

Carthage 601-267-5671 • Philadelphia 601-656-2601 • Rankin 601-829-1201 • Sebastopol 601-625-7422

# Central EPA Annual Meeting

Over 500 people attended the 81st Annual Meeting of the Membership of Central Electric Power Association March 20 at the coliseum in Carthage.

The crowd was entertained by Bros. 4, a southern gospel quartet based out of Rankin County. Members enjoyed the old convention-style singing.

General Manager Brian Long opened the meeting followed by the invocation given by Phillip Crosby, a member of the board of directors. Mayor Jimmy Wallace of Carthage welcomed the crowd and complimented Manager Long and the board of directors for the wonderful job they do for the community.

Michael Callahan with the Electric Cooperatives of Mississippi and John Malone with

the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) were guests at the meeting. Both the Electric Cooperatives of Mississippi and TVA value their partnership with Central Electric Power Association and the hard work that has been accomplished through the years.

Manager Long reported that by the end of 2017, the association had 36,428 members in central Mississippi and 4,269 miles of underground and overhead distribution and transmission lines. Long also praised his staff for working hard, being safe, and keeping the lights on.

To conclude the meeting, a raffle took place. Dozens of prizes, including an electric grill, were given away to lucky members. The grand prize given away was a 2010 Ford F-150 extended cab pickup to Curt Pace of Neshoba County.



Bros. 4 provided musical entertainment.



A crowd of more than 500 people attended the **2018 Annual Meeting**



Foch Dickens and Chance Sistrunk talk to a member about energy efficient light bulbs.



A commitment to community is a tradition at Central Electric including a health fair held at the annual meeting.



**GRAND PRIZE WINNER**  
Curt Pace, of Neshoba County, was the winner of a 2010 Ford F-150 extended cab pickup.

Tim Stewart, Sebastopol district manager presents Curt Pace, Pastor of New Bethel Baptist Church, the keys to this 2010 Ford F-150 extended cab pickup.



Rachel Wolverton from Sebastopol was the winner of a patio bistro grill. She is pictured with her cousin Rudolph Williams who also won a door prize.



Board member Phillip Crosby delivered the invocation.



Mayor Jimmy Wallace welcomed the crowd to Carthage while giving a report on the town's progress.



Board member Danny Thornton reports the minutes of the 2017 annual meeting.



Brian Long delivers his first annual report as general manager at the recent annual meeting.



Central Electric sends local students to Youth Leadership Workshop

# Leading the Way into the FUTURE

through Mississippi's brightest students

The Electric Cooperatives of Mississippi recently held the 32nd Youth Leadership Workshop in downtown Jackson. This annual youth event brought students from across Mississippi to the state capital to meet their legislators and to participate in activities designed to enhance their already-present leadership abilities.

The workshop began on Wednesday, Feb. 21, and continued through Friday, Feb. 23. Electric cooperatives from all areas of Mississippi participate in the program each year. Wallace Bass, Sarah Burns, Gabby Caldwell, Allyson Crocker, Courtney Gill, Brian Pace, Alana Patterson and Arrow Scott were selected among the schools in Central Electric' Power Association's service area to represent the electric cooperative during this hands-on event.

"The program was developed to help young leaders determine their strengths and weaknesses while showing them ways to become better leaders. We then encourage them to return home and put their skills to use," said Ron Stewart, senior vice president and program coordinator. "We challenge these young people to go out and make a difference in the lives of others, exemplifying true leadership."

This year, 80 students attended the workshop which was held at the Marriott in downtown

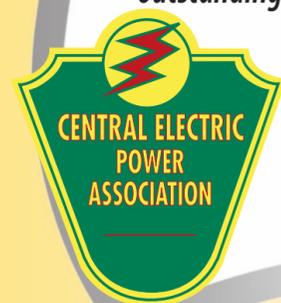
Jackson. When the students arrived on Wednesday, the workshop began with a "get acquainted" session and they were put into situations where they had to learn about others. They were then asked to participate in a Town Hall meeting, which encouraged them to discuss issues they are facing as young people. Together with their groups, they developed possible solutions to these issues, and were encouraged by group leaders to take the skills they learned back to their schools where they could make a real difference in the lives of their peers.

On Thursday morning, the students enjoyed breakfast with senators and representatives who serve in state government on behalf of the districts in which they reside. The breakfast was well-attended with over 40 legislators in attendance. Before visiting the Mississippi State Capitol, Lt. Gov. Tate Reeves spoke to the students and encouraged them to work hard for their dreams. He gave the students three guidelines for success: dream big, make a plan and work hard. "If you do these three things, you can accomplish anything you set your mind to," he said.

Gov. Phil Bryant continues to support this program by speaking to the students each year during a luncheon at the Old Capitol Inn. During his speech, he encouraged the students to pursue their

**"We are proud to have these outstanding students represent Central Electric."**

— Brian Long  
General Manager



Above: Ron Stewart, senior vice president of Electric Cooperatives of Mississippi, presents Wallace with an award for winning the Overall Youth Leadership Council (YLC) Award. Wallace will represent Mississippi for a one-year term and will join YLC's from around the United States for a conference in Washington, D.C., the statewide Annual Meeting on the Gulf Coast and the NRECA Annual Meeting in 2019 in Orlando, Fla. Congratulations to Wallace on being selected for this prestigious award. Left: Sarah Burns uses her leadership skills as she guides her team to complete a difficult challenge.



Above from left: Courtney, Alana, Gabby, Sarah, Rep. Scott Bounds, Arrow, Allyson, Wallace and Brian.

Right: The students pose during the Fun Time photobooth session.



dreams and hold on to their Mississippi values. He discussed the positive economic factors happening in Mississippi and told them that they don't have to go far from home to become successful.

"There are so many opportunities for you in Mississippi to take on leadership roles here. Whether you go on to college or choose a technical trade, there are many advantages to staying right here at home," he said.

The students also heard from other motivational speakers and participated in a fun evening with local magician, Dorian LaChance where he wowed them with his illusions. When the workshop came to a close, the students had made many new friends and memories that will last a lifetime.

Building leaders is fundamental to building a strong

community and through this program, Central Electric hopes to prepare these young people for a bright future. The program has proven to encourage students to reach their goals year after year, and the students take away lifelong relationships.

Central Electric is a proud sponsor of the program. "We are proud to have these outstanding students represent Central Electric," said Brian Long, general manager. "They are our future leaders, and we look forward to seeing all that they accomplish."

In June, the students will travel with the youth group to Washington, D.C. The seven-day trip will include visits to all of the popular monuments and memorials, as well as meetings with Mississippi's congressional delegation during a visit to Capitol Hill.



Arrow, Allyson, Sarah, Gabby, Courtney, Wallace, Brian and Alana visit the Mississippi State Capitol.

## WORKSHOP SPEAKERS



Gov. Phil Bryant



Lt. Gov. Tate Reeves



Bro. Terry Rhodes



Magician Dorian LaChance

# Spoonfudge!

## owners continue to expand

By Elissa Fulton

In 2011, Tarah “Queenie” Boykin and Alesia “Nelly” Johnson took a leap of faith and purchased a small growing website business with unlimited potential. The residents of Sebastopol are all too familiar with the charming little restaurant downtown that sells delectable fudge in over 120 flavors from little jars. In the seven years the two have owned and operated Spoonfudge!, they have listened to their customers and have expanded several times, gaining more business than they ever could have initially dreamed for. A map with pins on the low-hanging ceiling in Sebastopol shows the locations the fudge has shipped to all over the world.

The first order of business was to style the business as their own. Tarah’s marketing background was beneficial when taking on the task of rebranding. At the time that the two women acquired Spoonfudge! there was only one small kitchen in the space. In 2012, when the customers began to urge Tarah and Alesia to open a space to gather, the ladies added a few tables and opened their doors three days a week, serving coffee and pastries. It was instantly popular and became a trendy spot for the people of Sebastopol.

The next urging came when the customers wanted a space to have birthday parties and small gatherings. Taking their customers advice once again, after the Christmas rush of 2013, Tarah and Alesia closed the doors in January 2014 to do a large expansion and renovation.

“We have a great landlord who has been very supportive of our business so he was very accommodating with the expansion. We knocked out walls, added another kitchen in the back and built the Loft upstairs for parties and overflow seating,” said Tarah. “Although



Alesia “Nelly” Johnson and Tarah “Queenie” Boykin

the original plan was just to be a small café selling our pastries and coffees, our customers asked us to consider serving lunch since there was really nowhere in town to eat. We started doing that too, and it’s just kind of boomed from there.”

In September 2017, Tarah and Alesia got what they call a “wonderful opportunity” to open another location in Newton called Spoonfudge 2! Although the flagship

location in Sebastopol still produces the Spoonfudge! product and stocks the Newton store, the two locations are very different. The focus of the Newton location is primarily on their lunch service, while the Sebastopol location is centered on the production of their gourmet fudge.

“The locations are very different and the atmosphere is really different in Newton,” said Tarah. “For one thing our building in Newton is much larger and there’s a lot more seating.”

A few months after opening the new store, they realized that their upstairs room wasn’t being used quite as often, since many of their Newton County residents are now taking advantage of the closer location. “The room served its purpose, but then we had another idea,” said Tarah. “Through the years, we’ve been blessed to have so many Mississippi-makers come to us and ask our advice. At times, it’s been a hard road for us to figure out and we are still figuring it out every day. So we thought, maybe this is what God wants us to do – to help other Mississippi-makers and give them a leg-up.”

That’s when the pair opened The Loft at Spoonfudge! In Sebastopol. The upstairs area in the main location has now become home to many unique items made primarily in central Mississippi. The artists pay a percentage of sales and Tarah and Alesia handle their inventory, help to sell the items and even gift wrap for special occasions.

“We really love The Loft because we love to buy from people we know and supporting that mission, because if it hadn’t been for those kinds of hearts and minds supporting us, we wouldn’t still be here seven years later,” said Tarah. “It didn’t really hit us until seven years ago when we became a Mississippi-made product, how important it is to support other Mississippi products and that’s just been a really important thing to us.”

Tarah and Alesia stay busy between the Sebastopol and Newton stores and they also co-chair the town festi-

### Spoonfudge 2

114 S Main Street • Newton, MS  
(601) 685-2000

#### Hours

Tuesday-Friday 11:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m.  
Saturday – 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.  
\*Kitchen closes 30 minutes prior to shoppe!

### Spoonfudge! and Loft @ Spoonfudge!

24 Hwy 492 • Sebastopol, MS  
(601) 625-7923

#### Hours

Tuesday-Friday 10:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.  
Saturday – 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.  
\*Kitchen closes 30 minutes prior to shoppe!



Top photo: Spoonfudge! original store located in downtown Sebastopol. Above: The Loft at Spoonfudge! has unique gifts such as T-shirts, candles, crafts, etc. All products in The Loft are Mississippi-made by artists from central Mississippi.

val in the fall – Sebastopolooza – with help from many of the town volunteers. Tarah also just took on her first term as Alderwoman, so they are both certainly enthusiastic to support the community. With all of the obligations the women have, they depend on their staff a great deal. “Stretching ourselves between here and Newton, we certainly couldn’t do it without the great staff we have,” said Tarah.

Owning and operating a local business is very personal to Tarah and Alesia and they want to give the best service possible to their customers and would like to continue supporting other Mississippi artists. Tarah said, “We have really listened to our customers over the years and kind of gone in the direction that they push us toward and if that’s where God wants us to be, then it has always seemed to just work out.”

For more information or to order online visit [www.spoonfudge.com](http://www.spoonfudge.com) and follow Spoonfudge on Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest.

## PEARL RIVER FOODS TO HOLD JOB FAIR

Pearl River Foods will hold a job fair April 9th at the old elementary school in Carthage, Mississippi, located at 500 North Van Buren Street. The job fair will start at 9:00A.M. and close at 7:00 P.M.. Make plans to be there for 2 to 2.5 hours as that is how long the process could take and make sure to bring your photo id.

Pearl River Foods will be hiring for the following positions:

- |                                 |                         |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Sizers/Cutters                  | Production Workers      |
| Forklift Drivers/Pallet Drivers | Sanitation              |
| Quality Assurance               | Maintenance Technicians |
| Administrative Assistant        |                         |

To see a detailed job description and preregister for the job fair visit your local WIN Job Center.

Pearl River Foods is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

## Central Electric needs your CURRENT phone number!

Please call your local Central EPA office and verify/update your telephone number you are most likely to call from when reporting an outage, including cell phone numbers. These numbers will be used by the automated outage reporting system to quickly locate your account and more quickly address your power outage!

Please call today to update your information!

## Thank a lineworker on April 9

Remember to #ThankALineworker

America’s electric cooperatives have designated the second Monday of April as National Lineworker Appreciation Day.

On April 9, 2018, Central Electric will honor the dedicated men and women who often work in challenging conditions to keep the lights on. We proudly recognize all electric lineworkers for the services they perform around the clock in dangerous conditions to keep power flowing and protect the public’s safety.

“Our lineworkers are the first responders of our electric distribution system, and they work around

the clock on high-voltage lines,” said Brian Long, Central Electric general manager. “Conditions can be dangerous, but they power through to ensure reliable service for our members.”

To honor these brave lineworkers Central Electric invites members to take a moment and thank a lineworker for the work they do. Use #ThankALineworker to show your support for the men and women who light our lives.

