



SOUTHERN PINE CONNECTION

News & Notes from Southern Pine Electric

FROM THE MANAGER

Chances are you probably don't think too often about your ownership role with your electric cooperative. Every member of Southern Pine Electric can take pride in the fact that you are an owner of your electric co-op. While at times it may seem easy to take the provision of electricity for granted, we are working 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to make sure you, the member-owners of the co-op, are well taken care of when it comes to your electricity needs.



By Donald L. Jordan
General Manager

Southern Pine understands you can't sell electricity to a business that has closed its doors, or to people who have left the community because there are not enough local opportunities. Electricity is a critical need, but it takes more than poles, wires and kilowatt-hours to make a community.

Southern Pine is actively involved in helping to improve the regional economy by helping local and state economic development agencies to attract new businesses to our area. We also promote development by helping local businesses acquire funds under the Rural Economic Development Loan Program and the Rural Economic Development Grant Program.

We are owners of our co-op, and in a real sense, we are owners of our community. Our community is strong. Think about how much greater it can be when we work cooperatively to tackle our future challenges. If we act like owners on a consistent basis, we will put even more care and attention into our community, and we will look locally for solutions. Finding local solutions can help keep money—and people—right here in our community.

We all have a role to play. As your local electric cooperative, we promise to do our part for the community. If you have thoughts about how we can do a better job, please contact us at info@southernpine.coop. You are the owners of the co-op, and we welcome your active participation.

Students win capital trip

Two high school juniors will represent Southern Pine Electric in the 2017 Youth Leadership Program, which includes an expenses-paid trip to the nation's capital.

Makenzie Downs from Puckett High School, daughter of Sheila and Randy Downs, and John Mark Huff from Hidden Arrows Farm School, son of Debbie and Mark Huff, were chosen by independent judges during Southern Pine's Cooperative University, held in December in Taylorsville.

Twenty-two juniors from high schools around the Southern Pine service territory competed for the cooperative's two slots in the program.

The students submitted an essay and then completed the Cooperative University, where they learned about Southern Pine, generating electricity and the benefits of being a co-op member.

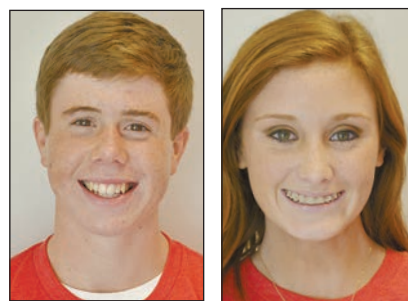
"We had some excellent students competing for the two slots," said General Manager Donald L. Jordan, who welcomed the students. "This program helps us identify future leaders of our communities, state and nation and provides excellent training to develop their skills."

The first stop for Downs and Huff will be in Jackson Feb. 22-24 where they will get a first-hand look at state government. They will meet with legislators and other elected officials.

Then it's on to Washington, D.C., June 10-16, where they will join more than 1,700 other high school juniors from around the nation. The schedule in the nation's capital includes tours of the major monuments and memorials and meetings with Mississippi's congressional representatives.



Above, students participate in one of the activities at Cooperative University recently at Southern Pine Electric. The students spent a day learning about Southern Pine and the electric cooperative business model. Two of the students, Makenzie Downs and John Mark Huff, below, were selected by an independent panel of judges to represent Southern Pine at the 2017 Youth Tour Leadership Program.



Downs and Huff's travels to Jackson and Washington will not cost them anything. All expenses—from airfare to hotel accommodations—are paid for by Southern Pine.

Utilities are raising awareness about scams

When a scammer called Florida pet clinic operator Cindy Evers last year and demanded immediate payment on an overdue electric bill, it sounded real.

"They knew my account number and gave me a figure that I owed that's close to what I usually pay on my electric bill," Evers said. She paid, even though, in the back of her mind, she knew her payment wasn't late.

"I have pets under sedation, and I'm taking care of animals. I think I just panicked, thinking they were going to shut my electricity off. I did what they told me to do."

Evers lost \$900 because the call was a scam.

The scam that duped Evers has been plaguing utility consumers for several years, robbing them of millions. Southern Pine Electric in recent years has seen

a spate of scams targeting our members, including the "past due" scheme that targeted the Florida business owner.

Southern Pine members should monitor our website, southernpine.coop, our Facebook page or follow us on Twitter to get information anytime we hear about a scam from our members.

The "past due" scam goes something like this: A customer gets a call from an 800-number that looks like a valid utility company phone number. Widely available spoofing software allows crooks to display what appears to be an official number on caller IDs. The caller threatens to cut off power if the customer doesn't pay.

But here's the giveaway: The crook will demand payment via a prepaid debit card or money order. And he'll ask for it within a specified time frame—often an



Urgent call from a utility? It could be a scam.

to put money on the card and provide the card number to the scammer.

Here are some tips on how to protect yourself:

- Do not assume the name and number on your caller ID are legitimate. Caller IDs can be spoofed.
- Never share your personal information such as birth date, Social Security number or bank account number.
- Never wire money to someone you don't know.
- Do not click links or call numbers in unexpected emails or texts, especially those asking for your account information.

hour or less.

The scammer may even quote an amount that sounds like your typical monthly bill. That way, the threat has even more credibility.

Scammers might direct the customer to a specific store nearby that sells the prepaid cards and instruct the customer

- Southern Pine does not require members to purchase prepaid debit cards or money orders to avoid an immediate disconnection.
- Southern Pine employees will not call members and ask for personal information.

Helping you to enjoy everyday life!

Mississippi's electric power associations have a long-standing tradition of promoting electrical safety and energy efficiency—a natural fit with our initial mission of extending affordable electric service to everyone who wanted it.

We are member-owned electric cooperatives whose viability reflects our commitment to providing valuable, money-saving services to our members.

Our broad mission of service also encompasses a range of community service activities. Our employees are respected leaders and civic-minded volunteers in our service area. We help grow our communities through economic development, leadership and volunteerism.

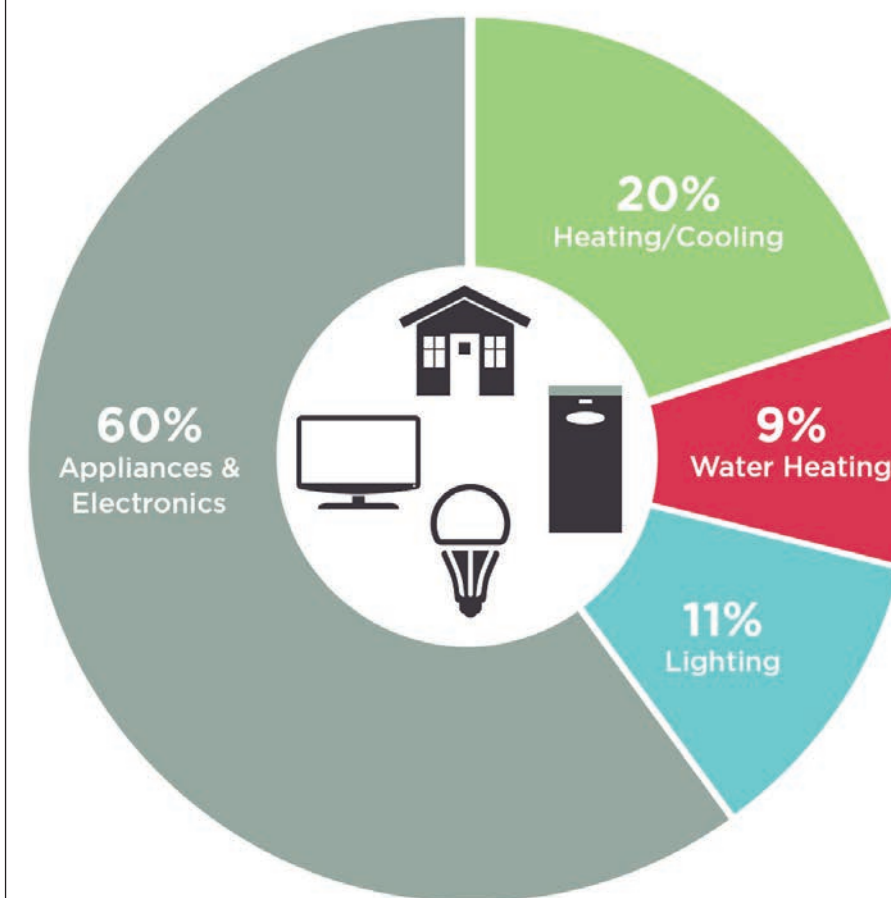
We are more than an electric utility service. We are part of the family of electric cooperative members, and we work every day to make your life better every day!



your quality of life partner

How Americans Use Electricity

The latest data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration shows that appliances and electronics account for the largest amount of electricity consumption in American homes.



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, 2015 Annual Energy Outlook, "U.S. residential sector electricity by major end uses."

Contact Us

Contact us at any of our offices.

Business hours are 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Taylorsville — 110 Risher St.; 601-785-6511

Brandon — 3215 Louis Wilson Drive; 601-824-7070

Newton — 1400 S. Main St.; 601-683-2200

New Hebron — 2504 Ferguson Mill Road; 601-694-2711

Hattiesburg — 7848 U.S. 49 North; 601-264-0185

Outages

To report an outage, call 1-800-231-5240. You can provide details about the outage to an automated answering service or speak with a member service representative.

You can monitor outages at www.southernpine.coop. Dispatchers are on duty 24/7.

Remember: If you see a downed power line, assume that it is energized and dangerous. Don't go near it. Call Southern Pine or 911.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Save energy and money by lowering your water heater thermostat to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. This will also slow mineral buildup and corrosion in your water heater and pipes.

Source: energy.gov