

CAWS granted my request to go to Cullman Electric Cooperative and I learned much more than I had imagined that I was going to learn. Cullman Electric Cooperative serves over 41,000 member accounts, in four different counties, covering 12 towns. Cullman Electric Cooperative is on the forefront of innovated electricity suppliers. From an app that the members can use to track usage, to the high tech call center, Cullman Electric Cooperative leads the way. What I appreciated the most, was learning what a cooperative really is. It is all about the members. I was surprised to see, they don't call their members customers, but just that, members. I am grateful to Mrs. Gail Neal and Mr. Grady Smith, who took the time to teach me what a cooperative company is and how it came into being. It is evident that Cullman Electric Cooperative is a great place to work and that it is like working with your family, for your family.

What is a cooperative and how did Cullman Electric Cooperative come into being? That was the focus on our first day. Grady Smith, President and CEO and Gail Neal, Vice president, Human resources and assistant CEO were very informative and I learned so much. I learned about the seven principles of a cooperative and that because of 14 farmers that were turned down for electric power, the Cullman Electric Cooperative came into being in 1936. Cullman Electric Cooperative was the first cooperative in the state of Alabama to energize the lines!

As I was introduced to the different departments, I begin to discover there are many different career opportunities that one has at Cullman Electric Cooperative. The call center was one of my favorites. With two giant digital screens, you could see exactly where the lines are located. When a member calls, the outage is highlighted on the digital screen. The program has the ability to predict lines that that might see outages and where other outages might begin or end. One can also see the trucks as they are en route to a particular location and on which line they are working. It is vital for the safety of the linemen to know if there are other linemen working on the same line.

There are so many different areas where one can have a career in this cooperative: member services, human resources, accounting and finance, communication and marketing, engineering, mechanics, linemen, storage and supply managers, IT technicians, account managing, staking technicians, theft control, and even more.

I have always heard that working at Cullman Electric Cooperative was a highly coveted job. I now know why, aside from the fact that the pay and benefits are competitive to other careers but moreover this particular cooperative cares, they care about the quality of their work, they care about the timeliness, they care about safety of their coworkers, and they care about the members. The members ARE the priority and that keeping the members connected with electricity AND well-informed of the current news of Cullman Electric Cooperative is of utmost importance.

I am most grateful to Cullman Electric Cooperative. They opened their doors wide and welcomed me each day. Every person with whom I spoke was very eager to teach me about their job and what it entails. In each department that I visited, I learned of employees that had been there decades. This is proof that Cullman Electric Cooperative is one of the best places to work in Cullman County. I will be honored to tell all that I learned to my students at Cullman High School.