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**SANTEE ELECTRIC
 COOPERATIVE NEWS**

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Scams! How not to fall victim



I REALLY WISH this was a column I did not have to write. Unfortunately, though, there are enough people with bad intentions out there that I need to address this.

Let's talk about fraud and scams. Sometimes, examples mean more than definitions,

so here are several that happened right here in SEC's system:

- ▶ One of our members was called by someone claiming to be from Santee Electric and told to pay \$900 (immediately, over the phone)—or their service would be disconnected.
- ▶ Another of our members was called by someone from an 800 number (making it look like a more legitimate business call) basically asking for the same thing. When we tried calling this number, the person who answered the call posed as a representative from another electric cooperative in South Carolina. Apparently, they were running scams on folks from multiple cooperatives, but they were trying to do so with only one 800 number.
- ▶ A third example reports men claiming to be from SEC and also from one other utility knocking on doors in a neighborhood to change light bulbs.
- ▶ In just one more example (of many), a member was convinced by a caller

that the member needed to purchase a prepaid bank card and then call back in order to pay their light bill. Unfortunately, this scam was successful in at least one case.

What's true and what is not true?

While it is true that we do disconnect power for nonpayment, we would NEVER call and demand that you wire us money or give us your credit card information over the phone. We would also never tell you to purchase a card to pay us. There are times members apply for service or bank draft via telephone, fax or email. At that time, we would ask for payment (deposit, application fee, membership) via credit card or collect credit card information for bank draft; however, these members would be anticipating the call from us.

Furthermore, we do not ask to come into any homes. We do need to check our equipment from time to time. We may knock on doors letting you know we are planning to do some work in the area which may cause a temporary interruption in power. We also have appointments from time to time to come out and meet with members. We would NEVER, however, just knock on your door and ask to come in.

What should I do?

If you get a call from someone claiming to be from SEC that sounds suspicious, hang up, call us and ask. If someone comes to your door claiming to be with SEC, they should have our logo on their vehicle, their uniform, or—at the very least—a business card. Thank you, and have a great month!



ROBERT G. ARDIS III
 President and Chief Executive Officer

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February

9 Electronic E-Waste Recycling Event,

Manning. (803) 433-4004

21 \$10,000 Drawing Event, The Railway

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March

12 Williamsburg Hometown Chamber

Banquet, Kingstree. (843) 355-6431

25 Georgetown Chamber Golf Classic,

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