



## There is a cooperative difference

BY F. WHIT HOLLOWELL JR., CEO



**F. Whit Hollowell Jr.**

In the U.S., the vast majority of people receive their electricity from one of three types of utilities: investor-owned, municipal-owned or through their electric cooperative, which is owned and controlled by the people who use it. Let's take a closer look at these three ownership models and see why it matters to you.

In the investor-owned model, the corporation is owned by a great number of stockholders who may or may not be real customers of the utility. Investor-owned utilities (IOUs) tend to be very large corporations such as Georgia Power Co., Duke Power Co. or Con Edison.

They serve large cities, suburban areas and some rural areas.

About 72 percent of the U.S. population is served by investor-owned utilities. The American Customer Satisfaction Index reports many of the country's IOUs have some of the lowest customer satisfaction ratings.

Municipal electric systems, as the name implies, are government owned. They can serve large cities, like Los Angeles, Austin or Orlando, or smaller areas, such as the nearby Georgia city of Sylvania or even the tiny town of Brinson, population 215. In municipal systems, the city runs the utility with little to no meaningful oversight from the citizens. About 16 percent of the market is served by municipal utilities.

Rural electric cooperatives serve the smallest number of consumers, about 12 percent of the market, which equals 42 million people. There are more than 800 electric co-ops in 47 states, including Coastal Electric Cooperative. While co-ops serve the fewest number of people, our

electric lines cover more than 75 percent of the U.S. landmass. This is because we provide power where others once refused to go because of the low population density.

Electric co-ops rank highest in member satisfaction among the three types of utilities. We believe this is because we serve member-owners, not customers.

As the electric utility business continues to evolve, we are committed to being there for you, our member, to meet your electric energy needs. We are rooted right here in coastal Georgia. Over the years, we have answered the call to provide additional benefits and services because it is extremely important to us that our community thrives and prospers. This is why we offer Bright Ideas grants to our local teachers and scholarships to our students, and support community and economic development programs and leadership training for our young people.

There is a cooperative difference. You own us, and we are here to serve you!

### American Customer Satisfaction Index Second Quarter 2015

<b>Coastal Electric Cooperative</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>Touchstone Energy co-ops</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>Top-rated investor-owned utility</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Investor-owned utility average</b>	<b>72</b>

*The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), measured on a 100-point scale, is the only national cross-industry measure of customer satisfaction in the United States.*

# Cooperative solar project now online for members

Coastal Electric Renewables' 50-kilowatt (kW) cooperative solar project, adjacent to its Midway headquarters, is online and producing approximately 87,000 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of solar electricity per year.

Cooperative solar projects provide our members access to the benefits of solar-generated electricity without a large initial financial commitment.

- No upfront costs
- No maintenance
- No contracts
- No financing

Cooperative solar is also an alternative for members who might otherwise be excluded from owning and installing their own solar electricity generation. Obstacles like improper roof orientation, excessive roof shading, restrictive subdivision covenants or landlord prohibitions are frequent barriers to homeowners and renters who want to install solar systems.

Now you can receive solar electricity based on your needs and interests. Every month, the energy output of your portion of our cooperative solar farm will be calculated and credited to your bill. This solar energy will offset energy produced from traditional fuels.

Solar-generated electricity is expected to be flowing from the project by October 2015.

## Cooperative solar advantages

- Coastal Electric Cooperative operates and maintains the facility
- Economies of scale bring costs down
- No holes in your roof



**This solar project is the first of similar projects to be built throughout our service territory. Located at our office headquarters in Midway, it is easily visible from U.S. Highway 17. The installation was built using all made-in-the-USA components.**

- No solar siting issues (roof direction, shading, etc.)
- Renters can participate
- Homeowners under restrictive covenants can participate

## Location

This 50-kW solar project is the first of similar projects we will be building throughout our service territory. At our Midway headquarters, it is easily visible from U.S. Highway 17. The installation was built using all made-in-the-USA components. We invite you to drive by and take a look.

Here's how you can participate:

## Energy production

Each block is 1/40th of the output of the project and is expected to produce between 166 and 203 kWh of solar energy monthly.

Energy output will vary based on the sun's angle, the time of year, the number of cloudy days in the month and other factors.

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## Availability

You will, initially, be able to sign up for just one block of solar electricity. Requests for additional blocks will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Only residences served by our electric grid can participate.

## Sign-ups

Sign-ups are open on a first-come, first-served basis. We expect to be sold out of our initial offering soon. Call us at (912) 884-3311 to apply, or sign up online at *CoastalElectric.Coop*. If blocks are sold out, a waiting list is available. We will not begin billing until Nov. 1.

## Billing

You will be billed \$25 per month for each block of solar electricity. The kWh produced by your block in each calendar month will offset the same number of kWh on your bill. If your block produces more kWh than you use during your billing period, you will receive a credit for the excess.

## Length of commitment

You can discontinue your solar energy commitment at any time by notifying us. If you leave the program, Coastal Electric Renewables cannot guarantee there will be availability if you decide to rejoin.

# Why Coastal Electric must sometimes replace utility poles

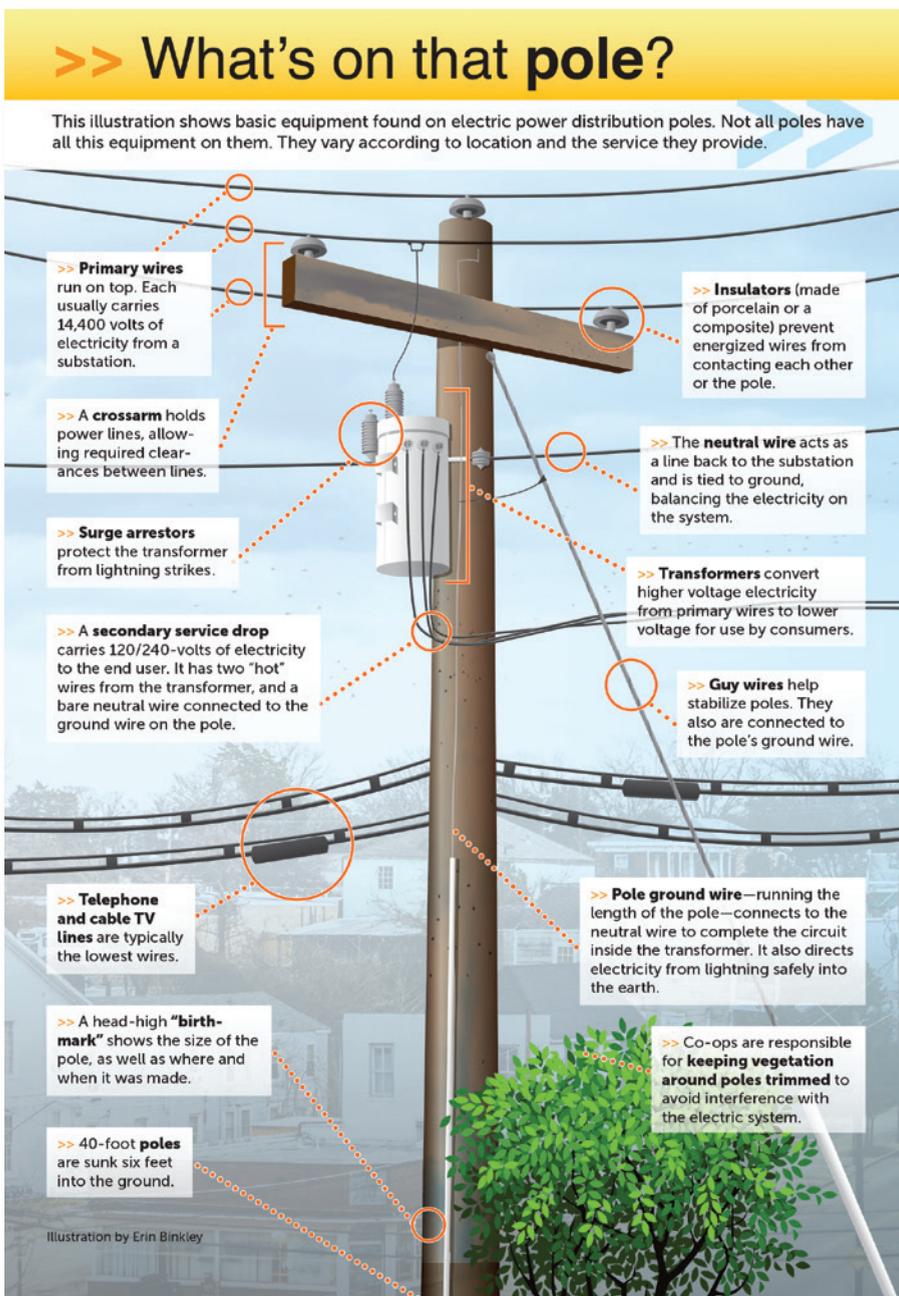
You probably don't pay much attention to the utility poles throughout Coastal Electric Cooperative's service territory, but did you know these tall structures are the backbone of our distribution network?

Strong, sturdy utility poles ensure a reliable electric system, which is why we routinely inspect the thousands of poles on our lines. Throughout the year, our crews check poles for decay caused by exposure to the elements. They know which poles are oldest and conduct inspections on a rotating basis. Typically, a standard wooden distribution pole is expected to last more than 50 years.

Occasionally, poles must be replaced for reasons besides decay and old age. Weather disasters, power line relocation and car crashes are potential reasons for immediate replacement. When possible, Coastal Electric Cooperative communicates when and where pole replacements will take place so you can stay informed of where crews will be working.

## A quick breakdown

When a pole needs to be replaced, crews start by digging a hole, typically next to the pole being replaced. The depth of the hole must be 15 percent of the new pole's height. Next, the new pole is fitted with bolts, crossarms, insulators, ground wires and arm braces—all of the necessary parts for delivering safe and reliable electricity. Then, crews safely detach the power lines from the old pole. The new pole is then



raised and guided carefully into position, and the lines are attached, leaving the new pole to do its job.

So, the next time you come across a Coastal Electric

Cooperative crew replacing a pole, use caution and know that this process ensures a more reliable electric system for you, our members.

# CONNECTIONS

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## Business office hours

Open 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and until 5 p.m. on Friday, except for holidays.

## Report outages

Call us at (800) 421-2343

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*Coastal Electric Cooperative, your Touchstone Energy® Partner, is a not-for-profit, member-owned power cooperative providing electricity to the people of Bryan, Liberty, Long and McIntosh counties.*



Touchstone Energy®  
Cooperatives

The power of human connections

## PRODUCT CONTENT LABEL

The product is sold in blocks of 150 kilowatt-hours (kWh).  
The product will be made up of the following renewable resources.

Green-e Energy Certified New <sup>3</sup> Renewables in Coastal Electric Cooperative Green Power Program	Generation Location	
	2014 <sup>1</sup>	2015 <sup>2</sup>
Biomass	100%	100%
Geothermal	0%	0%
Eligible hydroelectric	0%	0%
Solar	0%	0%
Wind	0%	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

1. The 2014 figures reflect the resources that were supplied for the year ending Dec. 31, 2014.
2. The 2015 figures are prospective and reflect the power that we have contracted to provide. Actual figures may vary according to resource availability. We will annually report to you the actual resource mix of the electricity you purchased during the preceding year.
3. For energy supplied in 2014, New Renewables come from generation facilities that first began commercial operation on or after Jan. 1, 2000. For energy to be supplied in 2015, New Renewables come from generation facilities that first began commercial operation on or after Jan. 1, 2001.

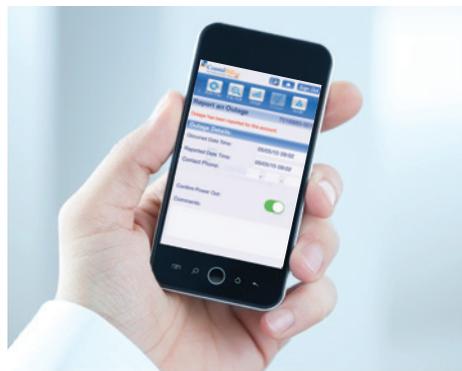
For comparison, the current average mix of resources supplying Coastal Electric Cooperative includes: Coal (27.8%), nuclear (22.4%), oil (0%), natural gas (4.6%), hydroelectric (5.7%) and other (39.5%).

The average home in the United States uses 900 kWh per month. [Source: U.S. EPA]

For specific information about this electricity product, please contact Coastal Electric Cooperative, (800) 421-2343.



Green-e Energy certifies that Coastal Electric Cooperative Green Power Program meets the minimum environmental and consumer protection standards established by the non-profit Center for Resource Solutions. For more information on Green-e Energy certification requirements, call 1-888-63-GREEN or log on to [www.green-e.org](http://www.green-e.org).



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