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Hilton Head fifth graders win 2023 Children's Book Challenge

Hilton Head Island, SC – *The Electric Trail*, written and illustrated by local students Kaia Bishop and Sawyer Blakeley Costello, was selected as the group category local and statewide winner of the 2023 Children's Book Challenge. Sponsored by EnlightenSC—an educational initiative of the state's independent, consumer-owned electric cooperatives like Palmetto Electric, the competition challenges 4th and 5th grade students to write and illustrate stories that focus on the impact of electricity in their lives, communities and the state.

Bishop and Costello, both fifth graders at Hilton Head Island School for the Creative Arts, were surprised when Berl Davis, President and CEO of Palmetto Electric Cooperative, announced in their classroom that they had won the local and statewide award. The two split the state contest's \$500 cash prize and their teachers, Jennifer Friend-Kerr and Alexandria Holland, will each receive a \$100 prize.

The Electric Trail competed against books from across the state after being selected by Palmetto Electric. As the local winners, the students and teachers were also each awarded \$50 from Palmetto Electric.

"The judges were impressed with the quality of both the story and illustrations Kaia and Sawyer created for their book," said Missy Santorum of Palmetto Electric Cooperative. "They are both gifted artists and writers and we are pleased to be able to recognize and reward their work."

The Electric Trail follows main characters Chloe and Cameron, lost during a school field trip, to an abandoned cabin. There, they use their knowledge of electric cooperatives to find their way back to their classmates. *The Electric Trail* will be published and distributed to elementary schools throughout the state this summer.

South Carolina's electric cooperatives have been committed to powering rural communities since 1938. This concern for communities, and the future of our youth, has carried forward to today. By inspiring students to learn more about energy in our state, S.C.'s electric co-ops hope to spark a passion for critical thinking in the minds of tomorrow's leaders.

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Palmetto Electric Cooperative is a not-for-profit electrical distribution utility that is owned by the members it serves. The Cooperative serves over 77,000 consumers in southern Beaufort, Jasper and Hampton counties. Palmetto Electric Cooperative's mission is to deliver competitively priced, reliable energy and innovative related services to its members and to provide leadership and support to the communities we serve. For more information, visit palmetto.coop or call 843- 208-5551. Palmetto Electric is also a member of Touchstone Energy, which is a national alliance of local, consumer-owned electric cooperatives providing high standards of service to customers large and small. More than 692 Touchstone Energy cooperatives in 46 states are delivering energy and energy solutions to approximately 40 million customers every day. Touchstone Energy cooperatives serve their members with integrity, accountability, innovation and a longstanding commitment to communities.

EnlightenSC is an energy-education program developed by educators for South Carolina's consumer-owned electric cooperatives. The electric cooperatives created EnlightenSC to help teachers access energy-related training, activities, and resources for their classrooms and to provide opportunities for young people to learn and get excited about science, technology, engineering and mathematics. For more information, visit www.enlightensc.org.