



Because in the end, it's your electric co-op

The fall of the year is special in Mississippi. It brings relief from the relentless summer temperatures, a chance to enjoy the woods with my kids and watch some SEC football (Hail State!).

It's a particularly busy time of the year for us at Southern Pine Electric. While planning for our annual membership meeting starts early in the year, we are feverishly wrapping up details and spreading the word about our upcoming event. With 2018 representing our 80th anniversary, we want to make this year's meeting memorable for those who attend.



Jason S. Siegfried
President/CEO

In the early life of the cooperative, the annual meeting represented progress. It was a time to celebrate the achievement of the previous year, and to provide assurance of the cooperative's future.

These days, we often hear, "I mailed in my ballot, so what's the point of coming to the meeting?" Well, beyond the hot dogs and door prizes, our annual meeting plays an important role in our cooperative

business model and can be described by two words: engagement and accountability. Member engagement is crucial to the success of Southern Pine, and the annual meeting provides an essential platform for this. Attending members take part in our annual business meeting where important issues are discussed and voted upon. The election of directors puts members' ownership and control of the cooperative front and center as they select who will govern the cooperative. Those attending have the opportunity to speak with the

directors in a welcoming environment to discuss cooperative business. The directors are designated trustees of the



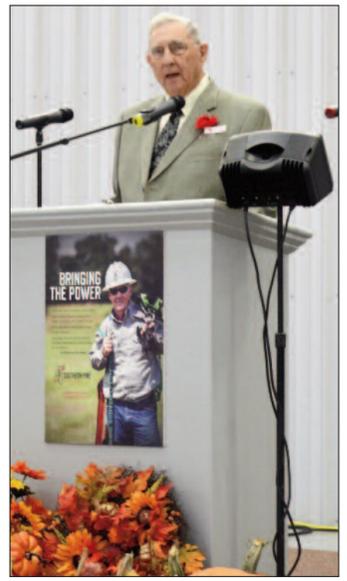
Above, Southern Pine Electric has been holding its Annual Membership Meeting since 1938. Below, Southern Pine Electric started the Adopt-a-School program at the 2017 Annual Membership Meeting.



member-owned business and are required by the cooperative by-laws to report on the association's operations, activities and financial condition. The annual meeting is where this accountability measure is held. Annual reports are provided to those in attendance and employees can address any questions from the membership.

The annual meeting also allows us to showcase Southern Pine's number one asset: our people. Every employee attends the annual meeting. It gives them the opportunity to display their pride in what they do, but even more important, it gives me the opportunity to give public recognition for their hard work and dedication.

Electricity is a necessity in our society today, yet the excitement that it generated 80 years ago is no longer the norm. However, the electric cooperatives across this nation have built rural America. Without the work and dedication of generations of co-op employees and directors, what would our lives be like today? It's a good question that requires deep thought, but



Don Jordan presides at the 2017 meeting.

I venture to say that it would be vastly different.

The annual meeting is our chance to show you just what we do at Southern Pine. It's how we define *Bringing the Power* to our members because in the end, it's your electric cooperative.

Please consider this a formal invitation to you, as a member/owner of Southern Pine Electric, to join us on Thursday, Nov. 8, at our Taylorsville Warehouse location, 13491

Highway 28 West, Taylorsville, for our 80th Annual Membership Meeting. Member appreciation events begin at 12 p.m. with our business meeting at 2 p.m.

80th anniversary book traces Southern Pine history

This year Southern Pine Electric celebrates 80 years of service to its members and South Mississippi. To commemorate this significant milestone, the co-op undertook to research and write its history, as a gift and tribute to the many people who worked to make life better for thousands of Mississippians.

The result of months of extensive research, numerous interviews and hundreds of photographs from our members is a beautiful hard-copy, limited edition book sharing the lives of the men and women who built Southern Pine Electric. "Making Life Better: The Story of Southern Pine Electric Power Association" takes its readers on an eight-decade journey of the hardships, battles and victories of the tiny rural co-op destined to become one of the best in the nation.

A limited number of the books will be available as gifts to members and guests during the Annual Membership Meeting on Nov. 8, 2018. We recommend that members arrive early as the book supply is limited, and when they are gone, they are gone forever.

Below is an excerpt from "Making Life Better: The Story of Southern Pine Electric Power Association":

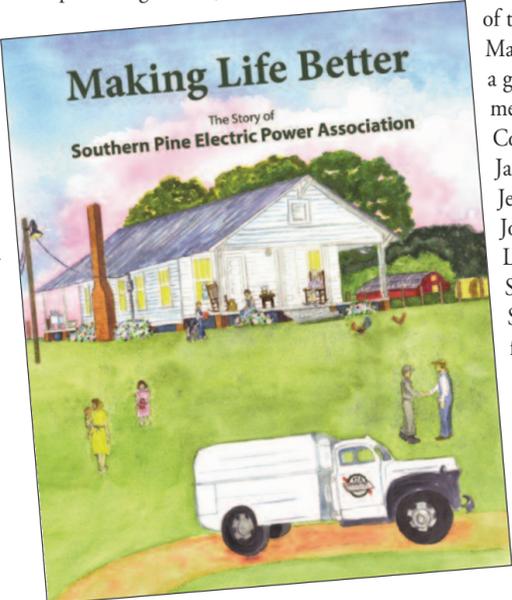
The Birth of Southern Pine

Time had demonstrated that the people of South Mississippi were smart, resourceful, and willing to work hard for what they wanted. They had heard and were paying attention to the

information coming out of Washington concerning the REA [Rural Electrification Administration]. They knew the REA had money to lend for establishing electric cooperatives. The low-interest loans were available not only for the building of distribution and transmission systems but also for co-op offices, equipment, and for appliances that members could purchase through the co-op.

The need for electricity in rural Mississippi is the reason Southern Pine was born. People were determined to make life better for themselves, so they united to form a not-for-profit cooperative that could provide electricity. They would work together to provide for their common needs and by doing so would have a stake and share in everything that happened. They would not be customers but would be

member-owners of the co-op. On March 25, 1938, a group of members in Covington, Jasper, Jefferson Davis, Jones, Lawrence, Simpson, and Smith counties filed the Charter of Incorporation of Southern Pine Electric Power Association (SPEPA).



The cover for Southern Pine's history book, "Making Life Better: The Story of Southern Pine Electric Power Association," is a watercolor painting by artist Ashlye Shoemaker, from Collins.

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA @MYSOUTHERNPINE

We use **Facebook**, **Twitter** and **LinkedIn** to post information on how to become more energy efficient, safety tips and to inform members about special events throughout the year. During weather-related events, these sites provide storm preparation details and outage information.

However, social media is not the most efficient means to report an outage, as it is not monitored 24-7.



From left are Jason S. Siegfried, CEO; Mickey Berry, chairman of the board; Don Jordan, executive vice president; and Charles Waldrup, director. Southern Pine's management and board of directors undertook to have the co-op's history preserved in a beautiful book as a gift to its members to celebrate 80 years of service to south central Mississippi.