fit. I worked mostly in the warehouse, but was up front a little, taking bills, and sometimes I’d work after-hours as a mechanic. Back then, you just did whatever they asked you to do. I even did a little staking as well.”

Long says a lot changed over his career, and has kept changing ever since his retirement. “When I started out, you had to have great penmanship because we wrote everything out by hand!” he says. “You had to know the codes for the connectors and parts like that. There was a special book we had to break down all the work orders. Now everything’s punched into a computer and it makes it a whole lot simpler. I still remember staying over a whole weekend when we transferred all those numbers over to a computer. It was a lot of work, but it ended up being such a blessing.”

Long says that whenever a fellow employee had a new baby or fell ill, everybody pitched in to cook meals for their co-worker. “We were so tight-knit, it was like a family. I can remember a lot of laughing and cutting up, but we always got the work done.”





CAPITAL CREDITS



Capital Credits: Something that sets Baldwin EMC apart

By TAYLOR STRUNK

Baldwin EMC was established as a co-operative in 1938. As such, Baldwin EMC is a non-profit owned by its members – the people we serve! Because we operate as a non-profit, the money our members pay on their power bill each month goes to pay for electricity and operating expenses. Anything left over is distributed to the members in the form of capital credits. How does this process work? Well, let's MAP it out!

M is for MARGINS

Capital credits are the previous year's margins that have been distributed to members in the form of allocations. Margins are monies left over after expenses. This capital allows Baldwin EMC to build, repair and maintain power lines to keep the electricity running safely and smoothly to our members' homes, with the intent that the capital will be repaid to our members in later years.

A is for ALLOCATION

Allocation is the process of recording each member's share of the year's margins. Allocations are based on each member's contribution to Baldwin EMC's income. That is, the amount of capital credits a member has is in direct proportion to the amount of electricity he or she purchases. The more electric service you buy, the greater your capital credits account. The total of your monthly bills as a percentage of total revenue is used

to determine your capital credits.

Capital credits represent the value of a member's investment in Baldwin EMC; it is not dollars in a bank account. It is similar to the equity you build in your home.

P is for PAYMENT

Capital credits are retired (or paid back to our members) as the cooperative can afford to do so. When capital credits are retired, members (and former members) will receive their share. That's why it's important for you to provide a forwarding address if you leave our service area so that you can still receive payment. Deceased members' capital credits are paid to their estate.

Each year, Baldwin EMC's Board of Trustees decides whether the financial condition of the cooperative allows for the refund of capital credits. The determined amount may be a blend of old and new capital credits. More than \$18.8 million have been paid out to our members in capital credits in the past ten years.

Baldwin EMC refunds as large a percentage of capital credits as possible while continuing to operate the cooperative on sound financial principles. This allows the cooperative to keep its rates lower than they would be if capital credits were refunded in larger amounts.

For more information on capital credits, please visit www.baldwinemc.com.

Home Energy Loan Program

Baldwin EMC's Home Energy Loan Program (HELP) is designed to help our members improve the energy efficiency and comfort of their homes.

Through an agreement with Regions Bank, qualifying members may receive low-interest loans to finance certain energy efficiency improvements.

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4. If approved, you hire a contractor to make the improvements.
5. You receive monthly loan billing statements from Regions Bank.





COMPREHENSIVE TIMELINE

YEAR	EVENT
1935	May 11 – Rural Electrification Administration (REA) is created by the federal government. Only 10 percent of farms in Baldwin County have electricity.
1937	Frank Earle, P.A. Bryant, Alton Hankins, Frank Hoffman, and Thomas L. Steele, Jr., consult with attorney John Chason about forming an electric cooperative. On April 22, Baldwin EMC forms, funded with a \$200,000 REA loan. There are four employees. The membership fee is \$5.
1938	Baldwin EMC energizes its first 211 miles of lines with power purchased from Foley’s Riviera Utilities; 200 Baldwin County families are served, which accounts for 7 percent of the population.
1940	Baldwin EMC divides the service area into districts.
1942	Baldwin EMC becomes part of the Alabama Rural Electric Cooperative Association.
1949	The cooperative shows its first net profit and joins the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.
1950	The cooperative completes construction of the office, warehouse and yard.
1952	Due to a growing number of engineering problems, the cooperative creates an engineering department to be operated at a cost of \$6,000 a year. The co-op hires W.B. Clary as its first engineer.
1954	The cooperative conducts a rate study into electric home heating.
1959	Ninety percent of electricity used by members is in the kitchen.
1960	The Silverhill substation doubles in capacity to 5,000 KVA, the Bay Minette substation increases from 1,500 KVA to 2,500 KVA and the new substation just south of the canal is online with a 44,000 volt line.
1964	More homes are added to the system than any year since 1947.
1965	For the first time, sale of electric energy rises to over a million dollars.
1968	Baldwin EMC opens a branch office in Gulf Shores, which would later be moved to Orange Beach.
1969	A “new concept,” underground service, begins.
1972	The cooperative moves from Robertsdale into its new headquarters in Summerdale.
1974	The Bay Minette branch office opens.
1976	The cooperative shifts to conservation of electricity, urging homeowners to take advantage of their new weatherization program.
1977	Beverly Jennings becomes the cooperative’s first woman board member.
1979	September 12 – Hurricane Frederic strikes, leaving every member in the Baldwin EMC area without electricity. It takes three months to rebuild lines and bring every member back online.
1980	Seeing the highest number of new services in its history, the cooperative encourages electricity conservation to offset new growth. Baldwin EMC also begins to receive all power from Alabama Electric Cooperative (now known as PowerSouth Energy Cooperative).
1988	The cooperative joins other South Alabama marketing members in a program to provide satellite television programming at a reasonable cost to participating members.
1989	The cooperative installs SCADA, which provides state-of-the-art control over outages and response times.
1995	The Monroe County warehouse/field office opens in Uriah. A new control center opens with four full-time dispatchers trained to operate SCADA and Baldwin EMC’s outage management software.
1998	Baldwin EMC begins a new alliance with Touchstone Energy and rolls out a new corporate image. The cooperative initiates credit card payments as a way to improve member service.
2000	Baldwin EMC ranks number one in the state in member growth and 39 th in size nationally.
2004	September 16 - Hurricane Ivan hits the Gulf Coast and causes all 56,000 of Baldwin EMC’s meters to lose power. Electricity is restored in only eight days to all those who could receive it. Baldwin EMC also implements Operation Round Up. Members “round up” payments on their bills to the next highest dollar. The extra change is then dispersed for charitable causes in the community.
2005	Hurricane Katrina brings another catastrophic storm to the area.
2006	The cooperative begins offering electricity generated from renewable resources accumulated through methane gas created at a Florida landfill.
2007	The cooperative introduces Co-op Connections Cards, a program to save thousands on products and services, including prescription drugs.
2010	BP’s Deepwater Horizon spills oil into the Gulf, causing a major environmental catastrophe that affects all businesses along the Gulf Coast.
2011	The Baldwin Electric Membership Charitable Foundation introduces the Star Light Award program to provide grants to local teachers for innovative classroom projects.
2013	Prepay Power is introduced, allowing members to choose how and when they pay for their electricity.
2015	Karen Moore becomes the first woman to be named chief executive officer of an electric cooperative in the state of Alabama and the first in Baldwin EMC’s 78-year history.
2016	Baldwin EMC’s Operation Round Up program surpasses \$3 million in grant distributions to the local community.
2017	Baldwin EMC celebrates its 80 th anniversary.



EMC DISASTER PLAN

Helping the community prepare and rebuild

By DESTINY BROWN

The employee disaster team is a staple of the success of Baldwin EMC. Employees act as first responders to the emergencies, power outages, storms, hurricanes and other disasters across the county, and sometimes, across the country.

Each employee of Baldwin EMC is given a manual that details their responsibilities for emergencies.

According to Jody Taylor, vice president of operations for Baldwin EMC, the disaster plan manual lists a specific job for every employee. The job may not be one they do every day, but is spelled out in the disaster plan, which is reviewed every year before hurricane season. Once the co-op goes into storm mode, employees take on the duties that are spelled out in the manual.

When a disaster strikes, the members of the disaster team are out and working on a solution.

“The number one concern after a major storm is the safety of our membership and our first responders and those types of people that will be out after the storm,” Taylor said. “One of our first things to do is evaluate what damage we have sustained and ensure everyone in the community is safe.”

Though Baldwin EMC’s service territory is located between Mobile, Ala., and Pensacola, Fla., and includes beautiful Gulf Shores and Orange Beach, the co-op is always helping with disasters in other places that need assistance.

“We work closely with our area’s state-wide organizations,” Taylor said. “We have mutual aid agreements with

other cooperatives in the entire nation. In the past year, we’ve sent more than 100 people out to help other cooperatives.”

Past storm experience has taught the team to always be prepared, Taylor said.

“The time to be prepared is not near or after the storm, it’s months before,” Taylor said. “It’s so important for us to have a plan in place.”

There are different varieties of storms and the damage they bring with them.

“We’ve had a lot of storms during my time here, since ‘93,” Taylor said. “We’ve had smaller storms and bigger storms and all are different. Some can be windy and sometimes water is the number one issue. We’ve been able to tweak our plan throughout the years and I think we have a very good plan. Everyone understands what their duties are prior to the storm.”

Baldwin EMC has some of the most technically advanced equipment available, which gives them state-of-the-art control over their electrical distribution system and minimizes outage time.

“A lot of people don’t understand when a storm like Ivan hits, managing the additional manpower we need is difficult,” Taylor said. “You also have to feed people and house those who come to help. Because of this, employees who coordinate food and lodging have an important part in the plan,” says Taylor. “In a disaster, everything changes. Every storm is different and brings its own challenges. But we have a skilled, professional workforce ready to handle whatever comes.”



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BRINGING LIGHT



Baldwin EMC Brought Light When Others Would Not

Sonny Hankins' father was one of the original directors of Baldwin EMC

By DESTINY BROWN



When Alabama Power refused to run electricity out to the rural areas in Baldwin County for the small amount of families who resided there, Baldwin EMC stepped in to provide for those people.

Sonny Hankins, the son of one of the original directors, Alton Hankins Sr., can recall when electricity was new to the rural areas of the county and what a modern advantage it was.

“My dad was one of the original directors of Baldwin EMC,” Hankins said. “I remember riding with my dad and going around to put up power lines everywhere. It was a tremendous asset to Baldwin County.”

Having electricity was a huge advantage for farmers, and new powerlines meant houses could have new luxuries, such as indoor plumbing.

“My folks were in the dairy business,” Hankins said. “Before my time, they hooked up the lights and that meant

you could run a vacuum pump and milk those cows. What my mother loved more than anything was the water pump to wash clothes. You could also have an indoor bathroom. It was such a tremendous advantage.”

Baldwin EMC continued to grow and the rural communities of Baldwin County grew with it.

“Baldwin EMC has been a good friend to the community for all these years and has done an excellent job,” Hankins said. “They’ve done so many things. When I got the money to build the coliseum and shelter, I went to see them and they became a partner with us and they provided the power that comes in. They put up the poles and lights for us and became a sponsor and we certainly appreciate it.”

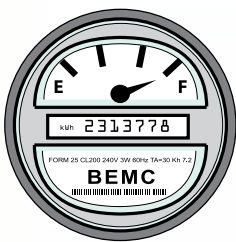
“These co-ops made America,” Hankins said. “It’s what put us into the 20th century and they were a major part of it. Baldwin County never developed until electricity came to town and it developed out in the rural areas.”



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POWERING LIFE EIGHTY YEARS AT BALDWIN EMC

Reflections from long-time employees

By HEIDI TYLINE KING

Since 1937, Baldwin EMC has provided electricity consistently to homes throughout south Alabama. However, the way that electricity is produced and delivered has changed. Equipment, technology, regulations—even the way actual work is done is drastically different from 80 years ago when the cooperative was founded. Below are the observations of some who know the co-op best: five long-time employees.

Lane Vick, superintendent in Baldwin EMC’s South Baldwin district, grew up in the co-op. His father, Mr. R. F. Vick, was also a superintendent at Baldwin EMC for many years.

“I remember the outages because the calls were directed to our house phone,” he said. “People came by and paid their light bills after hours at our house. I learned how to drive in a Baldwin EMC truck going down dirt roads on Sundays to check the lines with my dad. He would come by in the summertime and pick me up at lunch, and I’d go out there and spend the day with him.”

Vick says that the tools a lineman uses today are safer and more ergonomically friendly, which keeps the back, shoulders and elbows healthier. Bucket trucks were a game changer; linemen now climb poles in only the rarest instances. And safety trumps every other demand of the job.

“We have always tried to be as safe as we could, but today, there is an emphasis on it,” Vick said. “It is a cultural shift to where every guy is committed to working safe, and we are constantly having refresher courses. We want to get the job done, but more importantly, we want every guy to go home in the evening to his family.”

Pam Dearborn, payroll and benefits specialist, began her career in 1983.

“As a child, I remember that the cooperative’s annual meetings were a big to-do, and that made an impact on me,” she said. “In high school, I participated in a pilot program for students. That solidified the idea that there were opportunities here, and that this was one of the better places to

work in our area.”

Throughout her tenure, Dearborn has witnessed monumental changes in how work is executed. There was the conversion from a mainframe computer to individual networked systems. The workforce has grown to nearly 200. Strategic planning guides the entire organization toward collective goals. Leadership has evolved to embrace innovation.

Even so, “we are still here to serve our members,” Dearborn said. “That’s what we are here for. Without us, they wouldn’t get their electricity.”

In 1973, **Donna Givens** took what she thought was a part-time job at the drive-up window. She’s still working at the cooperative 44 years later. Much of that time has been spent in government and community affairs.

“The dynamics of our community have changed and the growth in our area has been phenomenal, especially at the beach,” Givens said. “Our county is growing. In fact, 40 percent of Alabama’s revenue comes from our beaches, and Baldwin EMC has been a big part of making that growth happen.”

Another component to Baldwin EMC’s mission of serving the community is through volunteering and sponsoring community events. The cooperative is active in Relay for Life, chili cook-offs, local festivals and other community events, and manages Operation Round Up, which raises money for the needy and other organizations in the community.

“From top to bottom, the people at Baldwin EMC are generous, kind-hearted people,” Givens said. “Our employees spend many hours volunteering in the community. Often, we have employees who hear of someone struggling and they will take up money among themselves to pay someone’s power bill or buy Christmas presents and food. Because we have so many employees out in the field, they see how the wealthiest people live along our beautiful beaches, but they also see people struggling with real life issues.”

Jimmy Hardy, superintendent of Baldwin EMC’s Summerdale district and an employee since 1977, believes that one reason Baldwin EMC is thriving today is because of strong management.

“We have been lucky to have managers with the foresight of constantly upgrading and strengthening the system,” he said. “They have made sure we had new machinery to help us keep up with what needed to be done and resources like better poles. Both Hurricane Frederic and Ivan were bad, but we didn’t have as much damage as we could have because they had us prepared beforehand.”

Hardy is most awestruck by the dedication of his fellow Baldwin EMC employees.

“When the lights go out, everybody is ready to give 100 percent to get them back on. They understand the demands of the job and are willing to learn new ways of doing things if it means keeping us safer and the system more efficient. They understand that even if you coach a child’s ballgame, you may have to leave if work calls. Just because supper gets put on the table doesn’t mean you get to eat.”

For **Louis Ruffin**, who has worked on the line crew for almost 40 years, being part of the Baldwin EMC family is one of the job’s best perks.

“Dumpling, Bulldog, Lou Lou—we’re all just one big family,” he said. “We look out for each other.” Ruffin experienced this firsthand during Hurricane Danny in 1997, when the road collapsed and his truck plunged into the water. He was pinned underneath the steering wheel, but fellow lineman Jerry Rider, who was in the truck with him, refused to get out until he had freed Ruffin.

That same sense of responsibility is also felt for members.

“We care about our members—we really do,” Ruffin said. “My wife has put supper on the table and I get a call and have to leave. I’ve called her at eight in the morning and said I have to have my clothes ready because we’re leaving out at noon. I have missed a lot of family time, and I regret that sometimes. But when a storm hits, we gotta go.”



Operation Round Up

A local family loses their home in an early morning fire. A local English teacher needs to provide books for underprivileged students. A young couple is trying to deal with the financial strain of their new daughter’s birth defects. You see these types of stories on the news and read them in the papers. What have they all got in common? Thanks to Baldwin EMC’s Operation Round Up program, the answer to this question is “help in time of need.”

Members of Baldwin EMC have the opportunity, the means, the encouragement and the reward of contributing to worthwhile community activities and needs thanks to Operation Round Up.

For more information:

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www.baldwinemc.com/programs/operation-round-up

Baldwin EMC is looking for a few shining stars!

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Applications available at: www.baldwinemc.com



YOUTH TOUR

Baldwin EMC Youth Tour

By HEIDI TYLINE KING

“The Youth Tour allowed me to step outside of my comfort zone and try some things that I would have never done otherwise,” said Will Randall, Youth Tour alum.

“Youth Tour gave me the chance to form friendships across the state and learn more about what an electric cooperative accomplishes,” said Carter Jernigan, Youth Tour alum.

“I met people who understand me, and on top of all the learning, exploring, and meeting new people, Youth Tour was FUN. It was by far my favorite experience in high school,” said Jessica Kiser, Youth Tour alum.

The Youth Tour began as an idea suggested by Texas Senator Lyndon Johnson. Johnson grew up without electricity in Johnson City, Texas, which was too rural and therefore too costly to electrify. When Johnson ran for public office, he campaigned on

the promise of bringing electricity to the sparsely populated Hill Country of Texas. After winning the seat for the 10th Congressional District of Texas in 1938, he became a founding member of the Pedernales Electric Cooperative in Johnson City. In 1939, he lobbied President Roosevelt for REA funds to create the Lower Colorado River Electric Cooperative.

Johnson’s relationship with cooperatives continued throughout his career, and in 1957, addressing the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), he suggested sending young people to Washington to work for the summer in his office. “If one thing comes out of this meeting, it will be sending youngsters to the national capital where they can actually see what the flag stands for and represents,” Johnson said.

And so began the Youth Tour, now in its 60th year, coordinating trips to the nation’s capital. Baldwin EMC has been an active participant for years, sending high school juniors from Baldwin County to Washington each

summer to develop leadership skills and gain a broader understanding of electric cooperatives and their role in the modernization of America. Over a thousand students from 38 states participate annually.

Youth Tour 2010 attendee Shuji Miller found the experience profound.

“We all have moments in our lives that we want to relive—a moment that molds and shapes us into the people we are today—a moment so significant that it is impossible to forget the people, places and memories woven into that influence,” he said. “Baldwin EMC provided me with one of those significant moments through a life-changing program called the NRECA Youth Tour.”



Youth Tour Goals

High school students who participate in the Youth Tour will:

- Increase their understanding of the value of rural electrification
- Become more familiar with the historical and political environment of the nation’s capital through visits to monuments, government buildings and cooperative organizations
- Visit elected officials to increase their knowledge of how the federal government works
- Expand their understanding of cooperatives as a business model

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WHEN THE LIGHTS CAME ON...

Electrifying South Alabama

By HEIDI TYLINE KING

In 1934, a house-to-house canvass of farm homes by the U.S. Bureau of Home Economics found that only 1.7 percent of Alabama farms had electric service. Most of these were located miles from main roads, where lines were strung and connected to central stations back in town. Yet the benefits of electricity to farm life were too great to overlook. In 1937, a group in Baldwin County met to form what would become Baldwin EMC. The first homes were electrified that year; it would be 1978 when the last known existing home in the Baldwin EMC area without power finally got electricity.

The following are stories from a few long-time Baldwin EMC members who remember when the lights came on.

Edmund Hare

Robertsdale, Alabama

“It was 1944 when the first electricity came to the Gateswood area, but even then, it was frontier stuff. They wired the house and it had one lightbulb per room. We didn’t have outlets, and none of it was wired for 220 voltage—if it [electricity] would pull without blowing the fuse, why, then, we’d plug it in. Our first appliance was a refrigerator. Our second was a radio. Everyone was so excited to have lights; it was a great improvement over kerosene.

“At first, we didn’t have power in the barn because daddy thought there was too much danger of fire and rats chewing on wires. But soon enough he had wires running everywhere. There were no two- or three-way stitches back then, but my grandmother tied a string to the pull chain on the light in the center of her room and tied it to her bed post. At night, she pulled on the string to turn off the light without getting out of bed.

“My momma was constantly telling us to turn the light off or we’d never be able to pay our power bill. Back then, it was from \$1 to \$5. The REA charged our little Methodist church a flat rate of \$12 a year. The church had lights once a week on Sunday.

“It was a real treat to go to my granddaddy’s house in Pensacola. The whole town was lit up. It was a big contrast to life on the farm.

“When the war [WWII] came and the air raid whistles went off, everything went dark—I mean, when they killed the power, they killed it.”

Sidney Chandler

Silverhill, Alabama

“We lived above my daddy’s general store, and it was my job to keep the wood stove burning. I remember when my mother finally got a two-burner kerosene stove. Do you know how much easier it is to carry a gallon of kerosene up 18 stairs to the kitchen than an armful of wood? That stove was the cat’s meow. All these years later, the cooperative is still doing good and serving people.”

John Ray Nelson

Bon Secour, Alabama

“I believe it [electricity] is the most important thing to ever hit Baldwin County.

“There was no electricity in this area in 1926 when I was born. We didn’t stay up until midnight—you went to sleep when it got dark. We had an icebox to keep things cold, but it was so drippy. We finally got electricity at home in 1939. My mother was so proud to get a refrigerator.

“By then, the fishing industry had changed considerably because of the gas engines on boats, but we were marketing only oysters and they didn’t need refrigeration. When we started bringing in large boats of fish and shrimp, electricity really helped us grow by keeping our warehouses cool and fueling our ice plant.

“After Hurricane Frederic, Gulf Shores and Orange Beach were flattened. It was weeks before some people got power, but the co-op got us electricity within 24 hours.”



OUR HISTORY



YOUR STORY

A Message to the Members of Baldwin EMC

We've come a long way, haven't we?

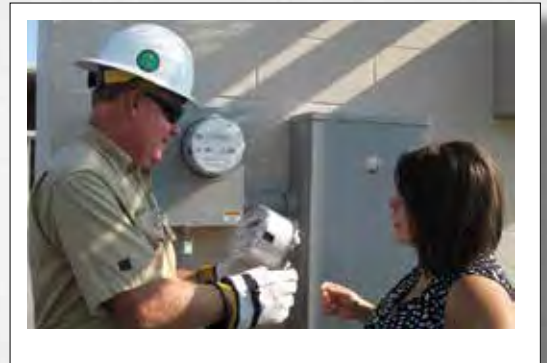
Since 1937, we've been working together to improve the quality of life for our communities. Eighty years ago, that meant something much different than it does today. You see, back then, without the conveniences of electricity, work was hard, life was hot and daylight never lasted long enough. That's when a group of people just like you got together and created a company that would drastically change the way we lived our lives then and still influences the way we live them now.

It was a unique kind of idea for a utility company. Instead of a government-owned municipality or an investor-owned corporation, Baldwin EMC would be a cooperative. Everyone pooled together their resources to create it and keep it going. Everyone shares the benefits. It was different, but it worked.

That was Baldwin EMC's business model in 1937 and it still is today. Our goal is still to serve people, not make profits.

We haven't forgotten where we came from or who made it possible. For 80 years, every pole, every mile of line, every flip of a light switch has been the result of your support, *your membership*.

Without you, there is no us.



THANK YOU

for 80 powerful years.

Here's to many more
together.

