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**SANTEE ELECTRIC  
 COOPERATIVE NEWS**

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

# Safety first—and ALWAYS!



**I WOULD LIKE** to use this month's column to brag on the employees of Santee Electric Cooperative. We found out recently that we won the President's Safety Award for the calendar year 2018!

Each year, the Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina

compare the quantity of accidents and injuries around the state to see which of us had the best record for the year. We are broken into three tiers, and because SEC is one of the larger cooperatives in the state, we are in the top tier. Then, within each tier, the number of accidents and injuries is divided by the number of employees at each cooperative. The lowest ratio wins. This year with only one qualifying incident, SEC won the contest for its tier!

Granted, we would love for this number to be zero rather than one, but it is an amazing feat! Last year, our employees drove well over 1 million miles in company vehicles. When you add to this the fact that we worked approximately 300,000 hours last year, you can see that one recordable incident is indeed impressive. I am so proud of our team here at SEC!

You are all fully aware of the dangers of line work. Our linemen and servicemen deal daily with electricity and heights—two things that the average person goes out of their way to avoid. Much of this work—especially in a power restoration situation—is done in the dark and in the middle of inclement weather. Let's not forget about the vehicles they have to drive around. Oversized vehicles like bucket trucks and digger derricks are hard enough to maneuver, but adding a

trailer full of poles to haul around makes this job as difficult and dangerous as any on the road.

It's not just the linemen, though, that get measured in this competition. All of our employees (nearly 130 people) have to exercise extreme caution to win such an award. This means that our warehouse employees have to be well-trained to handle a forklift and numerous heavy loads throughout the day. Our equipment shop and substation guys work with heavy and dangerous equipment every day. Our engineers and right-of-way folks have to be careful in the field as they design the routes of

new services. Even our office employees must be careful.

One severely sprained ankle from stumbling on the stairs or walking through the right-of-way...one back injury from improper lifting of a heavy box or some piece of equipment...any of these can hurt everyone.

Why do we care so much?

First of all, we are a family here at SEC. We care about what happens to members of our work family, and we want everyone to be safe and healthy. Of course, we also care because it impacts the bottom line. Accidents and injuries make our insurance rates—and, eventually, your electric rates—go up. For these reasons, and many more, it's not just "safety first" for my team and me... it's SAFETY ALWAYS.



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