

BRMEMC...from Page 1A

costs are built into the variable energy portion of member bills, so declining sales will mean declining fixed-cost recovery, which will make it even harder for the co-op to pay its bills without taking on more debt down the road.

Eventually, action will be necessary. That's why Mitchell is recommending that the board start to consider a series of revenue-neutral rate adjustments to take place over several years.

Simply put, a revenue-neutral rate adjustment is a proportional lowering of the energy charge and raising of the customer charge so as to have no impact on the electric bills of average residential users.

Such adjustments would result in the transfer of fixed costs out of the co-op's variable energy charge, thereby allowing the EMC to recover more in

fixed costs regardless of power use.

Mitchell also pointed out that implementing revenue-neutral rate adjustments would work to even out power bills somewhat throughout the year, as decreased variable energy rates would result in smaller fluctuations in electric use during typical high-usage times like summer and winter.

Of course, there's a separate issue associated with the idea of revenue-neutral rate adjustments, namely the question of who should be responsible for the financial burden of delivering electricity to the entire membership.

Because fixed costs have historically been built into the per kilowatt-hour energy rate, fixed charges have always varied per household based on energy usage.

For example, a family

of four would likely use more energy than a part-time resident in a second home. This would understandably result in higher energy charges for the family, but it would also result in the family paying disproportionately more in fixed costs to maintain the EMC, despite all co-op members relying equally on the same infrastructure to keep the lights on.

The same would hold true for lower-income households in which homeowners can't afford to adopt more energy efficient technologies or home modifications, potentially culminating in higher fixed charges for lower-income residents compared to part-time and/or lower-use members.

Ultimately, future revenue-neutral rate adjustments would help maintain the EMC by granting it better cost recovery in an inflationary environment featuring declining individual power sales, all while enabling

a fairer distribution of fixed cost charges than is currently the case.

Members Joseph and Lourdes Trutie attended the June 17 meeting to express dissatisfaction with higher-use, full-time members having to pay more of the EMC's fixed costs than part-time residents.

They suggested that the EMC establish an additional charge for part-timers with second homes, though Director Cory Payne informed them that it would be against the EMC's agreement with TVA to do so.

In other rate news, EMC General Manager Jeremy Nelms announced that, given recent public remarks made by new TVA CEO Jeffrey Lyash, it's possible that the expected 2019 TVA wholesale rate increase may be postponed, potentially indefinitely.

The EMC Board voted in May to pass the expected increase – with corresponding EMC revenue-neutral rate adjustment for residential and GSA1 accounts – on to member bills.

Should TVA Board Members decide in their August meeting not to implement the expected rate increase, EMC members will dodge the across-the-board \$1.54 per month additional charge that was slated to begin in October.

However, as determined by EMC Board Members in their May meeting, the co-op's corresponding revenue-neutral rate adjustment will go into effect regardless of what action TVA takes on its expected rate increase.

Discounting the TVA rate increase, the EMC rate adjustment will result in slightly higher bills for below-average residential power consumers, while above-average users will see slightly lower costs, and average users, at 907 kWh, will experience no change in their monthly bills.

If TVA does choose to implement the rate increase, all residential and GSA1 member accounts will experience the same \$1.54 in additional charges per month for a flat \$18.48 more a year.

Members should keep in mind that the revenue-neutral rate adjustment will result in the customer charge on all residential accounts reflecting a \$1.54 increase from \$21.37 to \$22.91 on Oct. 1, though without the TVA increase, the energy charge will remain at the lowered variable rate.

This will be the third year running that the EMC has conducted a revenue-neutral rate adjustment in anticipation of annual TVA rate increases in recent years.

Mitchell has only recommended revenue-neutral rate adjustments for residential and GSA1 accounts, as larger commercial GSA2 and GSA3 accounts already pay additional demand charges not paid by smaller accounts.

GSA1 account holders are members with modest power needs that are still greater than

typical residential members, like members requiring second meters at their homes or small businesses.

And the EMC membership overwhelmingly consists of these smaller user accounts, which is why eventually moving the needle on fixed costs by making revenue-neutral rate adjustments on residential and GSA1 accounts figures so heavily in the future financial solvency of the EMC.

Currently, the EMC serves 53,015 members, with 42,066 residential members, 10,683 GSA1 members, and only 266 GSA2 and GSA3 larger member accounts.

Also in the June 17

meeting, the EMC Board approved the co-op's FY2020 budget of \$92.8 million. The budget features an additional \$750,000 in new fiber-optic internet construction in the EMC's five-county area, which will augment the \$740,000 in new fiber built out this year.

Members interested in running for the EMC Board of Directors ahead of the 2019 Annual Meeting in September should turn in Director Candidate Forms to the EMC's Nominating Committee no later than June 26.

If a potential candidate misses this deadline, they will be required to seek nomination by petition.

Fair Pageant...from Page 1A

must be 17 to 23 years of age and from the Northeast Georgia Region.

"We have a dress rehearsal on Sunday night before the pageant, and it will be held in the Music Hall," said Thomason. "They will have to ride the float (in the Fair Parade), and then they have orientation and interviews up at the Holiday Inn on Sunday."

Contestants wishing to perform a talent can do so if they want, but a talent competition is not part of the Miss Georgia Mountain Fair Pageant.

"They can do a talent, but they will not be judged on the talent," said Thomason. "They will be judged on evening gown wear, sports clothes – which used to be bathing suits, but they changed it to sports outfits and athletic clothes. Their interviews are scored a lot, and of course, their ball gowns."

Even if entrants do not become this year's queen of the Georgia Mountain Fair, pageant participation is beneficial for those involved.

"Performing in this pageant gives the contestant a lot of opportunities to go on and participate in other pageants, too," said Thomason. "And it gives them a lot more stage confidence, with public speaking and all, so it's a great opportunity for them."

"I'd really like to encourage all the young ladies in our area to participate in



Katie Walsh of Cherokee County, North Carolina, being crowned 2018 Miss Georgia Mountain Fair by 2017 Pageant First Runner-Up Emma Kate Ledford of Towns County on July 23, 2018.
Photo by Lowell Nicholson

the pageant because it's a really great opportunity and experience for them."

To apply for the

pageant, visit GeorgiaMountainFairgrounds.com for an application, or visit the main office to pick one up.

Be part of the annual 4th of July Boat Parade



Make plans now to be part of the annual 4th of July Boat Parade on Lake Chatuge. Scheduled to begin at 10:30 a.m. in the Sunset Bay cove (in back of the new Young Harris Water Sports boat rental location), the parade will be led by the good folks of Aqua Tiki! Boats will line up behind the lead boat and proceed east towards the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.

Please note: All boats must be pre-registered this year to be judged and eligible for one of two prizes! You can register by calling the

Towns County Chamber of Commerce at 706-896-4966 or e-mail crystal.wagner@brmemc.net. We will send you a registration form and upon receipt of a completed form you will receive a number to display on the front right side of your boat. You may participate without registering but you will not be judged.

Boats in the parade should all be decorated in red, white and blue or other patriotic theme. Please be respectful of others – this is a family event! The parade will start on Thursday, July 4 beginning at 10:30 a.m. However, if you are entering a boat in the pa-

rade please plan to arrive in the cove between 10 and 10:15 a.m. If you will be viewing the parade from solid footing (on land), plan on viewing from the boat ramp area of Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds or from the area behind the old Towns County Recreation Center in Hiwassee. The parade cannot be viewed from the Anderson Bridge – no pedestrian traffic will be allowed on the Anderson Bridge so please plan to view from a safe spot.

For more information, please call the Towns County Chamber of Commerce at 706-896-4966. T(Jun26,F2)SH

Sen. Steve Gooch appointed as Chair of Senate Study Committee

ATLANTA - Sen. Steve Gooch (R-Dahlonega) has been appointed by Lt. Governor Geoff Duncan to serve as Chair of the Senate Evaluating E-Scooters and Other Innovative Mobility Options for Georgians Study Committee.

"I want to thank Lt. Governor Duncan for appointing me as Chair of this very important study committee," said Sen. Gooch. "Alternatives to vehicles are critical to improving mobility and decreasing traffic on our roads. These scooters and other forms of transportation are seen as the 'last leg' of the transportation puzzle and have encouraged commuters to use existing public transportation to get where they are going. While there are positives, we have to review current parameters and rules regarding these alternative commute methods to ensure riders, drivers and pedestrians are safe."

"Georgians expect their elected leaders to make deliberate, informed decisions to better our state," said Lt. Governor Duncan. "The study committee process allows our Senators to dedicate extensive focus to a single issue and generate in-depth proposals for our next legislative session. I look forward to the hard work of Chairman Gooch and



Sen. Steve Gooch

the appointed members of the Senate Evaluating E-Scooters and Other Innovative Mobility Options for Georgians Study Committee as they meet to study, discuss, and prepare legislative action items for the Senate to consider in 2020."

The Senate Evaluating E-Scooters and Other Innovative Mobility Options for Georgians Study Committee was created by the passage of Senate Resolution 479 during the 2019 Legislative Session. Five members will serve on the study committee and will evaluate how local governments, state agencies and universities are utilizing E-scooters and other innovative mobility technology. The committee must report its findings on or before December 1, 2019. N(Jun26,Z15)CA

Happy birthday!



Better late than never! So sorry we missed her big day, and we hope everyone else remembered it. But if you did forget her birthday like we did, wish her a very happy belated birthday when you see her! T(Jun26,F1)SH