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**TO REPORT
POWER OUTAGES ONLY**
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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



Plan ahead, stay safe

September is National Preparedness Month

SEVERE WEATHER can impact Horry County at any time, especially during the peak of hurricane season. Horry

Electric is preparing and we encourage members to do the same.

September is National Preparedness Month, and preparation is one of the most powerful tools you have. Taking a few simple steps before an emergency occurs can help keep you and your family safe, while also reducing stress and uncertainty. When severe weather strikes, planning beforehand can make all the difference.

Here are a few ways to get started:

- ▶ **Assemble an emergency kit.** Put together the essential items you'll need in the event of a prolonged power outage or natural disaster. Include items such as nonperishable foods, water (one gallon per person, per day), batteries, flashlights, first-aid supplies, medicine and phone chargers.
- ▶ **Protect documents.** Store important documents such as birth certificates and property deeds in a safe place away from your home, such as a bank safe deposit box.
- ▶ **Keep pets safe.** Create an emergency kit for your pets, too. Include shelf-safe food, bottled water and medication. Bring pets indoors at the first sign of a storm or emergency. Microchip your pet and ensure your contact information is up to date.
- ▶ **Have cash available.** During a power outage, electronic card readers and ATMs may not work. It's a good idea to have cash on hand for emergencies.

During the storm

Once a storm moves into the area, stay tuned in to local news stations for up-to-date information. In the event of a natural disaster, remember:

- ▶ Stay away from windows and doors.
- ▶ Get to higher ground or a second level of your home if flooding occurs.
- ▶ Do not use any electrical appliances, outlets, switches, etc. if flooding occurs.
- ▶ If possible, avoid driving. If you must be on the road, stay clear of flooded roadways.
- ▶ Stay away from downed power lines. All lines should be treated as if they are energized and deadly.

When the storm has passed

Be sure to report all power outages and downed power lines immediately. There are multiple ways to report an outage:

- ▶ Text "OUT" to MyOutage at 1 (844) 369-2767
- ▶ Call PowerTouch at (843) 369-2212.
- ▶ Report through the HEC Mobile app.
- ▶ Log in and report it through your MyEnergy Online account.

Like with any storm, we will weather it together. For more information on storm preparedness or generator safety, visit the Outage Center on **horryelectric.com**.

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



PHOTOS BY JENNIFER CUMMINGS

Technology is rapidly changing and that includes the electric meters on the side of your home. Decades ago, meters included traditional dials (left) before advancing to the latest generation of meters (two at right).

HEC starts meter change-out project

MAINTAINING AND UPDATING electric equipment is essential when it comes to providing safe, affordable and reliable service to members.

In August, Horry Electric began a year-long project to replace meters in its service territory that are more than 20 years old. Contractor crews will be working by substation areas to install the new meters.

What do you need to know?

If your home is due to receive a new meter, the change out typically only takes a few minutes. The power outage necessary to install the new meter will be brief. Even if your meter will not be replaced, you should be aware that you may see contract crews working in your area.

Our contractors will:

- ▶ Have an Horry Electric picture ID badge.
- ▶ Wear a safety vest.



Contractor Steven Glaesman with Border States, a partner of Horry Electric, changes out a 20-plus year-old meter as part of a year-long project to replace aging equipment across HEC's service area.

- ▶ Have magnets on both sides of their vehicles that read "Contractor for Horry Electric Cooperative, Inc. 369-2211. Ask for ID."
- ▶ Knock on doors before they change the meter at the service location. Contractors will not knock before 8 a.m.
- ▶ Will work on Saturday if there is a rain day during the Monday to Friday work week.
- ▶ Will end their workday at 4:30 p.m.

How will members be informed?

Over the course of the project, Horry Electric will communicate with members through a variety of channels:

- ▶ **Emails** will be sent to members (who have an email address listed on their account) based on their substation to notify crews will be in the area, regardless of if their meter is being changed out or not.
- ▶ **Text messages** will only be sent to members who are having a new meter installed. Members must be opted in to text alerts to receive a text message from Horry Electric.
- ▶ **Social media posts** will be shared on Facebook and Instagram as contractor crews move to a different substation.
- ▶ **A website banner** will be posted on horryelectric.com with a link to more information.
- ▶ **South Carolina Living** will include a brief reminder in each edition until the project is completed.

As a reminder, Horry Electric's Bylaws and Service Rules and Regulations state members must grant the cooperative access to electric equipment. These rules and regulations are in place to keep everyone safe.

If you have any questions regarding this project, please call Horry Electric at (843) 369-2211.

Searching online for your co-op? Make sure the result is real

A NEW SCAM is targeting electric cooperative members across the Southeast, and some members of South Carolina co-ops have fallen victim to the scheme.

According to the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, scammers are placing fake websites and phone listings at the top of search engine results, posing as power providers in an attempt to steal members' payment information. These fake listings could appear as sponsored results, map listings or look-alike websites.

In one instance, a co-op member searched online for his power provider and called the number displayed with one of the search results. Instead of a legitimate member service representative, he spoke with a scam artist who convinced him to send a \$400 payment. That money never reached the co-op.

A South Carolina co-op member had a similar experience. After searching online, she called the number listed and was offered a \$20 discount to pay her power bill over the phone. Surprisingly, the scammer paid her bill, but likely only to buy time to use her card information elsewhere.

"Both Horry Electric's website and the MyEnergy Online portal are secure and contain accurate information for our members," says Dale Johnson, manager of information technology. "Unfortunately, scammers can make fake listings

appear in search results. We encourage members to type our address directly into their browser or call the number printed on their bill."

Here are some ways to protect yourself:

- ▶ **Skip the search bar.** Rather than relying on search engine results, type www.horryelectric.com directly into the address bar. Better yet, bookmark the website on your browser or use the HEC Mobile app.
- ▶ **Use the number you know.** Call us using the phone number printed on your bill or in past correspondence, not one you find in a search engine.
- ▶ **Be wary of deals.** We'll never pressure you to pay quickly or offer a discount for paying over the phone.
- ▶ **Trust your gut.** If something seems suspicious during a call, hang up and call us directly at (843) 369-2211.

If you believe you shared payment information with a scammer, contact Horry Electric right away. You should also call your bank or credit card company immediately.

"We don't want members to feel like they can't pay their bill online," says Horry Electric's Office Manager Jodi Jordan. "However, in today's world, you can never be too cautious on the internet."

HEC crew in your area? Here's what to know

HORRY ELECTRIC CREWS work year-round to inspect electrical equipment across our service territory. If a piece of equipment needs to be repaired or replaced, crews respond quickly to make the necessary repairs or upgrades.

Horry Electric also has contractors who work throughout the year on various jobs, including building power lines, boring and vegetation management.

What you will see

When Horry Electric crews are in your area, you will see:

- ▶ Employees in an Horry Electric uniform. Each employee will have an ID badge for identification. Contractors who work with Horry Electric also have ID badges.
- ▶ Employees working on your property.
- ▶ Horry Electric vehicles/side-by-sides/golf carts.
- ▶ Machines working.

Remember!

- ▶ HEC does not allow any sort of attachments on any piece of electric co-op equipment.
- ▶ Members must grant the cooperative access to electric



Horry Electric vehicles have a yellow oval decal with co-op mascot Wille Wiredhand in the center.

equipment, according to Horry Electric's Bylaws and Service Rules and Regulations.

- ▶ Members should be familiar with the vegetation maintenance requirements for overhead and underground service, in addition to the meter base(s) at your service location. You can find the requirements on horryelectric.com/vegetation-management.

Horry Electric reminds members that personnel or crews can be in your area at any time. If you ever have questions, call (843) 369-2211.

A closet full of care

WIRE teams up with students to help homeless teens

BY JOSH P. CROTZER

FORTY TEENAGERS from across South Carolina formed two single-file lines, as if they were getting lunch in their high school cafeteria. Instead of trays, they carried blue and green drawstring bags, filling them with toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo and other hygiene items they collected from tables stretching the long length of a meeting room. A total of 500 bags will eventually make their way to other teens that don't have a stable place to call home.

As she handed them bags, Jessie Robinson noticed the change in perspective.

"You can really see the understanding on their faces," says Robinson, an operations assistant at Horry Electric Cooperative. "The realization hits them that there are people their age, sometimes even at their school, that are dealing with homelessness and what that actually means."

Robinson was one of three Horry Electric employees—along with Alison Jordan and Kassie Roscoe—who traveled to West Columbia this summer to help stuff bags with items such as toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo and other self-care items for South Carolina teens experiencing homelessness. The annual project is known as Kids Closet and is organized by the state chapter of Women Involved in Rural Electrification, or WIRE, an electric cooperative-affiliated service organization. The bag-filling was hosted at the headquarters of CEEUS, the equipment and materials supplier for South Carolina's co-ops.

"Kids Closet is a project that is very near and dear to all of us at SC WIRE," says Robinson, who has been involved in the organization for 20 years. "Sadly, many of our youth fall into unfortunate circumstances beyond their control. This project not only allows us to help these

young people, but it also raises awareness."

For several years, WIRE has gotten help from the students participating in the Cooperative Youth Summit, a weeklong leadership program sponsored by Horry Electric and the state's other electric cooperatives. This summer's experience also included a tour of South Carolina ETV studios, a visit with Gov. Henry McMaster and education in electrical safety and equipment at CEEUS.

The Kids Closet bags will be distributed through schools so they can reach students who may be difficult to identify or reluctant to ask for help.

The Youth Summit students' help "is essential to make this project happen," says Robinson. "Having so many hands on deck is a game changer and allows us to get these bags to the schools at the start of the new year."

The impact doesn't end with the bags. It follows the Cooperative Youth Summit students home, too.

"I feel that after participating in a project such as this, they are more sensitive to the issue of homelessness," Robinson says. "A seed gets planted to want to help in their own schools and communities."



Each year, WIRE partners with Cooperative Youth Summit students on their Kids Closet project during a visit to CEEUS.

PHOTOS BY JOSH P. CROTZER



Horry Electric's Alison Jordan collects one of the 500 Kids Closet bags that will be distributed to homeless teens across the state.



Horry Electric's Jessie Robinson and a Cooperative Youth Summit student fill a bag of essential items that will help a teen experiencing homelessness in South Carolina.

Food safety through any storm

HURRICANE SEASON, in addition to afternoon thunderstorms, can bring power outages. While extended power outages are rare, it's important to understand how to keep your food safe and avoid illness. Here are a few food safety tips to keep in mind before, during and after a power outage.

Before the storm

- ▶ **Use appliance thermometers** in your refrigerator and freezer. Safe temps: 40 degrees (refrigerator), 0 degrees (freezer).
- ▶ **Freeze water containers** to help maintain cold temperatures.
- ▶ **Keep coolers, ice packs or ice** ready in case of extended outages.
- ▶ **Consider filling plastic containers with water** leaving an inch of space inside each one, to help keep food cold if the power goes out.
- ▶ **Stock up on ready-to-eat foods** that don't need refrigeration including canned goods such as vegetables, fruits, beans and tuna (make sure to have a can opener), instant mashed potatoes, oatmeal, crackers, nuts and dry cereal.

During an outage

If you experience a power outage, start by eating perishable foods and items from the refrigerator. Following that, turn your attention to the freezer, then begin using nonperishable foods and essential staples. Here are ways to preserve food as long as possible:

- ▶ **Keep doors closed.** A fridge keeps food safe for up to 4 hours; a full freezer, up to 48 hours.
- ▶ **Use a cooler** if the power is out for more than 4 hours. Layer frozen items with fridge foods and ice for a more consistent temperature.
- ▶ **If you don't have a cooler, you can use your freezer.** Put ice in bowls and place them around the food to prevent melting ice from flooding your freezer. Use blankets to insulate the freezer, but ensure that air vents are unobstructed.
- ▶ **Monitor temperatures with a thermometer.** Food must stay below 40 degrees to stay safe.
- ▶ **Never taste food to test safety.** If it smells, looks or feels off—throw it out.
- ▶ **Don't use food that touched floodwater** unless it is in waterproof packaging.

MORE THAN A FEW CANS OF SOUP...

Which Foods Are In Your Emergency Kit?



THE FOOD IN YOUR EMERGENCY KIT SHOULD:

- Have a long storage life.
- Require little or no cooking, water or refrigeration.
- Include nourishment for infants and toddlers if applicable.
- Meet special dietary needs.
- Include the needs of pets if you have them.

WATER AND PREP ITEMS

Include in your supplies:

- One gallon of water per person per day to last at least three days.
- A manual can opener and cooking supplies.
- Indoor warming methods, such as chafing dishes and fondue pots.

EMERGENCY STASH

Plan for several days' worth of food for each person in your household. Edible items could include:

- Canned meats, fruits and vegetables.
- Grains, such as crackers and multigrain cereals.
- Protein or fruit bars.
- Dried fruit.
- Peanut butter.
- Canned soups, meats and beans.
- Powdered milk.
- Dried meat/jerky.
- Oatmeal or breakfast bars.

BE PREPARED TO KEEP THOSE YOU LOVE SAFE, NOURISHED AND HYDRATED DURING AN EMERGENCY.

Safe Electricity.org Learn more at:

Sources: FEMA and CDC

SAFE ELECTRICITY

After power is restored

Frozen food is safe if it still contains ice crystals or has stayed under 40 degrees. Don't refreeze or cook food that got too warm. Throw out anything questionable.

Use the U.S. Department of Agriculture's guide on [foodsafety.gov](https://www.foodsafety.gov) to learn more about foods you can keep or should throw out after a power outage. Staying prepared can help you avoid illness, waste and added stress during a storm.

Energy Detective Challenge

School is back in session, and it's time to put your observation skills to work! Complete the challenges below and earn points by finding ways your family can save energy.



Goal:

Score 20 points to become an Energy Detective! After you've earned 20 points, cut out the badge below and display it for all to see!



SCAVENGER HUNT

COMPLETED

- A light is left on in an empty room **(2 points)** ☐
- A smart or programmable thermostat **(4 points)** ☐
- A ceiling fan spinning in a room where no one is spending time **(2 points)** ☐
- A charger plugged in with nothing connected to it **(2 points)** ☐
- An ENERGY STAR® label on an appliance **(3 points)** ☐
- A window or door left open or cracked when the heating/cooling system is on **(3 points)** ☐

MISSIONS

COMPLETED

- Turn off the lights when you leave a room **(3 points)** ☐
- Open blinds or curtains during the day instead of turning on a light **(3 points)** ☐
- Unplug a charger that isn't being used **(3 points)** ☐
- Remind family members to close the refrigerator door quickly **(3 points)** ☐
- Help your family create a "lights out" check before bedtime **(4 points)** ☐