

Horry Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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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Co-op Connection Editor

Penelope D. Hinson
penelope.hinson@horryelectric.com

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

It's right around the corner

Annual Meeting 2013 planning continues

ANNUAL MEETING PLANNING has been a major focus at Horry Electric for several months. As promised, we're keeping you updated as decisions are made and plans are put in place. We want you to be fully prepared for the event, scheduled for Tuesday, May 14, at the Convocation Center on the campus of Coastal Carolina University.



It's your meeting

The Annual Meeting is important. It's one of the best examples of how your membership matters.

For us, it's an opportunity to report our status, share our progress and announce future plans. We also get to meet members face-to-face rather than through voice, electronic or written communications.

For you, it's an opportunity to proactively participate in the business meeting of your electric cooperative. There is a quorum requirement in order for business to be officially conducted, so we do everything we can to make attending the Annual Meeting of Members as convenient and rewarding as possible.

Registration gift increase

Only members who register, in person, to participate in the Annual Meeting of Members between the hours of noon and 7 p.m. on May 14 are eligible to receive the Registration Gift.

Once again, the Registration Gift is an electric bill credit. This year, the board of trustees decided to increase the amount from \$15 to \$25.

Change relieves concern

Attendance records are expected to be broken at our new meeting location. More members means more traffic. Not wanting traffic concerns to discourage members from coming, the board of trustees has removed the requirement that keeps people there until the last winning ticket is called in the prize drawing.

Effective in 2013, members no longer have to be present at the time of the prize drawing in order to win.

Each member who registers, in person, at the meeting during the designated hours for Registration, will not only qualify to get the Registration Gift, but will also be automatically entered into the prize drawing. Winners, if they are not present, will be notified by phone the following day.

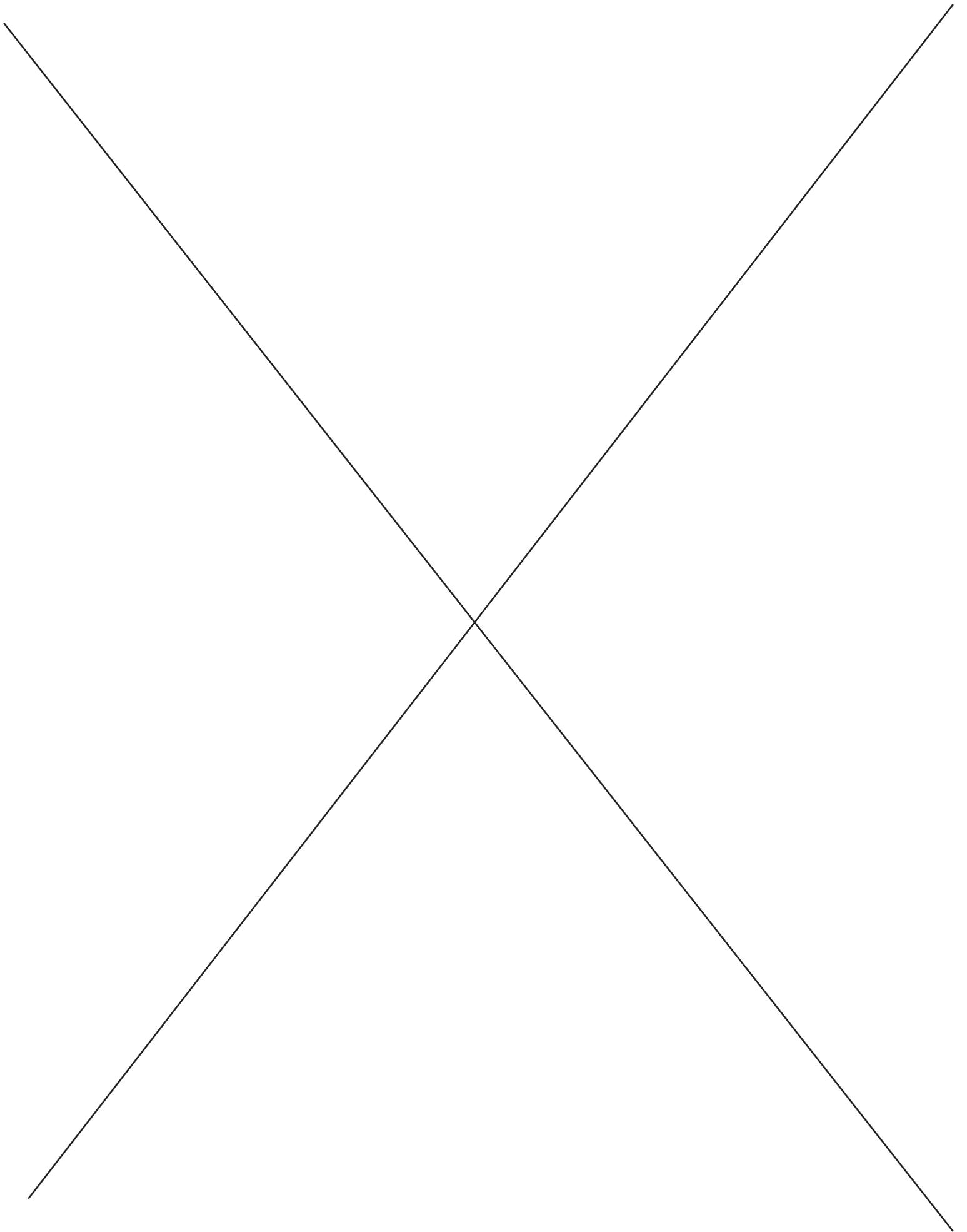
Ironing out the details

Planning an event the size of our Annual Meeting is not an easy job. Parking, shuttle service and traffic logistics have been high on the list of priorities. A new construction project eliminated one of our planned parking areas, so we had to make adjustments. An updated plan will be provided in the April edition of *South Carolina Living* magazine.

Traffic flow and logistics for the Registration and Voting areas are equally important. A drawing of that plan is provided on page 5.

We'll see you May 14!

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



Look up and around before planting something new!

HORRY ELECTRIC takes right-of-way clearance around electrical equipment very seriously. Whether it is located overhead, underground or attached to your home or business, the electrical equipment needs its space to do its job.

Look up

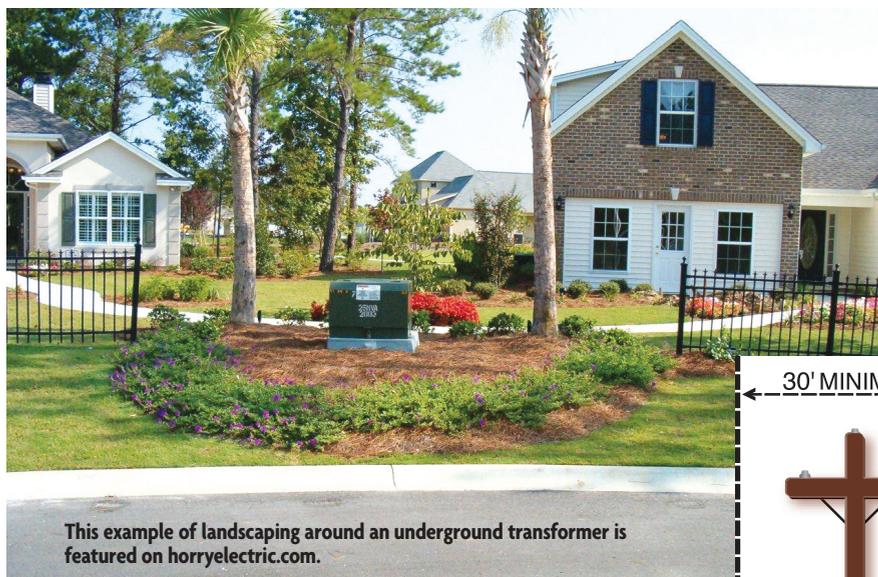
Trees and overhead power lines just don't mix. Lightning, high winds, ice, heavy rains or even extremely dry weather can send a tree to the ground and its limbs into a power line. The result is a power outage. Crews have to be dispatched, electrical equipment has to be replaced and members are without power until the work can be safely completed.

"We have a tree-trimming program in place to help reduce the potential for outages related to trees and limbs, but keeping up with tree growth in Horry County is a challenge," says Reed Cooper, manager of engineering for Horry Electric. "If members are considering planting trees near our overhead equipment, we encourage them to learn all they can about choosing the right tree for the right place," he continues, adding that the South Carolina Forestry Commission is an excellent source for information.

Look around

"If you have one of our underground transformers on your property, the clearance boundaries for planting and landscaping are equally important," says Cooper. "They aren't pretty, but they are a very important component in the delivery of electric service to homes and businesses on our system.

"It's only natural that someone would want to landscape around them so the equipment isn't noticeable, but the right-of-way clearance boundaries established and posted on the stickers on the transformers themselves need to be respected and



maintained for your safety and the safety of our crews," says Cooper, adding that, in recent years, the cooperative has stepped up efforts to educate members on electrical equipment and landscaping. "We even feature a physical display of an actual transformer, complete with landscaping at our Annual Meeting."

Education is ongoing

In addition to the display at Annual Meeting, Horry Electric includes basic information about landscaping around electrical equipment on horryelectric.com. "We also periodically publish information in *South Carolina Living* magazine, our membership manual, safety brochures and on the stickers placed on the majority of our equipment," says Kevin Jordan, distribution engineer for Horry Electric. "When it comes to our electrical equipment, the best advice we can give is to keep your distance, and we try to get that word out in different ways, especially when it comes to underground electric transformers."

A flyer, simply titled *Keep Your*

Distance, was created by the cooperative to help communicate that message a few years ago. "This equipment is necessary for the safe and reliable delivery of electric service to the families and businesses in our area," says Jordan. "They're connected to underground power lines, and we have to have clear access 24 hours a day, so they should never be enclosed with fencing, shrubs or anything else with less than a 10-foot-wide gate or opening."

Other things to remember are to never allow children to play near transformers, never pour waste oils, chemicals or other liquids on or near transformers and always pay attention to the important safety stickers on electrical equipment.

"If members need advice on how to safely beautify the area around the transformer, please call Buddy Parker, our right-of-way coordinator at (843) 369-2211," says Jordan. For additional information on safety and reliability or landscaping around electrical equipment, visit horryelectric.com. ☺

Plugged-in kids

Website offers fun ways to “switch on” youth to energy efficiency

BY MEGAN MCKOY-NOE

GETTING CHILDREN EXCITED about energy efficiency may seem hard—for some parents, it’s enough of a challenge to get them to do chores. But a website has been designed with young energy savers in mind.

Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, the brand “ID” of the nation’s not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric cooperatives, offers Kids Energy Zone—online at KidsEnergyZone.com—featuring a spunky energy efficiency mascot, CFL Charlie. The site is designed to teach children in kindergarten through fifth grade how to be Super Energy Savers in their homes. The Kids Energy Zone also includes interactive games, videos, activity sheets, and surprises.

“The website is all about engagement,” explains Ruben Musca, senior manager of advertising and marketing for Touchstone Energy. “This is a way for parents to interact with children so the family can focus on energy efficiency together, and help everyone develop energy-efficient habits that will last a lifetime. Through fun activities, students and their parents learn about energy, electrical safety, and energy savings.”

For example, Lights Out!—an energy-saving game in the Kids Energy Zone—challenges kids to speed through a virtual house, replacing traditional incandescent lightbulbs with energy-efficient compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs) and turning off lights and appliances as fast as possible. The less energy a player uses by the time everything’s off, the better the score.

“Playing the Lights Out! game and taking kids through a house with an energy efficiency checklist, which parents can find in the Kids Energy Zone, are great ways to work together to get good habits started,” Musca



TOUCHSTONE ENERGY COOPERATIVES

recommends.

Teachers searching for ways to help students focus on energy efficiency have several resources available. Horry Electric has provided fourth grade classrooms in Horry County with CFL Charlie Super Energy Saver kits.

“Each kit accommodates a class of 30 students and includes a checklist that children can use to help guide their parents on an ‘energy efficiency expedition,’”

Musca explains. “In the exercise, kids walk through the house with their mom and dad to make sure the refrigerator door is closed, and they discuss switching out incandescent bulbs with CFLs, turning off all lights after leaving a room, and shutting off computers when not in use.”

Finished checklists signed by children and parents are submitted to teachers for a certificate declaring the student “an official Touchstone Energy Cooperatives Super Energy Saver.” Certificates carry the image

and signature of CFL Charlie.

“The kits also contain classroom activities such as connect-the-dots and word search games,” Musca adds. “Handing out these materials provides a great way to influence household energy efficiency.”

The latest addition to the kit is an educational coloring book.

“As a kid growing up, I loved coloring books—it’s what kept me entertained on weeknights, road trips, anywhere,” Musca concluded. “The new 10-page coloring book we’ve added can keep kids entertained and educate them

about energy savings at the same time.”

Plug into these resources and more at KidsEnergyZone.com. ☺

Source: Touchstone Energy Cooperatives

MEGAN MCKOY-NOE writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation’s 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

Protect against power surges

POWER SURGES are responsible for millions of dollars of property damage each year, and, over time, they can cause cumulative damage while decreasing the lifespan of TVs, computers, stereo equipment, and anything else plugged into a wall outlet. Being educated is the key to choosing the best surge protection for your home.



Ricky Lowder

How does a power surge cause damage?

First, what is a surge?

“A surge is a boost in the electrical charge over a power line,” explains Ricky Lowder, senior marketing representative with Horry Electric Cooperative. “This can be caused by lightning, but it’s more commonly caused by motor-driven electrical devices, such as air conditioners and refrigerators, that require a lot of energy for starting and stopping compressors. Some surges can also be caused by faulty wiring.”

Frequent, small power surges tend to shorten the life of home appliances and electronics. “Power surges come in all shapes and sizes—the most extreme case being a lightning strike because it can destroy equipment and sometimes set your house on fire,” comments Alan Shedd, director of residential and commercial energy programs for Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, the national brand for America’s electric cooperatives. “But less severe power surges are rooted in

hundreds of different causes.”

He continues: “The severity of a surge depends not only on the voltage and current involved but how long the event lasts. Most surges are very short in duration. It’s important for people to realize that surges can happen through any connection on your equipment. If there is a wire connected to your equipment, then it provides a path for a surge.”

How can I protect my property?

A surge-protection device mounted at your home’s main electrical panel or the base of your electric meter protects equipment inside your house or business from surges coming through “ports of entry,” such as outside electric, telephone, and cable TV or satellite dish line.

Point-of-use surge-protection devices do not suppress or arrest a surge but divert it to ground. They’re designed to protect your sensitive electronic appliances, like a computer, and resemble a regular plug strip. However, don’t assume your plug strip offers surge protection unless it specifically says so. You can also install special electrical outlets that offer surge protection, which can be helpful in places like kitchen countertops.

“My computer is plugged into an uninterruptible power supply with surge protection,” Shedd notes. “We had a lightning strike, and a surge came in over the phone line. But the surge protector stopped it.”

One of the most effective ways to protect your property

is a two-tiered approach.

A service entrance surge-protection device reduces power surges to a lower level that protects large appliances, such as your stove or clothes dryer, while point-of-use surge protectors defend your sensitive electronics.

Remember to be cautious when shopping for surge-protection equipment. “Some items claim that they can save energy, and these claims are generally false,” Shedd concludes. “Surge protection is a valuable tool for protecting your home or business but not for saving energy.”

Source: Touchstone Energy Cooperatives



Some surge-protection devices can be mounted at the base of your electric meter or main electrical panel. Others resemble a simple power strip that you plug into the wall and then plug your appliance or electrical device into the strip. But remember—your power strip doesn’t provide surge protection unless it specifically says so.

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® Partner

Horry Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Small change changes lives



Through Operation Round Up, members of Horry Electric Cooperative have the unique opportunity to participate in an innovative program that provides funding for all kinds of worthy projects here in Horry County.

The bills of participating co-op consumers are rounded to the next-highest dollar each month. The extra cents we collect from each participant goes into the Operation Round Up fund. The average amount contributed by each person in a year is about \$6.

Because we're a Touchstone Energy Partner, we believe it's only right that we should work for positive change within the communities we serve.

Contributions to Operation Round Up are tax deductible. For details, visit horryelectric.com or call us at 369-2211.



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

Safety is top priority

On the job, plus to and from

BEST-IN-CLASS SAFETY practices are part of the standard operating procedures at Horry Electric. "This means, we often go above and beyond federal and state requirements for safety," explains W.I. Jones, manager of operations for Horry Electric.

Such is the case with the co-op's position on distracted driving. "There has been a lot of talk in South Carolina about distracted driving, but legislation has not yet been passed to address the problem," says Jones. "Regardless, we know it isn't a good idea and we have had a policy in place that encouraged employees to keep safety in mind when using a mobile device."

Jones asked his fellow staff members at Horry Electric to take another look at the policy after getting a phone call from a member expressing concern about the issue. "He was passionate about it and I started thinking, 'what if,'" he says. "All five of us, plus the CEO discussed it and agreed we needed to take a more proactive stance against mobile phone use while driving."

The updated policy prohibits employees from texting while operating any co-op vehicle or while operating personal vehicles during working time. "It also prohibits talking on a mobile phone while operating a co-op vehicle or while operating a personal vehicle during working time, unless the employee is using a hands-free device in either situation," says Abigail Lewis, human resources coordinator for Horry Electric. "Distracted driving is a prevalent issue on our roadways and, in recent years, the dangers of distracted driving due to mobile phone use and texting have increased dramatically."

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, motor vehicle

crashes killed nearly 33,000 people in 2010. The National Safety Council estimates that 24 percent of all motor vehicle crashes involve cell phone use.

"It's just a risk we want to be aggressive about eliminating at Horry Electric," says James P. "Pat" Howle, executive vice president and CEO of the Cooperative, adding that employees are equally engaged. "All of our employees have taken The Arrive Alive, Text Later (TXTL8R) Pledge promoted by Horry Telephone Cooperative (HTC) and WFXB FOX TV."

Howle and Jones and the rest of the crew at Horry Electric would like to see the members of the cooperative and their families join in the

campaign, which was launched by HTC and WFXB in August of 2012.

"We are thrilled to connect with Horry Electric Cooperative on this public service campaign that focuses on reaching and encouraging local youth and adults to think twice before texting and driving. HTC is extremely pleased to be one of the first telecommunications companies nationally and the first in the area to launch a campaign of this kind and bring this positive life-saving message to our community. Nearly 5,000 local residents have taken the Text Later pledge, and we're honored that HEC is encouraging their entire work force to pledge along with them," said Tom Vitt, director of marketing at HTC.

For more information about the TXT L8R campaign, visit htcinc.net or wfb.com/TXTL8R/ and take the pledge, or visit the nearest HTC office. HTC has nine convenient locations throughout Horry County: Coastal Grand Mall, two Conway locations (the main office on Highway 701 and the newest location on Highway 501 next to Hadwin-White), Loris, Little River, Murrells Inlet, Myrtle Beach, Socastee and Towne Centre.

