

# Rayle Lines

## Member Newsletter



September 2024

The Official Newsletter of Rayle Electric Membership Corporation

## Rayle EMC partners with CoBank to award four Sharing Success grants to charitable organizations

**R**ayle EMC recently had the opportunity to participate in a unique and exciting community program called the Sharing Success program. Aimed at supporting local communities and people, the grant is made possible by our board of directors, in partnership with CoBank—a national nonprofit cooperative bank owned by the rural American cooperatives it services. The \$5 million fund is a cornerstone of CoBank's corporate citizenship efforts, matching donations by the bank's customers to nonprofit organizations in their communities.

Sharing Success is a matching grant program created by CoBank in 2012. The cooperative bank partners with its customers, like Rayle EMC, to support the causes and organizations they care about. CoBank customers can apply for matching grants each year. This year, Rayle EMC awarded \$2,000 to each recipient, and CoBank matched the funds. A total of \$4,000 went

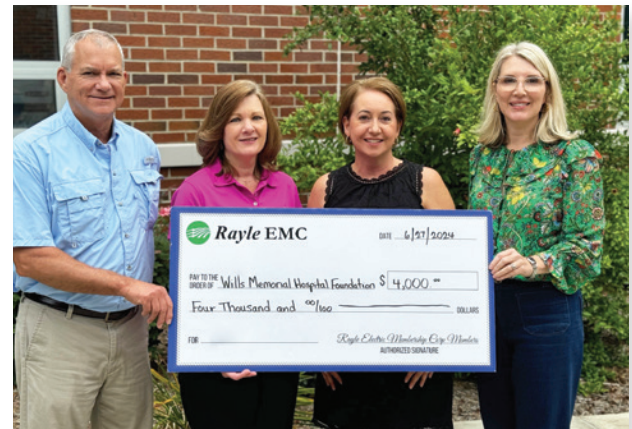
*Continued on page 22D*



From left: Rayle EMC's Karen Chafin and Tony Griffin and Catherine Stewart, Children's Hospital of Georgia Director of Philanthropy.



From left: Karen Chafin, Rayle EMC; Steve Chalker, Burn Foundation of America COO; and Tony Griffin, Rayle EMC.



From left: Tony Griffin and Karen Chafin of Rayle EMC; Tracie Haughey, Wills Memorial Hospital CEO; and Susan Pope, Wills Memorial Hospital Director of Human Resources.

# Rayle EMC sponsors local student to attend co-op youth leadership conference

**J**uliana Prestenbach of Washington was sponsored by Rayle EMC to attend the Georgia Cooperative Council Youth Leadership Conference held at the FFA/FCCLA Center July 8-12, 2024. Juliana is the daughter of Jessica Pullum of Washington.

At the conference, known as “Co-op Camp,” she joined 34 other young leaders from Georgia and Virginia for a week of engaging leadership and learning sessions through interactive activities and outdoor adventures. The event provided opportunities for growth in community leadership, problem-solving, relationship-building and communication in a relaxed environment. Sponsored by members of the Georgia Cooperative Council, including Rayle EMC, the conference highlighted the impact of cooperatives on communities and how youth can be a part of them.

One of this year’s teens said, “Co-op camp is an amazing experience for anyone who plans to be a leader in their future career. You learn the group skills needed to efficiently work well with others in a fun environment.”

Camp participants developed new leadership skills by practicing them with peers and new friends. Interactive workshops included a personality profile session to enhance teamwork and a session with tips on how to navigate social interactions more effectively.

Another student commented, “Co-op camp is awesome and gives valuable information for us to take back home and use in our daily lives.”

Another added, “It’s so much fun getting to know like-minded people and definitely an experience that can’t compare to anything.”

Throughout the week, students engaged with representatives from Farm Credit Associations, Georgia EMC, Go Energy Credit Union, Pineland Telephone Cooperative and Adam Schwartz of The Cooperative Way.

These presenters highlighted how their organizations embody the Seven Cooperative Principles: voluntary and open membership, democratic member control, members’ economic participation, autonomy and independence, education and training, cooperation among cooperatives and concern for community.

“Supporting and encouraging leadership growth

among our youth is crucial. This weeklong conference not only brings the seven cooperative principles to life but also helps teenagers develop essential leadership and soft skills in an enjoyable setting,” says General Manager Tony Griffin of Rayle EMC.

The group visited Walton EMC and Godfrey Dairy to observe these principles in action. Alongside these educational experiences, the camp featured a high-ropes course, mud course and team-building activities, fostering strong friendships and memorable moments.

As one student remarked, “Co-op camp is a fantastic opportunity to make new friends,

enjoy outdoor activities and learn about the cooperative business model. It’s an unforgettable experience.”

Rayle EMC is a consumer-owned cooperative providing electrical services to more than 14,000 consumers in Wilkes, Oglethorpe, Lincoln, Taliaferro, Greene, Hancock, Morgan, Oconee, Madison and Clarke counties.

The Georgia Cooperative Council is a statewide nonprofit cooperative association whose membership is composed of financial, electric, telephone, marketing and service cooperatives. The objective of the Council is to promote and encourage all types of cooperative associations in the state and to educate the public about the cooperative way of business.



**Juliana Prestenbach represented Rayle EMC at the Georgia Cooperative Council Youth Leadership Conference.**



# Celebrate farm safety in September

**W**orking on a farm can be dangerous. As a reminder, farm communities have celebrated National Farm Safety and Health Week every September since 1944. This year's observance is Sept. 15-21.

For many areas of the country, the fall harvest season is one of the busiest, but also one of the most dangerous for our nation's farmers and farmworkers. Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows the agriculture industry is consistently at the highest risk for occupational injuries and fatalities, with 453 fatalities in 2021, or an equivalent of 19.5 deaths per 100,000 workers. Between 2021-2022, there were 21,020 injuries in agricultural production that required days away from work.

Many of those injuries and deaths are preventable. During National Farm Safety and Health Week, share these safety tips with friends and family members who work in agriculture:

- Equip tractors with roll-over protective structures (ROPS) and keep proper guards in place on power take-off units (PTO) and other moving parts.
- Ride your tractor alone. Most are designed for one passenger.
- Roadway crashes that involve farm equipment are five times more likely to end with a fatality, but proper signage, lights and reflective safety strips can help farmers stay visible on rural roads.
- Wear protective equipment for all farm work, especially when using power tools. Safety goggles, dust masks, face shields and hearing protection should be readily available to anyone on the farm.
- Keep power tools in good condition, and check the cords and plugs for wear before using.
- Power tools should be properly grounded or double-insulated.
- Don't leave children unsupervised or give them chores they can't safely handle. Stress the importance of safety.
- Organize a Farm Safety Day for the children in your farm community. Plan games and activities that teach about safety.



## RAYLE LINES

Official Publication  
Rayle EMC



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### Rayle EMC

#### Office Locations:

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#### LEXINGTON DISTRICT

786 Athens Rd.  
Lexington, GA 30648  
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#### 24-HOUR PHONE SERVICE AT EACH LOCATION

#### OFFICE HOURS

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
Monday through Friday

Rayle EMC serves Wilkes, Lincoln, Oglethorpe, Greene, Taliaferro and parts of Hancock, Morgan, Clarke, Madison and Oconee counties.

# Rayle EMC new employee

**R**ayle EMC General Manager Tony Griffin announces the addition of a new employee. Colby Matthews will be working out of the Rayle EMC office in the Greensboro District.

Matthews of Newborn began his career with Rayle EMC on May 20, 2024, as a Staking Technician Trainee in the Greensboro District. He is a 2006 graduate of Rockdale County High School. Matthews is the son of Phil and Leigh Matthews of Madison and has one sister,

Hope Bryson of Watkinsville. He is married to the former Kayla Jackson of Covington and they have two children, Briley Brooke Matthews, 9, and Brody Matthews, 7. Matthews and his family attend Redeemer Church in Madison.

Prior to joining Rayle EMC, Matthews worked as a cable splicer for Pike Electric. During his spare time, he enjoys hunting, fishing in tournaments and watching his kids in Junior Rodeos.



Colby Matthews

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Now is the time to schedule annual maintenance for your home's heating system. During fall months, HVAC technicians are typically less busy, making this an excellent time for maintenance and any necessary repairs before the winter months.

A qualified technician can clean filters, check for leaks and ensure all system components are working efficiently to keep your home cozy and warm when the temperatures begin to drop.



## Sharing Success grants, *Continued from page 22A*

to each of these organizations: Wills Memorial Hospital Foundation, Burn Foundation of America, Children's Hospital of Georgia and Children's Healthcare of Atlanta.

"Caring for community' is one of the cooperative's seven principles," says Rayle EMC General Manager Tony Griffin. "Partnering with CoBank in the Sharing Success program is an opportunity for Rayle EMC to carry out this principle, and proudly support these local charitable organizations that provide vital services to the areas we serve."

The matching grant program is designed to celebrate the vital role that cooperatives play in individual communities across the country.

CoBank states that collaborating with their customers to support worthy causes they care about is a great way for them to make a positive difference and fulfill its mission of service to rural America. Since its inception in 2012, the program has generated more than \$86 million in total charitable donations, primarily in rural areas across the country.



Rayle EMC General Manager Tony Griffin presents a check to Children's Healthcare of Atlanta.