



fairfield.coop

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BLYTHEWOOD OFFICE

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Blythewood, SC 29016

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



Rate change to address rising costs

AS A MEMBER-OWNED, not-for-profit cooperative, Fairfield Electric Cooperative operates solely to serve

you, our members. Our commitment has always been to deliver dependable power at the lowest possible cost.

In previous columns, I have discussed the challenges your cooperative is facing as we grapple with rising costs. Prices for critical materials and equipment and for wholesale power have risen dramatically. As a member of the co-op, you deserve to understand these challenges and the decisions they force us to make.

We have avoided an electric rate change for the past 16 years, but our co-op faces significant cost increases that are beyond our ability to control and absorb. To continue delivering essential services while accounting for the rising costs in our industry, a rate change will take effect in September 2025.

Why is this rate change necessary?

Over the past five years, we've seen the price of critical materials, equipment and supplies double. Wholesale power costs also have risen dramatically. Because South Carolina cooperatives like ours purchase electricity from suppliers such as Duke Energy, Santee Cooper and the Southeastern Power Administration, our rates are driven in large part by the price of wholesale power from those suppliers. Those wholesale prices are going up.

In particular, we have seen significant cost increases arise due to the end of a court-agreed Santee Cooper rate freeze on Dec. 31, 2024. Santee Cooper customers—including co-op members—are also paying for the unbudgeted, extra costs that Santee Cooper incurred during its four-year rate freeze period, when the utility wasn't allowed to raise its rates to cover those costs. These charges are coming on top

of Santee Cooper's other planned rate increases, which will help it meet the rising prices for fuel and materials.

We are not alone

The forces driving up energy costs are affecting utilities across South Carolina, the Southeast and our nation. Each of South Carolina's major utilities—Dominion, Duke and Santee Cooper—announced rate adjustments in 2024.

Those major utilities raised their residential electric rates by 11%, on average, in 2024. Most of South Carolina's electric co-ops have also implemented rate adjustments in 2024-25.

What does this mean for you?

We recognize how inflation continues to strain daily budgets, and we are working diligently to keep electricity costs to a minimum, while still providing the highest quality of service to our members. As a not-for-profit cooperative, this rate adjustment was not made lightly. We're making this change as a last resort after months of careful analysis and consideration. The specific impact for each member will vary depending on your household's energy use. The average residential member will see an increase of 7%. For example, an energy bill of \$150 will see an increase of roughly \$10.

As these changes go into effect, please know we're here to answer your questions and provide support. You can find additional information about the rate change online at **fairfield.coop** or by calling us directly. We will navigate these challenges as we always do—together.

Thank you for being a valued member of Fairfield Electric Cooperative.

BRUCE G. BACON
Chief Executive Officer

Destination D.C.

Local students experience nation's capital on Washington Youth Tour

BY JOSH P. CROTZER

EVEN BEFORE she applied to go on Washington Youth Tour, the District of Columbia was a dream destination for Aubri Collins.

"My great-grandpa was an immigrant from Mexico, so I've had interest in politics forever, specifically international politics," says Collins, a rising senior at Westwood High School. "I love the way the city looks and feels, so I can see myself going to college there."

In June, Collins, Johnathan Bonds, Chris Joby and Morgan Miller were sponsored by Fairfield Electric on Washington Youth Tour, a five-day trip to the nation's capital and surrounding landmarks. They joined 67 other high school students representing South Carolina's electric cooperatives on visits to historic and educational sites such as George Washington's Mount Vernon, Fort McHenry in Baltimore and the Smithsonian museums in Washington.

For Joby, seeing the National Holocaust Museum Memorial made a significant impact.

"I didn't think a museum could deliver that kind of emotion," says Joby. "It was rough seeing all those pictures, but if you hide it, what's the point? It's like, it never happened. And we need to know what happened"

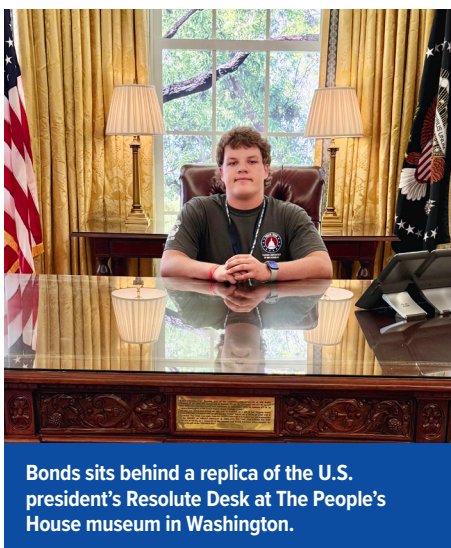
The students also viewed the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery, visited the 9/11 Memorial at the Pentagon and found names of fallen soldiers from their area on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall.

"I had a great-uncle that served in the military, so I especially loved the special tribute at the Vietnam Wall," says Miller, a rising senior at Spring Valley High School who looked for the engraving of



PHOTOS BY JOSH P. CROTZER

Fairfield Electric sponsored Johnathan Bonds, Morgan Miller, Aubri Collins and Chris Joby on Washington Youth Tour.



Bonds sits behind a replica of the U.S. president's Resolute Desk at The People's House museum in Washington.



Miller shows her state pride in front of the Potomac River at George Washington's Mount Vernon.

Blythewood's Albert Johnson on the wall.

During their visit to Capitol Hill, the students were welcomed into congressional offices, toured the Capitol complex and heard from U.S. Sens. Lindsey Graham and Tim Scott on the Capitol steps.

"It was really cool to see how things got to be where they are today," says Collins. "It just made me want to take my drive for politics further."

The trip was also an opportunity for the students to interact with peers from other parts of South Carolina and the 43 other state co-op delegations that

converged on Washington that week. The Youth Tourists traded state pins with one another—South Carolina's pins depicting the notorious Lizard Man were popular—and came together for Youth Day, where they heard from national cooperative leaders and inspirational speakers.

"It was an opportunity of a lifetime," says Bonds, a rising senior at Richard Winn Academy. "I got to meet a lot of new people, and touring all these places in Washington really opened my mind about government and what it's all about"