

Northeast Louisiana

POWERlines

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September, 2025

**Viserion Grain works
to keep agriculture moving
in Northeast Louisiana**

Then & Now: *The IOUs showed their cards early*

It would be nice to have cooperatives in the mix, but if a federal rural electrification program was going to move fast, investor-owned utilities (IOU) would have to take the lead. They had the expertise, the experience, the equipment, the personnel ...

By Frank Gallant
NRECA Staff Writer

That was the thinking on May 11, 1935, the day President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed an executive order creating the Rural Electrification Administration as a Depression relief agency.

Nine days later, Morris L. Cooke, the man FDR chose to head REA, invited IOU leaders to meet with him in Washington, certain that low-interest government loans and a sense of public duty would win them over.

According to an article in Encyclopedia.com, a research service of the University of California at Santa Barbara, they were "friendly and seemed to indicate a spirit of cooperation." They left the meeting "agree[ing] to study ways by which they could work with the REA to develop rural electrification."

But beneath the surface, old disagreements smoldered.

"The power companies still did not believe that rural service would be immediately profitable and did not want the federal government to dictate terms and control rates," the article says.

When the IOU men returned to Washington on July 24, they submitted a report in which they proposed using REA loan funds to build rural lines at an estimated cost of \$1,356 per mile. This was greatly disappointing to Cooke, whose 1931 study for the State of New York projected construction costs as low as \$300 per mile.

He was also disappointed because he understood the IOUs' rates would be too high for farmers and other rural people.

It was the same old "lack of faith that service to smaller household users through area coverage could be made profitable," the article notes.

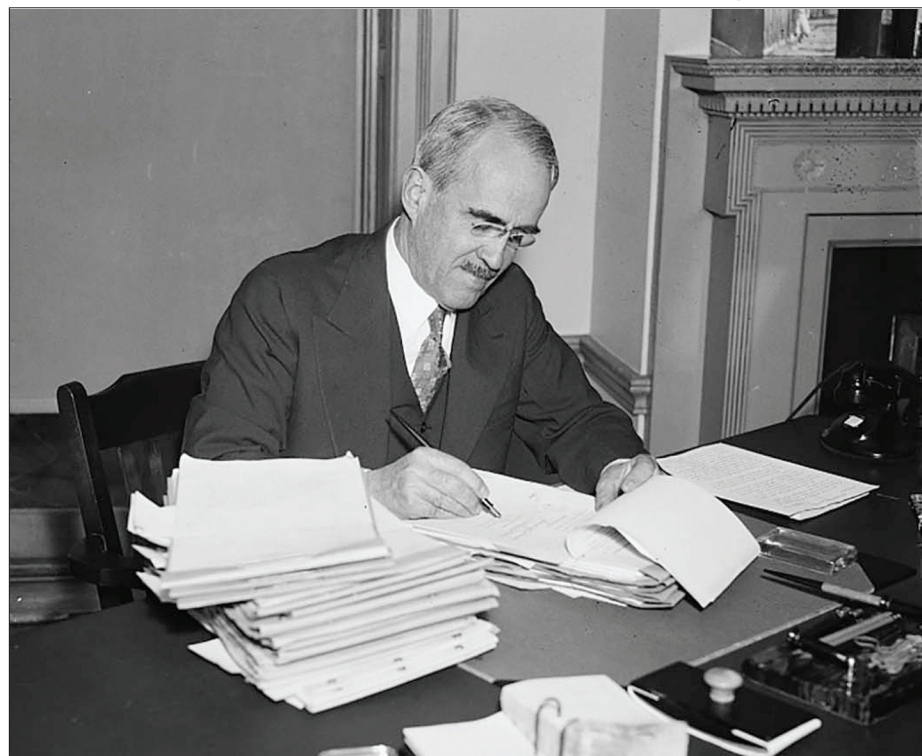
The meeting was a turning point for REA.

Another came in November, when Cooke met for two days with 152 representatives of municipal utilities in 17 states.

Before the end of the first day, the muni managers made it clear they were "worried about possible rate increases if they extended service into the countryside, and expressed concerns that rural expansion would bring adjacent cities into conflicts about jurisdiction over intervening territory. There was even anxiety about possible legal disputes between cities and state legislatures."

The final blow came when Cooke had to reject a loan application from Wisconsin Power and Light Co., an IOU that had displayed an unusual interest in rural electrification but did not "adequately address the issues of affordable rates and area coverage" in its application.

At the same time, Cooke and his staff were paying close attention to Alcorn County Electric Power Association, an experimental co-op in Corinth, Mississippi, that was exceeding economic



Morris L. Cooke was the head of the Rural Electrification Administration when this photo was taken in 1935. Cooke was a mechanical engineer and had shown interest in and began working toward the idea of rural electrification during the 1920s, and was appointed by President Roosevelt as REA's first director. The agency had been organized by the Roosevelt administration and was set up to finance the construction of power distribution systems in rural areas lacking electricity. (Photo Courtesy: Library of Congress)

expectations even though its members were poor and included many tenant farmers.

ACE Power, as the co-op was known, got off the ground in June 1934 with a \$154,000 loan from the Tennessee Valley Association. Once power lines had been extended from the town to the surrounding rural area, the co-op began distributing retail power bought wholesale from TVA.

Rural homeowners, with help from a new federal loan program, the Electric Home and Farm Authority (EHFA), immediately began buying electrical appliances sold to them by Corinth merchants. Surprisingly, farmers began using even more electricity than townspeople, which helped pay for the cost of building the rural lines.


ACE Power thus became the model for the electric co-op-driven rural electrification program Cooke and his successors spread across the country.



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NORTHEAST LOUISIANA
POWERlines
September 2025 - Vol. 7, No. 9

POWERlines is the official publication of Northeast Louisiana Power Cooperative and is published in the interest of keeping all of our member-owners apprised of the latest developments at their cooperative.

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Annual Subscriptions:

\$2.64 Members; \$5 Non-members

Postmaster: Send Form 3569 to P. O. Box 1577,
Winnsboro, LA 71295-1577. Periodicals postage
paid at Baton Rouge, LA 70821.

Send change of address to P. O. Box 1577,
Winnsboro, LA 71295-1577.

POWERlines (ISSN #26893746) is published
monthly by Northeast Louisiana Power
Cooperative, LLC, 1411 Landis Street,
Winnsboro, LA 71295. POSTMASTER:
Send all address changes to POWERlines,
P. O. Box 1577, Winnsboro, LA 71295-1577.

Circulation: 10,500

Advertising is accepted and published in
POWERlines on the premise that the merchan-
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MANAGER'S MESSAGE



Agri 'culture' is real and it serves us well

By Jeff Churchwell, *NELPCO General Manager*

As we celebrate and honor our farming communities this month, I couldn't help but reflect on my life as a farm kid.

Actually, I was not a true farm kid to be quite honest; rather, just that my Dad has been in ag his entire life. Because of his farm upbringing in West Carroll Parish, he instilled his farming "culture" in my life as I grew up.

I will confess, too, that I don't always adhere to the "early to rise" portion of that culture. As a kid, I saw my Mammaw get up every morning at 4:30 to start her day. The interesting part of that was she and Papaw were "retired" farmers, but they still raised my Dad in that culture, and it took.

As an FHA agent in Franklin Parish or a John Deere tractor salesman, store manager, and a dealership owner, my dad NEVER lost that culture.

In 1990, I graduated from ULM and went to work at Bacon

Equipment in Mer Rouge, now part of the Goldman Equipment empire. Dad started me as a grunt for all departments of that store; parts, service or setup, you name it, and I was the low man on the proverbial totem pole.

Fortunately, the culture embedded in my DNA helped me learn. In the summer of 1991, I was blessed to be offered the job of General Manager of Jones Producers Gin, where I stayed for 22 gin seasons.

Agriculture represents many things, innovation being one. I saw the advent of a module builder that allowed for greater harvest capacity. That led to the invention of a great advancement in the gin industry, the "Feeder", which allowed us to gin at higher bale rates per day, which meant money for our farmers.

Those in agriculture are also

great stewards of money and guardians of America's greatest resource, our dirt. The pride shown in the farms across our great nation is awe-inspiring, and even though the family farm has given way to the corporate approach and some of the culture has changed, some things never change.

A farmer is always a farmer.

I thank our farmers who mean so much to Northeast Louisiana Power Cooperative, and even though we're seeing data centers across our region pop up where cotton and corn once did, agriculture remains our greatest industry.

I don't think anything will ever change that.

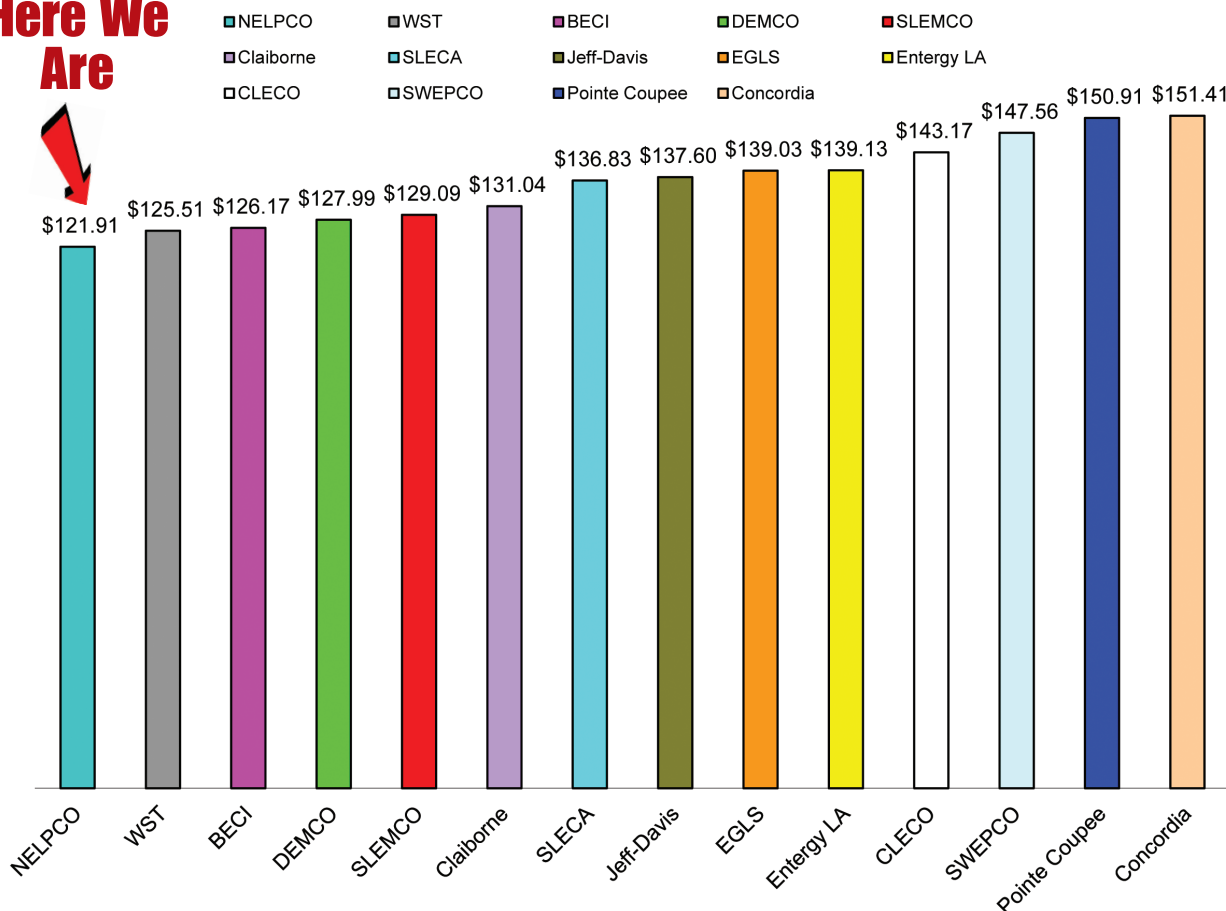
Thank you, Clyde Churchwell, for insisting that Jack adhere to the agri "culture" that molded many... and especially me.

Happy Harvest to our Farmers!

Rate information provided by the
Louisiana Public Service Commission

August, 2025 - RESIDENTIAL RATE COMPARISON - 1000 kwh

**Here We
Are**





Now the whole world knows about Holly Ridge

By Paul Price, Jr, Powerlines Editor

When I was a young fellow, Holly Ridge was a relatively unknown place my granddad Radau drove to each day to work at the George Franklin sawmill.

Pawpaw was a big strapping German American named Adolph, a lumber grader for the Franklins and a truck driver as well, a good one apparently, considering the 18-year safe driving pin he received in 1951. His wife, Mary, was a seamstress by trade, and her old Singer treadle machine is parked just outside my office door.

They worked hard and lived right, and I was blessed to know and love them both.

But Lord have mercy... I can't imagine what my granddad would say if he saw Holly Ridge today.

Once simply two keys on a typewriter, AI - artificial intelligence - is transforming the world if the massive Richland Parish project is any indication. President Trump even talked about it at a recent cabinet meeting.

It's also a writer's biggest enemy and best friend, all rolled into one.

For this column, I typed into Google AI the following: "150-word essay on the history of Northeast Louisiana Power Cooperative," and in less than four seconds, the following was regurgitated in AI-speak:

"Founded in 1938, Northeast Louisiana Power Cooperative (NELPCO) was born out of the Rural Electrification Act, which aimed to bring affordable power to rural Americans neglected by investor-owned utilities. Pioneers, including the first directors like H.B. Landis and R.M. Ward, worked tirelessly to recruit members in underserved areas. The cooperative brought light and opportunity to rural homes in parishes across the region, including Franklin, Madison, Morehouse, Richland, East Carroll, West Carroll and Tensas. As a member-owned entity, NELPCO remains democratically controlled, with elected directors setting policy. Over the decades, it has evolved with technology to serve its expanding territory. In 2025, NELPCO became a

founding partner of 1803 Electric Cooperative, a new generation and transmission co-op that enhances power supply reliability and control. This reflects NELPCO's enduring commitment to its members, upholding the cooperative tradition that has powered the region for generations."

Move over, Encyclopedia Britannica. AI nailed it.

This is only a miniscule part of what the fuss is about. AI requires enormous amounts of energy to process data – hence the colossal Holly Ridge facility, among others – with great potential in countless applications. It's going to physically transform our corner of the world, certainly, but the future unknown unknowns have yet to even be determined.

As someone who enjoys history, I enjoy looking at old newspapers from back in the day. A story about a December 1929 high school football game between Tallulah and Winnsboro was at the top of the front page of the paper, and the following sentence caught my eye.

"The day was chilly, clouds hid the sun and gentle zephyrs, evidently direct from the north pole factory, that had previously ushered all gloom from the field of tumult, nicked at silk stockings, hid in the pockets of overcoats and searched diligently for a spot to make cold on the persons of spectators. To some extent they succeeded, making the day an ideal one for a football game."

That anonymous writer crafted 68 words to tell the readers it was cloudy, cold and windy, and a good day for a football game 96 years ago.

It has stood the test of time.

No way AI - or anybody else I know - could come close to writing a sentence like that.

So... at least we've got *that* going for us.



Fall Soup

This is THE perfect cooler weather soup. You can substitute the water for half chicken broth and half white wine, and also add Parmesan cheese as a garnish and serve with a nice crusty bread.

- INGREDIENTS**
- 2 garlic cloves; minced
 - 1 tsp dried oregano
 - Italian parsley for garnish
 - 4 cups canned whole tomatoes
 - 2 cups water
 - 1 tb + 1 tsp olive oil
 - 1 pk dried cheese tortellini
 - 1 c chopped carrot
 - 1 bay leaf
 - 2 c chicken broth
 - 1/2 cup onions; chopped
 - 1 tsp dried basil
 - 1/2 cup chopped fennel (optional)
 - 2 cup escarole or spinach

DIRECTIONS

Heat olive oil in large stockpot; saute onion, carrot, fennel and garlic. Cook until vegetables are limp; stir in herbs, and cook 1 minute.

Stir in chopped tomatoes, 2 cups of water and chicken broth and cook for 15 minutes. Add pasta, and cook until tortellini is tender, adding additional water, if necessary.

Add escarole or spinach, and cook for 6 min. Garnish with Italian parsley.

SOURCE: Food for Thought

1	S	W	A	T	6	C	R	E	E	9	C	L	I
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Answers to September crossword

Check out what's going on in Franklin Parish!
www.visitfranklinparish.org

Rooted in Louisiana: Viserion Grain's commitment to local agriculture



Established in 2021, Viserion Grain ("VGC") is a grain company with a highly experienced leadership team whose purpose is to use that experience to connect local producers to the domestic and international agricultural value chain.

VGC is deeply rooted in Northeast Louisiana and proudly serves producers in parishes across Northeast Louisiana and in Southeast Arkansas. The company has strategically located facilities in Lake Providence, Crowville, and Lettsworth, and also employs twenty-plus across Louisiana, which increases to nearly forty during peak harvest times.

The facility in Crowville is served by NELPCO.

"We specialize in handling a diverse range of grains, including corn, soybeans, sorghum, wheat, and dry, rough rice," said Tom Russell, who serves as the Southern Region Manager at VGC. "Our commitment extends beyond simple grain handling."

"We prioritize a customer-focused approach and offer a suite of marketing, transportation, and storage services designed to enhance opportunities and maximize returns for our producer customers," he added.

In addition, VGC continuously invests in facility upgrades to better serve producers.

"In the summer of 2025, the company constructed a new ground storage pile for corn at its Crowville location," Russell said. "The company also implemented state-of-the-art equipment monitoring systems to detect bearing and belt temperature issues, preventing breakdowns and minimizing downtime."

In Lake Providence South, VGC installed a new floating barge dock that improved loading speed and provided safer access to barges. Plans are also underway to upgrade the scales at Lake Providence South by fully automating them to mirror the efficient system used at the Lake Providence North facility.

"Looking ahead, we are planning capital expenditures for 2026

that focus on further improvements to our facilities," Tom said. "This will help to ensure we remain at the forefront of grain handling technology and efficiency."

Through its parent company, Viserion International, VGC's global reach includes a soybean crush facility in Barcelona, Spain that operates under the name "Elían." This facility streamlines the export process and allows the VGC team to access international markets more efficiently.

As a leader in the industry, VGC actively participates in numerous domestic and international trade groups, such as the National Grain and Feed Association (NGFA), USA Rice, and the Louisiana Ag Industries Association.

VGC's extensive geographic footprint, from northern Iowa to southern Louisiana, combined with its strong commercial management and industry expertise, provides the company with a comprehensive view of the market and logistical flexibility that few independent companies can replicate.

The company also engages in international trade missions to foster stronger relationships and expand trade opportunities with various countries. This proactive approach helps the team stay ahead of market trends and provides valuable insights to producers, supporting the agriculture industry as a whole.

"With experienced teams at each facility, Viserion is dedicated to building upon existing relationships, establishing new connections, and fostering growth within the communities we serve," Tom said.

"We are committed to agriculture and to the prosperity of Northeast Louisiana," he added. "We also thank Northeast Louisiana Power Co-op for supplying power to our Crowville location, as well as to the many valued producers and community members across Louisiana."



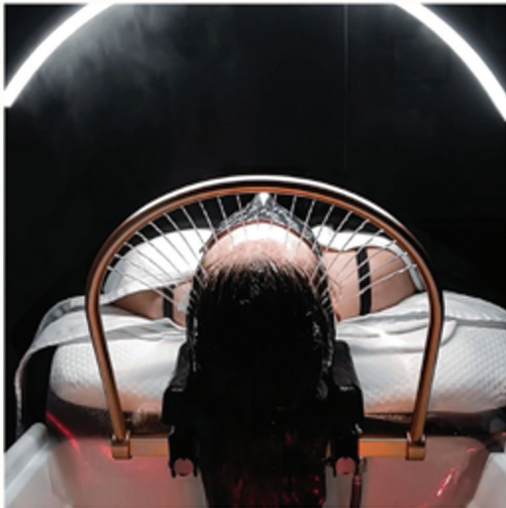
(Clockwise from upper left) Tom Russell, the Southern Region Manager at Viserion Grain (VGC); aerial shot of the grain elevator and corn pod at Crowville; the south elevator at Lake Providence; the port of Lake Providence; and the Lake Providence north elevator. Other regional VGC operations include sites in Helena and Osceola, Arkansas and Lettsworth, Louisiana. (Courtesy photos)

YOUR LOCAL MASSAGE THERAPIST

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With a warm smile and healing hands, Kristen has once again earned her place at the top. Voted Best Massage Therapist for the second time, Kristen continues to raise the bar for therapeutic care in the region. With over 15 years of experience and a passion for wellness, Kristen is here to serve you.



Kristen says: "Your well-being is my top priority. I genuinely care about your health and I take pride in providing treatments that support your body, mind, and overall wellness."

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YOUR LOCAL MASSAGE THERAPIST

Build a new home with connectivity in mind

When you build a home, you make plans for plumbing, electrical, and insulation. Why not also plan for internet connectivity?

With the average household now using dozens of connected smart home tech such as TVs, phones, computers, and even vacuum cleaners, connectivity is no longer optional. Planning ahead to include connectivity in your construction designs will save you money and can even increase home value.

Smart Tips for Building a Fiber-Ready Home

1. Fiber Is the Future

Fiber internet is the gold standard for speed, reliability, and future-proof performance. If you're early enough in your home-building process that you don't have property purchased yet, Volt Broadband can help you make sure you're shopping in a fiber-served area. After all, your new home deserves the best internet in the region.

Already purchased your property? Give us a call at Volt Broadband. We'll check to see if fiber is available in your area.

2. Plan for a Central Network Hub (a.k.a. Data Closet)

Having a dedicated space for your network equipment will be a huge benefit in hiding your equipment while also ensuring solid connectivity throughout your home. Designate a centrally located utility room, hallway closet, or finished space for your networking equipment. Think of it like a central nervous system for your home's connectivity.

This space should include:

- Several power outlets (for routers, switches, battery back-ups, etc.)
- Ventilation or passive airflow (these devices generate heat)
- Space for ONT (optical network terminal), router, and battery backup unit (BBU) all at working level, not on the floor or mounted to the ceiling
- Conduit access to attic or crawlspace for future expansion

Avoid locating your data closet near your electrical panel, HVAC system, or water heater, as these can interfere with wireless signals.

3. Install Ethernet Ports in Every Room

Even with strong Wi-Fi, wired connections are faster, more secure, and more reliable, especially for bandwidth-heavy tasks. Hardwiring Ethernet (Cat6 or higher) in key rooms such as bedrooms, offices, living/family room, and even the kitchen improves speed, reliability, and your overall online experience.

4. Add Wiring for Future Wi-Fi Extenders or Access Points

As our technology usages changes, you may find that you need Wi-Fi coverage in places you never imagined you would need it. Adding wiring for future Wi-Fi extenders and access points helps ensure full-home Wi-Fi coverage, even if you don't need it right now. This is also ideal for multi-level houses or properties with thick walls where Wi-Fi struggles to reach.

5. Wiring for Modern Home Tech

When planning out your future home connectivity needs, think beyond the internet. What kind of technology could be useful, either now or down the road? Consider prewiring for:

- Security cameras and smart locks
- Smart thermostats
- Doorbell cameras
- Media rooms or surround sound systems

Research smart home tech and see what might sound interesting



to you. Don't have it in the budget to install a smart security system just yet? Add wiring at all four corners and on all entrances. You'll be saving money in the long run since adding that

later will cost more and may require cutting into walls.

6. Whole-Home Surge Protection

Consider adding a surge protector at your breaker box and at individual outlets near your networking gear. Protecting sensitive electronics (router, ONT, PCs, TVs) from power surges is a smart add-on that could save you the stress and unexpected cost of replacing that after an unexpected power outage.

7. Battery Backup Unit (BBU)

Speaking of power outages, many fiber installations include a BBU for phone service, but it's helpful to have one for your router, too. A BBU keeps critical systems (internet, smart security) online during short power outages. Also consider installing a UPS (uninterruptible power supply) in your data closet to ensure everything stays online, all the time.

The Long-Term Payoff: Adding Value to Your Home

Modern buyers increasingly prioritize reliable internet, especially with the rise in remote/hybrid work. A 2023 study showed that fiber-delivered internet access could increase a home's value by almost 5%. A home that has access to fiber internet AND that is wired for whole-home coverage can be more appealing and may further increase resale value.



TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS



Solar energy is rising in popularity, and so are solar scams. If a salesperson knocks on your door promising free solar panels at zero cost or that you'll never have to pay your energy bill again, it's likely a scam. If you're interested in solar panels for your home, do your research, get multiple quotes from licensed providers who are reputable, and most importantly, take your time to ensure a smooth process.

Source: Federal Trade Commission



Crews busy after Franklin Parish storm



A line of seven NELPCO poles along Highway 17 near the Associated Producers Gin went down during a storm last month, which caused a significant outage for NELPCO members. Our crews were able to switch the load to restore power to all affected customers in a few hours, then returned the next day and changed out all of the poles. Holden Armstrong, the Winnsboro office construction foreman, supervised the process as the crew executed the restoration and repair job. In addition, a Volt Broadband crew was involved in the repair process, as is the usual case when poles go down and cause service interruptions. *(Photos courtesy of Nora Pylant)*



NELPCO pole tests ongoing

NELPCO crews are conducting pole tests throughout the service territory, and members are reminded that if they have shrubbery around poles that service their home or business.



There is a chance some of this vegetation may be damaged or cut back to facilitate testing the poles. This is routinely done to avoid unforeseen issues with service interruptions due to faulty utility poles in the future, and our crews appreciate your patience and understanding as this process plays out.



In 1978, President Jimmy Carter proclaimed September 28th as National Good Neighbor Day, encouraging Americans to nurture their sense of community.



Stronger
Connections Start
with



150 Christian Drive - Rayville
318.728.1022
www.voltbroadband.com

“For most of us, a sense of community is nurtured and expressed in our neighborhoods where we give each other an opportunity to share and feel part of a larger family,” President Carter said. Celebrate the day and be a good neighbor! Pull in a trash can, lend a hand, say hello... And while you’re at it, make sure your neighbors have the best internet connection in the community with fiber from Volt Broadband!

Volt Broadband celebrates third anniversary

1,800 mile fiber optic network serves NELPCO membership

The month of September, 2025 marks the third year since Volt Broadband turned on its first customer in the Log Cabin community.

That red letter day came after Ayear of planning, engineering and first phase construction that culminated in the first customer coming on line on September 7.

“It’s hard to believe it’s been over four years since the idea of bringing reliable internet service throughout the entire NELPCO service territory was first envisioned,” said Gary Carver, who has served as Volt’s Manager of Operations since day one. “Time sure does fly when you’re having fun and it’s been great to be a part of such a game-changer for the NELPCO members.”

After just three years, Volt Broadband serves almost 7,000 active customers through seven parishes with more being added daily. The network is connected with some 1,800 miles of fiber optic cable utilizing some 50,000 of NELPCO’s utility poles.

“We’ve found that once people get on our service they keep it unless they move,” said NELPCO and Volt Broadband GM Jeff Churchwell. “The quality of our product along with our price point simply cannot be matched by anyone else in our market.”

Churchwell noted that the take rate of NELPCO members who opt in for the service continues to climb and currently stands at 58% of eligible members.

“We brought the internet gold standard - fiber optic cable - to a mostly rural population that’s been terribly underserved over the years, many who never thought they’d be able to get something of this quality at their home or business in rural northeast Louisiana,” Churchwell said.

“We’re very proud we could do that.”

Carver noted that Volt Broadband continues to look at growth opportunities to expand their footprint beyond the NELPCO territory.

“There are still thousands of potential customers yet to sign up and be served within the NELPCO footprint, and there are many opportunities just beyond our current system that have expressed interest in being served,” he said.

“We have another 80-plus miles beyond the NELPCO system targeted for buildout within the next year along with several additional adjacent areas currently being reviewed.”

Carver added that Volt is working to release a new 2 Gig (2000 Mbps) residential plan before the end of the year.

“Those gamers with a ‘need for speed’ will really like this,” he said. “And with the new Meta AI data center going up essentially in our backyard, there are countless new opportunities and products yet to be envisioned that can only be delivered with the horsepower of a fiber-based network like Volt with Megabit or Gigabit speeds, both upload and download, along with unlimited data usage.”

“Plus,” he added, “we have a local, hometown presence that others will be hard pressed to beat.”

According to Churchwell, Volt Broadband is a stand-alone company and will be supporting itself going forward, just like NELPCO has been since 1938, and continue to get new customers on a daily basis.

“The good news is that just like NELPCO did when they transformed rural northeast Louisiana with dependable power, Volt Broadband has accomplished similar transformation and brought new economic activity to a region with lightning-fast and very dependable broadband capabilities. The added emphasis and opportunities brought by the Meta project in Holly Ridge will fuel even more growth in the future.”

This goes far beyond being able to watch Netflix or play online games,” Churchwell said. “Volt has made it possible for the elderly patient to be seen by their doctor in another town from their home or to take online classes.”

“It’s also created new business opportunities for internet entrepreneurs or for those who work from home,” he added. “Frankly, it has brought the world to our rural customers who had been terribly underserved until now.”

“There are still thousands of potential customers yet to sign up and be served within the NELPCO footprint, and there are many opportunities just beyond our current system that have expressed interest in being served.”

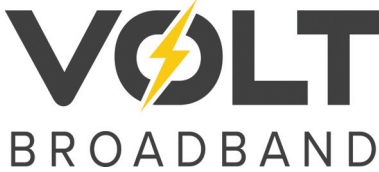
Gary Carver
Manager of Operations



“When you stop and really consider the economic engine that’s been created by Volt Broadband, it’s quite a remarkable story, one that came about through a dedicated team who worked hard to bring it to reality,” Churchwell said.

“I could not be prouder of what has been accomplished through this effort.”

Carver echoed Churchwell’s comments. “Our internet service packages, both residential and business, continue to lead with the most competitive pricing, highest reliability, and fastest speeds available,” he said. “All it takes is a call and we’ll be there.”



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***Please don't shoot
at birds on our wires!***



**Ammo through our fiber lines
can cause internet outages
for your friends and neighbors.**



***Help us keep
our community
connected!***

NELPCO crew assists with pole replacement



NELPCO has long been a partner in the communities they serve across seven parishes in Northeast Louisiana, and often helps out in places for causes that call for expert skills and equipment.

Such was the case when NELPCO helped out at Crowville Middle School, where they recently swapped out some dangerous and worn-out poles, which were purchased by the Franklin Parish School Board.

Though the school in Crowville isn't on our lines, we still believe community service has long been a tenet of the NELPCO operation, and we are pleased to be able to help where we can and how we can.

Special thanks to Holden Armstrong, our NELPCO construction foreman who took some great pictures of his crew in action while supervising the operation.



Dylan Foret and Chase Box assisted with the replacement of light poles at the Crowville school football field



Back in the day - Check out who was playing at the Ark-La-Miss Fair in 1976...

Ark-La-Miss Industrial & Agricultural

FREE FAIR

MONROE, LA.

CIVIC CENTER • OCT. 4-10

Over 200 Rides on the Midway!

Plus Super Stars ★ Each Night

Oct. 4 - 7 & 9 pm - Statler Bros.

Oct. 5 - 7 & 9 pm - Barbara Mandrell

Oct. 6 - 7 & 9 pm - High School Bands

Oct. 8 - 7 & 9 pm - Dolly Parton

Oct. 9 - 7 & 9 pm - Ronnie Milsap

Oct. 10 - 2 & 5:30 pm - Jerry Clower

TICKETS

\$6 - \$5 - \$4

Band Concert

\$2

5 shows

for price

of 4

This Offer Good

Thru Sept. 15

Tickets on sale at Civic Center Box Office 9 am to 6 pm, Mon. thru Sat., and at all Civic Center outlets.

Enclose check or money order payable to Monroe Civic Center and stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Courtesy of the Franklin Sun

ARK-LA-MISS FAIR

LIVESTOCK SHOW

Open 4-H and FFA Show

October 4, 2025

Ike Hamilton Expo Center

501 Mane St. West Monroe, La

Beef, Goat, Sheep, Swine, Rabbit, & Poultry:

PRE ENTRIES RECEIVED BY SEPT 19, 2025

Cattle \$30

Lamb, Goat, Swine \$20

Poultry & Rabbits \$5

Showmanship/Vintage Showmanship \$5

ENTRIES RECEIVED AFTER SEPT 19, 2025

Cattle \$35

Lamb, Goat, Swine \$25

Poultry & Rabbits \$10

Showmanship/Vintage Showmanship \$10

Poultry will be shown by age and size and NOT by breed. Standard or Bantam, and Age (Hen, Pullet, Cock, Cockerel)

Rabbits will be judged by breed and age classes. Each breed will have a best of breed and a best opposite sex

Registration at www.showman.app

Rabbit registration at <https://forms.office.com/r/guYuRt7jav>

CATTLE, LAMB, GOAT, & SWINE JUDGE: Rylie Melancon

POULTRY & RABBIT JUDGE: Lewis Hinkle

Shavings \$10 bag, purchase on registration site or day of show

Show Schedule

October 3, 2025

10 a.m. Animals may arrive, besides Rabbits & Poultry

6 p.m. Showmanship Clinic

October 4, 2025

7-9 a.m. Weigh market steers and commercial heifers

7-8:30 a.m. Check in Poultry (Inside arena)

7-11 a.m. Goats and Lambs arrive

9 a.m. Beef Cattle Show

Beef Showmanship

Market Steers

Commercial Heifers

Registered Cattle Classes

9 a.m. Poultry Showmanship followed by judging

10-12 p.m. Check in Rabbits (Inside arena)

11-1 p.m. Weigh market lambs and goats. Check in Breeding Goats and Commercial Does.

12:30 p.m. Rabbit Showmanship followed by judging (Immediately following poultry show)

2 p.m. Lamb/Goat show: (Could start sooner.)

Lamb Showmanship

Lamb Show

Market Goat Showmanship

Market Goat Show

Breeding Goat Showmanship

Breeding Goat Show

2-4 p.m. Weigh Market Swine

5 p.m. Market Swine Show: (Could start sooner)

Swine Showmanship

Market Swine Show

*Peewee and Vintage Showmanship following each species showmanship for Beef, Goat, Sheep, & Swine

Save the date!

**The 2025
NELPCO
Annual Meeting
will be held on
Tuesday, October 28.**

**The meeting location
and other details
will be announced
in next month's
Powerlines magazine.**

**Registration will begin at 8 a.m.
The meeting will start at 9 a.m.**



Latest NELPCO Board Meeting Approved Minutes

NORTHEAST LOUISIANA POWER COOPERATIVE MONTHLY BOARD MEETING - WINNSBORO, LOUISIANA July 30, 2025

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Northeast Louisiana Power Cooperative, Inc. was held at 1411 Landis Street, Winnsboro, Louisiana on Wednesday, July 30, 2025.

Directors present were Weldon Fitch, Thad H. Waters, Jr., Charles Hixon, Ronald Pippin, Alton L. Welch, Jr., and Justin Rials. Others present were Jeff Churchwell, General Manager, Nora Pylant, James Berry, Attorney, and Tessa Fowler, HMV Auditor.

Mr. Fitch called the meeting to order. Mr. Churchwell led the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag.

Ms. Fowler presented the 2024 draft audit report. On motion made by Mr. Pippin, seconded by Mr. Hixon and carried, none opposed, the report was approved as presented.

The minutes of the June 22, 2025, meeting were approved as presented.

Mrs. Pylant gave an update on Mr. Austin Nielsen.

Mrs. Pylant presented the June manager's report and income statement.

Mr. Churchwell presented the 1803 Electric wholesale power invoice.

Mr. Churchwell and Mr. Fitch updated the Board concerning activity at 1803 Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Mr. Fitch reviewed the residential rate comparison.

Mrs. Pylant reported that she and Mr. Proctor are continuing to work with the software provider to provide customer refunds as required by the LPSC.

Mr. Churchwell reported that there had been meetings with potential developers in the Holly Ridge area.

Mr. Berry gave a legal update.

Mr. Churchwell provided an operational update for Volt Broadband, LLC.

Mr. Churchwell presented the Board with a property parcel for review.

On a motion made by Mr. Waters, seconded by Mr. Hixon and carried, none opposed, the following resolution was adopted:

RESOLVED, that the following capital credits totaling \$ 16,429.33 be paid on behalf of deceased members: (Listing on file at Winnsboro office)

On the motion made by Mr. Rials, seconded by Mr. Welch and carried, none opposed, the following applicants, totaling 54 members, be accepted as new members of Northeast Louisiana Power Cooperative, Inc.: (Listing on file at Winnsboro office)

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

s/ Weldon Fitch, President

s/ Ronald Pippin, Secretary



**YOUR rural electric cooperative
serving Franklin, Madison,
Richland, Tensas, East Carroll,
West Carroll, and Morehouse
Parishes since 1938.**

FREE

AND

Easy

CHECKING

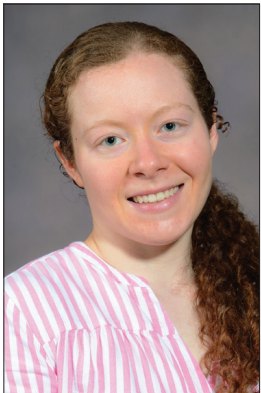


WSB

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Elderberries... nature’s gift or just another nuisance?



By Olivia McClure, LSU AgCenter

There’s an old saying that one person’s trash is another’s treasure. It’s a similar story for elderberries — nuisance for some, valuable crop to others.

It’s true: Elderberries do behave like weeds in many ways. These large shrubs pop up along fences, in ditches, on vacant lots. They grow quickly, spreading with ease thanks to an extensive root system and numerous seeds. With unassuming white flower clusters, tiny berries and a scraggly growth habit, they aren’t much to look at.

And yet elderberries have their benefits. For one, their BB-sized berries are an important food source for all sorts of wildlife. They serve as a host plant for several moth species, and their plentiful flowers provide pollen and nectar for bees and other pollinators.

People, of course, also make use of elderberries. Jams, jellies and syrups made from the berries have become trendy in recent years. Elderflowers are edible, too, often making an appearance in drinks in the form of elderflower liqueur.

Elderberry shrubs are part of the *Sambucus* genus, and a few species are native to the United States. Here in Louisiana, you’ll find *Sambucus canadensis*.

Right now, elderberries are ripening across our state. Whether you live in the city or the country, you shouldn’t have to look far if you want to harvest some.

“Pretty much everywhere that a bird’s been, you’ll see an elderberry,” said Clark Robertson, an LSU AgCenter horticulture agent in Livingston Parish.

That’s because birds love eating elderberries. They disperse the seeds, which germinate readily, through their excrement.

Unlike birds, most humans won’t enjoy eating elderberries straight off the plant. Raw berries have an unpleasant, strong taste and can upset stomachs. People generally eat them cooked, and in this state, they have more of a blackberry flavor.

When foraging for berries, pay close attention to their color. “You’ll want to harvest the whole inflorescence when the majority of the berries are a dark purple to black color,” Robertson said. “When you’re processing the berries, you would want to remove any green to red berries, as they could potentially be toxic.”

If you’re interested in having an elderberry shrub of your own in your home orchard, AgCenter horticulturist Jason Staggs suggests sticking to wild types and avoiding the black-leaved cultivars you might find at your local garden center.

“In limited trialing at the Hammond Research Station, we decided that those were not the best for our hot climate, as those have European genetics,” Staggs said.

Elderberries prefer fertile, moist — but not waterlogged — soils. They’re deciduous and can die back to the ground in severe winters, but they’ll reliably come back in the spring. They have few disease or insect pest issues and, true to their weedy tendencies, they don’t require much maintenance to grow successfully.

Plants usually reach about 10 feet tall in Louisiana and bloom multiple times in spring and summer.

“You’ll have berries ripening throughout the summer,” Robertson said.

Now — some of you are probably thinking, “I have more elderberries than I can stand! How do I get rid of them?”

To tame an elderberry infestation, chop the shrubs down and paint a stump killer containing the herbicide triclopyr onto the cuts to kill the root system. You also can keep an eye out for young elderberries, dig them up and discard them — or share them with someone who’d like to transplant them.



Elderberries are large shrubs that produce tiny, dark berries, and are a native plant and very easy to come by in Louisiana. The best time to harvest elderberries is when they are dark purple to black. Do not eat green or red elderberries because they are toxic. Elderberries grow wild as shown near a fence and barn in Livingston Parish. (Photos by Olivia McClure/LSU AgCenter)

September NELPCO Crossword

ACROSS

- 1- Attack a fly
- 5- Algonquian language
- 9- Second-century date
- 12- Kansas city
- 13- ___-garde
- 15- Impoverished
- 16- Heart of the matter
- 17- Founded: abbr.
- 18- -, in analogies
- 19- Lets in
- 21- Pertaining to the mouth
- 23- Mariners can sail on seven of these
- 25- Slaughter in Cooperstown
- 26- Math subj.
- 29- Perry’s creator
- 31- Thing
- 35- Fam. reunion attendee
- 36- Passed out
- 38- Army leader?
- 39- Christmas
- 41- Evade
- 43- Hot times abroad
- 44- World-weariness
- 46- Sporting blades
- 48- Triumph
- 49- Extent
- 51- Diminutive suffix
- 52- Lennon’s love
- 53- An earth sci.
- 55- Cereal grain
- 57- 1st month of the Islamic calendar
- 61- Keys
- 65- Goon
- 66- Actor Delon
- 68- Intestinal sections
- 69- Cairo’s river
- 70- Spine-tingling
- 71- Injectable diazepam, in military lingo
- 72- Costa del ___
- 73- Ardent

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8			9	10	11	
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16					17					18				
19				20			21			22				
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49					50		51				52			
				53			54		55		56			
57	58	59					60		61			62	63	64
65					66			67			68			
69					70						71			
72						73					74			

74- ___’acte

DOWN

- 1- Director Vittorio De
- 2- Unit of language
- 3- Graduate, for short
- 4- Hire cars
- 5- Roman capital of Palestine
- 6- Campers, briefly
- 7- Chow
- 8- Maternally related
- 9- Go for
- 10- Monetary unit of Lesotho
- 11- High-performance Camaro
- 14- Steak order
- 15- Monetary unit of Egypt
- 20- Ticked (off)
- 22- ___ Lisa
- 24- Drudge
- 26- Synthetic fiber
- 27- Sierra ___
- 28- First American to orbit Earth
- 30- Bolt to bond
- 32- Halved
- 33- Connection
- 34- Kind of question
- 37- Link with
- 40- Suitcases
- 42- Belated
- 45- Anatomical passage
- 47- Goes down
- 50- Dike, Eunomia and Irene
- 54- Hood-shaped anatomical part
- 56- Pizzeria order
- 57- Range: Abbr.
- 58- Presidential battleground state
- 59- Ship’s frame
- 60- Sportscaster Albert
- 62- Dash
- 63- Portable shelter
- 64- German river
- 67- Jr.’s junior

Solution on Page 4

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Meet Juan Torres, IT Administrator for NELPCO and Volt Broadband

Juan Torres came to work with NELPCO and Volt Broadband in 2023 as an IT contractor and, before long, moved into a full-time position with both companies.

He brings more than 25 years of experience in the IT industry to the table, and currently serves as the IT administrator for both organizations.

Juan, a Texas native who was raised in Florida, moved to Louisiana many years ago and has called the state home ever since.

"I attended school in Florida and built my career in information technology, working in healthcare, utilities, industrial sectors, and internet service providers," he said.

"That diverse background gave me the tools and experience I now use every day at Northeast Power and Volt."

Juan's role as the IT Administrator keeps him very

busy supporting employees from both companies with their technical issues through securing systems, maintaining the network and overseeing Microsoft 365.

"One thing's for sure; no two days are ever the same," he said with a laugh. "One moment I may find myself troubleshooting a system, and the next I'm improving security or making sure all our systems are running smoothly."

"I enjoy the variety and the challenge of keeping everything connected," he added. "There's never a dull moment."

Juan and his wife, Norma, live in West Monroe and have three grown children. Their oldest, Jonathan, is 25 and works in the medical field, while their daughter Yoselin, 23, works in a fitness club.

Their youngest child, Emily, is 18 and is a member of the Army National Guard, and is currently training at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri.

"Family is everything to us," Juan said. "When I'm not at work, I enjoy traveling and spending time with my family and being an active member of our church, Emmanuel Baptist Church, which is a part of Rescue Community Church."

Juan also enjoys tending to his saltwater aquarium and taking on personal technology projects, as well as participating in outdoor activities that allow him to unwind from the day-to-day stress of work.

"I've always enjoyed tinkering and learning, whether it's building something new, setting up equipment, or just relaxing by the aquarium," he said.

Juan enjoys his work and being part of the NELPCO and Volt Broadband teams.

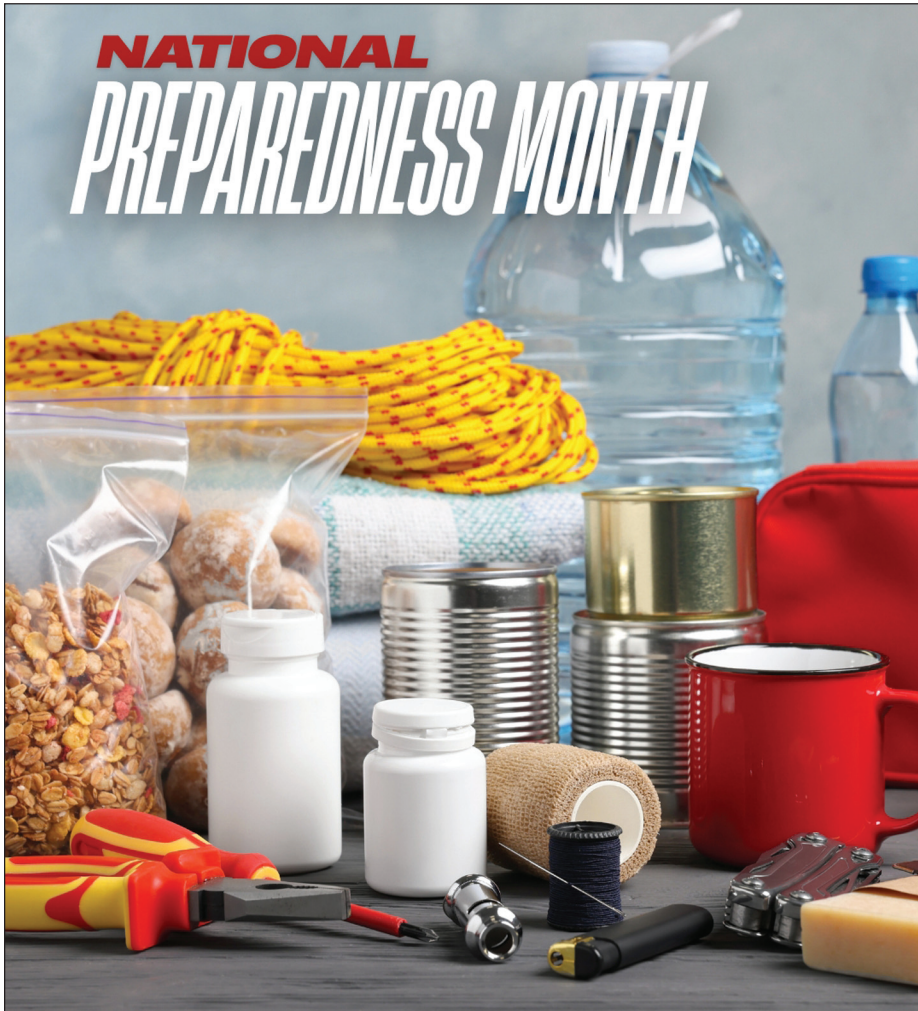
"I'm excited about the future of both organizations and am proud to be part of it all," he said. "Technology is one thing that is constantly changing, and I really enjoy what I do every day at work."



Juan Torres began working with NELPCO and Volt Broadband in 2023 as an IT contractor before moving into a full-time position. Juan has more than 25 years of experience in the IT industry, and now serves as the IT administrator for both organizations.



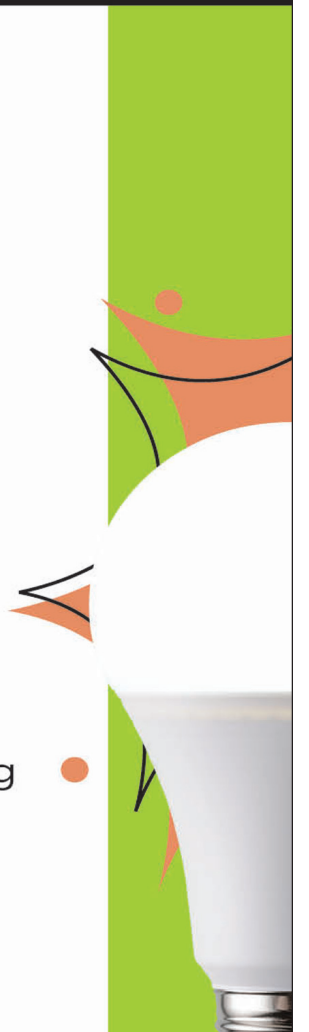
NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH



**Make a plan.
Build an emergency supply kit.
Stay informed.**

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Take advantage of "shoulder months," which refer to the transitional periods between peak heating and cooling seasons. During the fall, these milder weeks typically occur between September and November. Shoulder months offer a great opportunity to reduce home energy consumption as the need for extensive heating or cooling is reduced. Look for simple ways to boost indoor comfort without running your heating and cooling system. Use ceiling fans and open windows on breezy days to ventilate your home. On cooler days, add a layer of clothing and avoid running the heat.



NELPCO sponsors local team



NELPCO was proud to sponsor a team in the Winnsboro 13-19 Dixie Majors summer league that played their games at Dickey Field in Winnsboro.

NELPCO has historically sponsored teams for many years dating back to the formation of the local baseball leagues in the 1950s.

Team members pictured included (left to right) Coach Ben Graham, Jesse Killingsworth, Eli Rials, Beau Guy, Braxton Poindexter, Eli Magnuson, Colton Spence, Carson Chunn, Jackson Chunn, Jed Rials, Colton Lindsey, Duncan Parker, Jonathon Dobson, and Coach Justin Rials. Not pictured is Coach Raylee Thomas. (Courtesy photo)

**NORTHEAST
LOUISIANA
POWER**
COOPERATIVE, INC.

MAIN STREET Market

SATURDAY
20 SEPT 2025

10 AM - 2 PM

FOOD
SHOPPING & MORE

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WEDNESDAYS ONLY

\$10 OFF

OIL CHANGE
7:30am - 4:00pm

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Rayville, LA
(318) 728-4404

Tires / Balancing / Oil Changes

Northeast Louisiana
POWERlines
www.nelco.coop September, 2025

Viserion Grain works to keep agriculture moving in Northeast Louisiana

This month's cover...

Pictured is an overhead view of Viserion Grain's Crowville elevator at the height of this year's harvest.

We salute our farmers in the field doing what they do best - farming.

Photo courtesy of Viserion Grain.

Office hours

NELPCO Daily Office Hours

Monday - Friday
8 am - Noon
(Office closed during noon hour for lunch)
1 pm - 4:45 pm

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Powerlines September 2025.pmd

14

8/27/2025, 5:15 PM

Operation RoundUp supports local projects



NELPCO launched its Operation RoundUp program in January of 2016 with the purpose of having a positive impact on the communities within the seven parishes it serves.

Grant cycle closes Friday, September 26, 2025

Through donations our members make by voluntarily rounding up their electric bills each month, grants totaling more than \$500,000 have been awarded to local organizations for such things as educational scholarships, feeding and clothing those in need, supporting the arts, honoring our veterans, and much more.

In addition to grants offered to nonprofit organizations, Operation RoundUp has spent more than \$80,000 to help deserving individuals and families facing a crisis, such as the loss of a home to fire.

The deadline for the current grant cycle is the close of business (4:45 p.m.) Friday, September 16, 2025.

Applications can be picked up at any of the three NELPCO offices which are in Winnsboro, Oak Grove and Bastrop or downloaded from NELPCO's website (www.nelpcocoop).

Applications should be returned to any of our three locations by the deadline to be considered.

For more information, call (318) 435-4523.

NELPCO is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



September Birthdays



Zach Harrell
1st
NELPCO



Kirk Keberlein
2nd
Volt Broadband



Billy Joe Hickman
7th
NELPCO



Casey Allred
11th
NELPCO



Juan Torres
19th
NELPCO/Volt



Jessie Hart
22nd
NELPCO



Gene Roberts
29th
NELPCO

Now Accepting New Patients!

Dr. Joseph Enriquez, a Board-Certified Family Medicine Physician and Delhi native, is accepting new patients of all ages at the Delhi Rural Health Clinic! With a passion for compassionate, high-quality care, Dr. Joseph is excited to serve his hometown community.



Dr. Joseph Enriquez



Delhi
Rural Health Clinic

318-878-3737

www.DelhiHospital.com

508 Broadway St. Delhi, LA 71232

AI tools for electric cooperatives

Artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming an increasingly popular tool for many industries and even in our daily lives. AI is a hot topic - sometimes exciting, sometimes a little scary. It has the potential to bring many opportunities - and a few challenges - to the electric utility sector. But machine learning takes time, and we're still in the process of determining how AI can really be utilized.



Many electric cooperatives are already exploring emerging technologies like AI, virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR). Most of AI's current applications are task-specific—like using chatbots to answer common questions from co-op members or analyzing data to better understand members' needs.

Contrary to what Hollywood would have you believe, AI can't think for itself. Its abilities depend on how it's programmed, the quality of its training and the data it receives. AI is essentially about learning from patterns and making decisions based on that input - not about having thoughts or opinions of its own.

Because AI interacts with both internal systems and external networks, cybersecurity is a top priority. As NELPCO looks to adopt tools powered by AI and other tech, we will ensure our systems are safe from potential cyber threats. Strong digital defenses are essential to using any new technology safely.

As we consider emerging AI tools, our focus won't be so much on the technology itself as on solving real problems. If AI can streamline a process, predict an issue or improve service for our members, it's worth considering. As the technology evolves, AI may eventually be built into smart meters to help members track their energy use more effectively. It could even help our staff better manage the local grid or predict storm damage to deploy crews more efficiently.

Another exciting area is AR and VR. Many electric utilities are currently testing AR for training, giving lineworkers a hands-on

The challenges AI brings

The rapid growth of artificial intelligence, particularly energy-intensive technologies like generative AI and large language models, is presenting several challenges for electric utilities.

One of the biggest concerns is the dramatic increase in energy demand. AI relies heavily on data centers, which require massive amounts of electricity to operate. As these technologies expand, power consumption is expected to rise significantly.

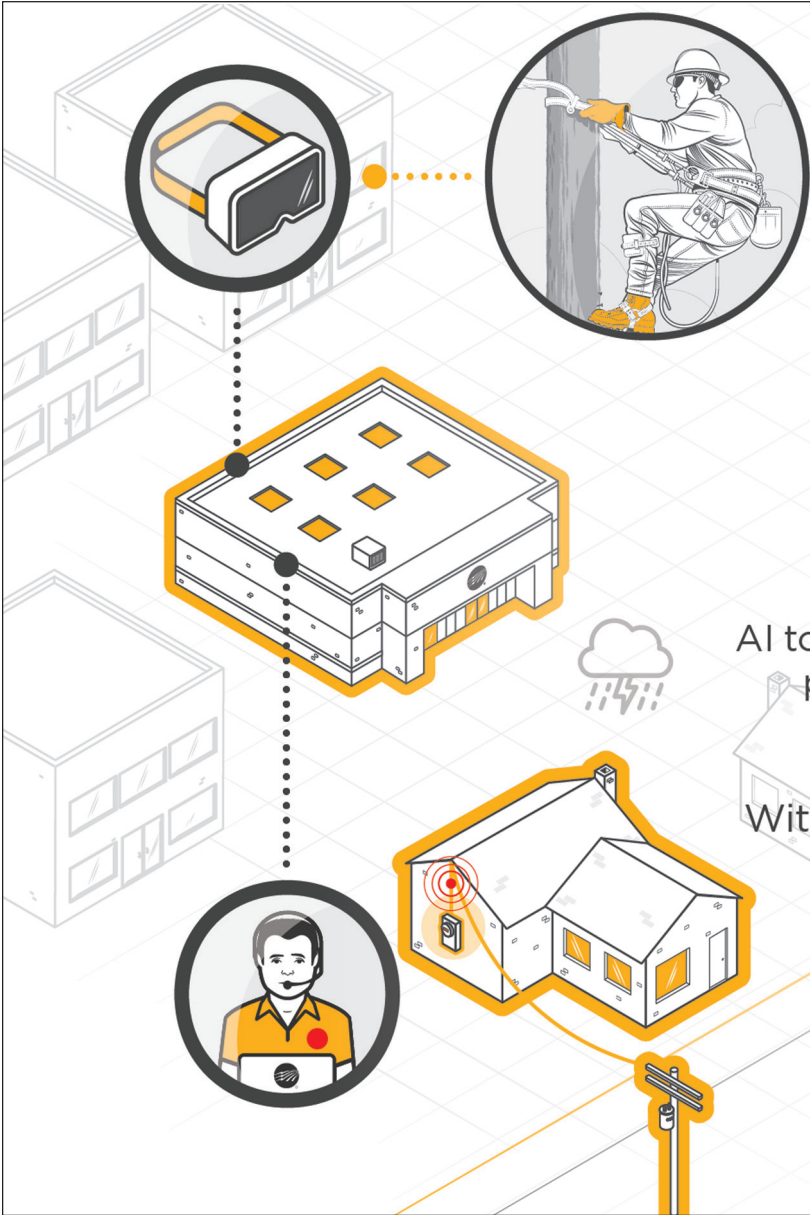
This growing demand is also creating a strain on our nation's electric grid, which can lead to instability and a higher risk of outages, especially in areas that are already dealing with high energy use or aging infrastructure.

While AI tools offer great potential in improving utility operations, these challenges highlight the growing tension between AI advancement and the long-term capability of the grid.

experience to prepare for dangerous situations before facing them in real life. In the future, smart glasses may help crews instantly identify and troubleshoot equipment in the field.

Ultimately, AI, AR and VR are tools that can help utilities like NELPCO serve their communities better - making energy more reliable, services faster and operations more efficient.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association is the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56% of the nation's landscape.



AI PUT INTO ACTION

Electric cooperatives are already using artificial intelligence (AI) and augmented reality (AR) for key tasks and activities. Looking ahead, co-ops see great potential for AI and AR as helpful tools for improving grid reliability and the services they provide to consumer-members.

SERVICES FOR MEMBERS

AI tools like chatbots can enhance member interactions and provide a tailored experience based on energy use data.

WEATHER FORECASTING

With the help of AI, weather forecasts will become more accurate, pinpointing areas to station utility crews.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Through augmented reality, or AR, lineworkers can experience interactive, lifelike trainings, rather than watching a video or webinar.