

Horry Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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(to report power outages only)

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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

Here for the long haul

National network a big benefit

WHEN YOUR CO-OP JOINED THE RANKS of the Touchstone Energy Cooperative nationwide branding alliance on



Jan. 1, 1998, we were one of 300 participating electric cooperatives in 32 states delivering energy and energy solutions to more than 16 million members every day.

Today, there are 751 electric cooperatives in 46 states participating in the network collectively delivering on the commitments of integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community to 32 million members.

Our history is our future

Horry Electric will be celebrating 75 years of service in January. Organized for and by people right here in Horry County, our co-op is deeply rooted in the community. Like all cooperative businesses, we operate according to the core principles and values first set out in 1844 by the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers in England.

Members are directly impacted by at least five of the seven principles. Voluntary and open membership, democratic member control and member's economic participation truly set us apart from other types of businesses. In everything we do, maintaining the cooperative's autonomy and independence, as well as having a concern for the community by working for sustainable development are among the priorities set by the management team of your Cooperative and by the members of your board of trustees.

The alliance with sister cooperatives and the addition of the Touchstone Energy brand to our existing local, well established presence in 1998 is an excellent example of cooperation among cooperatives, which is another guiding principle. From our history, we know we are much more effective with accomplishing goals by working together with sister cooperatives on a regional and national basis. Improved efficiency and cost effectiveness are other benefits of working together.

Being a part of the Touchstone Energy Cooperative network is a big benefit to our co-op, our members and our communities. It enhances our local connections and has given us the ability to follow through on another very important guiding principle—education, training and information. The list of resources and tools available through Touchstone Energy is long. You can learn more by visiting us online at HorryElectric.com and TogetherWeSave.com.

Horry Electric Cooperative is here for the long haul. You can count on us to look out for you and be your advocate. It matters to us, because we work and live here, too. The majority of us are members ourselves. What impacts you, also impacts us.

Stay tuned as we gear up to celebrate 75 years in Horry County and 18 years as a Touchstone Energy Cooperative.

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

On the go? Take us with you!

JUST LIKE YOU, HEC is on the go: With our Mobile Apps or Mobile Web App, co-op members can view their bill, sign up for alerts and reminders, view their payment history, pay their bill and more! Look for the Horry Electric name in the App Store or Android Market. To learn more, check out our Mobile App FAQ at HorryElectric.com or call us at (843) 369-2211.



WALTER ALLREAD



Brandi Stalvey, 4, poses with a Sunflower Wreath made by her mother, HEC member Jamie Stalvey. Jamie (above, left) markets her sunny creations via her Facebook page, which is how customer Samantha Mincey found out about them. Jamie meets her customers for deliveries. Being on the go, she uses Horry Electric's Mobile App. In fact, Jamie had just paid her bill before making this sale, she says.

Have you thought about...

TO REDUCE PROBLEMS associated with indirect lightning and power surges, Horry Electric offers affordable, flexible protection through its Surge Guard program. Surge Guard helps protect against unexpected voltage surges that can harm or even ruin electronic devices such as major appliances and TVs, DVD players or personal computers.

Surge Guard is really a two-step program. The first step takes place outside at the meter base. The second occurs indoors where individual surge suppressors are installed to provide your TV, telephone, stereo and other electronic equipment with reliable, state-of-the-art surge protection.

Horry Electric can help you find the right protection for your specific needs. A good ground system is essential for surge equipment to work properly.

Details are included in Surge Guard brochure, available at HEC offices and at HorryElectric.com. Just complete the 'I am interested in Surge Guard' form in the brochure and return it to us.

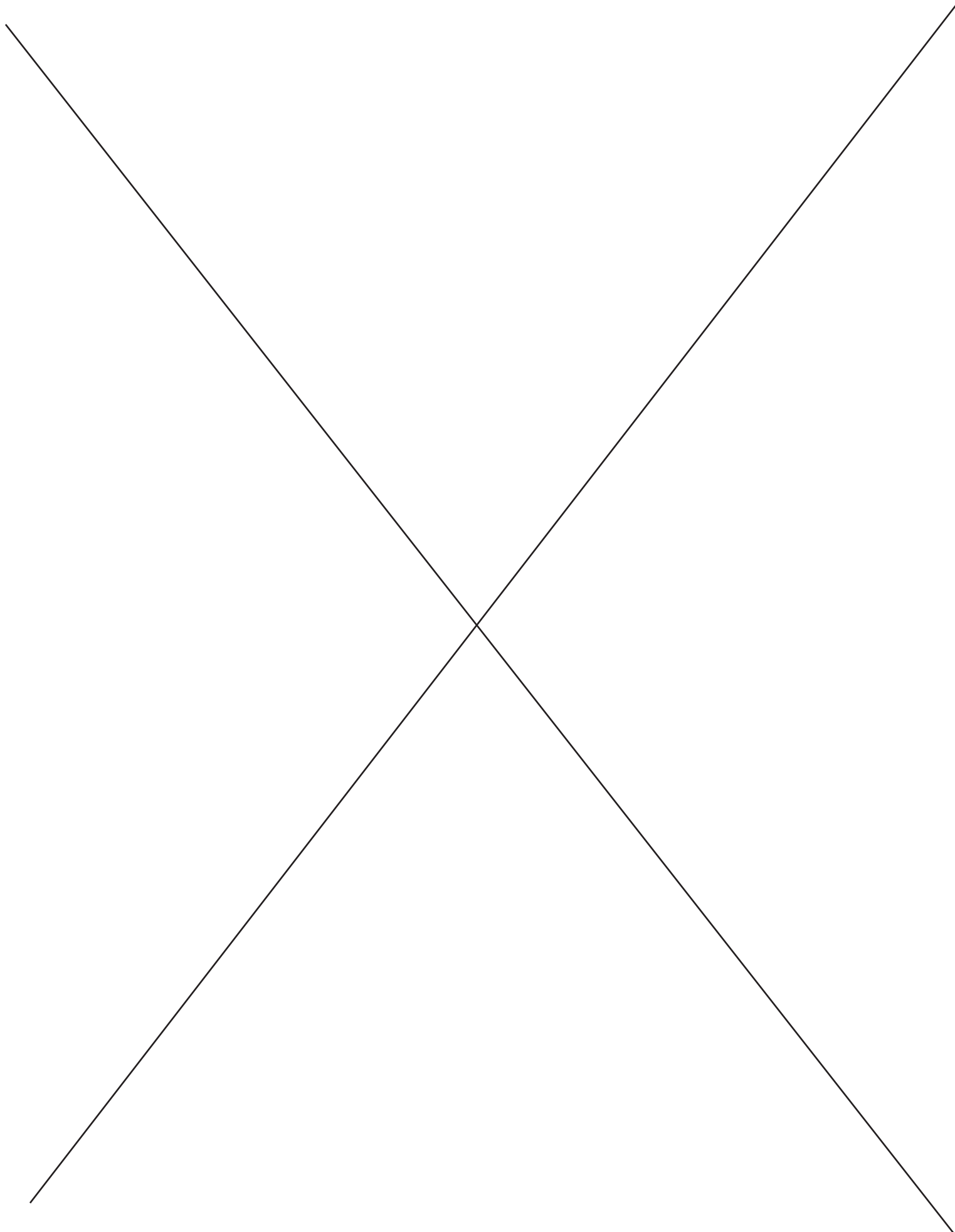


Horry Extra



Miracle on Hwy. 67

Miracle Lewis is a rare breed: A young Horry native who stayed down on the farm—Home Sweet Farm, as she calls it. Her story opens our Horry Extra section on page 16A.



Miracle on Highway 67

How Miracle Lewis came to choose farm over pharmacy

PAWPAW WOULD BE PROUD. Miracle Lewis' grandfather, Bill Lewis, passed away in 2011—but not before passing down a way of life he loved.

Today, he'd no doubt be especially pleased at how she has brought his old farm near Loris back to life.

Home Sweet Farm, as Miracle calls it, is a real labor of love for the Horry Electric Cooperative member. Lewis and her boyfriend, Jimmy Rabon, have doubled the size of the operation this year, increasing production from seven acres of beans, squash, cucumbers, zucchini, potatoes, honey and other crops last year to 15 acres this spring. And they've added more types of vegetables and fruit. "We're doing a second and a third crop of everything we plant," Miracle adds.

The 4-H agent for the county Clemson Extension Service office, Miracle sells her produce in local farmers markets and directly to restaurants and stores. It's challenging, but getting there is well worth it, she says: "I would rather stay at home and pick stuff all day long than do anything in the world. I don't mind sweating. I love being outside, and I love to get dirty. It's a fun job. It's what I was meant to do, I really think."

What's in her name?

It wasn't always that way for the 24-year-old daughter of Harold and Lisa Lewis. Six years ago, Miracle's goals were not unlike those of many young Horry County women: "I had intentions of going to pharmacy school. I went to Coastal [Carolina University] and those were my plans," she says. "I worked at a pharmacy to get experience—but I didn't want to do it."

Like her chosen field—working in the fields, that is—the story of Miracle's name is also remarkable. As Lisa Lewis explains, "I lost two children before her. During the time



Miracle Lewis at the Conway Farmer's Market, her baskets almost empty at the end of a pretty good Saturday of sales. The Horry Electric Cooperative member also sells fresh produce at other farmers markets around the county. She's happiest at her farm—she calls it Home Sweet Farm—on Highway 67 near Loris. "I would rather stay at home and pick stuff all day long than do anything in the world," Miracle says.

WALTER ALBRECHT

I was expecting her, I had a lot of complications. I ended up staying bed-bound for several months. ... I thought, 'If I have this baby, it's going to be a miracle'—and then I realized, 'That's her name!'"

Her daughter, she says, comes by her love of farming naturally: "She's been around it all of her life," Lisa says. Miracle's parents chose

non-agricultural careers, but the farming gene apparently jumped a generation.

"She followed her PawPaw on the farm, and he taught her about all of this stuff," Lisa says.

Miracle, who as a child spent a lot of time with her PawPaw and her late grandmother, Versie Lewis, remembers

continued on page 16C

For farmers and growers, a bold plan takes root



Julie Norman at the Pee Dee Agriporium Food Hub location in late May. "I truly believe this is going to be an economic driver for not just this county but for the entire region," she says.

Food Hub could spur agribusiness, bring \$3 million a year to region—and better, local food

HORRY COUNTY FARMERS AND GROWERS are signing up to sell produce through the Pee Dee Agriporium Food Hub on Hwy. 501 near Marion, set to open in late August or early September.

Julie Norman, executive director of the Marion County Economic Development Commission, says the Agriporium will boost the Pee Dee economy. "I truly believe this is going to be an economic driver for not just this county but for the entire region," she says.

Horry Electric member Elaine Gore is growing Dutch cucumbers to sell through the Food Hub. The deputy director at Horry County Council On Aging, Gore also serves on HEC's board. Being so busy, she says, she doesn't need the work but wants to support the Pee Dee Agriporium. "These rural people, they need this Food Hub," she says. "They need this badly."

Not a farmers market, a food hub is a facility for farmers to drop off produce for cleaning, packaging and delivery to restaurants and stores. Among 227 food hubs nationwide, the Pee Dee Agriporium Food Hub is predicted to bring in at least \$3 million by year five. The Food Hub will provide farmers and growers—even hobby gardeners—a new way to sell their produce. The state's only other hub is in Charleston, she notes.

Get fresh, get local

The facility's primary market will be Grand Strand restaurants, which more than ever crave fresh, local produce to satisfy demanding diners.

"Right now we spend \$11 billion in this state on food but only 10 percent of that stays in the state," Norman says. "The tomatoes that we eat on the Grand Strand are all coming from California—they ripen on the truck. So we want to put some of that money in the pockets of producers, growers and farmers in the Pee Dee region who will, in all likelihood, head right back down to the Grand Strand and spend some of that money in hotels and restaurants, on entertainment and so forth. The restaurants along the Grand Strand know that, so they're eager to

participate in the Food Hub and buy fresh, local produce."

Technology will play a big part, with restaurants ordering vegetables and produce online and growers responding to demand, she says. The Agriporium will also include a retail store, a small business assistance center and an FDA-grade commercial kitchen incubator.

A friend to farmers

Jody Martin has been hired as director of the Pee Dee Agriporium Food Hub. Martin has more than 35 years of agricultural and agribusiness experience. He is the co-founder and chairman of the S.C. AgriBiz and Farm Expo Advisory Council, which has a close relationship with farmers in the region.

"My years working with farmers will help establish long-lasting working relationships with our Food Hub farmers, restaurants and grocery stores," he says.

The Pee Dee Agriporium Food Hub offers assistance to growers preparing to supply the Food Hub, including those who need work and are willing to help with planting. Farmers and potential growers of ANY size can call (843) 423-8235 with questions.



Jody Martin



WALTER ALFREDA

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regularly driving her little pink Barbie Jeep down the farm road from her parent's house to her grandparents' home: "Mama would stand on her front porch, and my grandmother would stand on her front porch, and they would watch me."



In late May, Miracle's tomatoes were coming in as fat as her pattypan squash (below).



Old ways, new challenges

Today, while touring the revived farm on a golf cart, she considers how her grandparents would feel about all the animals and the row crops—plus a

peach orchard and Muscadine vines—that she and Jimmy have added.

"I think they'd

be excited. PawPaw would be really tickled to show everybody everything. He would love seeing all the people come up here."

As much as she appreciates the old ways, she knows firsthand that farmers today face different challenges than those of yesteryear. A modern operation like Home Sweet Farm needs buyers for its produce—lots of them. Direct sales to consumers in the farmer's markets and to restaurants help, but otherwise, their local marketing options are limited, she says. "In Charleston and the Upstate, they have a lot more opportunities than we do," Miracle notes. "They have all these brokers they can sell to, but we don't. People here would probably grow more things if they knew they could sell it."

Aiming high

For her part, Miracle aims high. "I'd love to sell to Walmart one day,"

How sweet it is!
Homegrown Home Sweet Farm honey.



Miracle's friend Ashley Huggins feeds baby goats. The menagerie at Home Sweet Farm also includes this tom turkey, a gift from a 4-H student. Miracle (right) credits her boyfriend, Jimmy Rabon, for much of the farm's success. "He's smarter than I am," she says.

she says. "That's my goal. I know I've made it, if I could sell to Walmart. Because that's one of the toughest places to get into."

This fall, Miracle will begin online classes to earn a master's degree in agriculture from Clemson University. In addition to her grandfather, she credits Jimmy for teaching her a lot about agricultural practices. "He's smarter than me," Miracle says, "He researches a lot of this stuff at night."

They know why young people find other work besides farming. "It's a struggle, for sure," Jimmy says. As much as they'd like to expand Home Sweet Farm's operations, he says, "We can't justify planting a lot more, until we find a bigger buyer."

Miracle, who likes the idea of the Pee Dee Agriporium Food Hub in Marion (see story on facing page), is even more supportive of proposals to expand the Conway Farmers Market. The idea has long been encouraged by Blake Lanford, the Clemson Extension agent who helped establish the Waccamaw Market Cooperative for local growers, of which Miracle is a member. "He wants to do a mobile market where they come and buy from farmers and sell to grocery stores



and restaurants like they're doing in Marion, too," Miracle says. "If that works out, we'll grow more."

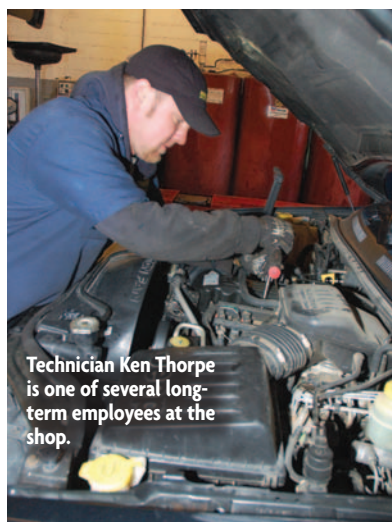
Those additional crops will likely include some Dixie Lee peas from a very special source: "We've got my PawPaw's seeds that he saved," Miracle says. "We're going to try some of these this year and probably get some more seeds off of them and do some heirlooms."

So PawPaw is going to grow one more crop? "He is, and he doesn't know anything about it!" she says. ☺



Dixie Lee peas saved by Miracle's late grandfather 10 years ago.

A personal touch with your cars and such



Technician Ken Thorpe is one of several long-term employees at the shop.



The Meineke Car Care Center in Murrells Inlet is a “family-friendly place,” says Janice Whalen, co-owner with her husband, Joe Whalen. Their personable approach extends to customers and workers alike: “We have long-term employees. They’re here because we run an honest shop,” she says. “We treat people fairly. We don’t force our employees to sell people things that they don’t need. We have very happy customers. They tell their friends, family and neighbors about us.”



Owners Janice and Joe Whalen with their dog, Marley.



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Co-op Connections® Card

Horry Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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The card also entitles members of HEC and other participating Touchstone Energy Cooperatives to Healthy Savings Discounts on prescription drugs, dental, vision, hearing, lab work and imaging, and chiropractor visits. Best of all, you get these benefits for free!

Misplaced your Co-op Connections card? Visit Connections.coop, click the Healthy Savings page, and click on Print My Card. HEC members can also click Locate Providers to find more than 58 local pharmacies and 30 participating health-care providers within 50 miles of Conway. ☺

Local discount

Meineke Car Care Center
12270 Hwy. 17 By-Pass, Murrells Inlet
(next to Home Depot)

Hours: 7:30 a.m.–6 p.m. Monday–
Friday and 7:30 a.m.–5 p.m. Saturday
Phone: (843) 357-6833

Co-op Connections card discount
Show your Co-op Connections
card and receive 10 percent off
any service. Offer excludes tires,
batteries and specials.