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**Santee Electric
Cooperative News**
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Learning from our members

A strong work ethic always pays off

ONE OF THE THINGS that I cherish about this area is the work ethic our leaders instill in young people.



In this month's column, I would like to recognize two such local leaders whom we lost in the past year, Wayne Avant and Toy Nettles. It is certainly sad any time SEC loses one of its member-owners, but I wanted to speak about these

two specifically, because, in addition to being Santee Electric Cooperative member-owners, they were also men who had a profound influence on my life.

Wayne Avant

I had the privilege of working in tobacco for Wayne Avant for several summers while I was a teenager. For any of you who have had the pleasure, you know this is hot, dirty, sticky work . . . but I cannot possibly measure how much good it did me as I grew up. Mr. Wayne (affectionately known as Captain Wafer for his fondness of a particular type of snack) had a team of boys working for him. He taught us a great deal that would help us as we grew into men. He taught us that hard work, dependability and toughness were keys to success. At the same time, he had a way of showing us that we could have fun while we were working hard. "The Captain" expected a lot out of all of us, but he happily let work take a backseat

whenever August brought football practice and school back into the picture.

Toy Nettles

I also worked with Toy Nettles before coming to Santee Electric Cooperative. He was the first person who made me take on the responsibilities of being a supervisor. I remember being called into his office and him asking me if I would be willing to take on a new role. I was overwhelmed, honored and a little scared. However, I could see the confidence he had in me, and it—in turn—filled me with confidence. Toy was another boss who expected a lot out of me and made sure I was happy doing my work. You have all, no doubt, heard the saying, "If you love your job, you'll never work a day in your life." With Toy, it never seemed like work.

I would like to encourage all of you to thank someone who led you, encouraged you and helped you develop into the person you are today, if you still have the opportunity. Furthermore, I encourage you to lead others. You never know . . . that kid you hire to work in your tobacco field might just be a CEO one day.

Robert G. Ardis III
President and Chief Executive Officer