accountability

Key Part of the Cooperative Difference
When Palmetto Electric Cooperative was formed in 1940, our main mission was to offer an alternative source of electricity when the large investor-owned utilities declined to bring power to rural areas. Created as a not-for-profit utility owned by its customers, we have always operated with transparency and community-driven service that benefits every member and every part of our community. We are proud that accountability is first and foremost among our core operating values, and we know that it is a key part of the cooperative difference. Because our sole purpose was built on offering affordable electric service to an underserved area, our level of accountability has continued to make us a trusted, long-term partner to help drive the prosperity of Hampton, Jasper, Allendale and southern Beaufort counties.

Today, accountability to our members—and to our entire service area—remains our guiding principle. Every morning, our service trucks roll out to work through the day and night and through weekends and holidays—not to mention every possible weather event—to bring reliable service to ensure our community’s quality of life. But we are also proud to be accountable to the community in other ways—supporting education and schools, job creation and enhancing our infrastructure.

There are many other ways Palmetto Electric has continued operating on the promise of accountability to our members—many of which you can read about throughout this annual report. Where other utilities are more concerned with profits over people, we believe it is our honor to serve every member to the best of our ability and to promise we will always be accountable to our friends, our neighbors and the community we call home.

Sincerely,

A. Berl Davis Jr.  
President and  
Chief Executive Officer

Jeremiah E. Vaigneur  
Chairman of the Board

Palmetto Electric offers accountability in the following ways:

Financial Accountability:  
Returning revenues after operating costs are met, our Capital Credits program gave back $3.2 million to our members in 2018. This is money that goes back into the pockets of our hardworking members to help them enhance their life and family.

Service Accountability:  
From the clearing of rights-of-way and the placement of power lines underground, we not only enhanced the aesthetics of our beautiful community, we were also able to make our distribution system more resilient to withstand strong winds, which helps reduce outages in inclement weather. We worked with cooperatives across the nation, the Department of Energy and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association to secure our electric grid and safeguard against cybersecurity threats to help ensure our members’ sensitive personal information remains secure.

Community Accountability:  
Once again, many of our generous members rounded up their utility bills in the Operation Round Up® program. By doing so, members helped us award $513,318 in grants that funded community service projects, including Bright Ideas scholarships for teachers with innovative classroom projects. Funding was also given to many social service organizations, nonprofits and public assistance projects that include Meals on Wheels, Coastal Discovery Museum, the Sandalwood Community Food Pantry, the Boys & Girls Club of Hilton Head Island and many others.
From the RBC Heritage’s 10th anniversary as a Green Power partner to instructing children about electric safety with Safety Days, Palmetto Electric enjoys being a dependable and accountable partner with the community. Last year we were proud to offer such programs as Co-op Connections®, our discount pharmacy card and app that has helped members save $103,648 in prescription drug costs—part of the total of $3,125,001 that members have saved since the program’s inception in 2009.

Throughout 2018, we also worked with various organizations to enhance our service area by sponsoring festivals, promoting economic development to bring industry to our area and do our part to be a good corporate neighbor. It was also our privilege to work with many public service organizations, nonprofits and other groups to help enhance our members’ quality of life throughout Hampton, Jasper, Allendale and Beaufort counties.

“Palmetto Electric’s Operation Round Up donated funding to help us create the Childcare Gym and a new computer lab at our new recreational center and, without their support, we would not have been able to do that and provide it to so many children in our community. We have a long history with Palmetto Electric and they have helped us out in many different ways; not just the general services that they provide to the community, but also through their programming and long-term support of our organization in general.”

Frank Soule
Executive Director of the Hilton Head Island Recreation Association
Throughout our history, Palmetto Electric has taken an active role in promoting and enriching the educational efforts of members and their families. We know that nothing is more powerful than knowledge and that's why we do our part to help out schools and individual teaching programs. We follow and support the work of local teachers through the Bright Ideas grant program that provides funding for innovative classroom-based education projects. We also offer financial assistance to deserving students through the Palmetto Electric Trust (PET) and Women Involved in Rural Electrification (WIRE) educational scholarships, along with attending Career Days in local schools throughout our service area—providing accountability to our youngest members to help them build a solid future.

Palmetto Electric extends our educational support by sponsoring students to attend the Washington Youth Tour and the Cooperative Youth Summit—ways to inspire young people as to how cooperatives work on the state and national level, and to better understand the nonprofit business model. We also offer online educational programs such as enLIGHTenSC that gives students a course on topics such as renewable resources, recycling and energy conservation.

“There is always a segment of our student population that is vulnerable to finding themselves in a homeless situation. All of us at the Jasper County School District greatly appreciate Palmetto Electric for their ongoing support to the homeless community of our county and the students who belong to these families. The ‘hygiene duffel bags’—supplied by Palmetto Electric employees and members of WIRE are especially appreciated. Filled with toiletries and a blanket, they provide a sense of normalcy to a chaotic situation—allowing us to put needed resources in the hands of children when they are most vulnerable.”

Tillmon M. Ancrum, I, M.Ed.
Director of Student Services & Alternative Programs, Jasper County School District
accountability
with Renewable and Reliable Commitments

As a good steward of our community, Palmetto Electric puts environmental accountability into every aspect of our service and programming. We realize that we live in a treasured, beautiful part of our state, and we want to do everything possible to preserve and nurture our precious resources for future generations. To this end, we consistently offer proactive environmental measures that include recycling, offering renewable Green Power to member and business customers, and we also continue working diligently to improve the efficiency and reliability of our service during inclement weather.

“Palmetto Electric’s Universal Waste Program allows us to collect spent lamps, ballasts and batteries—all of which we contract for proper removal and disposal, including lamps from our own outdoor lighting program and ones used in our community. Annually, we recycle an average of 1,500 spent lamps and 100 lb of spent batteries that otherwise would end up in the landfill. Other recycling efforts by Palmetto Electric include the sale of scrap wire conductor and metals, wooden pallets, reels returned to pipe and wire manufacturers for re-use, with cardboard and paper products—all of which reduce impact on local landfills while also returning funds to us to assist in reducing the cost of power to our consumers.”

Bob Shier
Materials Manager, Palmetto Electric Cooperative, New River District Office

Locally Owned—Locally Served

As a member-owned cooperative, Palmetto Electric is accountable to the community in every way. Each year, our annual meeting gives members a voice and lets them approve bylaws that govern our co-op to ensure we are serving the community to the best of our ability. As a not-for-profit utility, our Capital Credits program returns additional revenues to members after all expenditures have been met. In 2018, we also looked out for members in other ways, including innovative cyber security measures, and using state-of-the-art firewalls to protect assets and personal information. Finally, it has been our pleasure to offer the highest degree of accountability in everything we do for our members. From service to costs, our board and staff are always here to listen to your concerns, questions and suggestions. We are proud to operate our utility with total transparency in our never-ending quest to enhance the community we share with you.

“Board Governance, transparency and accountability have always been subjects of great importance to our Board. Community involvement, economic development and prompt, efficient service to our members are also a top priority. At the same time, technology is advancing at a high rate of speed which also brings opportunity with caution for our co-op. We thank everyone for their membership and together we will provide for a better tomorrow where we work, play and live.”

Jimmy Rowe
Palmetto Electric Cooperative Board Member
Palmetto Electric Cooperative is governed by a policy-making board of 12 trustees—six who reside in Beaufort County, three who reside in Hampton County and three who reside in Jasper County. The directors serve terms of three years each, with terms of two directors from Beaufort County and one director each from Jasper and Hampton counties expiring each year. These directors are elected at the Annual Meeting of the members and exercise all of the powers of the Cooperative, except those reserved for the members, according to the bylaws of Palmetto Electric.
The Cooperative's financial statements are audited annually by independent certified public accountants. Copies of the audited financial statements and accountants' reports are available for your inspection at the Cooperative's offices.
For power outages, call:
Palmietto.coop

Hampton: 803-943-2211  Hilton Head: 843-681-5551  New River: 843-208-5551
Ridgeland: 843-726-5551  1-800-922-5551  palmetto.coop

The Touchstone Energy® symbol is your assurance that we’re a community-minded electric cooperative providing high standards of service for customers large and small.