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Google grant transforms homes



MIKE FULLER
President & CEO

AS AN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, it isn't surprising that we recognize the value of strong partnerships. Electric cooperatives were formed by neighbors coming together to work with the federal government to electrify the countryside.

Now, 85 years later, those first few poles and spans of wire have grown into a distribution network of more than 6,500 miles of line serving more than 130,000 member-accounts across the Lowcountry. Today, we still recognize the power of partnerships, which is why I am pleased to announce a new milestone in our commitment to serving our communities.

Google recently announced \$250,000 in funding to Berkeley Electric Cooperative, marking a significant step toward enhancing energy affordability and improving living conditions for low- and moderate-income households in Berkeley County. This grant opens access to energy-efficiency solutions for our members most in need, and every home made more efficient not only benefits the family but also contributes to a more sustainable energy future.

The funding, administered through the cooperative's certified energy auditors and in partnership with local non-profit Hope Repair, will also support pre-weatherization, health and safety improvements and workforce development initiatives that benefit the entire community.

If you are not familiar with the organization, Hope Repair began as an Outreach ministry of Pointe North Church in October 2009 and over the past 15 years has sent volunteer teams to work on nearly 1,500 homes. During that time, Hope Repair has had an impact of approximately \$3,000,000 in Berkeley County because of the cost of



materials and volunteer labor.

Our certified energy auditors will work alongside Hope Repair to implement weatherization and health and safety improvements, ensuring homes are safer, more comfortable and more energy efficient. These efforts not only lower utility bills but also foster a more resilient community. Additionally, the grant will support workforce development initiatives, creating opportunities that benefit all of Berkeley County.

This is one more example of Google's commitment to Berkeley County. With more than \$73 billion invested in South Carolina and more than 8,000 volunteer hours contributed by Google employees, the company continues to be a vital partner. This grant also aligns with Google's broader collaboration with the South Carolina Office of Resilience and clean energy company, Sol Systems, to advance sustainable weatherization and clean energy access across the state.

We're proud to leverage this grant and create partnerships essential to uplifting families and creating lasting change in the community. At Berkeley Electric, we see this grant as more than funding—it's a catalyst for change. By combining Google's support, Hope Repair's dedication and our cooperative's mission, we are building a brighter, more sustainable future for Berkeley County.

Sincerely,

Michael S. Fuller



SC legislature passes major energy bill

THE S.C. GENERAL ASSEMBLY passed its major energy reform bill in the final hours of the 2025 legislative session, paving the way for a new wave of power generation and transmission projects that are needed to meet South Carolina's growing energy needs.

State lawmakers passed the S.C. Energy Security Act after more than two years of hearings and debates over how the Palmetto State should address the rising electricity demand that has accompanied its explosive growth.

South Carolina's electric cooperatives joined the state's three largest utilities—Santee Cooper, Dominion Energy and Duke Energy—in supporting the bill.

The legislation authorizes Santee Cooper and Dominion to work together to build a 2,000-megawatt natural gas-fired power plant in Colleton County. The plant is deemed necessary to address a looming electric shortfall fueled by the state's growing industrial base and the decreasing use of fossil fuels across the nation's energy grid.

The two utilities said they would save 30% on construction costs by jointly building the project rather than separately building two 1,000-megawatt units.

The new law also streamlines the state permitting process and curtails the ability of opponents to kill power projects with years-long appeals and delays, which could add thousands—if not millions—of dollars in additional costs to the final cost.

CALLING ALL PHOTOGRAPHERS—we want to showcase the year-round beauty of the Lowcountry! This year's calendar will be divided into the four seasons—Winter (Dec.–Feb.), Spring (March–May), Summer (June–Aug.) and Fall (Sept.–Nov.). Three photos will be chosen to represent each season, and members can submit up to four digital entries. If one of your photos is chosen it will be featured in our 2026 calendar, **plus you will win \$100.**

The contest deadline is Sept. 24. All submissions must be in landscape orientation (horizontal), and please send the **highest resolution** image possible. Cell phone shots are typically *not* print quality. E-mail all submissions to micahp@bec.coop with the subject line "Calendar Contest" and indicate what season your photo represents. **You must be a BEC member to enter and win!**



BERKELEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE is now accepting nominations for the Board of Trustees in Districts 2, 5 and 8. Potential candidates must be members in good standing and reside in the district of the seat for which they are running. They must also submit a petition with the signatures of at least 50 active Berkeley Electric Cooperative members by the Sept. 19 deadline. Please contact your local district office for information on how to obtain an official petition candidate form.

The board is elected by fellow members during the annual meeting in November and acts as their voice, shaping the direction of the cooperative and making sure decisions are made in the best interests of the community they represent.



Sheila Powell
Trustee, District 2

Changes streamline time-of-day rate

THERE IS NO SUCH thing as an exact science. In fact, the basis of science is to come up with a theory, test it repeatedly, and then change the theory based on the results. The same principle can be applied to rate design in the electric industry.

When Berkeley Electric designs a new rate, it is driven by factors such as the need to compensate for growth, promote energy efficiency, or make sure that revenue keeps pace with rising costs. Our time-of-day rate (TOD) was created to match costs with the actual demand on the grid, which fluctuates throughout the day. It also encourages members to shift high-energy activities to off-peak hours by rewarding them with a lower rate, offering significant cost-saving opportunities for both the co-op and members.

BEC announces new time-of-day rate

Earlier this summer, Berkeley Electric made changes to its TOD rate to streamline the program and make it easier for members to understand. The new rate structure is the same year-round, with an off-peak charge of 7.88¢ per kilowatt hour, compared to the standard residential rate of 12.62¢ per kilowatt hour. The on-peak charge was adjusted to 33.37¢ per kilowatt hour.

Previously, the off-peak portion of the TOD rate would change based on the time of year, with a lower rate in the summer because Berkeley Electric is a winter peaking system. A peak is the period when electricity demand is highest. This usually occurs during times when many people are using electricity simultaneously, such as during the late afternoon and early evening

when people return home from work and school. It is also the time when electricity costs are the highest, which is why reducing demand at the individual and cooperative levels helps keep costs stable.

How it works

Members participating in the time-of-day program are rewarded with a lower, year-round hourly rate for energy used during off-peak hours. In the summertime, like now, peak hours are from 3–6 p.m., and in the wintertime, peak hours are from 6–9 a.m. Energy used during peak hours, however, is calculated at a rate almost three times the current residential rate.

By shifting high-use activities such as running a dishwasher, drying clothes, taking showers and charging electric vehicles to off-peak hours, households can lower their monthly bills. For example, a family that runs their appliances at night or during early afternoon hours, when rates are typically lower, can see substantial savings without sacrificing convenience. Businesses, particularly those with flexible operations, can also reduce expenses by scheduling energy-intensive processes during off-peak times, boosting their bottom line. Don't forget, adjusting your thermostat a few degrees can also generate significant savings as heating and cooling account for about half of your monthly electric bill.

Beyond the bill

Along with financial savings, TOD rates give members greater control over their energy usage. With access to smart meters and real-time data, members can monitor their consumption patterns and make informed decisions about when to use electricity. And by helping to spread demand more evenly, these rates also reduce the risk of blackouts and the need for costly infrastructure upgrades, which can drive up electricity prices. All these factors combined make the TOD rate a win-win for members and the co-op.

Learn how participating in the program could benefit you by reaching out to any district office to connect with one of our Energy Experts.

Sincerely,

Sheila Powell

BERKELEY AT-A-GLANCE	APRIL 2024	APRIL 2025
Total kWh sold	365,560,749	396,200,543
No. meters served	129,009	134,787
Avg. residential kWh/meter	865	877
Avg. residential bill/meter	\$136.54	\$157.45
Miles of line	6411	6544
Avg. daily high temperature	79	81
Avg. daily low temperature	57	58



Nyssa Kuonen (far left) asks Sen. Tim Scott a question during his visit with the Youth Tourists on the U.S. Capitol steps.



Berkeley Electric sponsored 10 local students on Washington Youth Tour in June, (from left) Dylan Hughes, Nyssa Kuonen, Griff Jackson, Natalyia Jordan, Allen Floyd, Hailey Bryant, Eli Yarborough, Isaiah Burns and Ye Yiqing.

PHOTOS BY JOSH P. CROTZER

Museums, memorials and more

Local students have ‘life-changing’ experience in Washington

BY JOSH P. CROTZER

ALLEN FLOYD had seen parts of the U.S. Capitol from watching his favorite politicians on television. But there is nothing like being there in person.

“I really love politics; that’s what I really want to do,” says Floyd, a rising senior at Stratford High School in Goose Creek. “It felt so surreal to be in the U.S. House gallery, looking down at the floor and seeing where they sit

and talk, where the State of the Union address happens.”

He, along with nine other local high school students—Aniyah Bryant, Nyssa Kuonen, Isaiah Burns, Griff Jackson, Natalyia Jordan, Hailey Bryant, Eli Yarborough, Dylan Hughes and Yiqing Ye—enjoyed a whirlwind week in Washington, D.C., in June, when they visited U.S. Rep. Nancy Mace’s office, took a guided tour of the Capitol with two of Mace’s interns and heard from U.S. Senators Tim Scott and Lindsey Graham at the Capitol steps.

“It was eye-opening to see all that went into forging America and the importance of every bit and piece of everyone that was included,” says Yarborough. “Being here and learning about this stuff, I’ve really been affected by it.”

The students’ experience on Capitol Hill was just one part of Washington Youth Tour, a five-day, all-expenses-paid trip to the nation’s capital and surrounding landmarks sponsored by Berkeley Electric Cooperative. They joined 61 other high school students representing the state’s electric cooperatives on visits



The nose on the bust at the entrance to George Washington’s Mount Vernon is hard for Eli Yarborough, or any visitor, to resist.

to historic and educational sites such as George Washington’s Mount Vernon, Fort McHenry in Baltimore and the Smithsonian museums in Washington. 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 hometowns on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall.

“I think my favorite thing was going to the National Museum of African American History and Culture,” says Bryant. “I really love getting to know



Ye Yiqing (center) and Yarborough and several other South Carolina Youth Tourists unfurl the Great Garrison Flag at Ft. McHenry in Baltimore.



PHOTOS BY JOSH P. CROTZER

Among the many landmarks in Washington, South Carolina students visited the World War II Memorial.

about my culture and being able to see how life was before me.”

The trip was also an opportunity for the students to interact with peers from other parts of South Carolina and the 43 other state 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.

Throughout the trip, the students participated in the Soda Pop Co-op, a student-run market that sold snacks and beverages to their fellow youth tourists. Jackson was one of the students who served as a cooperative board member.

“I like the idea of connecting with people from 44 different states,” says Bryant. “I’ve been able to get out of my comfort zone, talk to people, be myself and not feel judged.”

For Yarborough, advice he heard from Sen. Scott harmonized with his experience on the trip.

“He told us, ‘Don’t wait for an opportunity to come. Put yourself out there and take full advantage of it,’” says Yarborough. “This trip was a little scary for me, but it has genuinely been one of the greatest moments of my life of my life.”



▲ On her visit to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall, Aniyah Bryant etches the name of Maj. James Westley Ayers of Moncks Corner. Each South Carolina Youth Tourist was given the name of a servicemember from their hometown to find on the wall.



◀ Kuonen, Jordan, Floyd and Henok Mokonen of Indian Land walk through the National Pentagon 9/11 Memorial.



PEYTON DRESS

Senior scholarships awarded

EACH YEAR, the Operation Round Up Trust Board presents up to 10 scholarships to graduating seniors in Berkeley Electric Cooperative's service territory. The \$2,500 scholarships are awarded to students meeting the grade and income requirements and are used to help children of co-op members attend an accredited college or trade school. Congratulations to this year's recipients:

- ▶ **Marlo Dorcey**, Lucy Beckham High, College of Charleston
- ▶ **Kasmere Ladson**, Goose Creek High, University of South Carolina
- ▶ **Tatiana Fasnacht**, SC Governor's School, Xavier University
- ▶ **Arya Glover**, Goose Creek High, Winthrop University
- ▶ **Zacora Scott**, Timberland High, Trident Technical College
- ▶ **Joshua Rael**, Northwood Academy, Charleston Southern University
- ▶ **Mollie Dillon**, St. Johns High, Trident Technical College
- ▶ **Gavin Todd**, Northwood Academy, University of South Carolina
- ▶ **Owen Freres**, Goose Creek High, Lander University
- ▶ **Kayley Lindsley**, Berkeley High, College of Charleston



PHOTOS BY MICAH PONCE

Teachers take the plunge into STEMersion

Berkeley Electric recently hosted 43 local teachers as part of STEMersion, a week-long learning experience showcasing job paths for STEM students at various local businesses. Representatives from the co-op, Santee Cooper, and the SC Power Team showcased opportunities in information technology, cyber security, and GIS, as well as industry uses of AI and how to apply gamification learning.



SC Power Team's Angelyn Smith explains how gamification learning can help students learn while preparing for their careers.



MICAH PONCE

Reading with the RiverDogs

Berkeley Electric kicked off the summer with the return of the popular Reading with the RiverDogs events at the Johns Island district office and John's Island Library. During the event, players from the baseball team read stories to area children in Spanish and English. The event includes dancing, singing, a free lunch and photo ops with Charlie the RiverDog and other mascots.