

## Horry Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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**TO REPORT  
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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

# 2020: Keep pushing forward

Coronavirus adapting continues amid hurricane season



**IT FEELS GREAT** to have our lobby doors open, and we are happy to see our members again! While we know things are a little different right now, we're excited things are getting back to normal.

We opened our doors on June 1, after closing them on March 19. We are continuing to limit the number of members allowed in our lobbies. To conduct business with us, we encourage our members to use our drive-thru windows, online portal, bank draft, or visit one of our convenient, local pay stations listed on our website.

## Hurricane season is here

The 2020 Atlantic hurricane season is officially here. Forecasters with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) predict an "above-normal" year with 13 to 19 named storms, with six of these likely to become dangerous Category 3, 4, or 5 hurricanes. We've already seen three named storms.

Horry Electric is part of the state's largest utility network with 5,407 miles of electric distribution lines. We are a not-for-profit electric cooperative with plans in place if a hurricane threatens us. We have Mutual Aid agreements in place with S.C. co-ops, as well as out-of-state co-ops. These agreements allow other cooperatives to assist Horry with power restoration as needed.

## Staying ahead

A major storm or hurricane can form at any time, so we all need to be prepared. We can never estimate how long power will be out until our crews begin assessing damage after the storm. Rest assured, we will have power restored as soon as we can safely do so.

We have an entire section on our website dedicated to storm preparedness. Click "Prepare" under our "Storm

Center" section.

The most important thing to know is your evacuation zone and evacuation route. Tune into local radio or TV stations, The Weather Channel or the National Hurricane Center for information on your area.

As part of your plan, have an emergency kit ready. Gather supplies if you're planning to evacuate, or have them ready if you're planning to weather the storm at home. Have bottled water and non-perishable foods readily available. Don't forget flashlights and batteries. It's never too early to start putting these items together.

## Be ready

If an evacuation is ordered for your area, we recommend evacuating and following orders issued by Governor Henry McMaster, especially if you have special medical needs.

If you have health issues requiring the use of medical equipment, contact us as soon as possible to obtain a Special Needs Account Member Certification form. This form does not guarantee that your electric service will not be interrupted; however, it does certify that you have special medical needs if you lose power. Again, we cannot predict how long it will be before power is restored. We ask for your patience and your prayers. Our motto reads: Safety is our First Concern. We follow that with our members being our top priority.

No matter if it's a virus or a major storm, we are all in this together.

Thank you for your patience and understanding. Please continue to stay safe.

*Daniel B. Shelley, III*

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

# Co-op born and raised

## HEC's Penelope Hinson retiring after 31 years

**IT IS SAID** that some people are born with natural talent. Horry Electric's Penelope Hinson is definitely one of those.

She was born into the world of electric cooperatives. Her father, Derl Hinson, served electric cooperatives from Mississippi to the Carolinas. He started his career in 1960 at Pee Dee Electric. Nearly 40 years later, he retired as executive vice president and CEO of Lynch River Electric.

Penelope has followed in her dad's footsteps, making electric co-ops her lifetime career and passion.

### Making her co-op mark

Penelope studied communications and public relations at Meredith College in North Carolina and completed her education at the Mississippi University for Women.

After getting her degree, she went to work for Berkeley Electric Cooperative in 1989. She served as their communications manager until 1999, when she moved up the coast to continue her career at Horry Electric.

Penelope has worn many hats during her 21 years at HEC. She has served as manager of public relations, marketing and energy management. She's expanded Horry Electric's social media presence, launched multiple programs, and more.

She's also had a fundamental role in the world of government relations.

"You could not find a person who believes more in the mission of electric cooperatives than Penelope," says John Frick, vice president of government relations with The Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina (ECSC). "That passion for improving the lives of our members has made her one of the most trusted advocates I have known. From Washington, D.C. to Columbia, that trust has translated directly to better value for cooperative members. All of us in the co-op family are greatly indebted to her for that."

**Penelope served as a lobbyist for the co-ops of South Carolina. Here she stands with Josh Crotzer, a former lobbyist, outside the governor's office.**



JENNIFER HARMON



### Leaving behind a legacy

Her legacy expands outside of Horry County. Penelope has been an asset to our statewide association, as well as co-ops around the country.

"Penelope has been my 'go-to person' in co-op land for as long as I've known her—14 years. I've always thought of her as a contract employee for Statewide because of her great advice when it comes to advocating for all our co-ops in S.C. She's lived and breathed co-ops her entire life, and that's experience that can't be replaced," says Van O'Cain with ECSC.

Penelope has received several awards and credentials. "We are so proud of all of her accomplishments. She's a Certified Cooperative Communicator. She's also served on multiple boards, including her recent appointment to serve on the Touchstone Energy Board of Directors," says Horry Electric's Executive Vice President and CEO Danny Shelley.

"The great thing about workplace longevity is the institutional memory it provides. People like Penelope hold in their minds a huge amount of information about how the co-op operates, what members need and how to solve problems. The co-op has been blessed with Penelope's longevity and the experience that brings," says Executive Vice President of ECSC Lou Green.

### What's next?

As Penelope starts her next chapter, she says she's ready to travel and enjoy life.

While we may not know exactly "what's next" for her, we can only imagine she'll have her furry companion Daisy by her side (**pictured above**). We also suspect she'll be near a beach somewhere because of her love for shelling.

A trip to North Carolina to watch N.C. State football or a trip to Chicago to watch a Cubs baseball game is probably in her near future too!

Wherever retirement takes you, Penelope, we wish you all the best and we thank you for your service to electric cooperatives. From all of us at Horry Electric, Happy Retirement!

COURTESY OF ECSC



## We're always CONNECTED!

**THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC** posed many challenges for Horry Electric after lobby doors closed in March.

State and local guidelines prompted a quick response for the safety of employees and members. Over half of the office staff worked from home until lobby doors reopened June 1. Operations crews are continuing to work staggered shifts to maintain social distancing.

Adjustments took time and coordination. The world saw a surge of video conferencing and our cooperative was no different. Several supervisors used FaceTime (**see picture at right**), in addition to Microsoft Teams, to meet regularly and communicate across various departments. "With today's technology, it was very easy to stay connected and informed during the pandemic. We could call, text and email throughout the day to ensure our members' needs were met timely," says Gail Morton, member service supervisor.

Office Manager Jodi Jordan said it was a great way to maintain constant communication. Interdepartmental communications never slowed down.

"Our employees never hesitated working from home. They maintained a 99.97% call answer rate while working from home, many while also caring for their children. We continued serving our members, just as we would have if we were in the office. This is another example of our commitment to excellent member service," Jordan says.



COURTESY PIXABAY/HORRY ELECTRIC

## Bright Ideas application deadline extended

**GREAT NEWS!** Horry Electric is extending the deadline for Bright Ideas grant applications due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The new application deadline for 2020 is **August 31, 2020**.

"Due to the uncertain times we're living in, we want to give our teachers extra time to complete their applications," says Toni Gore, coordinator of the Bright Ideas program.

Horry Electric understands teachers have faced several challenges this school year, so the extension is one way to make things a little easier for teachers in the fall.

Bright Ideas is a grant program designed to provide funding for innovative classroom-based educational projects.

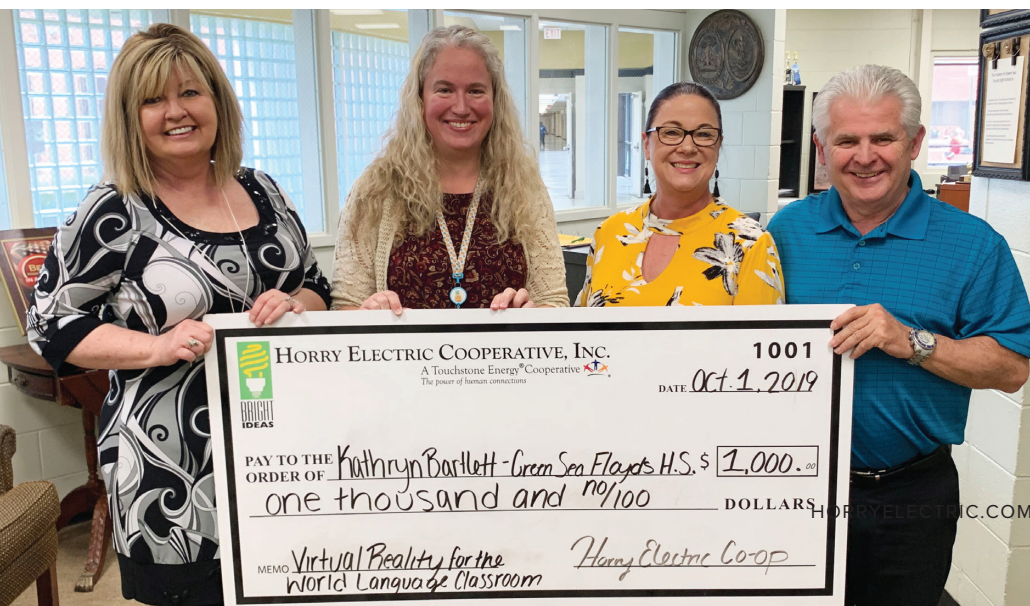
Bright Ideas grants are intended to fund projects outside normal public school funding parameters and can

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. \$1,000 is the maximum amount teachers can apply for.

In 2019, 12 teachers in nine different schools across the county were awarded grant money, totaling \$10,000. Grants are normally awarded in October.

"We encourage any teacher in the district to apply! We would love the opportunity to help fund any project a teacher may want to do for their classroom," says Gore.

Anyone interested can apply online through our website. Download an application at [horryelectric.com](http://horryelectric.com). For more program details, email [Toni.Gore@horryelectric.com](mailto:Toni.Gore@horryelectric.com)



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Spanish teacher Kathryn Bartlett holds her \$1,000 Bright Ideas check from Toni Gore (left), alongside Principal Ms. Andrea Pridgen (second from right) and Ken Richardson (right), school board chairman, for her virtual reality classroom.

## Answering the call: The life of a serviceman

'We are the eyes of the co-op'

**FOUR MEN**—they're the jack of all trades at Horry Electric. They are your servicemen.

Each of these men started out as linemen. Two specialized in overhead construction; two in underground. All are extremely dedicated to their job. Their main goal: getting and keeping the lights on.

There are a lot of similarities between being a lineman and being a serviceman. Schedules are unpredictable, the phone rings at all hours of the night, and if there's a storm, you're heading to work.

"It's not an 8 to 5 job. You have to be a special kind of person to have this job and you have to have a real understanding family," says Billy Cooke.

While there are similarities, the responsibilities of a serviceman are very different than those of a lineman.

"I'd say every part of Horry Electric, every department, we get involved in. We change broken poles. We troubleshoot to figure out problems. We probably interact with the members more than

anyone," says Cooke.

The biggest part of their job: being on call and restoring power. When a storm rolls in and there's an outage, these men are the first to leave their families.

"You spend a lot of time away from your family. You think about it, when you have little kids growing up and they're playing ball or doing other stuff in school, when you're on call and get called out, you miss it," says Ricky Hardee.

The servicemen have jobs every day, including changing out yard lights, performing voltage checks, and clearing limbs off power lines. However, their day can change on a dime if there's a storm, a car accident, or anything that causes an outage.

One of the biggest differences is the servicemen work on their own. "It's a lot more responsibility because you're by yourself. You have to make the decision. When you're out at a job site, you have to decide what you're going to do and how you're going to do it," says Ryan Lambert.

While some might say it's dangerous to work alone, the servicemen know their limitations. "You have to respect electricity. There's a lot of danger in it. We've been trained to do what we do. If we can't handle it, we're going to call someone," says Frankie Harrelson.

The servicemen also have another big responsibility: riding the lines.

"We are the eyes of the co-op. We're out there riding and patrolling the lines and we see things. We see what's happening and we know what needs to be done," Harrelson says. They are looking for things like growing vines or broken guy wires, anything that could be dangerous to our crews or our members.

The beauty of their job, they say, is no day is ever the same. Billy says, "There's miles and miles of line around here that a construction crew may never see. They go from job-to-job and they go to places when there's a problem. We see the whole thing!"

Horry Electric has over 5,000 miles of line. It's a lot to cover, but the servicemen love it.

In reality, the servicemen and linemen spend more time together than they do with their families. "We pick and we give each other a hard time, but we're always happy. We try to help each other and we all focus on one thing: getting the job done and getting the lights on," Harrelson says.

Billy says, "If you look at some of the storms that come through and the comments on social media, our members are pretty great. If there's anything I can say, it's that we're going to get the lights back on as quickly and safely as we can, I promise."

**Horry Electric's servicemen (from L to R) Ricky Hardee, Frankie Harrelson, Billy Cooke and Ryan Lambert pause for a quick picture before loading up their trucks to start their day.**



JENNIFER HARMON



## Generating your own power? Let HEC know



Horry Electric's Metering Supervisor Blake Strong shows the inside of a home's generator panel. The panel connects the member's generator to the home circuitry.

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**A TOP PRIORITY** for Horry Electric Cooperative is to safely provide reliable power to members.

Safety is our first concern, but it should also be a priority for members who are generating their own power and sending it over Horry Electric lines. Brian Chestnut, the cooperative's safety coordinator, says the risks lineworkers face during storm restoration are compounded by the energy being back fed onto lines by home or portable generators.

Both types of generators are a high concern during any storm, but especially during hurricane season, which runs

from June 1 to Nov. 30.

While Horry Electric's linemen are trained to take necessary precautions before working on any kind of downed power lines, a generator is a different story.

Linemen do wear their personal protective equipment, but it's the members that can provide the most important protection to the line crews. Members should inform the cooperative that a generator is operating at their home.

"If you have a generator, never connect it directly to your home's circuits, unless it is wired for generator use and it has been done by a

licensed electrician," says Burroughs Nobles, manager of operations. "Always plug appliances directly into properly grounded generators, but never overload it."

Risks exist when home generators are self-installed without the expertise of a licensed electrician and

without notifying the cooperative. This is when it is the most dangerous to the linemen working in the field.

Horry Electric employees are not the only ones in danger when a generator is installed improperly. Homeowners themselves may be at risk of electrocution, fire injury, property damage, or carbon monoxide poisoning, if they do not follow the necessary safety rules.

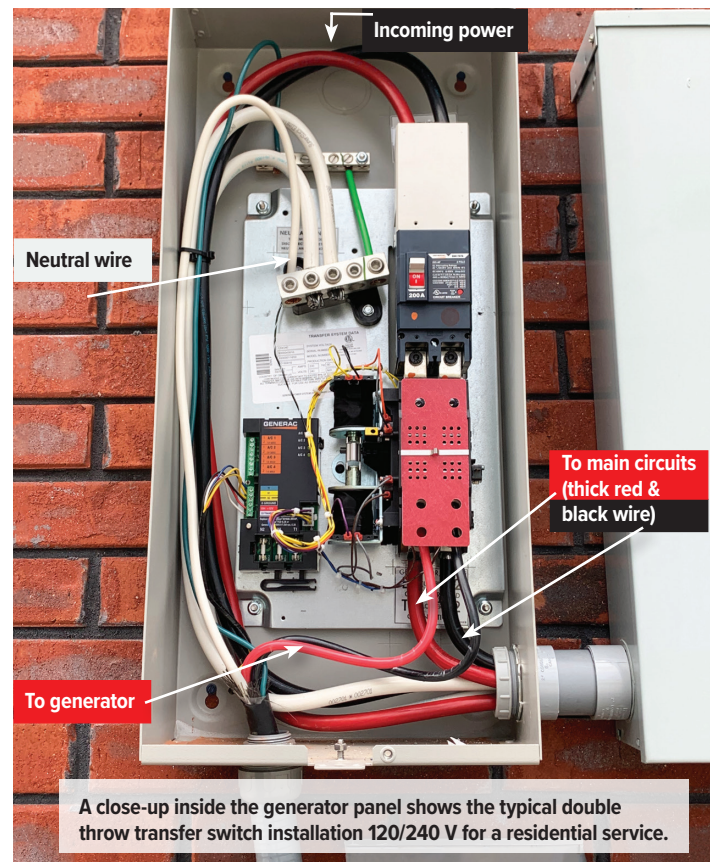
We understand that members like having generators to use during extended outages, but we want to keep everyone safe.

**Thinking of installing a generator? Need some questions answered? Contact Horry Electric at (843) 369-2211 or visit [horryelectric.com](http://horryelectric.com) for more information.**

### Generator Installation Checklist

- ▶ Call Horry Electric first. We can answer your questions and provide guidance before you make your purchase.
- ▶ Involve a licensed electrician and/or a certified installer. We have a list of approved electrical contractors on our website under "Energy Programs."
- ▶ Make sure your home is properly wired for generator use.
- ▶ Ensure the installation has been permitted, inspected and approved by county building code officials.
- ▶ Inform Horry Electric when the installation is complete and someone will come to reconnect the power.

**For more information on generator safety, visit [horryelectric.com/generator-safety-2/](http://horryelectric.com/generator-safety-2/)**

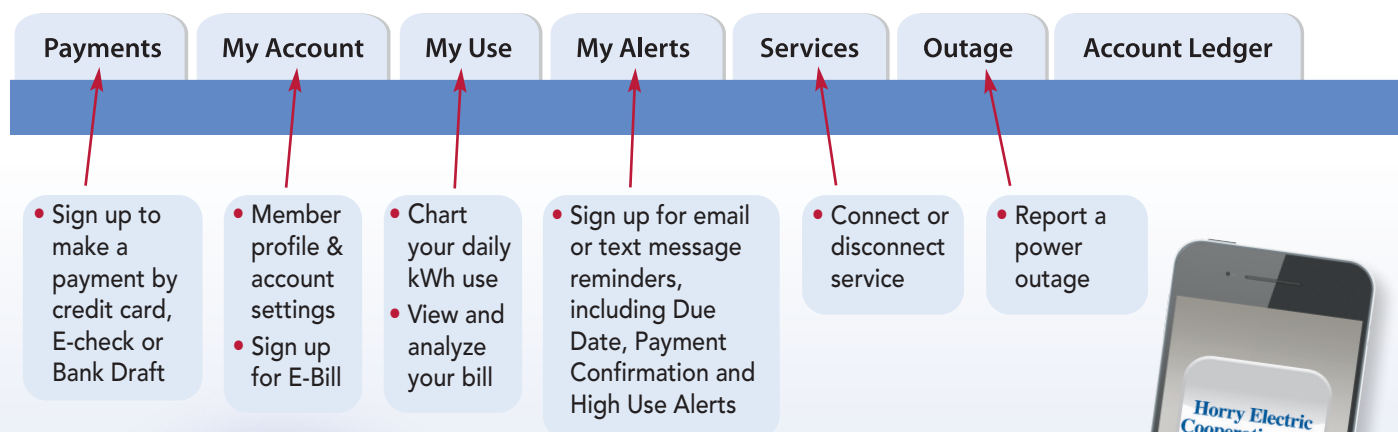


A close-up inside the generator panel shows the typical double throw transfer switch installation 120/240 V for a residential service.

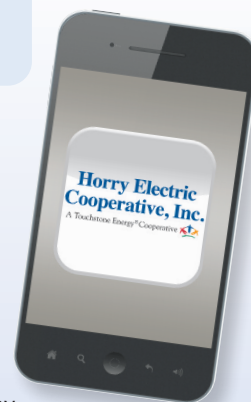


# MyEnergy *online*

is a helpful service from Horry Electric Cooperative that significantly expands your account management options. Simply go to [www.horryelectric.com](http://www.horryelectric.com), click the MyEnergy Online icon, and you'll have access to an informative, user-friendly site designed with you in mind. It's a virtual service representative—24 hours a day—7 days a week—365 days a year.



Horry Electric's **Mobile App** offers you another way to manage your account anytime, anywhere. Download for FREE from the App Store or Google Play.



MyEnergy Online is safe and secure. You will need your account number and password to login.

If you have not set up your MyEnergy Online Account, click on My Account and create a User ID.

For more information about MyEnergy Online, call us at 843-369-2211.

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