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SANTEE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE NEWS
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SANTEE ELECTRIC IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER.



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Singing her praises

IT HAS BEEN quite a few months since we had a chance to feature one of SEC's stars. This month, I am happy to introduce to you another great employee, Melody McFadden.

You could say Melody was born to work in the power industry. She was born on the night of the biggest event in SEC's history—the night of Hurricane Hugo. “My mom says they had to roll the hospital bed into the hall that night,” Melody recounts, “because the wind was so bad.”

After graduating from Kingstree Senior High, Melody went on to work in customer service at Cato and Georgetown Kraft Credit Union. She had years of experience at both locations when we were fortunate enough to snag her as a member service representative in early 2019. Melody handles thousands of calls for Santee Electric each year. Chances are, if you have called in for something in the past few years, Melody has helped you.

Melody is the oldest female out of her eight siblings of four brothers and four sisters. She has one sister who lives in Virginia, but the rest of the family is still close by. Melody's daughter, Bri'ney, is 12 years old and a rising seventh-grader at Kingstree Middle Magnet School of the Arts. When asked what Bri'ney likes to do in her spare time, Melody replies, “She loves to cook, draw and shop!”

Melody also likes to cook, particularly baking cakes. “I make a really good strawberry cake,” she reports, “but my specialty is my red velvet cake. I make everything from scratch. If you are not making your icing for the red velvet cake with cream cheese, then all you have made is a red cake!” Melody also likes to paint, especially landscapes. When I asked her which was her favorite, she told me of painting a small barn behind her grandma's house. “My uncle framed



JOANNA ARNSMEYER

Member Services Representative Melody McFadden is always willing to help members.

it and still has it today.”

“My favorite part of my job is helping people,” Melody says. “I love getting them the right answer and putting a smile on their faces.” Of course, I also asked her the toughest part. “Nasty people,” she says. “Some people just want to call in and yell at someone.”

I also asked Melody what she likes best about Santee Electric as a whole. “I like coming in here, and I like the people I work with,” she says. “I also appreciate how well my supervisors work with me when I need something.”

As I always do when interviewing our folks, I asked Melody for one thing she wishes all our members knew. “I want them to know there is almost always help when they need it,” she says. “Nine times out of ten, there is something we can do. If you need help [with a payment], call us.”

If you know Melody, make sure you say hello to her around town. If you call in, maybe it will be Melody helping you. You can say, I read an article about you!

ROBERT G. ARDIS III
 President and Chief Executive Officer

Youth Tour provides new perspectives for students

BY JOSH P. CROTZER

FOR BRIAN OATES, Washington Youth Tour was about gaining new experiences and new perspectives.

The rising senior at Manning High School joined 58 other student delegates sponsored by South Carolina's electric cooperatives on a six-day, all-expenses-paid trip that took them to historical and educational sites such as George Washington's Mount Vernon, Arlington National Cemetery, the National Mall and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Santee Electric also sponsored Carvers Bay High student Camryn Coles.

In addition to the museums, memorials and monuments, the students also spent a day at the U.S. Capitol building where they toured the complex, visited congressional offices and met with staff members. Oates and other student constituents of the 6th Congressional District sat down with Rep. Jim Clyburn's senior advisor Willie Lyles for a half-hour discussion.

"That was really a spectacular experience because I never thought I'd meet somebody that close to power," says Oates. "It was really special to me because I got to speak to someone that's helping change and fight for equality."

Coles visited Rep. Nancy Mace's office and was able to view the Capitol complex from the roof of the Longworth House Office building, accessed through the office window. Later in the day, they engaged in question-and-answer sessions with members of Sen. Lindsey Graham's staff and Rep. Ralph Norman on the Capitol steps.

Throughout the trip, the students participated in the Soda Pop Co-op. The co-op sold snacks and beverages to the students. Some of the students served as cooperative board members, others were a part of the management team. As member-consumers, the students each received \$7 in capital credits, their share of the co-op's end-of-trip margins. The exercise allowed the students to learn first-hand how the not-for-profit co-op business model works.

South Carolina's youth tourists were not the only student delegates in Washington. They were among more than 1,500 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. Students from across the country also gathered for National Youth Day where they learned about the rich history of electric cooperatives and the important role of being an active participant in our democracy.



Santee Electric student delegates Brian Oates (left) and Camryn Coles were among 59 students on the electric cooperative-sponsored Washington Youth Tour.

PHOTOS BY JOSH P. CROTZER



Brian Oates (right) joined other 6th Congressional District constituents in Rep. Jim Clyburn's office.



Camryn Coles (right) and Horry Electric delegate Rachell Hernandez at the National Air and Space Museum.