# Electric News

Published for Members of the Little Ocmulgee EMC

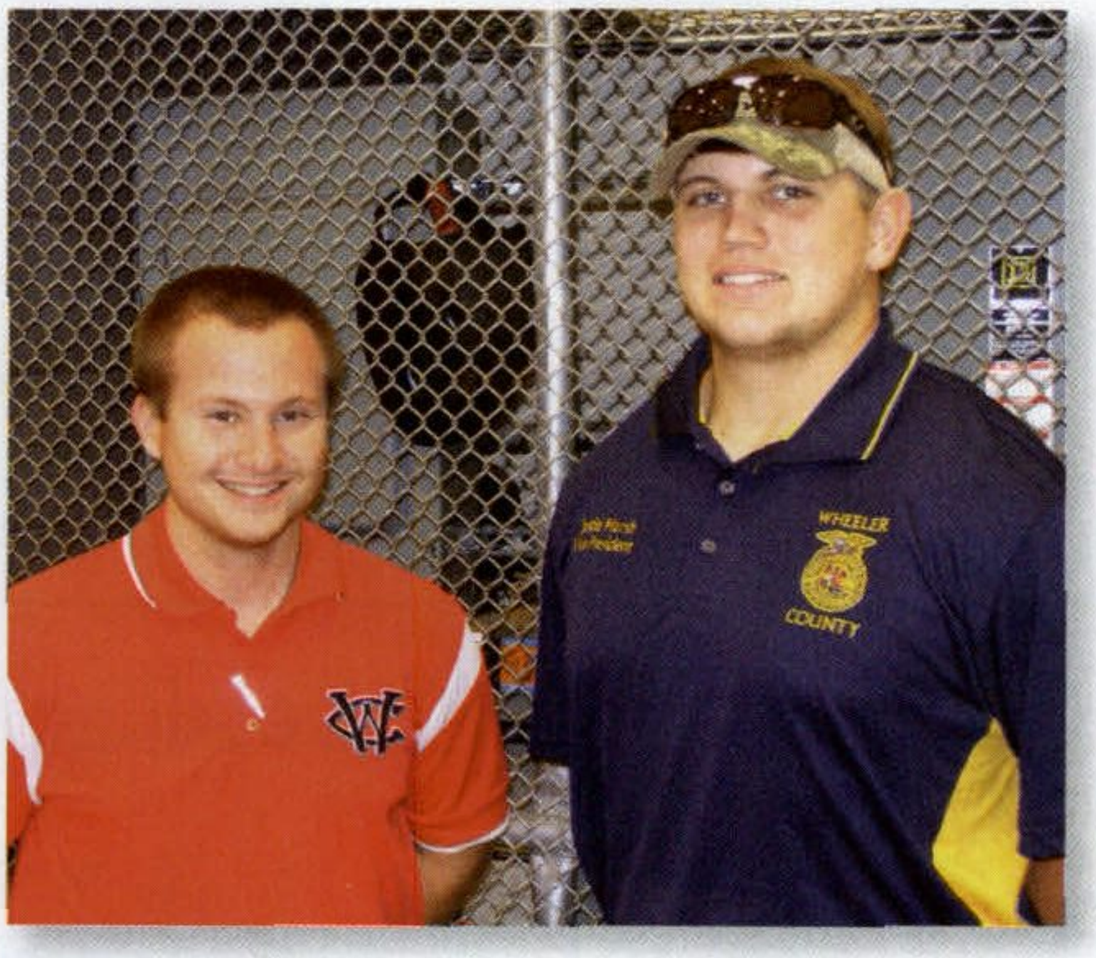
MARCH/APRIL 2014 • VOLUME 37, NUMBER 2


## Wheeler County Student Polishes Wiring Skills

Wheeler County High School senior Justin Marsh recently participated in the Area IV EMC/FFA Agricultural Education Career Development Event (CDE), a competition in which agriculture students learn about the safe, efficient use of electricity while sharpening their wiring skills. Justin, son of Al and Sandra Marsh, of Alamo, was one of 11 participants in the wiring contest, held at Treutlen County High School in Soperton.

The practical wiring exercise during the contest is especially popular with students and teachers, who recognize the benefits of hands-on learning. "Students in a hands-on program will remember the material better, feel a sense of accomplishment when the task is completed and be able to transfer that experience easier to other learning situations," says Little Ocmulgee EMC General Manager Lewis Sheffield. "When more than one method of learning is offered, the information has a better chance of being stored in the student's memory for retrieval. They'll also stay on task more often because they are *part of* the learning process and not just spectators."

Justin Marsh gives the judges his speech/demonstration on a specific wiring exercise, which tests his knowledge of the National Electrical Code. Participants are also required to complete a written exam and a practical wiring problem during the Area IV contest.



Justin, right, was accompanied this year by Wheeler County Middle School agriculture instructor Lonnie Giddens. Giddens and high school agriculture instructor Bryant Oliver (not pictured) mentor their students in preparation for the competition.

Contestant participants must also complete a multiple-choice written exam and give a presentation describing necessary steps to complete a specific electrical task.

Over the years, EMC representatives and students have come to appreciate the benefits of the wiring competition. In some cases, students were inspired to pursue degree programs in the electric industry or agriculture. Some have graduated with engineering degrees, completed electrical courses at technical colleges and eventually landed jobs in their area of study.

Any active FFA member enrolled in a ninth- through 12th-grade high school agriculture education class is eligible to participate. The top two individuals in each area contest advance to the state competition. As an added incentive, and to encourage participation, college scholarships can be earned for use at any college, university or vocational school.

# Industry-leading Safety Practices Bring Accreditation for Little Ocmulgee EMC

Zero injuries and zero lost-time accidents are goals at every electric membership corporation (EMC) in Georgia. Working with electricity is inherently dangerous, and the industry has developed robust safety protocols that are employed in the field, in warehouses and in offices so everyone can practice safety at work.

Little Ocmulgee EMC recently received accreditation for its safety practices from the Electric Cooperative Safety Accreditation Program of Georgia. The award is based on the utility's safety record and safety programs over the past three years, says Jim Wright, Georgia EMC's Vice President of Training, Education and Safety.

"Georgia's EMCs operate in a culture of safety, making sure they do everything possible to keep workers and members of the public safe," says Wright. "Accreditation shows that a cooperative is doing all of the right things to stress safety on the job—regardless of where an employee works."

The accreditation process includes two primary components: record keeping and a multi-day on-site visit. The record-keeping portion consists of a check of a cooperative's safety records and its adherence to safety programs and regulations from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

"A rigorous inspection process ensures that EMC employees are following the proper safety protocols in the office and in the field to keep themselves, co-workers and the general public safe," Wright says.

During the on-site inspection, observers visit the main office, warehouse and district offices as well as the utility's service area. Inspectors make sure that equipment used by cooperative employees, everything from rubber goods and fiberglass-insulated sticks used to handle live wires to utility trucks, are in compliance with testing protocols. Inspectors include personnel from accredited EMCs and the cooperative training center.

The inspection process also includes criteria to determine whether the cooperative is keeping the public safe. Observers inspect public rights of way, utility poles, and overhead and underground wiring to ensure proper utility practices are being followed.

Safety is ingrained in the culture of Little Ocmulgee EMC, says General Manager Lewis Sheffield. "This award shows the commitment we make to safety," says Sheffield. "We live it, we breathe it and we practice it, day in and day out, to better serve our member-owners and our co-workers."

The Safety Accreditation Award was presented to Little Ocmulgee EMC during the annual meeting of Georgia EMC on Nov. 11, 2013, in Augusta. Georgia EMC developed its own accreditation program for member cooperatives in order to tailor to their members' safety practices. Georgia's EMCs undergo accreditation on a rotating basis. Little Ocmulgee EMC is among 15 EMCs to receive the new accreditation, which is effective for three years.

# Claim Undeliverable Capital Credits by Sept. 1 Deadline

A current list of members with unclaimed capital credit checks issued in 2008, marked as "undeliverable" by the post office, is located for your review at our offices in Alamo, Dublin and McRae. This list can also be viewed online at *www.loemc.com.*

The last possible date to claim these funds is Sept. 1, 2014. If these funds are not claimed by this date, they will be donated for charitable uses, as permitted by O.C.G.A. 44-12-236.

Our corporate office in Alamo and the branch offices in Dublin and McRae are open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m.

# Little Ocmulgee EMC Gives Back to Communities

Bridges of Hope

Telfair County High Hog Market

Telfair County 4-H

Laurens County 4-H

Little Ocmulgee EMC (LOEMC), headquartered in Alamo, Ga., has been busy assisting local charities and nonprofit organizations with monetary donations made available from unclaimed capital credits. In 2005, House Bill 431 was passed, allowing unclaimed capital credits to be used by nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations, for educational purposes or economic development instead of returning the funds to the state.

Capital credits are paid to an EMC member's account on an annual basis after all expenditures of the EMC are met. These margins are distributed based on the member's annual patronage and paid out on a 30-year rotation. After these capital credits checks are mailed, some are returned and deemed "unclaimed." When all efforts to reach the member have been exhausted, these funds are given to charities or nonprofit organizations, or sent to the state.

Little Ocmulgee EMC, with locations in Alamo, Dublin and McRae, is proud to donate some of the unclaimed funds to various local community nonprofit charities and organizations, which retain the funds in the local communities.

LOEMC recently celebrated 75 years of dedicated service to its members and currently provides electricity to more than 7,500 members with more than 11,000 meters in Wheeler and Telfair counties, plus portions of Laurens, Dodge and Montgomery counties.

West Laurens County High Hog Market

Wheeler County 4-H

Laurens County Youth Leadership

Telfair-Wheeler Youth Leadership

Serenity Foundation

Serenity Hospice Care

Teen Challenge of Middle Georgia

Wheeler County High Hog Market

# In Memory of Vance Oliver

Vance Oliver started his career at Little Ocmulgee EMC on Tax Day (April 15, 1965). His official retirement date was Dec. 31, 2007. But even after his retirement, Vance was still very much a part of LOEMC. His accomplishments have always been standards that others tried to follow. Some of the notes of his personal work habits documented in his file are:

- Being exact and precise
- Very keen and alert
- Careful about personal appearance
- Energetic, seldom tires
- Remains calm
- Thinks things through and makes good decisions
- Shows sincere concern for safety

Vance started as a Lineman, retired as Senior Line Foreman and held many titles in between. He was the first and only employee to be named Senior Line Foreman. Vance was an integral part of shaping Little Ocmulgee EMC and will be remembered as a pioneer and part of the co-op's foundation. Those who had the privilege of knowing and working with him feel very blessed by the opportunity to learn from his leadership and the examples he set.

Vance died Dec. 22, 2013, at the age of 68. It is with great respect and much love that his fellow employees of Little Ocmulgee EMC say goodbye to Vance Oliver.

## *Tribute to the 'Old Man' Vance Oliver*

'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the country,

Ice covered the trees and roads were slick and bumpy.

The calls came pouring in; the weather was rough.

The phone operators cried, "We've had enough!"

We need the crews out—and I mean them all.

Get them on the phone; there's no time to stall.

The guys in their buckets came ready and fast.

But one man went out with only a pickup and gas.

Hooks and a pack of Salems, the poles for to climb.

He didn't need the oil; he came from another time.

He could pull in a 2, as some of us know.

But he had to light a Salem before he would go.

He sounded like Gibbs, saying, "You're just in time…

Saddle on up 'cause we need help on the line."

"No hoist and no rope," is what he did say

"Watch how this is done, so you can do it someday."

That night the poles from Laurens to Wheeler and back

Were covered all over with June Bug's hook tracks.

He did his job, as one should do.

And then passed down the torch for me and for you

So when the oil can't go up and those rusty hooks you see,

Think of the Old June Bug who helped pave the way for you and me.

Don't be concerned that he's hung up his tools,

Because if you need the "Old Man," he can still show you the rules.