



Trustee talk

Meet District 2's Eugene Alford

A lifelong Grand Ridge resident, Alford has been a West Florida Electric Cooperative trustee since 1991. He and his wife, Elizabeth, or "Liz," have three children and six grandchildren. Here, he discusses how he's working to ensure the Co-op continues to serve future generations:

You've been a WFEC for three terms. Why have the Co-op members in your district wanted you to represent them for the last nine years?

I have served the members of this district with the utmost honesty and integrity. Because I am a lifelong resident of this area, I know most of the people over here. They are hard-working people, just as I am, so therefore I can relate to their problems very well. I have always been and will continue to be available to help any of them any way I can assist. I am dedicated to these people and this co-op.

What are the most significant changes that have taken place at WFEC during your time on the board?

Three things come to mind quickly. The first is how the entire staff and employees have come together and are working with each other to best meet the changing needs to the Co-op. This entire group is right up there at the top!

Second would be the mail ballot. This was a very positive move for the Co-op. This method of voting allows all the members a chance to vote and be heard. Many of our members are elderly or disabled, or are simply hard-working people who, many times, are not able to attend the annual meeting. This gives them a chance to have a voice in their cooperative.

Third would be the joining of many rural electric cooperatives nationwide under the Touchstone Energy brand. This makes us the largest electric utility in the country! It's all about people helping people.

What is the greatest challenge WFEC faces today?

By far, deregulation. A lot of our members today are not aware of the fact that the IOUs, investor-owned utilities, did not want to serve the rural areas and would not serve them due to the costly investment. So the rural electric cooperatives took those areas in their hands, and we've had them ever since. I'm proud of what we have done for rural America. We've served them very well.

What lies ahead for WFEC?

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The sky is the limit! With change comes great things. We've looked very long and hard at the future of the Co-op and have strategically planned for the future to meet these ever-changing times. We are diversified in many areas and offer our consumers a variety of services. WFEC is a very innovative co-op. We are constantly searching for better ways to meet the needs of our consumers. We are very sound and will continue to be so.

How will you, as a trustee, ensure WFEC is prepared for the future?

We are doing everything to stay up-to-date on legislative issues that are constantly confronting our cooperative. I believe I speak for my fellow board members as well as myself — We are committed to the members of this cooperative to be as competitive as possible in a most competitive environment.

As your trustee, I can tell you that WFEC has and will continue to focus on finding ways to implement new ideas along with new technologies for our members. Our primary goal is to provide reliable, quality service as the least cost. 

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