



santee.org

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**SANTEE ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE NEWS**

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



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



“We are
right in your
back yard.”

In case you missed it

THANK YOU VERY MUCH for helping to make our 2024 Annual Meeting a huge success! Once again, we set a record, registering 4,840 members. If you attended, I want to say thank you and encourage you to spread the word about our awesome format. If you did not make it, please give it a try. The old days of standing in line for hours are over. Registration usually takes less than 10 minutes, and you can do it all from the comfort of your vehicle. Also, make sure to check out our livestreamed business meeting at **santee.org/annual-meeting**. You can see the speeches and the scholarship and prize recipients without having to sit in a cramped gymnasium.

In case you missed it, I did want to touch on the main topics of this year's address.

Santee Electric Cooperative is heavily involved in economic development in the communities that we serve. Like our counties and our state, SEC supports economic development because it brings jobs and investment to our territory. Part of our mission is to improve quality of life, and jobs and investment do just that. Specific to your cooperative, though, is the fact that the customers that come to these industrial parks tend to buy electricity when it's inexpensive to deliver. Because they do this, the overall rate that we can offer to our residential members is lower. Furthermore, our development successes have yielded net profits, saving our members money.

We know South Carolina is one of the fastest growing states in the country. While this is a great thing, it also puts a strain on our infrastructure. To make sure we can handle this growth, it is critical that your electric cooperative and its partners do two things: build new capacity and make the most of existing capacity.

We need to build more generation plants and more electric transmission lines. We also need our partners in the gas industry to build more gas in the Palmetto State. This is a team effort. Green energy is a great thing, but it needs to be coupled with gas generation to cover times when the sun is not shining, and the wind is not blowing.

The best way to make the most of what we already have is to offer an incentive for any energy use you can move off peak. For this reason, we have cut our energy charge nearly in half (from 12.5 cents to 6.5 cents) to incentivize off-peak usage. That doesn't mean you have to suspend your life for the three hours of the peak each day. It just means that choosing to move energy use off peak (pre-heating or pre-cooling your home and using appliances such as the washer, dryer and dishwasher outside the three-hour window) puts a lot more money back into your pocket.

As I said when I wrapped up my speech, you own your electric cooperative. We are right in your back yard. If you have questions about any of this, reach out. Have a great month!

ROBERT G. ARDIS III

President and Chief Executive Officer

JOANNA ARNSMEYER



Gabby and her human, Jim Cox, loved the drive-thru Annual Meeting.

JOSH P. CROTZER



LJ and Sarah (son and daughter of member Elizabeth Strums) give two thumbs up for SEC's drive-thru Annual Meeting (and the cool sunglasses).

Thank you for coming!

SANTEE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE held its 84th Annual Meeting on April 16 at the co-op's headquarters in Kingstree. We registered 4,840 members, a new record number of registered members! The business meeting was streamed live on our Facebook page. If you'd like to watch a replay of the meeting, go to santee.org/annual-meeting.

Incumbent trustees Walter Sanders (District 1), Donald E. Coker (District 3) and Andy D. McKnight (District 5) were reelected to the cooperative board by acclamation.

Thank you to everyone who came out. We wouldn't be SEC without you, our members!

JOSH P. CROTZER



Member Carrie Williams came prepared with her April *South Carolina Living*, which included her registration ticket.

JOSH P. CROTZER



SEC employees, including Sylvester Speights (left) and Wendy Swinton, are always happy to serve members at the Annual Meeting.

JOSH P. CROTZER



George and Kathleen Graham were happy to register and receive their knives.

Safety on the line at annual lineworker rodeo

SEC crew finishes 2nd overall, Davis third on written test

BY JOSH P. CROTZER

LAURA COLLINS SAYS her 4-year old daughter Everleigh knows one important thing about her dad's job.

"She knows he climbs poles," says Laura Collins, wife of Santee Electric Cooperative lineman Corbett Collins.

Laura knows a lot more, like the everyday hazards that he encounters while working with high-voltage equipment. "I tell him to make sure he does things the way they're supposed to be done so that he can come home to his wife and children," she says.

Doing things the way they are supposed to be done is what the 2024 South Carolina Lineworkers Rodeo is all about. Sponsored by The Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina, the rodeo features events such as a written safety test, overhead transformer changeout and streetlight replacement. Not only do the state's electric cooperative lineworkers get to show off their skills in front of family and friends, but the emphasis is on applying safe practices—more than speed—during the competitions.

"I know they are timed, but the main part for them is to be safe," says Collins. "That's the good thing about this, not only do they get to compete, but it's teaching them safety at the same time."

The event took place in March at Berkeley Electric Cooperative's Moncks Corner facility and featured 98 lineworkers representing 10 electric cooperatives. The rodeo features two divisions. Apprentice lineworkers (less than 4 years of experience) compete individually, while journeymen compete as three-man crews.



JOSH P. CROTZER

Laura Collins is glad Santee Electric is committed to making sure her husband Corbett Collins returns home safely to his two daughters.



KRIS MEADE

SEC's Abbi Davis scored third highest on the written safety test in the apprentice division.



KRIS MEADE

Channing Matthews and his Santee Electric crew change out a padmount transformer during the S.C. Lineworkers Rodeo.

Santee Electric's journeyman crew of Collins, Dustin Shady and Channing Matthews finished second overall in the division. They placed second in the Overhead Transformer Changeout challenge and had the highest cumulative score on the written test of the statewide safety manual.

Apprentice line worker Abbi Davis, the state's only female electric cooperative lineworker, placed third in the division on the written test. Davis says including the test as a rodeo event is beneficial to all the participating line workers.

"It gives everybody the opportunity to make sure they are well versed in what we're supposed to be doing out in the field," she says.

Davis, who is originally from Harkers Island, North Carolina, had several members of her family travel over 300 miles to see her compete. They were not surprised by her strong showing.

"They know me well enough to know that I'm always going to take the safe route," she says. "No matter what happens."

Cooperative LIGHT helps children thrive

SANTEE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE is committed to making a positive impact in the communities it serves. Recently, the co-op identified a worthy cause where it could bring about a positive change: the lives of children living in poverty. This is a part of SEC's core principles, the 7th being Concern for Community.

Santee Electric employees established Cooperative LIGHT (Leaders Igniting and Giving Hope Together) to serve children in the community by providing them with necessities such as clothes, shoes, hygiene products and more. We work closely with schools in our service territory to establish the needs of the students.

The mission of Cooperative LIGHT is to empower children by providing access to essential resources and opportunities, ensuring no child is limited by their circumstances. We want every child to have the tools and support they need to thrive.



The first-place team of the Cooperative LIGHT Fundraiser included (from left) Reed Cooper, David Anderson, Danny Shelley and Burrough Nobles.



The Sporting Clays Fundraiser drew 100 participants and raised roughly \$30,000. Trey Brown, CEEUS account manager, Joanna Arnsmeier SEC manager of community relations, Michele Johnson, SEC administrative assistant and Megan Blackburn, SEC executive assistant and Cooperative LIGHT coordinator were among those in attendance.

Cooperative LIGHT fundraiser

THE FIRST Cooperative LIGHT fundraiser was a huge success! The Sporting Clays Fundraiser, held at Backwoods Quail Club, was attended by 100 people who were excited to support the cause. With the help of our wonderful sponsors, we raised roughly \$30,000 for Cooperative LIGHT and its mission of helping children in the communities we serve.

The fundraiser was a testament to the power of community, a platform for people to unite, showing their support for a cause that truly matters. The success of the event reflects the generosity of all our sponsors, who went above and beyond in donating to Cooperative LIGHT. We are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to this remarkable event.

Thank you to our sponsors

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Energy scams unmasked

CONSUMERS WITH water, gas and electricity connections have long been targets for utility scams. In today's digital world, the risk has elevated. Scammers are more sophisticated and use a variety of methods to effectively trick unsuspecting consumers into giving them money or providing their personal information.

"Scammers try to create a sense of urgency and use it to their advantage," says Ardweena Bluefort, vice president of Member Services. "That helps them to convince our members to use unauthorized payment methods like gift cards or cryptocurrency.

Look for these red flags to identify utility scams:

- ▶ **High-pressure tactics** Scammers typically pressure consumers and

make threats to disconnect your service if payment isn't received immediately. Santee Electric Cooperative always sends advance notification and works with members to avoid disconnects.

- ▶ **Sketchy payment methods**

Scammers may ask for unusual forms of payment, like prepaid gift or debit cards, or cryptocurrency. Santee Electric offers several secure payment methods—but we will never request funds through unusual payment methods like this.

- ▶ **Dodgy communication** Whether an email, text message or other type of communication, utility scams often include poor grammar, spelling errors or an unusual email address.

"Santee Electric will never demand an instant, immediate payment and threaten to disconnect your service without prior notice," says Bluefort. "We do our best to work with our members to avoid disconnects."

Whether in-person, over the phone or online, Bluefort encourages members to be suspicious of an unknown individual claiming to be a co-op employee and requesting banking or other personal information. Santee Electric will only send you text messages if you have opted in for important alerts from our TextPower program.

Members should call (800) 922-1604 if they suspect they are targets of a scam. To find out more about Santee Electric Cooperative's authorized payment methods, visit santee.org.

WHO POWERS YOU?

Inspired by someone making a difference in our community? Tell their story and they could win a prize.

We know our community is filled with unsung heroes who are making a difference. Let's celebrate them! This is your chance to honor the people who are making a real difference. Winners will be selected by a panel of judges based on the impact they have on our community. All entries must be submitted by July 31.

Grand Prize \$2,500

Your Local Co-op Prize \$500



Visit ecsc.org/WhoPowersYou for full contest rules





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From making a fast payment to reporting a power outage, the Santee Electric SmartHub app gives you a quick and easy access to your account.

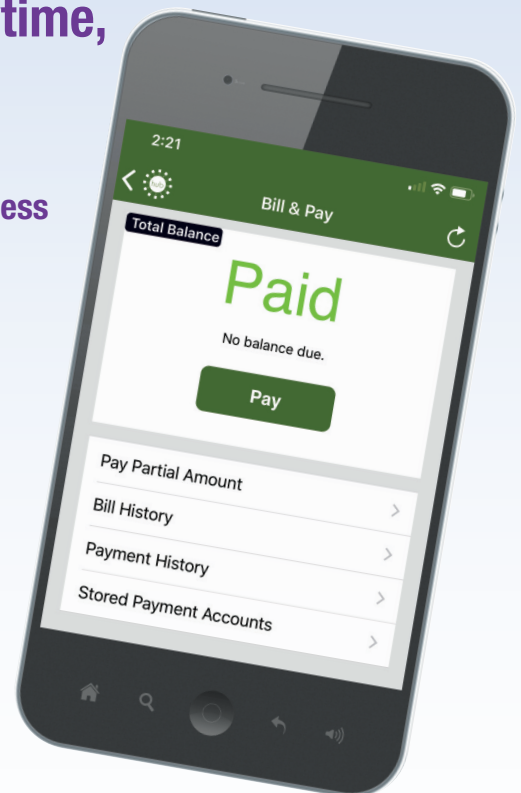
Available for all smart devices like iPhones, iPads and Androids.

The SmartHub app also lets members:

- ◆ review payment history
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- ◆ stop and start service
- ◆ request maintenance

Just download the Santee Electric SmartHub app for free on your smart phone's app store.

Once you download, simply follow the directions to connect your account and you're all set!



For more information, visit santee.org.



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