

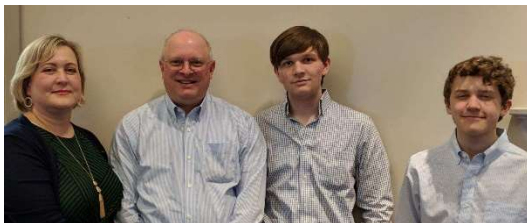
New Cares Board Members Ready for the Challenge

*The greatness of a community is most accurately
measured by the compassionate actions of its members.
---Coretta Scott King*

Inaugural Cares board members Cathy Kemp of Carthage and Livingston banker Randy Dodson never turned down an opportunity to share the news about the benefits of UCEMC Cares. It left many to wonder if those big shoes could be filled when they retired in December. Take heart. The appointment of two new members to those seats has left no doubt - that boundless energy will remain on the board for many years to come.

Michael Austin, loan officer at Livingston's Bank of Putman County, replaces friend and fellow banker Dodson in his role of treasurer and representing District 3 on the board. "Mr. Dodson is someone I've known and respected for many years. I know I have some big shoes to fill," says Michael, whose background includes working for the USDA's Department of Rural Development, allocating funds to those in need. "I hope that my experience will help me carry on the work for Cares that Mr. Dodson has devoted so much time and energy to. The most challenging part of the role will be determining how to distribute funds equitably among so many worthy applicants in this area, but I believe my past experience will help me allocate the funds appropriately."

UCEMC members may opt-in to "Round-Up" their monthly bill to the nearest dollar with this small amount of change going to Cares. Members who choose to participate donate around \$6.00 a year on the average. Michael admits he's still learning the many facets of the program since joining the Cares board. However, his family chose to "Round-Up," their monthly UCEMC electric bill years ago. "I think many of us who round-up our monthly bill never take the time to understand the impact our pennies can make each month fully. Small amounts of money add up quickly. Those funds support schools, civic organizations, and other groups that make our communities better places to live and raise our families," Michael adds. "AEDs for the local fire department and outfitting sports teams with safe, new equipment are just some of the needs met with Cares grants here in the district. In my job as a loan officer, I often interact with individuals who may not be aware that such a program is available to their organization. I plan to encourage as many of these groups as possible to apply for Cares grants."



Michael is a lifelong resident of Livingston and is married to internal medicine physician Dr. Lori Austin. The couple has two boys, John and Matthew. "I look forward to my time on the board, and I hope to see good things transpire for many of our worthy organizations,"

Michael says. "I hope to educate those around me about the program, and by doing so, alert all who might benefit from our small "Round-Up" sacrifice."



Ken Frye rides World Champion walking horse Confederate Jose in the Petersburg, Tennessee competition.

Sometimes, all that's needed to reach a goal is pure determination.

Ken Frye has ample horsepower and hustle to serve District 1 on the Cares board – figuratively and literally.

Riding and showing Tennessee Walking Horses is his hobby, keeping the Hustler Turf mowers at the top of the sales charts is his work. "I love riding my horses. I can't imagine what it would be like to sit on the sidelines and not participate in this hobby that I enjoy," says Ken, who has been in the show ring spotlight for most of his life. Helping organizations that support children's activities in District 1 will be one of his priorities as a Cares director.

"Any time you can help a child participate in an after school activity that they enjoy, you're investing in that child's well-being. When an organization seeks a Cares grant for a cheerleading group, a choir, or sports team, they're helping a youngster in their community. A child who might not have the resources to buy a uniform or go camping with the other kids. A busy child is a happy child, and that makes for a better community."

The term "mover and shaker" could be used to describe Ken when he's busy working a crowded room. Still, this humble, self-described "country boy" has a persuasive way about him. It's a manner that speaks of genuine caring and warmth - attributes that will serve him well as he goes about his Cares board duties. "I've never met a stranger. I feel that it must be a gift that I'm not afraid to walk right up and introduce myself and start a conversation," Ken admits. "I'm at home with anyone from anywhere."

He's made it a personal goal in the next few years to educate and inform UCEMC members about how the Cares program works. He wants them to understand the benefits of rounding-up the monthly electric bill to help others. For Ken, being in a position to assist so many in the community is personally rewarding, an experience that every co-op member can share.

"It's not always about 'us' in this life. It's about being compassionate and reaching out," Ken says. "By rounding up your monthly electric bill to the nearest dollar, you're giving only pennies, but that small amount adds up to a *big change* in the community. No matter what your income level, you can make a difference for others."