



santee.org

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

TO REPORT AN OUTAGE

Use our SmartHub App



Or call 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
Timothy Cooper, *District 7*
Dudley Musier, *District 2*
Walter L. Sanders, *District 1*
Harry Walters, *District 9*

**SANTÉE ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE NEWS**

Joanna Arnsmeier, *Editor*
jarnsmeyer@santee.org

FIND US ON



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



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Chief problem solver

AS WE APPROACH the holiday season, I want to tell you that your cooperative has had a great year. I can't think of a better way to top off the

year than to share a little about a great employee. Elliott Askins, SEC's Network, Communications and Fleet Administrator, wears a lot of hats. When I think of Elliott, though, it's as our chief problem solver!

Elliott was born and raised in Lake City. He graduated from Lake City High School and then from the University of South Carolina. Recently, he completed his MBA from The Citadel with a 4.0 GPA, which surprised no one that works with him at Santee Electric!

Elliott came to SEC as a project engineer because we needed someone who could take care of our network communications. Because of his talents, Elliott's job has grown into what it is today. I would be willing to wager that there is not another cooperative employee in the country who is an IT guru, as well as the guy in charge of the fleet—but Elliott is one-of-a-kind.

When asked what he likes best about his job, Elliott said, "Part of it is the flexibility and variety. A lot of my job is in the office, of course, but a big part is outside dealing with vehicles and network and security equipment in the substations. I also enjoy analyzing data, identifying patterns and solving problems."

"The toughest part is the time crunch," he added. "Whether it is a major IT upgrade or a vehicle that isn't performing, employees and members are waiting, and I want to shorten that wait as much as possible."

As many have said, Elliott likes the family environment at SEC. "I look forward to coming to work every day," he said. I asked Elliott to share one thing he wants our readers to know, and he said, "I wish they



Elliott Askins is SEC's network, communications and fleet administrator.

could all see the work that goes on behind the scenes to keep the lights on and all our member-focused programs up and running. It's impressive!"

Elliott met his wife, Melissa, when they were both students at USC. They married in 2001. Melissa is currently on city council for Lake City. Before that, she was a school psychologist for 15 years, and she has most recently been home-schooling their three daughters.

Olivia (19) is in her second year at USC, pursuing a master's in library and information science and is very artistic. She even made her own prom dresses! Ella (16) is passionate about dance and wants to become an instructor. Adeline (9) favors athletics and is involved in cheer, soccer and basketball.

When Elliott is not working at SEC, he's working at home. "I love yard work, and I love repairing anything. I also love spending time with my family as well as skiing, boating, and fishing."

If you see Elliott around, just tell him thank you for me. It's impossible to cover how much SEC depends on him in a single column.

ROBERT G. ARDIS III
President and Chief Executive Officer

SEC EXTRA

Check out pages 12A-12D for nominating committee information, an economic development update and more!

Investing in the community

SEC partners with CoBank to “share success”

JENNIFER LYERLY, health services supervisor for Florence School District Three, had one goal in mind when she sought to purchase new automated external defibrillators (AEDs) and “Stop the Bleed” kits for the district. She knew the equipment could be lifesaving for both students and staff.

In May, Florence County School District Three received a \$5,000 donation from Cooperative LIGHT, Santee Electric’s nonprofit foundation. CoBank’s Sharing Success program matched the donation, bringing the total to \$10,000. CoBank, a national cooperative bank, partners with Santee Electric through its Sharing Success program,

“We are proud to support this initiative that FSD3 is tackling,” says Megan Blackburn, Santee Electric Cooperative executive assistant. “When Nurse Lyerly brought up the idea, we knew that Cooperative LIGHT should support this.”

“We are so grateful for this donation,” says Lyerly. “Ensuring the safety and well-being of our students is the ultimate goal. Through generous donations like this one, we can.”

The school district is one of three

organizations that received significant donations from Santee Electric Cooperative through CoBank’s Sharing Success program in 2025.

In March, the Durant Center, a new facility in Williamsburg County established by the Pee Dee Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Assault, also received a \$5,000 donation from Santee Electric. CoBank matched the contribution, bringing the total to \$10,000. The center, which provides treatment and support for children affected by abuse, was raising funds for renovations and equipment.

“Establishing this center was crucial for Williamsburg County,” says Ellen Hamilton, executive director of the Pee Dee Coalition. “Previously, more than 300 children had to travel to neighboring areas to access the help they needed. We are thankful for a community partner like SEC.”

In September, Well Watered Ministries received a \$5,000 donation from Cooperative LIGHT and Santee Electric’s WIRE (Women Involved in Rural Electrification) chapter. CoBank matched the donation, resulting in a total donation of \$10,000.

The volunteer-led outreach organization has served more than 200 families in



PHOTOS BY JOANNA ARNSMEYER

Eliana Jenkinson, founder of Well Watered Ministries, gave a tour of the facility to SEC representatives.

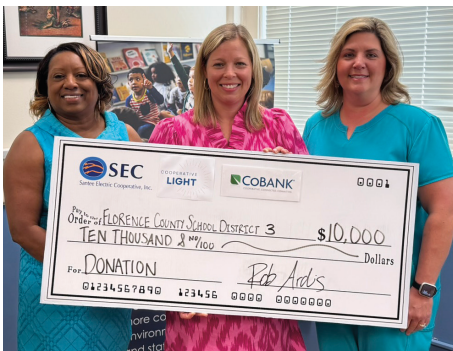
Clarendon, Sumter and Orangeburg counties over the past year through a variety of programs, including a food pantry, a “free boutique” offering clothing and household items, a hygiene program for underserved children and adults, the Sleep Safe initiative, which provides beds and pack ‘n plays for infants and children, and emergency housing assistance for domestic violence victims and others in crisis

Founded in 2022, Cooperative LIGHT’s mission is to empower children by providing access to essential resources and opportunities, ensuring that no child is limited by their circumstances. Cooperative LIGHT works closely with schools to identify student needs and serves communities in Williamsburg, Clarendon, Georgetown and Florence counties.

CoBank’s Sharing Success program matches contributions of up to \$15,000 to eligible organizations. Santee Electric has participated in the program for 13 years.

“CoBank has been a trusted lending partner to Santee Electric for many years, and their Sharing Success program is one of the most impactful tools they offer,” says Jay Kirby, vice president of public affairs. “It allows us to support the local charities that make a real difference in our communities.”

These donations reflect Santee Electric Cooperative’s ongoing commitment to the communities it serves. Through Cooperative LIGHT, WIRE and CoBank’s Sharing Success program, SEC continues to invest in local organizations making a difference.



Cooperative LIGHT and CoBank partnered to make a \$10,000 donation for AEDs and “Stop the Bleed” kits to support emergency preparedness and student safety across Florence School District Three. From left to right: Dr. Laura Hickson, FSD3 superintendent, Megan Blackburn, SEC executive assistant and Jennifer Lyerly, FSD3 health services supervisor and lead nurse.



Jay Kirby, SEC vice president of public affairs and Ellen Hamilton, Pee Dee Coalition executive director, at the ribbon cutting for the Williamsburg County Durant Children’s Center.

2026 Nominating Committee Information

SANTEE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE will hold its 2026 Drive-Thru Annual Meeting on April 14, 2026, at SEC Headquarters, 424 Sumter Hwy, Kingstree, SC 29556.

Nominating Committee to meet

In accordance with Article IV, Section 3 of the co-op’s bylaws, excerpted below, the member-owners listed at the right have been duly appointed to the Nominating Committee. The committee will meet December 17, 2025, at SEC’s headquarters for the purpose of nominating trustees for Districts 6, 8, and 9.

Nominations by petition

Article IV, Section 3 also gives member-owners the right to nominate board candidates by petition. At least one percent of the co-op’s membership, acting together, can nominate a fellow member. Petitions must be filed with the cooperative at least 80 days prior to the annual meeting.

Applicable bylaws

Article III: Meeting of Members

SECTION 1: ANNUAL MEETING. The annual meeting of members shall be held on such day in each year, beginning with the year 1952, and at such place within a county served by the Cooperative as shall be fixed and determined by the Board of Trustees, and as shall be designated in the notice of the meeting for the purpose of electing trustees, passing upon reports for the previous fiscal year and transacting such other business as may come before the meeting. Failure to hold the annual meeting at the designated time shall not work a forfeiture and dissolution of the Cooperative.

Article IV: Trustees

SECTION 3. NOMINATIONS. It shall be the duty of the Board of Trustees to appoint, not less than one-hundred-and-seventy (170) days or more than one-hundred-and-ninety (190) days before the date of a meeting of the members at which Trustees are to be elected, a committee on nominations consisting of not less than five (5) nor more than eleven (11) members who shall be selected from different sections of the project area so as to ensure equitable representation. No member of the Board of Trustees may serve on such committee. Incumbent Trustees seeking reelection shall not directly or indirectly influence the nomination or credentials process. Said Trustees shall recuse themselves from participation in appointing members to such committee(s), and Cooperative members from their Trustee Districts shall be selected without their input or participation. Trustees may not appoint, direct or cause a family member to become a member of such committee(s). For purposes of this Section, “family member” includes a spouse, parent, brother, sister, child, mother-in-law, father-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, grandparent, grandchild and a member of the individual’s immediate family. The committee on nominations shall prepare and post at the principal office of the Cooperative at least one hundred (100) days before the meeting a list of nominations for Trustees, but 1% or more of the members of the Cooperative, acting together, may make additional nominations in writing over their signatures, listing their nominee(s) in like manner and filing the same with the Cooperative, not less than eighty (80) days prior to the meeting and the Secretary shall post such nominations at the same place where the list of nominations made by the committee is posted. The Board of Trustees shall, by policy, adopt a process allowing petition signatures to be collected electronically according to procedures or standards approved by the Board. The Secretary shall mail with the notice of the meeting a list of the number of Trustees, shown by District, to be elected and the names and addresses of the candidates nominated for each District, specifying separately the nominations made by petition, if any. The names are to be arranged by Districts and in alphabetical order, except that incumbents shall be placed first on the list so arranged. At the meeting of members, the Secretary of the Cooperative shall place in nomination the names of the official candidates for each District. Election of Trustees shall be by ballots. The ballots shall list the candidates selected by the Nominating Committee and by petition. The names shall be arranged by Districts and in alphabetical order, except that the incumbents shall be placed first in order on such ballot. Each member of the Cooperative present at the meeting shall be entitled to vote for one (1) candidate for each District for which a Trustee is to be elected at that particular meeting. The candidate receiving the highest number of votes for each District at this meeting shall be considered elected as Trustee. In the event that the number of candidates seeking election does not exceed the number of Trustees required in a particular District, balloting may be dispensed with in respect to that District and, if there are no objections, the nominee may be elected by acclamation.

Nominating Committee appointments for 2026 Annual Meeting

Angela Bartell
306 Scotland Road
Lake City, SC 29560

Wanda J. Johnson
1438 Lake Shore Drive
Manning, SC 29102

Gwenevere Moody
2256 White Oak Road
Kingstree, SC 29556

Olin Dukes
365 McCollough Loop
Kingstree, SC 29556

Frankie M. Davis
296 Walnut Avenue
Georgetown, SC 29440

Kasey Feagin
4803 Pine Oak Road
Effingham, SC 29541

Clifford Gamble
1389 Edwin Road
Salters, SC 29590

Penny S. Gamble
2212 Santee Road
Andrews, SC 29510



RONALD CARTER

In June, construction was completed on a 105,000 square foot building in the Clarendon County Industrial Park in Manning. Similarly designed as the building in Georgetown Business Center, the facility was built to be move-in ready for industries.

Preparing for success

How Santee Electric Cooperative is powering economic development

BY RONALD D. CARTER, JR.

IN SEPTEMBER 2021, our Board of Trustees at Santee Electric Cooperative made the strategic decision to invest heavily in economic development to grow the industrial sector within our electric service territory. Their investment has paid off. Since then, we have gone from having limited opportunities for economic development to having quality sites and buildings available in all four of the counties that are served by SEC—Clarendon, Florence, Georgetown and Williamsburg. We're now better prepared than ever to attract new businesses and create jobs.

Being prepared doesn't end just because we currently have sites and buildings that are ready. As we were successful, we found that there was

almost a full year of design, permitting and other governmental approvals that are necessary between our construction projects. Fortunately, the board agreed with our assessment and agreed to allow us to proactively plan for replacement projects as we develop within existing industrial parks. This saves us that time and reduces the potential for increased material costs. Accelerating our speed to market hastens our ability to continue delivering positive results for you, our members.

2025 has been a busy year. In June, we completed a 105,000 square foot building in the Clarendon County Industrial Park (Manning), and we completed a 101,500 square foot building in the Georgetown County Business Center



KAREN CAMPBELL

Ronald Carter, manager of economic development & government relations, supports growth across our region by helping bring new businesses and jobs to the communities SEC serves.

(Andrews) in September. Both buildings are empty precast concrete-walled boxes with high ceilings and no floors. This design allows a variety of manufacturing uses and shortens their timeline to production by a year or more versus starting with a greenfield site (undeveloped land used for new construction). Since 2021, we have completed eight projects and currently have four more planned. Altogether, we have developed or planned for more than 350 acres and almost 900,000 square feet.

The benefits of this economic development program are becoming more apparent as manufacturing companies that purchased our buildings are now completing nearly \$70 million in capital investments and creating more than 250 well-paying jobs. While these investments take time to materialize, there are substantial upfront benefits to our communities. Our construction projects employ many contractors, fabricators and material distributors. In general, 75% of the people working on our projects live within the state and 100% of

our materials are sourced from South Carolina-based manufacturing facilities or distribution centers. It is not unusual for there to be 17 to 20 local companies that are either directly contracted or subcontracted to work on our projects. Using local people and locally sourced materials not only makes financial sense for our projects, but it is also the right thing to do for our communities.

SEC is focused on attracting more manufacturing facilities because they bring a clear benefit. They use large amounts of electricity, which helps improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of our electric system. Not only do manufacturers consume large quantities of electricity, but they generally do so 24/7, helping increase the overall load factor of the SEC system. Having a better system load factor means that SEC can purchase wholesale electricity at a lower cost than it would have otherwise.

Another reason SEC wants to increase electric sales comes down to simple math. The cooperative has fixed

costs such as maintaining thousands of miles of power lines, substations, transformers and other equipment. These costs stay the same whether we sell a little electricity or a lot. So, the more kilowatt-hours we move across the system, the more those costs are spread out, which lowers the cost per kilowatt-hour. In 2024, SEC delivered over one billion kilowatt-hours to homes, businesses and industries. If we could double that to two billion kilowatt-hours without needing new infrastructure, the fixed cost per kilowatt-hour would be cut in half. That means lower operating costs for SEC and lower electric bills for you, our member-owners.

As of this article, SEC's economic development program has added a combined connected load of 10,750 KVA to our system. This translates into millions of additional kilowatt-hours being sold, helping reduce costs and deliver real savings to you, our member-owners. It's a clear example of how smart investments in our communities can benefit everyone we serve.



PHOTOS BY RONALD CARTER

The 101,500 sq ft building in the Georgetown County Business Center in Andrews was completed in September. Empty precast concrete-walled boxes with high ceilings and no floors allow for a variety of manufacturing uses. This flexible, open design will make it easier for manufacturers to move in and begin production.

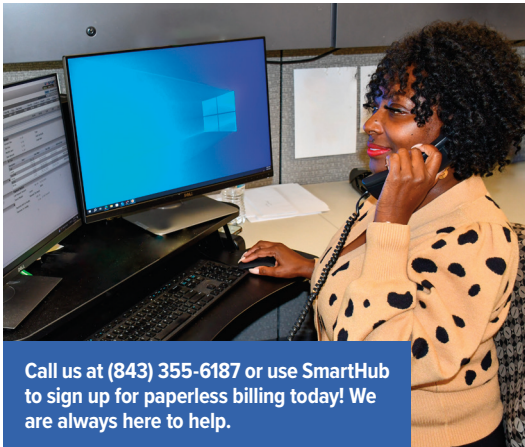
Reminder: \$1 Paper bill charge begins January 2026

Starting in January 2026, members who receive paper bills will be charged a \$1 monthly fee. This helps cover printing and mailing costs and supports our goal to reduce paper waste.

You can avoid this \$1 fee by switching to paperless billing! It's fast, secure and convenient. You'll get your bill online, via the SmartHub app, and by email, so no more waiting for the mail! You can sign up for paperless billing through SmartHub or by calling us today.

As a member-owned cooperative, we're always looking for ways to reduce waste and save costs—because every dollar saved benefits you, our members.

See a step-by-step guide on how to sign up for paperless billing by scanning the QR code:



Call us at (843) 355-6187 or use SmartHub to sign up for paperless billing today! We are always here to help.



Winter Peak hours began Nov. 1

WINTER PEAK HOURS (6–9 a.m.) are now in effect!

By using less energy during peak hours, you can lower your bill. Your peak charge is based on the highest single hour of energy use during the billing cycle. Small changes can lead to noticeable savings.

Visit santee.org/rate-structure to learn more about peak hours and our rate structure or call (843) 355-6187.

Happy Holidays!

SEC's offices will be closed on the following days in observance of the following holidays:

- **Thanksgiving:**
Nov. 27 and 28
- **Christmas:**
Dec. 24 and 25
- **New Year's:**
Jan. 1, 2026



Santee Electric puts the power in your hands!

Manage your account whenever—and wherever you are—with the SmartHub app.

Whether you're homebound, facing a weather event or need to quickly access your account on your own time, the free SmartHub app from Santee Electric Cooperative is here when you need it!

Available for all smart devices like iPhones, iPads and Androids.

With the SmartHub app you can:

- ◆ make bill payments
- ◆ stop and start service
- ◆ report power outages
- ◆ check on monthly energy usage
- ◆ review bills and payment history
- ◆ request maintenance



A Touchstone Energy* Cooperative

Download your FREE Santee Electric SmartHub app at the App Store or Google Play!

1-800-922-1604

For more information, visit santee.org

