

THE COMMUNICATOR

Phone: (336) 835-2511

Email: wifm@wifmradio.com

Since January 1990

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Servant Hearts, Helping Hands

We all know that dozens of community organizations, churches, individuals, and businesses in Surry, Yadkin, Wilkes, and Alleghany counties — too many to list — collected needed supplies and delivered them to western North Carolina after Hurricane Helene. Many volunteers also rushed to help meet the physical, emotional, and psychological needs of their fellow North Carolinians. Without minimizing this disaster and the long journey ahead to recovery, we should acknowledge goodness and be grateful for so many servant hearts that revealed themselves in these difficult days. "Blessed are those who persevere through trials, as they will receive the crown of life." (James 1:12)

Hurricane Relief Flows From North Wilkesboro Speedway

Dozens of vehicles and trailers of all sizes arrived at North Wilkesboro Speedway with non-perishable food, bottled water, clothing, cleaning supplies, personal hygiene items, and more to help western North Carolinians recover from catastrophic storm damage. For weeks the speedway continued serving as a hub for distributing donated items.

The Wilkes County government created and operated the recovery and relief hub in cooperation with Speedway Motorsports Inc., the track's owner. Dion Burleson, Wilkes County emergency management logistics and planning coordinator, shared, "The North Wilkesboro Speedway is a great staging point for something like this. This wouldn't have been possible without the speedway and SMI."

Local officials said more than 70 tractor-trailer loads of supplies were accumulated at the speedway in the first week of October, including several tractor-trailer loads of non-perishable meals ready to eat and bottled water provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Dozens of volunteers from Wilkes County government, SMI, local businesses, and various groups helped organize and load supplies. Volunteers included students from Appalachian State University in Boone, staff from N.C. Farm Bureau, and the N.C. National Guard. Loads of supplies on multi-

ple 24-foot flat-bed trailers were delivered to other counties by Wilkes County Manager John Yates and county officials including Commissioner Bill Sexton, Finance Director Chris Huffman, EM/EMS Director Jason Reavis, and Wilkes Emergency Medical Services Operations Office David Holbrook.

Yates noted that N.C. Cooperative Extension Service Director John Cothren helped farmers in both Ashe and Wilkes counties deal with storm-related losses including flood-damaged hay.

Surry Rushes Aid to Western NC

Within days and in some cases within hours after Hurricane Helene smashed and flooded western North Carolina, first-responder agencies in Surry County deployed resources and personnel to the hard-hit mountain counties. Surry County Emergency Services and the Surry County Office of Emergency Management on Oct. 2 reported via "Surry on the Go," the county's streaming and on-demand TV channel, about these rapid responses to the urgent needs of our neighbors to the west:

- State Radio Cache (STR5) deployed to Transylvania County
- Surry Magnum 150kw generator deployed to Fletcher WNC Agriculture Center
- Communications Officer deployed to WCC
- Emergency Manager deployed to WCC
- Two Surry County Telecommunicators deployed to Avery County 911 Communications
- Mount Airy Rescue Squad crew with chainsaws and ATV aided search operations in Ashe County
- Elkin Emergency Rescue Squad crew with chainsaws and ATV deployed to assist with search operations in Ashe County
- Surry County morgue trailer deployed to Black Mountain

For an inside look at how Surry County, Dobson, Elkin, Mount Airy, Pilot Mountain, and Surry Community College helped in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Helene, visit SurryOnTheGo.org or its [surryonthego](https://www.facebook.com/SurryOnTheGo) Facebook page and watch the special 12-minute video with Pete Kulsziski interviewing Emergency Management Coordinator Byron Isaacs of Surry County Emergency Services. The program is at <https://fb.watch/vh2yQVkuNC/>

Bundle Up For Buncombe

Mount Airy City Schools is partnering with five Buncombe County schools to help their recovery after the catastrophic impact of Hurricane Helene. The schools, 10 to 15 miles east of Asheville, are:

- Black Mountain Primary in Black Mountain
- Black Mountain Elementary in Black Mountain
- W.D. Williams Elementary in Swannanoa
- C.D. Owen Middle School in Swannanoa
- Charles D. Owen High in Black Mountain

Because cooler weather has arrived in the mountains, the first request Mount Airy City Schools is answering is for warm hoodies for all students. MACS partnered with Pine State Marketing for this initiative; the company will provide the logo-marked hoodies for \$13 each. MACS's goal is to raise \$30,000 for hoodies for the more than 2,000 students at the five Buncombe County schools. Within six days of the initial announcement, Bundle Up For Buncombe passed 15% of its goal and had \$5,000.

B.H. Tharrington Primary, J.J. Jones Intermediate, Mount Airy Middle School, and Mount Airy High School each will involve students and staff to organize fundraisers and support this cause. If you wish to give directly to the cause or to see how much has been raised, visit <https://bit.ly/BUP4B>. For updates on recovery efforts at Buncombe County Schools, visit BuncombeSchools.org.

Check Before Traveling

While recovery from Hurricane Helene continues and road conditions improve, please be mindful of when and where one can help. Many small businesses, farms, restaurants, and artisans in the affected areas rely on tourism. Before traveling to see and patronize them, though, please call ahead or go online to make sure a business or venue is open, accessible and accepting credit cards. Perhaps consider buying gift cards now and visiting later.

Travel responsibly. For the latest, updated reports on highway and other road conditions, go to DriveNC.gov. And for additional advisories on travel and tourism in the area, please go to VisitNC.com.

SYEMC Gives To Community

Surry-Yadkin Electric Membership Corporation's 12th annual Charity Golf Tournament raised \$41,000 this year, surpassing the SYEMC Community Projects Committee's goal of \$30,000. As a result, committee members led by Chair Taylor Zimmerman and Vice Chair Caleb Lowe presented \$20,500 checks to the Hometown Habitat for Humanity that serves Yadkin and Wilkes counties and to YVEDDI Meals on Wheels for its services in Surry and Yadkin counties.

In addition to the annual golf tournament,

Surry-Yadkin EMC hosts food drives, sponsors families at Christmas, supports youth programs like NC Youth Tour, awards Bright Ideas Education Grants to area teachers, funds Touchstone Energy Sports Camp scholarships, and more. For example, the Community Projects Committee hosted bingo games on Sept. 21 at the Surry County Service Center in Dobson to raise money for Mountain Valley Hospice & Palliative Care.

Surry-Yadkin EMC is a member-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperative. For more information on SYEMC and its community programs, visit the cooperative's website at SYEMC.com.

Dia De Los Muertos At Museum

The Mount Airy Museum of Regional History will host its fifth annual Dia de los Muertos ("Day of the Dead") celebration from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 2. There will be food trucks and booths, craft activities for children, face painting, raffles, live music, and dance performances. The event is free and open to the public.

El Dia de los Muertos is a Mexican holiday, traditionally observed on Nov. 1-2, that honors and celebrates deceased loved ones. During this time, families create ofrendas (altars) at home and in cemeteries, adorning them with photos, mementos, and favorite foods of the departed. The celebration is a time of both remembrance and joy, reflecting the belief that the souls of the dead return to visit their families. It's a vibrant mix of indigenous traditions and Catholic influences, emphasizing the cycle of life and death.

Five years ago, the Mount Airy Museum of Regional History began its annual observance of Dia de los Muertos. The event grew in popularity and the museum expanded its activities. This year in October the museum presented a historian's talk about the celebration and invited families and individuals to bring items for a community ofrenda.

The museum is at 301 N. Main St. in Mount Airy. For more information about its Day of the Dead celebration, call the museum at 336-786-4478 or visit its website at NorthCarolinaMuseum.org.

5K Pumpkin Run In Elkin

The second annual 5K/1K Pumpkin Run & Walk in Elkin will kick off at 8 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 2, in Elkin Municipal Park. Registration will be open from 6:30 to 7:30 a.m.

Presented by the Yadkin Valley Chamber of Commerce, the Town of Elkin, and Captain Mark Garner VFW Post 7794, the event is a fundraiser in support of mental health and suicide awareness.

For more information, visit the VFW's Facebook page or email elkinvfwpost7794@gmail.com.

Successful Tournament

We at 100.9 WIFM Radio send sincere thanks to all who contributed to, supported, and participated in the 17th annual Elkin Emergency Rescue Squad Charity Golf Tournament. The event at Cedarbrook Country Club raised \$57,575.75 to support the squad's operations and equipment needs.

ERS is headquartered at 940 N. Bridge St. Visit it on Facebook at ElkinEmergencyRescueSquad.

Elkin High Opens Thirsty Herd

Elkin High School in October celebrated the grand opening of "The Thirsty Herd," a student-led store operated by the 2024-25 DECA Club members. The store near the EHS Auditorium's lobby will provide valuable, real-world business experience to students while offering stylish, exclusively designed Elkin apparel to shoppers.

DECA, formerly known as Distributed Education Clubs of America, is a nationwide program that helps high school students develop business skills, leadership capabilities, and career readiness. Operating a store like The Thirsty Herd provides club members with opportunities to apply their academic studies of business and marketing to managing sales operations, product selection, inventory control, and customer service.

Elkin High School's DECA advisors are John Darcey and Derek Carter. DECA officers are President Webb Snyder, Vice President Raleigh Johnson, Secretary Makaela McGee, and Treasurer Luke Jackson — all of whom played key roles in the store's development.

Special thanks goes to the Yadkin Valley Rotary Club for its continued support and partnership for The Thirsty Herd and Elkin High School's DECA Club. Among Rotary members who were present at the store's Oct. 7 ribbon-cutting ceremony were President Steve Kobelek, Youth Services Chair Dr. Myra Cox, Katee Hettleman, Brittany Russell, and Elkin Mayor Sam Bishop.

7th Annual GROW Strong 5K

Surry County Schools' GROW Strong program will return to Fisher River Park on Friday, Nov. 15, for its annual races. More than 350 students from third, fourth, and fifth grades in all 11 elementary schools are expected to compete while families and school staff cheer them on.

GROW is an acronym for Go Run Our World. The program encourages enthusiasm for health and wellness and a love of running. Each team's coach trains students to run a 5 kilometers (3.1 miles) race. The youngsters learn perseverance, responsibility, race etiquette, self-motivation, self-pride, and teamwork. Training takes place over 10 weeks

leading up to the big event.

On race day there are awards for individuals and school teams. One male and one female student will receive a GROW Strong All Heart Award based on attitude, participation, courage, and team spirit.

Surry County Parks & Recreation hosts the event. The Surry County Schools Educational Foundation organizes it for the participating schools.

Light Up Night In Elkin

Every year, usually on the first Friday of December, Light Up Night kicks off the holiday season in Historic Downtown Elkin. This year's celebration will be on Dec. 6 from 5 to 9 p.m.

Carolers and other musicians will perform throughout the downtown area. Stores and restaurants will be open later than usual. The Christmas tree lighting ceremony will be from 6 to 6:30.

The Foothills Arts Center already announced it will set up the Merry Makers Market at The Wisdom Table, 101 E. Main St. Talented artists will be offering handmade art for holiday gifting. Like many participating Light Up Night businesses, it will be open from 6 to 9 p.m. both Friday and Saturday.

For more information and a map of events, watch the LightUpElkin.com website and the LightUpNightElkinNC page on Facebook.

Word Match Game

Match the word with its definition

- | | | |
|---------------|-------|-------------------|
| 1. pompous | _____ | A. intense |
| 2. abject | _____ | B. logical |
| 3. profound | _____ | C. beginning |
| 4. meticulous | _____ | D. no pride |
| 5. capitulate | _____ | E. dull |
| 6. cogent | _____ | F. polite |
| 7. culinary | _____ | G. shun |
| 8. decorous | _____ | H. flippant |
| 9. diffident | _____ | I. surrender |
| 10. facetious | _____ | J. self-important |
| 11. first up | _____ | K. shy |
| 12. glib | _____ | L. plentiful |
| 13. drab | _____ | M. precise |
| 14. prolific | _____ | N. shallow |
| 15. dissident | _____ | O. objector |
| 16. vilify | _____ | P. denigrate |
| 17. ostracize | _____ | Q. about cooking |

See answers on Page 7.

Farming Is A Passion

As this harvest season nears its conclusion, and in loving memory of our late friend and most successful farmer Grant Neibaur (1930-2019) of American Falls, Idaho, we present this tribute to farming by artist and poet Bonnie Mohr:

Farming is a PASSION — a devoted and HONORABLE way of life. It is a heritage and a LEGACY that connects one GENERATION to the next and the force that feeds the world.

Farming requires a STRONG MIND, BIG HEART, and PROFOUND PATIENCE to weather long hours, harsh conditions, and unpredictable prices. There is a spiritual presence on the farm and in the land. Here, FAITH, COMMITMENT, and INTEGRITY provide strength for the unwavering labor that is the foundation of life itself.

It is where roots run as deep in the house as they do in the field — where FAMILIES are bound strong because of shared experiences, and are grown with LOVE and TENDERNESS. It is where examples speak louder than words, and where thanksgiving happens more than once a year. Thank you God for agriculture and the life of farming.

Memorable Meal

Many of us are the beneficiaries of elaborate and sumptuous holiday meals because the cooks in the household first of all love and enjoy preparing large spreads. Below is the memorable, monumental menu of foods Gerald and Teresa Plaster of Pilot Mountain prepared for 23 family members celebrating Thanksgiving in 2022:

Turkey and dressing	Tater Tots
Baked ham	Corn bread
Chicken casserole	Yeast rolls
Cranberry sauce	Gravy
Mac & cheese	Pinto beans
Green beans	Corn
Creamed potatoes	Deviled eggs
Broccoli & cheese casserole	

Desserts: peanut butter pie, chocolate eclairs, banana pudding, cream cheese cake, cupcakes

Gratitude

With Thanksgiving approaching, we all should be taking time to acknowledge what we are grateful for. A study of 1,000 people from ages 8 to 80 found that people who practice gratitude consistently report a host of benefits physically, psychologically, and socially.

- Gratitude allows us to celebrate the present. It magnifies positive emotions.
- Gratitude blocks toxic, negative emotions such as envy, resentment and regret — emotions that can destroy our happiness.

- Grateful people are more stress resistant.
- Grateful people have a higher sense of self-worth.
- Once we start to recognize the contributions that other people have made to our lives — once we realize that other people have seen the value in us — we can transform the way we see ourselves.

Prayers For Thanksgiving

Dear Lord, as we celebrate Thanksgiving with family and friends, please help us to express our gratitude for all the blessings we have and continue to receive. In today's challenging climate and with war in the Middle East, it is easy for us to forget how fortunate we are to live in the United States. With all its imperfections, the U.S.A. is still the greatest country in the world — a fact too many don't appreciate. Others worry that our greatness is being tested in many areas. We pray that we will continue our nation's greatness. Amen

Oh, Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for food and remember the hungry. We thank Thee for health and remember the sick. We thank Thee for friends and remember the friendless. We thank Thee for freedom and remember the enslaved. May these remembrances stir us to service, that Thy gifts to us may be used for others. Amen.

Dear Father, as we bow our heads in thanks for these, thy gifts so bountifully bestowed — our daily bread, and work that satisfies, and love that lights the way and shares the load — help us to look beyond the feast for ways to bring all men the blessings that we know: Thy peace, and freedom to enjoy its boons; to move, unchallenged, safely to and fro, freely without fear to speak and teach; to worship Thee as conscience points the way. Lord, give us grace to know how blessed we are and make our lives one long Thanksgiving Day.

—Maureen Murdoch

Speaking Of Thanksgiving

- Thanksgiving, to be truly Thanksgiving, is first thanks, then giving. —Jacob M. Braude
- Gratitude is the inward feeling of kindness received. Thankfulness is the impulse to expend that feeling. Thanksgiving follows that impulse. —Harry Van Dyke.
- When life is sweet, say thanks and celebrate. When life is bitter, say thanks and grow. —Shauna Niequist
- What if, today, we were grateful for everything. —Charlie Brown, aka Charles M. Schulz
- Not what we say about our blessings, but how we use them, is the true measure of our thanksgiving. —W.T. Purkisser

Holiday Fun In Yadkin County

Pre-Christmas events in Yadkin County are beginning to fill up holiday calendars. Here are some samples:

- Nov. 30, **Small Town Christmas** presented by East Bend Volunteer Fire Department at Station 14 in the center of town, 200 School St. in East Bend. Attend this free event to see the Christmas tree lighting, have chances to win tons of door prizes, and eat some chicken stew.

- Dec. 6 and 7, **Christmas Tree Lighting and Holiday Parade** presented by the Town of Yadkinville. See the Christmas tree lighting at 6 p.m. on Friday at Yadkinville Community Park, then come to the parade at 10 a.m. Saturday on Main Street.

- Dec. 6 and 7, **Jolly Jamboree** presented by the Town of Boonville. Admission is free for the Christmas Tree & Nativity Scene Lighting Ceremony at 6:30 p.m. Friday in downtown Boonville. A Christmas tree decorating contest also gets underway Friday. On Saturday a vendor market will open up starting at 10 a.m. and the annual Twilight Christmas Parade begins at 4 p.m.

- Dec. 8, **Yadkin Valley Christmas Parade** in Jonesville and downtown Elkin starts at 3 p.m.

Holiday Festivities In Sparta

Everyone turns out for the annual Christmas parade down Sparta's Main Street in Alleghany County. This year's Christmas Holiday Parade will begin at 2 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 30.

In addition to marchers there will be roving performers and food trucks and booths. Sparta's unique stores and restaurants will be open for customers. The weekly Alleghany Jubilee with live old-time and bluegrass music and dancing will go on from 6 to 10 p.m. at 27 N. Main St.

One week earlier, the Alleghany Farmers Market will host its 5th annual outdoors Holiday Market on Saturday, Nov. 23, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Crouse Park. Presented under the auspices of the N.C. Cooperative Extension Service, this is a non-juried art, crafts, and food market, and all items must be handmade or prepared by the vendor. Visitors can expect to see goods such as pottery, furniture, soap and body products, clothing and textiles, and art works.

There's still time for vendors to sign up for the Holiday Market. Applications must be submitted no later than 5 p.m. Nov. 6. Drop off a completed application; send one by mail to Jill Cockerham, North Carolina Cooperative Extension, P.O. Box 7, 90 S. Main St., Sparta, NC, 28675; or email a PDF copy of a completed application to jill_cockerham@ncsu.edu. For more information, visit AlleghanyCountyChamber.com or the Alleghany County Center at Alleghany.CES.NCSU.edu.

Seagrove Potters Celebration

Pottery has been made in North Carolina's Seagrove region for generations. Soils indigenous to the area lend themselves to becoming potter's clay, the raw material that is made into world-renowned pottery. Some of the world's greatest artisans have originated there, and many who want to be potters migrate to the Seagrove area to learn an exceptional craft.

Annually on the weekend before Thanksgiving more than 40 artists and shops showcase their masterpieces to the public. The 17th annual Celebration of Seagrove Potters will be on Nov. 22-24 from 2 to 7:30 p.m. Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday. In addition to the Potters Market, there will be demonstrations, the Kids Booth, and food trucks.

This year's event is especially exciting. Celebration of Seagrove Potters will be held in a newly renovated part of the Luck Comer Lail Center (Historic Luck's Cannery) with increased space for more booths. To mark the occasion, there will be a Ribbon Cutting, Preview Market, Gala, and Auction on Friday.

For more information, visit DiscoverSeagrove.com, and watch the Seagrove Potters pages on Facebook and Instagram for updates.

A Very Mayberry Christmas

The downtown Christmas parade in Mount Airy will be on Saturday, Nov. 23.

The "Half Mile of Christmas Cheer & City Hall Tree Lighting" will be on Thursday, Dec. 5. Visitors are encouraged to stroll through downtown Mount Airy and watch performances by diverse groups of musicians and street performers starting at 6 p.m. — a leadup to the annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony.

Watch the websites MountAiryDowntown.org (Mount Airy Downtown Inc.) and VisitMayberry.com (the Mount Airy Visitors Center) and the Half Mile of Christmas Cheer page on Facebook for more information.

Talk About Christmas Teas

Just in time for the holidays, a talk at the Mount Airy Museum of Regional History will introduce people to Christmas teas, wassail, and tea parties.

Julie Thompson, proprietress of The Grove Teas & Botanical Gifts in Pilot Mountain, will present the program from 2 to 4 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 10. She has been blending teas for over a decade with a particular love for medicinal and herbal teas. There will be samples to taste and teas available to purchase.

The museum is at 301 N. Main St. in Mount Airy. For more information, call 336-786-4478.

Investors Luncheon

Since March 2004, I've been a regular attendee at the Yadkin County Chamber of Commerce's monthly Investors Luncheon. Established by the late Jimmy Hutchens in 1992, the Investors Luncheon from noon to 1 p.m. is in the Yadkin County Agricultural Building's banquet facility, 2051 Agricultural Way, Yadkinville, N.C. The event is a mecca for social gathering, connecting, and reinforcing relationships in Yadkin County.

The delicious meal is free, sponsored by a local business or nonprofit entity and catered by skilled chefs, restaurants, and food services. Surry-Yadkin EMC sponsored September's luncheon catered by D and F Catering, Shallow Ford Foundation sponsored October's luncheon catered by Regal Catering, and Surry Community College will sponsor Nov. 26th's luncheon with food from D and F Catering.

The Investors Luncheon inspires and enlightens, and whom we see, greet, and meet always gives us cause for positive exchanges of smiles and information. Just imagine being in a room with Yadkin County county commissioners and the county manager, the Yadkin County Schools superintendent and Board of Education members, prominent civic and nonprofit organizations' leaders, and active, involved business people.

Newcomers should not be apprehensive; Chamber Executive Bobby Todd and Jamie Johnston are available for quick introductions. And oh, yes, there are door prizes galore.

For more information about the Investors Luncheon and other events and activities, visit the Yadkin County Chamber of Commerce website at YadkinChamber.org, call the office at 336-679-2200, or stop in at 205 S. Jackson St. in Yadkinville, N.C.

Coach John McKissick

We've been sharing the meaningful contributions of legendary Coach John McKissick since our meeting at Alan York and Kyle McElveen's wedding in July of 2008 at Centenary Methodist Church in Winston-Salem. Coach, 93, passed at his home on Thanksgiving Day five years ago.

His Summerville (S.C.) High School's Green Wave football teams won 621 games in 61 seasons and won 12 state championships. More than 9,000 players and families were beneficiaries of his guidance and care. Grandson Joe Call went on to become Summerville High's head coach.

During my last visit, Coach McKissick was alert as he shared memories of the Green Wave's best seasons and of sharing advice at age 82 with high school varsity coaches in a clinic at Clemson University. He was revered by his contemporaries and competitors, and although he was a coaching icon, he championed his fans and would always

give them — especially children — his time and attention. Our Lord gifted me my relationship with John McKissick. I'll treasure his humility, hope, and heart. He was my mentor, hero, icon, and friend. We are all blessed by his life and contributions.

A Leader To Watch

Surry Community College's vice president of instruction, Dr. Ashley Morrison, is among 17 dynamic leaders from 15 community colleges across North Carolina selected to attend the first-ever Aspiring Presidents Institute. The program helps prepare participants for serving as a college president.

At the N.C. State Belk Center for Community College Leadership and Research, 20 current North Carolina community college presidents served as faculty. They sharing their expertise and insights and mentored the participants.

Dr. Morrison said afterwards, "One of the most beneficial parts of the experience was the opportunity to pause and deeply explore my 'why' for this work. I have come to understand that my leadership is driven by a passion for student achievement and a commitment to innovation and community growth. Community colleges open doors, offer hope and opportunity for anyone, but it's the leader's job to ensure there's a strategy in place to translate that hope into success."

Morrison is a graduate of Starmount High School in Yadkin County. She holds bachelor's and master's degrees in biological science from N.C. State University. She began her career at Surry Community College in 2007 as a horticulture and biology instructor. She later became Science Division Chair and after eight years rose to Dean of Arts & Sciences before becoming Vice President of Instruction.

Morrison in 2019 began work on her doctorate at Appalachian State University; she graduated with a 4.0 GPA in May. Her doctoral dissertation is titled, "Opening doors to disruption: A poststructural deconstruction of community college discourse."

Send Me

Most of us can readily recall a most-important call to answer a real need that we first resisted or denied. In Charles Stanley's "Ways to Servanthood" collection of sermons, he asks us to be ever-mindful of needs in our lives and prepare to answer the calls to serve. Pastor Stanley says we are to prepare our lives to the point when we will say, "Dear Lord, here am I. Send me to help those who suffer and need our time, talent and treasure." We are to discover needs, be prepared to serve, and take advantage of opportunities. In July 2006, I gave in to God's encouragement and committed to helping Elkin's Rescue Squad, and my heart has been filled with thanksgiving. "Here am I, Lord. Send me!"

Surry-Yadkin EMC Reports

Surry-Yadkin Membership Corporation invited its members to virtually attend its 83rd annual business meeting on Oct. 22 via YouTube Live on the Surry-Yadkin EMC channel. A Touchstone Energy Cooperative located in Dobson, N.C., SYEMC serves more than 27,000 members in Surry, Yadkin, Wilkes, Stokes, and Forsyth counties.

Board President Karoline Overby reported, "This 83rd year of service has continued to provide us with the opportunity to serve our member-owners based on cooperative values that make us unique and relevant to the rural communities we are so fortunate to serve... We have maintained an impeccable safety record and continued to upgrade and improve our infrastructure so we can uphold our pledge 'to provide safe outstanding service that powers our rural communities.'"

She continued, "We also were awarded more than \$7.48 million through the U.S. Department of Energy's Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships program. This funding will be matched by Surry-Yadkin EMC so that we can continue to strengthen our reliability and service, while minimizing the impact of the cost of maintenance and upgrades to our member-owners. In 2023, we invested \$11.8 million in our infrastructure, bringing the value of our system less depreciation to \$137,557,882."

SYEMC closed its year with 28,170 member accounts. Sales of electric energy grew 12% to \$58.9 million and total revenue was \$60.4 million. The corporation donated more than \$46,000 to 23 charities on behalf of its members who participated in Operation Round Up by agreeing to let the co-op round up their bills to the next dollar.

Results of board elections were not available at The Communicator's publication deadline. Current members of the Board of Directors are President Karoline Overby, Stephen Hutson, Willard Swift, Board Secretary Brenda Hardy, Alvin Reid Jr., Stephen Joyce, Sandy Welborn, Treasurer David Miller, David Pendry, and Vice President Eddie Campbell.

The October issue of SYEMC's digital magazine, "Carolina Country," includes the annual report. It's online at <https://www.carolinacountry.com/digital/surry-yadkin/2024-10.htm>

VOCE Holiday Concert Dec. 2

Local choral ensemble VOCE will present its annual Christmas concert in both Mount Airy and Elkin. The singers will kick off the holiday season at 7 p.m. on Dec. 2 with a performance at First Baptist Church in Mount Airy. The following Monday, Dec. 9, they will take the stage at 7 p.m. in First Baptist Church of Elkin.

Created in 2022 by the late Sandy Beam, a well-known music teacher in Mount Airy, VOCE

(pronounced VOH-chay) is an ensemble of about 30 singers of all ages selected by audition. With accompanying musicians they rehearse weekly on Monday evenings to prepare for their free public concerts. VOCE is a qualified 501-C3 nonprofit organization supported by donations.

In May, the group took a bus to Manhattan in New York City with more than two dozen associates including singers from Elkin's First Baptist Church. There they took part in a showcase featuring choral groups from around the country who performed composer Pepper Choplin's "Our Father," a cantata inspired by The Lord's Prayer.

In October at the Andy Griffith Playhouse, the VOCE ensemble and several soloists presented songs from Broadway musicals.

For more information about VOCE, visit its website at VOCEMtAiry.org.

Free Four Rivers Map

The beautiful, wonderfully detailed Surry County Four Rivers Map from the Tourism Partnership of Surry County provides outdoors recreation enthusiasts with in-depth information about 100 miles of kayaking and canoeing waters (including access points); 500 miles of official cycling routes; and 36 miles of trout waters stocked by the N.C. Wildlife Commission. What's more, the map is free!

The four waterways are the Ararat River, Fisher River, Mitchell River, and Yadkin River. Road cycling routes comprising the Surry Scenic Bikeway are clearly shown. For hikers, the map tracks the North Carolina Mountains-to-Sea Trail's route through Surry County and identifies the locations of state and county parks. There also are the locations of 18 wineries, four breweries, and one distillery plus other points of interest in Surry County.

The Tourism Partnership of Surry County has an interactive version of the map at YadkinValleyNC.com/map. To obtain a free printed copy delivered by mail, fill out an order form at YadkinValleyNC.org/guides/outdoor-recreation-map/. Copies of the Surry County Four Rivers Map and other useful guides for visitors also are available from the following:

- Mount Airy Visitors Center, 200 N. Main St.
- Pilot Mountain Visitors Center, 124 W. Main.
- Yadkin Valley Heritage & Trails Center, 257 Standard St. in Elkin.
- Dobson Town Hall, 307 N. Main St.

Word Match Answers

From Page 3

- | | | | | |
|------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. J | 5. I | 9. K | 13. E | 17. G |
| 2. D | 6. B | 10. H | 14. L | |
| 3. A | 7. Q | 11. C | 15. O | |
| 4. M | 8. F | 12. N | 16. P | |

The Communicator

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Your support of our Elkin Rescue Squad in 2024 is a resounding blessing. We are thankful!

Pictured: Eddie Bobbitt, Jerry Atkins, Mike Bovender, Silas Matthews,
Tim Darnell, Jane Hendrick, James Anderson, Jennifer Atkins and Charlotte York