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**SANTÉE ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE NEWS**

Joanna Arnsmeier, Editor
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**SANTÉE ELECTRIC IS AN EQUAL
OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND
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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Making an impact through Cooperative LIGHT

I HOPE YOU all had a wonderful Independence Day! This month, I want to talk to you about the charity your

cooperative formed to help local schools and students. Cooperative LIGHT stands for Leaders Igniting and Giving Hope Together. On page 5, we highlight a recent fundraiser held for Cooperative LIGHT, but I want to talk about what we are doing with those funds.

We started this charity in 2022 with a small goal—could we, through donations, help local children have presents on Christmas morning? From this initial goal, which came to us from our local Department of Social Services office, we have expanded the scope to work with all the public schools in our service territory to provide for children facing challenges.

My executive assistant, Megan Blackburn, was an elementary school teacher before we recruited her to Santee

Electric, and she knew some of the challenges kids face. Cooperative LIGHT was her idea, and the main goal was this—if there is a small financial challenge standing between a child and an education, we want to remove that barrier. Megan is quick to point out that she has great contacts at our schools.

“I want to send out a big thank you to all of our school nurses,” she says. “These wonderful ladies are often the ones that understand the needs of kids more than anyone else, and they are who we turn to when SEC wants to find out what we can do.”

To date, we have provided Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs), washers and dryers to local schools. We have also supplied clothes (including coats) and personal hygiene products for students. Many of us take these things for granted because we have them at home (not the AEDs, of course). However, not everyone does, and your cooperative wants to make sure we provide those things that kids need.

The 7th cooperative principle is Concern for Community, and Santee Electric is quite partial to this one! The overwhelming majority of funds Cooperative LIGHT sends to schools comes from donations from employees, trustees and local businesses. We truly appreciate our generous patrons.

Cooperative LIGHT is just one more example of how the employees that work for YOU love their community. We live here, we work here, and our kids go to school here. We want what’s best for our community.

ROBERT G. ARDIS III
President and Chief Executive Officer



Cooperative LIGHT was proud to support Florence County School District 3 with a \$5,000 donation—matched through CoBank’s Sharing Success program for a total of \$10,000—helping bring life-saving AEDs to their community. Pictured are (left to right) Dr. Laura Hickson, Florence County School District 3 Superintendent, SEC Executive Assistant Megan Blackburn and Jennifer Lyerly, Florence County School District 3 health services supervisor.



The second annual Cooperative LIGHT Sporting Clays Fundraiser had more than 130 participants and raised over \$37,000 for Cooperative LIGHT!

Together for change

Community leaders support students

THE 2ND ANNUAL Cooperative LIGHT Fundraiser was a resounding success, showcasing the strength and generosity of our community in support of a truly meaningful cause. The Sporting Clays Fundraiser, held at Backwoods Quail Club, welcomed 130 enthusiastic participants, all rallying behind Cooperative LIGHT's mission to uplift and empower children in need.

Thanks to the unwavering support of our dedicated attendees and the generosity of our incredible sponsors, we raised an astounding \$37,000—funds that will go directly toward Cooperative LIGHT's ongoing efforts to provide essential resources to students in our service areas. From clothing and hygiene products to shoes and coats, Cooperative LIGHT ensures that children facing economic hardships have access to the necessities they need to thrive.

But this event was more than just a fundraiser—it was a powerful testament to what can be accomplished when a community comes together for a shared purpose.

Cooperative LIGHT was founded by the employees of Santee Electric Cooperative, rooted in the seventh core principle of cooperatives: Concern for Community. The program works closely with schools in SEC's service territory to identify students in need and provide them with essential support, ensuring no child is held back by their circumstances.

School representatives can also request assistance through the online donation request form at santee.org/cooperative-light.

Thank you to all our sponsors! Their generosity reminds us that, when a community stands together, there is no limit to the impact we can make.



PHOTOS BY JOANNA ARNSMEYER

Congratulations to The Citizens Bank team for taking 1st place! The Citizens Bank was a proud Silver Sponsor of the 2025 Fundraiser.

Thank you to our 2025 sponsors!

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SEC EXTRA

Check out pages 12A-12D for information on Bright Ideas, learn about annual lineman training, a feature story on Palmetto Synthetics and learn how to sign up for paperless billing!

Training for when seconds matter

THE TRAINING BEGINS with linemen swiftly gearing up and then climbing a towering pole until they reach the “body”—a 150-pound dummy suspended in midair. With precision and urgency, they secure a rope to the dummy, lowering it safely to the ground, all while ensuring their own safety.

Each year, Santee Electric Cooperative’s linemen undergo intensive pole top rescue training, a vital exercise designed to prepare them for emergencies that could mean the difference between life and death. The scenario they rehearse is one of the most critical challenges they might face on the job—rescuing an unconscious fellow lineman stranded at the top of a utility pole.

But that’s just one aspect of their life-saving drills. Linemen also practice bucket

rescue, simulating the retrieval of an incapacitated coworker from a utility bucket. Lowering the bucket into position, they carefully maneuver to lift the dummy out, reinforcing the quick-response techniques necessary in high-stakes situations.

Though these exercises take place in a controlled environment, the gravity of the training is never lost. The dummy may be lifeless, but the risks linemen face are real. Even with substantial safety investments and rigorous training, the job comes with unavoidable hazards. That’s why preparedness is key—ensuring every lineman can act swiftly and efficiently when duty calls.

Linework is one of the most dangerous professions, but safety is the backbone of the trade. Through relentless training, hours of practice and unwavering



JOANNA ARNSMEYER

SEC lineman Corbett Collins works as fast and safely as possible during pole top rescue training.

teamwork, Santee Electric linemen sharpen their skills and strengthen their bond. Above all, they find confidence in knowing that when the unthinkable happens, they have each other’s backs—ready to respond, rescue and protect their own.

**TEACHERS IN WILLIAMSBURG,
GEORGETOWN, CLARENDON
AND FLORENCE COUNTIES**



**APPLICATIONS ARE OPEN FOR
THE BRIGHT IDEAS GRANT!**

Bright Ideas grants are intended to fund projects outside normal school funding parameters and are available to all disciplines in grades K-12. Grants are awarded for up to \$1,000 each. The Bright Ideas Grant is a fantastic opportunity to bring creative and engaging projects to your school, take advantage of it!

For more information about the Bright Ideas Grant program and the application, visit santee.org/bright-ideas. Completed applications are due by **Monday, September 22, 2025.**



Turning vision into legacy

Kingstree-based Palmetto Synthetics is a fiber manufacturing pioneer

BY JOANNA ARNSMEYER

ON A COLD FEBRUARY morning 28 years ago, Henry Poston and his business partners stood in an empty bean field in Kingstree. The site had no water or power, but the group had a bold vision. Where others saw obstacles, they saw opportunity.

With determination and hard work, that barren bean field became the foundation for Palmetto Synthetics, a 350,000-square-foot facility that has transformed the fiber manufacturing industry. As CEO, Poston understood the challenge ahead and was ready to make it happen.

Today, Palmetto Synthetics leads the fiber industry, combining innovation with superior service to provide a broad range of specialty thermoplastic fibers. Poston's son, David, now serves as president, carrying forward the vision his father established decades ago.

Finding a home

In 1997, Henry Poston was looking into multiple options for where to establish the company's operation. Originally from Florence County, Poston saw Kingstree as the perfect place to build his company, just a few towns over.

"It seemed like the best option, and that has proven true," says Poston. "Williamsburg County has a great workforce; it was close to home and made the most sense."

From the start, Williamsburg County embraced Palmetto Synthetics, and its workforce quickly became the backbone of operations.

When operations first began, employees trained at Special Schools, now known as ReadySC, to develop the skills



Palmetto Synthetics is a family legacy. Henry Poston (left) and his son David are running the company as CEO and president respectively.

needed for fiber manufacturing. That early investment in workforce development fostered both expertise and lasting loyalty. More than two decades later, many of those first employees remain a vital part of the Palmetto Synthetics family—a testament to the company's strong culture and steady growth.

Now with more than 125 employees and expanding, Palmetto Synthetics continues to invest in its people while actively hiring new talent.

"Our employees are the best around,"



Precision in motion—Rosa Scott, Palmetto Synthetics employee, monitors the line at Palmetto Synthetics.

Palmetto Synthetics

- ▶ Founded in 1997
- ▶ Headquarters in Kingstree
- ▶ Regional agents in China and the UK
- ▶ Thermoplastic fiber manufacturer
- ▶ 125 employees and currently hiring

MISSION STATEMENT: Our mission is to be the leading global innovator and provider of Specialty Synthetic Fiber while fostering a culture of integrity, dignity and respect for our Team Members, Business Partners, Community, and Environment.

says Poston. "I enjoy going around and talking to everyone and checking in on their families. And they are all hard workers, which can be hard to come by."

An industry pioneer

Palmetto Synthetics prides itself on a workplace built on integrity, dignity and respect—values that extend beyond its employees to its approach to innovation. That same commitment to excellence drives its pioneering work in sustainable manufacturing, where transforming recycled plastic into fiber has redefined waste management in the industry.

"We are in the recycling business,"

PHOTOS BY JOANNA ARNSMEYER



CEO Henry Poston and SEC Economic Development Manager Ronald Carter discuss the fiber manufacturing process inside the Palmetto Synthetics plant.

says Poston. “Our main goal is to make fibers from recycled materials.”

With multiple recycling lines, Palmetto Synthetics repurposes a wide range of materials, including recycled plastic bottles, food packaging, automotive fibers and even internal and customer-generated waste. These materials are pelletized and processed into fibers used in various industries, reinforcing the company’s commitment to reducing landfill waste and promoting a circular economy.

Beyond processing recycled materials, Palmetto Synthetics has played a key role in developing sustainable fiber technology that supports industries seeking

eco-friendly alternatives. By offering custom solutions tailored to specific needs, the company not only meets customer demands but also helps brands reduce their environmental footprint.

As the demand for sustainable materials continues to grow, Palmetto Synthetics remains committed to leading the charge in fiber innovation—proving that sustainability and high-performance manufacturing can go hand in hand.

Along with recycling fibers, it is a specialty manufacturer of synthetic fibers. Unlike mass-market manufacturers, Palmetto Synthetics crafts specialized, made-to-order fibers tailored to unique customer needs

“We have always said we are a by-prescription type manufacturer; we are not the generic brand makers,” says Poston. “If you want something special, we do our best to get the solution for you. It is what sets us apart from others in this industry.”

While Palmetto Synthetics remains rooted in Kingstree, its influence extends far beyond South Carolina. With regional agents in China and the United Kingdom, the company supplies its specialized fibers worldwide, with 25% of production shipping internationally.

A long-term relationship

For the Poston family, Kingstree

is more than just a business location—it’s home. Poston serves on various boards for local organizations, including Williamsburg Technical College, Pee Dee Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Assault and the Williamsburg County Development Board. Palmetto Synthetics actively supports community programs.

The company is a unique key account for Santee Electric Cooperative. When the company was looking to establish its new facility in 1997 in Kingstree, it had the opportunity to choose among various electric utility providers. Ultimately, Palmetto Synthetics selected Santee Electric Cooperative as its power provider. This decision began a strong partnership between Santee Electric Cooperative and Palmetto Synthetics.

“When we were starting, and they told us we had a choice to make for our power provider, we said there is no choice other than Santee Electric Cooperative,” says Poston. “And we are so happy with that decision we made all those years ago.”

“The quality of service and reliability that Santee Electric Cooperative provides is unmatched,” says Poston. “We are really pleased with our relationship with Santee Electric Cooperative.”

Looking ahead, Palmetto Synthetics remains committed to innovation, sustainability and community—ensuring its impact continues to grow both locally and globally.



Alana White, Palmetto Synthetics employee, ensures smooth operations at Palmetto Synthetics, maintaining efficiency and quality on the production line.



PHOTOS BY JOANNA ARNSMEYER

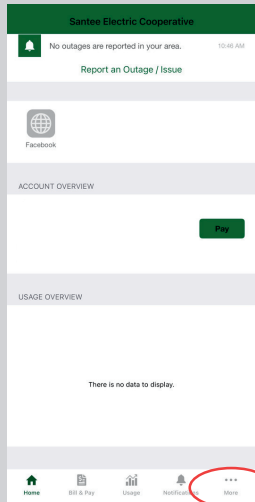
Freshly processed synthetic fibers make their way into bins, ready for the next stage of production at Palmetto Synthetics.

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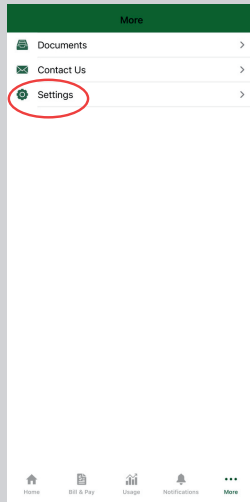
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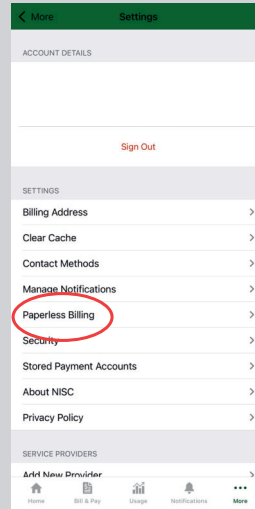
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On the **"More"** page, select **"Settings"**



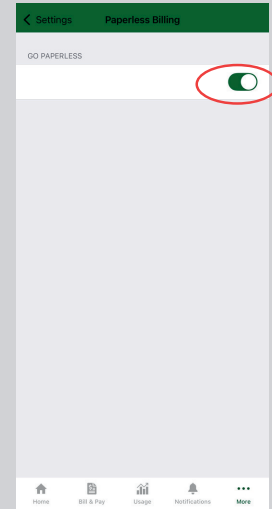
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