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**TO REPORT  
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Horry Electric Cooperative Inc. is a not-for-profit, member-owned organization providing information and energy-related services on a fair and equitable basis.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



## A new record

### Annual Member Meeting tops 10k

**THE 2026 ANNUAL MEMBER MEETING** of Horry Electric Cooperative was a tremendous success! In order to conduct

the official business meeting, Horry Electric's bylaws require a quorum of 5% of the membership. The 2026 quorum was 4,322 members. Over the course of a day and a half of drive-thru registration and voting, we broke our record for the sixth straight year. We had 10,478 registrations and of those, 7,323 were members who registered.

I'd like to thank each and every member who took the time to attend the drive-thru event, in addition to everyone who watched the virtual business session on April 1.

#### Trustee 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.

Two candidates ran for the District 9 seat—Freddy Thompkins (incumbent) and John Newcomer. With 4,792 votes, Freddy Thompkins was re-elected. Candidates Johnny Shelley (District 3) and Eugene Harriott Jr. (District 8) ran unopposed.

The board of trustees elected officers at the April board meeting. Johnny M. Shelley remains as president with Eugene Harriot Jr. as vice president. Elaine Gore will also continue as the secretary/treasurer.

#### Prize winners

The 54 prize winners for the Annual Member Meeting have been notified. The grand prize for this year was a 2021 E-Z-Go electric golf cart, which was awarded to Clara Steele. You can view some of our favorite snapshots from this year's event on page 5.



JENNIFER CUMMINGS

The Annual Member Meeting grand prize was a 2021 E-Z-Go electric golf cart. Clara Steele of Myrtle Beach was named the 2026 winner!

#### Important reminder

June 1 marks the beginning of hurricane season, which runs through Nov. 30.

Horry Electric is actively preparing for severe weather, and we encourage members to have a plan in place. Make sure you have an emergency kit ready with water, non-perishable foods, batteries and flashlights.

If you experience an outage, there are multiple ways to report it:

- ▶ Text "OUT" to MyOutage at 1 (844) 369-2767
- ▶ Call PowerTouch at (843) 369-2212
- ▶ Download the free HEC Mobile app
- ▶ Log in to your MyEnergy Online portal

When it comes to power restoration, crews work from the substations out. You can find a video explaining this in the Outage Center on [horryelectric.com](http://horryelectric.com). You can also find safety tips in the "Preparedness" section for storms, downed power lines and generator operation.

**J. REED COOPER, P.E.**  
Executive Vice President and CEO

# Annual Member Meeting snapshots



Administrative Specialist Alison Jordan (right) is always a friendly face when members walk into the Conway office. She also has the opportunity to connect with members, like Wanda Chestnut of Longs, during the drive-thru registration and voting event.



Randall Jones of Conway took advantage of the spring weather, rolling through the drive-thru registration and voting event in his Jeep. Kassie Roscoe, HEC work order accountant, explained the voting process to Jones before he voted on members to serve on the board of trustees.



Electric cooperative mascot Willie Wiredhand always makes an appearance at the drive-thru registration and voting event. Willie and HEC's Executive Vice President and CEO Reed Cooper greeted members as they rolled through.

JENNIFER CUMMINGS



Monica Hucks of Conway cast her votes for the board of trustees after registering with Taylor Shirley, who is a member service representative at HEC's Socastee office.

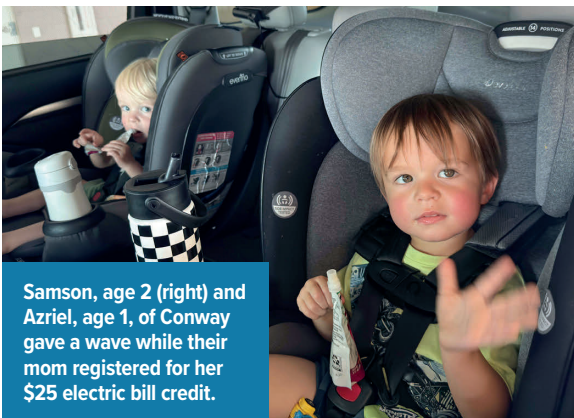


Myrtle Beach member Lynn Mongardi gave a thumbs up to the quick pace of the drive-thru registration and voting process at HEC's Conway office.



Teresa Adock's furry companions, Little Miss and Mr. Nugget got a treat from Senior Energy Management Representative Garrett Gasque.

PHOTOS BY JOSH P. GROTZER



Samson, age 2 (right) and Azriel, age 1, of Conway gave a wave while their mom registered for her \$25 electric bill credit.



Loading up in a van and traveling to the drive-thru registration and voting event is a yearly tradition for members of Horry County Council on Aging's (HCCOA) Enterprise Burgess Senior Center. Van riders posed for their yearly photo with Jennifer Cummings, HEC public relations & marketing coordinator.

MARTIN WILLIAMSON

# Get ahead of storms, hurricane season

## Enroll in Surge Guard for a chance to win

**SUMMER IS ONE** of the most active weather seasons. Afternoon thunderstorms are common, but there is also the potential for hurricanes.

Hurricane season runs from June 1 to Nov. 30. Meteorologists are predicting a “near to below average” hurricane season this year with 11 to 16 named storms. Four to seven of those are predicted to become hurricanes with two to four forecasted to be major.

Lightning is one of the top causes of power outages when it comes to storms. It can also be a problem inside a member’s home. Horry Electric wants to help you reduce problems associated with indirect lightning strikes and power surges by installing a device outside your home at the meter base.

The Surge Guard program helps protect against unexpected voltage surges that can harm or ruin electronic devices such as major appliances, TVs or computers.

For the low price of \$5.35 a month, members can enjoy



comfort, convenience and peace of mind knowing they have utility grade protection from nearby lightning strikes.

During the months of May and June, any member who enrolls as a new participant in the Surge Guard program will be automatically entered into a prize drawing for a chance to win a \$100 electric bill credit.

To enroll, visit [horryec.info/surge-guard](http://horryec.info/surge-guard) and click the “Apply Now” button to enter your information and complete the participation agreement. A trusted energy advisor will contact you to arrange installation. The monthly charge is added as a line item on the member’s monthly electric bill.

Members have until 11:59 p.m. on June 30 to enroll. The winners will be announced by mid-July. Visit [horryelectric.com](http://horryelectric.com) to read the contest rules. If you have questions about the Surge Guard program or how to protect your home, contact a trusted energy advisor by calling (843) 369-2211 and selecting option 5.



The Jenny Ballard Opportunity Scholarship helped Horry Electric member Jacqueline Kelly-Silva realize her dream of earning a bachelor’s degree. A mother of three, she graduated from Coastal Carolina University in 2024 with a degree in psychology.

## Apply now for college scholarship

**IT TAKES COURAGE** and vision to pursue a college degree as a working adult. Horry Electric Cooperative offers an opportunity to female members who are taking that step.

The Jenny Ballard Opportunity Scholarship is for women who are resuming academic journeys that have been interrupted or delayed.

Applications for this one-time award are now open for female members of Horry Electric. Sponsored by Women Involved in Rural Electrification (WIRE)—a service organization associated

with South Carolina’s electric cooperatives—and named after one of WIRE’s founding members, the \$2,500 scholarship is based on need and personal goals.

The deadline to apply is June 1. An online application for the 2026 WIRE scholarship can be found at [ecsc.org/wire](http://ecsc.org/wire). The scholarship will be awarded based on the information provided in the application.

Applicants for the program must:

- ▶ Be a member (or spouse of a member) of Horry Electric Cooperative or another South Carolina electric cooperative;

- ▶ Have graduated from high school or earned a GED at least 10 years ago;
- ▶ Obtain acceptance into an accredited college or university;
- ▶ Demonstrate financial need.

Recipients will receive scholarships for the fall 2026 or spring 2027 semester, with funds paid directly to the college or university.



## Include us in your plans

**THE ELECTRIC SERVICE** provided to your location is capable of handling the load requirement for which it was originally designed. If you are in the process or are planning on making any changes or

additions that may alter the load requirements of your service, be aware that an upgrade in service may be necessary.

Please call us during the planning stages of your project so we can advise you on any necessary upgrade requirements or costs before you begin construction.

# Redemption on the line

## Horry Electric crew claims journeyman title at Lineman's Rodeo

BY JOSH P. CROTZER

**LAST YEAR**, Hunter Gardner, Bryson Cooper and Dawson Mishoe left the South Carolina Lineman's Rodeo with the same score as the winning journeyman team—only 49 seconds slower.

This year, the three Horry Electric linemen left the March rodeo as the only crew with a perfect cumulative score of 400, along with the fastest cumulative time of 29 minutes, 48 seconds and the trophy declaring them the 2026 overall journeyman champions.

"We knew we had all our points, but we also knew there were a lot of good teams there that could have done the same," says Mishoe. "We were really hoping we had good enough times to win."

"I figured we stood a good chance because our team came together and worked smoothly," says Gardner. "We kept



HEC journeyman linemen Hunter Gardner, Bryson Cooper and Dawson Mishoe (left to right) were the 2026 overall journeyman champions. They were the only journeyman crew with a perfect cumulative score of 400 and the fastest cumulative time of 29 minutes, 48 seconds.

CANYON DURHAM

all of our points and got good times. I'm super proud of how these men showed out."

Sponsored by The Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina, the annual rodeo mirrors the challenges lineworkers face when they are working with energized lines. This year's event, hosted by Black River Electric and Santee Electric at the

Clarendon County Industrial Park in Manning, drew more than 40 apprentices and 14 journeyman teams competing in events such as the hurtman rescue, overhead bell changeout and obstacle course.

While skill and speed helped the Horry Electric crew capture the title, it's not



HEC Advanced Line Technician Chase Cox served as a judge for the rodeo events. Cox is a two-time journeyman team champion.



Apprentice lineman Thomas Hansen demonstrates his skills in the vertical line transfer test.

MEADE AGENCY



Family is a big part of the South Carolina Lineman's Rodeo. Eliza Cooper, daughter of Bryson Cooper, takes in all the activities.

PHOTOS BY JENNIFER CUMMINGS



HEC linemen who competed in or judged the South Carolina Lineman's Rodeo included (front row, left to right): Bryson Cooper, Matt Savage, Chase Cox, Hunter Gardner, Dawson Mishoe. Back row (left to right): Riggs Carroll, Sean Brown, Brian Mercer, Thomas Hansen, Easton Wingard, Rivers Huggins, Jonah Elliott, Dalton Justice, Isaac Tatman, Scott Smith

the main emphasis of the South Carolina Lineman's Rodeo. The strict judging criteria are designed to reinforce safe and essential daily practices.

"It's not just about how quickly you can climb a pole or change out a fuse," says Travis Renwick, loss control and training director for The Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina. "It's about safety, because the most important thing is that these guys go home to their families every night."

For this year's competition, however, co-ops didn't have the advantage of practicing specific events ahead of time. Competitors didn't know what the events were until they arrived.

While Mishoe admitted he "was not a fan" of the change, Gardner took a different view.

"I don't mind the mystery events because it's almost like pulling up to the job and figuring it out on the fly," he says. "We just took every tool we had and decided what to use when we got there. It was stressful, but it all worked out."

Indeed, it did. Gardner, Mishoe and Cooper won the B-phase bell changeout and the vertical line transfer. They placed

second in the hurtman rescue event and third in the obstacle course. Across all four events, the judges marked no deductions.

Horry Electric also sent a strong group of apprentice linemen. Dalton Justice, Thomas Hansen, Easton Wingard, Riggs Carroll, Brian Mercer, Rivers Huggins, Isaac Tatman and Jonah Elliott competed individually in the separate division. Elliott placed third in the B-phase changeout with a perfect score and a time just 16 seconds behind the event winner.

For Horry Electric's journeyman crew, rodeo season isn't over. This month they'll represent South Carolina at the Gaff-n-Go Lineman's Rodeo in Virginia, a regional competition that draws crews from across the Mid-Atlantic.

"We're going to show up and do what we do best, just work," says Gardner. "We'll have the same objective of keeping our points, getting the best times we can and hopefully get our name called."

The South Carolina rodeo's festival-like atmosphere also included activities for the families and a live-line demonstration and other activities to teach the importance of safety around power lines.

## The events of the 2026 S.C. Lineman's Rodeo

**EACH EVENT** is built around a real-world task lineworkers perform on the job. Crews start with a perfect score of 100 and lose points for any safety lapse, no matter how small. Time is recorded only as a tiebreaker.

### Who competes

- ▶ **Apprentice**—Individual competitors still completing the multiyear training program required to become a journeyman.
- ▶ **Journeyman**—A fully qualified lineworker who has completed an apprenticeship and demonstrated proficiency in all aspects of line construction and maintenance. Journeymen compete in three-person crews.

### Events

- ▶ **Hurtman rescue**—A crew or individual responds to a simulated injured lineman (mannequin) at the top of a 40-foot pole.
- ▶ **B-Phase bell changeout**—Replacing failed bell insulators on a multi-phase overhead line.
- ▶ **Vertical line transfer**—Working from a pole, a journeyman crew transfers an energized conductor from one position to another.
- ▶ **Obstacle course**—Competitors maneuver tools, materials and conductors through a defined course on the pole.
- ▶ **Drop-in pin & insulator changeout**—An apprentice climbs to the crossarm and replaces a failed pin-style insulator without losing control of the line.

WIRE (Women Involved in Rural Electrification) hosted a bake sale to raise funds for the Chavis House at Burn Centers of America in Augusta, a facility that has treated many injured linemen.

## Local student wins book challenge

**WRITING A CHILDREN’S BOOK** as a fourth or fifth grader may sound difficult, but local students at Forestbrook Elementary were up to the challenge.

As part of this year’s Children’s Book Challenge, an educational initiative by The Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina, students wrote and illustrated their own books. This year’s theme was “A Day in the Life of a Lineworker.”

Fifth grader Andrew Alford-Duncan wrote *Why are Linemen so Important?* His book explains the dangerous career of lineworkers and why they wear special gear to keep them safe. Alford-Duncan took photos around Horry Electric’s service area of crews and co-op equipment.

This competition challenges fourth and fifth graders across the state to write and illustrate their own books about the importance and impact of electricity in their lives.

In March, Horry Electric paid a surprise visit to Forestbrook Elementary in Myrtle Beach to award Alford-Duncan with a \$100 cash prize. He was announced as the winner during an assembly in front of the fourth and fifth grade classes. Alford-Duncan’s teacher, Media Specialist Wendy Savoca, also received a prize.

The South Carolina Children’s Book Challenge is an energy education program developed by educators to help teachers access energy-related information and activities. You can find more resources by visiting [sbookchallenge.com](http://sbookchallenge.com).



PHOTO PROVIDED BY JENNIFER CUMMINGS

Forestbrook Elementary’s Wendy Savoca (left) arranged a surprise assembly to announce Andrew Alford-Duncan as the 2026 Children’s Book Challenge winner. Kelli McDowell, HEC energy management and marketing representative, and Jennifer Cummings, HEC public relations & marketing coordinator, awarded the cash prize.

## IN THE NEXT EDITION OF SOUTH CAROLINA LIVING...

### 2026 Washington Youth Tour



Four rising high school seniors are headed to Washington, D.C. this summer for the trip of a lifetime! They’ll meet with lawmakers, tour historic sites and learn how electric cooperatives are preparing for the future.

Meet the four students from Horry County in the next edition!

