



Powerlines

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Managing the peak — PowerSouth sets a record

Freezing January temperatures prompted an all-time system peak and highlighted PowerSouth's commitment to the operation of reliable generation and transmission systems.

Between 6 and 7 a.m. on Jan. 18, PowerSouth set an all-time system peak of 2,457.8 megawatt-hours. The previous record peak of 2,400 megawatt-hours occurred Jan. 7, 2014, during the polar vortex. A megawatt-hour is equal to one million watts of electricity used for one hour.

PowerSouth is a winter-peaking utility, meaning the highest demand for electricity is in the coldest months during the early morning. The cooperative's

employees were well-equipped to handle this peak thanks to preparation, routine maintenance of the generation and transmission systems, and tools designed to mitigate heavy loads.

Routine maintenance at PowerSouth's generating facilities ensures reliability during periods of high demand. This work is usually performed during mild weather when energy demand is lower. This dedication to maintaining critical infrastructure ensures the plants work safely and efficiently.

Through programs like right-of-way management, PowerSouth's transmission system receives similar attention to ensure the

system is prepared to meet demand safely and efficiently.

All generating plants are staffed 24 hours a day throughout the year to ensure adequate electricity is available to all member systems. The Energy Control Center is also staffed 24 hours a day, every day of the year to monitor the generation and transmission system.

To prepare for extremely cold weather, PowerSouth implements a winter preparedness plan at each plant. During these events, additional staff is assigned, and teams take measures to prevent equipment from freezing or other problems that could affect reliability.

PowerSouth also initiated load control on four days in 2018: Jan. 2, 5, 17 and 18. During these times, the cooperative engaged 19,115 load control devices to cycle off water heaters of end-use consumers.

Cycling these water heaters lowered the amount of electricity the cooperative needed to either generate or purchase. These efforts are estimated to have saved PowerSouth's members approximately \$1.6 million.

The result of this preparation and planning is that, when temperatures plummet, PowerSouth member systems can expect a reliable energy flow that meets their demands. ■



Chief Financial Officer Rick Kyle retired after a 39-year career at PowerSouth.

Answering the call

Kyle enjoys a 39-year career at PowerSouth

Rick Kyle's 39-year career began and ended with prayer. "The first time I was offered a job at PowerSouth, at that time Alabama Electric Cooperative (AEC), I was a young married man enjoying my career as an auditor with a public accounting firm," Kyle said. "I turned the job down."

But about a year later, his wife, Linda, was expecting, and the traveling and late-night hours that went along with audit work looked much less appealing.

After much prayer and consideration, he called A.G. Palmore back and asked if the accounting job was still open. Turned out it was. So in 1979, Kyle started the career that would lead to his retiring as PowerSouth's Vice President and Chief Financial Officer almost four decades later.

Kyle enjoyed the challenging work. He saw the cooperative

through some roller-coaster times while its assets grew from \$353 million to \$2 billion, including some dark days when he wasn't sure the cooperative would make payroll. Those were the days when office supplies were guarded like Fort Knox gold, and employees had no choice but to improvise and make do.

When Kyle began at AEC, Tombigbee Power Plant had just been built at a tremendous cost, and due to an unfortunately timed recession, power sales were slumping instead of growing as predicted. The debt was overwhelming.

"I did financials on a 13-column pad — we didn't have computers — and I remember saying, 'I just brought down the last dime on our line of credit,'" Kyle said. "Our liquidity was extremely low, and we were basically out of cash."

He helped to steer the cooperative out of those shaky times and has been a loyal steward in better times, as well. "It's important to have secure financing for the future as we expand to meet our members' needs," he said. "Maintaining a stable credit rating keeps us from having to lean on government-backed financing and has helped establish us as a solid company."

Through it all, Kyle maintained a keen sense of humor. Rick Kyle folklore includes tall tales of school supplies allegedly sourced from the supply closet, Linda's valentine flowers being bought off an employee's desk, and a weekend grocery cart race requiring strange bandages and ending at the emergency room.

During his decades of service, Kyle's family grew, too. He and Linda, who taught at Andalusia Middle School, had three children. Amy, Emily, and

David have gone on to excel as a certified public accountant, physician's assistant, and orthopedic surgeon, respectively, while providing their parents with five — soon to be seven — grandchildren.

In the early years, the young family enjoyed camping, hiking, fishing — in short, the great outdoors — and of course, the beach. More recently the now-extended family has enjoyed traveling together to more distant lands including Alaska, Ireland and Iceland.

Just as there is much to learn about different states or countries when traveling, Kyle had a lot to learn about the utility industry and the cooperative way, but he grew to love them both.

"It is a unique industry, and it can be demanding," Kyle said. "The complexity of this company has



increased exponentially. The technologies we use to generate electricity have changed. All the regulations have changed and grown in number. The skills needed have changed.”

A positive change, according to Kyle, is the culture of the cooperative. He attributes it to the arrival of President and CEO Gary Smith.

“He has always let the members know that they own PowerSouth and that we are here to serve them,” Kyle says. “He also let us know the minute he took over that employees were the company’s greatest asset. He wants them to be safe, and he wants us to promote employees from within. People know that if they come in, work hard and contribute, they will have a chance to move up the ladder.”

Among all the variables of the industry, Kyle identified one constant. “What hasn’t changed is our goal: It has always been and always will be to provide members with affordable, reliable power. That won’t change, but it can be difficult to achieve.”

Another constant in Kyle’s life has been his faith. A long-time member of Cedar Grove Church of Christ, he provided leadership there, serving as an elder for many years, as well as serving as a teacher for various groups. He and Linda will be moving their church membership, as well as their worldly belongings, to Huntsville, where they’ve bought a new home closer to their children and grandchildren.

As he retires, Kyle said he will most miss the people he has worked alongside for so long.

“They are a great group, and it has been a pure joy to come to work every day,” he said. In fact, it was so joyful that he had a hard time retiring.

“But I prayed about this transition, and I know the time is right,” he explained. “Even so, I will miss it!” ■

Rick Kyle’s wife, Linda, along with his children and grandchildren attended a retirement ceremony for Kyle at PowerSouth’s headquarters in Andalusia. Kyle plans to move to Huntsville so he can be closer to his children and grandchildren. Kyle was also given a pair of bikes from Regions Bank to thank him for his years of service and so he can continue to enjoy the outdoors throughout his retirement.



Bruce Boswell



Randall Bush

Boswell and Bush elected to PowerSouth Board of Trustees

Bruce Boswell of Phenix City, Ala., and Randall Bush of Graceville, Fla., were elected to the PowerSouth Board of Trustees at the January Board meeting.

Boswell, who represents Tallapoosa River EC, is employed by the U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service. He has two sons, Ben and Blair.

Bush, who represents West Florida EC, is self-employed as the owner of Bush Paint and Supply. He is a graduate of Holmes County High School.

He earned an NRECA Board Leadership Certificate and is former Vice President of Holmes County Development Commission. He is also a member of the Graceville Merchants Association.

He and his wife, Teresa, are members of Bethel Baptist Church. They have one daughter, Brandy. ■

PowerSouth announces organizational changes

To prepare for PowerSouth's future, plan for retirements, strengthen the organization and fulfill member needs, PowerSouth Energy Cooperative recently announced organizational changes and promotions effective Feb. 5, 2018.

Brian Matheson has been named Director of Power Production. In this new role, Matheson will report to David Powell, Vice President of Power Production. Upon Powell's retirement later this year, Matheson will transition into the role of Vice President of Power Production. With 21 years of experience at PowerSouth, Matheson previously served as Director of Engineering.

Matheson earned a Bachelor of Science degree in computer engineering from Auburn University. A native of Leroy, Ala., Matheson and his wife have two children, Austin and Jordan, and one grandchild, Eli.

Joe Armstrong has been named Director of Engineering with the responsibility for telecommunications, computer information services and T&D engineering and construction. In his new role, Armstrong will report to Damon Morgan, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer. With 17 years of experience at PowerSouth, he previously served as Transmission O&M Manager.

Armstrong earned a Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering from the University of Alabama, and he is a licensed professional engineer in Alabama and Florida. A native of Andalusia, Ala., he and his wife,

Deb, have three children: Megan, Brandon and Callie.

Josh Hilburn has been named Transmission O&M Manager with the responsibility for transmission line operation and maintenance, vegetation management on PowerSouth's rights of way, as well as fleet services. He will report to Terry Wilson, Director of T&D Operations. With 17 years of experience at PowerSouth, he previously served as Distribution Engineer and Assistant to the Director of Engineering.

Hilburn is a native of Andalusia, Ala., and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering from Auburn University. He is a licensed professional engineer. He and his wife, Lainie, have three children: Ensley, Dakota and Triston.

Russ Harper has been named Distribution Engineer and Assistant to the Director of Engineering. In this role, he will report to Armstrong. With five years of experience at PowerSouth, Harper previously served as Engineer I.

Harper is a native of Roanoke, Ala., and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering from Auburn University. He and his wife, Jessie, have one daughter, Caroline.

"These gentlemen have done outstanding work for PowerSouth," said Gary Smith, PowerSouth President and CEO. "Their promotions are well-earned and well-deserved." ■



Joe Armstrong



Russ Harper



Josh Hilburn



Brian Matheson

The Right Man

You may have heard of the butterfly effect. It refers to a butterfly flapping its wings off the African coast, causing a movement that starts a wave that moves across the Atlantic Ocean and becomes a hurricane. Edward Lorenz, who coined the term, referred to it as “a very small change in initial conditions that creates a significantly different outcome.”

Charles Lowman was the third of Alabama Electric Cooperative’s (now PowerSouth) five CEOs. He followed the long tenure of Basil Thompson, who helped found the company, and Wesley Jackson’s short term as CEO. As A.G. Palmore, a retired AEC Chief Financial Officer, said of Mr. Lowman, “He was the right man at the right time.”

AEC was founded in 1941, but most of the 1940s and 1950s were spent trying to establish AEC as a viable power supply entity for its members. During those decades, AEC principally relied on Alabama Power Company and Gulf Power Company for wholesale power to serve its members. Wholesale supply under those contracts was often unreliable during droughts because of the amount of water available for hydroelectric production, and pricing was volatile. The primary obstacle to AEC’s success was the development of its own reliable power supply resources with predictable and affordable costs.

The answer to that need was the Tombigbee Power Plant, AEC’s second but largest coal-fired generation unit. Charles Lowman was chosen by Mr. Thompson to lead the construction effort of the coal-fired units that are our Lowman Power Plant. Tombigbee Unit #1 was completed in 1969, giving

AEC a cost-effective supply of electricity. Mr. Lowman was the right man for the job.

He was raised near Andalusia, had studied Defense Radio and Electronics at the University of Alabama, and joined the Navy. He spent most of World War II at sea as part of the 1st Aircraft Repair Unit, a mobile group that followed and repaired combat aircraft around the world.

After the war, Mr. Lowman re-entered the University of Alabama and later transferred to Alabama Polytechnic Institute (now Auburn University) where he received an electrical engineering degree. After graduation, he returned home to Andalusia and started work at AEC.

Mr. Lowman was an engineer’s engineer. He was quiet, thoughtful and respected by everyone. He was noted for his memory, recalling minute details of documents and conversations. AEC’s technical personnel was thin, and Mr. Lowman was required to know all the technical aspects of AEC’s generation assets and transmission systems. He was calm and collected. He did not make rash decisions and never panicked. Above all else, he was admired and liked by all of his fellow employees.

Mr. Lowman was named General Manager (CEO) of AEC in 1970. Times were turbulent with renewed supply and rate issues with Alabama Power and Gulf Power. Mr. Lowman rallied the AEC members to remain together and to pool their costs into a single pooled billing rate — a step he later referred to as the most important single action taken by AEC’s members. He was the right man for the job.



He led the decision to build the larger two Tombigbee Units that were completed in 1979 and 1980. They were built with the anticipation of large retail electric growth. However, that growth did not materialize as the country entered a devastating recession in the early 1980s. By 1983, AEC, like most electric utilities, was in dire straits with excess generation and flat or declining electric sales. I have researched that era and found no evidence that the AEC board ever considered replacing Mr. Lowman as CEO regardless of the troubles. He was trusted by everyone.

After recovering from the recession, the economy boomed and the country thrived. Electric usage soared. AEC was prepared for the growth with the electric generation plan Mr. Lowman orchestrated. Upon his retirement in 1988, the Tombigbee Power Plant was named the Charles R. Lowman Power Plant in his honor.

After retirement, he started a pecan farm north of Andalusia

and developed his own strain of pecans. In one of my too rare conversations with Mr. Lowman, he said, “You grow pecan trees for your grandchildren.” As I wrote in a recent article, Mr. Lowman also built power plants for our grandchildren.

Mr. Lowman built power plants and facilities, held people together through tough times, and planned for the future. Like the butterfly effect, his actions led to much bigger and much better things for PowerSouth, all of us, and our members. Small things you do result in significant things for your grandchildren.

Charles Lowman passed away Jan. 10, 2018, at the age of 94. He was the right man for the job.

I hope you have a good month. ■



Gary Smith
PowerSouth President and CEO



George Rhodes
Lowman
38 years, March 28



Pam Bond
Telecom Services
37 years, March 31



Trish Gatlin
Financial Services
32 years, March 24



Lee Davis
McIntosh
30 years, March 14



Skip Spurlin
Member Services
28 years, March 19



Debbie Bracewell
HR Services
27 years, March 11



Billy Rogers
T&D Technical Services
27 years, March 11



Ken Thompson
Transmission O&M
27 years, March 26



Keith Stephens
Environmental Services
26 years, March 9



Randy Elmore
Lowman
26 years, March 30



John Johnson
Lowman
26 years, March 30



Scottie McBride
Lowman
26 years, March 30



Fred Pringle
Lowman
26 years, March 30



Joey Ramey
Lowman
26 years, March 30



Chad Jenkins
Telecom Services
21 years, March 31



Ted Centner
T&D Eng. & Const.
19 years, March 29



Ken Clarke
Fuels & Energy Services
18 years, March 6



Katie Johnson
T&D Technical Services
18 years, March 6



Josh Hilburn
Transmission O&M
18 years, March 30



Marisa Petty
Lowman
17 years, March 19



Cheryl Weeks
Financial Planning
17 years, March 19



Ed Karr
Lowman
16 years, March 4



Jessie McConico
Lowman
16 years, March 4



Nick Steadham
Lowman
16 years, March 4



Chad Warrick
Lowman
16 years, March 4



Russ Dowling
Lowman
16 years, March 5



Diane Edgar
Safety Services
16 years, March 11



Cheryl Cotton
Communications
16 years, March 25



Connie Lawrence
Central Generation
16 years, March 25



Calvin Davenport
Lowman
11 years, March 26



Danny Dees
Lowman
11 years, March 26



Brian Jones
Lowman
11 years, March 26



Wilzy Sims
Lowman
11 years, March 26



Shane Booth
Lowman
11 years, March 27



Joe Day
Lowman
11 years, March 27



John Loper
Lowman
11 years, March 27



Cal Mullins
Lowman
11 years, March 27



Wayne Turner
Lowman
11 years, March 27



Jason Anderson
McIntosh
10 years, March 3



Wesley Arnold
McIntosh
10 years, March 3



Golden Coleman
Lowman
10 years, March 17



Michael Murphy
Transmission O&M
8 years, March 8



Tunde Caraway
Computer Info. Serv.
8 years, March 9



J.R. Harrell
McIntosh
7 years, March 28



Mark Harrell
Lowman
7 years, March 28



Matt Diamond
Fuels & Energy Services
7 years, March 29



Kim Hopkins
Finance & Accounting
6 years, March 16



Heath Bishop
Transmission O&M
4 years, March 10



Patrick McCalman
Legal Affairs
4 years, March 31



Joey Reeves
T&D Technical Services
2 years, March 14



Kevin Breland
Lowman
2 years, March 28



Dustin Dunagan
Lowman
2 years, March 28

Board Meeting

Mark your calendars for Friday, March 23. Headquarters employees are reminded to wear professional attire.



Comings and goings

Welcome



Robert Long, Operating Technician at Lowman, effective Jan. 29.

Promotions

Congratulations to **Anna Stephens**, who was promoted to Member Services Representative I from Member Services Representative II in Member Services, effective Jan. 1.

Goodbye and good luck

Emilee Hudson, Work Study in Human Resources Service, effective Jan. 4.

Brandon Horn, Engineer I in T&D Technical Services, effective Jan. 19.

Retirements

Richard Coxwell retired as Plant Supervisor at Lowman on Jan. 2 after 36 years of service.

Lane Taylor retired as Inventory Control Supervisor at Lowman on Jan. 2 after 40 years of service.

Mark Pippin retired as Operating Technician at Central Generation on Jan. 3 after 17 years of service.

Dianne Curry retired as Sr. Real Estate Specialist in T&D Engineering and Construction on Jan. 4 after 39 years of service.

Penny Sullivan retired as Administrative Clerk at Lowman on Jan. 5 after 10 years of service.

Happy Birthday!

March 1	Justin McDaniel Beverly Wilson
March 2	Ken Thompson
March 3	Tunde Caraway Damon Morgan Michael Richardson Ryan Sanders
March 4	Larecia Fowler
March 5	Richard Butts Norman Howard
March 6	Stephanie Williams
March 7	Jeff Etheredge Sam Phillips
March 8	Kyle Hayes
March 9	Mike Goldman Alex Payne
March 10	Bryan Jones
March 11	Jerome Armstrong David Murphy
March 12	Steve Ballard Byron Beverly Colton Sims
March 13	Doug Campbell Russ Harper
March 14	T.J. Defee Steven Hinote Jill Jones Brandon Rogers
March 16	Joe Armstrong Greg Bennett Brandon Hall Kenny Shiver
March 17	Josh Blackburn
March 18	Brian Maio Rita Sanders
March 21	Kim Hopkins Kenny Jones
March 22	Michael Ballard Jeff Bundrick Deidra Monigan Bo Welcher Anthony Whitman
March 23	Stacy Carpenter Ricky Cook
March 24	Kenny Lee
March 25	Steve Grissett Wilzy Sims
March 27	Robby Hunt Angela Nelson Lanie Sells
March 28	Brent Bracke Chuck Moore
March 29	Cheryl Weeks
March 30	Chad Chandler Matthew Pierce
March 31	Jamie Todd John Twitty

PowerSouth sends eight students to 2018 Youth Tour

Eight students from Pike County, Andalusia, Elba and Opp high schools will represent PowerSouth at the 2018 Youth Tour this March. The winners were chosen based on their performance on a written essay, a written test and an interview competition.

They will join hundreds of other Alabama students in Montgomery to learn about government, lawmaking and the importance of rural electrification.

One winner from each school will also receive an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C., in June to participate in the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) Youth Tour with more than 1,500 students from all across America. They will tour the nation's capitol, meet with members of Congress and become part of a group that has more than 50,000 alumni in every walk of life including U.S. Senators and CEOs.

PowerSouth is proud to participate in the Youth Tour program for more than 30 years and congratulates this year's winners.



Pike County High School: (left to right) Donald (Trey) Vardaman III (winner), Lydia Harrison (runner-up), Marshay Caldwell (first alternate), Monica Bland (second alternate) and Aleyah Daniels (third alternate).



Opp High School: (left to right) Jacob King (winner), Merrill Ann Culverhouse (runner-up) and Kaitlyn Anderson (first alternate).



Elba High School: (left to right) A'Quandria (Shay) Roberson (winner), Ashlea Williams (runner-up), Denyia Wilkerson (first alternate), Desten Coone (second alternate) and Sandra Lindsey (third alternate).



Andalusia High School: (left to right) Colin Marcum (winner), Cameron Maurer (runner-up), Whitman Jackson (first alternate), Sarah Piggott (second alternate) and Kayley Williams (third alternate).



February photo contest winner: **Tommy Deas**

Congratulations to Tommy Deas (Lowman) for winning this month's photo contest. February's photo contest theme was "Celebrations."

April's photo contest theme is "A splash of color."

IMPORTANT: When sending photos taken with a mobile device (cellphone), be sure to send the highest quality possible.

The contest will close on the 15th of the month prior to publication. So, the deadline for the April contest is March 15.

Send entries to Christi Scruggs at christi.scruggs@powersouth.com or via interoffice mail. ■



Powerlines is published monthly for the employees and members of PowerSouth Energy Cooperative.

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