



santee.org

P.O. Box 548
 Kingstree, SC 29556
 (843) 355-6187
 (800) 922-1604

Georgetown (843) 546-4521
 Lake City (843) 374-3000
 Hemingway (843) 558-3313
 Manning (803) 473-4036

TO REPORT AN OUTAGE
 1-888-239-2300

Robert G. Ardis III
President & CEO

TRUSTEES

Billy L. Morris, Jr.,
Chairman, District 6
 Allen Nesmith,
Vice Chairman, District 4
 Bill Floyd,
Second Vice Chairman, District 8
 Donald E. Coker,
Secretary/Treasurer, District 3
 Andy D. McKnight
Assistant Secretary/Treasurer, District 5
 Dudley Musier, *District 2*
 Stanley S. Pasley, *District 7*
 Walter L. Sanders, *District 1*
 Harry Walters, *District 9*

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

FIND US ON



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



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Taking care of his members

HAPPY NEW YEAR, everyone! I hope you had a Merry Christmas!

Joanna Arnsmeier, our editor, has put together a great issue for you this month. In particular, we feature some of the wonderful things SEC does for students and athletes in our communities, including Touchstone Energy Cooperatives Bowl, Washington Youth Tour, Bright Ideas and scholarships.

I also have the pleasure of presenting another one of Santee Electric's stars to you. This month's featured employee is one of your favorites—Serviceman Harry Dukes.

Harry came to work at SEC in October of 1989, just one month after Hurricane Hugo. He was born and raised in Williamsburg County and attended St. Mark and Williamsburg-Blakely schools. Harry grew up in a farming family. After graduating from Williamsburg-Blakely in 1987, he helped year-round with the family's gathering of tobacco, corn, wheat, soybeans and cotton. We are thankful that Harry eventually chose the cooperative for his full-time job, however, as we were still not finished with Hugo recovery when he started!

Harry has been married to Mary Elizabeth Dukes since 1992, and they have five loving children. From oldest to youngest, they are Quanshae, Alex, Pierre, Olivia and Xavier. Olivia lives in Charleston, but the rest are close to home. Xavier attends Kingstree High School.

Harry is blessed to have his mother, Elmira, nearby. While his father has passed, he was a well-known member of the community. Though he was born James J. Dukes, everyone knew Harry's father as "Badad." In fact, he was quite famous for his barbeque. I asked Harry if he would share the secret of the sauce with me. He smiled and replied, "I'll be glad to share the ingredients with anyone, but not how to mix them!"



JOANNA ARNSMEIER

Harry Dukes

I asked Harry what he does when he is not at work, and he said, "I like to hunt deer, and I really like to fish in Black River. It's such a beautiful place. I also farm some, and I spend time working on equipment."

When asked what he likes best about his job, Harry volunteered that he likes the independence of running his own route and setting his schedule. He likes taking care of his members on his route. It is clear Harry takes pride in taking care of people. Regarding SEC in general, he said, "I really appreciate how they have helped me provide for my family."

The other side of that, of course, is the toughest part of the job. "Honestly," he offered, "It's that final step we have to take when people don't pay. I know it's part of the job, but it's never easy."

As always, I asked him if there was one thing he wanted our readers to know. He went back to the disconnect subject and said, "Call us first (for an extension or an arrangement). There is a lot we can do to help before that last step."

If you see Harry around, wave, smile and say thank you. Of course, if you can get the proportions for that BBQ sauce for me, I'd appreciate that too!

ROBERT G. ARDIS III
 President and Chief Executive Officer

'Climb Like a Girl' glove bag is a strong reminder for Abbi Davis

BY JOANNA ARNSMEYER

BEING A ROLE MODEL is a huge responsibility, one that Abbi Davis, apprentice lineworker and currently the only female lineworker at an electric cooperative in South Carolina, is up for. The saying "Climb Like A Girl" on her glove bag reminds her of that responsibility every time she takes her gloves out to work on or near energized conductors.

South Carolina's electric cooperatives recently partnered with their materials and equipment provider, Cooperative Electric Energy Utility Supply (CEEUS), to sponsor the My Why contest. Cooperative lineworkers across the state received bags donated by CEEUS to decorate with messages and art to inspire a focus on safety.

Davis mailed her canvas glove bag to her family in North Carolina so they could help her design her "Why." Her niece, Lexie, nephew, Cole, sister, Hannah, and parents, Jeff and Chris, made Davis' bag colorful and included a powerful message.

The bag is decorated on all four sides and has a big "WE LOVE YOU" at the top with the names of her family members (human and furry). Another section reminds her to "climb like a girl" with a detailed picture of a bucket truck with a female lineworker.

A panel of Davis' colleagues selected her glove bag as the winner of Santee Electric's My Why contest, and it went on to win second place overall in the statewide competition.

"The Why behind my glove bag reminds me of my family, but it also reminds me of the role model I am to my niece and other girls out there," says Davis. "Being a woman in this field gives me a responsibility because people look up to me, and I want to set a good example of what a safe lineworker looks like. It is so important."

Santee Electric Safety Manager Benji Floyd says, "The My Why contest stood for what we emphasize daily: safety, why we work hard and coming home to your families. Every measure to stay safe is important. These glove bags are a great representation of that."



CHRIS DAVIS

Davis' niece, Lexie, and nephew, Cole, wrote a special message to add to her glove bag.



JOANNA ARNSMEYER

Abbi Davis (middle) was congratulated for her glove bag winning second in the state contest by Trey Brown, CEEUS account manager (left) and JJ Synder, senior safety & training instructor at The Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina.

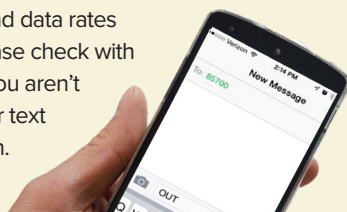
Text us!

SEC HAS A FREE texting service for our members that allows you to report outages, check the status of your outage, receive restoration notices and important updates by text message. Members may also receive notifications from SEC concerning planned service interruptions in your area and/or other emergency information pertinent to potential service interruptions.

Opt into our texting service by texting SECIN

to 85700. Your mobile number must be on file to use this option; if not, call us to update your contact information. For more information visit santee.org/text.

Message and data rates may apply. Please check with your carrier if you aren't sure about your text messaging plan.



SANTEE EXTRA

BE SURE TO CHECK out pages 12A-12D for news about the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives Bowl, Bright Ideas grant winners, Washington Youth Tour/ Cooperative Youth Summit and scholarship information.

TRAVIS BELL



Bowl game opponents Jasaia Young (left) and Dion Brown team up to help Rafael Gomez on his shopping spree.



TRAVIS BELL

South Florence tight end Rodney Lesane has his selfie pose ready as he is lifted in the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives hot air balloon.

Local all-stars win bowl game and with kids

BY JOSH P. CROTZER

EVEN THOUGH JASAIYA YOUNG was wearing practically the same thing all the other all-stars were wearing, Rafeal Gomez sensed he had a good sense of style. So, the fourth grader at Myrtle Beach Elementary School trusted the defensive back from Carvers Bay High School to help him pick out some clothes. The Legos and the toys on his list, Gomez could handle himself.

Gomez was one of 44 deserving students treated to a Christmas shopping spree at a Target store in Myrtle Beach. He was matched up with a pair of football players, one each from the North and South squads, who were set to face off in the annual Touchstone Energy Cooperatives Bowl later that week. Young and Dion Brown of Lewisville High School ushered Gomez around the store, making sure he could find most of the items on his list and spend the \$150 gift card provided by South Carolina's electric cooperatives.

"It was a fun experience to be with the kids and watch them spend the money and get what they want," says Young. "There's nothing wrong with that."

In fact, there is a lot right with it, according to one of Young's South

JOSH P. CROTZER



West Florence linebacker Franklin Emerson is used to filling holes at the line of scrimmage. He finds making a hole in a power pole during the Lineman Demo experience more difficult.

teammates, West Florence High School linebacker Franklin Emerson, who helped fourth grader Dariah Spells find the items she wanted.

"The shopping spree was the highlight of the week, for sure," says Emerson. "Dariah was the sweetest girl. We took her to the different sections and just let her roam free and it was awesome to see a smile on her face."

The shopping spree was part of a full week of experiences for the 88 players participating in the annual all-star game at Doug Shaw Memorial Stadium on Dec. 9. The night before, the players were given the opportunity to take a tethered ride in the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives hot air balloon. They also got to explore careers as linemen through hands-on demonstrations presented by a crew from Horry Electric Cooperative.

When he saw Lineman Demo on the



TRAVIS BELL

Andrews High running back Lavon White rushed for 21 yards in the South's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives Bowl victory.

bowl week schedule, South Florence High School offensive lineman Justin Joe guessed he would be learning some new blocking skills.

"I thought it was going to be some kind of O-line thing," says Joe, referring to his position on the roster. "But we got to see how power lines work and the job that those linemen do every day. It's an important job and it's pretty dangerous, too."

Other players from Santee Electric Cooperative's service area participating in the game included Andrews High School running back Lavon White, Kingstree High School defensive lineman James Brockington and South Florence High School tight end Rodney Lesane.

Congratulations teachers!

SEC awards Bright Ideas grants

SANTEE ELECTRIC WAS PROUD TO AWARD 16 Bright Ideas grants in 2023. Bright Ideas provides funding for innovative classroom-based projects. Santee Electric is deeply committed to its core principle of Concern for Community. That's why we love being able to support local teachers who are doing important work in our communities. Santee Electric believes that investing in our teachers and students is an investment in the future of our community,

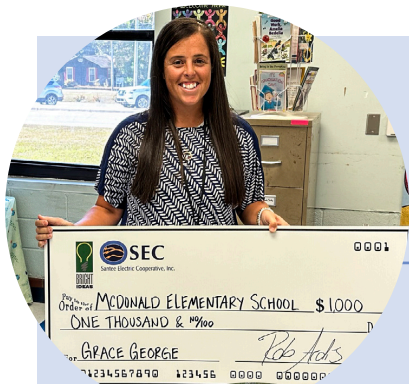


and we're proud to be a part of that effort.

Grants are available to all kindergarten through 12th grade teachers in Santee Electric's service territory. Each applicant is judged anonymously by educators from other parts of the state. There is no limit to creativity in the Bright Ideas grant, and there was a wide range of initiatives in the 2023 projects.

Teachers, be on the lookout for the Bright Ideas application opening in July. You could be a 2024 Bright Ideas Grant winner!

PHOTOS BY JOANNA ARNSMEYER



Georgetown County School District

McDONALD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Grace George won a \$1,000 grant for her project, "Sensational Sensory Supplements."



Florence County School District 3

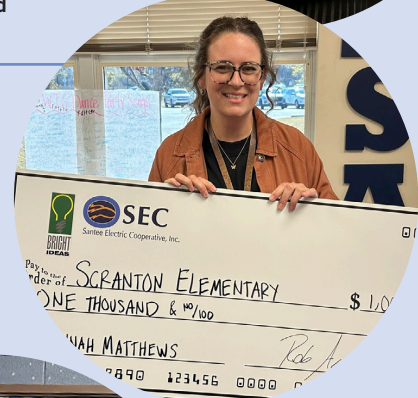
SCRANTON ELEMENTARY STEAM ACADEMY

Rebecca English won a \$1,000 grant for her project, "Empowering and Inspiring Innovative Leaders, Learners and Listeners!"

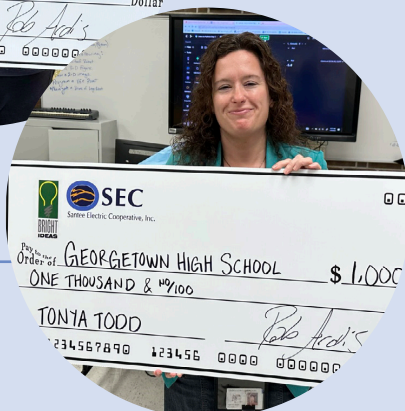


ROSEMARY MIDDLE SCHOOL

Kayla McCray won a \$1,000 grant for her project, "Boogie in Math."



Hannah Matthews won a \$1,000 grant for her project, "South Carolina History and Awards."



GEORGETOWN HIGH SCHOOL

Tonya Todd won a \$1,000 grant for her project, "It's the Math in the Motion—Gathering Data to Garner Appreciation and Skills!"



DR. RONALD E. McNAIR SCHOOL OF DIGITAL COMMUNICATION AND LEADERSHIP

The teacher team, Amanda Cullars-White and Jarren Manning won a \$1,000 grant for their project, "Lights, Camera, Build Your Action!"

Florence County School District 5

JOHNSONVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL

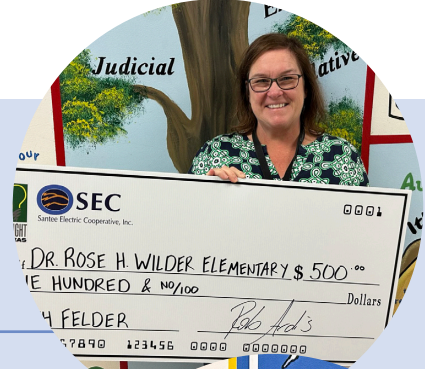
Donna Tanner won a \$800 grant for her project, "Elevate Learning with Breakout EDU."



Clarendon County School District

DR. ROSE H. WILDER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Beth Felder won a \$500 grant for her project, "Owl Be Back! Using Owl Pellets to Learn About Habitat Interaction."



Willette Sheard won a \$1,000 grant for her project, "Literacy Nature Trail."



Williamsburg County School District

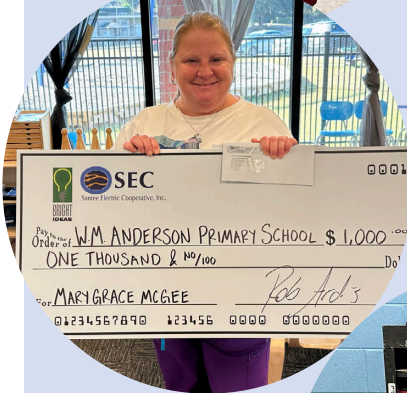
KENNETH GARDNER LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Katie Floyd won a \$1,000 grant for her project, "Cultivating Curious Creators: A Journey of Wonder."



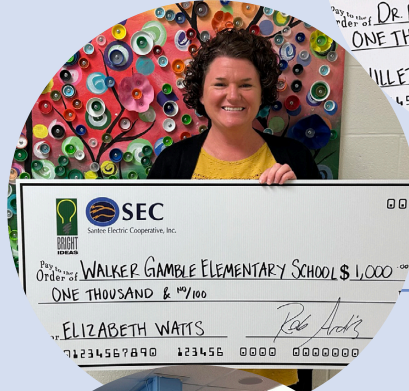
W.M. ANDERSON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mary Grace McGee won a \$1,000 grant for her project, "Informational Learning."



WALKER GAMBLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Elizabeth Watts won a \$1,000 grant for her project, "STEAM Night—Fostering Inquiry, Collaboration, & Problem-Solving."



Michelle Weaver won a \$1,000 grant for her project, "You've Been Booked!"



KINGSTREE MIDDLE MAGNET SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

Merrilyn Bradley won a \$1,000 grant for her project, "Robotics with LEGO."



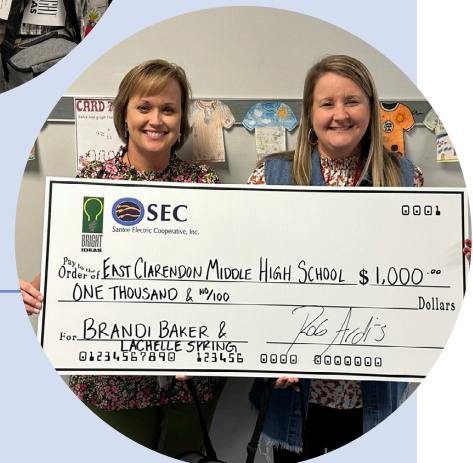
Williamsburg Academy

Rebecca Cox won a \$1,000 grant for their project, "Stupendous! Spectacular! Spellers!"



EAST CLARENDON MIDDLE HIGH SCHOOL

The teacher duo, Brandi Baker and Lachelle Spring won a \$1,000 grant for their project, "Windows to the World!"



Scholarships Available

Empower the Future Scholarship (\$1,000)

Santee Electric Cooperative offers a \$1,000 scholarship to seniors from the high schools in our service territory. Applications and scholarship guidelines are available at santee.org/sec-schools. **The deadline to apply is April 1.**

Operation Round Up Scholarship (\$2,500)

The SEC Trust will provide one \$2,500 scholarship in each of the four counties that we serve. Applications and scholarship guidelines are available at santee.org/sec-schools. **The deadline to apply is April 1.**



Ready for an experience you won't forget?

Your co-op has two amazing trips planned this summer. Juniors: Apply for the Washington Youth Tour. Sophomores: Apply for the Cooperative Youth Summit.

Juniors: Experience Washington, D.C., with hundreds of students from across South Carolina and the country, meeting lawmakers and touring all the sights. Your electric co-op will cover your round-trip plane ticket, tours and meals. In other words, it's all free!

Sophomores: Experience South Carolina's capital like never before. Tour the Statehouse, meet lawmakers and see how co-ops are preparing for our state's energy future. Plus, there's plenty of fun with visits to popular Columbia attractions like Riverbanks Zoo & Garden. Your electric co-op will cover all your expenses.

We've made it easy to apply for either FREE trip. Apply today!



Washington Youth Tour: June 15-20, 2024



Cooperative Youth Summit: July 15-18, 2024



Applications available: santee.org/washington-youth-tour

Application Deadline: February 23, 2024

