

Along these **LINES**

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2020

Powering Economic Development

The DEMCO economic development team continues to play a pivotal role in the local area growth

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/DEMCOLouisiana DEMCO.org



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ALEC Annual Meeting, COVID-19 and Concern for Our Community

On July 27, the Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives held its first-ever virtual annual meeting. It seems we have gone from one calamity to the next this year in Louisiana, with tornadoes, lawsuits, the COVID-19 pandemic and an active hurricane season.

In the early days of the coronavirus outbreak, it was clear the pandemic would change our perception of normal. As concepts such as social distancing first circulated among health officials, electric cooperatives looked ahead to identify and confront the possible impacts of COVID-19.

Throughout this new COVID-19 reality, our Louisiana electric co-ops have taken necessary extreme measures to protect employees so they can keep the lights on. The services they provide are vital across Louisiana in our homes, businesses and hospitals. Damage from multiple storms and the ongoing impact of the pandemic have made this a challenging year, but our co-ops have risen to the challenge and served their communities with compassion and pride.

As our co-ops responded to local concerns and circumstances, we at ALEC worked to present a unified front to our

political leaders in Baton Rouge and Washington, D.C., and urged them to address the specific needs of our communities and their cooperatives. Working alongside the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, our national trade organization, we informed policymakers about the challenges faced on the ground in Louisiana.

The pandemic has caused reduced income for many of our member co-ops, but they have responded by helping their communities, working with members on extended payment plans, promoting local businesses and expanding broadband access.

Helping member co-ops accomplish those goals is the ALEC team, which is dedicated to supporting Louisiana's electric cooperatives through safety training, employee education, member engagement, communications, Youth Tour, community outreach, government relations and legal affairs—anything that helps your cooperative better serve you and your communities.

It is unclear what the coming weeks, months or years hold, but I am absolutely confident our co-ops will be there serving their communities, leading with compassion, and trying each and every



CEO Jeff Arnold

day to do the right thing for their members and their employees.

One of the Seven Cooperative

Principles—Concern for Community—looms large right now in the minds of America's electric co-ops. It has governed our response to the pandemic from the beginning, and will continue to serve as our primary focus as we seek additional ways to help our co-op members.

Despite the challenges, our annual meeting was a success. Guest speakers included Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards and NRECA CEO Jim Matheson. Following their presentations, Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange, CoBank and the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corp., presented checks to ALEC. Member co-ops were recognized for their previous year's accomplishments and involvement in the Action Committee for Rural Electrification.

The annual safety and awards banquet will be held at a later date due to social-distancing restrictions. ■



Embrace the Gulf

Louisiana joins coastal states in a yearlong celebration of the many ways the Gulf of Mexico contributes to life in the region

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Mission

DEMCO is focused on enhancing the quality of life for members by providing safe, reliable and competitively priced energy services.

Volume 35, Issue 5

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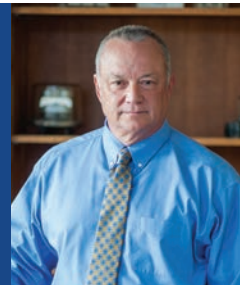
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DEMCO is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Manager's Report

Randy Pierce
CEO & General Manager



While the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the heroism of doctors, nurses and others who protect the public, it has also brought out scam artists who prey on consumers.

Since the mid-March lockdown, a reported rise in scammers is happening across the nation and right here at home. Unfortunately, scammers take advantage of people during hard times. They make demands, incite worry and somehow get the attention of good people.

Beware of callers who say they are calling from DEMCO and demand immediate payment to avoid service disconnection, or who advise you to pay now with a credit card or to mail a money order.

If you get a call from someone claiming to represent DEMCO demanding immediate payment, or who gives you instructions to pay a certain way using a specific method, hang up and report the suspected scam to the Federal Trade Commission at [FTC.gov/complaint](https://www.ftc.gov/complaint) or at 1-877-382-4357. You can also report it to the governor's office and to DEMCO to make state and local officials aware of particular schemes targeting our communities.

Regarding payments, DEMCO regularly works with members as needed to prevent disconnection for nonpayment. For members who were unable to pay their electricity bill during the height of the COVID pandemic, DEMCO is making payment contracts available to residential members to levelize payments up to 12 consecutive months to satisfy their outstanding balance. Members who received a notification through the mail should call 1-844-MyDEMCO Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. to discuss their situation and the options available.

There are many other resources available to help members through hardship as a result of the pandemic. I encourage you to visit the DEMCO website to learn more about national, state and local programs and resources. Visit www.DEMCO.org/member-services/COVID-19.

The DEMCO Foundation is a nonprofit charitable organization funded by DEMCO members to assist DEMCO members in need. Since 1997, the DEMCO Foundation has granted more than \$5.5 million to help our members through hard times. Although the foundation does not pay utility bills, funds may help pay for rent or a mortgage, repairs and maintenance on homes, pharmacy and medical supplies, and other needs. For information or to apply, visit www.DEMCO.org/community/DEMCO-Foundation.

DEMCO has been a part of this community since 1938. In the past eight decades and in all the days to come, I can assure you, DEMCO will do everything possible to work with members through challenging times. Thank you for your past and continued patience as we navigate these times together - the closings and openings and reclosings and reopenings. We will power through together for the health and safety of our community.

Official Notice: Annual Meeting

In accordance with the provisions of Article III, Section 3.03 of the Bylaws of DEMCO, notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of the members of the corporation is scheduled at DEMCO Headquarters, 16262 Wax Road, Greenwell Springs, Louisiana, Saturday, September 12, 2020, at 10 a.m.

In accordance with Article IV, Section 4.05 of the corporation Bylaws, notice is hereby given that the following persons qualified and were elected to fill the four positions on the board of directors that were up for election this year.

Stephen Irving
East Baton Rouge Parish, Board District 4

Dennis Lott
Livingston Parish, Board District 8

Mike Anderson
East Feliciana Parish, Board District 5

Richard Sitman
St. Helena Parish, Board District 10

The annual meeting will be presented on Facebook Live to allow members to watch the proceedings. Following the meeting, a recording can be accessed via hyperlink at [DEMCO.org](https://www.DEMCO.org).



DEMCO began providing power in August 1938. The co-op now serves more than 112,000 meters in seven Southeast Louisiana parishes.

What Does it Mean to Be Part of a Co-op?

Being part of a cooperative means being part of something special. With more than 40,000 cooperative businesses serving more than 120 million people nationwide, co-ops are made up of the members they serve. The principles of every co-op in America are based on honesty, openness, respect and the democratic right of all members to have a say in the business.

Formed as far back as 1844, co-ops became a way for people to obtain goods and services otherwise inaccessible or too costly. Co-ops were established by working together and pooling their resources. Examples of well-known

co-ops include Associated Grocers, Blue Diamond Growers, Ocean Spray and ACE Hardware.

DEMCO is one of more than 903 electric cooperatives nationwide. The cooperative powers 112,000 meters serving members in Ascension, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Livingston, St. Helena, Tangipahoa and West Feliciana parishes. DEMCO was established in 1938 to bring power to rural areas of southeast Louisiana. (Account No. 07197701001)

“Cooperatives Build” is the theme of this year’s National Cooperative Month, celebrated in October.

“This year’s theme is excellent because there are so many ways cooperatives help to build a stronger rural America,” says David Latona, DEMCO vice president of marketing and member services. “Each year, DEMCO invests in the community to help dollars circulate close to home, helping to strengthen the local economy.”

Cooperatives generate jobs in their communities, keep profits local and pay local taxes to help support community services. Read more about the economic impact of America’s co-ops and DEMCO on pages 20-21, “Economic Impact and Growth.” ■

Sign Up for Bank Draft!

DEMCO members who pay their bill by bank draft are eligible to win a \$50 gift card! Winning account numbers are published in each issue of Along these LINES.

Congratulations to these winners:

Account #40000819002, #80196430002, #80064027001 and #80288011001.

It’s easy to sign up and be eligible to win! Go to DEMCO.org/PaymentOptions or call 1-844-MyDEMCO.

DEMCO is closed September 7 in observance of Labor Day



Embrace **The Gulf**



Louisiana joins coastal states in yearlong celebration

By Colette Boehm

Oil and natural gas wells account for 17% of U.S. crude oil production; 45% of U.S. refining capacity is along the Gulf Coast.

PHOTO BY BRANDON WILT

Beyond its miles of natural shorelines, countless fishing docks and three major ports, the Gulf of Mexico touches nearly every aspect of Louisiana's economy.

Recreational fishing, commercial seafood and shipping are huge economic drivers, each depending on access to and resources from the Gulf. But it's the oil and gas industry that affects the state and nation beyond any other.

Throughout its phases—from exploration to production to shipping to refinement and beyond—the impact of this industry in Louisiana is as vast as the Gulf itself.

“There are roughly 33,000 people who work offshore in the Gulf of Mexico,” says James Hanzalik, vice president of Clean Gulf Associates. “There are a huge number of jobs just in the planning stage (exploration and production). There are geologists and engineers. They go out and explore, and a lot of money goes into that research. Then there is the construction of production platforms and all the production equipment. Then the product is brought ashore, where we have refineries. Beyond that, there are service companies and chemical companies. It goes on and on.”

A Gulf Coast native, James credits on-the-water excursions during a high school marine biology class for setting his path toward a career on water.

James has spent much of his life working in the Gulf—first during his 24-year career in the U.S. Coast Guard and with CGA since 2011. CGA is a nonprofit cooperative formed by some of the largest exploration and production companies working in the Gulf. Its mission is to provide state-of-the-art equipment and expert personnel to respond to and mitigate marine incidents such as oil spills.

“We're an old-school co-op,” James says. “We buy and stage equipment to be ready to respond, so not every company has to have a big cache of equipment themselves.”

By sharing resources, the companies ensure each has top-notch capabilities at the ready—a formula similar to another organization James works with: the Gulf of Mexico Alliance, which CGA sponsors.

GOMA is a regional partnership representing more than 1,000 people focused on sustaining and promoting



James Hanzalik, in inset above and center kayak, paddled in a Gulf of Mexico Alliance event.
PHOTO BY COLETTE BOEHM; INSET PHOTO COURTESY OF CLEAN GULF ASSOCIATES

Gulf resources. The nonprofit is led by a network of federal agencies, academic groups, businesses and other nonprofits.

This year, CGA has joined GOMA to “Embrace the Gulf.” Launched in January, the yearlong campaign showcases the importance of the Gulf of Mexico and highlights five areas of influence: resilient coastal communities, prosperous industries, superior educational opportunities, thriving tourism and healthy ecosystems. The campaign includes daily online messaging and events throughout the five coastal states.

The 2020 campaign includes events and activities that restore coastlines, rehabilitate wildlife and improve water quality. State-specific education and cleanup events, as well as a regional Paddle the Gulf ecotourism opportunity, also are planned.

Much like CGA's model, the collaboration GOMA fosters is vital, James says.

“Developing oil production in the Gulf has a huge economic impact not only on the state of Louisiana, but also on Texas, Alabama and, to some degree, Mississippi,” James says, noting that protecting the resource and supporting the jobs associated with it is important to everyone.

In addition to containment and recovery equipment, CGA employs plans for wildlife rescue and habitat protection.

“We're there to protect the environment,” James says. “That's our main job.”

CGA operates from six sites in Louisiana and two in Texas, supporting its members throughout the Gulf.

GOMA shares a similar mission.

“We couldn't ask for better partners,” James says. “The work of oil companies, environmental organizations and state agencies all fits together in the Gulf. GOMA is a part of that. They bring us all together.”

Through his cooperative efforts with CGA and GOMA, James hopes to ensure the resource he loves remains healthy and productive for generations to come.

GOMA started out as part of the U.S. Ocean Commission in 2004. The value of GOMA relationships established across state lines and among agencies and industries is most evident when responding to events such as the Deepwater Horizon explosion and oil spill in 2010.

Just as the resilience of the Gulf and all it touched was tested 10 years ago, Louisiana's communities and economy are being tested this year by the COVID-19 crisis.

“The Gulf of Mexico is an astonishingly valuable natural resource,” says Laura Bowie, GOMA executive director. “It supports 60 million people who live and work throughout the Gulf coastal region and an even greater number of people who visit.”

“GOMA is proud to embark on a campaign to promote the vitality, sustainability, beauty and productivity of the Gulf of Mexico. In the year that represents an anniversary for a variety of natural and man-made hazards, we now find ourselves in another crisis that extends well beyond our region. It is yet another reason to celebrate the resilience of this amazing resource.” ■

See Gulf of Mexico facts, page 16

Stay in the Know

At DEMCO, we strive to improve our operational efficiency so we can provide the best service possible for our members.

We rely on data for nearly every aspect of our operations, which is why we need your help. By making sure we have your most accurate and complete contact information, we can serve you better.

Are you married? If so, you and your spouse should both be listed on your account. To check, log in or give us a call. The graphic at right provides detailed instructions to manage your account.

Go to DEMCO.org. On the home screen select “New User? Register Now” below the login button. Each spouse is required to provide their Social Security number, but this is an easy step to make sure we are authorized to talk with either of you about anything having to do with your electric service.

Accurate information also improves communication for reporting and repairing outages. Up-to-date contact information may speed up power restoration. For example, the phone number you provide is linked to your service address in our outage management system. This means when you call to report an outage, our system recognizes your phone number and matches it with your account location. Accurate information helps our outage management system predict the location and possible cause of an outage, making it easier for our crews to correct the problem. (Account No. 80064027001)

While we always do our best to maintain service, we occasionally plan outages to update, repair or replace equipment. In these instances, we provide advance notification to affected members through automated phone messages,

Manage YOUR ACCOUNT

Register for online account access at **DEMCO.org**. It’s quick and easy to set up! You must have your account number and an email address to register. You can activate bill alerts, and access your account information from anywhere at any time. Check out your latest kWh usage, meter readings, and due dates all in one convenient place.

First time users need to register for an online account.

Visit DEMCO.org and on the homescreen page – to the right - you’ll see MY DEMCO ACCOUNT. Below the LOG IN button you will see “New User? Register Now” – click that.

Now you’re at the Customer Login Page. Enter your Account Number – include only the number without the dash in that field.

Next you need to create a password, then click New User. It’s that simple! Now you can explore your online account, set up bill reminders and more.

For future log ins, go to DEMCO.org and enter your User ID and Password on the homepage in the box to the right: MY DEMCO ACCOUNT. Remember your User ID is your account number that is printed on your bill.

If you forget your password, here’s a trick to try – Enter your User ID (account number) and the last four digits of your home telephone number (xxxx). If we have an email address on record for you, then your password will be emailed to you when you click Submit!

**Or you can call DEMCO Member Services to assist you at
1-844-My-DEMCO
(1-844-693-3626).**



text messages or email if we have your updated contact information and communication preferences.

Many of you have been co-op members for years, and it’s likely your account information hasn’t been updated for some time. We recognize many members now use a cellphone as their primary phone service, and we might not have that number in our system.

We want to emphasize that we never share your contact information with third parties. It is only used by DEMCO to send important information to you.

Please take a moment to confirm or update your contact information by logging into your account or by calling DEMCO member services at 1-844-MyDEMCO (1-844-693-3626). Take a few minutes to help us serve you better. ■

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WOW! 69¢

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TAILGATOR ★★★★★ (1245)

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7 ft. 4" x 9 ft. 6" All Purpose/Weather Resistant Tarp

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55592309 **LIMIT 4** - Exp. 10/22/20

200 Lumen LED Super Bright Flip Light

★★★★★ (5952)

\$1.99

~~\$3.99~~ **Save 60%**



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55592605 **LIMIT 4** - Exp. 10/22/20

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YOUR CHOICE OF 6 COLORS

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ITEM 54991 54392 44818 54392 54390 54394

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Heavy Duty Foldable Aluminum Sports Chairs

★★★★★ (4984)

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\$19.99

~~\$29.99~~ **Save 50%**



Compare to Coleman 635394 \$39.99

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55593073 **LIMIT 4** - Exp. 10/22/20

COVERPRO ★★★★★ (1864)

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\$169.99

~~\$199.99~~ **Save \$120**



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WARRIOR ★★★★★ (4980)

29 Piece Titanium Drill Bit Set

\$10.99

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PORTLAND ★★★★★ (7091)

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\$59.99

~~\$79.99~~ **Save \$39**



Compare to Worx WG309 \$99.98
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300 lb. Capacity ATV/Lawn Mower Lift

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55601153 **LIMIT 2** - Exp. 10/22/20

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\$29.99

~~\$39.99~~ **Save 54%**



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55601616 **LIMIT 5** - Exp. 10/22/20

drillmaster ★★★★★ (6317)

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55602077 **LIMIT 4** - Exp. 10/22/20

HaulMaster ★★★★★ (4982)

18" Working Platform Step Stool

\$19.99

~~\$29.99~~ **Save 50%**



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55603229 **LIMIT 4** - Exp. 10/22/20

CENTECH ★★★★★ (3886)

Automatic Battery Float Charger

\$4.99

~~\$9.99~~ **Save 83%**



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55603255 **LIMIT 4** - Exp. 10/22/20

PITTSBURGH ★★★★★ (1660)

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~~\$79.99~~ **Save \$91**



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Make Your Voice Heard

There's an old political saying, "If you're not at the table, you're on the menu." This adage is the perfect answer to the question, "Why vote?" It's a blunt description of what happens when you don't engage in the political process.

If you don't vote, you're not only missing the opportunity to support a candidate who shares your views and concerns, you're allowing others to chart a course that impacts your future. That's why we

encourage all Louisiana electric cooperative members to recognize National Voter Registration Day on September 22, 2020.

Whether you're registering yourself or others to vote, or

helping members of our community get organized, there are many ways to get involved.

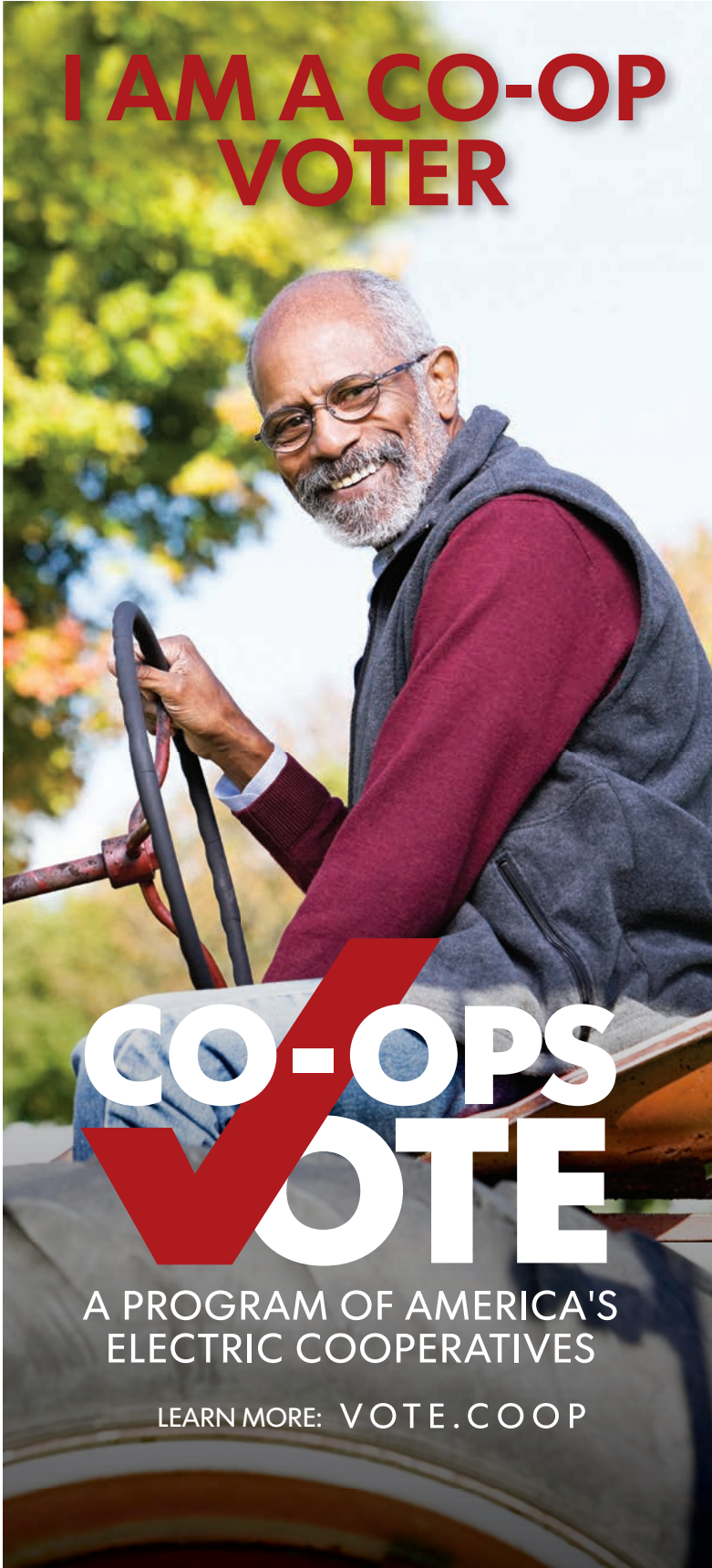
While local elections may not be as exciting as a high-profile presidential election, they are just as critical. Local elections have a direct impact on your community and quality of life.

As at the national level, local elections represent who we are as a community and, more importantly, where we want to go. Whether it's an election for a mayor, sheriff, state representative, school board, public service commissioner or an electric co-op board member, your vision for the community is tied to your vote.

A strong voter turnout shows investment in the community and ensures a diverse number of views are represented. The entire community benefits when more people participate in the process because greater numbers reflect a consensus on the direction of the future and the will of the people.

By voting in national, state and local elections, you are a role model for your family, friends and colleagues. The act of voting demonstrates your support for the community and helps officials chart a course for the future. Democracy is not a spectator sport. Research candidates, learn about issues on the ballot, and get out and vote! ■

To learn more about National Voter Registration Day or to get involved, visit www.nationalvoterregistrationday.org.



I AM A CO-OP VOTER

CO-OPS VOTE

A PROGRAM OF AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

LEARN MORE: VOTE.COOP

Fighting for Your Access

Electric co-ops seek to improve broadband in rural Louisiana

A bill that would have significantly hampered the ability of electric cooperatives in Louisiana to provide retail broadband to their members was struck down by the governor following a broad grassroots effort by the state's co-ops.



Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards vetoed the bill June 8, noting amendments to the measure ran counter to the original intent of the bill, which was to allow electric cooperatives to enter the broadband business and serve their 1 million members.

Quick work by the Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives—with assistance from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association—helped derail the legislation, which passed unanimously in the state House and Senate.

ALEC CEO Jeff Arnold delivered 500 signed petitions to the governor opposing the bill, and explained the concerns of co-ops and their members.

“Our member Louisiana electric cooperatives have done an excellent job of cultivating relationships with their member-consumers,” Arnold said. “It is truly impressive to watch their members jump into action when they are called upon by their local electric cooperative. Relationships like these are only built with integrity and being a trusted source for political information.”

The original bill would have authorized electric cooperatives to allow internet service providers access to their poles without requiring additional consent of property owners. But it was amended to restrict electric co-op broadband projects to areas deemed “unserved” by the Federal Communications Commission.

These FCC designations are based on service provider filings at a census block level and are known to be inaccurate.

“Such a law would have been bad for electric cooperatives that seek to serve all their members equally and bad for consumers generally by depriving them of competition and, in some cases, depriving them of access in the first place,” said Kelly Wismer, NRECA’s legislative director for broadband initiatives.

The Louisiana electric cooperatives worked with Sen. Beth Mizell to ensure Louisiana electric cooperatives were able to compete in the broadband market.



Jeff Arnold, CEO of the Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives, with some of the 500 petitions he delivered to Gov. John Bel Edwards opposing a bill that would have interfered with the state's electric cooperatives' ability to provide broadband access to their members.

The Senate bill advanced in the state legislature facilitates Louisiana electric cooperatives entering the broadband space or allowing internet service providers to use their infrastructure without the restrictions of the vetoed bill.

In addition, House Bill 69 provides a 50% rebate on sales and use tax for fiber-optic cable for grant winners under the Rural Development Opportunity Fund—a \$20.4 billion initiative to deliver high-speed fixed broadband service to rural homes and small businesses that lack it. ■

FALL INTO

Easy-to-Make Dinners

Pizza Pancakes

2 cups biscuit/baking mix
2 teaspoons Italian seasoning
2 large eggs
1 cup 2% milk
½ cup chopped pepperoni

½ cup shredded part-skim
mozzarella cheese
1 plum tomato, chopped and seeded
¼ cup chopped green pepper
8 ounces pizza sauce, warmed

In a bowl, combine biscuit mix and Italian seasoning. In another bowl, whisk eggs and milk until blended. Add to dry ingredients, stirring just until moistened. Stir in pepperoni, cheese, tomato and pepper.

Preheat griddle over medium heat. Grease lightly.

Pour batter by ¼ cupfuls onto griddle. Cook until bubbles on top begin to pop and bottoms are golden brown. Turn, then cook until second side is golden brown.

Serve with pizza sauce.

Recipes by Gertrude Treadaway

Photo by Hanna Cheek

Nacho Pie

4 cups tortilla chips,
coarsely crushed
1 pound ground beef
½ cup chopped onion
8 ounces tomato sauce
16-ounce can chili beans,
undrained and warmed
1 cup shredded part-skim
mozzarella cheese

Heat oven to 375 F.

Place chips in a lightly greased 9-inch pie plate. Set aside. In a large skillet, cook beef and onion over medium heat until meat is no longer pink. Drain. Spoon over chips. Top with tomato sauce, beans and cheese.

Bake, uncovered, until heated through and cheese is melted, about 7 to 8 minutes.

Sloppy Joe Pasta

1 pound ground beef
1 envelope sloppy joe mix
1 cup water
8 ounces tomato sauce
6 ounces tomato paste
7 ounces small shell pasta,
cooked and drained
1 cup 4% cottage cheese
½ cup shredded cheddar
cheese

Heat oven to 350 F.

In a Dutch oven, cook beef over medium heat until no longer pink. Drain. Stir in the sloppy joe mix, water, tomato sauce and paste. Heat through. Remove from the heat and stir in pasta.

Spoon half of mixture into a greased 2½-quart baking dish. Top with cottage cheese and remaining pasta mixture. Sprinkle with cheddar cheese.

Bake, uncovered, for 30 to 35 minutes, until bubbly and cheese is melted.

Bacon Bow Tie Pasta

8 ounces bow tie pasta
½ pound bacon
8 ounces cream cheese,
softened
¼ cup butter, softened
1½ teaspoons Italian
seasoning
¾ cup milk
½ cup grated Parmesan
cheese

Cook pasta according to package directions. Drain and keep warm. Cook bacon according to package directions. Drain well and crumble.

Beat cream cheese, butter and Italian seasoning in a medium-size microwave-safe bowl at low speed with an electric mixer until smooth. Gradually add milk, beating until mixture is smooth.

Microwave cream cheese mixture at high for 3 minutes or until thoroughly heated, whisking every 30 seconds. Pour cream cheese mixture over warm pasta and toss to coat. Top with crumbled bacon and Parmesan cheese.

Lightened version: Substitute reduced-fat or turkey bacon, ½-less-fat cream cheese and 2% reduced-fat milk.

Ham and Cheese Pinwheels

8-ounce tube crescent rolls
½ pound deli sliced ham
2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
8 ounces sliced Swiss cheese
4 tablespoons butter, melted
¼ teaspoon garlic powder
2 tablespoons chopped
parsley
1 teaspoon poppy seeds

Heat oven to 350 F. Grease an 8-inch-by-8-inch baking pan with cooking spray.

On a lightly floured surface, unroll dough and separate the sheet into rectangles. Pinch the perforations to seal. Spread mustard onto each rectangle. Top with sliced ham and cheese. Starting with one short side, roll up each rectangle. Pinch edges to seal. Cut each roll into five or six slices. Place cut side up in baking pan.

In a small bowl, whisk together butter, garlic powder and parsley. Brush over pinwheels, then sprinkle poppy seeds on top. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes, until the rolls are golden.

Mac 'n' Cheese Dinner

2 cups elbow macaroni
4 medium carrots, thinly sliced
10 ounces frozen peas
1 cup cubed cooked ham
⅔ cup milk
¼ cup cream cheese, softened
4 ounces shredded mozzarella
2 tablespoons grated
Parmesan cheese
1 teaspoon dried basil
⅛ teaspoon salt
⅛ teaspoon pepper

Cook macaroni in boiling water for 3 minutes. Add carrots and peas; return to a boil. Cook until macaroni is tender, 5 to 6 minutes longer. Drain. Add ham.

In a 1-quart microwave-safe dish, combine the milk and cream cheese. Cover and microwave at 50% power for 3 minutes. Stir. Cook until cream cheese is melted, about 2 to 3 minutes more. Stir in mozzarella, Parmesan, basil, salt and pepper. Pour over pasta and toss to coat.

Baked Cheddar Eggs and Potatoes

3 tablespoons butter
1½ pounds red potatoes,
chopped
¼ cup minced fresh parsley
2 garlic cloves, minced
¾ teaspoon kosher salt
⅛ teaspoon pepper
8 large eggs
½ cup shredded extra-sharp
cheddar cheese

Heat oven to 400 F.

In a 10-inch cast-iron or other ovenproof skillet, heat butter over medium-high heat. Add potatoes. Cook and stir until golden brown and tender. Stir in parsley, garlic, salt and pepper.

With the back of a spoon, make four wells in the potato mixture. Break two eggs into each well. Bake until egg whites are completely set, and yolks begin to thicken but are not hard, about 9 to 11 minutes.

Sprinkle with cheese. Bake until cheese is melted, about 1 minute.



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Gulf of Mexico Facts

A core initiative of Embrace the Gulf is to share facts about the Gulf of Mexico. The Gulf's influence goes far beyond local connections. The states it touches are linked through oil and gas exploration, tourism, marine transportation, and commercial and recreational fishing—industries impacting the region and the entire country. Here are a few nuggets from the Gulf of Mexico Alliance illustrating the Gulf's diversity, environmental and economic importance, and wealth of recreational opportunities.

The **Gulf of Mexico region** includes Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas. Combined, these states share 1,631 miles of coastline divided as follows: Florida, 770 miles; Louisiana, 397 miles; Texas, 367 miles; Alabama, 53 miles; and Mississippi, 44 miles.

If the five Gulf states were a country, the economy would rank in the top 10 worldwide with a **gross domestic product of more than \$2 trillion**.

The Gulf of Mexico covers **600,000 square miles**, measuring approximately 1,100 miles east to west and 800 miles north to south.

The Gulf is home to **six of the top 10 most productive shipping ports** in the country.

Industries in the Gulf of Mexico region have built **70% of the U.S. naval fleet** of warships.

At its deepest point, the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico is 2.7 miles underwater. However, most of the Gulf is much shallower. **About 60% of the Gulf is less than 700 feet deep**.

Within the Gulf ecosystem are 207 estuaries, 47 wildlife refuges, 15.6 million acres of wetlands and eight national parks.

Natural resources in the five Gulf states **support the employment of more than 8 million people**.

Each of the five Gulf states has an artificial reef program to supplement natural underwater habitats. These **artificial reefs enhance fishery resources** and fishing opportunities by creating habitat for fish and invertebrate species using man-made materials.

Because of its warm waters and diverse habitats, **15,419 documented marine species** make their home in the Gulf of Mexico.

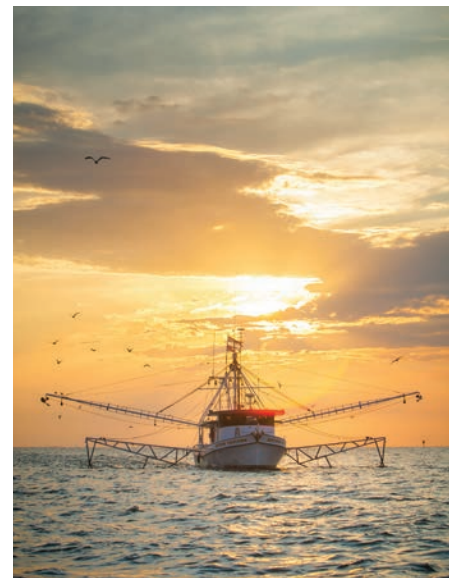
The Gulf states generate **1.3 billion pounds of seafood a year**, which is more than the annual production of the mid-Atlantic, Chesapeake and New England areas combined.

The Gulf of Mexico provides **77% of the U.S. shrimp harvest**.

The most popular vacation destination in the United States is the Gulf states, with an economic impact of **\$45 billion annually from tourism**.



Red snapper is a popular catch aboard the many Gulf Coast charter boats that take anglers fishing. PHOTO BY MARY SERGEANT



A shrimp boat works the waters of the Gulf. PHOTO BY BILLY POPE

Padding events will be held on the waters of each of the Gulf states as part of this year's Embrace the Gulf celebration. PHOTO BY COLETTE BOEHM



The Value of Electricity

It wakes us in the morning, heats the water for a shower, powers the coffee machine and so much more. It lights our way and powers our day.

Whether cooking dinner, watching TV, working on the computer or charging up a cellphone, we all rely on electricity. It is abundant, easily accessible and adds so much to our quality of life. Thank goodness for electricity!

Most of the time, we don't even think about electricity. We use it all day long. Most of the time, we don't make a conscious decision to use electricity. It's just there for us whenever and however we need it. It's the backdrop to a comfortable home, cooled or heated just the way we like it. It heats water for dishwashing, cleaning clothes and bathing.

We hardly notice all the ways we use electricity, except when the power goes out or the monthly bill is due.

Given the extent to which we rely on electricity to power our modern-day lifestyle, we are lucky it isn't cost-prohibitive. On the contrary, it's a great value—especially compared to other common services and expenses.

Here are some interesting facts about the value of electricity:

Since the 1970s, the cost of a home has increased 1,000%, beef 500%, a loaf of bread 800%, a gallon of gas 800% and the average cost of a new car 1,000%. Electricity has increased by only about 3% to 4% in the past five decades, with a stable forecast for many years to come. (Account No. 80196430002)

Even though the price of electricity doesn't fluctuate nearly as much as other consumer goods, it is still an expense. If you think about when and how you use electricity, you may find ways to lower your bill.

Here's the key: You only pay for what you use.

Each month, your electric meter measures your energy use. To lower your bill, lower your use. Set your air conditioning to 78 degrees in the summer and 68 degrees in the winter to save up to 3%. Replace incandescent bulbs with LED bulbs that use less energy. Outside the home, strategically place the right combination of plants and trees to provide shade and energy savings. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, the average household can save \$100 to \$250 in yearly energy costs.

If windows and doors are not sealed, cool air can escape and warm air can enter. Seal your windows and doors.

Consider temporary fixes such as plastic film kits to cover glass windows. Proper sealing and insulation in the attic also improve a home's energy efficiency.

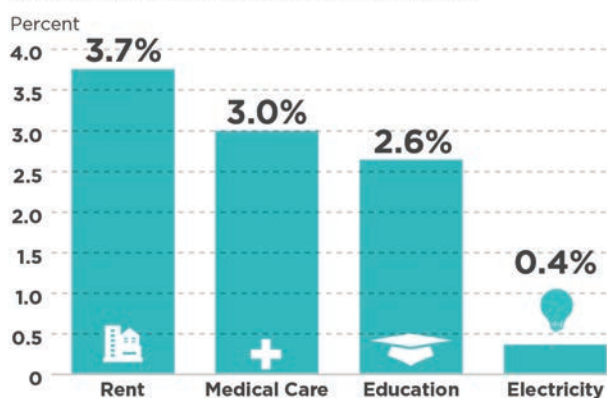
Even though energy is a good value, it's still an expense that affects our budget each month.

To increase awareness of the energy you use and for ways to lower your bill, visit DEMCO.org/energy-savings. ■

ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

The cost of powering your home rises slowly when compared to other common expenses. Looking at price increases over the last five years, it's easy to see electricity remains a good value!

Average Annual Price Increase 2014-2019



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index

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Powering Economic Development

DEMCO continues to play a pivotal role in local economic growth

By Colette Boehm

The DEMCO service area has changed and grown tremendously during its eight decades in service. As the largest electric cooperative in Louisiana—with 112,000 meters across a seven-parish territory—DEMCO plays a major role in powering economic growth. All the while, its rates have remained among the lowest in the country, with members enjoying excellent reliability.

The region once again is experiencing major redevelopment in commercial office and industrial space. Along with the addition of new business DEMCO Vice President of Marketing and Member Services David Latona says this is not only good for the economy, but good for DEMCO members.

Louisiana residents have the lowest rates in the country.

“We work hard to keep costs low for our residential members, who represent 93% of our customer base,” Latona explains. “Additional bulk rate power supply not only supplies the new businesses, but it helps keep residential prices down.”

Those rates are one factor fueling growth in the Baton Rouge region. The DEMCO community—which includes Ascension, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Livingston, St. Helena, Tangipahoa and West Feliciana parishes—is part of the

nine-parish Capital Region promoted by the Baton Rouge Area Chamber.

The chamber is the lead economic development organization for the region. It works with business leaders and other local partners to attract new businesses and grow jobs.

“We’ve seen growth, specifically in suburban areas,” Latona says. “Much of this new commercial development is connecting the dots of those suburban areas. Interstate 12 starts in Baton Rouge and goes east. It runs right through the heart of our service area, and this is where we’re seeing extensive multiuse growth. Developments like The Greens at Millerville are an example of connecting the dots.”

The development is on the site of the old Fairwood Country Club. Plans call for 320 apartments and 393,000 square feet of retail and office space to be built on roughly 54 acres. (Account No. 03576301001)

“It’s a very diverse mix of businesses,” Latona notes. “There are many service providers, as well as several restaurants. Richards Honda is now open on a 9-acre property and The RV Shop is occupying 5 acres of land. There’s also office space and a 20,000-square-foot service center.”

The same type of growth is happening in other sectors throughout the Interstate 12 corridor. Another new cluster of developments is in the Juban Crossing area, near Denham Springs, with retail, restaurant

and commercial development converging.

“This type of multiuse growth is a key element in the DEMCO five-year strategic plan,” says DEMCO CEO and General Manager Randy Pierce. “Economic development and business development go hand in hand: serving a growing and changing member base while keeping rates down and continuing to give back to the community. This focus is important to DEMCO members. It translates to new jobs and new tax revenues. In many cases, they’re bringing new services to our community. It’s good for the entire community.”

Jayson Newell is regional director of economic development at BRAC. He’s seen firsthand how the availability of reliable and affordable utilities attracts new business development.

“Economic development is a team sport,” Newell says. “We have staff who work with business expansions and we have a team working on recruiting new businesses. That team includes lots of partners, like DEMCO, to help us appeal to new prospects.”

DEMCO’s full-time staff includes business development, engineering design and operations professionals who provide value-added services that help bring new business to southeast Louisiana.

“Having people who know their product and know how to market it is a big advantage,” Newell says. “We’re thrilled to work with DEMCO. They are great partners, offer competitive power rates and are very responsive. They’ve got a good team and they are important in our efforts to continue to be successful.

“We are blessed here in Baton Rouge. We’ve been successful across diverse industry sectors. It’s been white-collar, blue-collar, tech projects and others. That all trickles down. These people bring jobs that bring people in. They will look for houses. They will shop in grocery stores. It’s good for everybody.”

The DEMCO economic development team includes, from left, Toma Holland, Veronica Claiborne, Jim Cavanaugh and Heather Verrett.



DEMCO itself contributes to the local and state economy. In a recent study of economic impact from 2014 to 2018, DEMCO added \$967.8 million to Louisiana's gross state product, including \$850.9 million in value added to the local economy.

DEMCO supported an average of 1,210 jobs a year and \$395.8 million in wage income throughout Louisiana. In the local community, DEMCO is responsible for 1,103 jobs annually and \$352.7 million in wage income.

"Our role in providing power is essential to the region's growth and its overall quality of life," Pierce says. "The co-op is a powerful business model established by the members we serve. Together, we generate \$89.1 million in federal taxes and \$93.1 million in state and local taxes in Louisiana."

Pierce says this is an important reason to shop locally.

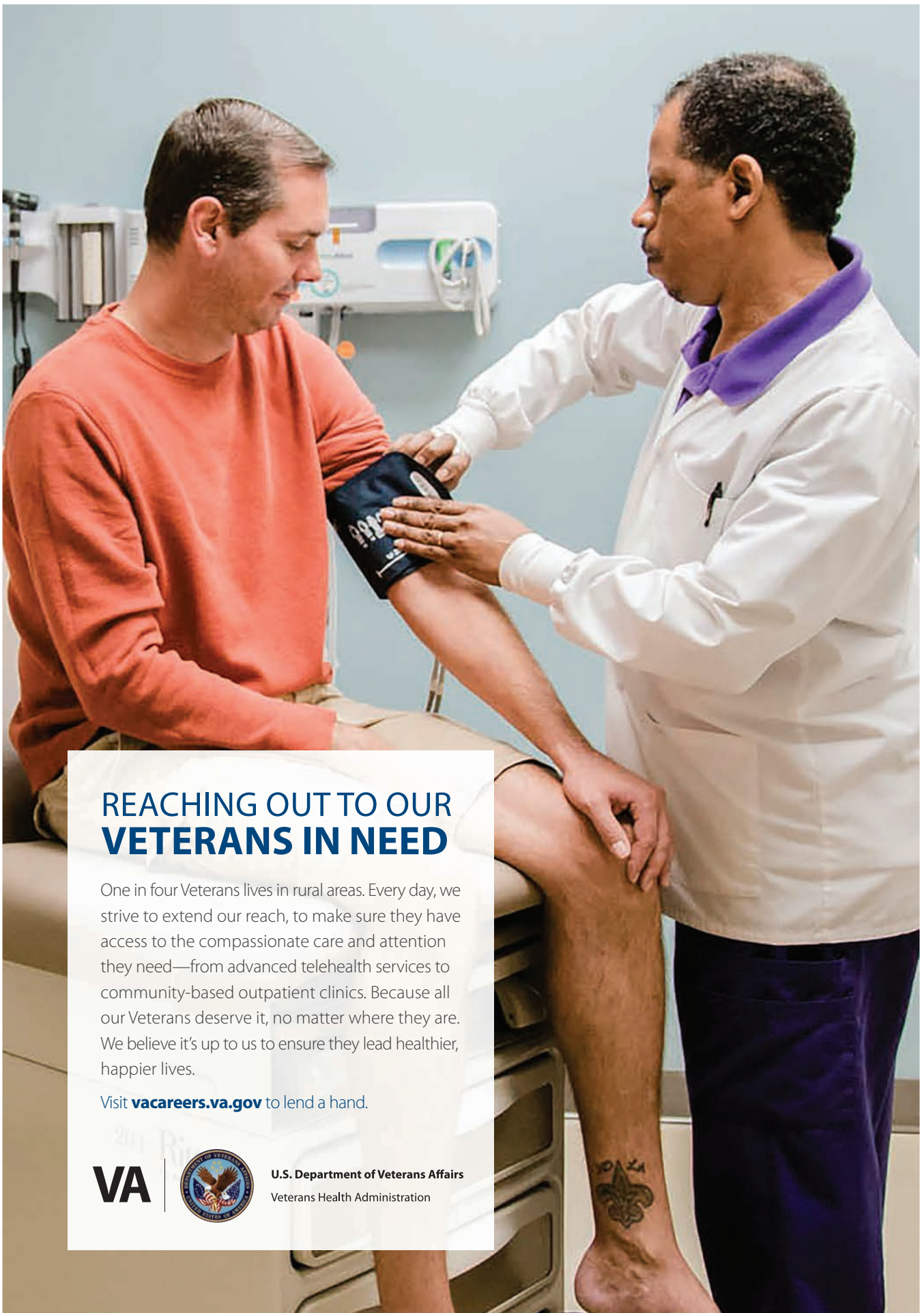
"The more we support these businesses, the more we are supporting economical, efficient power supplies to our neighborhoods," he says. "In addition to our mom-and-pop stores, larger businesses coming in support the community by employing local people—and that makes us all more successful."

Since 1938, DEMCO has focused on working with residential and commercial developers to support their needs and help shape the communities of its seven-parish region. As new commercial and industrial cluster developments and new business and residential members come online, DEMCO welcomes them as new members, and the cost-spread helps keep Louisiana rates the lowest in the country.

"We are committed to providing reliable service and affordable electric rates to all our members," Pierce says. "We value this community, and appreciate that new business and new development translates into new jobs, a stronger local economy and an improved quality of life for our friends, families and neighbors." ■



ABOVE PHOTOS: The Greens at Millerville, a new commercial retail development off I-12 at Millerville Road.



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St. Jude patient Miguel, eye cancer

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