



# Connection

Communicating local energy news to Four County Electric members

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative 

## May is National Electrical Safety Month

**A**s your local energy partner, and in honor of National Electrical Safety Month in May, Four County EMC is encouraging members to take time this month to discuss safe electricity practices with your family. You can start by sharing these simple tips:



### Inside

- Never put anything other than an electrical plug in an outlet. Use outlet covers to protect children.
- Examine electrical cords often for fraying or cracking, and throw away any worn cords.
- Extension cords are for temporary use. They are not intended for use as permanent home wiring.
- Don't run cords under carpets or rugs.
- Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) outlets should be used in any area where water and electricity could mix—including kitchens, bathrooms, garages and outdoors—and should be tested monthly.
- Never touch electrical appliances with wet hands or use them near sinks, tubs, toilets or showers.
- Don't use extension cords or multi-outlet converters for appliances. All major appliances should be plugged directly into a wall outlet.

### Outside

- Never go near or drive over a power line. If you encounter a downed line, stay far away and notify Four County EMC at 888-368-7289.
- Keep kites, model airplanes and metallic balloons away from powerlines.
- Watch for overhead lines when using a ladder, working on a roof or carrying a long tool.
- Call 811 before any digging project.
- If it is necessary to use a portable generator, always operate the generator outdoors in an open area. Use an extension cord to connect the generator directly to the appliance, and ensure the extension cord has three-prongs and is rated for the amount of power used by the appliance. Do not connect generators directly to household wiring unless the work is completed by a licensed electrician. This prevents backfeeding, which could electrocute utility workers.

For more safety tips and information, visit [fourcty.org](http://fourcty.org) and the Electrical Safety Foundation International at [ESFI.org](http://ESFI.org).

inside  
Four County  
Connection



p. H

Youth Leadership Weekend Returns ..... p.B

Prepare Now for Hurricane Season ..... p. F

### Get the Scoop

Four County EMC offices will be closed Monday, May 30, in observance of Memorial Day. Have a safe and blessed holiday.

Mother's Day is May 8. Happy Mother's Day to all the moms, we hope you have a wonderful day!





*Top Row (left to right): Timothy "Rylee" Mintz (Pender High School), Ben Gongloff (Topsail High School), Isaac Morales-Gomez (Pender Early College), Chris Coronel (Heide Trask High School), Josh Fish (James Kenan High School) Walker Ward (Harrells Christian Academy). Bottom Row (left to right): Isidora Martinez De Lon (West Bladen High School), Brianna Allen (Union High School), Makayla Robertson (Pender Early College), Ainsley Heath (Heide Trask High School), Grace Deitz (Topsail High School), Amber Jones (Harrells Christian Academy), Isabel Lopez (James Kenan High School).*

## 2022 Youth Leadership Weekend Marks 14<sup>th</sup> Year

**F**our County EMC hosted its 14th annual Youth Leadership Weekend in person after two years of virtual leadership training due to COVID-19. The event was held at Camp Kirkwood in Watha on March 11-13 with 13 area high school juniors in attendance this year.

On Friday afternoon, the students were taught the cooperative business model and what makes Four County EMC different from other electric providers. They then participated in an introductory session and initiation games conducted by YMCA Camp Kirkwood staff. On Saturday, the students participated in a full day of leadership training that involved various team-building and individual exercises. Throughout the weekend the stu-

dents learned and demonstrated goals such as teamwork, communication, trust, leadership, problem-solving and self-esteem.

Guest speakers discussed integrity, confidence, team building, and leadership skills to apply to the real world. In addition to learning and overcoming both physical and mental challenges, the students will also have an opportunity to write an essay about the experi-

ence for a chance to win one of two \$1,000 scholarships. The winners will be announced in late May and will receive the scholarships once enrolled in college.

On Sunday morning, the students reflected on the weekend and shared what they learned. Isidora Martinez De Leon from West Bladen said, "I enjoyed how the activities allowed me to push myself. I also liked how you didn't



know any of the other students when you first arrived, and by the end of the weekend, you felt connected to everyone here. I learned that effective communication is important and that I can trust and rely on people that want to achieve the same goal.”

MaKayla Killens, Youth Leadership Weekend coordinator: “I enjoyed watching the students bond instantly as I reflected on the Youth Leadership program. Every student supported one another, whether a task was big or small. This program is about teaching young people how to become better leaders. The skills learned here are tangible and intangible resources that these students can take back to their communities. YMCA Camp Kirkwood did a fantastic job hosting us and interacting with the students. The bond

that these students have made is unmatched. The hope is that they will remember this experience and carry these new goals and practices with them for the rest of their lives.”

At the end of each Youth Leadership Weekend, students vote on which male and female students they consider the best leaders of the weekend. This year’s winners were Timothy “Rylee” Mintz from Pender High School and Makayla Robertson from Pender Early College. In addition, Four County will sponsor both students to represent Four County EMC at Youth Tour in Washington, D.C.

Also, Grace Deitz from Topsail High School and Joshua Fish from James Kenan High School were selected to attend the Cooperative



**Youth Tour Recipients: Timothy “Rylee” Mintz, Pender High School, and MaKayla Robertson, Pender Early College.**

Council Leadership Camp in Laurel Hill to better understand the cooperative business model. Both Youth Tour and the Cooperative Leadership Camp will be held in June.

## Teachers, Apply for a Bright Ideas Grant

Four County EMC is partnering with outstanding educators to bring creative learning to life! Teachers can apply for a Bright Ideas education grant of up to \$2,000 to fund projects that enhance student success in K-12 classrooms and would otherwise not be possible. Applications and more information about the program can be found at [ncbrightideas.com](http://ncbrightideas.com).

Grants are available in all curriculum areas including art, science, history and mathematics, and Four County expects to award approximately 18 grants to local teachers during the 2022-2023 school year. Over the past

28 years, Four County EMC has issued more than \$500,000 for over 800 projects that have benefited over 3,000 students in Bladen, Duplin, Pender and Sampson counties.

Bright Ideas grant applications will be accepted through Sept. 15, but teachers are encouraged to apply early. Those who submit their application by Aug. 15 will be entered to win one of five \$100 Visa gift cards.

Supported by all 26 electric cooperatives in North Carolina, Bright Ideas grants have contributed \$14.3 million to N.C. classrooms, funding a total of 13,536 projects that have benefited well over 2.8



million students statewide since 1994.

Support for youth and education is part of our continued commitment to building a brighter future for the communities we serve. To learn more, visit [fourcty.org/bright-ideas-grant-program/](http://fourcty.org/bright-ideas-grant-program/).



**Member Spotlight:**  
**Riverside Barn Antiques**

*By Janet Smith*



**A**s you drive east towards the beach on Highway 41, between Wallace and Chinquapin, you'll see a 12,000-square-foot barn filled with a picker's paradise. Riverside Barn Antiques has been a pitstop for beachgoers and locals alike for over 28 years.

Aaron and Jenny Cavanaugh opened their store in 1994 after Aaron filled their barn with curated items he had secretly purchased over the years. When Aaron told Jenny he wanted to open a store, she thought he meant a tack shop since they frequently bought and sold horses. She didn't know her husband had a barn bursting at the seams with antiques. Jenny exclaims: "When he made all those trips to Pennsylvania, I thought he was just buying horses!"

Aaron Cavanaugh grew up in Duplin County near the Northeast Cape Fear River. He met Jenny on a blind date in 1966. They quickly fell in love and were married by

the end of the year. Aaron was a turkey farmer for Nash Johnson, and Jenny worked the 4 p.m. to midnight shift in the computer room of Nichols Foodservice. Jenny recalls how she would get home, sleep a few hours, then help Aaron with the farm during the day. That was her routine for years until she crashed into the barn after falling asleep on the tractor. Chuckling, Jenny remembers giving her two-weeks notice the next day.

The couple's farming days ended when Nash Johnson Farms transitioned from turkeys to chickens. At first, Aaron remembers thinking it was the end of the world, but, as it turned out, he says it was the

best thing that could have happened. Aaron and Jenny focused full-time on the store. They put their heart and soul into it, purchasing antiques, rarities and other items at auctions, estate sales, and the Amish areas of Pennsylvania. Aaron buys everything from glassware to signs to old toys and books, even automobiles. Jenny said one day she arrived at the store, noticed something new in the parking lot and demanded, "Aaron, where did that truck come from?"

The Cavanaugh's have never tried to get rich from Riverside Barn Antiques. Aaron says he prices



*“The couple's farming days ended when Nash Johnson Farms transitioned from turkeys to chickens. At first, Aaron remembers thinking it was the end of the world, but, as it turned out, he says it was the best thing that could have happened. Aaron and Jenny focused full-time on the store.*”

items to sell, marking them up just enough to make a little profit. He laughs and admits, “I like a quick turnover on my items so I can go buy more!”

Jenny shakes her head, smiling and says, “He'll buy anything!” She recalls seeing some bizarre items in their shop over the years: an eight-foot-tall wooden Indian, a six-foot-tall pirate, and the strangest of all were coffins Aaron purchased from the movie studio. Laughing, she exclaims, “He actually sold one of them!”

But she admits that some of his unusual purchases were very clever. One day she arrived at work to see boxes of VHS movies lining

the front porch. She remembers asking Aaron, “Why did you buy those? We'll never sell them!” However, Jenny admits she was wrong. A prop master from Wilmington's movie studio showed up and bought every VHS tape they had, plus other period pieces from the 80s.

Being “river-side” does come with its pitfalls, however. As we all know, hurricanes can bring catastrophic flooding to our area, and no one knows that better than Aaron and Jenny. Thanks to Hurricanes Floyd, Nicole, Matthew and Florence, Riverside Barn Antiques has flooded four times.

After Hurricane Matthew, Jenny recalls washing salvageable dishes and glassware six days a week for six straight weeks. With Florence, not only did their shop have 11 feet of water inside, but the floodwaters also destroyed their house. Aaron and Jenny lived with a dear friend for 14 months, and it took



Aaron two months just to clean the debris and ruined items out of the shop. He says he still gets chills when thinking back on the hurricanes.

Obstacles that would paralyze the hardiest people have not stopped the Cavenaugh's. While the couple is still reeling from losing their only child to COVID-19 last year, Aaron says the store has been good for his physical and mental health. Despite the adversities, Jenny adds without hesitation, “God has blessed us, and people have been so good to us.”



### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Even in summer months, adding insulation to your attic can keep your home more comfortable and save energy used by your cooling system. If your attic insulation is level with or below your floor joists (meaning you can easily see your joists), you should add more. If you can't see any of the floor joists because the insulation is well above them, you likely have enough insulation. Attic insulation should be evenly distributed with no low spots. Make sure the areas along the eaves are adequately covered.

Source: [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov)

# Prepare Now for Hurricane Season

**M**ay 1-7 is Hurricane Preparedness Week in North Carolina. Four County EMC is joining the National Weather Service and state officials in encouraging all North Carolinians to prepare now for storms, especially with the Atlantic Hurricane Season starting on June 1. Here are simple steps to get ready and stay safe this storm season:

- Outline a communication and evacuation plan for your family. If you have pets or any livestock, include them in your plan.
- Create an emergency kit that includes:
  - Important documents sealed in a watertight plastic bag
  - Cash
  - Enough non-perishable food, water and medication for at least three days
  - First-aid kit
  - Battery-powered radio
  - Flashlight
  - Extra batteries
  - Personal hygiene items
  - Extra clothes and blankets
  - Food and other supplies for pets
- Connect with us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to stay informed about outages and other storm information.
- Download our Four County EMC app to view and report outages.
- Visit [fourcty.org/report-an-outage/](https://fourcty.org/report-an-outage/) to report an outage and to view our real-time map of power outages across our service territory.



- Report an outage via text message. Text “OUTAGE” to 888-368-7289 to report an outage. Text “STATUS” to 888-368-7289 to receive the status of your outage.
- Sign up for local weather alerts. You can also visit [ReadyNC.org](https://ReadyNC.org) for tips on preparing for natural disasters, as well as real-time weather and traffic information.

It is also important to stay tuned to the latest health and safety guidelines from the CDC and local officials, and to adjust your preparedness plans accordingly to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.

Visit [fourcty.org/hurricane-preparation/](https://fourcty.org/hurricane-preparation/) for additional storm preparedness information and tips.

## Outdoor Home Improvement Safety

The month of May offers beautiful, warm weather in southeastern North Carolina, drawing us outdoors for home improvement activities. A focus on electrical safety awareness can help ensure these projects do not result in injuries and deaths.

Following a few simple safety rules can help reduce the number of electrical deaths and injuries:

- Ladders—even those made of wood—that come into

contact with a power line can prove fatal. Keep all ladders at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines.

- Unplug outdoor tools and appliances when not in use.
- Inspect power tools and appliances for frayed cords, broken plugs, and cracked or broken housing. Repair or replace damaged items.
- Water and electricity do not mix. Avoid damp conditions—including wet grass—when using electricity.



# Community Meetings: Attend One Near You

Four County EMC annually holds community meetings to inform our members about new developments in the electric utility industry, as well as receive information on current programs and services at their cooperative. Please join us in May at a location near you to get valuable information about what's happening at your cooperative, including:

- Energy Efficiency
- Billing Options and Marketing Programs
- Things the cooperative is doing to improve service

Meetings have been scheduled with registration and meeting starting at 6 p.m. Meetings are held as another service to you, our members. We hope to see you at one of the meetings listed below.

Refreshments will be served, and members can register to win prizes during the evening. For more information about any of the meetings scheduled in your neighborhood, call Four County EMC at 1-888-368-7289.

### May 10

Love Grove Baptist Church  
50 Main Street  
Tar Heel, NC 28392

### May 12

Corinth Baptist Church  
1107 Cornwallis Road  
Rose Hill, NC 28464

### May 17

Jordan's Chapel UMC  
2410 Stag Park Road  
Burgaw, NC 28425

## CO-OP CONNECTIONS BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

# Small Town Nutrition

Looking for a healthier alternative? Small Town Nutrition in the heart of Burgaw has it all. Tucked away in Southern Chic's Boutique, this establishment offers a down-to-earth getaway for their customers to sit and chill or grab a drink and run, from Herbalife meal shakes to tea bombs loaded with caffeine to give you that extra boost you need to get through the day. They truly have it all. You can also get a shake to make for the next day; just add 8 ounces of water and ice. The options they provide are completely safe for people with diabetes and those with dairy sensitivities. Kids are welcome and love the colorful drink options; you can even jazz your drink up with edible glitter!



“Getting the community active and helping people become a better version of themselves” has inspired Burgaw natives Olivia and Devin Lesine to provide their community with healthy alternatives and ways to stick to those positive habits. They have a genuine love for fitness and inspire others to reach their fitness goals. Don't wait around for your new year's resolution. Small Town Nutrition offers



the ultimate experience. They strive to give their community the best health-conscious experience, from challenge group workout competitions to customer appreciation perks.



Their motto is the cleaner, the better, so all drinks have less than 10 grams of sugar. All teas are completely sugar-free. Feeling sluggish and need a boost? Ask for an energy boost, the quickest way to get an up on your

day. Their menu offers any drink choice you could imagine. Check out their Facebook page to get the scoop on trending drinks, customer discounts, and more!

*Four County members will receive 10% off when using their Co-op Connections discount.*



# Winning Recipe

from the editor



## Ingredients:

- 2 cups mashed strawberries
- 4 cups sugar
- 2 tbsp lemon juice (optional)
- 1 pouch Certo

Prep the strawberries. Rinse them off, cut off the tops and any soft areas you see, then cut into 4 pieces. Mash strawberries until mixture looks like a chunky soup. 1 quart of strawberries should create 2 cups of mashed strawberries. Add sugar to your strawberries and stir until the sugar is fully incorporated. Let mixture sit for at least 20 mins, just to make sure the sugar dissolves. Add Certo and lemon juice to mixture. Constantly stir for 3 minutes.

## Easy Strawberry Freezer Jam



Pour jam into 5 8-oz. mason jars or any container of your choosing. Let the containers sit out for at least 24 hrs before moving them to the freezer. Can be kept in the freezer for up to 1 year.

Watch 'Cooking with Cam' on our Facebook page to see how this dish is made.

## The 2023 Four County EMC Calendar Photo Contest

Help us create our 2023 Four County calendar by entering your best photos. Now through Aug. 1, you can submit your photos of scenery, buildings, power line equipment, anything you find interesting in our beautiful service area. Prizes will be awarded for the 12 selected photos.

Please submit entries to [marketing@fourcty.org](mailto:marketing@fourcty.org) using the following submission guidelines:

- Photos must be taken in the Four County service area by a Four County member.
- Submitted photos must be a high-quality JPEG image.
- Only landscape (horizontal) photos will be considered.
- Scenic or nature photos only (no individuals in the photo).
- Up to three entries per member.

Email any questions you may have to [ashleydavis@fourcty.org](mailto:ashleydavis@fourcty.org).



*\*By submitting a photo entry to this contest, you are granting FCEMC permission to use the image in any and all of its publications, including internal and external newsletters and website entries, without payment. However, photo credit will be given. FCEMC reserves the right to disqualify any photo deemed inappropriate or offensive.*

### Four County Electric

#### Our Mission

To provide highly reliable electric service, innovative energy solutions and outstanding service to our Members and Communities.

#### Our Values

- Respect
- Integrity
- Trust
- Teamwork
- Commitment
- Excellence

#### Our Vision

To be an advocate for our Members by:

- Exceeding members' expectations
- Utilizing well trained, motivated employees
- Achieving excellence
- Operating efficiently
- Maintaining hometown values

## Four County Connection

Published monthly by Four County Electric Membership Corporation, P.O. Box 667, Burgaw, NC 28425, as a service to our members.

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### A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

We believe in the Power of Human Connections

1-888-fourcty (368-7289)  
customer@fourcty.org

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