



*PowerSouth's natural-gas McIntosh Plant (above) and Vann Plant (below) are part of the cooperatives' reliable fleet. Reliable natural gas was a major topic during the Fall Focus CEO Panel.*

**EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS**  
*every day*



*(L-R) Jeff Bowman, Gary Smith and Lisa Johnson*

# Powerlines



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## G&T Leaders Talk Reliability, Opportunity

In discussions about the evolving energy landscape and regulatory challenges, PowerSouth's President & CEO, Gary Smith, highlighted the key priorities for cooperatives: reliability, affordability and capability. "Meaning," he said, "that when economic development opportunities come calling, you say, 'Yes, we have a home for you.'"

Smith's comments reference the difficulty some utilities face adding large-load consumers without access to adequate amounts of around-the-clock generation.

"Affordability gives people a better way of life, but it's about more than just cost," he said. "We want reliable, cheap electricity to lead economic development. We are in a position to welcome the economic development benefits that come from large-load consumers."

Smith was joined by two fellow Southeastern G&T CEOs – Jeff Bowman of Cooperative Energy and Lisa Johnson of Seminole Electric Cooperative – at PowerSouth's Fall Focus Conference last month in Miramar Beach, Fla. Fall Focus allows member services and communications staff to discuss current events, key strategies and trends.

While these three G&Ts have unique characteristics, they share a common shift

from coal-fired to natural gas-fired generation. Cooperative Energy repurposed its Morrow Plant into a natural gas facility; PowerSouth and Seminole recently completed combined-cycle facilities. All three leaders agree that shifting to natural gas was the result of resource planning and the need for long-term reliability to address environmental regulations.

According to Johnson, most Southeastern utilities rely on natural gas, solar, and some nuclear. With new coal out of the question and technology not ready to move completely into hydrogen, she said, utilities "must maintain a fleet of reliable, efficient natural gas."

Bowman agreed: "I'm encouraged because more people are starting to acknowledge the truth of natural gas having to be a significant part of our electric mix – for a while. This notion of reaching net-zero emissions by 2035 or 2050 is not only infeasible, it's impossible ... we need dispatchable generation."

Access to reliable generation allows each G&T to add renewables and, more importantly, keep the lights on when it matters most.

"Reliability doesn't happen by accident," Bowman said. "People think if they pay the bill, their lights will come on. Unfortunately, that's just not the world we're in right now...

I've actually heard folks in some parts of the country say that people need to become accustomed to blackouts during extreme weather events. But these blackouts aren't happening during just extreme weather. Improving quality of life – that's what we do. The message right now for all of us is reliability."

From PowerSouth's perspective, blackouts came geographically close to the region in Dec. 2022. As part of the Southern Company Pool, and with reliable generating sources in the fleet, the cooperative withstood increased demand without service interruptions. The pool also allows the cooperative to add more utility-scale solar energy (when it is cost-effective) without introducing grid instability. Smith said PowerSouth can access more highly-efficient, peaking units to make up for the gaps left by solar. This is important, he said, because it does allow the cooperative to responsibly, and methodically, add renewables.

Overall, the three stressed the importance of the cooperative business model. As Johnson stated: "The cooperative model is the best plan to serve electricity. We provide something people cannot live without, something that supports economic growth and sustainability, that becomes more essential every day. We must be reliable, affordable, and responsible for the current and future consumer." ■

# Heroes Among Us: A Veterans Day Tribute

*Information Technology Specialist James Falk and Telecommunications Crew Leader Kenny Hughes are two of many who served our nation's armed forces to protect our freedoms. PowerSouth salutes them and all veterans for their service – on Veterans Day and every day.*

## **Integrity First, Service Before Self and Excellence in All We Do**

The Air Force core values above hold a special place in the heart of veteran and Information Technology Specialist **James Falk**. "I strive to live by them and instill them in my children," he said.

Their father's military service inspired Falk and his brother. In 2004, shortly after high school, Falk joined the Air Force. He said, "For the next four years, I felt I was doing something that mattered and that made a difference." His brother chose an Army path.

After time in Texas for boot camp and technical school, Falk arrived at Kirtland Air Force Base in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Although he never saw battlefield action or served overseas, Falk's training in aircraft armament systems provided crucial support for our nation's fighting forces in the air and on land.

"I loaded, maintained and tested weapon platforms on air assault and transport aircraft," said Falk. These included some of the most



*Holding a M134 Minigun*



*(photo by SSGT. Val Gempija)  
Capt. Dale Falk and son, Robby, were part of a group on the flight line for a special ceremony. For more details, see Page 6.*

## **Falk – childhood nickname, "Robby" – in a newspaper photo with dad, Capt. Dale Falk.**

capable heavy-lift helicopters in the world, as well as the AC-130 gunship — an artillery aircraft delivering fire support for ground forces with its mounted machine guns, howitzers and Gatling-style cannons.

Falk vividly recalled his first experience shooting a Gatling gun, a powerful weapon with rotating barrels. He said, "I'll never forget the sound and intense feeling of pulling the trigger and sending 4,000 rounds per minute downrange."

At 22, the airman first class planned to serve his country until retirement. But Falk's military career ended after an injury that resulted in a medical discharge. One night, he was carrying a 50-caliber machine gun from a helicopter to

a waiting truck. In the darkness, he slipped in hydraulic fluid that had leaked onto the ramp. "My legs went down and my upper body hit the ramp, pinned down by the heavy gun," he said. His lower body bent backward, seriously injuring his back.

Life, however, has a way of working out. After his discharge, he met his wife, Kenzi, and the couple had children, Michael and Leah. "I can't imagine life without my family," he said, "and being a father is the best job I could ask for."

Falk is also thankful for his job with PowerSouth's IT group. Onboard for nearly four months, he provides vital support behind the scenes in the PC Shop and with help desk assistance. "I'm still fixing things and teaching others how to prevent problems," he said. Protecting this new corner of his world, Falk wouldn't have it any other way.



*Falk and his family: wife, Kenzi and two children, Michael (11) and Leah (4).*



James Falk



Kenny Hughes

### What a difference freedom makes

Flying over the Afghan desert, **Kenny Hughes** watched families fleeing the Taliban. The PowerSouth Telecommunications Crew Leader recalled it vividly, "They were carrying their children in their arms, miles from civilization, with all their belongings on donkeys."

The Air Force veteran served from 2002 to 2005 during Operation Enduring Freedom. Exposure to other countries and their cultures helped him fully appreciate how fortunate he is to live in America. "I played a small role to ensure that my sons, Mason and Weston, can grow up in a free country," he said.

Hughes' grandfather, as well as several uncles and cousins, served to protect that same freedom. But the 9/11 terrorist attacks compelled Hughes to do his part.



(L-R) Hughes' sons, Weston (7) and big brother, Mason (9).

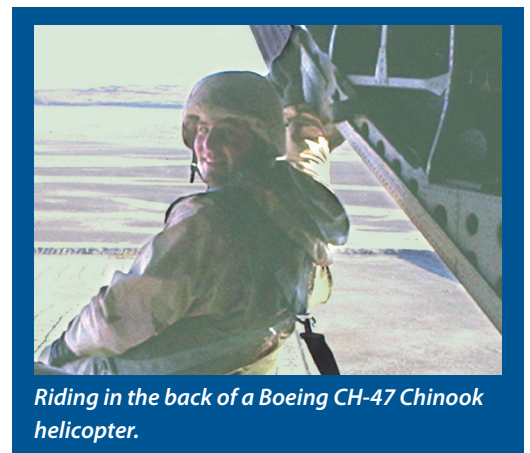
## "I played a small role to ensure that my sons, Mason and Weston, can grow up in a free country."

—Kenny Hughes

After boot camp in Texas, Hughes trained in Mississippi and Georgia as a satellite, wideband and telemetry systems technician. He operated and maintained forward-deployed satellite terminals and tactical radio systems in support of the 726th Tactical Air Control Squadron based out of Mountain Home Air Force Base in Idaho. His work was vital in keeping communication, data and intel flowing between pilots over great distances.

In Afghanistan, Hughes marveled at how different daily life and local customs were compared to what he'd experienced back home. The senior airman also spent holidays away from loved ones, including Christmas day in a bunker due to rocket attacks. "But many brave men and women have sacrificed much more," he said, "laying down their lives for our country."

The families of servicemen and women also make sacrifices. According to Hughes, they're often overlooked and suffer the most — with added responsibilities and many playing the role of single parent. "I think of the children,



Riding in the back of a Boeing CH-47 Chinook helicopter.

too," he said, "especially after hearing a parent singing 'Happy Birthday' to their child at home." Though he had no children then, Hughes remains grateful for the support of his wife at the time, Tara, and other family members.

He sees technical similarities between his military job and his work at PowerSouth, although he says, "day-to-day life at PowerSouth is much better." For seven years, Hughes has overseen and assisted in the construction and maintenance of the co-op's communication equipment, towers and infrastructure.

One vital truth he continues to communicate: "As Americans, living in a free country is easy to take for granted," he said. "Let's take time to reflect on life, the freedom we enjoy and those who put their lives on the line for it." ■

# Employees show great support for PAC, cooperative life

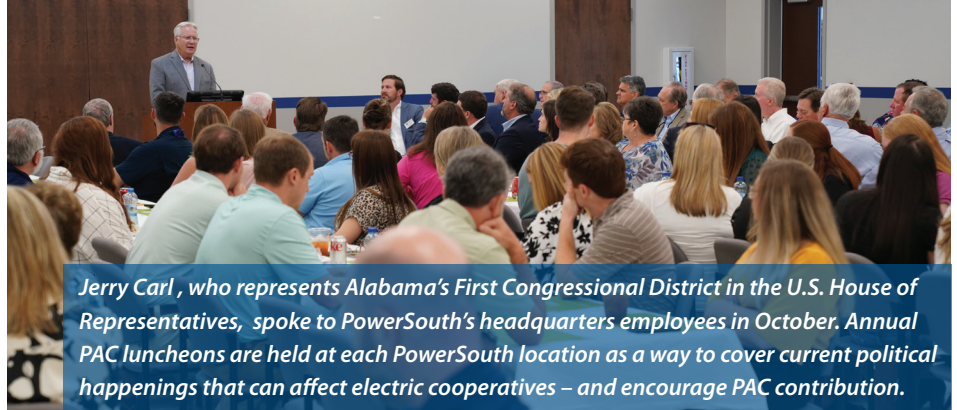
Just one year after 70 upgrades or new memberships to support the political action committee formerly known as ACRE, PowerSouth's employees continued a massive wave of support for America's Electric Cooperatives. The cooperative had 61 new members and 7 upgrades.

America's Electric Cooperatives' PAC provides a collective voice in government for all employees of rural electric cooperatives. The bipartisan PAC supports political candidates and policies that favor electric cooperatives and the cooperative way of life.

"Supporting the PAC is easy," said Wanda Woods, ACRE Committee Chair. "Employees can choose to contribute whatever amount is right for them, and, by doing so, can show our elected officials that we care about the cooperative business model and about our mission, and that we have a desire to continue fulfilling that mission to the best of our ability."

With the upgrades and new memberships, 80% of PowerSouth employees now contribute to ACRE. Such a strong percentage is great representation.

"Electric cooperatives support communities big and small, in every area of our country. It is so important that we, as cooperative employees, maintain a collective voice in policy discussions by supporting candidates who understand the role cooperatives play in each

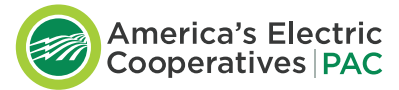


*Jerry Carl, who represents Alabama's First Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives, spoke to PowerSouth's headquarters employees in October. Annual PAC luncheons are held at each PowerSouth location as a way to cover current political happenings that can affect electric cooperatives – and encourage PAC contribution.*

of these communities every day," McLendon said. "PowerSouth has a strong reputation for showing the employee support necessary to help preserve our cooperative ideals and advance our policy goals."

The name and branding change from ACRE was, according to the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), intended to demonstrate more clearly the origin of the bipartisan PAC funding for elected officials.

"The name change just makes sense," said Gabe Snow, the PAC's director. "If we're going to have a large PAC, we need to make sure it's identified appropriately to help ensure electric cooperatives are recognized for our collective efforts." ■



**68** New Members and Upgrades

2023 Recruitment Goal: 50

**61**  
New Members

**7**  
Upgrades

**80%** of PowerSouth employees are AEC PAC members

*New name Same mission*

## Ballard to represent SPEC on PowerSouth Board



**Bobby Ray Ballard**, of Southern Pine Electric Cooperative, has been elected to PowerSouth Energy Cooperative's Board of Trustees. His appointment was announced on October 27, during PowerSouth's monthly Board Meeting.

Ballard has served on the Board of Southern Pine Electric Cooperative as Treasurer, Vice President and President.

Fully invested in his local community's development, Ballard – a self-employed home builder, serves on the Conecuh County Soil & Water Conservation District Board in

Evergreen, Ala., and on the RC&D Council Board in Thomasville, Ala. He is an active member of the Castleberry United Methodist Church, and the Chairman of the Baggett's Chapel Men's Club.

Ballard is a proud alum of Conecuh County High School, Jeff Davis Junior College and Auburn University. He has two children, Amy and Shannon, blessing him with six grandchildren.

In his spare time, he enjoys cattle farming, hunting and fishing with his grandkids. ■

# Summer is Over

Bob Green wrote an article, "Summer is Done," for the Wall Street Journal, published September 2, about Jimmy Buffett and his death on Labor Day weekend. The article, and Jimmy Buffett's apparent sudden death, set off many memories of Jimmy's music and my younger days.

The first time I remember hearing anything about Jimmy Buffett was in 1972 when he played a concert at Ole Miss. None of us knew anything about him and didn't know any of his music. His mainstream hit, "Come Monday," soon became popular, but at that time we hadn't heard of Jimmy. Of course, everyone quickly became huge fans of "Why Don't We Get Drunk."

Access to music was much different in the early 1970's. There was no Spotify, Pandora, Apple Music, or the Internet to find music electronically. Most of our tastes were influenced by what we heard on AM radio stations out of Memphis in the daytime and Chicago at night.

We mainly bought 45 singles and an occasional album at the Western Auto store in downtown Corinth or a few music stores in Oxford. Jimmy really had no mainstream radio hits and his songs were very difficult to find in stores, if you could find them at all. Later, usually in the spring, radio stations would pick up one of his songs, probably to get their listeners excited about the coming summer and set up their playlists for the season.

In 1975, my brother found some Jimmy Buffett albums in Oxford when he was at Ole Miss and bought me the "A1A" album. I had never heard any songs on the album but immediately fell in love with not only Jimmy's music, but his vibe. "A Pirate Looks at Forty," "Trying to Reason with Hurricane Weather," "Life is Just a Tire Swing," "Tin Cup for a Chalice," and "Stories We Could Tell" were played through the dorm night after night. All the songs on the "A1A" album were great. We probably played the grooves off the album. We all dreamed of living on islands, riding in boats and drinking at beachside bars.

Later that summer, I found and bought copies of "Living and Dying in ¾ Time," and "A White Sportscoat and a Pink Crustacean." "He Went

to Paris," "The Great Filling Station Holdup," "Cuban Crime of Passion," and "Pencil Thin Mustache" were a different style of music than anyone else was making in those years. Summer nights during my college years with Jimmy on 8-Tracks and, later, cassette tapes still hold good spots in my memories.

Jimmy took a turn toward more mainstream music, or maybe mainstream music tastes accepted him better with his next albums. "Changes in Latitude," "Changes in Attitude," "Havana Daydreamin'," and "Son of a Son of a Sailor" were commercial successes that made Jimmy a household name. He was living in Key West and playing island music about hurricanes and margaritas. There are still great debates about whether "Cheeseburger in Paradise" was written about Cabbage Key or Pirates' Cove in Josephine, Alabama.

He was one of us, raised in Mobile, flunked out of Auburn and then attended Southern Mississippi. He played his music across the Alabama and Mississippi coasts before he caught a break and found his way. He was known to be very likable, as we would expect one of us to be. He would drop into Lulu's, his sister's restaurant in Gulf Shores and play for dinner crowds. Only his growing popularity on the coast and the huge crowds drawn by the speed of social media ended those impromptu concerts.

Jimmy's music gave us the idea that anyone could live in Key West or on a Caribbean island and lay in the sun and have boat drinks all day. He sold the image of a laid-back, island lifestyle. It turns out that while he sold the image, he didn't live it. Jimmy was apparently a workaholic who built a business empire of music, live concerts, bars, Margaritaville restaurants and hotels, Landshark beer, Parrot Head clothing, and many other things associated with his music and lifestyle image. He was reportedly worth approximately a billion dollars when he died.

I was at Jimmy's concert in Orange Beach in



the summer of 2020. The huge crowd of Parrot Heads had a great time. The crowd sang along and rocked with the Coral Reefer Band. It was a great evening and time. It brought back great memories.

But, if Jimmy Buffet can die, we all can and will. The mirage of a lifestyle of endless sun, islands, and music can die, too. Without Jimmy to serenade us, summer is over. At 69 years old it is sobering to realize that not only is summer over, I am into the winter of life. But, there will always be those memories in the 1970s of warm summer nights and Jimmy Buffet music in the air. Maybe summer will always live through his music.

I hope you have a good month. ■



**Gary Smith**

PowerSouth President and CEO

# Service anniversaries



**Brian Howard**  
T&D Eng. & Const.  
33 years, Nov. 3



**Nick Grana**  
Lowman  
33 years, Nov. 12



**Mel Moseley**  
Lowman  
28 years, Nov. 13



**Lamar Crowe**  
Telecom Services  
27 years, Nov. 11



**Mark Craig**  
Finance & Accounting  
23 years, Nov. 13



**Bill Sexton**  
Central Generation  
23 years, Nov. 27



**Brent Bracke**  
Central Generation  
22 years, Nov. 5



**Jason Stearns**  
Power Production  
21 years, Nov. 11



**Bill Marler**  
Transmission O&M  
21 years, Nov. 18



**Derek Dillard**  
Substation O&M  
19 years, Nov. 8



**Suzanne Grissett**  
HR Services  
19 years, Nov. 15



**Marlin O'Guynn**  
Lowman  
19 years, Nov. 15



**Jamie Waite**  
Lowman  
19 years, Nov. 15



**John Wiggins**  
Substation O&M  
19 years, Nov. 22



**Josh Sightler**  
Computer Info. Svcs.  
17 years, Nov. 6



**Leslie Threadgill**  
Lowman  
17 years, Nov. 27



**Adam Elmore**  
Substation O&M  
16 years, Nov. 12



**Eric Hicks**  
T&D Eng. & Const.  
14 years, Nov. 30



**Jerrold Syphrit**  
Lowman  
13 years, Nov. 29



**Jim Helms**  
Substation O&M  
12 years, Nov. 21



**Brock Wallace**  
Telecom Services  
12 years, Nov. 28



**Lane Rider**  
Safety Services  
11 years, Nov. 12



**Andrew Rabren**  
Substation O&M  
11 years, Nov. 26



**Tresa Middleton**  
Lowman  
9 years, Nov. 24



**Heath Hendrix**  
Legal Affairs  
8 years, Nov. 23



**Brian Ward**  
Legal Affairs  
8 years, Nov. 20



**Justin Cottle**  
Central Generation  
6 years, Nov. 6



**William Holley**  
Central Generation  
6 years, Nov. 6



**Jamey Reeves**  
Central Generation  
6 years, Nov. 6



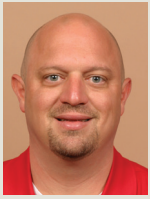
**Ethan Hall**  
Central Generation  
6 years, Nov. 16



**Alex Short**  
Legal Affairs  
6 years, Nov. 20



**Clark Sanders**  
Compliance Services  
6 years, Nov. 28



**Brian Blackmon**  
Computer Info. Svcs.  
4 years, Nov. 11



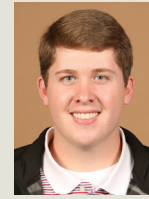
**Marty Moulton**  
Legal Affairs  
3 years, Nov. 9



**Thomas Tyson**  
Gov't Affairs & Eco. Dev.  
3 years, Nov. 30



**Kaitlyn Anderson**  
T&D Eng. & Const.  
2 years, Nov. 2



**Bryce Dubose**  
E&O Support  
2 years, Nov. 15



**Robert Maddox**  
Power Supply  
1 year, Nov. 28

# Comings and goings

## Promotions

**Jennifer Brooks** was promoted to Senior Accountant from Financial Planning Accountant I in Financial Planning, effective Sept. 1.

**Joshua Williamson** was promoted to System Operator I from System Operator II in Energy Services, effective Sept. 3.

## Goodbye and Good Luck

**Randy Kelley**, System Operator I in Energy Services, effective Sept. 19.

# Happy Birthday!

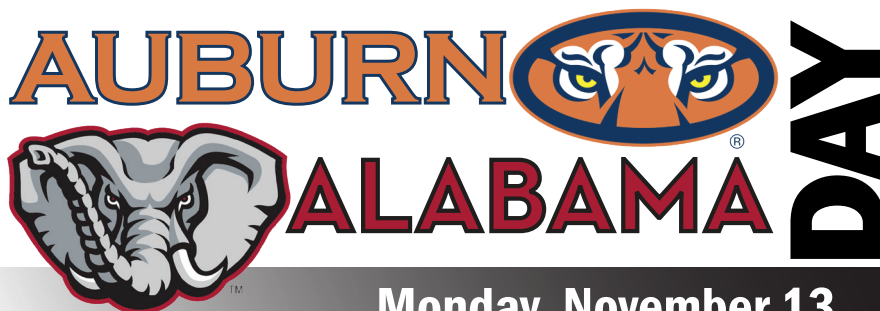
- November 1.....Windell Bedwell  
Dara Dorman  
Neil Howell
- November 2.....Benji Elmore
- November 5.....Erik Blocker  
Jeff Bush  
Michael Mitchell  
Hugh Stovall
- November 6.....Jared Armstrong  
Jennifer Kelley
- November 7.....Jarrett Bryan  
John Shaw
- November 8.....Kenneth Harbuck  
Jamie Hawkins
- November 9.....John Lanier  
Shep Lucas  
Jessie McConico  
Kim Nawlin
- November 10.....Art Brunson  
Patrick Thrash
- November 11.....Jennifer Brooks  
Nick Grana
- November 12.....Taylor Williams  
Kyle Wyatt
- November 13.....Lisa Cravey  
Hannah Grimes  
Heath Hendrix
- November 14.....Robert Maddox  
Will Piggott
- November 16.....Russell Keith  
Brenda Turner
- November 17.....Joey Short
- November 18.....Tanner Sheffield  
Amy Turner
- November 19.....Bryce Dubose  
Tonya Maraman
- November 22.....Kurt Taylor
- November 23.....Michael Hardage
- November 24.....Tracy Jackson
- November 25.....Gauge Carter  
Shane Culbreth  
Angela Kelly
- November 26.....Darrell Mann  
Joey Reeves
- November 28.....Jamie Jones
- November 29.....Willie Williams



**Trece Mays (left), President of AOPA presenting the award to Anna Worley, nominated by Sandy Wilford of Covington Electric Cooperative.**

## Congratulations

Andalusia Office Professionals Association, which includes many members from PowerSouth, recently named its 2023 Boss of the Year. Though it wasn't a PowerSouth employee, the winner was from a member system – and that's close enough in our book. **Anna Worley**, Member Services Manager of Covington Electric Cooperative, Inc., was honored during the AOPA's Annual Boss's Lucheon. Anna is described as team oriented, and excels at designing and implementing new ways to get jobs done.



**Monday, November 13**  
**NOON | CREW ROOM**



**Wear your team colors to show your spirit | T-shirt rule waived for this event**

**POWERSOUTH**  
Monthly Board Meeting

**NOVEMBER 17**

*Headquarters employees should wear business casual attire.*



## November Photo Contest Winner: **Jarrold Pettie**



Congratulations to **Jarrold Pettie** (East Central Transmission Line O&M) for winning this month's photo contest. November's photo contest theme was **I am thankful for...**

The December photo contest theme is **Christmas Lights & Laughs.**

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

The submission deadline for the December contest is November 24. Please submit only one entry per employee per month. Entry must be an original photo, taken by you, or you **MUST** have permission to use the photo.

Send entries to Yvonne Lo at [yvonne.lo@powersouth.com](mailto:yvonne.lo@powersouth.com) or via interoffice mail. ■

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