

# Johnson...from Page 1A

with them, there is nothing," Johnson said.

Commissioner Bradshaw said his office would put the framed pictures at the rec center and would look into mounting a brochure holder near the memorial site.

He asked that Johnson and his fellow veterans help the county to design Iwo Jima informational brochures.

Johnson also offered to speak to schoolchildren who come to see the monument to explain the history behind the Battle of Iwo Jima and the fight for freedom and independence.

"I think the kids should know about our country's history, and I'm not sure how much the kids learn about this in school," Johnson said.



The unique Iwo Jima Memorial at Foster Park.

Photo by Chad Stack



Bill Kendall admiring a photograph provided to the county by Bud Johnson, with Cliff Bradshaw and Charley Andrews.

Photo by Lowell Nicholson

# TVA...from Page 1A

fixed charge of average users in equal measures.

Average residential use is right at 907 kilowatt-hours a month, so factoring in a revenue-neutral rate adjustment will result in average-use members experiencing a \$1.54 increase in customer charges offset by a reduction of \$0.0017 per kWh, with a net-zero impact on monthly bills.

The EMC will then apply the same treatment to all residential account holders, increasing customer charges by \$1.54 and lowering energy rates by \$0.0017 per kWh across the board.

And if TVA implements its expected increase in October, the EMC will figure the 1.5% TVA increase – equal to \$0.0017 per kWh at 907 kWh – back into the variable energy portion of all member bills.

At that point, the offset energy charge will bump back up to its former value, and everyone will be left with an additional \$1.54 in customer charges on their monthly bills.

Had the EMC chosen not to implement its revenue-neutral rate adjustment prior to the TVA increase, higher power users – like families or people who can't afford energy efficient homes – would have been stuck paying an even larger share of fixed costs than they already are compared to lower power users, like members with second homes and some lower-income households.

Based on a recommendation by the EMC's rate consultant, general service and smaller business accounts will also experience a revenue-neutral rate adjustment prior to the implementation of the TVA rate increase.

The EMC's larger commercial accounts pay additional power costs called demand charges above and beyond residential and smaller business accounts, so instead of undergoing any rate adjustments, they will see a simple 1.5% bump in base energy charges should TVA approve its increase.

If TVA decides not to implement a rate increase, which is expected to occur in the August TVA Board meeting, then the revenue-neutral rate adjustments for residential and general service rate classes will be all that occur as a result of the EMC Board's actions on May 13.

Should that be the

case, average-use members would see zero change in their monthly bills, below-average users would experience a slight increase, and above-average users would see a slight decrease, as higher power usage at a reduced kWh rate would result in greater savings over the \$1.54 fixed-charge adjustment.

Nelms has defended the need to conduct revenue-neutral rate adjustments on residential accounts in recent months, pointing out that the residential kWh rate has too much fixed cost built into it.

Again, this creates a situation wherein some members end up paying more in fixed costs than others, said Nelms, who believes that everyone should pay their fair share to maintain the EMC.

Several co-op members have attended board meetings recently to express their belief that such rate adjustments would unduly burden the poor and members living on fixed incomes.

EMC Director Roy Perren was the lone dissenter during the May 13 vote to pass the TVA rate increase and corresponding EMC rate adjustment on to residential accounts, citing concern for fixed-income members.

Also in the May meeting, the board voted to edit the EMC bylaws to read that the election of directors each year would occur by majority vote. In previous years, whoever had the most votes, or a plurality, won their election.

This edit will allow the EMC to put in place a new style of voting ahead of the 2019 Annual Meeting known as ranked-choice voting.

According to BRMEMC.com, "Widely used by several municipal and state governments, as well as various member organizations, to determine a majority winner, ranked-choice voting relies on voters ranking all candidates on the ballot by preference.

"If no single candidate receives the necessary majority of first-choice votes, the candidate receiving the smallest number of first-choice votes is eliminated, and the second-choice votes of the eliminated candidate's ballots are redistributed among the remaining candidates. This process will repeat until a candidate has secured a majority of all votes."



Roy Perren

Nelms said that ranked-choice voting is efficient and cost effective, eliminating the need for ever having to hold costly runoff elections. He also said that it's a fair process, still allowing for any number of potential candidates to run while ensuring the highest vote getter wins each race.

Ranked-choice voting will only apply for board seats that have more than two candidates running for the seat.

Also up for discussion was the Fiscal Year 2020 Budget, which features an additional \$750,000 in new fiber-optic internet construction in the EMC's five-county area, which will augment the \$740,000 in new fiber built out this year.

At \$92.8 million, the FY2020 budget is up more than \$2 million from last year, which is a strong indicator of financial health, stability and a growing system.

In accordance with a new state law, the board voted to establish EMC Broadband LLC, which is a limited liability corporation through which the EMC will conduct its broadband business moving forward.

The new law, known as Senate Bill 2, clarifies local power companies' abilities to provide broadband services alongside electricity, and it also paves the way for greater grant opportunities in the future.

Members interested in running for the EMC Board of Directors ahead of the 2019 Annual Meeting in September should be aware that Director Candidate Forms are due to the EMC's Nominating Committee no later than June 26.

Those forms and more can be found at BRMEMC.com.

# Gnarly Fingers...from Page 1A



Hundreds of people enjoyed the musical offerings on the Hiawassee Town Square last Saturday.

Photo by Jarrett Whitener

the music with a little bit of dancing going on. It's just a great event that is great for all ages, and I'm really happy that Mardi (White) and Ron (Schott) have been doing this for many, many years. On the Map is the name of their organization, and they do a great job."

With concerts this year, the backside of the square is blocked off to traffic, allowing room for more people to bring seats and not be uncomfortable sitting in the grass.

"They have been doing concerts on the square for almost 20 years," said Ordiales. "Last year, we built this stage and moved it to the back.

"I think that it's more appealing to people because they have more room and they don't have to worry about the

bugs and stuff crawling on them while they sit in the grass.

"We have gotten a lot of good feedback from it, and I'm glad to see it grow and get used the way it does, and I'm sure that will continue for years to come."

The concert series is run by Mardi White and a few volunteers who are dedicated to seeing regular music events in Hiawassee.

"This is our 19th year putting on shows on the square," said White. "My late husband, Eugene Jakel, started this event, and we've just kept it going since then.

"I just think this is a wonderful thing for people to do on a lovely Saturday evening. People just love music, and it brings people out

as a community.

"It's a wonderful way for people to spend their weekend nights during the summer, and we want to see people come out and enjoy the shows we put on for them.

"The Gnarly Fingers have a good following and support, so I'm sure they helped bring out a large crowd tonight."

These concerts are put on every Saturday evening until Labor Day, with the next group being Train, which performs on Saturday, June 8, starting at 7 p.m.

For a full listing of 2019 Enchanted Music Concerts, visit HiawasseeGA.gov and navigate to the "Community" tab.

# Watson...from Page 1A

"I've been singing for years, I try to sing them just a little bit better than I did the night before. I work hard at it, and the fans keep on coming back, requesting songs and buying our products, our merchandise."

Morgan also performed a great set that evening, singing a beautiful rendition of Bobbie Gentry's "Ode to Billie Joe," as well as a song she recorded years ago with The Beach Boys called "Don't Worry Baby."

"Thursday night (June 9) is my 35th anniversary being a member of the Grand Ole Opry – that's not bad for 36," she said, drawing plenty of laughter. "Being made a member of the Grand Ole Opry has been the highlight of my career.

"I have had so many blessings and highlights in my career, but I'm telling you the truth, that being a member of the Grand Ole Opry has truly been a blessing for me."

Morgan said that, before her mother died about a year ago, she asked her Country Music star daughter why she didn't have any religious songs in her show. So, that evening, she sang a Christian song in tribute to her mom.

Several thousand people came from near and far to see the Watson/Morgan show, and none were disappointed.

Lamar Palmer, a retired sheriff from Walton County,



Lorrie Morgan giving a passionate performance inside Anderson Music Hall on June 1.

Photo by Lowell Nicholson

said he drove up from Monroe to see Watson, whom he'd gotten to know running security for one of Watson's past concerts in Walton County.

"I was his bodyguard, so to speak, and I got to know him, and I got a picture signed by him," said Palmer. "I've just loved him ever since."

Matt Lindsay and his wife, who had never seen Watson perform, traveled from Dahlonega to see the show.

"He was here several years ago – we walked in when they were having the Fair, and we said we were going to come back. This is it," said Lindsay.

Sara Hubbard from Oglethorpe County near Athens said she's seen Watson many times.

"He always puts on a good show," she said.

Ottis Franklin of Blairsville was there with his wife, as was Pastor Marty Duncan of Fellowship of the Hills Church. Both said they were there to see Watson and Morgan and to hear some real Country Music.

And that's exactly what they got, with both Watson and Morgan receiving standing ovations at the end of their sets.