



emPower You

December 2025 Newsletter

From the Desk of Our President

Greetings NC AABE Family,

What an absolute whirlwind we are in! Things are moving and shifting all around us, but we are strong. The government was shut down; SNAP benefits were set to end, ICE is in our streets, and the air was filled with frustration, fear, anxiety, and despair. What are we supposed to do now? We adjust, that's what! We adapt and continue to thrive. Get to know your neighbors, stay connected with family, create and cultivate community. It takes a village and now is the time for us to lean into our community. Be wise, be kind, stay alert and move with intention. Our world is changing but lest you forget, I remind you WE WERE BUILT FOR THIS. We are well able!

Challenge yourself to avoid “doom scrolling”. Focus on self-care, make a concerted effort to redeem quality time in the presence of people who bring you peace, or make you laugh until your cheeks hurt. Get those endorphins flowing!

Colder weather is upon us, so be sure to stock your pantries with canned food, dry goods and other non-perishables. Keep firewood, charcoal, a grill etc. on hand as well. Also, remember to stock up or replenish your first aid and cold and flu treatments. If you stay ready you don't have to get ready.

A few notable items as I close, our annual Energy Policy Symposium in D.C. was quite a success. I count it as a privilege to have been part of the planning process. If possible, put this event on your schedule for next year, you will not be disappointed. The information shared and the fulsome discussions are unmatched. If you haven't already done so, [register for AABE's 49th National Conference](#) to be held in New Orleans April 12–15. Early bird registration will remain in effect until January. Finally, renew your membership to make sure you stay connected with us.

Let peace, grace and gratitude carry you through the rest of this year.

Happy Holidays to you all!



MoNiqueka Smith
 President, NC Chapter of AABE
Moniqueka227@gmail.com
Moniqueka.smith@duke-energy.com
 C: 704.774-0049

Save the Date

Mark Your Calendar!

SAVE THE DATE

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

BUILDING YOUR PERSONAL PIPELINE

About Our Event!

Date: March 20, 2026
Time: 8:00am - 5:00pm
Location: Duke Energy Plaza
 525 S. Tryon St.
 Charlotte, NC 28213

Event Highlights

- Build Your Professional Tool Kit
- Legislative Policy Updates
- Confidence Building
- Exploring AI

Join or Renew Membership Today

Contact us
 northcarolina@aabe.org

Website
 ncaabe.org

Featured Conference Topics

- Professional Tool Kit Development: Workshops focused on skill-building and industry best practices.
- Legislative & Policy Insights: Expert-led sessions on upcoming policy changes that may impact your work.
- Confidence Building & Leadership Growth: Engage in motivational experiences that strengthen your leadership abilities.
- Artificial Intelligence Exploration: Learn how AI is being used today and what it means for the future of the industry.

This empowering event is designed to support your growth, sharpen your skills, and expand your professional network. We invite you to join us in Charlotte for a high-impact day filled with valuable insights and hands-on learning.

Friday, March 20, 2026 | 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Duke Energy Plaza
525 S. Tryon St., Charlotte, NC

Click here to register: [Professional Development Conference](#)

For questions, email northcarolina@aabe.com or moniqueka.smith@duke-energy.com

Membership Engagement Events



NC AABE Membership & Engagement Holiday Event

Wednesday, December 17, 2025

5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Birdsong Brewery Company

1016 N Davidson St, Charlotte, NC 28206

This is a membership event and a time for Networking, Conversations & Cocktails!

Invite your network in the Energy Sector to come out and learn more about AABE. Our Membership Drive runs through December 15. Please RSVP, [2026 End of Year Event](#).

If you are interested in joining our NC Chapter, please use the following link –

www.ncaabe.org

There will be New Member Recognition at the event.

Please contact Andrea Wages, andrea.wages@duke-energy.com with any questions.

Member Spotlight

This month, we're featuring Dana Davis, Vice President, Human Resources at North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives and NCAABE Personal Development Chair.

Tell us about yourself, career journey and current role at North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives.



I joined North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives in 2008 and have enjoyed watching the industry evolution during my 17 years of partnership with leaders to improve the quality of life in rural North Carolina communities. With more than 25 years of HR experience, I believe organizational successes and triumphs are built on three critical pillars:

- Healthy Organizational Culture
- Innovative and Engaged Talent
- Strong Leadership.

My career has been shaped by launching start-ups, recruiting, developing the next generation of workforce, and by providing HR direction and support to leaders in all size organizations.

Prior to joining NCEC, I supported both established organizations and entrepreneurial ventures as an HR Consultant and General Manager at Express Personnel Services. As VP, of Human Resources, with NCEC I am driven to create a Brighter Future for rural North Carolina communities by recruiting and developing an agile workforce prepared for the dynamic changes in the energy industry.

I earned my Bachelor of Arts at North Carolina State University. I am a certified Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR) and a certified DDI, Crucial Conversations, and Influencer facilitator. I am committed to making a difference through engagement with organizations that can shape the future of the energy industry, like E4 Carolina's HBCU Pathways Council and NC A&T's Steps 4 Growth Program. I have served on the Triangle Clean Tech Cluster's HR Advisory Group and the Center for Energy Workforce Development Workforce Advisory Group

What inspired you to get involved with the North Carolina Chapter of the American Association of Blacks in Energy (NC AABE)?

My first encounter with AABE was through the NC chapter's Black Energy Awareness Month academy for high school students. I was so inspired by the talent and the next generation workforce for our industry that I have been involved ever since.

Why is it important for AABE to focus on professional development of its members?

As the energy industry undergoes rapid transformation driven by technological innovation, clean energy transitions, and evolving policy landscapes, it is essential for AABE to prioritize the professional development of its members. Equipping members with the latest industry knowledge and emerging skills not only empowers them to lead and innovate but also positions them to lead in technical and executive roles that drive strategy and vision. Continued investment in professional growth ensures that AABE members remain competitive, influential, and prepared to shape energy solutions that benefit both the industry and their communities.

Can you share any memorable experiences or achievements over the course of your career that had a major impact on who you are today?

I am proud of our internship program. North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives internship program is designed not only to provide hands-on practical work experience; we also teach our interns about our industry. We include site visits and learning experiences that get them up close and personal with microgrids, face-to-face with executives, and working together to present at employee meetings. I have followed the careers of our past interns and I'm so proud to see the impact they are making on our industry and their communities.

What advice do you have for young professionals looking to advance in the energy industry?

Let yourself be driven by natural curiosity and develop your critical assessment skills. As our industry changes, understanding the changes and impacts becomes the foundation as you make decisions about your career path. Explore how you connect your talents and abilities to the emerging skills gaps. Critical thinking and assessment skills are essential in a transformative environment. Organizations need employees who can look beyond "now" making decisions and driving actions that result in positive outcomes.

What brings you joy in your personal life?

As one of 7 siblings, the mom of 3, and grandmother of a precocious 6-year-old, I love family gatherings full of laughter, food, and family. Life keeps us so busy that I look forward to the moments when we can slow down and enjoy time together, share a meal, and spend quality time together.

If you have suggestions for members we should consider for a future spotlight, please Communication Committee Chair, Sandra Williams (Sandra.Williams2@duke-energy.com).

Career Opportunities

Are you aware of any Career and Job Opportunities?

Submit opportunities to us at northcarolinias@aabe.org.

For information on additional jobs in NC and other States, please review the AABE Career Center on the National website.

[Energy Jobs - American Association of Blacks in Energy \(aabe.org\)](http://Energy Jobs - American Association of Blacks in Energy (aabe.org))

Community Involvement

Congratulations to NC AABE! Celebrating Our First Community Outreach Event — A Successful Food Drive



We are thrilled to celebrate the NC AABE's first community outreach event! This milestone marks a significant step in our mission to give back and support those in need within our local community. Thanks to the dedication, generosity, and teamwork of our members, volunteers, and supporters, our inaugural food drive was a tremendous success. Together, we collected and distributed food items to Care Ring based in Charlotte, NC and Durham Technical Community College in Durham, NC, ensuring that more tables are full this season.

Moving Forward Together

The success of our first outreach event is just the beginning. NC AABE is committed to continuing our efforts to uplift and empower our community through meaningful service. Stay tuned for upcoming events and opportunities to get involved. Now is a critical time for people who need support and food assistance, so please continue to give to your local food pantries, places of worship or other organizations working to feed people in need in your community. Together, we are making a positive impact!

Legislative and Public Policy Updates

► Federal & Policy Updates from AABE External Affairs Outreach

Groups sue EPA over canceled \$7 billion solar program intended to help poorer Americans

A "Solar for All" lawsuit has been filed by multiple states and environmental groups against the EPA to challenge the cancellation of a \$7 billion federal grant program intended for low-income and disadvantaged communities.

Read more: [Groups sue EPA over cancellation of \\$7 billion Solar for All program | AP News](#)

About North Carolina's Solar for All Program: EnergizeNC

On April 22, 2024, the EPA awarded the EnergizeNC coalition with a \$156,120,000 Solar for All grant. The EnergizeNC coalition is led by the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality's State Energy Office, in collaboration with North Carolina Clean Energy Technology Center, the North Carolina Clean Energy Fund, and Advanced Energy. [Read more: Solar For All | NC DEQ](#)

Scholarship Opportunities

The Scholarship Committee of the NC Chapter of the American Association of Blacks in Energy (AABE) is excited to announce the 2025-2026 scholarship application window is now open. This program is designed to support promising graduate high school seniors in North Carolina who aspire to pursue studies in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and business to make a positive impact in their communities.

Application Window
November 1, 2025 – February 15, 2026

How to Apply:

- Visit the [AABE scholarship application site](#)
- Register to apply
- Choose 'North Carolina' as your state of residence

Eligibility Criteria:

- High school students with a minimum unweighted GPA of 3.0
- Plan to major in an approved field (e.g., science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and business).
- Intend to enroll in an accredited college, university, technical, or trade school in the fall semester.
- Demonstrated leadership in your community.



[Submit Your Application Today](#)

We strongly encourage all eligible students to apply and take the next step toward achieving their academic and professional goals.

Please share this announcement with students, educators, and community organizations that may benefit from this opportunity.

Together, we can empower future leaders in energy.

Keep Your Membership Current

Are you unsure of the status of your membership or do you need to renew your membership to get back in “active” status?

You may send an inquiry using the link [here](#) to access the AABE Membership Renewal page.

Do you know someone interested in joining AABE?

Share this [link](#) with a non-member and encourage someone to join!

Call for Membership Engagement!

Are you looking for ways to be more engaged with the Chapter?

If you are looking for an opportunity to increase your knowledge of the energy industry and develop leadership skills – look no further. The North Carolina Chapter of AABE has several opportunities for you to engage with other chapter members as a committee chair or committee member.

If you are interested in becoming a committee leader, please contact Chapter Vice President, Vinita.Moore@duke-energy.com.

2025-2026 Chapter Leadership

AABE Officers

President MoNiqueka Smith

Vice President Vinita Moore

Historian Shantesea Kinard (Shae)

Secretary Malika Lindsey

Treasurer Latitia M. Haskins

Committee Information and Contacts

We look forward to hearing from you!

Finance Support Committee

Latitia Haskins – latitia.haskins@gmail.com

- Support and assist the treasurer with day-to-day financial responsibilities, including creating monthly financial reports shared with board of directors
- Assist with defining the chapter's financial strategy for board approval

Scholarship Committee

Bria Burwell – Bria.Burwell@duke-energy.com

Onté Johnson – Onté.Johnson@gmail.com

- Oversee annual chapter scholarship recipient selection process
- Plan and execute annual Youth Energy Academy in October – in recognition of Black Energy Awareness Month
- Lead Make It Take Activities hosted at local elementary schools and middle schools

Membership Recruitment and Engagement Committee

Bria Burwell – Bria.Burwell@duke-energy.com

Onté Johnson – Onté.Johnson@gmail.com

- Plan and execute membership recruitment, retainment, and appreciation events
- Develop strategic partnerships for engagement opportunities that may include joint community service and STEM awareness projects
- Track and reconcile chapter memberships with national records
- Host membership engagement activities

Communications Committee

Sandra Williams – Sandra.Williams2@duke-energy.com

LaVonia Briscoe – LaVonia.Briscoe@duke-energy.com

- Oversee collection of articles to compile and distribute chapter communications
- Maintain relevant information on chapter's website and social media platforms
- Develop chapter communications strategy

Legislative and Public Policy Committee

Andrea Foster Andrea.Foster@duke-energy.com

- Plan and execute legislative and public policy events to bring awareness to legislative issues and regulatory policies affecting our industry and communities.
- Oversee and execute By-law's changes/updates and the Chapter's Board Election process (occurs every two years)

Professional Development Committee

Dana Davis Dana.Davis@NCEMCS.com

- Plan and execute career development initiatives in support of professional development for members to increase energy knowledge.
- Identify and share professional development opportunities via national, regional, and inter-chapter partnerships.

Technology Professional Development Committee

Shawnon Burks Shawnon.Burks@duke-energy.com

- Develop technical support strategy for chapter events
- Provide technical support for all virtual events

Historical Committee

Shae Kinard Shae.Kinard@duke-energy.com

- Compile and interpret Chapter records and documents to include photographs, newsletters, and other pertinent information for history of AABE – North Carolina Chapter.
- Engage with other committees.

Communications

Seeking feedback and participation!

The newsletter is a service of the NC Chapter of AABE Communications Committee to ensure our members are informed about industry topics and chapter events. We welcome your feedback and suggestions for articles, calendar entries or topics to increase the knowledge and information shared with members!

Please contact Committee Chair, Sandra Williams (Sandra.Williams2@duke-energy.com) if you have input for an upcoming newsletter.