



Berkeley Electric  
Cooperative  
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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Call: 1-888-253-4232

#### DISTRICT OFFICES

Hours: 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

#### AWENDAW

North 7200, US-17

Awendaw, SC 29426

(843) 884-7525

AWMemberRequests@bec.coop

#### GOOSE CREEK

2 Springhall Road

Goose Creek, SC 29445

(843) 553-5020

GCMemberRequests@bec.coop

#### JOHNS ISLAND

1135 Main Road

Johns Island, SC 29455

(843) 559-2458

JIMemberRequests@bec.coop

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Moncks Corner, SC 29461

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## Staying plugged in



**MIKE FULLER**  
President & CEO

In the past, we have advised you to unplug unused electronics to avoid using energy unnecessarily.

However, this month, I want to tell you how Berkeley Electric Cooperative stays plugged in on your behalf.

Of course, I'm not referring to the power outlets on the walls around your house. I'm talking about being connected at the South Carolina Statehouse. It's why your board trustees, members of our staff and some of our lineworkers participate in Co-op Day at the Statehouse each February.

We are joined by hundreds of others from South Carolina's electric cooperatives, thanking lawmakers and expressing a vision for a future that keeps electricity safe, reliable and affordable.

What happens there has a significant impact on your community and your wallet. Frequently, state lawmakers consider bills that affect the cost of electricity and our ability to provide it safely, reliably, and affordably.

That's why having and maintaining a good working relationship with the men and

women you've elected to represent you is a critical role of your electric cooperative. We're your voice at the Statehouse when it comes to energy-related matters.

Last year, the General Assembly passed the Energy Security Act, which addressed the growing strain on our state's electric grid, opened the door for additional power generation, streamlined the regulatory processes and placed long-term grid reliability at the forefront of South Carolina's energy planning. These were changes we'd been advocating for a long time, and we're thankful that lawmakers listened and understood the need for a new, smart energy policy.

As former U.S. House Speaker Tip O'Neal famously said, "All politics is local." For the members of Berkeley Electric, that means the people speaking on your behalf are co-op employees who live and work in your community.

Rest assured, our plugs will stay connected so that yours will deliver power when they are supposed to.

Sincerely,

**BRIGHT IDEAS 5K**  
BERKELEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

**APRIL 25** CYPRESS GARDENS

**LACE UP YOUR Sneakers TO HELP LOCAL Teachers !**

**EARLY BIRD SAVINGS** →  SCAN ME

## Scholarships for women returning to college

The Jenny Ballard Opportunity Scholarship is for women who are resuming academic journeys that have been interrupted or delayed.

Applications for one-time awards are now open for female members of Berkeley Electric. Sponsored by Women Involved in Rural Electrification (WIRE)—a service organization associated with South Carolina's electric cooperatives—and named after one of its founding members, the \$2,500 scholarships are awarded based on need and personal goals. The deadline for applying is June 1.

An online application for the 2026 WIRE scholarship can be found [ecsc.org/wire](http://ecsc.org/wire). The scholarship will be awarded based on the information provided in the application.

Applicants for the program must:

- Be a member of Berkeley Electric or another South Carolina electric cooperative;
- Have graduated from high school or earned a GED at least 10 years ago;
- Obtain acceptance into an accredited college or university;
- Demonstrate financial need.

Recipients will receive scholarships for the fall 2026 or spring 2027 semester, with funds paid directly to the college or university. E-mail inquiries can be sent to Peggy Dantlzer at the Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina - [peggy.dantlzer@ecsc.org](mailto:peggy.dantlzer@ecsc.org).

## Trust Board offers financial aid to graduating seniors

Berkeley Electric is still accepting online applications for its Trust Scholarships. The Operation Round-Up Trust Board is funding ten (10) \$2,500 scholarships to be presented to a graduating senior in Berkeley Electric Cooperative's service territory.

The Trust Board Scholarship Committee will conduct the approval process and award the scholarships based on the guidelines specified in the scholarship application, which are grade and income-based.

**Deadline March 26!**



# Repairing hope, one house at a time

When Google partnered with Berkeley Electric in December 2024, the goal was simple yet powerful: bring comfort and efficiency to homes that needed it most. With \$250,000 in grant funding, BEC launched the program in April 2025, teaming up with Hope Repair, a local nonprofit with deep roots in Berkeley County.

Hope Repair began as an outreach ministry of Pointe North Church back in 2009. In just 15 years, they've touched nearly 1,500 homes, contributing an estimated \$3 million in materials and volunteer labor. Their mission has always been clear—help neighbors live safer, healthier lives. This partnership with Google and Berkeley Electric gave them a new tool: energy efficiency.

## The Work Begins

Many of the homes visited were heated only by kitchen stoves or space heaters. "Some cry when the heat comes on," said Director of Energy Services Eddie Plowden. "These members are emotionally appreciative of the cooperative. It's really touched Rob and Rodney who are directly installing these mini split heat pumps in the home."

Plowden is referring to Rob Meade and Rodney Hill, experienced HVAC contractors who have been working with the program, at a discounted rate, to help ensure that the grant funds can reach as many members as possible. Another local contractor, Sexton HVAC, has also been lending his expertise for ducted systems.

So far, almost 40 homes have received HVAC improvements, primarily mini-split systems.

"These are very inefficient homes, so it's best to install the mini split heat pumps and only use central ducted in homes with good duct work. The mini split delivers heat straight into the room, with no duct losses," Eddie said.

A mini-split AC is a ductless air conditioning system with an outdoor unit connected to one or more indoor air handlers, allowing for zoned heating and cooling in specific



Rob Meade is one of the experienced contractors offering discounted services to help ensure grant funds reach as many members as possible.



Co-op member Dorothy Rivers stands beneath her new mini split A/C funded through a Google grant.

rooms or areas without ducts. This makes it a good choice for installing in older homes like the ones qualifying for the program.

## Behind the Scenes

Before and after every job, The Energy Experts<sup>SM</sup> at Berkeley conduct energy audits to measure efficiency gains. This isn't just about warmth, it's about sustainability.

"We're very close to deploying the full \$250,000 in grants," Plowden said. "What happens when we run out of money? We ask for more, to help more members in need!"

## Looking Ahead

Although Berkeley didn't anticipate using all the funds in a single year, by January, every dollar was at work in the co-op's communities. While BEC is currently working with Google to fund the next stage of the project, Google's community support goes beyond this program. It has supported local events such as the Bright Ideas 5K and worked with other co-ops across S.C. on similar energy efficiency programs.

To check the status of the Hope Repair program or to see if they qualify, members can apply in-person at Pointe North Church located at 110 Bi-lo Dr., Ste C, Moncks Corner; or call them at 843-258-1174.

## Get off our Island

BY FRANK GALLANT | RE MAGAZINE, SEPT. 2025

One morning in January 1989, people on Johns Island, South Carolina awoke to the sound of chain saws cutting a 3.5-mile right-of-way for a power line being built by South Carolina Electric and Gas (SCE&G) to serve a new shopping center. It confused them as much as it would anger them.

What was this investor-owned utility doing on their river-girdled island on the outskirts of Charleston? They already had a power provider, a good one—Berkeley Electric Cooperative—which had served them reliably for nearly 50 years and whose linemen and service people they knew and liked.

“SCE&G came on the island illegally and irresponsibly,” R.M. “Sonny” Hanckel, an island farmer who helped organize his neighbors against the interloper, said at the time.

SCE&G claimed Charleston had annexed that part of Johns Island. Berkeley Electric said its service area was assigned by the Public Service Commission of South Carolina and couldn’t be taken away.

Al Ballard, executive vice president of the Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina, said Johns Island was a “testing ground...We’re in the middle of a takeover fight ... SCE&G is trying to find a way to take over the co-ops. If they can get away with it, it’ll happen all over the state.”

E.E. “Skip” Strickland, Berkeley Electric’s general manager, was thankful islanders were putting up a strong resistance. He noted that the 40,000-meter distribution system had a number of other turf battles smoldering in other parts of its service territory.

The resistance was aimed at SCE&G, but it was also against four-lane highways, golf courses and Charleston professionals who looked at Johns Island and saw bedroom communities.

“The island people are really being taken by developers,” said Hanckel, who had been elected chairman of Johns Island



The Angel Oak on Johns Island became a symbol of the quiet country lifestyle residents were fighting to preserve.

### Citizens for Co-op Power.

Locals were still angry at Charleston Mayor Joseph Riley for saying on TV in 1984 that the city had no plans to annex any part of Johns Island and then doing just that two weeks later.

“Country people...believe what people tell them,” explained Barry Hart, co-chairman of the citizens group. “That kind of thing doesn’t go well with them. People take you at your word.”

The citizens group accused SCE&G of intimidating landowners and throwing money around. One pro-SCE&G landowner was allegedly paid \$45,000 for a strip of land seven feet wide and 335 feet long. Another received \$11,500 in consulting fees over a two-month period.

Hart charged the investor-owned utility with trying to divide the island along racial lines, pointing out that SCE&G had met with a group of Black ministers but hadn’t talked to any representatives of churches attended by whites.

The first meeting of Johns Island Citizens for Co-op Power was held in the St. Johns High School cafeteria. So many people showed up, some had to stand outside listening through an open window. Dozens of meetings followed.

On February 14, 1989, Johns Islanders started showing up for a 6:30 p.m. Charleston City Council hearing at 1:30. By 3:30 p.m., the council chambers had reach capacity. Eventually, Mayor Riley decided to move the meeting to the Dock Street Theater a few blocks away.

Many of the Berkeley Electric supporters wore “I love my co-op” buttons, and after almost four hours of debate, they felt Mayor Riley and the City Council had their eyes opened—and maybe their hearts. It helped that Citizens for Co-op Power presented a petition with 7,000 signatures.

Berkeley Electric and SCE&G continued their territorial battle over Johns Island until 2001, when the investor-owned utility abandoned the feeder line that served the shopping center, and the ground under it became a permanent part of the co-op’s service territory.



Posters like this one went up all over the island during the push to stop SCE&G.

**REEL STEEL**

MILITARY APPRECIATION FISHING EXPERIENCE

**APRIL 14**

CANAL LAKES FISH CAMP

**6:00 AM - 2:00 PM**

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**DO YOU REQUIRE MOBILITY ASSISTANCE?**  **YES**  **NO**

Must have valid fishing license

## Co-op supports orphan relief efforts



Through donations from the Berkeley Electric Trust Board, Lowcountry Orphan Relief (LOR) recently received funding allowing them to support the "Just in Case Closet" program. The program provides emergency resource closets stocked with essential items such as school uniforms, socks, underwear, and toiletries for Title I schools.

The Trust Board's support allowed the organization to open new closets in Boulder Bluff Elementary, Timberland High School, and Santee Elementary, as well as restock existing closets at St. Johns High School, Goose Creek Elementary, and Mt. Zion Elementary.

### About the "Just in Case Closet" Program

By providing these items, the program helps restore dignity and stability, allowing students to attend school with confidence, focus on their education, and fully participate in the classroom environment without the added stress of lacking proper clothing or hygiene products.

Through partnerships with local schools, Lowcountry Orphan Relief establishes and maintains these closets, restocking them as needed based on direct feedback from school staff. The impact of this program is reflected in the continued requests for restocks and the heartfelt thank-you letters received from schools describing how these resources change lives.

Lowcountry Orphan Relief also provides Care Kits with two-weeks of supplies and hosts a "Make a Child Happy" Day festival. To learn more or to support LOR, visit [LowcountryOrphanRelief.org](http://LowcountryOrphanRelief.org).