

Horry Electric Cooperative, Inc.

horryelectric.com

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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



Restructured rate—ways to save

Employees, board members join pilot test group

AS I SHARED WITH YOU

last month, beginning with your September 2024 use that appears on your October 2024 statement, Horry Electric is restructuring the way members are billed. I realize change can be scary, especially when it comes to your finances. I am excited to introduce a rate that gives members control of their bill.

For 21 hours a day, members can use all the electricity they need at a highly reduced rate compared to today's rate. Members will only need to pay close attention to three peak hours per day.

When I introduced the new rate structure to employees in 2023, many were skeptical, like I'm sure you are. In July 2023, every employee and board member (trustee) participated in a rate training class and was given the opportunity to join a pilot test group. Once employees and board members (trustees) realized how having control over their use allowed them to save, they were eager to sign up.

I am excited to share the pilot test group has collectively saved an average of \$13 per month on their August 2023 through May 2024 bills, compared to the old rate.

A few changes to your normal routine can help lower your power bill. Here are the top ways to save.

- ▶ **HVAC system** Smart thermostats are a great way to save energy during peak times with their built-in scheduling feature. You can schedule your thermostat to adjust the temperature in your home during peak hours.
- ▶ **Water heater** A water heater timer allows you to set a schedule, so your water heater does not reheat during peak hours. Your water heater should keep the water in the tank hot, but the timer will not allow the tank to

reheat until peak hours are over.

- ▶ **Electric clothes dryer** Alter your routine for when you dry clothes. An average electric clothes dryer uses five kilowatts. There will be a significant cost difference between drying clothes during on- and off-peak hours.
- ▶ **EV charger** Set your EV charger schedule to run during off-peak hours. On average, EV chargers require 10 kilowatts. It will benefit you to charge off-peak.

I'm not saying you can't use electricity during peak hours. I just want to make you aware of how high energy users can drive costs up during peak hours. With the restructured rate, you have control. You get to decide what changes, if any, will benefit your family the most.

The main thing to remember is to not use all high demand appliances at one time. We call this "stacking." You don't want to turn your HVAC system to 68 degrees in the summer, take hot showers, dry clothes and charge your EV during peak hours.

If your family needs to take showers after a day on the river, wait until after 6 p.m. to start the dryer. Stacking high demand appliances will increase your bill.

Our pilot test group can attest to the benefit of small changes three hours per day.

The goal of the restructure is to give members control of their bill and an opportunity to save. We are your electric cooperative and we are looking out for you.

DANIEL B. SHELLEY, III
 Executive Vice President and CEO



PHOTOS BY JOSH P. CROTZER

Even during the dog days of summer, Jeremy and Elizabeth Ammons (with Otis and Toby) know their home will stay comfortable during peak hours when everyone is using more electricity.



Chris Grainger is still going to cook breakfast, but Amy can wait to do their laundry to hold down their peak electricity demand.

Lessons learned

Since August 2023, some Horry Electric Cooperative employees have field tested the new restructured rate in a pilot program.

Here are two examples of what they found.

BY JOSH P. CROTZER

WHEN HORRY ELECTRIC

Cooperative lineman and member Jeremy Ammons first heard about the cooperative's new restructured rate, he was a bit skeptical. But after 10 months participating in the co-op's employee pilot program, those doubts have been eliminated.

By the numbers

Average monthly peak demand decrease -4.79 kW

Average monthly peak savings-\$57.48

From 'uh-oh' to 'no-brainer'

"We were kind of like, 'uh-oh,'" Ammons says of he and his wife Elizabeth's initial reaction. "But once it started and we started saving, it was a no-brainer."

The Ammons family has taken full advantage of controlling their energy use to save money on their monthly bill. In a recent month, they saved nearly \$300 from the same month last year.

They use the scheduling features on their smart thermostat to keep their heating and cooling system from coming on during peak hours. They do the same with their pool pump and water heater, using a timer. They don't do laundry or cook supper until after 6 p.m.

Although the Ammons' overall energy use has increased since they've been on the pilot, their efforts to reduce consumption during peak hours have led to big reductions in their total bills. That's because under the new rate, the price per kilowatt-hour has decreased to 6.9 cents. Horry Electric members are charged for the highest one hour of use during peak hours in the billing period. The Peak Charge is \$12 per kW for that highest one hour and encourages members to shift their consumption to the other 21 off-peak hours in the day.

Ammons says it didn't take long for his family of four to buy in.

"I got my crowd used to it," he says. "They've seen what we're saving and conserve during the peak hours."

Graingers see \$1,000 swing with new rate

Amy Grainger, a member service representative at Horry Electric, is cold-natured. So, she likes to keep her home warm in the winter. Her husband Chris, who recently retired from Horry Electric, is the opposite and always makes sure temperatures are 70 degrees or below inside. The result is a thermostat frequently being adjusted to meet each other's comfort.

So, when they agreed to participate in piloting Horry Electric's new rate, their bill was projected to increase by \$400 over 12 months. That is, if they made no changes to their habits.

Instead, the Graingers have seen a \$1,000 swing in the other direction.

One of the primary changes they made was setting their smart thermostat so that their heating and cooling system doesn't turn on during peak use hours for electricity (6-9 a.m. during the winter and 3-6 p.m. in the summer). During other hours of the day, it's set at temperatures that are comfortable for both of them, most of the time.

"I let him take control," says Amy. "He adjusted everything, and I adjusted my mind."

Even when things get a little cold for Amy or warm for Chris, they make other adjustments. Amy puts on sweatpants and grabs a blanket or Chris turns on the fan. In addition, they've avoided "stacking" the use of their appliances. For example, in the winter, Chris is still going to cook breakfast in the morning, but Amy will hold off running the dryer at the same time.

"You do whatever you want the rest of the day, just focus on those three hours and you can make a difference," says Chris. "She's given a little and I have too, and it's been good for the both of us."

By the numbers

Average monthly peak demand decrease - 4.49 kW

AVERAGE MONTHLY PEAK SAVINGS-\$53.88

Be prepared for summer storms

THE SUMMER SEASON is officially underway, which means storms can roll in unexpectedly. When severe weather threatens, Horry Electric crews are prepared and ready to respond. We encourage members to be prepared, as well.

Have a plan in place In the event of a storm or natural disaster, make sure you have a plan for you and your family. Have an emergency kit stocked with nonperishable foods, water, batteries and flashlights. If you need to take shelter, go to a centrally located room without windows, such as a hallway or closet.

Backup chargers When severe weather is predicted to impact our area, make sure your devices are fully charged and portable power banks are ready to go. Don't forget to have a weather radio available, if needed.

Stay informed Listen to local weather updates for up-to-date information on the storm. Visit Horry Electric's Facebook page for outage and restoration information. In the event of a natural disaster, outage and restoration information will also be posted on HEC's Instagram and Twitter pages.

Stay safe High winds may bring down power lines. Remember, if you come across downed power lines, turn around. Treat all lines as if they are energized. Stay away and never drive over them. If you come across standing water while you're driving, turn around and find a safer route.

For more information regarding storm preparedness, visit the outage center "Preparedness" section on horryelectric.com.

If you experience a power outage, there are multiple ways to report:



Advanced Line Technician Sean Brown restocks supplies on his truck so he's prepared to respond to a storm.

- ▶ Text "OUT" to MyOutage at 1 (844) 369-2767.
- ▶ Call PowerTouch at (843) 369-2212.
- ▶ Download the free HEC Mobile app.
- ▶ Visit MyEnergy Online.
- ▶ Text "OUTAGE" to 352-667.

Signs of an energy scam

CONSUMERS WITH water, gas and electricity connections have long been targets for utility scams. But in today's digital world, every swipe and click increases the risk of your falling victim to fraud.

Horry Electric wants to help you avoid energy scams. One common scam involves a person who comes to your home disguised as a utility employee or representative. They will claim your bill is past due and threaten to disconnect service if payment isn't made immediately. Similarly, scammers may use phone calls, text messages or emails to demand payment or personal information.

Here are three signs of an energy scam:

- ▶ **High-pressure tactics.** Scammers will pressure you, creating a sense of urgency. Claims that your power will be disconnected without immediate payment are common with utility scams.
- ▶ **Sketchy payment methods.** Scammers may ask for unusual payment methods like gift cards or cryptocurrency. In these cases, it's likely a scam.
- ▶ **Dodgy communication.** Whether an email, text message or letter, utility scams typically include poor grammar, spelling errors or unusual email addresses. These are additional common warning signs of a scam.

Whether in-person, over the phone, or online, always be suspicious of an unknown individual claiming to be a Horry Electric employee and requesting banking or other personal information.

Horry Electric will not call you asking for personal financial information. If your balance is subject to disconnection for nonpayment, Horry Electric will either mail, text or email (based on your account settings) you before disconnection.

If you're suspicious about any call, text or email you receive, call Member Services at (843) 369-2211.



Paula Hall of Green Sea presents her registration card while in line.



Willie Wiredhand showed his patriotic spirit while directing members to registration and voting.

2024 Annual Member Meeting recap

Horry Electric breaks attendance record for 5th straight year

THE 83RD ANNUAL MEMBER MEETING of Horry Electric Cooperative was a huge success! In order to conduct an official business meeting, Horry Electric's bylaws require a quorum equal to 5% of the membership. The 2024 quorum was 3,935 members. Over the course of a day and a half of drive-thru registration and voting, we broke our record again, registering 9,876 accounts. Of those registrations, 7,285 were members who registered and voted.

Thank you to every member who took time out of their

day to come to the event. We also appreciate everyone who watched the virtual business meeting on May 1.

All prize winners for the 2024 Annual Member Meeting have been notified by phone or mail. The grand prize for this year's meeting was a 2018 E-Z-Go TXT electric golf cart, which was awarded to Jamie Suggs.

On the next page are some of our favorite snapshots from this year's event.

Board of Trustees election results

THE BUSINESS SESSION agenda included the election of three trustee candidates, who are members of the Cooperative, to serve on the Board of Trustees for a three-year term.

Candidates Aaron Johnson (District 2), Franklin Blanton (District 4) and Jody Prince (District 6) ran unopposed.

The board of trustees elected officers at the May board meeting. Johnny M. Shelley remains as president, with Eugene Harriott Jr. as vice president and Ashley Anderson as secretary/treasurer.



Aaron C. Johnson
District 2

Term: 2024-2027



Franklin C. Blanton
District 4

Term: 2024-2027



Jody D. Prince
District 6

Term: 2024-2027



JOSH P. CROTZER

Clarence and Bobbie Freeman of Longs register at the 83rd Annual Member Meeting of Horry Electric Cooperative.



JOSH P. CROTZER

Wade Petty of Conway flashes his JEEP sign before leaving the drive-thru registration and voting event.



JENNIFER CUMMINGS

Willie Wirehand thanks a deputy from the Horry County Sheriff's Office for his help directing traffic.



JOSH P. CROTZER

Maddy Garside of Conway was accompanied by her dog, Taloula.



JOSH P. CROTZER

RaeRae and Ellie Black wave hello while their grandmother, Gloria Clinger, registers.

Grand Prize winners



Belva Patton won the 1st Place prize of \$500.



Mary Jordan won the 2nd Place prize of \$400 cash.



Tommy and Kerry Harrelson won the 3rd Place prize of \$300 cash.



JENNIFER CUMMINGS

Jamie Suggs was the Grand Prize Winner of a 2018 E-Z-Go TXT Electric Golf Cart.

WHO POWERS YOU?

Inspired by someone making a difference in our community?
Tell their story and they could win a prize.

We know our community is filled with unsung heroes who are making a difference. Let's celebrate them! This is your chance to honor the people who are making a real difference. Winners will be selected by a panel of judges based on the impact they have on our community. All entries must be submitted by July 31.


Together, let's
celebrate the
power of
human
connections.



Grand Prize \$2,500

Your Local Co-op Prize \$500

**Horry Electric
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Visit ecsc.org/WhoPowersYou for full contest rules



Touchstone Energy®
Cooperatives
of South Carolina

The power of human connections.®