

## EMC...from Page 1A

we want to protect them and do what's in the best interest for the members."

As is customary, the board met for a quick meeting following adjournment of the annual meeting, during which time the directors selected new board leadership from within their ranks.

Ray Cook of Cherokee County, North Carolina, was chosen to serve as board president, and he is taking over from Mickey Cummings, who officially left the board at the close of the 2018 annual meeting.

Cook served as vice president of the board in the year leading up to the 2018 annual meeting, and he is now in the third and final year of his first full term on the EMC Board.

"The biggest thing is to just try to keep the board acting as one," said Cook. "I thought Mickey did a good job, and I want to try to continue that and keep all nine members acting as one, and going forward, continue to make it a good thing."

In the coming year, Perren will maintain his longstanding role as board secretary; Bert Rogers of Towns County will step into Cook's former role as vice president of the board; and Cory Payne of Clay County, North Carolina, will carry on in his role as board treasurer.

Also in the meeting, the results of the two bylaw amendment proposals were



More than 200 people attended the annual meeting this year, which saw the election of two new directors, the re-election of one, the adoption of one bylaw amendment and the rejection of another.

Photo by Lowell Nicholson

announced: District Voting was defeated with 2,965 "no" votes to 1,797 "yes" votes, and the definition of "member in good standing" was approved with 4,397 "yes" votes to 428 "no" votes.

No district voting means that EMC director candidates will continue to be elected at large by all of the voting membership, and for the purposes of becoming or remaining an EMC director, the phrase "member in good standing" will be defined as any member who has not lost his or her right to receive electric service from the cooperative.

Probably the biggest highlight of the 2018 annual meeting, aside from the results of the election, was the guest appearance by Tennessee Valley Authority President and CEO Bill Johnson.

Johnson came to discuss the yearly rate increases TVA has imposed since 2013 as part of its 10-year financial plan to cut energy costs and reduce debt.

The TVA Board passed another 1.5-percent wholesale rate increase in August, which will amount to a 2.4-percent upward adjustment on TVA's portion of wholesale power costs come Oct. 1.

"I got to TVA five and a half years ago, and we were on the brink of catastrophe – something had to be done," said Johnson. "So, we made a simple plan, and here was the plan: we're going to reduce our own spending; we're going to remake our generation fleet so that we make electricity cheaper; we're going to bring our debt down.

"We are allowed under (federal law) to have \$30 billion of debt. We had gotten to \$27.5 billion."



TVA President and CEO Bill Johnson addressed the BRMEMC Membership at the 2018 Annual Meeting.

Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Since the plan was implemented, TVA has been able to shave about \$1.8 billion a year off fuel and O&M costs, meaning they're now ready to tackle their extensive debt service.

"We also said at the beginning of this plan we're going to raise rates 1.5 percent a year as long as rates remain as competitive as they were when we started, competitive meaning compared to others in the region," said Johnson. "So, what's happened?

"Our local power company rates have gotten more competitive than they were five years ago. Now, I don't kid myself, I know nobody likes rate increases ... but rates have gotten more competitive."

Due to overperformance in revenues and cost-cutting measures thanks to the 10-year plan, TVA leadership signaled recently that it will likely only implement one more rate increase, thereby forgoing the final three years of increases originally outlined in the plan.

During his Manager's Report, BRMEMC General Manager Jeremy Nelms stated that a cybercrime had been committed against the EMC in July, and that customer banking information had been the target of the attack.

Fortunately, Nelms said security experts investigating the matter believe that no personal information was compromised, and he reassured the membership that the EMC is always working to harden itself against future attacks.

Both Johnson and Nelms emphasized the history of the TVA and Blue Ridge Mountain EMC in their comments, as this year marks the 85th and 80th anniversaries of these organizations respectively.

In closing, Cummings, in his final remarks as an EMC director, offered words of kindness to the membership and the many EMC employees he'd come to know in his time on the board.

"The past three years I've served on this board have been enlightening and educating and a lot of hard work," said Cummings. "But I want you to know how much I appreciate the opportunity to serve you. And at this time, I want to take this opportunity to thank the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC employees for all the hard work that they do.

"I promise you, just being involved in some national meetings that we go to and seeing other employees, there is not another group of employees in the nation that I've seen that are a harder working group than those guys and gals back there in the back of the room that keep your power on. So, let's give them a round of applause."

Entertainment was provided that day by the Union County High School Jazz Band and the Union County High School Chorus Ensemble.

Annual meeting refreshments included water, coffee and Krispy Kreme donuts, and many door prizes were given out after the meeting adjourned.

## Beavers...from Page 1A

Chevrolet S-10 pickup speeding westbound toward the dam.

"It was traveling at a high rate of speed, the radar clocked him in at 66 mph in a 45 mph zone. Deputy Jackson turned around on the vehicle and activated his blue lights and siren. The vehicle turned left into the boat ramp area right before you get to the dam and crashed into the guardrail.

"The subject in the vehicle fled the scene, and deputies were not able to make contact with the subject."

After the subject fled, deputies inventoried the vehicle prior to impounding it and found a recent Dollar General receipt, according to Lt. Osborn.

They also discovered that the truck belonged to Dalrymple in Murphy, according to Lt. Osborn.

UCSO Deputy Jerrit Pack was familiar with Dalrymple, and he was able to determine through contact with the man's family that he would never let anyone borrow his truck, according to Lt. Osborn.

The Union County Sheriff's Office then notified Cherokee County authorities about what had happened here, and they in turn responded to Dalrymple's home with several of his family members, according to Lt. Osborn.

"They went over there to do a welfare check on him and found him severely beaten," said

Lt. Osborn. "At that time, he was still alive, and that's when we went to the Dollar General store and pulled video."

Investigators used the video from Dollar General to post a bulletin to Facebook asking the public's help in identifying the suspect, according to Lt. Osborn.

Tragically, Dalrymple never regained consciousness, and he passed away the next day on Sept. 8, according to Lt. Osborn.

Also on Saturday, investigators received information implicating Beavers as a suspect in the murder, according to Lt. Osborn.

Authorities learned that Beavers was staying at a residence off of Georgia 325 in Union County, and that Saturday evening, around 7 p.m., both Union and Cherokee County deputies converged on his location to take him into custody, according to Lt. Osborn.

Beavers was awaiting extradition in the Union County Jail at press time Monday, according to Lt. Osborn.

The investigation is active and ongoing, according to Lt. Osborn, so information regarding motive and Beavers' relationship to the victim were unavailable at press time.

"We would like to thank Deputies Jackson and Pack for their outstanding work on this case," said Lt. Osborn.