



santee.org

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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

Our responsibility

How your co-op is managing rising costs



AS WE ALL KNOW, the cost of nearly everything is going up. I am sure you are also aware that power bills have followed that same trend.

If you have read my columns or listened to my annual meeting speeches, you know that our number

one cost—what we pay for the wholesale power we purchase and deliver to you—has increased significantly in the past two years. I want to make sure that it's clear that I am not blaming our wholesale suppliers. The cost of their fuel and all the materials they need to buy has risen significantly.

My purpose for this month's column is not to explain why our costs are rising. But I want to share what your cooperative is doing to, one, avoid passing some of these costs on to you and, two, building financial prosperity among our membership. The rising cost of everything related to power delivery may not be your cooperative's fault but it is our responsibility to manage it.

The first category of managing costs has to do with sending the proper price signal regarding our costs of power. When we introduced our new rate structure in 2023, we lowered the energy charge by 6 cents per kilowatt-hour for 719 out of the 720 hours in a month.

The one remaining hour is your peak hour for the month, and you know ahead of time that can only occur during the published three-hour peak window.

Think of peak times like rush-hour traffic. Any "traffic," or energy use, you can move outside of rush-hour allows us to build and buy less and save you more.

Our members are smart, and it's your cooperative's responsibility to put that cost information in your hands so you can take advantage of it.

The second category has to do with economic development. We recruit

"Rest assured, your cooperative is a good steward for your investment."

industries for several reasons. First, these companies bring jobs and investment to our communities and help our members financially. Second, these companies buy power around the clock, which improves our overall cost of power and lowers the rate we need to charge our residential consumers. Finally, each time we sell or lease a building for a profit, that offsets costs we do not need to collect through rates.

The final category also has to do with building a better life for the children in our communities.

Scholarships, local charities and our own charity—Cooperative LIGHT—help give our students a better chance at a brighter future. One of the seven cooperative principles is Concern for Community. Working to boost our next generation ensures we have a talented workforce tomorrow and a better quality of life.

Rest assured, your cooperative is a good steward for your investment. Our responsibility is delivering the most reliable power to you at the lowest price possible. We appreciate the trust you place in us to do just that. You can always be certain that every penny we take in above what it costs to run your cooperative will be returned to you.

I'm blessed to work with just over 100 men and women who are always putting you first. I hope you have a great month and come out to the Annual Meeting!

ROBERT G. ARDIS III
 President and Chief Executive Officer

Powering the place they call home

April 13 is Lineworker Appreciation Day

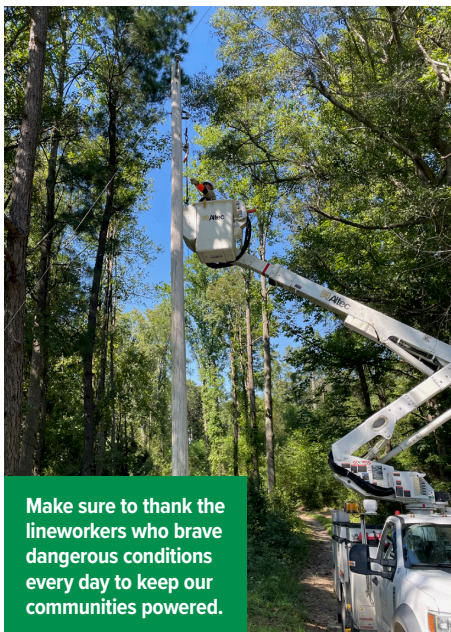
WHEN YOU SEE forecasts of storms across our part of South Carolina, our lineworkers see a call to action. They are always ready to respond when outages occur. They are ready to leave family dinners and miss Little League games so they can work in challenging conditions, sometimes through the night, to get your power restored as safely and quickly as possible.

That readiness is not accidental. It comes from rigorous training, experience and a shared commitment to serving others.

What makes lineworkers especially remarkable is that they are restoring power to their own communities. They raise their families here. Their kids go to our schools. They shop at our grocery stores. They understand that the service they provide is essential to our daily lives—to our local businesses, farms and our neighbors, who depend on power for medical equipment or to simply keep food from spoiling.

Powering the place they call home is deeply personal to them.

Electric cooperatives like Santee Electric were built on the principle of neighbors helping neighbors, and our lineworkers embody that spirit every day. They are the first to respond and the last



Make sure to thank the lineworkers who brave dangerous conditions every day to keep our communities powered.



to leave, often working long hours to get the job done.

At times, serving our neighbors means going beyond our own service territory through a process known as mutual aid. During major outage events across South Carolina and beyond, Santee Electric crews are ready to assist neighboring co-ops. Sometimes just down the road, as they did after Hurricane Helene, and sometimes across state lines.

When extreme weather happens here, crews from across our state and nation come to our aid. Mutual aid strengthens all cooperatives and ultimately benefits the members we serve.

At the very least, losing your power can be frustrating, at worst, life-threatening.

We are grateful for your patience and encouragement during these times. Linework is demanding, physical and dangerous. Our crews approach each job with a focus on safety and teamwork. They take pride in their craft and in the trust you place in them. A wave of thanks or even a kind word on social media means more to our crews than you might realize.

On April 13, we will celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Day, but every day we are thankful for their service and dedication.

Their hard work, readiness and unwavering commitment to the communities they serve are the backbone of our cooperative.

Reminder: Summer peak hours are 3 to 6 p.m.

SUMMER PEAK HOURS (3 p.m. to 6 p.m.) began April 1 and continue until Oct. 31.

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.



See you at the Annual Meeting April 14!

SEC'S DRIVE-THRU ANNUAL MEETING is on Tuesday, April 14. Come register between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. at our Kingtree headquarters. When you register, you will get a rechargeable flashlight, 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*.