

## Horry Electric Cooperative, Inc.

[www.horryelectric.com](http://www.horryelectric.com)

### Main Office

P.O. Box 119  
Conway, SC 29528-0119

**Conway Office: 369-2211**

**Socastee Office: 650-7530**



(to report power outages only)

**369-2212**

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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.**



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

## Final destination will be worth it

**THE PATH TO IMPLEMENTING CHANGE** is rarely easy, but the final destination is usually worth the trip.

Your co-op started out on a path to change our billing software more than a year ago. We've been taking our time and working through the process of converting to Southeastern Data Cooperative (SEDC), which is headquartered in Atlanta, Ga. We've been working to make sure the transition for employees and for members is as smooth and easy as possible. Our conversion team has left no stone unturned in the process.



### Going live October 1

We will reach our final destination at the end of September and will be ready to launch the new system the first of October. Using conversion jargon, Horry Electric will officially go live with member account information on October 1 and everything we do will be through the new software.

Please note that Horry Electric's offices will be closed on Monday, September 30, in final preparation of our go-live date of October 1. We are doing this to help insure a smooth start.

### Cost and efficiency improvements

As a co-op owned by you, our members, we are always looking for ways to effectively manage costs and improve operational efficiency. The conversion to SEDC helps us with both.

From a cost standpoint, the conversion is already saving us at least a quarter of a million dollars this year in software changes.

From an operational efficiency standpoint, the SEDC product is more user friendly. Service representatives will be able to navigate through the software much more easily when working with a member by phone or in person.

### Wait, there's more!

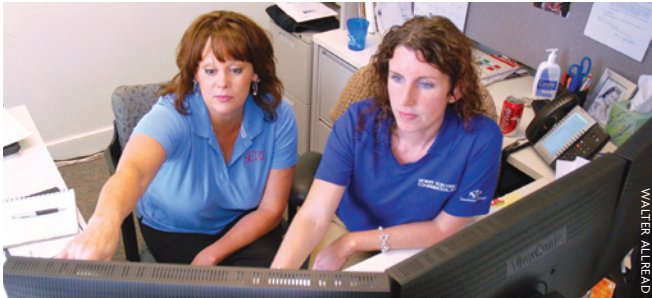
With the change, comes a user-friendly, dynamic online account portal. MyEnergyOnline will provide members access to their individual account to check billing and payment history; view their bill; make a payment; set up and manage email or text alerts; monitor energy use and even run a BillingInsights analysis of energy use and keep track of progress made with individual energy-saving efforts.

### Stay tuned!

We're excited about the changes ahead. Look for details about our conversion to SEDC in the September, October and November/December editions of *South Carolina Living*, as well as on [horryelectric.com](http://horryelectric.com) and through our social media outlets.

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

## To further improve member service, HEC teams with a special co-op



BY WALTER ALLREAD

**CUSTOMER SERVICE.** It's top priority for cooperatives like Horry Electric. So it's no surprise that when HEC looked for new ways to upgrade that service, it turned to a special co-op.

HEC has contracted with SEDC (Southeastern Data Cooperative) to streamline and integrate its software systems for billing, accounting, engineering and operations. Based in Atlanta, SEDC has four decades of experience helping its member co-ops and utilities gain efficiencies and save money.

Those benefits will also flow to HEC's

Beth Walser of SEDC (left) and Christian Graham of HEC review features of customer information systems that will help HEC employees better serve members. "They'll gain a lot of efficiencies," Walser notes.

member-consumers, says Information Systems Specialist Christian Graham. She headed up an HEC team that studied the co-op's options for three years before recommending SEDC for the job. "We had a representative from each department at every meeting," Graham notes.

With SEDC software, she says, all HEC departments will be on the same page at the same time. "Their systems talk to each other. So, for instance, once the member makes a payment,

it's going all the way up to accounting," Graham says, adding, "We just converted the mapping system [to SEDC], so all these systems will be integrated."

According to Beth Walser, an SEDC regional director who has helped HEC prepare for the transition, co-op employees will see greatly improved workflow. "They'll gain a lot of efficiencies," says Walser. "There are a lot of interfaces with SEDC systems."

Walser is confident HEC members will love features, such as smartphone apps, that will become available after HEC "goes live" with SEDC this fall.

The Myrtle Beach resident speaks from experience: She worked for a North Carolina co-op for 15 years, much of it overseeing customer service.

As a member-owned cooperative business itself, Walser notes, SEDC talks the co-op talk. Many

SEDC employees, like her, are former electric co-op employees who understand unique cooperative concepts such as capital credits, the patronage capital that co-ops often return to members. (HEC recently refunded more than \$1.5 million to its members.) SEDC software has helped its co-ops manage capital credits since its early-1970s start.

As Walser says, "There's a lot of camaraderie and dedication at the co-ops."

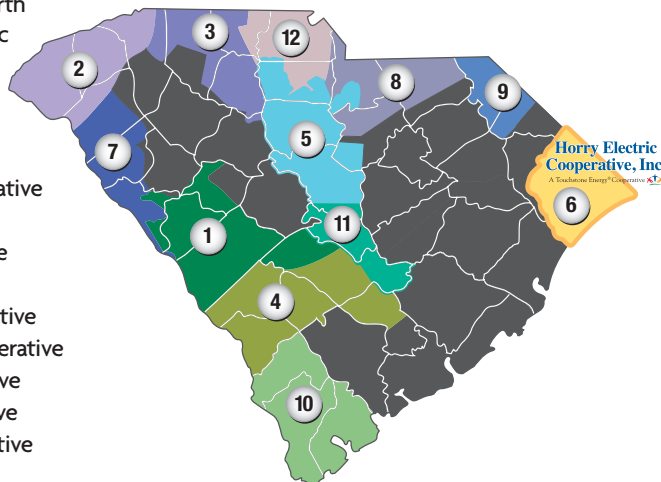
Graham is seeing it firsthand at SEDC user-group meetings. "I just love going and seeing people from all over South Carolina. You can ask them, 'What are you doing to handle this situation?' We can turn to them for advice."

Or call on SEDC anytime, Walser says. "We help our co-ops stay aware of what software is out there—and stay ahead of the curve."

### SEDC serves more than 200 utilities, including 12 electric co-ops in South Carolina

Southeastern Data Cooperative (SEDC) provides customer information services for more than 200 member utilities throughout North America, including 12 S.C. electric co-ops:

1. Aiken Electric Cooperative
2. Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative
3. Broad River Electric Cooperative
4. Edisto Electric Cooperative
5. Fairfield Electric Cooperative
6. Horry Electric Cooperative
7. Little River Electric Cooperative
8. Lynches River Electric Cooperative
9. Marlboro Electric Cooperative
10. Palmetto Electric Cooperative
11. Tri-County Electric Cooperative
12. York Electric Cooperative



### Horry Extra

#### Remembering 'when the lights came on'

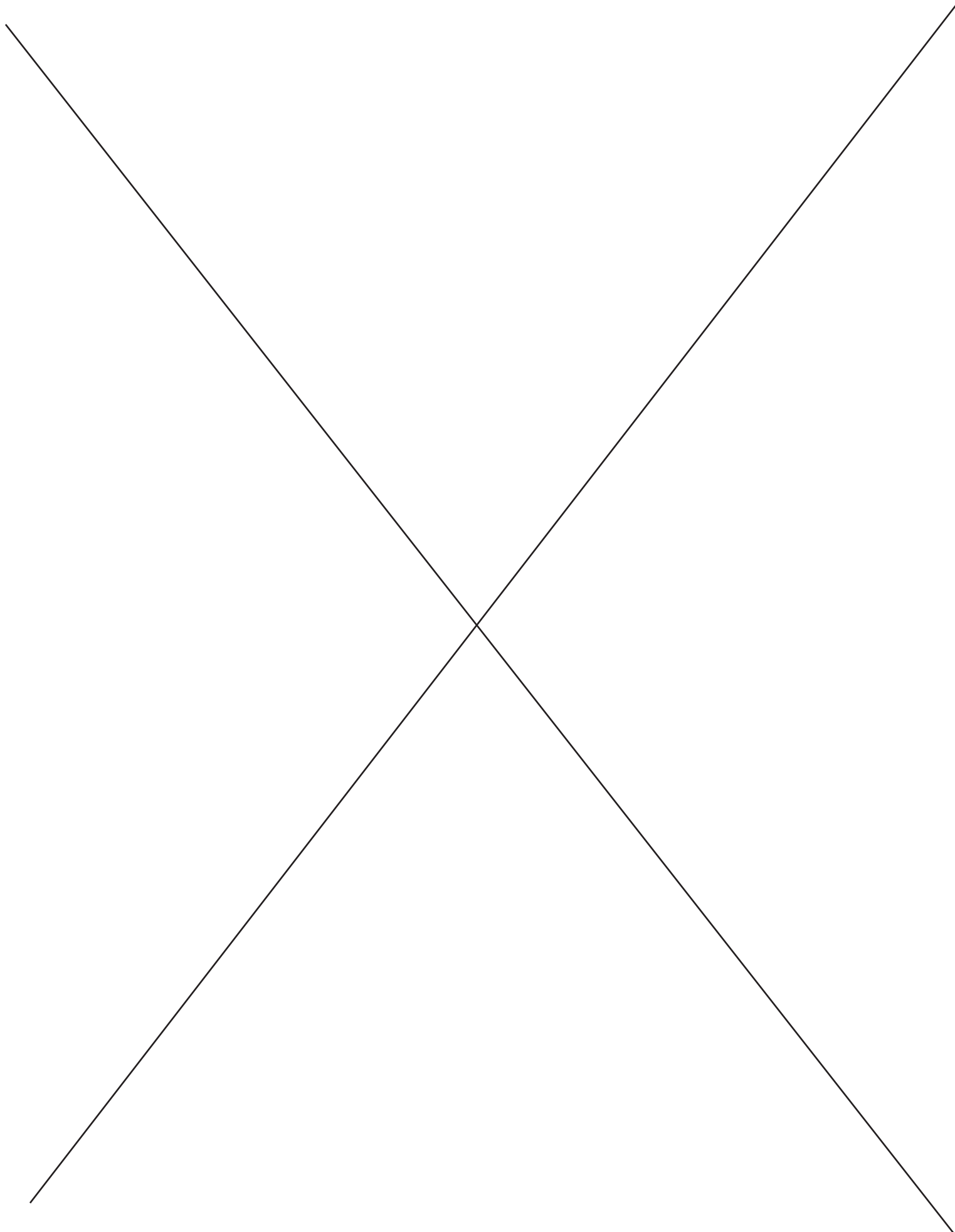
Electric co-ops across the country are celebrating their 75th anniversary. Horry Electric began serving members

January 7, 1941, and will mark its 75th in 2016. Leading up to the celebration, we're collecting the memories of co-op members and former employees who recall "when the lights came on."

See page 20B for a story about the daughter of a co-op pioneer who remembers the day the lights came on, quite literally: Her father held her up to pull the string on the light switch the day their Spring Branch home got power.



MARKING 75 YEARS OF SERVICE  
IN A 21ST CENTURY WAY



## Powering Up

When electricity goes out, most of us expect power will be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm causes widespread damage, longer outages may result. Co-op line crews work long, hard hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of consumers in the shortest time possible. Here's what's going on if you find yourself in the dark.

### 1 High-Voltage Transmission Lines

Transmission towers and cables that supply power to transmission substations (and thousands of members) rarely fail. But when damaged, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.

### 2 Distribution Substation

Each substation serves hundreds or thousands of consumers. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to determine if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself, or if problems exist down the line.

### 3 Main Distribution Lines

If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of consumers in communities or housing developments.

### 4 Tap Lines

If local outages persist, supply lines, called tap lines, are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service, outside businesses, schools, and homes.

### 5 Individual Homes

If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your residence may need to be repaired by HEC. If the weatherhead (where an overhead service line enters the conduit leading into the meter base) or the meter base itself is damaged, you will need to have it repaired by an electrician before HEC can safely reconnect your service.

graphic by Funnel Inc.

## To report outages, simply dial 369-2212

Horry Electric's outage-reporting system, PowerTouch, is tied to our mapping and customer information systems. When you call 369-2212, PowerTouch pinpoints the location of problems on our distribution system. Make sure the phone number you've provided is for a phone at the service location for which you might be reporting an outage or other service issue. Check your next statement or call 369-2211 if you're not sure we have the right number.

**PowerTouch**  
SYSTEM

## 'We're not twiddling our thumbs waiting,' when big storms threaten

**MANAGER OF ENGINEERING** Reed Cooper knows the drill well: "When a storm's coming, we are not twiddling our thumbs waiting on it," he told guests at Horry Electric's Member Service dinner June 27.



Reed Cooper

HEC closely monitors all major storms, he said. "We start making sure all equipment is in tip-top shape, all contractors are on alert, and just monitor that storm."

"Depending on the severity of the storm, we send our crews home to take care of their families before it hits. Just as soon as it's safe for them to come here—and some of them are kept here—the buckets go in the air and they start working."

Cooper showed a graphic, similar to the one at left, outlining HEC's restoration procedure. The idea, he said, is to take steps, like first repairing substations and feeder lines, that get the lights back on for the maximum number of co-op members. This allows HEC to often restore as many as half of all affected services the first day, Cooper said.

The last 1,000 or so outages can take longer due to isolated problems, such as damaged transformers or service connections, Cooper noted. "It's a lengthy process, but there's a method to the madness," he said.

**Horry County Solicitor Jimmy Richardson tries his hand—or lineman's glove, actually—at putting a nut on a bolt at the Member Service dinner. He did well! Assisting is real-life HEC Advanced Lineman Sean Brown.**



WALTER ALLREAD



## Pulling the string on the future

Daughter of long-time Horry Electric leader recalls the day lights came on

BY WALTER ALLREAD

**MARY ALICE MCNEILL THOMPSON** was 6 years old when her daddy took her in his arms and lifted her up toward the ceiling.

It was January of 1947, and the McNeill family had electricity run to the house for the first time. Though it was her father—longtime Horry Electric Cooperative board member and rural power champion Henry G. McNeill—who was responsible for getting lines to his house and the area, it was Mary Alice who did the honors.

“I remember we had gotten a refrigerator that Christmas knowing the power was coming, and my sister Evelyn was born January 4,” Thompson says. “Daddy held me up to the ceiling to grab the string coming down, and I pulled the string and the lights came on. It was amazing!”

The benefits were immediate. With a baby in the house, the milk could now be kept cold in the new refrigerator rather than in the well, where it had been kept. Also, for those working the farm in the heat, ice could be added to drinks, which led to

a peculiar predicament for Thompson.

“That summer, the men were out in the field and sent me in to get some ice for their drinks, because having ice in drinks was a new thing,” Thompson says. “I went to the refrigerator, and it



Mary Alice McNeill Thompson in the McNeill homeplace, where her father held her up to turn on the light in 1947. She's pictured at right with her sister, Evelyn, and inset with one of the oil lamps her family used before co-op power arrived.



## He helped wire first homes to get rural electricity

From the get-go, Raymond Cole and electricity have been partners.

After getting back to rural Horry County after World War II, Cole, a cousin of the late Henry G. McNeill, former HEC board member, went to work on the farm but quickly learned the electrical trade—and learned how valuable those skills were. In fact, he helped wire McNeill's house itself for the first time.

“It was poor times in '46, and I had a friend who was doing some of these houses that were first getting electricity,” says Cole, 94. “I was farming and got a side job helping out a friend who was wiring houses and just took to it.”

From helping install wiring to accommodate new electric stoves and water heaters to simply installing new fixtures or repairing a blown fuse, Cole always was happy to help and gained valuable experience that led to a four-decade career as a professional electrician who worked at power plants across North and South Carolina before retiring in 1980.

“They'd be hard-working farmers, and they didn't know about electricity,” he says of helping so many of his rural neighbors enjoy electricity for the first time. “So they depended on me.

“It's been a blessing helping people, and I've never regretted it,” he says.



Raymond Cole, says Mary Alice McNeill Thompson, was “Mr. Electricity” to Spring Branch farmers. “If you had a problem, you called him. He was like the doctor.”





looked so cold and frosty. It looked like something I needed to lick, so I licked it! “Of course my tongue stuck right to it, and so I got stuck and couldn’t holler or get loose! I didn’t get free until they came looking for me and poured water on it. We’d never had a refrigerator before, so nobody ever told me not to lick it. How could I know?”

Thompson, who went on to marry and become a teacher in Horry County, remembers one other convenience electricity afforded—radio entertainment.

“Before, we had a battery radio and only could listen on Saturday afternoons and evenings,” Thompson says. “But when we got electricity, we got a plug-in radio so we could listen all the time. I thought that was the best thing in the world.

“It’s amazing how things change.” ☺

**Mary Alice McNeill Thompson still uses this old Frigidaire electric range, originally from the McNeill homeplace, to cook fruits and vegetables for canning. She even still has the original “How to use and enjoy” manual that came with it.**



WALTER ALLREAD

## A true pioneer



COURTESY MARY FRANCES MCNEILL

**FORMER HEC BOARD MEMBER** and farmer Henry G. McNeill was a rural electric and telephone pioneer. His widow, Mary Frances McNeill, fondly recalls a story her husband often told about the struggle to get power to rural areas, including his farm.

When informed by the investor-owned power company that served the area in 1941 that it would cost \$1,000 to install lines to his home,

because it was a good distance from the highway, he balked.

“He told them, ‘A thousand dollars, that’s as big as a wagon wheel,’” McNeill says. “So he decided he’d do it himself.”

Using mules and horses to pull log poles and dynamite to blast holes to sink them, McNeill did himself what the power company wanted a small fortune to do, which led them to return later with an offer to provide power for less after they saw he’d done all the heavy lifting.

“He told them, ‘Not today,’” McNeill says. “Getting electricity to the farm was one of the proudest moments of his life.”



**Mary Frances McNeill, widow of Henry McNeill, holds a portrait taken of her late husband, who helped establish not only Horry Electric but also Horry Telephone Cooperative. An undated photo of him (above left) is one of many mementos she generously shared.**

## Remembering ‘the day the lights came on’

Electric cooperatives across the country are celebrating their 75th anniversary. Aiken Electric Cooperative, formed in 1938, this year became the first of South Carolina’s 20 distribution co-ops to reach that milestone.

Horry Electric Cooperative was organized April 24, 1940, and our system was energized January 7, 1941. We will mark our 75th anniversary in 2016. Leading up to the celebration, we’re interviewing co-op members and former employees who recall “when the lights came on.”

Please let us know if you, or someone you know, might have bright memories of those days. And tell us if you have vintage appliances, electrical items, memorabilia or photographs from the early days of rural electrification. Contact Gayle Addy at (803) 739-3032 (email [gayle.addy@ecsc.org](mailto:gayle.addy@ecsc.org)) or Rachel Despres at (803) 739-5072 (email [rachel.despres@ecsc.org](mailto:rachel.despres@ecsc.org)). They are employed by The Electric Cooperatives of S.C., Inc., the state association of co-ops, including Horry Electric Cooperative. ☺



**MARKING 75 YEARS OF SERVICE  
IN A 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY WAY**

## Horry Electric Cooperative, Inc.

### Statement of nondiscrimination

Horry Electric Cooperative, Inc. is the recipient of Federal financial assistance from the Rural Utilities Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and is subject to the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, and the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which provide that no person in the United States on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, or disability shall be excluded from participation in, the admission or access to, denied benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any of this organization's programs or activities.

The person responsible for coordinating this organization's nondiscrimination compliance efforts is Abigail Lewis, human resources coordinator. Any individual, or specific class of individuals, who feels that this organization has subjected them to discrimination may obtain further information about the statutes and regulations listed above from and/or file a written complaint with this organization; or write USDA, director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410; or call, toll free, (866) 632-9992 (voice). TDD users can contact USDA through local relay or the Federal relay at (800) 877-8399 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (relay voice users). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Complaints must be filed within 180 days after the alleged discrimination. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible.



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

## Pay your electric bill on time, every time —without writing a check!

**THE BANK DRAFT PROGRAM** from Horry Electric Cooperative makes it easier to pay your bill on time and to keep track of drafts. When you sign up for this program, Horry Electric will automatically draft your checking or savings account for the amount of your monthly electric bill. You'll still receive monthly statements showing kilowatt-hour usage and the amount due, but you won't have to write a check.

The best part is that you

won't ever have to worry about your payment getting to Horry Electric on time. Your account will not be drafted until the actual due date indicated on your bill. If that date falls on a bank holiday, it will be drafted the following business day. As with writing a check, all you have to do is make sure there is adequate money in your account. Otherwise, it will be processed as a return check and additional charges will be applied.

Simplify your life! Just fill out and send us the form below. It may take a few days to process your request; so continue to pay your bill until 'Bank Draft' appears on it. After that, you'll never have to remember to write a check to Horry Electric to pay your electric bill again! ☺

If you have any questions about Bank Draft, contact us at 369-2211.



You can mail or bring by your completed authorization form. You'll need to include a VOIDED check so we can obtain the correct bank account number and ABA/Transit number. Please allow five working days for your authorization form to be processed. Authorization forms can also be found on the back of your monthly electric bill.

### BANK DRAFT AUTHORIZATION

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Bank: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

### CONSUMER'S CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Best Time for a CSR to Contact You: \_\_\_\_\_ AM \_\_\_\_\_ PM

Horry Electric Cooperative, Inc. : I hereby authorize and direct you until further written notice to honor and charge to my bank account **DRAFTS** drawn on my ☐ checking ☐ savings account and payable to **Horry Electric Cooperative, Inc.** in the amount of the monthly statement rendered on the account(s) listed below.

HORRY ELECTRIC MEMBER ACCOUNT NUMBER(S)

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

HEC shall not be liable for returning any such drafts unpaid if the balance in my account is insufficient to pay the same upon presentation.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Type or print full name: \_\_\_\_\_

### HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT SURGE GUARD?

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, VCRs or personal computers.

**Two steps is all it takes.** The first step of the program takes place outside at the meter base. The second step takes place indoors—where individual surge suppressors are installed to provide your television, 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. "Please keep in mind that a good ground system is essential for surge equipment to work properly," says Ricky

Lowder, senior marketing and energy management representative for Horry Electric. "Before installation, we'll check to make sure the required external safety ground exists at the service entrance," he continues, adding that installation may be delayed if problems are found. "The same is true if the electrical wiring inside the home is inadequate." To avoid such delays, Horry Electric suggests securing the services of a licensed, bonded electrician to verify there are no grounding or electric wiring issues prior to scheduling an appointment for Surge Guard to be installed.

Want to learn more? Read the online Surge Guard brochure or call (843) 369-2211 for more information. Listen carefully to the menu options and select 'energy information or marketing programs' when prompted.

