



RELEASE

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BEMC ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR 2019 BRIGHT IDEAS GRANTS

Program now in its 25th year of funding innovative classroom projects

SUPPLY, NC (May 29, 2019) - - Brunswick Electric Membership Corporation (BEMC) is now accepting applications for the 2019 Bright Ideas education grant program, marking 25 years of funding innovative classroom projects.

Twenty-five years ago a BEMC employee encountered a school teacher purchasing school supplies for her students with her own money. This encounter sparked the idea for Bright Ideas and over time, 26 electric cooperatives across the state of North Carolina adopted the annual grant program.

“The program has evolved over time with an emphasis placed on innovation, but even today we find teachers applying for grants to cover additional school supplies for their students,” said Josh Winslow, CEO and general manager of BEMC. “We’re pleased to be able to help fund the educational needs of area students through a wide array of projects.”

North Carolina’s electric cooperatives have funded education projects to the tune of more than \$12.2 million in grant funding across the state. Locally, BEMC has provided 426 grants totaling more than \$617,000 to K-12 classrooms across Brunswick and Columbus County.

Grant funds have been used to purchase items such as basic school supplies, Chromebooks, materials for robotics programs and band instruments. Some of the most unique grants that have been provided in the past include a Vietnam Veteran’s history project and a battery-powered electric go-kart project.

Heidi Whitford, Lincoln Elementary School teacher, received a grant in 2018 to build a literacy garden in the common area where students can gather to read and study. Through the grant, she was able to purchase supplies for her students to build a garden in the outdoor courtyard. The project was designed to show students how to apply math skills to plot areas to create garden beds and incorporated visual arts to make the area aesthetically pleasing.

Fred Mason, a teacher at Columbus Career and College Academy, has received several Bright Ideas grants in past years for his masonry program. He has purchased professional quality levels to help his students compete at the state level and has incorporated technology into his curriculum with the help of Bright Ideas grants.

“The computers we applied for were to help our students get OSHA certified and this year, every student in the program received OSHA certification. We have also won several competitions using the levels we purchased with our Bright Ideas grant,” said Mr. Mason. “Bright Ideas elevated our program and I would urge everyone to apply for a grant.”

The deadline to apply for a 2019 BEMC Bright Ideas grant is September 23, 2019, however, teachers who submit an application by August 15 will be entered into our Early Bird drawing for a \$100 Visa gift card. To learn more about this program or to apply for a grant, visit ncbrightideas.com.

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About Brunswick Electric (BEMC):

BEMC is a locally owned and operated not-for-profit corporation. It is the second largest electric cooperative in North Carolina, serving approximately 96,000 member locations in Brunswick, Columbus, Bladen and Robeson counties. BEMC has a longstanding commitment to the communities it serves, providing support for a wide variety of activities that contribute to the quality of life for all citizens.