

Current Comments

JANUARY 2022
MEMBER NEWSLETTER

U.S. Sen. Raphael Warnock speaking to 2021 YT delegates.



IMPORTANT DATES

New Year's Day: Jan. 1
SRE will be closed Dec. 31.
Call the Outage Hotline at 1-866-244-4890 to report an outage.

SRE Trust Board meeting:
Jan. 12
Applications due Feb. 23,
for the March 9 meeting.
Visit southernriversenergy.com
to learn more.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day:
Jan. 20
SRE office will be open.

**Walter Harrison Scholarship
Deadline:** Feb. 1

**HAPPY NEW YEAR
FROM EVERYONE AT
SOUTHERN RIVERS ENERGY!**



YOUTH TOUR THROUGH A DIFFERENT LENS

The Washington Youth Tour (WYT) looked quite a bit different in 2021, as the annual in-person event was shifted to a virtual platform and hosted online June 22-24 because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The Georgia Electric Membership Corp. (EMC) Virtual Electric Cooperative Youth Tour was packed with leadership lessons for 39 delegates from 13 EMCs across Georgia.

Whether from the comfort of their own homes or in an EMC's conference room, students heard from experts and alumni on topics such as internship ideas, insights on how to meet people and gracefully leave conversations, identifying their top strengths using the Clifton-Strengths talent assessment, how to get involved in their communities and tips on choosing their college experience.

The theme for 2021 was leadership, and delegates had a chance to focus on leadership from three perspectives: Leadership and Me, Leadership and My Community, and Leadership and My Nation.

And just as they would have during an in-person tour of Washington, D.C., the 2021 group met and asked questions of state and national leaders.

Georgia Lt. Gov. Geoff Duncan, U.S. Sen. Raphael Warnock, and U.S. Reps. Sanford Bishop, Buddy Carter and Drew Ferguson joined the students via online meetings. Students were also assigned to mentor groups and met in those groups each day.

"Of course we'd always prefer to be in Washington, D.C., hosting an in-person event, but when logistical challenges made that impossible, our team here at Georgia EMC was able to create a virtual three-day event that engaged the delegates and helped them learn about themselves, while also cultivating their leadership skills with students from across the state," says Kaleb Frady, Public Relations Representative with Georgia EMC.


Having never created or hosted a virtual event of that magnitude, Georgia EMC wasn't really sure what to expect, but Frady and his team say that their expectations were wildly exceeded, and the entire Georgia EMC staff did a phenomenal job.

"The positive, grateful and appreciative feedback we received from the delegates has confirmed the efforts were very well-invested," Frady says. "Delegates remained engaged each day and actively participated."

NOW ACCEPTING 2022 YOUTH TOUR APPLICATIONS

Youth Tour allows high school students to learn more about our nation's capital alongside classmates and friends throughout Georgia. It is an all-expenses-

paid experience on behalf of Georgia's electric membership cooperatives (EMCs). Visit southernriversenergy.com to learn more and/or apply.



Southern Rivers Energy Employees Give Back

By Kathryn Green
SRE Communications Specialist

As a new year rolls in, you'll notice a recurring theme in our January Current Comments—Concern for Community. This is a value that all employees of Southern Rivers Energy (SRE) practice year-round, but during the holiday season, concern for the communities we call home seems especially important.

Electric cooperatives have a proud history of giving back. In addition to our Operation Round Up program, SRE is a collection site for Toys for Tots each year and makes regular donations to our local food pantry, but it doesn't stop there. For the past 22 years, Southern Rivers Energy employees have worked to provide clothes, shoes and gifts for needy children and teens in the community through the SRE Christmas Kids Fund program.

"When I started working at Southern Rivers Energy 17 years ago, I was given the option to participate in Casual Friday, which would allow me to wear jeans once a week. When I learned I would have to pay at least \$1 per week to do so, I thought it was a bit unfair to pay to take advantage of this perk—until I learned the money went into the Christmas Kids Fund," says SRE Director of Marketing and Member Services Erin Cook. "In 1999, SRE employees got together and started this program

to help needy families in our service territory at Christmas. At first they just accepted employee donations and used the money collected from office vending machines, but before long, employees wanted to deduct contributions directly from their paychecks."

Every year, SRE employees spend their personal time to shop, trying to provide happiness during the Christmas holidays. Sometimes the families have just been displaced by a fire, are facing a medical hardship, have recently lost a parent or are dealing with some other unimaginable challenge. Although we never know who the families are, the parents know the gifts are from SRE.

"The number of children that are helped varies each year depending on the needs from our local Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS), churches and other organizations throughout our service area," says Susan Lewis, Project Coordinator. "We try to distribute funds across the counties and set aside a certain amount of money per child. We are usually able to help 20-40 kids each year. Employees and our board of directors donate funds, but we also host creative fundraisers, such as chili cook-offs or bake-offs, throughout the year to go toward the Christmas Kids Fund."

I am blessed to work for an organization that encourages and helps facilitate giving back. We don't want the kids in our community to go without.

"It's a program that you want to be a part of and you are proud to go above and beyond for our kids and families. It has become a holiday highlight to SRE employees and has provided Christmas memories to hundreds of children in our area," says Customer Service Supervisor April Sorrow.

Our Christmas Kids Fund is 100% donated, with the sole purpose of giving back to our communities. We believe that every boy and girl deserves to experience the joy of a happy Christmas morning. Children receive toys, but most importantly, the shoes and jackets we buy are oftentimes enough to get the kids and their families through the winter months.

The people who make this event happen all share the same passion in helping others. No matter how great or small the act, every time we give back, we strengthen our community. As we begin making plans for 2022, I encourage you to find a way to share blessings with others who may be struggling. Happy New Year from everyone here at SRE!

PUTTING CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY INTO ACTION

Georgia's electric membership corporations (EMCs) put Cooperative Principle No. 7—Concern for Community—into action in numerous ways.

“True to this principle, EMCs in Georgia have stepped up to the plate to meet needs in their service areas for more than 80 years,” says Lindsay Bridges, Vice President of Communications and Member Services for Tucker-based Georgia EMC, the trade association for Georgia's 41 EMCs. “Electric co-ops lend a helping hand to local organizations and individuals, support worthwhile projects that benefit the community at large, support education and develop leaders to improve the lives and communities of those they serve.”

OPERATION ROUND UP

Our Southern Rivers Energy Trust Inc. heads up the Operation Round Up program, in which Southern Rivers Energy members round up their monthly power bills to the next dollar, with the difference funding a variety of programs.

Since 2006, the foundation has provided grants for area nonprofits, including food banks, literacy programs and emergency response equipment.



STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

Southern Rivers Energy (SRE) is now accepting applications for two scholarships. Funds are available for local high school seniors and currently enrolled college students. SRE offers five \$3,000 Southern Rivers Energy Trust Scholarships to local students each year. Applicants' primary residence must be within Bibb, Coweta, Crawford, Lamar, Meriwether, Monroe, Pike, Spalding and Upson counties. Applicants will be judged blindly by a panel of educators on the quality of their essays, along with grade point average, and community and school involvement. Applications are due March 1.

The Walter Harrison Scholarship is based on academics and financial need. This program offers \$1,000 scholarships to high school seniors and undergraduate students in college or technical school. Applicants must live in a household receiving electric service from SRE. Applications are due Feb. 1.

GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION (GHSA)

Georgia's EMCs support student-athletes by assisting with state football and basketball championship finals, and annually present Cooperative Spirit Sportsmanship Awards to high schools that exhibit exemplary sportsmanship.

BRIGHT IDEAS GRANTS

SRE supports education by funding innovative instructional ideas from local teachers. Last year, SRE and Southern Rivers Energy Trust Inc. awarded a total of \$15,286 to 19 local teachers to fund innovative lesson plans for students.

GEORGIA COOPERATIVE COUNCIL YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

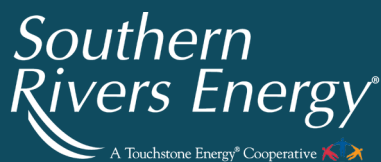
Held in Covington each July, this three-day event for high school students focuses on leadership training. Last summer, SRE sponsored Abby Bakoledis, Hayden Cook, Josie Perdue and Izzy Hubbard.



EMC/FFA ELECTRIFICATION CONTEST

Sponsored by Georgia's EMCs, this contest allows students to put their electrical wiring skills to work as they compete for scholarships. At SRE, Josh Hendricks, Energy Services Specialist, works with FFA students to help prepare them for the contest.

“As you can see, Southern Rivers Energy doesn't just provide safe, affordable and reliable electricity,” says Michael McMillan, SRE President/CEO. “We also demonstrate our Concern for Community through initiatives like these to improve the quality of life for all of our members and the community at large.”



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Official publication of
Southern Rivers Energy
P.O. Box 40, Barnesville, GA 30204
southernriversenergy.com

Erin Cook, CCC, CKAE, Editor
Kathryn Green, CCC, Designer

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Stephen Goodman, Chairman
Brian Ogletree, Vice Chairman
Harry Park, Secretary
Millie Alexander, Treasurer
John W. Dumas
John Pope
Samuel Snider
Nedam Walker

STAFF

Michael McMillan
President/CEO

Charles Lowery, CPA
Vice President of
Finance and Administration

Steve Caison
Chief Operating Officer

Erin Cook, CCC, CKAE
Director of Marketing/Member
Services

April Sorrow
Customer Service Supervisor

Donald Jones
Construction and Maintenance
Superintendent

OUTAGE HOTLINE
1-866-244-4890

OFFICE HOURS
Monday through Friday
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Drive-in window available
Closed Saturdays,
Sundays and holidays

Southern Rivers Energy is an equal
opportunity provider and employer.



22D

TOUCHSTONEENERGY.COM

WARM KALE SALAD WITH BACON-DIJON VINAIGRETTE, BLUE CHEESE AND APPLES

RECIPE COURTESY OF GEORGIA GROWN

INGREDIENTS

- 1 bunch kale, stems removed, leaves torn into 2-inch pieces
- 3 slices thick-cut bacon, sliced into ¼-inch pieces crosswise
- 4 tablespoons olive oil, plus more if needed
- ½ medium red onion, thinly sliced
- 2 teaspoons mustard
- ¼ cup red wine vinegar, white wine vinegar or apple cider vinegar
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 2 ounces of crumbled Georgia blue cheese
- 1 medium apple, diced into ½-inch cubes

INSTRUCTIONS

Wash kale. Using a salad spinner, spin dry the kale to remove as much water as possible. Place kale in a large bowl (for mixing your salad later) and set aside.

Cook bacon in a very large skillet (one that's big enough to hold all of the kale), until crisp on the outside but still slightly chewy and fat is mostly rendered. Remove bacon to a paper towel-lined plate; set aside. Note: You should have about 2-3 tablespoons of bacon fat left in the skillet, but if not, make up the rest with olive oil. Add olive oil to the bacon fat. Heat over medium heat until hot, then add the onion. Saute onion until translucent, about 5-10 minutes.

In a bowl, whisk together the mustard and vinegar. Increase the heat under the skillet to high, and add the vinegar and mustard mixture. Note: It will start to boil. While it boils, whisk the hot vinaigrette until mostly emulsified. Remove skillet from the heat.

Add kale all at once to skillet and, using tongs, toss it carefully with the hot vinaigrette so that it starts to wilt and turn bright green. Transfer kale and vinaigrette to a bowl and let it cool slightly. Season with salt and pepper. Note: Salt lightly as the bacon and blue cheese will be quite salty. When kale is cool enough to handle, use your clean hands to massage it so that it continues to wilt and break down to about half of its original volume. Taste and adjust for seasoning. Let the kale sit for about 30 minutes before serving, then transfer it with tongs to the large serving bowl. Top with reserved bacon, crumbled blue cheese and diced apple. Serves 2-4.

For recipes from farms and producers across our state, visit georgiagrown.com.



GEORGIA GROWN

SOUTHERN RIVERS ENERGY NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

In accordance with federal Civil Rights Law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Civil Rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, employees and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact the USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
- (2) Fax: (202) 690-7442
- (3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov

Southern Rivers Energy is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

GEORGIA MAGAZINE