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P.O. Box 548
Kingstree, SC 29556
(843) 355-6187

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**SANTEE ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE NEWS**
Joanna Arnsmeier, *Editor*
jarnsmeyer@santee.org

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



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Investing where we live, work and serve

THE CLOSURE OF International Paper's local mill hit hard for folks in Georgetown County, and its impacts were

felt throughout the state, threatening hundreds of jobs, tax dollars and even drinking water for the people of Georgetown. But we now have an opportunity to make a tough situation better—and potentially better than it ever was.

Santee Electric Cooperative is partnering with Georgetown County and Santee Cooper to identify potential options involving the properties currently owned by International Paper. Together, we have the right collection of people, assets and intentions to do what's best for the future of these properties and our communities.

I want you to understand why we're the best group to take ownership of these properties.

The short answer is that we care about our ratepayers, taxpayers and our community. Santee Electric, Santee Cooper and Georgetown County have been here for a long time and are not going anywhere. We aren't profit-driven developers looking to "flip" a property. We want to invest in the place where we live, work and serve. We want to do what is best for our community.

We won't enter this endeavor if it has a potential negative impact for our stakeholders. If the analysis shows an effort like this will cause a rate increase, Santee Electric and Santee Cooper will not pursue it. Similarly, Georgetown County will not if it leads to a tax increase. You have our words on that.

We're interested in finding the quickest path to replace jobs, investment and tax base that were lost due to the

mill closure. Your cooperative is heavily involved in industrial park development in all four of the counties we serve. SEC has a great relationship with Georgetown County and its administration and legislative delegation. We've already partnered to spur a great deal of economic development in the county. Furthermore, Georgetown County has a vested interest and responsibility regarding areas surrounding its port and airport. With the opportunity to steer the future of the International Paper property, we can build on the economic success we're already driving in this area.

In addition to its electric service, Santee Cooper has had great success in providing wholesale water in our state through its lakes system. They may be an ideal candidate to take over the International Paper canal to ensure there is a continued drinking water source to the City of Georgetown as well as a new source for Georgetown County Water & Sewer District. Beyond water service, Santee Cooper has a tremendous record for promoting economic development, individually and through partnerships with the state's electric cooperatives.

I believe our group can offer the best solutions for how to develop the International Paper properties. As we do our due diligence regarding this opportunity, however, I wanted you to know what we are studying...and why. Know that we have the best interests of our members and our community in mind.

ROBERT G. ARDIS III
President and Chief Executive Officer



April 14 is Lineworker Appreciation Day! This month, we celebrate the remarkable men and women who ensure reliable power and prove their dedication to the community time and time again.

Lineworkers are wired for service

IN THE QUIET HOURS before dawn breaks, while many of us are still nestled in our beds, lineworkers begin their day. They are often clad in flame-resistant clothing, hard hats, safety glasses, rubber gloves and thick, heavy boots—gear they might still be wearing hours after the rest of us have returned home from our jobs.

This month is an opportunity to reflect on the essential role they play in our daily lives as we celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Day on April 14.

Amid towering utility poles and power lines, lineworkers exhibit a strength that goes far beyond the physical. Whether battling inclement weather, troubleshooting technical problems or navigating treacherous heights, lineworkers demonstrate resilience and a quiet determination to keep our lights on, our homes comfortable and our communities connected.

Santee Electric crews travel across our four-county service territory, building, maintaining and repairing parts of our local system. Their extraordinary skills ensure our homes remain connected to the grid, businesses stay operational and emergency services remain accessible—a lifeline that connects us all.

In moments of crisis, when the lights go out and we find ourselves in the dark,

lineworkers emerge as beacons of hope. Their swift response restores normalcy, offering reassurance in times of uncertainty. Whether repairing storm-ravaged power lines or ensuring continuity during emergencies, their unwavering commitment illuminates life when we need it most.

Santee Electric lineworkers also answer the call beyond the boundaries of home. Our crews travel to fellow co-ops, near or far, when widespread outages occur and additional support is needed. Cooperation among cooperatives is one of our seven guiding principles, and no one embodies this core commitment better than lineworkers.

After Hurricane Helene, once all our members had their power back on, we sent three crews to Edisto Electric, Coastal Electric and Blue Ridge Electric to assist them in their restoration efforts.

This month, as we celebrate the remarkable men and women who ensure reliable power, let's recognize their unwavering dedication to the local communities they serve.

The next time you flip a switch, please take a moment to remember those who make it possible—lineworkers, who are wired for service and dedicated to illuminating life.



We can't wait to see you at the Drive-Thru Annual Meeting on April 15!

See you at the Annual Meeting April 15

SEC's Drive-Thru Annual Meeting is on Tuesday, April 15. Come register between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. at our Kingstree headquarters. When you register, you will get a travel tumbler set, a \$15 electric bill credit and be entered into our prize drawings.

The business meeting will stream live from our Facebook page at 6:30 p.m. The prize drawings will be at the conclusion of the business meeting.

In case you missed it—the Annual Meeting cover wrap was on your March *South Carolina Living*.

Summer peak hours 3 to 6 p.m.

Summer peak hours began April 1 and continue until Oct. 31. The summer peak hours are now 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Remember, the peak charge on your bill is based on your highest single peak hour during the billing cycle. By adjusting your energy use during the peak hours, you can save! The simplest hack is not to stack your major appliances; only use one at a time during peak hours.

For more information and tips, visit [santee.org](https://www.santee.org).

