



Democracy is the co-op way



From the desk of
CEO & General Manager
Eddie Oldham

Each year, we at Central Electric hold an annual meeting of the members that provides an opportunity for members to actively engage and participate in the business of the cooperative. In addition to updates on how the cooperative has been working to serve our membership, members also have the opportunity to elect their Board of Directors.

As a member of a co-op, you have the opportunity to help set the direction for the co-op. This is a critical difference between co-ops and other electricity providers, such as investor-owned utilities (IOUs). With IOUs, you are a customer and there is no required ownership. The utility is controlled by its shareholders, who may have no direct attachment to the organization other than seeking a return on their investment.

Election of directors is one of the most important activities we conduct as a not-for-profit cooperative. These are the individuals entrusted to represent the membership and work alongside the cooperative staff to give strategic direction and ensure the co-op has good governance. A director's decisions impact issues such as rates, work plans and the overall direction of the cooperative. This position holds great responsibility and requires men and women who understand the needs of their community and aim to serve the best interest of the membership.

The beauty of the cooperative model is that any member in good standing can run for the Board. They are a democratically elected body nominated by members within the cooperative's service territory and voted into position by members at the annual meeting. They are members, just like you, elected by you, who live near you. They want the same thing you want, affordable energy bills and the comfort of knowing the lights will turn on with the flip of a switch.

It is vitally important for the cooperative to elect strong directors to the Board. Central Electric has been very fortunate to have such a strong pool of directors. Each director has brought fresh ideas and new perspectives that have helped shape and guide the cooperative into what it is today.

This year due to the lasting impacts of COVID-19, in lieu of our typical meeting at the Dennis A. Wicker Civic Center in Sanford, we will be holding our first-ever virtual annual meeting. Part of this new virtual format is the process of electing your directors through a web and mail-in ballot process.

Get more information on the event, as well as how to participate in the election of your directors, at CEMCPower.com. We encourage all of our members to actively participate in this process, not just this year but every year, and exercise your opportunity to help establish the future direction of the cooperative. Look out for full event and voting details next month in our September issue of Carolina Country, and we hope you will tune in to the Annual Meeting livestream on Oct. 2. "See" you then!