



**fairfield.coop**

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**OFFICE HOURS**

8 a.m.–5 p.m.  
Monday through Friday

**CUSTOMER SERVICE**

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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



## 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.

**BRUCE G. BACON**  
Chief Executive Officer



Chris Joby gets comfortable at Gov. Henry McMaster's desk during a Cooperative Youth Summit visit to the Statehouse.

Krishna Dave received some higher learning from a lineman in the bucket of a boom truck during her visit to Newberry Electric Cooperative.



## Finding new perspectives

### FEC sends local students on summer learning trips

BY JOSH P. CROTZER

**THE VIEW FROM** the bucket of a utility truck looking out over a rural horizon certainly looks different than the view from the steps of the U.S. Capitol. Both, though, are places local high school students stood and gained new perspectives, along with peers from across the Palmetto State, on life-changing summer trips sponsored by Fairfield Electric and South Carolina's electric cooperatives.

Charlie Bonds of Winnsboro, Kinsely Price of Great Falls, Laney Funderburk of Richburg and Taylor Grant of Winnsboro were among the 57 South Carolina teens who traveled to the nation's capital in June through the co-ops' Washington Youth Tour. Harris McLean of Blythewood, Chris Joby of Elgin, Jonathan Bonds of Winnsboro and Krishna Dave of Elgin joined 41 other high school students for Cooperative Youth Summit in July in Columbia and Newberry.

During a six-day trip, the Washington Youth Tourists visited monuments, museums and memorials, including George Washington's Mount Vernon, which was a highlight for Charlie Bonds.

"So many impactful people stood in some of the same places



On Washington Youth Tour, Fairfield Electric's student delegates (from left) Charlie Bonds, Laney Funderburk, Kinsley Price and Grant Taylor went to the U.S. Capitol where they met with U.S. Sens. Lindsey Graham and Tim Scott.



While visiting the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Grant Taylor etches the name of a fellow Winnsboro native, Stephen Randolph Hilton, who was killed in the war in 1968. All the Washington Youth Tour students were given the biography and name panel location of a soldier from their area who is memorialized on the iconic wall.

that I got to stand," Bonds says of touring the historic home of the nation's first President.

In Columbia, Cooperative Youth Summit students embarked on a four-day exploration of their state government, civic engagement and the cooperative business model. In addition to a visit to the South Carolina Statehouse and Gov. Henry McMaster's office, they toured Newberry Electric Cooperative's headquarters, where many of them were lifted more than 100 feet in the air in a bucket truck. They also participated in a team competition in which they developed presentations arguing for and against current political and cultural issues such as banning TikTok and subsidizing electric vehicles.

"We were working with people we don't know, but by the end of it, we were good friends and supporting each other," says McLean. "The entire experience is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. You learn so much, and it's a ton of fun."