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**MAILING ADDRESS**

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Blythewood, SC 29016

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701 Blythewood Road  
Blythewood, SC 29016

**WINNSBORO OFFICE**

3129 U.S. Hwy. 321 North Winnsboro,  
SC 29180

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8 a.m.–5 p.m.  
Monday through Friday

**CUSTOMER SERVICE**

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**POWER OUTAGE REPORTING ONLY**  
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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

## In memory of Joseph E. Sharpe, Sr.



**FAIRFIELD ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

recently lost a leader and a friend with the passing of Joseph E. Sharpe, Sr. Joe served on the board of trustees of Fairfield Electric Cooperative for more than 46 years.

He served as president of the board of trustees from 1984 to 2018 and was recognized for his service in 2019 with a “Lineman in the Board Room” award. Through the years he also represented the cooperative by serving on the boards of Central Electric Power Cooperative, the power supply aggregator for Fairfield and the other co-ops in our state, and The Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina, Inc., the state association for co-ops.

Joe dedicated his life to serving others. He was well known in his community having operated Joe Sharpe’s Service Station in the Blythewood community for many years.

He was proud of his service on the cooperative’s board of trustees. He was very supportive of the employees and his focus was always what is best for the member. Joe was a servant to his community and the cooperative and he is truly missed.



**Joseph E. Sharpe, Sr.**

**BRUCE G. BACON**

Chief Executive Officer

### Winnsboro office update

Fairfield Electric Cooperative’s Winnsboro office was recently taken down. Due to the age and design of the structure, it was determined the cooperative would be best served to replace the building instead of costly renovations. The board of trustees is currently in the process of finalizing plans for the replacement office. For the convenience of our members, a temporary office is located on site.



# Answering the call

Fairfield County needs more volunteer firefighters like FEC's Collins

BY JOSH P. CROTZER

**IF CLIFF COLLINS' PHONE RINGS** in the middle of the night, it could be one of two things—a power outage or a fire.

Either way, Collins is quickly out of bed and hustling to the scene. If there are homes with no power, the Class A lineman for Fairfield Electric Cooperative works with his crew to find the cause of the outage and restore service. If a home is burning, Collins will join other volunteer firefighters with the Fairfield County Fire Service to extinguish the blaze and protect lives.

Collins has been with Fairfield Electric for 17 years and a volunteer firefighter for over 25 years. His introduction to firefighting came one night when he happened to be with some volunteers. They received an emergency call, and he went along.

"The next week I filled out my application to become a volunteer," says Collins. "I like doing it just to help people out. Even when they are going through hard times, we are still there to help them out."

Fairfield County Fire Chief Jason Pope says the community could benefit from more dedicated volunteers like Collins.

Currently, there are approximately 165 volunteers and 15 paid staff providing fire services to the citizens of Fairfield County. In 2020, the county's fire services responded to 875 separate incidents, and they are on pace to exceed over 1,000 calls for service in 2021.

"Our citizens are getting good fire protection," says Pope. "But we need twice as many volunteers than we have."

Pope points out that the benefits of being a volunteer go far beyond the modest stipend they receive.

"It's a wonderful and exciting way to get to know and give back to your community," he says. "When something bad happens, we get the opportunity to make it a little better. You get to go help people on their worst day and to me, that's worth so much."

There are various ways to volunteer. Pope says younger people tend to gravitate to firefighting, but older volunteers can train to be drivers and pump operators. There also is a Junior Firefighter program for 16- and 17-year-olds.

"It gives them an opportunity to get involved at a younger age," says Pope. "They can whet their appetite."

The county provides extensive training for all volunteers, as well as the equipment and gear required. Just like Collins did 25 years ago, all it takes to start the process is to fill out an application. The application process includes a criminal



Lineworker Cliff Collins is quick to respond to fires or power outages.

JOSH P. CROTZER

## A unique partnership

Fairfield Electric Cooperative and all the fire service providers in its territory share a unique partnership. The cooperative works closely with the departments, especially when there are major events like structural fires or tornadoes.

"Our local fire departments and rescue squads are essential to our cooperative during emergencies and major storm restorations," says Kevin Shull, vice president of operations at Fairfield Electric. "We always work hand in hand to make sure everyone in our area has reliable and safe service to their homes and businesses."

Greg Gerber, deputy chief for Fairfield County, says the partnership has been important to them as well.

"Fairfield Electric has always been good to us," says Gerber. "We get good cooperation from them, and they are always about the quickest to the scene."

background check and a physical with a drug screening.

Prospective volunteers can stop by the fire services headquarters at 880 West Moultrie St., Suite 300, in Winnsboro or call (803) 712-1070.



## The power of Operation Round Up

**IT STARTED AS A SIMPLE IDEA** 30 years ago at one co-op in South Carolina. Just round up a co-op member's electric bill to the next dollar, and then use the extra funds to do good work in the community. Today, hundreds of electric co-ops throughout the country, including Fairfield Electric Cooperative, use this idea to help members and organizations close to home.

All co-ops adhere to the seven cooperative principles, including Concern for Community. The Operation Round Up program is the perfect embodiment of this core principle. The average co-op member donates \$6 with a maximum possible contribution of \$11.88 per year. This may not seem like a large amount, but when combined with the more than 17,000 members who participate in the Round Up program, it adds up to make a significant impact.

Each co-op decides how it wants to operate the program, and the majority is governed by a board of volunteers that differs from the board of directors for the co-op. This ensures that the decisions are made in the best interest of the community.

The program is always voluntary, and, at any time, members can change their minds about participating. Once folks see the good work the program does in their community, they almost always keep contributing.

Since Fairfield Electric began the program in 1993, more than \$2.5 million has been distributed throughout our communities. The dollars go to a wide range of activities. This can include helping a family in need after a house fire, assisting the local food pantry, providing funds so the local fire department can get a needed piece of equipment, or dozens of other humanitarian efforts that bring electric co-ops even closer to the communities we serve. In 2020, Fairfield Electric donated over \$127,000 to organizations and those in need such as Camp Discovery in Blythewood, the Midlands Foundation for Foster



STEPHEN RAINES

Since Fairfield Electric's Operation Round Up program began in 1993, more than \$2.5 million has gone to local organizations and individuals in need. The Richburg Fire Department recently received a grant to obtain a washer extractor. Assistant Fire Chief T. Melton loads the machine. Extractors are essential to maintaining the firemen's equipment and preventing cancer causing soot build up.

Children, as well as the Elgin Police Department's Toy Round Up & Caring Hands Foundation. So far in 2021, Operation Round Up has allowed FEC to donate over \$60,000 to the local community.

Fairfield Electric is pleased to offer Operation Round Up. We welcome your participation and thank all participating members for showing their Concern for Community, too!

### Surpassing \$2.5 million in contributions

Fairfield Electric Cooperative's Operation Round Up program has surpassed \$2.5 million in contributions. This unique program gives members of Fairfield Electric an opportunity to come together and help individual families, local charities and community service organizations.

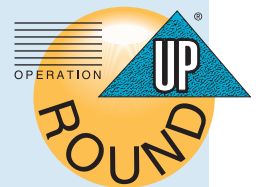
The volunteer Fairfield Electric Trust board administers member donations to

Operation Round Up. Here is information about grants made in 2020 thanks to member support.

| Grants        | Amount           |
|---------------|------------------|
| Organizations | \$91,803         |
| Individuals   | \$35,550         |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>\$127,353</b> |

Organizations assisted included Great Falls Referral & Assistance

Project, Harvest Hope Food Bank, American Red Cross—Kershaw, American Red Cross—Fairfield, Christian Assistance Bridge, Boys & Girls Club—Kershaw, IGA—Blythewood, Fairfield Sheriff's Office—Kid's Camp, Winnsboro Lions Club, Fairfield Salkehatchie Summer Services and Greenbrier-Bethel Volunteer Fire Department.







Following her message, Lt. Gov. Evette took a group photo and individual selfies with the students.

JOSH P. CROTZER

## FEC hosts finale of Virtual Youth Experience

Local students among 74 to talk with state leaders

**FOR STUDENTS WHO SPENT** their school year transitioning from distance learning to the classroom, Virtual Youth Experience was an appropriate way to begin their summer.

In June, Lily Hawkins and Taylor Hollis of Winnsboro and Adrian Sander of Elgin were among 74 high-achieving students that participated in a week-long, part web-conference, part in-person event sponsored by South Carolina's electric cooperatives.

After spending the first part of Virtual Youth Experience connecting with state leaders through their smartphones and laptops, students from across the state gathered at Fairfield Electric Cooperative. There, they heard inspiring messages from South Carolina

**Fairfield Electric's Mike Marthers** assists a student with his safety harness before he is lifted in the co-op's bucket truck.

Lt. Gov. Pamela Evette and Chris Singleton. They also had the opportunity to enjoy a lift in a Fairfield Electric bucket truck.

"The sky is the limit for these students and we were so proud to have all of them here," says Fairfield Electric CEO

Bruce Bacon. "I hope they take what they have learned and experienced in this program and use it to benefit their communities."

During her speech, Evette passed along advice she'd received from her grandmother, a Polish immigrant. "If you ever get the opportunity to serve, you should," Evette shared. "Take your God-given talents and make the country an even better place."

Singleton—a former professional baseball player whose mother, Sharonda Coleman-Singleton, was one of nine killed in 2015's Emanuel AME Church shooting—travels the country speaking to sports teams, churches and corporate events about unity and overcoming adversity.



JOSH P. CROTZER





◀ Fairfield Electric CEO Bruce Bacon welcomed Adrian Sander (left) and Taylor Hollis to the cooperative. (Not pictured, Lily Hawkins.)

▶ Fairfield Electric lineman Trevis Boyd and one of the virtual youth experience participants were all smiles as they prepared to take a bucket truck ride.



▲ Lt. Gov. Pamela Evette delivered a message about hard work, opportunity and service to the Virtual Youth Experience students.

◀ Motivational speaker Chris Singleton shared how his tragedy turned to triumph during the Virtual Youth Experience event.

“People think forgiveness is letting the other person off the hook,” he told the students. “It’s really letting yourself off the hook. It allows you to move forward. Forgiveness is freeing.”

During the online sessions of Virtual Youth Experience, the students discussed issues of the day with four members of South Carolina’s Congressional delegation—U.S. Representatives James Clyburn and Nancy Mace and U.S. Senators Tim Scott and Lindsey Graham.

“There are a lot of hurdles that we all face as Americans,” Scott told the students. “I think the best way to address these issues is to focus on education. A good education is the closest thing to magic in America that I’ve ever seen.”

The students also got screen time with Rev. Charles Jackson of Brookland Baptist Church and State Epidemiologist Dr. Linda Bell.



“I thank God for both the principle and the practice of love,” Jackson shared. “We have to transcend these barriers that divide us, and we can do that through love.”

The students also spent the week in teams learning how to create and produce audio podcasts that complete the sentence: “This is my country....”

A group of S.C. journalists will judge the podcasts and award \$5,000 scholarships to each student in the winning group. The student podcasts are available online at [anchor.fm/ecsc](https://anchor.fm/ecsc).

The Virtual Youth Experience began last year when the risks of COVID-19 caused cooperative programs like the Rural Electric Youth Tour and the Cooperative Youth Summit to be cancelled. The programs allow high school students to learn about electric cooperatives and how their government works.



# Keeping You in Touch Rain or Shine!



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The FEC Mobile app from Fairfield Electric Cooperative is free and gives you quick access to your account whenever you need it!

The FEC Mobile app also allows you to:

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- ◆ check on monthly energy usage
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