

Horry Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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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

Don't miss it! Annual Meeting May 14



DID YOU KNOW every cooperative is required to conduct an annual meeting of the membership? The purpose is to hold the election for three positions on the board of trustees, share important financial information and

participate in any other business matters that may need to be addressed.

Your annual meeting is set for Tuesday, May 14, on the campus of Coastal Carolina University. We say it is your meeting because it is one of the most important and best examples of the power of co-op membership. It's also a great example of the power of community. Very few organizations are uniquely positioned like Horry Electric to bring together people from all the different communities in Horry County.

Please come

We encourage members to come to the meeting and try to make it as convenient and as rewarding as possible for those who do. We have a quorum requirement, established by the South Carolina General Assembly, that must be met in order for business to be officially conducted. In the S.C. Code of Laws, Section 33-49-430, quorum is defined as five percent of all members. Registering and voting on cooperative business in person is part of the S.C. Code.

Proven success

Registration gifts that are sure to appeal to a large number of people, entertainment and prize drawings for registered members have proven to be successful methods for electric co-ops to meet the quorum requirement. On

top of that, we include a Grand Prize we think will be a big hit. This year, it is a 2019 Polaris 450 Sportsman!

As it has been for the past few years, the Registration Gift is an electric bill credit. The amount this year is \$20. Remember that only members who register, in person, to participate in the meeting between the hours of noon and 7 p.m. on May 14 at CCU are eligible to receive the Registration Gift.

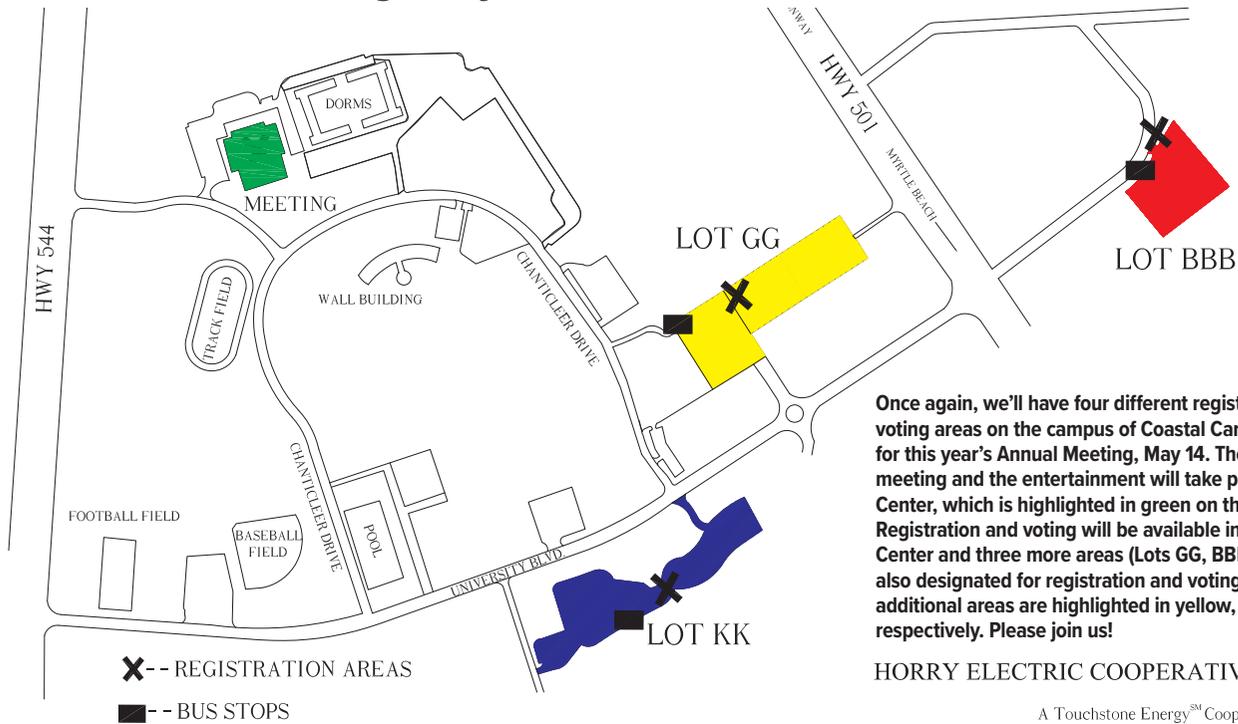
Each registered member will not only qualify to get the Registration Gift, but will also be automatically entered into the prize drawing. Registered members do not have to be present at the time of the drawing in order to win.

Stay tuned, more to come

Official Notice/Registration Postcards will be mailed to members prior to the meeting. Be sure to put it in a safe place. You'll need to bring it, plus some form of photo ID, when you come to the meeting. Members who bring their Official Notice and their ID will be able to take advantage of the Speedy Pass lines at registration. Shuttles will once again run in a continuous loop from the registration locations to the HTC Center, which is where the entertainment, business meeting and prize drawing will take place. The May edition of *South Carolina Living* will be mailed at about the same time as the Official Notice. It is your guide to your Annual Meeting and includes all the details you'll need for the big day

JAMES P. "PAT" HOWLE
 Executive Vice President/CEO

2019 Annual Meeting, May 14 at Coastal Carolina



Once again, we'll have four different registration and voting areas on the campus of Coastal Carolina University for this year's Annual Meeting, May 14. The business meeting and the entertainment will take place at the HTC Center, which is highlighted in green on the diagram. Registration and voting will be available in the HTC Center and three more areas (Lots GG, BBB and KK) are also designated for registration and voting. The three additional areas are highlighted in yellow, red and blue, respectively. Please join us!

HORRY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, Inc.

A Touchstone EnergySM Cooperative

Member Services Department

- Member Relationships
- Effective Communication
- Problem Solving
- Knowledge about Co-op programs

Collective Co-op Experience 217 years



- Gail Morton (1989)
- Kolton Wade (1994)
- Lynn Elvis (1995)
- Dana Bailey (2001)
- Melissa Gore (2001)
- Kelli Carroll (2004)
- Deborah Spivey (2004)
- Annette Harris (2006)

- Tara Singleton (2006)
- Patty Martin (2007)
- Beth Rabon (2008)
- Colby Hunsucker (2009)
- Richard Floyd (2012)
- Matt Holmes (2013)

The Cooperative Advantage
 LOCAL PEOPLE. SERVING YOU.
 Integrity • Accountability • Innovation • Commitment to Community

Horry Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone EnergySM Cooperative
 The power of human connections

We are committed to excellent member service, compassion and effective problem solving for our members.

HORRY EXTRA

He serves 'co-op bees,' too

HEC's Member Services Department (left) is full of Local People, Serving You—including Richard Floyd (below). When he isn't helping members, the amateur beekeeper looks out for the "co-op bees" he helped relocate last April. Turn to page 20B.





JENNIFER HARMON

Students Marley Pelton (left) and Miguel Acosta show off their book covers after entering the children's book contest.

Students write books to learn about electricity

TWO STUDENTS, a writing assignment about electricity, and a blank book—the story ideas are endless. Electric cooperatives around the state, including Horry Electric, sent out a call to all fourth and fifth grade students in South Carolina to write and illustrate a children's book, telling the story of electrification in the state.

Leave it to two fourth graders to teach readers the history of electricity through an animal and an insect. Horry Electric's winning book belongs to Daisy Elementary fourth grader Marley Pelton. Her book, *Einstein and His Electricity Adventure*, follows Einstein the guinea pig through the creation of electricity and the electric cooperatives.

Miguel Acosta is also a fourth grader at Daisy Elementary. His book titled *Electricity Investigations with Spy Fly* follows a fly throughout the 20th century showing the advancement of electricity. *Spy Fly* explains how electricity made its appearance in larger cities before coming to the rural areas of South Carolina.

Marley and Miguel are both students of librarian Debra Rogers in Loris. Marley's book will move on to compete in the statewide competition against other entries from across South Carolina. The statewide winners will have their books published, as well as win some money.

Marley and Ms. Rogers won \$50 each from Horry Electric for entering this contest. If you have students interested in writing, this competition will be held again at the end of this year.

'Just an everyday thing'

Running a farm at 84 doesn't phase Rural Lady of the Year Betty Lou Stephens

RUNNING A 550-ACRE farm would challenge a 42-year-old, but Betty Lou Stephens takes it in stride at twice that age.

Accepting the 2019 Rural Lady of the Year Award on February 15 at Horry Electric Cooperative, Stephens calmly said, "It's just an everyday thing!"

State Sen. Greg Hembree, Dist. 28, presented Stephens with a framed resolution recognizing her achievement. Rep. Jeff Johnson, House Seat 58, introduced the resolution, Hembree noted.

Established in 1979 and formally known as the Miss Leo G. Knauff Leadership Award, the Rural Lady honor recognizes the role of women in Horry County's agricultural community. The award reflects the co-op's deep roots in and continued appreciation of the county's farming culture.

Hembree, who serves on the S.C. Senate's Agriculture Committee, called Stephens, "a true treasure in our community." He added, "The family farm ... is truly the backbone of our country. If we do not have a predictable,

steady and safe supply of food, the rest of the things that we're working on really don't matter that much."

The widow of the late Maxwell Stephens, Mrs. Stephens has been involved in farming for more than 60 years—and a member of the co-op that entire time. She has three children, four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.



WALTER ALLREAD

Betty Lou Stephens accepts the Miss Leo G. Knauff Leadership Award, which is named for Horry Electric's original home energy adviser.



WALTER ALLREAD

Miss South Carolina, Davia Bunch, performs at the Rural Lady of the Year luncheon.

Co-op bees just fine, thanks to teamwork of employee, member

HORRY ELECTRIC'S Conway headquarters became a hive of activity a year ago, on April 26, 2018, when a swarm of honey bees showed up on an employee entrance sidewalk.

Apparently relocating from some unknown sweet spot and waiting for their scouts to find the swarm a new home, the bees stumble-bumbled into a honey of a location. Not every business, after all, has a CEO who knows not one but two beekeepers. But, Horry CEO & Executive Vice President Pat Howle does—the first being co-op employee, Member Service Representative Richard Floyd, the other, co-op member Rick Pierce.

Floyd recalls, “Mr. Pat wanted me to see if I could remove them before somebody got into them and got stung.” So Floyd scooted home, 20 minutes away, grabbed his empty Warre hive boxes and headed back.

Manager of Public Relations, Marketing & Energy Penelope Hinson, the queen bee of Horry’s social media efforts, saw a buzzworthy story: She quickly posted pictures of the swarm on Facebook. “We aren’t bothering them,” Hinson noted. “We’re letting them have that particular sidewalk. We’re using a different entrance.”

Soon Facebook was abuzz with comments: Some posters offered helpful tips—one even told how to water the bees. Others thoughtfully mentioned how beekeepers at Brookgreen Gardens might be able to help.

As Floyd was on his way back, Howle reached out to Pierce, a friend of his son, Steven Howle. When the beekeepers teamed up, the result was pure grade-A cooperation.

As Hinson noted on Facebook, Pierce spied the swarm’s queen. He nabbed her and put her in Floyd’s Warre box.

“Thank you for

your epic move to capture the queen,” Hinson posted in praise of Pierce. “When you put her in the hive, the workers immediately started following!”

On Facebook, Tanya Mauldin just thought it was the bee’s knees: “That is awesome. Many people would have called to have them exterminated. Bees are very important to the ecosystem here,” she noted.



Horry Electric's Richard Floyd checks on the bees behind his parent's home in Conway last May.

WALTER ALFREDA

He takes care of co-op members—and bees

APRIL 26, 2018, was just another day at the office for Richard Floyd. As a member service representative, he’s accustomed to helping co-op members who visit HEC’s Conway office.

But a swarm of bees? Floyd can help them, too.

An amateur beekeeper, Floyd and a co-op member, Rick Pierce helped capture a swarm that showed up at the office.

“We put the queen in the hive box, and by nightfall, all of the workers had attached themselves to the house. They eventually relocated into the house.”

Floyd knew just where to take them: To the Conway home of his parents, Merrell and Carolyn Floyd. Merrell, who retired as HEC’s staff coordinator in 2005, welcomed his son’s hives into his backyard, already home to a passel of cats.

It’s counterintuitive but Richard knew it would be safer for the bees in town than out in the country. He’d lost several hives years earlier after relocating bees to his rural home between Conway and Aynor, which is surrounded by corn fields. The bees had been in a tree at the home of his coworker Chris Collins’ grandmother. Unfortunately, Richard notes, certain



RICHARD FLOYD

The “co-op bees” enter Richard Floyd’s Warre hive box at HEC headquarters last April 26. They’d appeared on a sidewalk that morning.

systemic pesticides used in farming are deadly to bees. The bees were goners after they got into some herbicide-treated corn that was pollinating nearby, he says.

A bee-movie scene

In a world where “killer bees” terrorize humans in B-grade movies, Floyd recognizes the irony that bees—not people—are by far the more threatened party out in the real world.

“They’re pretty docile,” he says. “They’re really not concerned unless you do something to upset them.”

Key phrase there: “Unless you do something.”

Then a less experienced beekeeper, Floyd had done a lot to the Collins bees. He chainsawed the tree open and vacuumed the bees out, catching them in a temporary wire cage. Most of them, anyway: “The queen had retreated too far up into the hollow of the tree to catch her,” Floyd said.

Back home, he moved the workers into a new hive box. “It was probably 8,000 or 10,000 bees,” says Floyd, who was wearing a beekeeper suit, hat and net. “The box I put them in was full of their honey, the comb that I had removed from the tree and put in there in the house.”

“They came exploding back out,” Floyd says. “They were mad after everything they’d been through, and they were missing their queen. They were *very* aggressive.”

“My wife was standing across our backyard, watching. She said I went from solid white to solid black. They’re stinging my suit, but I was protected. Or so I thought. My net zipped onto the suit, there was about one inch that wasn’t zipped all the way up.

“I felt a bee crawling across my face. I thought, ‘How’d that get in there?’ And then there was another on my face. They were getting all over me. They started stinging me on my forehead. I got about 17 or 18 stings before I took off running and shedding that suit.”

Yes, he was safe—for a while. The bees, which have a keen sense of smell, had marked him with pheromones. And good!

“For about two weeks, it didn’t matter how many times I scrubbed and washed my hair, it was on my skin,” Floyd says, chuckling at the memory. “I’d walk outside, and they’d just start coming out of nowhere. I couldn’t weed-eat or mow grass or anything because they were like, ‘There he is!’”

Rescue #2

After those bees died, Floyd put his hobby aside until the co-op bees arrived last April. This time, he’s suffered no stings—even working without the suit. The bees are fine, too.

He even rescued them a second time after Hurricane Florence. Water was rising in his parents’ yard, which is near Crab Tree Swamp. Paddling out in a small boat, Floyd managed to load and relocate their hive boxes to higher ground. “It was a little tricky balancing it,” he says.

So, we’re happy to report, this spring things are humming along nicely for a co-op worker, thousands of worker bees and, somewhere in there, one very content queen.



Rick Pierce with “co-workers” at his Reedy Creek Apiaries.

White knight who captured queen has honey of a hobby

For Rick Pierce, the queen-capturing white knight from last April, beekeeping is a sweet, sweet pastime. A co-op member, as well as a member of the Blackwater Beekeepers Association, Pierce is largely self-taught in his hobby, which stems from a lifelong appreciation of nature. “It’s always just been a love for the outdoors really,” he says.

When he’s not playing a superhero queen bee wrangler, Pierce is part of the “hive mind” of the internet, you might say: “I work in cybersecurity as an implementations manager for a company called Dell Secure Works,” Pierce notes.

He and his wife, Whitney Pierce, a school teacher at Daisy Elementary, have two kids, daughter Presley and son Riggs. They’re learning at school with their mom and at home with their dad, who lets Presley pick paints for hive boxes. She even has her own suit.

“Getting them involved is awesome,” Pierce says. “They both learn a lot. If I’m ever out here working with the bees and there’s somebody here with us, my daughter will be the first one to tell you more than you would want to know, which is awesome, and I love it!”

Pierce’s bees are busy, too—producing his Reedy Creek Honey. How sweet it is? “We harvest somewhere in the neighborhood of about 60 to 70 lbs. of honey per hive,” Pierce says.



Co-op returning \$4.6 million in capital credits to members

THIS MONTH, Horry Electric Cooperative will return approximately \$4.1 million to members who had co-op accounts in 1999, 2000, 2001 and/or 2018.

The payments reflect a unique feature of cooperative businesses—capital credits. When finances allow, co-ops like Horry Electric use capital credits to return to members any funds left over after the co-op has paid its expenses for a given year. This spring, members who had co-op accounts in 1999, 2000, 2001 and/or 2018 will receive payments based on how much electricity they bought during those years.

Jodi Jordan, office manager for Horry Electric, says the co-op refunds capital credits below \$100 to an active member's account in order to reduce the expense of processing and issuing checks. "Individuals who were members in 1999, 2000, 2001 and/or 2018 who don't get a

check, will see a credit on their electric bill," she notes.

Capital credit checks are expected to be delivered to members by the end of April.

"It's an exciting time for us around here," she adds. "Being able to return capital credits is a direct reflection of the financial strength and stability of your cooperative. We can all take pride in this accomplishment."

This year's payments extend a record patronage retirement trend for Horry Electric. "Last year, the cooperative disbursed \$3,200,000 from the capital credit account," said Jordan. ☺

The chart below is designed to help members calculate and estimate what their capital credit check might be. Questions about capital credits? Call the co-op at (843) 369-2211.

Capital credit disbursement 2019

This year, members will be receiving a portion of the capital credits assignment for 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2018. The allowable retirement this year is \$4,616,206 less \$500,000 in estate payments. The total amount being distributed is \$4,116,206, which includes the \$695,623 balance of 1999; the \$1,006,197 balance of 2000, \$2,114,386 balance of 2001 and \$300,000 of 2018.

If you were a member in 2018, you will receive 1.57% of your 2018 assignment. If you were a member in 1999 and/or 2000, 2001, you will receive the remaining unretired balance of your assignment for that year.

Example of 2018 allocation and retirement

You can calculate the approximate amount of your 2018 allocation and disbursement by using this example. Capital credit disbursements are made by the end of April.

If your 2018 electric bills totaled:	\$1,000	\$1,500	\$2,000	\$2,500
The 2018 assignment percent is: (multiply the percentage times your bills)	11%	11%	11%	11%
Your capital credit assignment for 2018 would be:	\$110	\$165	\$220	\$275
The 2018 retirement percentage will be 1.57% of your capital credit assignment.	1.57%	1.57%	1.57%	1.57%
Your general retirement refund for 2018 would be approximately:	\$1.72	\$2.59	\$3.45	\$4.31

It pays to be a member!

Not many businesses pay you for buying something you wouldn't want to live without—but electric cooperatives do.

Unlike other types of companies, cooperatives do not have shareholders, who expect to make money from the company's profits. Co-ops are not-for-profit businesses that exist solely to provide their members with a particular service, such as electricity. In a cooperative like Horry Electric, members are stakeholders.

"In a co-op, the net margins don't belong to the company; they belong to the consumers who paid their monthly electric bills," explains Jodi Jordan, office manager for Horry Electric.

When the co-op takes in more money than is needed to run the business, the owners are entitled to a portion of those margins. It's an example of the Cooperative Principle of Member Economic Participation.

Each year, money is allocated to each member's account, according to the amount of electricity the member bought, notes Ashley Anderson, secretary and treasurer of Horry Electric's Board of Trustees. "The more electricity purchased, the higher their share of equity. The co-op sets up a credit account that shows on the books the share of the year's net margins belonging to each member," Anderson says.

Generally, members don't receive a check the year they earned the capital credits. "That's because electric cooperatives use their members' equity to fund system improvements," he says.

Jordan adds, "If we couldn't get the operating capital from member payments, we'd have to borrow from the bank or some other source, which would cause electric rates to go up."