



# Tideland Topics

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE MEMBER-OWNERS OF TIDELAND ELECTRIC MEMBERSHIP CORPORATION

*Special Edition*

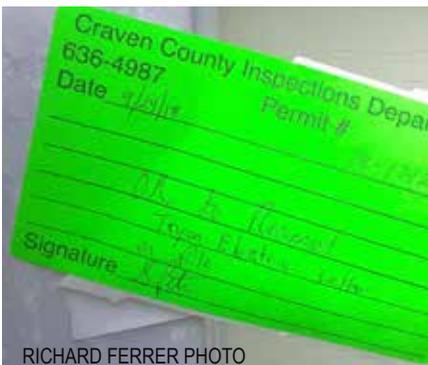
# Hurricane Florence



PAMLICO COUNTY  
MARK COLLIE PHOTO

## Recovery *A long way to go*

As we went to press in mid-October, hundreds of Tideland members remained without power due to varying degrees of damage to homes and businesses or limited recovery resources. Long-term recovery will, in many cases, depend on volunteers and private donations. Be part of the recovery. Visit [www.rebuild.nc.gov](http://www.rebuild.nc.gov) or contact your county's emergency management office for ways to help.



RICHARD FERRER PHOTO

## Hell and high water

Hurricane Florence damage estimates stand at \$45 billion for the Carolinas. As we went to press, Tideland was preparing for Hurricane Michael, which seemed to come out of nowhere. As word spread, some blinked in disbelief. "You're kidding me, right?"

The only consolation: Michael was moving at a steady clip and would approach us from land and not sea.

Hurricane season cannot end soon enough.



PAMLICO COUNTY  
BILL WATERS PHOTO



*"Run from water,  
hide from wind"*



**Landscapes &  
lives altered  
forever**

RIVER ROAD, ARAPAHOE  
MARK COLLIE PHOTO



FAIRFIELD HARBOUR  
HEIDI SMITH PHOTO

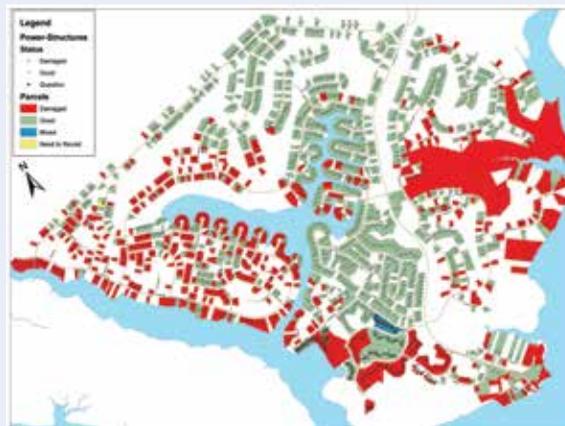
*A Tale of Two Sightlines*

Driving from Arapahoe to Oriental it was obvious the area had taken a beating by Hurricane Florence. But the devastation was magnified when walking along the waterfront. Homes that appeared disheveled from the roadway lay fully dissected along the water's edge. Recently mowed grass hung over a void of nothingness created by powerful storm surge that excavated yards of shoreline. Run from water? Yes. And get a head start.



**From experience, we know slow-moving hurricanes can be catastrophic, regardless of category classification**

Slow-moving storms are also psychologically fatiguing, keeping you at the edge of your seat with each impending meteorological update. A sigh of relief from news that the storm is downgraded from a CAT 4 to CAT 2 is immediately replaced with a new sense of urgency when the storm surge forecast is updated. A wall of water is coming.



Red denotes locations at Fairfield Harbour deemed unsuitable for electric service during initial restoration efforts. Most red areas have now had service restored. Source: Craven County Inspections

And then the storm arrives and it further wears everything down, both landscapes and people, because it just sits there. Hour after hour. Another outage. Then another. And another. But the storm holds you hostage until it is done with you.

And then it's gone. Time to go to work.

# Electricity and water don't mix

## Why electric meters are removed during power restoration

If it didn't happen to you, you probably didn't know that following Hurricane Irene, nearly 800 Tideland electric meters were removed from service prior to power restoration. That number was topped by Florence with 915 meters removed, primarily in Pamlico and Craven counties. One of the differences between those two events were the number of primary residences impacted by Hurricane Florence as opposed to Irene. Nowhere was that more true than Fairfield Harbour in New Bern, which saw recordbreaking storm surge.

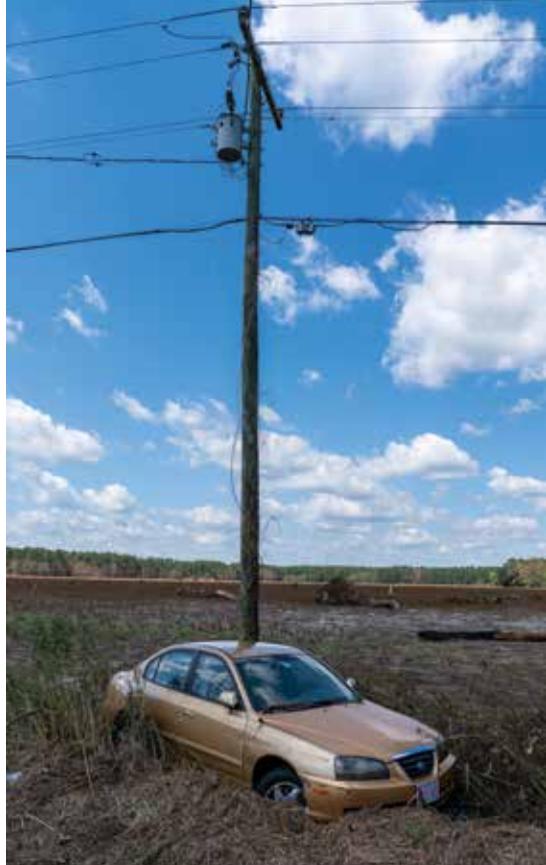


DAMAGE AT FAIRFIELD HARBOUR  
HEIDI SMITH PHOTO

Floodwater contaminants can create serious fire hazards if electrical wiring and equipment have been submerged in water. Salt water can be particularly damaging to electrical equipment due to the corrosive and conductive nature of salt water residue. Even with professional cleaning and drying, sediments and toxins

from floodwater are difficult to remove. After a serious flood, some items may be reconditioned, while others will need to be completely replaced to protect you and your family. It is recommended that you allow a licensed electrician or electrical inspector to guide the restoration or replacement of any electrical wiring or equipment.

Corrosion and insulation damage can occur when water and silt get inside electrical devices and products. Water can also damage motors in electrical appliances. Some items that may need to be replaced include: circuit breakers and fuses, entire electrical wiring systems, light switches, thermostats, outlets, HVAC systems, water heaters, appliances, and power tools.



## Real People

It is almost unfathomable how much Hurricane Florence altered shorelines, homes and lives. Paved streets, thick with storm debris, looked like dirt roads. Carpet and insulation, mattresses and appliances, and countless flood-soaked possessions lined roadways. It would be easy and justifiable to drown in the sadness of it all.

But something else was just as striking: people helping people. Neighbors pulling up in a drive-

Story continues on page H

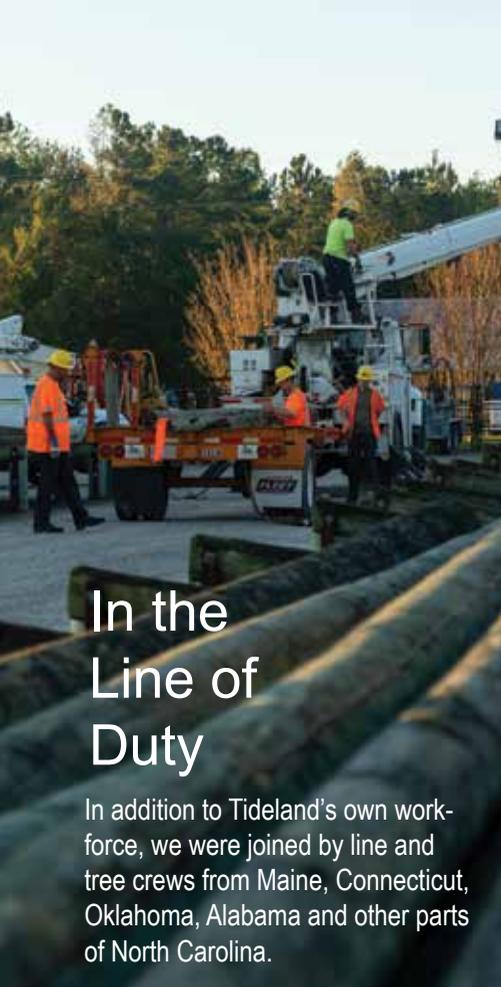


The charred remains of an electric meter that went underwater at Fairfield Harbour while energized  
HEIDI SMITH PHOTO



JANIERO ROAD, ARAPAHOE  
MARK COLLIE PHOTO

# Heroes in hardhats



## In the Line of Duty

In addition to Tideland's own workforce, we were joined by line and tree crews from Maine, Connecticut, Oklahoma, Alabama and other parts of North Carolina.



5:00 AM, SEPTEMBER 19  
TIDELAND EMC, GRANTSBORO  
MARK COLLIE PHOTO

## Storm Stats

### Member outages by county

Beaufort County: 8,379  
Pamlico County: 4,515  
Craven County: 2,742  
Hyde County: 1,888  
Washington County: 120

### Total tree and line workers

133 men and women

### Electric meters removed

915\*

### Poles replaced

40

### Estimated storm costs

\$1.3 to \$1.5 million\*\*

\*As of 10/8/2018, 560 meters had been reinstalled

\*\*Tideland EMC qualifies for FEMA's Public Assistance Program which will reimburse a portion of our storm-related expenses. We will also apply to NC Emergency Management for reimbursement of expenses not covered by FEMA.

## Technology and teamwork for the win

In the early days of rural electrification, the co-op mascot was Willie Wiredhand. Willie represented the "never-tiring, always available hiredhand to help our nation's farmers." Today, power-



line carrier, broadband fiber, and wireless technologies are increasingly improving electric co-op performance, especially during storm response. Tideland started laying the groundwork in 2009

when we installed our first smart meter, followed by GIS mapping, networked data communications with our substations, and an outage management system that interfaces with downstream devices. By pinging meters at the start of an outage, dispatchers can define the outage parameters and direct crews to the utility device that is open and interrupting the flow of electricity, saving valuable time.

Mobile workforce technologies now allow us to send service orders to crew iPads for more efficient scheduling and better materials management. Mobile workforce also allows us to better track utility crews, which

Continues next page

# When minutes feel like hours and days feel like weeks

**Sept 7** TIDELAND ACTIVATES ITS EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN. STORM PREP ACTIVITIES GET UNDERWAY.

**Sept 12** CREWS FROM CONNECTICUT, MAINE, OKLAHOMA, ALABAMA, AND NORTH CAROLINA BEGIN TO PRE-STAGE AT AREA HOTELS.

**Sept 13** LARGE OUTAGES BEGIN TO OCCUR IN PAMLICO COUNTY AROUND NOON. BY 4 PM, ALL CREWS ARE ASKED TO SUSPEND WORK AND SEEK SAFE SHELTER.

**Sept 14** 77% OF MEMBERSHIP WITHOUT POWER. NORTH OF THE PAMLICO RIVER, CREWS ARE ABLE TO BEGIN RESTORATION WORK. WEATHER STILL TOO SEVERE FOR LINE WORK SOUTH OF THE PAMLICO. SYSTEM OUTAGES REDUCED TO 60% BY DAY'S END.

**Sept 15** FIRST FULL WORKDAY IN ALL DISTRICTS WITH OUTAGES REDUCED TO 40% BY 9:30 PM. MAJOR DAMAGE TO THREE-PHASE CIRCUITS IN PAMLICO AND CRAVEN COUNTIES. CREWS WORKING SOUTH OF THE PAMLICO RIVER TOTAL 116.

**Sept 16** SYSTEM OUTAGES DROP TO 32%. DECISION IS MADE TO TERMINATE FAIRFIELD HARBOUR CIRCUITS PRIOR TO SUBDIVISION ENTRANCE DUE TO HISTORIC STORM SURGE THAT JEOPARDIZES SAFE POWER RESTORATION.

**Sept 17** OUTAGES FALL TO 28%. MAIN CIRCUIT REPAIRS CONTINUE IN PAMLICO COUNTY. HOUSE-BY-HOUSE INSPECTIONS GET UNDERWAY IN FAIRFIELD HARBOUR. THE FIRST FEW HUNDRED METERS IN THE SUBDIVISION ARE ENERGIZED.

**Sept 18** WITH THE MERRITT AND ARAPAHOE MAIN CIRCUITS NOW FULLY ENERGIZED, PAMLICO COUNTY SERVICE RESTORATIONS GAIN MOMENTUM. BY DAY'S END, SYSTEM OUTAGES ARE REDUCED TO 17%.

**Sept 19** REMAINING SYSTEM OUTAGES FALL TO 8%, WITH SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS BETWEEN DAWSON CREEK AND WHORTONSVILLE. HOWEVER, SATURATED UNDERGROUND SERVICE AT FAIRFIELD HARBOUR REQUIRES CREWS TO SLOW PACE OF RESTORATIONS.

**Sept 20** BLUE SKY WEATHER AIDS IN DRYING OUT FAIRFIELD HARBOUR UNDERGROUND AND POWER IS RESTORED TO 65% OF THE SUBDIVISION. SERVICEABLE LOCATIONS WITHOUT POWER SYSTEMWIDE STANDS AT 778.

**Sept 21** THE REMAINING DISTRIBUTION LINES ARE ENERGIZED. WHEN CREWS FINALLY TURN IN FOR THE NIGHT, 146 METERS REMAIN OFF.

**Sept 22** RESTORATION WORK IS COMPLETE. RECOVERY WORK BEGINS TO RECONNECT LOCATIONS DEEMED UNSERVICEABLE PENDING OWNER REPAIRS AND RECEIPT OF ELECTRICAL INSPECTION PERMITS.



BILL WATERS PHOTO

## Work Continues

We never publically declared our system 100% restored from Hurricane Florence. For record-keeping purposes we did complete restoration activities, but recovery continues. Crews are still removing storm debris, responding to consumer hazards and reinstalling meters as electrical inspection permits arrive. Thank you for your patience and support.

Please remember to work safely around utility structures when repairing storm damage or tackling hurricane debris.



DISPATCH CENTER, PANTEGO

### Technology and teamwork

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improves safety and allows for better allocation of human resources. That's critically important during a disaster when so many additional personnel are working on our system.

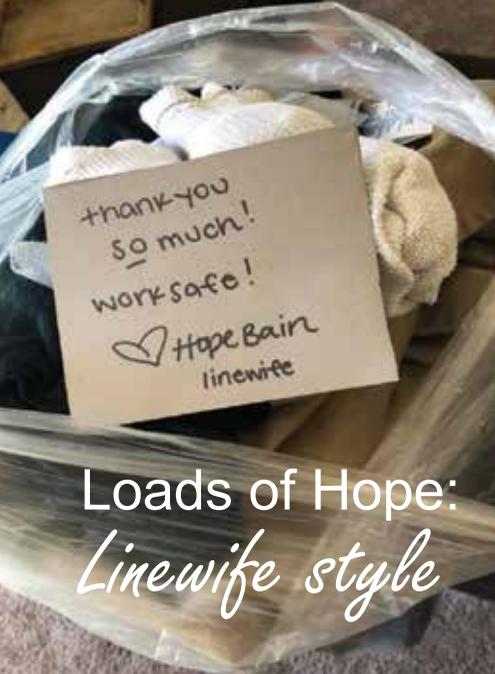
With the completion of our new dispatch center in July, Florence provided the first real test of how these investments in tech-

nology perform during disaster. We're pleased to report results were better than expected. We operated in a near real-time environment that provided robust information for operations personnel to effectively manage power restoration efforts. Based on past performance, we believe 1 to 2 days of restoration time was saved.



CREW LEADERS' PRE-DAWN SAFETY MEETING  
MARK COLLIE PHOTO

# "and other duties as assigned"



## Loads of Hope: *Linewife style*



*The Bains*



*The Ipocks*

While Tideland linemen Josh Bain and Timmy Ipock worked to restore power, their wives launched a project called #laundryforlinemen. Hope Bain and Alisha Ipock recruited a network of volunteers to do laundry for visiting crew members and workers who themselves didn't have power at home. Experienced linewives, Hope and Alisha also know the proper way to launder fire-resistant clothing, which all linemen must wear. When returned, each laundered bundle included a personal note of thanks from the linewives.



KITCHEN DUTY AT CAMP SEAFARER  
MARK COLLIE PHOTO

## When the last line in your job description becomes the frontline in storm support



From left to right: Human resources manager Myra Beasley, controller Karen Heffley and executive assistant Tonya Little slice pork tenderloin for 130 personnel. Photo: Emily Scott

It's a bit of a running joke at Tideland. That last line in all our job descriptions that reads: "and other duties as assigned." But no one felt it more than the team tasked with providing meals for personnel working south of the Pamlico River following Florence.



Myra Beasley discusses lodging and meal requirements with Tideland CEO Paul Spruill while helper Kim Van Essendelft continues meal prep. Photo: Emily Scott

Plan A had been to use a local caterer for the initial storm response. The caterer made it, but not her facilities, which were flooded. Plan B materialized when the YMCA was kind enough to offer us the use of Camp Seafarer in Arapahoe for both crew lodging and meal

Story continues on page H



KENNETH NEAL'S RETIREMENT DINNER  
TW ALLEN PHOTO

## *Kenny Neal:* Briefest retirement ever

On August 23, 2018, Kenneth Neal said farewell to Tideland after a 27-year career with the co-op. His exit was without office fanfare because, well, that's Kenny Neal's style. The lone celebration was a private gathering held at Fish Hooks in Belhaven with the men who had most impacted him during his career with the co-op. A licensed electrician, he already had plenty of work lined up. Retirement also meant more time with his two grandchildren.

Until Florence came calling.

Kenny Neal soon reappeared in Pantego to wire in a backup generator for the co-op's storm center. Then he accepted the call of duty to lead teams of visiting tree trimmers and line crews. He and his team restored power to members in Washington County before heading south to Pamlico County.

Once storm response concluded, Kenny Neal exited as unceremoniously as he had reappeared. Like we said. That's just his style.



## *Daddy's* Helper

When linemen report for storm duty, their families are left behind to manage in their absence. Spouses navigate both storm challenges and everyday life alone. Children are often asleep when their fathers leave for work and when they arrive home.

Six-year-old Braelen Neal's daddy, Matthew, is a Tideland lineman. Matthew snapped the photo below and wrote: "Braelen knows the long hours I have been putting in, so he has been getting my clothes out for me to help me out. Love him to pieces and his kind heart makes me happy. Love my family!"



## *We get by with a little help from our friends!* Northeast Elementary faculty and staff chip in to pack grab bags for line and tree crews

The hazard in issuing thank-you's is always the risk of leaving someone out. Of course, folks don't do nice things to be recognized, so a blanket "thank you" is hereby issued to all who exhibited kindness to co-op employees and the many contractors who assisted us...including the many thumbs up while passing by.

For the faculty and staff at Northeast Elementary, a teacher work-day turned into a "pay it forward day." They were eager to show their appreciation for prompt power restoration by volunteering to pack snack bags for our crews south of the Pamlico.

Thank you for your friendship!



way offering the use of their wifi, telephone or even a hot shower. Strangers stopping to ask if you needed something cold to drink just because you wore a hardhat. Church groups spreading tarps on damaged roofs.

Shirley Dean, 83, had just returned home from an inland shelter and cheerfully said, "I had such a lovely time with so many people and they fed us really well."

On Pelican Drive, neighbors celebrated the return of mail service. Joan Melius said, "It may seem small but it's another step towards normalcy."

Driving along River Road in Arapahoe we saw a house toppled over by Florence's powerful storm surge. Yet further down the road, freshly laundered clothes hung from a clothesline with the now calm and beautiful Neuse River as its backdrop. Another step towards normalcy. Yes, there's hope in that laundry too.

On September 15 at 6:44 pm, a member replied to one of our outage text message updates with words of thanks and ended it with a Bible verse. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

Yes, Florence was a powerful force. We can be more powerful.

## "and other duties as assigned"

Continued from Page F

service. Tideland's human resources manager Myra Beasley assumed the role of kitchen manager coordinating the preparation of 1,630 meals over a four-day period. Her team included the co-op's controller, safety director, executive assistant and payroll processor, associate accountant, I.T. manager, GIS specialist, purchasing director, and a departmental assistant.

Duties at the camp also included making beds and stocking daily essentials for approximately 47 personnel staying at Camp Seafarer.

Their days started at 3:30 am with breakfast service. By 5:00 am the meals were packaged and delivered to Tideland's Grantsboro office where crews reported daily for duty at 5:30 am.

In addition to three square meals a day, crew coolers had to be stocked with drinks and ice and snack bags were available daily to supplement meal service. The inside staff also handled the delivery of lunch and dinner to the crews at their individual worksites.

On Friday, September 21, a New Bern restaurant stepped in to take over meal service. Myra and company were able to retire their aprons and food service gloves and return to all the other duties listed in their job descriptions.

## Tideland Topics

[www.tidelandemc.com](http://www.tidelandemc.com)

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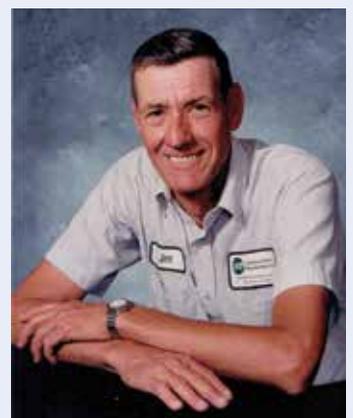
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### 24 Hour Outage Reporting & Automated Services

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Tideland EMC is an equal  
opportunity provider & employer



This issue of Tideland Topics is dedicated to the memory of Jim Satherthwaite who passed away on October 2. He retired from Tideland after 42-years of service.

He was a good man.

