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



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



## We love our linemen

**I HOPE EVERYONE** is enjoying their spring so far. I want to start off by saying thank you for helping to make our 2023 Annual Meeting of the Membership a success! Another spring event that always means a lot to Santee Electric Cooperative is lineman appreciation.

We have wonderful and talented employees at SEC, but I suspect the employee you picture most when you think about your cooperative is a lineman.

These guys (yes, they are all guys so far, but we are eagerly awaiting our first linewoman applicant) rise to the occasion when most of us would rather be safe at home. They work in some of the worst weather you can imagine. They deal with heights and extreme temperatures. They work around insects, snakes and other dangerous animals. Mainly, they deal with an invisible, lethal element on a daily basis.

Most people, after reading that last paragraph might ask, “Why would anyone want to do that for a living?” After decades of working around these gentlemen, I can tell you this—it is a passion! The ability to climb, the ability to build, the ability to do something that most people shy away from, that is part of what drives them. Mainly, though, they do it because they love helping people. People depend on electricity for their comfort, for their quality of life, for their livelihoods and—in some cases—for their lives.

In this month’s issue, you will see a feature on some of our linemen who participated in a recent cooperative lineman rodeo. I do not want to steal any thunder away from that article, but I want to make sure you understand what a big deal this is. These guys gave up their Saturday to drive hours from home to show a lot of people how good they are at their jobs because it is more than their jobs. It is their passion.

I am an engineer by education, and I am proud of the field I studied in school. I enjoyed the work I did as a utility engineer. As much joy and fulfillment as I received from that job, though, I was never tempted to enter my skills in a competition. That is the difference.

I love what I do but linemen are in a class by themselves. When the lights go out, they go out.

When Mother Nature (or a bad driver) puts you in the dark, this fills you with emotion. Loss of comfort, loss of visibility, perhaps the loss of work productivity, food or even health threatens you. Our superheroes do not wear capes, but they do wear a uniform. They leave their homes and families to provide for yours.

If you see one of our guys out and about, tell them thank you. I hope you all have a great month.

**ROBERT G. ARDIS III**  
President and Chief Executive Officer

“It’s more  
than just  
a job. It  
is their  
passion.”

# Santee linemen showcase skills

BY JOSH P. CROTZER

**FIVE SANTEE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE** linemen joined lineworkers from around the state in showcasing their skills for family, friends and colleagues at the 2023 South Carolina Lineman's Rodeo.

Sponsored by The Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina, the event took place at Palmetto Electric's Ridgeland campus in March and featured 126 lineworkers representing 14 electric cooperatives.

Santee Electric's crew of Channing Matthews, Corbett Collins and Dustin Shady placed third overall in the journeyman division and first in the GFC Relay event, in which competitors are required to install a guy wire, replace a fuse barrel, climb a 50-foot pole and ring a bell.

First-year linemen Tyler Poston and Causey Ellis competed in the apprentice division, individual events for lineworkers with fewer than five years of experience at an electric utility.

Rodeo activities began with a special flag-raising ceremony that featured lineworkers from each participating co-op climbing a pole to mount the American, South Carolina and



**Santee Electric's journeyman team of Channing Matthews, Corbett Collins and Dustin Shady placed third overall in the division and first in the GFC relay event at the South Carolina Lineman's Rodeo.**

Touchstone Energy Cooperatives flags. Lineworkers competed in other events such as Hurt Man Rescue, Double Crossarm Changeout and Digger Derrick Obstacle Course.

"These events represent important skills that linemen need to have but don't get to use every day," says Adam Johnson, Santee Electric's vice president of operations. "Not only does it make them more proficient, but also safer, because they have to take every safety measure to successfully complete an event."

Volunteers and family members from various co-ops were there to show their support. The cooperative-affiliated community outreach group WIRE (Women Involved In Rural Electrification) raised \$1,250 for the Chavis House at Burn Centers of America in Augusta, which has treated many linemen over the years.

# WHO POWERS YOU?

Inspired by someone making a difference in our community? Tell their story and they could win a prize.

We know our community is filled with unsung heroes who are making a difference. Let's celebrate them! This is your chance to honor the people who are making a real difference. Winners will be selected by a panel of judges based on the impact they have on our community. All entries must be submitted by July 31.

**Grand Prize \$2,500**

Your Local Co-op Prize \$500



Visit [ecsc.org/WhoPowersYou](https://ecsc.org/WhoPowersYou) for full contest rules

