

## Glenn Shepherd retires after serving the cooperative for 31 years

Woodruff Electric Cooperative Corporation (WECC) would like to congratulate Glenn Shepherd upon his retirement in January after 31 years of service to the membership of WECC. Glenn has been a vital employee of WECC, and we wish him the best in his retirement.

Glenn came to WECC after proudly serving his country with the Battery B 5th 206th FA National Guard Artillery Unit and with the 374th Medical Detachment in Little Rock as a Crew Chief on a UH-1 Helicopter. Glenn served in the military for more than 20 years.

Following his military duty in Honduras, Glenn accepted a job offer from the late Glynn Carpenter to join Woodruff Electric as an equipment operator at WECC's District I location in Augusta in late summer of 1990. Within a few months, however, Glenn's career at WECC was put on hold when he answered the call back to active duty to serve at the Fort Sill Army Post near Lawton, Oklahoma, and to train and prepare for deployment for Operation Desert Storm.

Glenn returned to the District I Office in Augusta in 1991 to work in the warehouse and conduct field audits. As opportunities became available, Glenn served the cooperative in various positions in the Operations Department and Engineering Department over the years, including District II Manager, Key Accounts Manager, Safety and Loss Control Manager and Apparatus Technician.

Glenn has seen many changes over the years, but notably mentioned the changes with the equipment

that is used in outside operations. "The change in equipment over the years allowed us to work smarter and not harder. The equipment is the heart of everything at the Cooperative," he said.

When asked what advice he would share with a new employee from his experiences with the Cooperative, Glenn paused for a second and then replied, "I would tell someone starting with the co-op to do your best job, be honest and you will go a long way." Glenn stated that he will miss his co-workers at the Cooperative and added, "I've built friendships here that have become long-term relationships with people everywhere."

Glenn and his wife, Sherry, have two children and one grandchild. When asked about his plans after retirement, he was quick to respond, "Red, my grandson with disabilities — whatever his needs will be — that will be my top priority, and I can't forget the 'honey-do' projects after that." He plans to go hunting, fishing and work on various projects. He closed by saying, "I've enjoyed my time with the Cooperative, but it's time for a new chapter. I look forward to spending more time with my family."



## High school students: March 21 is deadline for scholarships, Youth Tour

Woodruff Electric Cooperative Corporation is accepting applications from high school seniors for the Glynn and Mildred Carpenter Scholarship program and from high school juniors for the 2022 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.

Local area high school juniors may apply for the 2022 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. This is an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., June 17-23. The required essay topic and application may be obtained at [woodruffelectric.com](http://woodruffelectric.com) or by visiting any local area Woodruff Electric office. The application and essay must be completed and returned by March 21.

Local area high school seniors whose parents, grandparents or guardians are Woodruff Electric members may apply for one of five \$1,000 scholarships that will be awarded this year.

To be eligible for the scholarships, applicants must complete and submit the following requirements: applicant information, academic information, college/technical school costs and a letter of recommendation. An application may be obtained at [woodruffelectric.com](http://woodruffelectric.com) or by visiting any local area Woodruff Electric office. The application and all required materials must be completed and returned by March 21.

# Soaring fuel costs explain fuel cost adjustment

Soaring fuel costs have become an unfortunate reality for our nation. We feel the effects at the gas pump, grocery store, and in almost every other aspect of our daily lives. In recent months, we have seen the price of gasoline make a steady climb, exceeding \$3 per gallon. Other fossil fuels — like natural gas — have also experienced drastic cost increases.

## So why are fuel costs rising so dramatically?

Several factors influence fuel costs, including global demand, post-pandemic economic growth, decreased domestic supply and natural disasters — such as hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico. Gasoline, diesel fuel, natural gas, propane and coal all go up in cost as a result of these types of events, which, in turn, cause electricity costs to rise.

Natural gas is a key fuel consumed by wholesale electric generating utilities. U.S. natural gas inventories ended September 2021 at about 3.3 trillion cubic feet, or 5% less than the five-year (2016–20) average. Injections into storage this summer have been below the previous five-year average, largely as a result of increased natural gas used for electricity generation during the hot summer.

In recent years, in certain times and regions of the country, natural gas demand has grown faster than

available supplies can be delivered. Such tightening of the market has resulted in dramatic price volatility. According to the Electricity Information Administration, natural gas consumption in the United States has steadily increased since 1997. Increased use of natural gas for electric generation is a significant reason. In large part, the electric utility industry has turned to natural gas to meet additional needs that have come with retirements of coal-fired power plants. Consumption of natural gas in the United States is growing at a faster rate than any other primary source of energy.

Woodruff Electric Cooperative is impacted by these high fuel costs, much like consumers. In September, the price of natural gas purchased by Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation (AECC), our wholesale power provider, was approximately double the price paid last year at this time.

At Woodruff Electric, we recognize that our members are directly affected by escalating energy costs. Because you are served by a not-for-profit electric cooperative, you can rest assured that your electric energy is provided at the lowest feasible cost. In the face of rising fuel prices, Woodruff Electric will take every opportunity to provide you with the best value for your dollar.



**Working together,  
we will create  
a much brighter  
future for Arkansas.**

**We are a partnership formed by 14 Arkansas,  
member-owned electric cooperatives.**

Our mission is to catalyze the growth of high-speed connections throughout our state and to help make Arkansas the most significantly connected state in the country.



**Diamond State  
Networks**

[diamondstatenetworks.com](https://diamondstatenetworks.com)

**The state of Arkansas will award millions  
in broadband funding, and Diamond State  
Networks hopes to bring service to your area.**

**Here's how you can help:**

1. **Let your Arkansas state legislators know you support Diamond State Networks and the rural cooperatives' plan for better broadband.**
2. **Take the broadband survey at [surveymonkey.com/r/arbroadband](https://surveymonkey.com/r/arbroadband).**



## Behind the lines at Woodruff Electric

### Employee Spotlight: Barry Duncan

**Title:** Serviceman

**Department:** District I – Augusta

**How would you explain your job to someone else?** *I work as part of a team that keeps the electricity on for all members in our area.*

**What does a normal day at work look like for you?** *On an average day, I may be troubleshooting issues for homes or businesses, connecting irrigation wells, inspecting and maintaining power lines and installing load controls for local farmers.*

**How long have you been working at WECC?** *I began working for Woodruff in 1998 and have been here for 23 years.*

**Did you work at other companies before starting at Woodruff Electric?** *I worked at Arkansas Well Supply prior to starting at Woodruff Electric.*

**What is the best part of your job?** *Every day I get to do a job that I like, work with and for great people and represent a co-op that cares about its members. I have worked on storm restoration over the years and have seen the devastation in hard-hit areas like Louisiana after Hurricane Katrina in 2005. People were so kind to us even though some had lost so much. I still keep in touch with co-op employees that I met while working in Louisiana. You really can see the best in people during difficult times.*

**What is the biggest challenge you face in your job?** *The biggest challenge in my job is working in freezing weather conditions.*

**Is there something you would like people in other departments or people outside WECC to know about your job?** *I would like for other people to know that our members often tell me how much they appreciate the help they have received from employees of Woodruff Electric over the years. Some of those employees are retired or no longer living, but I hope they know they are remembered.*

**Who is your family?** *My wife, Dana, and I are blessed to have our two sons and their families close by. My son, Peyton, and his wife, Kara, have two daughters, Dawsyn and Haven. My son, Grant, and his wife, April, have one son, Micah, and two daughters, Allie and Andie-Claire. I also have family members in Wynne, McCrory and Blue Mountain, Mississippi.*

**What are some of your favorite hobbies?** *I enjoy any projects that my daughters-in-law, April and Kara, ask me to help with! I enjoy working with Grant and Peyton on projects in their homes.*

**What is your favorite food?** *My favorite foods include anything on the menu at Kennon's Dairy Bar in Fair Oaks, Arkansas!*

**What will you absolutely not eat?** *I do not like the taste of Asian food.*

**What would you like to learn how to do?** *I would like to improve my woodworking skills for projects in our home.*

**What are a few items that you collect?** *I collect tools for woodworking projects.*

**If I've learned one thing in life, it's:** *Happy wife – happy life!*

**One thing on my bucket list is:** *To visit the Amish Country in northern Indiana.*

