

Remembering Diverse Power retiree Val Pruitt

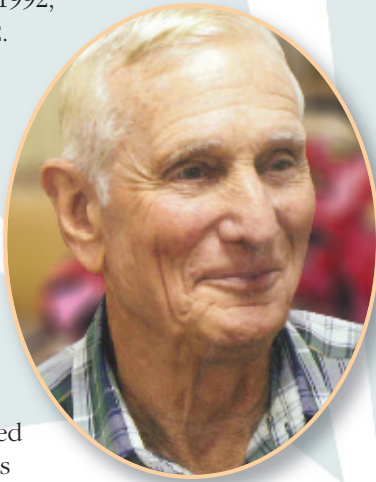
Retired employee Val Pruitt, whose career at Diverse Power spanned from 1946 to 1992, died July 14 at age 82.

Born March 28, 1929, in Marietta, Pruitt was raised in Troup County's Mountville community and graduated from Mountville High School. In 1946, at age 17, he went to work with then-Troup County EMC as a self-described "grunt" whose job was cutting right-of-way, staking and digging holes by hand. He retired in 1992 as manager of Construction and Operations.

"Val was very loyal to the job, to the company and also to his family," says Charlie Phillips, who worked with Pruitt and retired from Diverse Power in 2004 as vice president of Construction and Maintenance.

"Val was hard, but fair, and a very knowledgeable person who knew his job and had a good head on his shoulders," he adds. "He'd push you, but he let you do your job. He was a good one; I learned a lot from him."

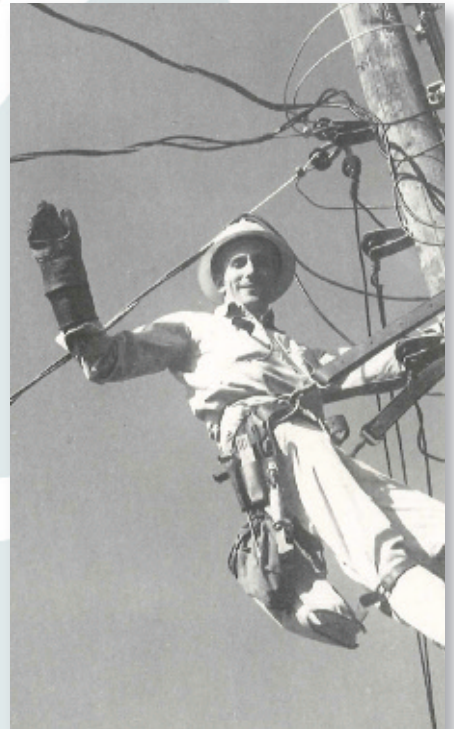
In 2005, Pruitt shared his memories of the cooperative's early years in preparation for a history book that was published this year. "Diverse Power: From Light Bulbs to Laptops, Building the Electric Cooperative" debuted at the cooperative's 75th anniversary Annual Meeting on May 11. At the meeting, Pruitt was one of several retirees who signed books for members.



When Pruitt joined the staff at Troup EMC, holes were dug and poles were set by hand. By 1949, he was a lineman but was drafted into the Army in 1951. After serving his country for two years, he returned to Troup EMC in 1953 and soon was promoted to line foreman, a job he held for 20 years before being named manager of Construction and Operations. He worked with the cooperative for 45 years.

"Val is one of the few people I've known who really enjoyed getting up and going to work in the morning," his wife, Joann, says of her husband's devotion to his job. "When the phone would ring at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning, I never heard him say he didn't want to go. He always hit the floor running."

Pruitt was among five electric cooperative employees in the state who together wrote the first statewide safety manual for Georgia's electric membership corporations. Under his leadership, Troup EMC earned numerous safety awards. A photo of him atop a utility pole (at right) was featured in a national magazine in 1957.



Diverse Power delegates motivated and inspired on Washington Youth Tour

By Jackie Kennedy

Diverse Power's Washington Youth Tour delegates Hannah Rose Duraski of LaGrange and Amber Zell of Hogansville were two of 104 high school students representing 38 electric membership corporations (EMCs) from across Georgia on the 2011 Washington Youth Tour.

The weeklong, all-expenses-paid tour in early June included kickoff ceremonies in Atlanta, a visit to the Little White House in Warm Springs and an extensive tour of monuments, memorials and museums in Washington, D.C. The journey proved to be a lifetime adventure for the students, who joined more than 1,500 other delegates representing EMCs from 44 states.

A Callaway High School junior, Duraski is the daughter of Ralph and Kaye Duraski, of LaGrange. The daughter of Nick and Rhonda Groves of Hogansville, Zell attends Heard County High School and plans to study veterinary medicine at the University of Georgia. The students earned their spots on the prestigious tour by writing an essay and interviewing with a team of Diverse Power employees.

"Even though we can only send two youths to Washington, the quality of the applicants we have each year lets me know our community has some great future leaders," says Joey McCartney of Diverse Power's Information Technology department and a former Youth Tour chaperone.

Devoted to encouraging leadership among Georgia's



Diverse Power Washington Youth Tour delegates Hannah Rose Duraski and Amber Zell (front row, second from right and far right) joined other delegates from Georgia's 3rd Congressional District to meet U.S. Rep. Lynn Westmoreland during their visit to Capitol Hill.



The Marine Corps War Memorial near Arlington National Cemetery was a favorite stop on the Washington Youth Tour for delegate Hannah Rose Duraski, of LaGrange, who admired the statue that depicts raising the flag on Iwo Jima in World War II.

youth, the tour teaches delegates how the electric cooperative movement started, facts about American history, and how government operates. While in Washington, delegates met with representatives from every member of Georgia's congressional delegation, including personal visits with Sens. Saxby Chambliss and Johnny Isakson and several U.S. representatives, including Lynn Westmoreland of the 3rd Congressional District, where Duraski and Zell reside.

The tour took students to numerous national monuments including the World War II, Korean War and

Vietnam Veterans memorials, along with Arlington National Cemetery.

Duraski says picking a favorite sight or experience is difficult.

“It was amazing,” she says. “I loved all of it. You hear about Washington, D.C., but actually going there opens your mind. Seeing everything and knowing what it stands for versus just hearing about it are two totally different things. Everywhere we went, we experienced places that showed us what our country sacrificed for us to have the freedoms we have today.”

Duraski says she also benefited from meeting new friends with ambitions similar to hers.

“It showed me there are other people out there who have dreams, too, and you’re not limited to your small town,” she says. “Everyone was saying what their plans were; you don’t always meet people like that in school. On the tour, you get to meet all sorts of people who are just like you and you stay friends with them, which is really cool. All 104 delegates became a family really quickly.”

Since 1964, electric cooperatives across the U.S. have sent more than 50,000 student delegates on the Washington Youth Tour, providing opportunities for leadership development and inspiring students to become strong, motivated leaders within their communities and their nation.

“It is truly a life-changing trip for each student delegate,” say Chipper and Tonya Jones, who served as chaperones representing Middle Georgia EMC. “Georgia EMC truly goes above and beyond to allow them a back-door pass to so many attractions. It’s the opportunity of a lifetime for these students because they learn so much about themselves and what leadership skills they can use at home to better their communities. In our opinion, this is one of the best investments the EMCs of Georgia are making to preserve the future of our country.”

To view videos about the tour, visit the Georgia EMC Youth Tour Channel on YouTube at www.youtube.com/user/GeorgiaEMCYouthTour. For more info, visit the Web at www.youthtour.coop.



A highlight of the Youth Tour was visiting the White House for Diverse Power delegate Amber Zell, front right, and her new friends, front left, Kristie McConnell and, back, from left, Amy Butterworth and Allison Fortner.



A visit to Madame Tussauds wax museum brought students up close and personal with wax likenesses of presidents, pop singers, actors and various historical figures. Posing as if they, too, were cast in wax are, from left, Diverse Power delegate Hannah Rose Duraski and fellow Youth Tour delegates Hannah Mott, Madeline Reeves, Jessica Sagastume and Allison Fortner.

Diverse Power delegate Hannah Rose Duraski, center, says making friends with like-minded students was a perk of the Washington Youth Tour. New friends joining her in front of Mount Vernon are, from left, Brittany Welch, Gabbi Markle, Hannah Mott, Janvi Chawla, Duraski, Simon David, Taylor Walden, Shawn Albert and Charity Martin.





Innovation through vision.
Quality through service.

Diverse Power Incorporated

P.O. Box 160
1400 South Davis Road
LaGrange, Georgia 30241
(706) 845-2000
(800) 845-8362
www.diversepower.com
www.arcofadventure.com

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Diverse Power history book celebrates 75 years of service

Diverse Power Incorporated commemorates its 75th anniversary this year with a book chronicling the electric cooperative's history.

"Diverse Power: From Light Bulbs to Laptops, Building the Electric Co-op" tracks the LaGrange-based cooperative's history from its pre-electric past to its formation in 1936 to its current status as a 90-employee electric membership corporation providing electricity and related services to 23,000 members in seven counties.

The 240-page hardcover volume was written by Jackie Kennedy, a LaGrange-based freelance writer who has produced articles for Diverse Power's monthly newsletter since 1994.

"Diverse Power's corporate history is the finest I've ever seen," says Troup County Historian Clark Johnson. "It is perfectly written, entertaining and interesting, and beautifully arranged and illustrated. It not only is a good business history and organizational record—it's an important piece of Troup County and West Georgia history that perfectly ties everything together with national events."

The book explores the local cooperative's connections with the origin of widespread rural electricity, which got underway after President Franklin D. Roosevelt enacted the Rural Electrification Administration in 1935. The president, who lived part-time in Georgia at his Little White House in Warm Springs, became well acquainted with the need for rural electricity while visiting with farmers and neighbors in Meriwether and Troup counties, which subsequently became part of Diverse Power's service territory.

"Rural electrification and Diverse Power's stories are truly important parts of our national and local history," says Diverse Power President/CEO Wayne Livingston. "Our 75th anniversary serves as an opportunity for us to reflect over the events, people and organizations that made us what we are today."

"From Light Bulbs to Laptops" is available for purchase in LaGrange at Diverse Power headquarters at 1400 South Davis Road, Troup County Archives at Legacy Museum on Main, and the LaGrange-Troup County Chamber of Commerce on Bull Street. The book, which retails for \$34.95, will be available for a limited time for \$25.

For each book sold at Troup County Archives, Diverse Power will donate \$5 to the Troup County Historical Society, and for those sold at the Chamber of Commerce, \$5 per book goes to support projects of the Chamber.



Jackie Kennedy will sign copies of her book on Saturday, Sept. 10, from 2 to 4 p.m., at Legacy Museum on Main, 136 Main Street in LaGrange. The signing coincides with a 9-11 observance featuring pieces from the World Trade Center and the opening of a model train display at the museum.