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**WINNSBORO OFFICE**

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SC 29180

**OFFICE HOURS**

8 a.m.–5 p.m.  
Monday through Friday

**CUSTOMER SERVICE**

Toll Free: (800) 628-0336  
Blythewood: (803) 754-0153  
Winnsboro: (803) 635-4621  
Camden and Lugoff: (803) 425-1059

**POWER OUTAGE REPORTING ONLY**  
(800) 499-7862

Outages are handled by an automated outage reporting system. Please follow instructions. The system will automatically report the outage and a crew will be dispatched.

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



## Time to reflect

**PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH** has confirmed what we've suspected all along—time goes by faster the older we get. It's why a minute in the "time-out" corner seems like an eternity to a kid, but to a parent, that child's entire youth goes by in the blink of an eye.

The approaching end of another year and the start of the holiday season is a good time to pause and reflect upon what 2022 has meant to us before next year is whirling past.

It's been a memorable year for Fairfield Electric Cooperative and our members. We have been able to resume many of the programs and events that had been cancelled or altered due to the pandemic. Some of the outstanding youth in our communities took part in Washington Youth Tour and our wonderful staff has resumed taking training and education courses in person.

We have also persevered through new challenges. The supply chain crisis is affecting every industry, including utilities. However, careful planning, sage strategies and strong collaboration with our trusted partners and vendors has kept your power safe and reliable throughout.

Severe weather had an impact on our system this year. In January, Winter Storm Izzy packed a punch. The ice-laden branches and trees caused a significant amount of damage with downed power lines and broken poles that affected more than 12,000 cooperative members.

We also saw a number of outages due to strong summer thunderstorms. Most recently, Hurricane Ian caused some disruption with heavy rain and wind gusts up to 50 mph. We're thankful that our crews worked safely to restore power this year and we appreciate your patience during these times.

At the State House, legislators looked out for electric cooperatives and our members. They increased tax credits to groups like Fairfield Electric that engage in infrastructure and economic development projects and instituted a small change that will allow our employees to obtain their commercial driver's license from our statewide association without having to attend costly driver training schools.

No matter how quickly time may move for each of us, it can only stand still when we capture it. Fairfield Electric will soon place 2022 into our records with intent to learn from its challenges and successes and make 2023 even better.

I hope you have the opportunity to count your blessings and successes before our year ends. May you have a safe and happy holiday season.

**BRUCE G. BACON**

Chief Executive Officer

# Have a safe holiday season

BY CHRIS GLENN, MANAGER OF SAFETY & TRAINING

**AS THE HOLIDAYS** draw near, many people will begin getting out the Christmas lights and decorations. Nothing says Christmas like a beautiful holiday light display. Remember to make safety a priority to help ensure your holiday is a happy one.

- ▶ Before using any holiday decoration, ensure that you inspect it closely. Look for missing or broken bulbs, plugs, or sockets that are cracked or damaged, wires that are loose or bare and any other damage. Also, inspect any extension cords that you use to connect holiday decorations. Remember, your holiday decorations have been in storage for the last year, and they can deteriorate or become damaged while they are in storage.
- ▶ It's reported that Christmas trees are the cause of 210 house fires each year! If you're purchasing an artificial tree this year, make sure the label reads "fire resistant." This indicates that the tree is not as prone to getting overheated as others may be. Place your tree at least 3 feet away from any heat sources. If you have an artificial tree with metallic pine needles, don't use string lights or electronic ornaments. If purchasing a real tree, check the tree for freshness—never purchase a dry tree!
- ▶ Read the package instructions to make sure you're using the right light for indoor or outdoor use. Never exceed the recommended wattage.
- ▶ Protect cords from damage. To avoid shock or fire hazards, cords should never be pinched by furniture, forced into small spaces such as doors and windows, placed under rugs, located near heat sources, or attached by nails or staples.
- ▶ Check for overhead power lines before using a ladder



Chris Glenn, manager of Safety & Training, directs the employee safety training and safety education program for Fairfield Electric Cooperative.

- outside or when hanging lights on trees.
- ▶ Avoid plugging too many decorations into an outlet. Overloaded circuits can start a fire.
- ▶ Consider LED lights. They last longer, create less heat and are more energy efficient.
- ▶ Stay in the kitchen when cooking. Unattended cooking equipment is the leading cause of home cooking fires.
- ▶ Turn off holiday lights and decorations when you leave the house or go to bed.
- ▶ Pack it away. When the holidays are over, pack up your Christmas lights in well-sealed containers. This will prevent potential damage and also hinder rodents from chewing on the cords.

Be careful this holiday season and proceed with caution when plugging in your lights, appliances, or other festive decorations. Make this a happy holiday season.

## Construction underway at new office

Progress is being made on the new Winnsboro office. Great Southern Homes is constructing the 5,000 square foot state-of-the-art facility, which should be operational in April 2023. Due to the age and design of the old office and the expense of a major renovation, the board of trustees made the decision to build a new office at the same site. A temporary office has been set up for the convenience of members.





# Gordge devotes time, talents to Camp Discovery

FEC member is co-op's inaugural winner of the Who Powers You Award

BY JOSH P. CROTZER

**AS A RETIRED ENGINEER**, Malcolm Gordge had to appreciate how his space-time continuum was manipulated.

"I set the clocks back at the house so that he wouldn't get here so early," confesses Gordge's wife Emily.

The ruse was a part of a surprise award presentation made at Camp Discovery in Blythewood. Friends, family and fellow Camp Discovery volunteers awaited his arrival to witness Gordge receive Fairfield Electric Cooperative's first ever Who Powers You Award, which recognizes local citizens making a positive impact in their community and benefitting members of their cooperative. The Fairfield Electric member was nominated for the award by Amy Ellisor, executive director of Camp Discovery, an outdoor nature and science center (see related story on pages 12B–C) where Gordge is a board member and devotes much of his time and talents.

"Malcolm is at the camp daily, keeping the property safe and clean," says Ellisor. "He mentors the children, teaching them life skills and parts of his engineering trade."

Engineering is what brought the native Englishman all the way to Blythewood. He was a product development manager at Spirax Sarco Inc.'s U.S. headquarters and retired in 2008. Applying his talents to unique projects is what attracted Gordge to Camp Discovery seven years ago. The facility was asking for volunteers to help reconstruct a corn crib, a small storehouse used to dry corn that has been on the property for generations.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY CAMP DISCOVERY



Repairing tables is just one of many services Gordge provides to Camp Discovery.

"It required a complete tear down, moving it five feet and then rebuilding it," says Gordge. "It just sounded like a really fun project."

Since then, the fun has continued for Gordge. In addition to maintenance and repairs, he built a safe creek entry boardwalk so that children could do creek exploration and investigation. He also guided high school students working on a service project in building a dodgeball corral for campers.

"For an engineer and a long-time amateur scientist, it's just a fabulous place," says Gordge. "We've got nature, science, environment and conservation—all the things that really matter to me."

Gordge says he is flattered to be honored with the award, but it is being a part of Camp Discovery's mission that gives him the most pleasure.

"Camp Discovery is so important to the town," he says. "We—staff, volunteers and the board—regard this as a very special place. I can't think of a better place to devote your time and energy to making lives better for kids and families in the immediate area."

Camp Discovery isn't the only place that Gordge devotes his time. He's a former member of the Blythewood Town Council and is currently on its planning commission. He is also on the board of the Blythewood Historical Society and helps raise funds for the



JOSH P. CROTZER

Fairfield Electric's Doug Payne presents Malcolm Gordge with the Who Powers You award at Camp Discovery.

Alzheimer's Association.

"Malcolm's commitment to his community and Camp Discovery is inspirational," says Doug Payne, vice president of member and strategic services for Fairfield Electric. "We are proud to have him as a member and to be able to recognize his service with this inaugural award."



# Connecting students with nature

BY JOSH P. CROTZER

**KIDS ARE SOMETIMES TOLD** not to stare at the ground or, conversely, to have their head in the clouds. But at Camp Discovery, both types of behavior are encouraged.

The 116 acres of protected land in Blythewood is a place where students learn about and experience nature. Since 1985, Camp Discovery has welcomed explorers of the natural world to an outdoor, hands-on educational environment that features forests, meadows, creeks and wetlands.

“Nature is a great teacher,” says Amy Ellis, the executive director. “Every day, we see children come alive as they connect with the outdoors. They can come out here and be loud. They can jump around, and they can ask questions.”

The camp has a low ropes course and other activities that can also be used for professional development retreats for educators and community business groups, but most of their visitors arrive in school buses. Schools throughout the state take advantage of the outdoor learning space that teaches students to observe and measure the world around them. Classes at the School for Zoological Botanical Studies (ZooBot), a magnet program at Longleaf Middle School in Columbia, make at least one visit to Camp Discovery each year between sixth and eighth grades.

“They get the most out of it because when they go back to school, they connect with it every single week,” says Tabitha Cully, lead teacher at ZooBot. “It’s so helpful because it goes directly into the curriculum. They have these real-world experiences that prepare them for the next level.”

Part of what ZooBot students



PHOTO PROVIDED BY CAMP DISCOVERY

▲ Heather Phelps leads students on a morning mindfulness hike.

► ZooBot students present their surface temperature data to their classmates.

are learning—measuring surface temperatures, cloud classification, identifying tree growth and collecting soil samples—use NASA’s Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment (GLOBE). GLOBE enables students who visit Camp Discovery to become citizen scientists and contribute data to the scientific community. At Camp Discovery, the students learn how to observe, collect and analyze the world



JOSH P. CROTZER



► **Nine-year-old Tyler Nunnery explains his GLOBE findings to one of the scientists at the Langley Research Center in September.**



PHOTOS BY JOSH CROTZER

around them and submit their findings directly to NASA through a mobile app.

“We embrace the natural curiosity of childhood and being out in nature, and we’ve paired it with NASA GLOBE investigations,” explains Ellisor. “With the support of the subject matter experts, we reinforce scientific process and give student’s work purpose.”

Camp Discovery was one of three facilities nationwide to pilot the GLOBE Goes to Camp program and it thrived during the pandemic, becoming NASA’s lead model camp.

“Camp Discovery is a perfect setting for a community to come together to make a difference in the lives of their students,” says Tina Hart, of NASA’s Langley Research Center. “It’s been a wonderful experience to see what the staff are doing together and the many volunteers from the community.”

In September, three area students represented Camp Discovery in Langley, Virginia at the Center’s Match to A Million Event, which celebrated one million GLOBE cloud observations from citizen scientists. Camp Discovery students Ian Johnson, Tyler Nunnery and Kensie Sharp presented an overview of their findings to Langley Research Center scientists and personnel. Ellisor says the experience for all of Camp Discovery’s GLOBE participants was inspirational.

“It just makes them feel limitless in what they can achieve,” says Ellisor. “They are being validated that they are doing something important, and they are making significant contributions.”

Camp Discovery isn’t all measurements and data, however. Program facilitators like Heather Phelps also focus on the students’ wellness. During mindfulness hikes, students are encouraged to stay silent while looking at and listening to what is around them.

“Especially after the pandemic when we had so much communication digitally, kids are really struggling with anxiety and depression,” Phelps points out. “It’s so powerful to be able to bring them here and get the benefits of not only the mindfulness, but the time in nature and time with each other. These are tools that these kids can learn now and take with them throughout their whole lives.”

The mindfulness hike seemed to have had profound effect on Jamelle Linton, a sixth grade ZooBot student from Elgin making his first trip to Camp Discovery in September.



Jamelle Linton (lying down) says he loved to listen to melody of the birds at Camp Discovery.



► **Students learn teamwork and critical thinking with activities like the “Whale Ship” where they try to balance their entire group upon the pivoting plank.**

“I like how we stayed quiet and heard the birds sing,” says Linton. “I just love this peaceful world, the birds singing, the melody. I’ve never done anything like that before.”

Camp Discovery has been able to provide these services thanks to the support they receive from the corporate partners, organizations and foundations, including a \$10,000 donation from Fairfield Electric’s Operation Round Up program in 2020.

“We’re very appreciative of the partnerships that we have in this community,” says Ellisor, who hopes more will be able to discover Blythewood’s nature oasis.

“We are a well-kept secret right now,” she says. “But we’re just trying to get people to come out in nature, see how pretty it is, hear the birds and just bring themselves down from their daily pressures.”

## Get involved

**CAMP DISCOVERY RELIES** on individuals, community groups, businesses and corporations for funding, donated items for camp programs and volunteers. If you are interested in helping, call (803) 754-2008. For more information about Camp Discovery and its programs, visit [campdiscoverysc.org](http://campdiscoverysc.org).



# Working Together for A Brighter Future!



Fairfield Electric Cooperative is working continuously to make this the brightest of seasons. From energy saving tips to programs that benefit our community, we are helping ensure the spirit of the season lasts all year long.

*Merry Christmas*

and the happiest of holidays  
to you and your family!

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Fairfield Electric will be closed for the holidays  
Nov. 24-25, Dec. 23 & 26 and Jan. 2.