

Horry Electric Cooperative, Inc.

www.horryelectric.com

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(to report power outages only)

369-2212

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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

Working hard, working smart

Linemen are geared up for safety and equipped with know-how

CAN YOU IMAGINE working a job that requires you to lift heavy tools and perform detailed tasks near high-voltage electric lines? Now imagine doing this 40 feet in the air and, sometimes, in extreme weather. This is the life of a lineman.



These brave men ensure that you are provided with safe, reliable electric service.

How do they stay safe working in these conditions? Horry Electric lineworkers wear personal protective equipment (PPE) at all times when on the job.

Let's take a look at their PPE:

- ▶ **Flame-resistant (FR) clothing** self-extinguishes, limiting injury from a form of electrical explosion, called arc flash.
- ▶ **Insulated gloves and sleeves**, rated at 30,000 volts, protect against electrical shock and burns. Protective gloves, usually made of leather, are also worn over the insulated gloves to protect the rubber from punctures and cuts.
- ▶ **Hard hats** protect linemen from blows and falling objects.
- ▶ **Steel-toe boots** are heavy-duty boots designed with extra support. The steel toe protects linemen from objects that could crush their feet.
- ▶ **Safety glasses** protect their eyes from hazards including flying objects, debris and arc flash.

While working on electrical lines, linemen also may wear equipment belts, tool pouches, safety harnesses and other equipment. The gear can weigh about 50 pounds—a lot to carry when working in a hazardous environment.



Jeremy Ammons, a first-class lineman for HEC, and Craig Cannon, a B-class lineman, reinsulate a co-op line on Dog Bluff Road. They're using personal protective equipment as well as insulated blankets and line covers to work on an energized line.

Linemen also carry something else—a lot of training and know-how. Horry Electric linemen must complete the Lineworker Certification Program from Northwest Linemans College. The curriculum includes 40 exams and 600 hours of academic training.

We'll be celebrating National Lineman Appreciation Day with sister electric co-ops on April 13. If you see an Horry Electric crew on the job that Monday, consider the hazardous work they do. They are true co-op heroes that, quite literally, you can look up to any day of the year.

James P. Howle

James P. "Pat" Howle
Executive Vice President and CEO

HEC hosting free workshop for K-12 STEM teachers March 21

HORRY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE will co-sponsor a regional workshop designed to show K-12 teachers of science, technology, engineering and math how to use the resources on EnlightenSC.org to enhance their classroom learning experience.

The free, half-day session will be held 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, March 21, at HEC's office, 2774 Cultra Road, Conway. Teachers who attend the workshop will earn credit-renewal points, which are required for their state recertification.

Developed for educators teaching STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) courses, EnlightenSC is a K-12 education initiative created to help students better understand energy, economics and related environmental issues. Sponsored by electric co-ops across the state, EnlightenSC and its website—EnlightenSC.org—gives teachers access to training opportunities and instructional resources, including classroom activities and age-appropriate lesson plans aligned with state education standards.

Learn more about EnlightenSC events and initiatives at EnlightenSC.org or facebook.com/EnlightenSC.



Co-ops across the state have co-sponsored EnlightenSC workshops and courses since spring 2014.

LINDSEY SMITH



Teachers, let's see how creative you can be! Send us your special projects by June 1

CALLING ALL EDUCATORS! Horry Electric Cooperative is now accepting applications for Bright Ideas, a grant program that provides funding for innovative classroom-based education projects.

The deadline to apply is June 1.

HEC launched Bright Ideas in 2007 and has since funded dozens of classroom projects. Bright Ideas grants are intended to fund projects outside normal public school funding parameters and can be made available to all disciplines in grades K-12 in Horry County. A school may submit an application, and teachers are limited to one application per year.

We've funded some downright brilliant entries, awarding Bright Ideas grants that allowed local educators to:

- ▶ create and maintain instructional literacy center stations
- ▶ buy computer software to monitor student achievement
- ▶ help fund a "Techstravaganza" event hosted by one area school
- ▶ purchase interactive technology to accommodate different learning styles
- ▶ set up a program to advance science knowledge through hydroponics and
- ▶ create a "morning show" at a local elementary school.

What's YOUR Bright Idea? We'd love to hear it!

Bright Ideas applications are available on HorryElectric.com. For details, contact Toni.Gore@HorryElectric.com.



Learn more

About the workshop

What: Workshop for K-12 STEM teachers

Where: Horry Electric Cooperative, 2774 Cultra Road, Conway

When: 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, March 21

Cost: Free. (A \$25 refundable deposit is required when teachers register online. Since space is limited and reserved on a first-come, first-served basis, the deposit holds their seat in the workshop. If teachers attend, the deposit is fully refunded.)

Benefits: Workshop attendees receive four credit renewal points, access to grade-appropriate lessons and activities, and lunch.

For more details and to register, visit the Upcoming Events section of EnlightenSC.org.

HorryElectric.com has new look

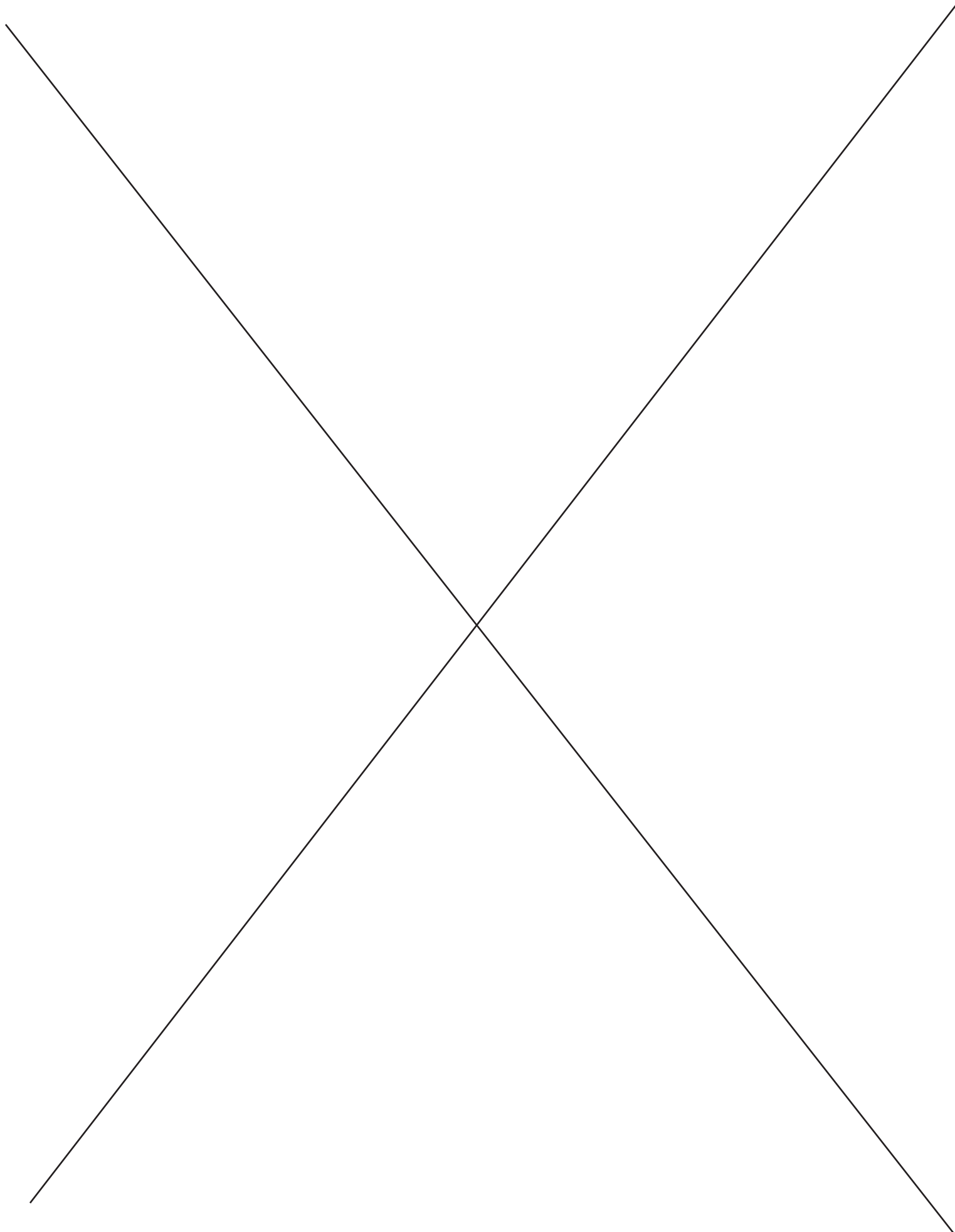
IF YOU HAVEN'T visited our website lately, make a point to access HorryElectric.com soon. We've given it a makeover that makes it easier to navigate and read. Appearance and placement of favorites like My Energy Online, Co-op Connections and Billing Insights remain the same. Don't forget the built-in site search and translation tools. Check it out!

Horry Extra

Has your deductible increased?

As employers across the nation increase deductibles, one executive explains why members should present both their insurance card and their Co-op Connections discount card to find the lowest price on prescriptions. Turn to 20B.





Watching for wildfires

WILDFIRES ARE OFTEN

considered to be one of the most powerful natural disasters known to man, and the spring and summer seasons are times to exercise extra caution, especially in drier climates.

In the past 28 years, more than 254 million acres of land have burned, and tens-of-billions of dollars have been spent in Federal Suppression Firefighting Costs. In California this year, wildfires raged so intensely that they could actually be seen from space, and by the time you read this article, well over 535,070 acres of U.S. land will likely have been burned by fire.

While some fires are caused by lightning—on average, about 10,000 per year—nine out of 10—are caused by man. There are measures you can take to prevent fires from happening, and there are ways to keep you, your family and your home safe during a wildfire. Just follow these helpful tips from Firewise.org:

- ▶ Clear leaves and other debris from gutters, eaves, porches and decks. This prevents embers from igniting your home.
- ▶ Remove dead vegetation from under your deck and within 10 feet of the house.
- ▶ Remove anything stored underneath decks or porches.
- ▶ Screen or box in areas below patios and decks with wire mesh to prevent debris and combustible materials from accumulating.
- ▶ Remove flammable materials (firewood stacks, propane tanks, dry vegetation) within 30 feet of your home's foundation and outbuildings, including garages and sheds. If it can catch fire, don't let it touch your house, deck or porch.
- ▶ Wildfire can spread to treetops. If you have trees on your property, prune so the lowest branches are 6 to 10 feet from the ground.
- ▶ Keep your lawn hydrated and maintained. If it is brown, cut it down to reduce fire intensity. Dry grass and shrubs are fuel for wildfires.
- ▶ Don't let debris and lawn cuttings linger. Dispose of these items quickly to reduce fuel for fire.
- ▶ Inspect shingles or roof tiles. Replace or repair those that are loose or missing to prevent ember penetration.
- ▶ Cover exterior attic vents with metal wire mesh no larger than 1/8 inch to prevent sparks from entering the home.
- ▶ Enclose under-eave and soffit vents or screens with metal mesh to prevent ember entry. ☺

Stay safe this fire season. For more tips and information, visit Firewise.org or the National Interagency Fire Center's website, NIFC.gov.



The largest forest fire ever recorded in South Carolina, known as the Clear Pond Fire, burned 30,000 acres in the area of Horry County near Wampee to the west side of U.S. Hwy. 501. The fire started from an unattended campfire on April 10, 1976.

Horry had record S.C. wildfire

Considering its size and population, South Carolina has one of the highest numbers of fires per year in the nation—and Horry County has had the state's largest.

Average number of fires per year: 3,000*

Average area burned each year: 18,000* acres

Largest fire on record: A 30,000-acre blaze in Horry County in 1976

*Statistics only include fires handled by the S.C. Forestry Commission

Forest fire danger is usually highest in late winter and early spring. March is frequently the busiest month for firefighters, but some of the largest fires have occurred during the first two weeks of April. South Carolina's fire season is in the winter because most vegetation is dead or dormant during that time. Fires do not start or spread as quickly when vegetation is green.

Source: S.C. Forestry Commission



Another Horry fire, the Highway 31 Fire in April 2009, burned 19,130 acres—the most destructive in terms of loss in state recorded history. Woodland damage was about \$17 million; 76 homes were destroyed.

Remember: 2014 ice storm 'added fuel to the fire'



Buddy Parker, HEC's right-of-way coordinator, reminds co-op members that 2014's Ice Storm PAX broke many limbs and trees, leaving more fuel for wildfires. "Co-op lines and facilities are also at increased risk due to wildfires," says Parker (left). "Help us prevent fires and associated outages by being safe with fire and immediately reporting any fire you see. Call 911 ASAP."

Turn to 20D for more helpful information about trees and co-op facilities.

Rising deductible plans an opportunity for cardholders

BY MARTI POWLES

IF YOU'VE FILLED a prescription recently, you were probably shocked by the price tag. U.S. drug prices are on



Marti Powles

the rise, with some specialty drug prices skyrocketing at extraordinary rates—and healthcare consumers are feeling the squeeze. In fact, a branded drug that cost \$100 in 2008

now costs

\$197, according to Express Scripts. Even generic drugs are getting pricier. Today, more than a third of available generic drugs cost insurers and consumers more than \$100 per prescription, according to Catamaran, a pharmacy benefit manager that administers prescription drug programs.

Unfortunately, the storm is just beginning. According to a health plan cost trend survey from benefits and HR consulting firm, The Segal Group, respondents predict higher trend rates for all prescription drug plans in 2015.

Darker skies ahead

To make matters worse, deductibles are also mounting. In 2015, 32 percent of large employers will offer only high-deductible plans, up from 22 percent in 2014, according to the National Business Group on Health. Because so many employees fail to meet their ever-increasing deductibles, many consumers are forced to pay for high-priced prescriptions out-of-pocket.

When I recently sat in a New Benefits senior management meeting, I discovered our company would once again endure a 15-percent increase

'I always present both my insurance card and discount card to find the lowest price because every dollar counts.'

in premium costs. It's a harsh reality to face, but we worked together to find the best way to take care of our employees while protecting the bottom line. Like countless other companies, we settled on raising the deductible. Our employees will see a \$5,000 deductible for 2015. Yet, many employees will never meet that

deductible, which means they'll have to dip into their own wallet to pay for prescriptions.

Fortunately, there is a solution—and it comes in the form of one small card.

The silver lining

Our discount prescription card helps consumers weather the storm of increasing out-of-pocket expenses by providing a second option when paying for their prescriptions. As a consumer with a high-deductible health plan, I don't automatically purchase a prescription using insurance. I always present both my insurance card and discount card to find the lowest price, because every dollar counts.

As deductibles and prescription prices continue to soar, our pharmacy card is the umbrella consumers need at the pharmacy. ☺

MARTI POWLES is chief operating officer of New Benefits, Ltd., the company that arranges the prescription drug savings available to Horry Electric Cooperative members through Touchstone Energy Cooperatives' Co-op Connections discount card program.

Co-op Connections® Card: By the Numbers

\$740,615

saved on prescriptions by HEC members since 2009



S.C. co-ops help members save \$14.4 million on prescriptions

New figures for 2014 show just how valuable the Co-op Connections discount card is for members of Horry Electric and other Touchstone Energy Cooperatives in South Carolina.

Members of participating co-ops around the Palmetto State have saved \$14,434,367.12 on prescription drug costs through 2014, according to a report from Touchstone Energy, the alliance of more than 750 independent, consumer-owned co-ops nationwide.

Since 2007, Co-op Connections cardholders saved more than \$82 million on prescriptions nationwide. Through February, Horry Electric's members will have saved over \$740,615 on prescriptions since 2009.

In 2014, discounts on prescription drugs reached an all-time high of 45 percent nationwide. HEC members saved even more—a whopping 48.97 percent! To find the 58 participating local pharmacies, use the Locate Providers feature at Connections.coop, a click away at HorryElectric.com.

Yet prescription drug savings are just one of the Co-op Connections card's Healthy Savings Discounts. HEC members can also save money on labwork and imaging, dental care, chiropractic and eye care. Currently, 31 providers within 50 miles of Conway offer these Healthy Savings Discounts, as the Locate Providers search feature reveals.

Searching for your Co-op Connections card? No sweat. Print a new one at HorryElectric.com.

CO-OP CONNECTIONS

Fast Facts 2014



119 local retail offers
where HEC members can
shop and save in and around
Horry County



At Connections.com, a
Locate Providers search
lists **58** local participating
pharmacies



HEC cardholders saved on
2,923 prescriptions last year



Average prescription savings
by HEC members reached
48% off, topping the record
45% national average

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Staying in the pink

With her pink driver and a pink ball, Kathy Motichka tees up at River Hills Country Club. The Pennsylvania resident was visiting friends in Little River last fall. The club is one of several local courses that offer a Co-op Connections discount.

STAYING ACTIVE reduces health care costs—and golfers with a Co-op Connections card can also get \$10 off the a.m. walk-in rate or \$5 off p.m. walk-in rate at:

Arcadian Shores

701 Hilton Road, Myrtle Beach

Phone: 449-5217

Grande Dunes Resort Club

8700 Golf Village Lane, Myrtle Beach

Phone: 913-9416

Myrtlewood Golf Club

1500 48th Ave. North, Myrtle Beach

Phone: 913-9271

Tidewater Golf Club

1400 Tidewater Drive

N. Myrtle Beach, SC 29582

Phone: 913-2424

River Hills Country Club

3670 Cedar Creek Run, Little River

Phone: 399-2100

Pine Lakes Golf


5603 Granddaddy Blvd., Myrtle Beach

Phone: 315-7700

Or, use your card to get \$2 off on 18 holes at:

Midway Par 3

3101 South Kings Hwy., Myrtle Beach

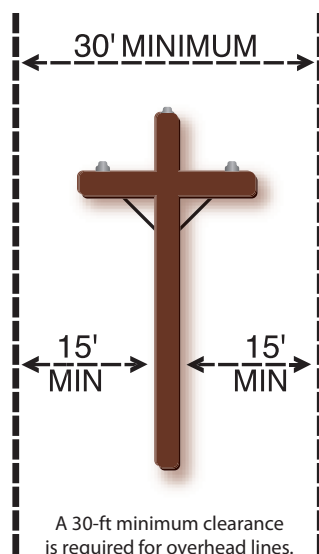
Phone: 913-5335 

Got spring fever? Remember to 'look up and around' before planting

TREES AND OVERHEAD

power lines just don't mix. Lightning, high winds, ice, heavy rains or even extremely dry weather can send trees to the ground and limbs into lines, knocking out power.

Crews have to be dispatched, electrical



equipment has to be replaced and members are without power until the work is safely completed.

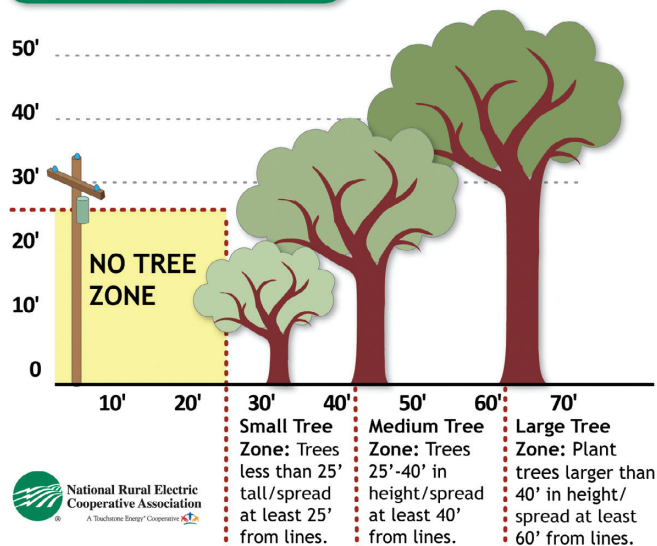
"We have a tree-trimming program to reduce the potential for outages related to trees and limbs, but keeping up with tree growth in Horry County is a challenge," says Reed Cooper, HEC's manager of engineering.

There's another way to prevent tree-related outages, Cooper says: Don't plant them too close to co-op lines.

"We encourage members to learn all they can about choosing the right tree for the right place," Cooper says. He recommends the South Carolina Forestry Commission website as an excellent information source.

Access state.sc.us/forest,

Tree Planting Guide



then click on Seedling Sales on the left side of the commission's home page. Resources include:

- ▶ Seedling Care and Handling
- ▶ How to Plant and Care for

Your Trees

- ▶ How to Plant with the Planting Hoe
- ▶ How to Plant with the Planting Machine
- ▶ How to Plant with the Dibble

Transformers need to be left alone

The green metal box in your yard contains an electric transformer for underground service. Horry Electric line crews need clear access 24 hours a day. Remember:

- ▶ The transformer is connected to underground power lines. Never dig anywhere in your yard without first calling Horry Electric at (843) 369-2211, or the Palmetto Utility Protection Service at 811, to find out where the cables are buried.
- ▶ Keep shrubs, fences and other obstructions well away from the transformer.
- ▶ Never enclose the transformer with fencing, shrubs or anything else with less than a 10-foot-wide gate or opening.
- ▶ Never place anything that gets closer than 10 feet from the front or 4 feet from the sides of the transformer. (The handle, lock and sticker are on the front.)
- ▶ If we have to conduct work at the transformer, we may need to remove obstructions from around our equipment. For your safety and that of our employees, please do not replace obstructions we remove.
- ▶ Never pour waste oils, chemicals or other liquids on or near the transformer. These liquids can seep into the ground and damage underground cables.
- ▶ Never allow children to play near the transformer.

For advice on how to safely beautify the area around your transformer, call Buddy Parker, Horry Electric's right-of-way coordinator, at (843) 369-2211.

