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**SANTEE ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE NEWS**

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FIND US ON



**SANTEE ELECTRIC IS AN EQUAL
OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND
EMPLOYER.**



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Options for payment, service

THIS MAY SOUND STRANGE, but we see it as a compliment when Santee Electric is taken for granted. Our goals are

to keep outages as rare and short as possible, to keep bills as low as possible and to make service order requests and payment methods as simple as possible.

The less you have to think about your power provider, the better the job we are doing. I have dedicated recent issues to explaining outage restoration and lowering your power bill. This month, I want to tell you about all the ways we make payments and service requests easy.

Of course, you can come to the cooperative's office to sign up for service, but you certainly don't have to. Our talented and professional member service representatives can handle anything you might need through phone and email, from a simple security light request to transferring an account to applying for a new service. You can also initiate this process from our website, santee.org. When you put in your request, our folks will reach out to you and take care of all your requirements while you hang out in the comfort of your living room!

How about paying your bill? The simplest way to pay your bill each month is to sign up for bank draft. In this case, your bill payment is drafted from your checking account at the same time each month. Before the draft occurs, you receive your bill with the draft date noted. You never have to worry about when your bill is due again.

You can also stop by one of our kiosks (outside of each of our offices and available 24/7) to pay by cash, card or check. You can call the office too and make a payment via check or credit card through our interactive voice response (IVR) system. Be aware, we have to

follow the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard, which prevents our representatives from taking your check or credit card information over the phone.

Of course, there are also the traditional methods of paying in person at the office and mailing in your payment.

Our newest payment option is impressive. Through a program called Vanilla Direct, you can pay your bill at over 100 retail locations in the counties we serve, such as Walmart, Walgreens, CVS, Family Dollar and Dollar General, to name just a few. Just take your SEC bill to one of these locations and pay while you are shopping. There is a \$1.50 transaction fee, but that is less expensive than a trip to the office.

I was, of course, only joking when I said we want you to take us for granted. We DO want you to be happy you own an electric cooperative. We just want you to see your interactions with us as being as simple and easy as possible. I hope you all have a great month!

ROBERT G. ARDIS III
President and Chief Executive Officer

Santee Extra

On pages 12A–D, you can learn more about Santee Electric's payment options, read a profile of the Georgetown-based company Envirosep and get a behind-the-scenes look at the power restoration process.

Local students make connections on Youth Tour

BY JOSH P. CROTZER

OF ALL THE THINGS she saw during her trip to Washington, D.C. earlier this summer, Johnsonville's Mikayla Emmen was most impressed with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, on which is engraved the name of every soldier that was killed during the Vietnam War.

Emmen, who was one of 57 students representing cooperatives across South Carolina on Washington Youth Tour, will remember one name, in particular. All the South Carolina students were given the biography and name panel location of a soldier from their area who is memorialized on the iconic wall so they could etch the engraving. Emmen

etched the name of James Edward Stone, a U.S. Army corporal, also from Johnsonville and just a few years older than her when he was killed in action in 1968 at age 20.

"They remember everyone, nobody was left behind," says Emmen, a rising senior at Hannah Pamplico High School. "It shows that people remember the ones that died for our country."

On Washington Youth Tour, students experience six days in the nation's capital area visiting historical and educational sites including George Washington's Mount Vernon, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the National Mall and the National Pentagon 9/11 Memorial. Santee Electric sponsored two students on the all-expenses-paid trip, Mikayla Emmen and Claire McKenzie of Andrews.

In addition to the museums, memorials and monuments, the youth tourists also spent a day at the U.S. Capitol where



Santee Electric youth tourists Mikayla Emmen and Claire McKenzie at the U.S. Capitol.

PHOTOS BY JOSH P. CROTZER



Emmen etches the name of Johnsonville's James Edward Stone from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall.



McKenzie takes in the view of Washington, D.C. from the observation deck of the Old U.S. Post Office Tower.

they toured the complex, visited Congressional offices and met with staff members. Afterwards, U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham and U.S. Sen. Tim Scott spent time talking with the students and answering their questions on the Capitol steps.

Throughout the trip, the students participated in the Soda Pop Co-op, a student-run market that sold snacks and beverages to their fellow youth tourists. As member-consumers, the students each received \$7 in capital credits, their share of the co-op's end-of-trip margins. The students donated a portion of their capital credits, a total of more than \$250, to Kid's Closet, a co-op affiliated outreach program that provides essential items to temporarily homeless youth throughout South Carolina.

South Carolina's youth tourists were not the only student delegates in Washington. They were among more than 1,600 students representing electric cooperatives across the nation. The students traded their state pins with one another and went on a riverboat dinner cruise along the Potomac River.

"I had a really good time and met a lot of really great friends," says McKenzie, a rising senior at Williamsburg Academy. "I got to see some cool things that I wouldn't have been able to, otherwise."

A way to pay for everyone

SANTEE ELECTRIC offers many ways for members to pay their monthly bill. Here are the options available.

- ▶ **SmartHub App/Online Portal** allows you to make payments right from your phone. You can pay your bill, report power outages, review payment history, stop and start service, check on monthly energy use and request maintenance. SEC's SmartHub app includes a personal password-protected gateway and secure socket layer that guarantees your information remains confidential, so you never have to worry.
- ▶ **Bank Draft (Auto Pay)** is a secure and hassle-free way to pay your bill. When you sign up, Santee Electric will automatically deduct the amount of your bill from your checking

account each month. You receive your monthly statement, showing your details and the amount due, at least one week before the bank draft happens. With Bank Draft, you can be confident that your payment will always be made on time. To sign up to have your payment drafted from your checking account, credit card, or debit card, you can log into your SmartHub account or visit any SEC office.

- ▶ **Kiosks** Every SEC office has a payment kiosk out front that is available to members 24/7.
- ▶ **VanillaDirect Pay** is a new, convenient way for SEC members to pay their energy bills. On the back of SEC's new bill print is a VanillaDirect barcode allowing members to make payments at various retail locations such as

Dollar General, Family Dollar, CVS, Walmart, and many more. For a full list of retailers, visit santee.org/billing.

- ▶ **Advance Pay** is a pay-as-you-go plan that allows you to pay when you want, in the amounts you want. Instead of receiving a paper or electronic bill each month, your energy use is calculated daily. It works similar to a prepaid cell phone. You put money into your Advance Pay account, and as you use electricity, the cost of your energy use will be deducted from your Advance Pay account balance daily.
- ▶ **In-person/mail** As always, we are here for you. Members can come to any SEC office and pay their bill. Or, mail it in. We are ready to assist you with your payment needs.

TEACHERS IN WILLIAMSBURG, GEORGETOWN, CLARENDON AND FLORENCE COUNTIES

APPLICATIONS ARE OPEN FOR THE BRIGHT IDEAS GRANT!

Bright Ideas grants are intended to fund projects outside normal school funding parameters and are available to all disciplines in grades K-12. Grants are awarded for up to \$1,000 each. The Bright Ideas Grant is a fantastic opportunity to bring creative and engaging projects to your school, take advantage of it!

For more information about the Bright Ideas Grant program and the application, visit santee.org/bright-ideas. Completed applications are due by **Monday, September 23, 2024**.

Engineering success

Georgetown-based Envirosep has grown from a dream into an industry leader

BY JOANNA ARNSMEYER

ENVIROSEP BEGAN with Tim Tilley, founder and CEO, taking the biggest risk of his life.

“There comes a time in everyone’s life when they consider doing something on their own,” says Tilley. “Beginning Envirosep was mine.”

Envirosep started upstairs in Tilley’s house 28 years ago. Tilley had an engineering degree and industry experience and was ready to take the leap.

Envirosep is now a full-service engineering and manufacturing firm specializing in innovative modular fluid handling, heat transfer and energy recovery systems. The company is served by Santee Electric Cooperative.

In 1996, Envirosep began with a business plan to target textile companies by building wastewater reuse systems using membrane separation technology. That is where the company derived its name, Envirosep, which stands for environmental separations. But, with the downturn of the American textile industry, Envirosep needed a new business plan.

“When things fail, you start over and do anything to provide for your family. If someone asked me to sell them my step ladder, I would have,” says Tilley.

Envirosep started over with three employees and a rented building in Earls, South Carolina. They then moved to Georgetown in 2002 and planted new roots. Georgetown was where Tilley wanted the business to be because it kept the company local. Envirosep began focusing on fluid handling, heat transfer systems and any other related technology clients requested.

“In simple terms, fluid handling is pumping water around,” explains



Thomas “Rett” Cox, part of the ASME team, works on a stainless steel tank.

PHOTOS BY JOANNA ARNSMEYER



Barry Howard (left) was hired as Envirosep’s third employee by Tim Tilley (right). Today, Barry Howard Boulevard runs through the heart of Envirosep, named in honor of one of its most dedicated employees.

Tilley. “Heat transfer systems are the heating and cooling of industrial equipment and sometimes the heating and cooling of a building space.”

Tilley believes what sets Envirosep apart from other businesses in the industry is its expertise in building complex systems in modular form, which

he says is the “future of the industry.”

Envirosep’s projects range from small, standardized packaged pumping equipment to complex, custom modular systems. The field has minimal expertise, Tilley says, and Envirosep is one of the few companies in the world capable of producing the systems.



Founder and CEO Tim Tilley inspects one of the mechanical rooms being constructed by Envirosep.

Envirosep Profile

- ▶ Founded in 1996 by Tim Tilley
- ▶ Established headquarters in Georgetown in 2002
- ▶ Full-service engineering and manufacturing firm that specializes in fluid handling and heat transfer system applications
- ▶ Expanded their headquarters in 2012 then added a 100,000 sq ft. 4-story manufacturing building in 2022.
- ▶ Currently has 250 employees (including subcontractors).

“We are able to build everything our customer needs in one location, then send it to them in modular form,” says Tilley. “Think of it as a furnished modular home. It gets shipped, bolted together, electricity is connected, and you are ready to go. It is the same thing, just on a more complex scale for our customers.”

Envirosep has completed many high-profile projects over the years. The company built modular equipment rooms for the tallest building in Brooklyn, at 1,000 feet, in Georgetown. The systems were then shipped in modules and put together on-site as crews put up the floors of the building.

The company also built a modular chilled water plant for Yankee Stadium. Envirosep shipped the plant in February 2024 so the stadium could have it in time for the Yankees’ regular season. The Los Angeles Clippers’ new arena, the Intuit Dome, will operate 100% carbon-free and be the only sports arena in the world built



David Baker, one of Envirosep’s welders, works on a base frame.

with 100% embodied carbon concrete. Envirosep helped make that possible by designing and building a modular central utility plant for the arena.

Envirosep also completed projects for the Los Angeles Raiders training facility and Eli Lilly and Company, the world’s largest pharmaceutical company by market value. Other major companies that Envirosep has worked with include Samsung, Toyota and Fiat Chrysler.

Beginning as a one-man operation, Envirosep now has over 250 employees (including subcontractors) and is still growing. A significant contributor to its growth in headcount is its expansion of facilities, which added 80,000 square feet in 2012 and a 100,000 square foot, four-story manufacturing building in 2022. The number of employees at Envirosep has tripled since 2018, when the second expansion began. Tilley attributes Envirosep’s success to the dedication of its employees.

“From a technical standpoint, every single employee we have is above average. Employees are the most important thing—and customers,” remarks Tilley.

Envirosep has obtained the U Stamp and the U2 Stamp from the ASME (American Society of Mechanical Engineers). These certifications ensure the company meets pressure vessel quality control system requirements. Envirosep is the only U stamp holder in northeast South Carolina and the only U2 Stamp

holder in the state. Tilley says this reflects the company’s high-quality workforce.

“We have to perform at high levels in order to receive these certifications,” he says. “We have engineers in almost every engineering discipline on staff, with 20 engineers.”

Envirosep is also on a mission to produce energy-efficient products that reduce energy consumption, lowering greenhouse gases and the carbon footprint. Envirosep has always focused on sustainability considerations and environmental factors.

Along with its business operations, Envirosep is dedicated to the local community. One significant contribution is its support of Horry Georgetown Technical College (HGTC). The company has been involved in the Advanced Manufacturing program, donated tools and supplies for students in the mechatronics program and has an apprentice program at HGTC. Tilley has also been on the HGTC Foundation Board since 2009 and plans to stay involved.

Tilley has held different positions in the community through the Economic Development Alliance, Georgetown Port Task Force, government affairs, and more.

Santee Electric Cooperative is proud to serve industries like Envirosep.

“The relationship between Santee Electric and Envirosep is outstanding,” says Tilley. SEC is a great partner to have in the community.”



TERRY MCGRAW

Getting the power back on

FOR MOST Santee Electric Cooperative members, power outages are rare and typically only last a few minutes or a couple of hours. But when a major storm impacts our area, an extended outage may be unavoidable.

So, when the power goes out, how do Santee Electric crews know where to start working? How do you know if your outage has been reported? Santee Electric's process begins with a plan that ensures power is restored safely and efficiently.

When the storm has subsided and it's safe for our crews to begin working, they start by repairing power lines and equipment that will restore power to the greatest number of people in the shortest time possible. This process typically begins with repairs to the larger main distribution lines that service thousands of homes and businesses. After those repairs are made, crews work on tap lines, which deliver power to transformers, either mounted on utility poles (for above-ground service) or placed on pads (for underground service). Finally, individual service lines that run between the transformer and the home are repaired.

While Santee Electric can't control the weather, the cooperative is always prepared for severe storms. The cooperative keeps a supply of extra utility poles, transformers and other equipment on hand so crews can quickly get to work in the event of an outage. When widespread outages occur, multiple crews will be out in the field simultaneously working to repair damage at multiple locations. Santee Electric also coordinates with nearby co-ops to bring in additional crews when necessary.

A proactive approach to maintenance helps minimize the chance of prolonged outages. This is why you may see crews periodically trimming trees and clearing vegetation near rights-of-way. Trimming improves power reliability for our entire community. In addition to managing vegetation, crews regularly inspect utility poles, power lines and other critical equipment in order to maintain a more reliable system.

If you experience a power outage, don't assume a neighbor reported it. It's best to report the outage yourself. The quickest way to report an outage is through the SEC SmartHub app. You can



As soon as a storm subsides, Santee Electric crews are out making repairs to get power restored as quickly as possible.

also call the outage reporting number at (888) 239-2300.

If you have a medical condition that requires electrical equipment, please let us know, and always have a backup plan in place. This plan could include a portable generator, extra medical supplies or moving to an alternate location until power is restored. If you plan to use a generator for backup power, read all safety information and instructions before use.

Mother Nature can be unpredictable, but as a member of Santee Electric, you can feel confident knowing we're standing by, ready to restore power as quickly and safely as possible.