

EMC...from Page 1A

Trout recently joined the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC Board of Directors with his appointment as a Clay County, NC director in April 2014. He fills the unexpired term of

the late Elois Anderson.

His opponent, Logan, currently is on the Board of Directors for the North Carolina Forestry Association, serving as Western Vice President of the North Carolina Forestry Association.

Payne was appointed by the EMC Board of Directors to fill the unexpired Towns

County term of former Board of Directors' President Terry Taylor. Payne is a closing assistant for a local attorney's office.

Her opponent, Phillips, is the owner of Benny's Sanitation in Hiawassee, and also serves as a local radio personality in the Towns County area. He has served on the

Board of Directors of Towns County FFA Alumni Board, and Towns County Food Pantry.

Parks has been an appointed Union County director for the past 11 years, and has been elected by his peers on the EMC Board of Directors to serve as Vice-President for the past five years.

His opponents include former State House District 8 State Rep. Charles Jenkins, of Blairsville, and Mike Patton, also of Blairsville, the owner of Patton Excavating, who has served on the Board of Directors for the Union County Board of Health, and Coosa Water Authority.

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volved as well."

Taylor, the former president of Blue Ridge Mountain EMC owes more than just his unpaid utility bill, documents obtained by the *North Georgia News* and *Towns County Herald* show.

The *North Georgia News* and *Towns County Herald* reported on April 30 that Terry Taylor was in arrears on his stone crusher company's utility bill in the amount of \$48,643.53.

Taylor was offered and accepted a consent agree-

ment with the EMC Board of Directors to pay a minimum of \$1,000 each month, in addition to current electric charges. That bill is down to \$45,643.53. Prior to Taylor's most recent payments, the last payment he made to BRMEMC was March 22, 2012.

If Taylor doesn't meet the terms, the EMC Board of Directors has secured legal avenues to collect the debt, according to details released by the EMC last week.

According to the documents obtained by the newspapers, the only board member who knew about Taylor's debt was Taylor himself. We now know differently, with as many as three board members knowing about the debt in March 2013. According to documents obtained by the newspapers, BRMEMC's administration knew about the debt and kept it secret from the board of directors.

Nine days before the *North Georgia News* and *Towns County Herald* first published the story of Taylor's debt, the EMC Board of Directors reprimanded BRMEMC General Manager

Matthew Akins. However, Akins remains as GM of the cooperative because board members acknowledged that he had inherited the debt situation from the previous administration, according to the documents.

However, there's another debt, according to documents obtained by the newspapers. BRMEMC denies that it loaned Taylor money to pay for equipment designed to lower his electric usage. Documents obtained by the newspaper show that BRMEMC discussed the loan in executive session in April.

Also, a bill dated June 10, 2014 shows Taylor owes \$62,354 in additional debt. That leaves a balance of \$107,998.43 owed to the cooperative, according to the documents, which includes 1.5 percent interest on a monthly basis.

A regular member who owes for an unpaid electric bill pays 5 percent interest on any uncollected money owed the EMC.

Also according to the agreement reached with Taylor, he must keep his current electric usage paid up to date,

the document shows.

Taylor resigned as president of the Board of Directors on April 17. The EMC Board appointed Julie Payne to serve Taylor's unexpired term on the board of directors for Towns County.

BRMEMC Board Vice President, Lenny Parks of Suches, is the acting board chair for the nine-member board.

The BRMEMC Board hired attorney Steve Minor of Tisinger Vance, PC to determine how the debt happened in the first place. That investigation, which will cost the membership up to \$30,000, is concluded and expected to be made public in the weeks ahead.

It's unclear how long Taylor's bill has been overdue, overlooked and gone unpaid. That information should come from Minor's report on the history of the debt.

The utility company has more than 43,000 customers with more than 49,000 electric meters serving a five-county area that includes Union, Towns, and Fannin counties in Georgia and Clay and Cherokee counties in North Carolina.

Reece...from Page 1A

la" Reece came along in 1750, one might have had to wonder if such a reunion would ever take place. Valentine "Fella" Reece was the only child of William and Mary Reece.

Valentine didn't let his family down. He and his wife Christina actually launched the Reece Reunion, after having nine children between 1770 and 1792.

The line that followed included Jacob Reece, William "Billy" Reece and Quiller Frank Reece, one of Union County's Confederate veterans.

"We're all from one line of the Reece family," said Weldon Eli Reece, president of the Reece Family Reunion. "It was William Reece that came from Wales in 1709 that got the ball rolling."

Weldon Reece, now 85, attended the first Reece Reunion in 1931 at the age of 2, when the gathering was held at Mossy Creek Campground in southern White County.

The William Reece line includes legendary Mountain Poet and author Byron Herbert Reece and dates back as one of the earliest families to settle Union County. It also includes *North Georgia News* and *Towns County Herald* Editor Charles Duncan, a descendant of James Roberson Reece.

Bill Honaker, the son-in-law of Hoke and Lillie Reece, was also at the event. He's likely to become the President of the Reece Reunion next year, said Weldon Reece, who will step down after almost 20 years as president.

The William Reece line includes veterans of every major war in the history of the United States of America. Most recently, Charles William "Chuck" Honaker Jr., who served in and was wounded in Iraq in 2003 didn't miss the event in 2014. In fact, the last Reece Reunion Chuck Honaker missed, he was serving in Iraq.

"I'd rather miss church than miss the Reece Reunion," Chuck Honaker said. "I'd never hear the end of it from my Momma if I missed a Reece Reunion."

Chuck's father Bill Honaker finished a book two years ago chronicling the Reece Family history. He's working on a second volume.

Alice Eliza Louise Reece Hayes is the one who really started gathering all the information about the Reece Clan, Bill Honaker said.

"She would have people come by the house and visit while she wrote down all of their information," Bill Honaker said. "She had probably worked on it all her life until she passed away at 89 in 1983.

"She was so dedicated and faithful," he said. "She was one of the most faithful ladies that I've ever seen. She kept a lot of the family information from being lost."

Weldon Reece said the Reece Reunion didn't quite



seem the same in 2014.

"This is the first Reece Reunion that I can remember in a while that Birdie Mae wasn't here," Weldon Reece said, referring to Birdie Mae White, who died early in 2014. "She was here in spirit."

Birdie Mae is the daugh-

ter of Carl and Alice Towe. Alice Towe is the daughter of James Roberson Reece.

"Birdie Mae's boys were here this year," Weldon Reece said. "Her son Terry brought the Birdie Mae Cake this year. He made it from scratch."