

# THE GRID

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Office hours:  
Monday-Friday  
7:30a.m. - 4:30p.m.

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To Report an Outage  
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### Find Your Name and Win \$50

Find your name hidden inside this  
issue of The Grid and receive a  
**\$50 bill credit**. Credit must be claimed  
by the end of each month in which  
this newsletter is published.



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## Local voices shape local solutions

### October is National Co-op Month

When you hear the word cooperative, what comes to mind? As your local electric co-op, we hope you think of Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative.

Regardless of the services offered, all cooperatives have one thing in common: They're led by the people they serve and that simple idea makes a meaningful difference.

Cooperatives come in all shapes and sizes, each created to meet a specific need. Credit unions help members save and borrow money. Producer cooperatives, like Ocean Spray and Land O'Lakes, help farmers bring their products to market. Retail cooperatives, like REI and ACE Hardware, are owned by their shoppers or a membership of store owners while housing cooperatives give residents a voice in managing their communities. And utility cooperatives like CMEC provide reliable electricity to the communities they serve.

Unlike many businesses that answer to outside investors or shareholders, cooperatives are built for their members. Their goal isn't simply to earn a profit; it's to provide value, meet unique local needs, and strengthen the communities they call home.

That's exactly what makes CMEC different.

Our story began in 1938 when neighbors came together to bring electricity to an area when other utilities wouldn't. While a lot has changed since then, our purpose has

remained steady. We're still here to provide power and make decisions with our community's best interests in mind.

Being locally owned means we have the flexibility to focus on what matters most to the communities we serve. That's why no two electric cooperatives are exactly alike. Every community has different needs and every cooperative reflects those priorities.

For some co-ops, that means expanding programs that help members save energy and money. Others may focus on supporting economic development, investing in new technology, or creating new opportunities for local students. At CMEC, every year we invest in our youth by sending area high school students to Springfield for Youth Day and a chance to be one of two students to win a trip on Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. We also give out six \$500 scholarships to help youth further their education.

You'll also find the co-op difference in the little things. It's the lineworkers restoring power after a storm, the employees answering your questions when you call, or the team members volunteering at community events. The board members are your neighbors who help guide decisions for the future.

We're your neighbor and local energy partner and we're committed to serving this community for generations to come.

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# Mapping Our Way Forward: Technology That Helps Us Serve You Better

By Steven Baldwin, Director of Operational Services



When you think about the technology behind your electric service, you may think of smart meters, outage notifications

or the equipment that keeps electricity flowing. But there is another important technology working behind the scenes every day at Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative: our Geographic Information System, or GIS.

We maintain approximately 1,700 miles of distribution lines across our service territory and knowing where our lines, poles, transformers, meters and other equipment are located and how they are connected is essential to operating the system safely and reliably.

## A Tool During Outages

One of the most important uses for mapping technology is outage restoration. When severe weather moves through our territory, crews may be responding to multiple outages at once. Accurate mapping information helps our operations team understand where problems are located, what equipment serves an affected area and how the

electrical system is connected. That information helps us prioritize work, communicate with crews and make informed restoration decisions.

Members can also see a portion of this technology through CMEC's online outage map. The map provides frequently updated information about outages and helps members see where interruptions are occurring.

A map can't repair a broken pole or restore a downed line. That takes our dedicated employees and line crews, but accurate information helps those employees know where to go and better understand the system they are working on.

## Supporting the Future of Our System

GIS is also an important tool for planning and maintaining our electric system. When we consider new construction, system improvements or changes to existing facilities, accurate mapping information helps our engineering and operations teams make better decisions.

Just as important is keeping that information current. When a pole is replaced, a transformer is changed, a line is relocated or new equipment is installed, those changes need to be reflected in our records. Technology is only as valuable as

the information behind it, which is why maintaining accurate field data is an ongoing priority.

As CMEC's system continues to evolve, our mapping technology will continue to evolve with it. GIS gives our employees a clearer picture of the system they work on every day and provides a foundation for incorporating new technologies and information into our operations. **Jeffrey Bailey**

Much of this work happens behind the scenes. Members may never see the maps our employees use when responding to an outage or planning a system improvement, but every time you flip on a light switch, there is a tremendous amount of planning, technology and teamwork working together to make sure the power is there.

At CMEC, our mission is to provide safe, reliable and affordable electric service to the members we serve. Mapping technology is one of the many tools that helps us fulfill that mission and helps us stay connected to the people and communities we are proud to serve.

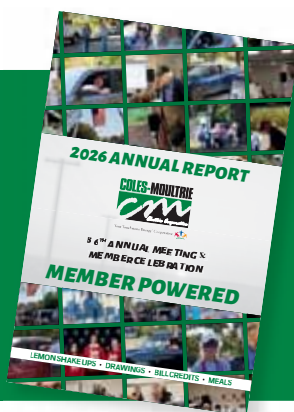
*"Co-op Month" continued from page 18A*

This National Co-op Month, we invite you to join us in celebrating the cooperative difference because this co-op belongs to you.

Whether it's CMEC, your local credit union, or ACE Hardware, cooperatives prove that when people work together, everyone benefits.

Your membership is what makes our mission possible and it's what keeps us focused on serving the people and communities that matter most.

**Your CMEC 2026 Annual Report has been mailed to all members. Request a copy by emailing [info@cmeccoop.org](mailto:info@cmeccoop.org) or visit our website [www.cmeccoop.org](http://www.cmeccoop.org).**



## Meet Our IT Team

This month, we're shining a spotlight on the people who help keep our cooperative connected, protected, and running smoothly. In today's electric cooperative world, reliable technology and strong cybersecurity are essential to serving members safely and efficiently. From protecting sensitive data and supporting daily operations to helping safeguard the systems that keep power flowing, our IT team plays a vital role behind the scenes. Their work reflects the cooperative commitment to service, security, and community, helping ensure we are prepared, connected, and ready to meet the needs of our members every day.



Ernie Sparks



Devon Durbin



David Welsh

## TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS



October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month, which is the perfect time to take a fresh look at your passwords. Forget the old advice about cramming passwords with symbols and random capitalization. Today's cybersecurity experts recommend using longer passphrases. A password made up of four or five unrelated words is easier to remember and much harder for criminals to crack than a short, complex password. Use a unique passphrase for every account and enable multi-factor authentication whenever available for added protection.

Source: NIST



HAVE A SAFE AND  
HAPPY HALLOWEEN!

## MEDICAL DEVICE SAFETY YOUR BACKUP POWER OPTIONS



Know if your device works with **batteries** or a **generator**, and for **how long**.



Safe  
Electricity.org



## Harvest Safety Tips

Your safety matters. Be prepared this harvest season!

- Always be aware of overhead power lines when operating tall equipment like grain augers and combines.
- As you work, be aware of overhead power lines. Always maintain at least 10 feet of clearance from power lines and electrical equipment.
- If your equipment contacts a power line, stay inside the cab and call 911. Only exit if there is immediate danger like a fire. If you must exit, jump clear without touching any part of the equipment.

## SAVE ENERGY THIS *Fall and Winter*

Follow these simple DIY tips to reduce energy use  
and keep you warm this season:

- Seal gaps around windows and doors with caulk or weatherstripping.
- Close curtains and blinds at night to keep the cold out.
- Open window coverings on sunny days to let the sun in.
- Clean or replace furnace filters.
- Run ceiling fans clockwise to push warm air down.
- Check insulation in your attic, attic hatch and crawl space.
- Use a smart thermostat to lower temperatures when asleep or away.
- Close the fireplace flue when not in use.
- Schedule a home energy audit to find and fix energy wasters.

For more tips, visit:



Monthly Board Meeting Minutes can be viewed on our website: [www.cmec.coop](http://www.cmec.coop)