

## Horry Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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Horry Electric Cooperative, Inc., is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Horry Electric Cooperative, Inc. is a non-profit, member-owned organization providing information and energy-related services on a fair and equitable basis.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

## Built on a strong foundation

Co-op principles plus four core values



**YOUR CO-OP IS BUILT** on a strong foundation. In addition to the Seven Co-op Principles, we hold ourselves to the four Touchstone Energy Cooperative values of integrity, accountability, innovation, and commitment to community.

These values represent the cooperative difference. We strive to demonstrate that difference. Every. Single. Day.

### Commitment to Community

There is a project that has been in the news that we're excited to be in a unique position to help make happen.

While we're not in the driver's seat on the possible multi-use community facility project, we can help put gas in the truck through the provisions of the Rural Development Act. Horry Electric has about \$400,000 per year that could either be sent to the State Tax Commission in Columbia or be kept in Horry County for the purpose of economic development.

We think it's much better to keep the funds here at home. The possibilities are without limit and it will create much-needed jobs.

### Integrity and Innovation

Members come first at Horry Electric. Every day. That's the power of co-op membership. As a not-for-profit electric cooperative, we deliver energy to members at the cost of service and not for the profit of any shareholders.

We are always looking forward. Whether it's exploring renewable energy

projects or developing programs to promote energy efficiency, we celebrate innovation at all levels.

### Accountability

We are local people, serving you. Accountability is important. We are excited about a new law passed in 2019, designed to augment our accountability to you.

Effective January 1, a member with an unresolved dispute regarding disconnection of service due to electric bill nonpayment may file a complaint with the South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff (ORS) Customer Care Department pursuant to S.C. Code of Laws Section 33-49-255. ORS Customer Care can be contacted at 1-800-922-1531 or online at [www.ors.sc.gov/consumers](http://www.ors.sc.gov/consumers). ORS cannot assist cooperative members in establishing payment arrangements to avoid service interruption.

This is an option if we, for example, fail to adhere to standard protocols for disconnection. For regular accounts, there is a 25-day allowance from the date of billing. Advance Pay participants get a negative balance notification the day prior to disconnection and disconnects are scheduled no earlier than 10 a.m.

Stay tuned. Other aspects of the new law will be shared in the magazine as they go into effect over the next two years.

**DANIEL B. SHELLEY, III**  
Executive Vice President and CEO



## Linemen on and off the field

### Touchstone Energy Bowl players try their hand at line work

**EIGHTY-EIGHT FOOTBALL PLAYERS** from across the Palmetto State got the chance to meet the type of lineman that doesn't play on a field back in December as part of the 2019 Touchstone Energy Bowl.

Four Horry Electric linemen took part in a Linemen Demo Day to allow the players the chance to try their hand at line work, including: changing a fuse line cut-out, drilling a hole through a pole, putting on equipment, and screwing a nut onto a bolt while wearing rubber gloves and sleeves.

The players also had the chance to be in their element and throw a football, but they had to do it lineman style, wearing rubber gloves.

Demo Days allow the linemen to explain what their job is like on a daily basis. It makes the day even better when students are interested in learning.

"It was a very inspirational day with a great group of students," said Advanced Lineman Sean Brown.

Two things the linemen have to wear on a daily basis are rubber gloves and rubber sleeves. One thing you may not know is those gloves and sleeves conduct a lot of heat.

"One running back was amazed at how hot it got as fast as it did. No more did he stand there and he was ready to take those sleeves off," said Carluss King, advanced lineman.

Horry Electric's linemen stand alongside four football players from Horry County selected to play in the Touchstone Energy Bowl. (From L to R) Linemen Phillip McClellan, Carluss King, players Shedrick Pointer, Ramsey Lewis, A. J. Campbell, Kenny Byrd, and Linemen Sean Brown and Scott Smith.

Education, training and information is one of the Seven Cooperative Principles and it's part of a lineman's job. "It's important to know about electricity because it can kill us, but also because not everyone is meant to go to a big-time college," King says.

Horry-Georgetown Technical College is one local college that offers an electrical lineman program. "Demo Day makes them appreciate the job a little more and gives them an idea of what to expect if they decide to go into the field," notes C-Class Lineman Scott Smith.

At the end of the day, HEC's linemen were very impressed by this group of students and their interest in line work. "They all struck me in a special way because they were interested in what we do," said Advanced Lineman Phillip McClellan.

### One proud mom

Moneek Stevenson, who recently celebrated 13 years with Horry Electric, had the exciting opportunity to watch her son Ramsey play in the 2019 Touchstone Energy Bowl.

Ramsey Lewis, known as Rambo, is the quarterback, previously a running back, for the North Myrtle Beach Chiefs.

Although excited, Mom was a bit

nervous. "Football is such a contact sport. I just don't want to see anyone get hurt," Stevenson says.

Despite her nervousness, she loves to see Rambo play football.

**HEC's Moneek Stevenson stands alongside (from L to R) North Myrtle Beach Coach Reel, her sons Ramsey and Noah, and husband Roger at the Touchstone Energy Bowl.**



## HORRY EXTRA

### Sharp business

One of the Local People, Serving You, HEC Underground Lineman Shawn Gore turns up the heat and it's not electricity we're talking about—it's knives. The story on how this lineman turns into a bladesmith after work is on Page 20B.





## Apply now for 2020 WIRE scholarships

**WOMEN RETURNING** to school to earn college degrees may now apply for financial assistance from the 2020 Jenny Ballard Opportunity Scholarship program.

Sponsored by Women Involved in Rural Electrification (WIRE), a service organization associated with South Carolina's not-for-profit electric cooperatives, the scholarship is a one-time award based on financial need and personal goals.

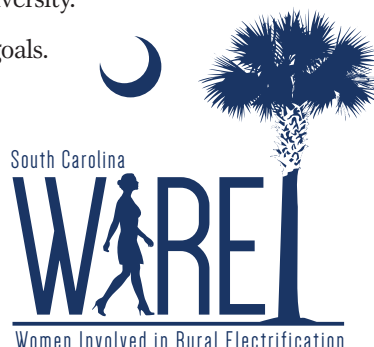
Application forms for the 2020 WIRE scholarship are available upon request at Horry Electric Cooperative and online at [SCLiving.coop/scholarship](http://SCLiving.coop/scholarship). Applicants for the program must:

- ▶ Be a member of a South Carolina electric cooperative.
- ▶ Have graduated from high school or earned a GED at least 10 years ago.
- ▶ Be accepted into an accredited S.C. college or university.
- ▶ Demonstrate financial need and clear academic goals.

The deadline for applications is June 1.

Recipients will receive scholarships for the Fall 2020 or Spring 2021 semester, with funds paid to the college or university.

Apply online at [www.ecsc.org/content/wire-scholarship](http://www.ecsc.org/content/wire-scholarship), by email to [peggy.dantzler@ecsc.org](mailto:peggy.dantzler@ecsc.org) or by mail to Peggy Dantzler, The Electric Cooperatives of S.C., Inc., 808 Knox Abbott Dr., Cayce, SC 29033.



## \$1,500 scholarship available from HEC WIRE

A \$1,500 scholarship is available for co-op members and dependents of members, courtesy of Horry Electric Cooperative's chapter of the community outreach organization, Women Involved in Rural Electrification (WIRE).

The award is for one academic year for a freshman entering Coastal Carolina University or Horry-Georgetown Technical College in the fall. The recipient will receive \$750 for the first semester; they must have at least a cumulative 2.5 GPA at the end of the semester to receive the other \$750. An essay is also required.

Applications must be received by March 2.

**Mail to:** Mrs. Susan Brown  
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P.O. Box 119  
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**Details:** (843) 369-6323

## Hey students! Great experiences await

### Deadline nearing for youth trips this summer

**HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**, act fast! Each year, Horry Electric Cooperative sends eight local high school students on two all-expense-paid trips to our capitals- Washington, D.C. and Columbia. The deadline to apply is February 21.

All local juniors are encouraged to apply for one of these great experiences. The annual Rural Electric Washington Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. takes place June 20-25. The South Carolina

Cooperative Youth Summit to Columbia is July 7-10 and is available to all high school sophomores.

Each trip allows students to meet other cooperative representatives from across the state, and the country, and enjoy a fun, educational experience. They will also be eligible to compete for the R.D. Bennett Community Service Scholarship, worth \$5,000 towards college expenses.

Horry Electric sends four students on each of these trips. A personal interview is part of the selection process for Horry Electric representatives. Study materials are sent to nominated students well in advance of the date scheduled for the selection process.

**For more information or if you have any questions, please contact Horry Electric's Youth Tour Coordinator, Toni Gore at (843)-369-6359 or [toni.gore@horryelectric.com](mailto:toni.gore@horryelectric.com).**

JENNIFER HARMON





# Lineman by day, bladesmith by trade

IT'S A TOOL that's easy to put in a pocket or it can hang on your side: a knife. It's a relatively easy item to find in the store for a decent price, but do you know what goes into making that "simple" knife? One of Horry Electric's underground linemen decided to find out for himself.

Shawn Gore has worked as a lineman for the past 11 years, but a few years ago, he decided to try his hand at a different trade: bladesmithing. Now, Gore is running his own company while also working the 24/7/365 schedule of a lineman and being a full-time dad.

Knives have always sparked Shawn's interest. "I've always loved knives; always liked to sharpen knives. It just came to me one day and I thought, 'Why don't you try to make your own?' It just took off from there," says Gore.



COURTESY OF SHAWN GORE

## Birth of the business

If you take a ride down the Waccamaw River through Conway, you might notice the water is a little dark. Locals say you might even say it's black. Thus, the Blackwater Blade Company was born.

Shawn says the name just popped out at him when he was starting up his local

business three and a half years ago.

He makes everything from kitchen knives to carry knives to everyday work knives. Work knives are his best sellers, including: hawkbill knives, straight blades, and skinner knives. You may take one look and think it's just a piece of metal and a handle, but it's not. Every knife is different.

"They might look similar, but I touch every process of the knife and I do everything free-handed, so everything is going to be a little bit different than the last one," Gore says.

## 'Similar, but different'

His knives are like people; no one is exactly the same. "Every knife has its own certain shape, size. Similar, but different," Shawn notes.

The process starts at the drawing board. While he says he does hand-form some knives, most of the time Shawn draws out a design and goes from there. It starts with a billet, or sheet, of metal and he cuts the knife out to size.

"Then I grind what we call the bevel down to the cutting edge. I drill holes for the pins, then put it in the forge for it to get treated," says Gore.

From there it's a recipe; two to three hours in the oven (yes, your normal oven) for a couple of cycles between 300 and 400 degrees. This is so the metal has a chance to temper.

## The artistic touch

Some may say the handles are just simply wood, but they are far from simple. Each handle is made from two wooden slabs, each slab ranging from \$40 to \$90. If you're wanting something really fancy, the handle alone could be upwards of \$130.

Shawn uses a variety of materials, to make the handles—acrylic, Hawaiian

**Underground Lineman Shawn Gore works on punching holes in the knife cutout, one of the first few steps in creating one of his knives.**



JENNIFER HARMON



wood and other various hardwoods, and in some cases, mammoth molar.

He hand-traces the wood to fit each knife and then sands it down to fit perfectly. Shawn's artistic touch is the way each knife is unique to the customer. He specializes in incorporating different styles to the knife, such as adding turquoise or a different color to the handle.

### A lineman's knife

A knife is a daily necessity in the life of a lineman and a majority of the Horry Electric linemen have one of Shawn's knives. You can look at their belts and see the Blackwater Blade Company knife sheath, which are also custom-made to fit a specific knife.

"They (the linemen) stood by me when I first started out and I'll never forget that. I have unbelievable support from the guys at the co-op," says Shawn.

Seeing the linemen carry his knives is something that fuels Shawn's passion. "It's something to be said when you see people out and about with that knife on their side and to think 'I made that. That's my work.'"

If you put it into perspective, Shawn says each individual knife totals about six hours of labor. Not to mention, he was

**Blackwater Blade Company showcases eye-catching kitchen and work knives (right) on social media. Gore also offers knives (upper right) with handles made from a variety of hardwoods.**



Blackwater Blade Company's tent at the 2019 S.C. Lineman's Rodeo.



able to sell around 200 knives in 2019 on top of his unpredictable work schedule.

### 2020 S.C. Lineman's Rodeo

Shawn mainly sells his knives via social media, but is currently working on a website. The great thing about social media, he says, is the ability to reach anyone and everyone. He's even had someone from as far as Russia contact him.

His big selling opportunity: The South Carolina Lineman's Rodeo. This year will be his second year of sponsoring and selling.

He brought 40 knives to the rodeo site last year, sold them all and came home with an additional 40 custom orders. This year, he aims to bring 75 to 100.

He says at the end of the day, the best part about making knives is personal satisfaction. "Seeing something that started from nothing and turns out to be



a beautiful product in the end that I've had my hands on ... to know that I make something that people like ... I'm blessed."

You can visit his table at the 2020 SC Lineman's Rodeo, which is being hosted by Horry Electric Cooperative on Saturday, March 21.

**SC Lineman's Rodeo details: Page 20D.**





# Get Ready to Rodeo!



The 2nd annual  
South Carolina Lineman's  
Rodeo

**Saturday, March 21!**

Hosted at  
Horry Electric Cooperative  
in Conway

Watch electric cooperative  
linemen from across the state  
demonstrate their skills in a fun,  
family-friendly environment.

**See you there!**



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