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Hilton Head teen wins statewide college scholarship

Tess Sanford, 17, of Hilton Head Island, is the winner of the 2021 R.D. Bennett Community Service Scholarship sponsored by South Carolina's electric cooperatives. Sanford won a \$5,000 prize for her community service project: *Jeopardy at Senior Care Centers*.

Sanford was among 74 high school students who participated this summer in the Virtual Youth Experience—a five-day conference sponsored by the state's co-ops that connects young people with state and federal leaders. She and six other students represented Palmetto Electric Cooperative at the conference.

As part of the Virtual Youth Experience, students were encouraged to create and implement a community service project in their local communities. Five students, including Sanford, completed projects during the summer. The project determined to have the largest community impact won the \$5,000 scholarship.

“Tess’s community service project exemplifies our core value of Commitment to Community, and we are extremely proud of her, as well as the six other students that represented Palmetto Electric on the 2021 Virtual Youth Experience,” said Berl Davis, Palmetto Electric president and CEO.

Sanford’s project allowed residents at two senior care centers in the Beaufort County area the opportunity to play a Jeopardy-like trivia game. The game encouraged teamwork and memory exercise among the seniors. Additionally, Sanford collected donations for a local non-profit organization—The Deep Well Project—which provides a food pantry, rental assistance and emergency funds to residents in need.

“It was extremely rewarding to have a small but positive impact on my local community during these challenging times,” said Sanford. “With limited entertainment options available to these senior residents, bringing a bit of fun and joy to their day made me feel proud of my efforts.”

Sanford attends Hilton Head Island High School. She is the daughter of James and Charlotte Sanford.

The R.D. Bennett Community Service Scholarship is named for Robert D. Bennett, the first head of The Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina, Inc., the state association of co-ops. Bennett, who led the state association from 1950 until his retirement in 1980, strongly believed that electric cooperatives should support their local communities—providing a better quality of life for their members. His spirit of community service is reflected in this scholarship opportunity.

Photos of Sanford and her winning project are available here:

<https://bit.ly/3zESmko>

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About Palmetto Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Palmetto Electric Cooperative is a not-for-profit electrical distribution utility that is owned by the members it serves. The Cooperative serves over 75,000 consumers in southern Beaufort, Jasper and Hampton counties. Palmetto Electric's mission is to provide diversified, innovative energy and related services to its members consistent with sound business practices, while always acting in a community-building leadership role. 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.