



Cooperative Update

from

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We're on your side

Before I travel, I plan ahead to make the journey as short and safe as possible. Of course, factors beyond my control—flight delays, accidents on the highway—can still create headaches for me and other travelers.

We feel the same frustrations at Fairfield Electric Cooperative as we work to keep your power bill low. Managing costs and smart business moves have kept our electric rates stable for years, but not everything is in our hands.

Government regulations, skyrocketing prices for critical materials, and other factors are driving up our costs. We also face the prospect of significant cost increases from our primary source of wholesale power, Santee Cooper. Here's why.

We join with other electric cooperatives to buy wholesale power through Central Electric Power Cooperative, an energy portfolio manager that negotiates on our behalf to purchase electricity at the best possible rates from Santee Cooper, Duke Energy and others.

Central's long-term contract with Santee Cooper requires the cooperatives to pay for about 70% of Santee Cooper's costs, including for large construction projects such as power plants. Notably, that includes the billions of dollars Santee Cooper and SCE&G spent before abandoning their effort to expand the V.C. Summer nuclear plant in Fairfield County.

Cooperative members across South Carolina will be charged for that V.C. Summer debt for decades to come—until 2056. In fact, it is already factored into your power bill, a small percentage of the monthly total.

Unfortunately, even more costs are coming. After the V.C. Summer project's 2017 cancellation, Santee Cooper agreed to freeze its electric rates for four and a half years to settle the "Cook" class-action lawsuit brought by the utility's customers. That rate freeze has kept our power costs—and yours—stable. Unfortunately, it ends Dec. 31. The Cook case settlement also provides that Santee Cooper may recover certain unbudgeted costs incurred during the rate freeze.

Unfortunately, Santee Cooper has claimed that a series of events during the rate freeze caused the utility to incur

approximately \$744 million in unbudgeted costs – what Santee Cooper calls the "Cook Settlement Exceptions."

When the rate freeze ends, Santee Cooper will begin charging its customers—including co-op members—to recover those costs. These charges will come on top of Santee Cooper's other planned rate increases.

We don't yet know exactly how much co-op members will have to pay for these Santee Cooper costs, but we expect it to be substantial. Fairfield Electric likely will have to adjust its electric rates to cover these expenses.

In keeping with our mission to protect our members from paying unreasonable costs, Fairfield Electric—through Central—continues to ask questions and scrutinize Santee Cooper's plans to charge consumers for these claimed Cook Settlement Exceptions. The court-appointed attorneys for the Cook class are also involved in this process.

Central will be negotiating with Santee Cooper to ensure our members pay only their fair share.

While we hope these negotiations lead to a resolution regarding these Santee Cooper costs and how they are collected, Central stands ready to do whatever is necessary to protect our members.

As we move forward, know that your co-op is doing everything it can to manage costs while still delivering safe, reliable electricity to your homes and businesses.



It's National Co-op Month! This is the time of year when cooperatives across the country, including Fairfield Electric Cooperative, celebrate who we are and more importantly, the members we serve.



Fairfield Electric's 'WHO POWERS YOU HERO' is Michaela McDowell



Michaela McDowell was recently awarded the 2024 Fairfield Electric Cooperative 'Who Powers You Hero' award.

The cooperative solicited nominations this summer to identify individuals who are making a difference in their community.

McDowell was nominated for her dedicated service as an art teacher at Catawba Trail Elementary School. McDowell has profoundly impacted the lives of her students. She fosters creativity and self-expression, allowing students to explore their artistic abilities in a supportive and nurturing environment. She has a strong connection with her students and helps them develop as artists and as individuals. Her work to showcase their artwork at an annual art show and online gallery fosters a sense of pride and accomplishment for her students.



Did You Know... Fairfield Electric Cooperative has been in the alarm business since 1991.

Fairfield Electric Security Services is here to serve all of your home security needs.

The alarm services division of the cooperative has served the needs of thousands of satisfied customers through the years.

Alarm system technology has changed significantly over the years. The new wireless systems of today offer many options and can be accessed remotely by a smartphone or computer. Without a doubt, cameras are the most requested add-on item and a great enhancement to a security system. A popular service for senior citizens is the Personal Emergency Response Pendant system.

If you have an existing system, we may be able to monitor the system if the equipment is compatible.

Give Fairfield Electric Security Services a call and schedule a free security survey today. We will design an alarm system to fit your home's needs. Call today at 1-800-628-0336.

**Security
at a
Touch**



Our employees live in the area, like Security Services installer/technician Roy McCracken, providing reliable service when and where you need it in a timely manner.



Right-of-way maintenance is vital

- You depend on Fairfield Electric to deliver you with reliable power and we take that responsibility very seriously, but the fact remains that Mother Nature will always have the force to cause outages. Our lines and distribution equipment cannot withstand a direct lightning strike, and the high winds associated with thunderstorms often uproot trees and blow limbs into contact with power lines.

- To reduce the number of outages caused by tree contact, we have an aggressive right-of-way maintenance program. It includes side trimming limbs next to power lines and also controlling the growth underneath power lines by mowing and using herbicides.
- We use contractors to provide right-of-way clearing services. Right Way Tree Experts are currently working in Ridgeway and Blythewood. Crews work their way through the cooperative's service area on a five-to-six-year cycle.
- When crews are in your area trimming right-of-way, remember this is necessary to avoid outages. Most important, however, is the safety of the general public and utility personnel that may be compromised by trees too close to energized equipment and lines.

Your cooperation is always appreciated. If you see a tree, limb or vegetation that you believe poses a risk to cooperative lines or equipment, contact one of our customer service representatives at 800-628-0336.