



OWNED BY THOSE WE SERVE

Business Office: 800-447-4509
11340 100th Street • Live Oak, FL 32060

Lobby Hours: 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday

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24/7 Power Outage Reporting
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www.svec-coop.com

CEO'S CORNER



A new way to serve

Michael S. McWaters
Executive V.P./CEO

At Suwannee Valley Electric Cooperative, service is in our DNA. Our employees wake up each morning ready to help neighbors, whether they're answering questions about a member's bill or climbing a pole to restore power.

But the commitment goes further. As a cooperative, SVEC is dedicated not only to providing quality electric service but also to making our community a better place to live.

Starting next year, we're introducing a program called Operation Round Up®. Members will have the opportunity to have their monthly bill rounded up to the nearest dollar, contributing those few cents to local schools. The pennies will add up.

While this program is new for SVEC, similar efforts have been popular for years at other cooperatives. In fact, many cooperatives in Florida, and nearly 350 cooperatives throughout the country, already participate in Operation Round Up® or a similar program.

So why are we telling you about this now? We believe Operation Round Up® provides an easy way for our members to help schools in our community, but we don't want anyone to feel like they are required to participate.

SVEC will begin rounding up members' bills in January 2019. Any member who doesn't wish to participate in the program can call our office before the end of the year to let us know they would like to opt out.

I hope you're all as excited as I am about this opportunity to help our schools. It only takes a small contribution from each of us, but together our small change can make a big difference. That's the power of cooperation. ■

Suwannee Valley CURRENENTS

June 2018

SVEC awards \$1,000 scholarships to 10 high school seniors

Consistent with one of its guiding cooperative principles — concern for community — SVEC supports the schools, teachers and students in the Suwannee Valley.

In 2015, the board of trustees established SVEC's scholarship program to help fund the continuing education of graduating high school seniors who are also dependents of cooperative members.

This year, SVEC trustees presented \$1,000 scholarships to 10 applicants from across our service area. Scholarship applications were reviewed by a committee of SVEC employees who selected recipients based on their high school GPA, letters of recommendation, history of community involvement and an essay on why they want to continue their education and how the scholarship will help them do so.

"SVEC understands the value of our young people," says SVEC Board of Trustees President Tim Steichen. "While these scholarships give special recognition to a few of our area's top students, we congratulate all graduating seniors and extend to them our wishes for a successful and fulfilling future." ■



Suwannee High School recipient Blake Tedder with SVEC Board President Tim Steichen.



SVEC Trustee Jerry Goff, left, with Branford High School scholarship recipients Seth Reaves and Brittany Frye.



SVEC Board President Tim Steichen with Columbia High School scholarship recipient Zachary Flugrath.



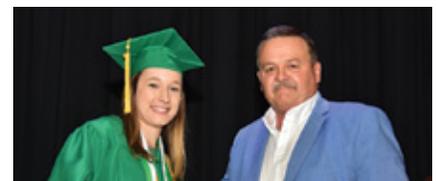
Suwannee High School recipient Kaleb Lane with SVEC Board President Tim Steichen.



Hamilton County High School recipients Austin Griffin, left, and Amanda Lacefield with SVEC Trustee Hugh Hunter.



SVEC Trustee Bill Hart, left, with Lafayette High School scholarship recipients Leesa Price and Krista Lyons and Trustee Tyler Putnal.



Suwannee High School recipient Hunter Rode with SVEC Board President Tyler Putnal.



SMALL CHANGE BIG DIFFERENCE



While providing electric service is the most important part of the cooperative mission, it's far from the only work cooperatives do. At Suwannee Valley Electric Cooperative, we take our involvement in the community seriously. That's why, starting next year, we will launch an Operation Round Up® program to help members support local schools.

Operation Round Up® rounds monthly electric bills up to the nearest dollar and puts that change into a cooperative fund, which can make a significant difference in the community.

SVEC's Operation Round Up® Foundation will support the needs of teachers in local schools, a cause that Foundation Board President George Scott believes everyone can get behind.

"I think the average person supports education, and this gives them a tangible way to contribute in a painless way," he says. "Each person will contribute what represents a very small amount of money, but is collectively really going to be beneficial."

Most importantly, the board includes several representatives with experience in education who will be able to speak about practical

ways to help our schools. Schools across the country are in need of additional funding to pay for supplies and to provide the quality of education all students deserve. Schools in the Suwannee Valley are no different, which is why SVEC will put all money raised through Operation Round Up® toward grants that will benefit students in the classroom.

"Classrooms often have small needs that aren't provided for in the school budget," says Scott. "Those are the needs we'll be able to meet, and it will be exactly what the teachers ask for and principles approve."

The goal is to raise \$60,000 a year to give schools throughout the Suwannee Valley the resources they need to prepare our students for the challenges of tomorrow.

WHAT IS OPERATION ROUND UP®?

One of the pillars of the cooperative model is neighbors helping neighbors, and Operation Round Up® is one way that SVEC members can make a big impact in their community without breaking the bank.



“The average person supports education, and this gives them a tangible way to contribute in a very painless way. Each person will contribute what represents a very small amount of money, but collectively it’s really going to be beneficial.”

— George Scott, Operation Round Up® Foundation Board President

way to give back to their own communities. In fact, 11 of the 14 electric cooperatives in the state of Florida participate in Operation Round Up® or a similar program. While the funding objectives of these programs vary from co-op to co-op, SVEC believes the entire community benefits from good schools and quality education.

WHEN WILL SVEC START ROUNDING UP?

The schools in our area have significant funding needs that the combined small contributions of our members could help meet.

For that purpose, SVEC will begin its own Operation Round Up® program in January 2019. Beginning that month, participating members’ bills will be rounded up to the next dollar.

WHO DECIDES WHERE OPERATION ROUND UP® FUNDS GO?

Once donations have been collected, the teachers from local schools will be able to submit applications for projects or supplies, and the Operation Round Up® board will screen those applications to decide which grants will be awarded.

The foundation board consists of nine directors, one appointed by each member of the cooperative’s board of trustees. Each board member brings their own experience in education and business to the board. Decisions on funding will be made collectively by the board and with the best interest of the community and its schools and teachers in mind.

DO I HAVE TO PARTICIPATE IN OPERATION ROUND UP®?

While we hope all of our members will want to take part in this program, participation in Operation Round Up® is entirely voluntary.

Initially, all SVEC members will be enrolled unless they choose to opt out. Any members who do not wish to participate can opt out at any point over the next six months by contacting the cooperative and letting us know they do not want their bill rounded up at the end of each billing cycle.

In addition, if a member decides to opt out after the Operation Round Up® program begins in January 2019, SVEC will, at the request of the member, refund up to 12 months of the donations collected from them.

For more information about Operation Round Up®, how to apply for funding, or to opt out of the program, please call 800-447-4509 or 386-362-2226. ■

Board members listed on page 4.



Have you been saving **Box Tops for Education** without a plan on where to send them?



SVEC is here to help. Just drop off your stash at SVEC or mail them to our office. We will make sure they are delivered to local school districts.

Mail:
P.O. Box 160
Live Oak, FL 32064

Drop-off:
11340 100th St.,
Live Oak, Florida

The program works by automatically rounding up participating members’ monthly electric bills to the next dollar. For example, a bill of \$63.47 would be rounded up to \$64, with the extra 53 cents going into the Operation Round Up® fund.

While an individual member’s donation amounts to pocket change each month, the program allows SVEC to collect an average of \$6 for each participating member annually. Together, those donations add up.

The Operation Round Up® program is not a new idea. It first started at Palmetto Electric Cooperative in South Carolina, where they launched the program in 1989 as an easy way for members to contribute to those in need.

With nearly 68,000 members who can participate in the program, Palmetto Electric Cooperative has contributed more than \$7.6 million in grants to worthwhile charities, service organizations and individuals. In 2016 alone, that cooperative collected \$257,985, which it dispersed within its service area.

Since its founding in South Carolina, Operation Round Up® has become so popular that nearly 350 cooperatives throughout the country have adopted similar programs as a

Prepare for hurricane season

After a decade of relative quiet, Floridians have witnessed two years of active hurricane seasons.

In September 2017, Hurricane Irma impacted nearly all of Florida, causing over \$60 billion in damage and leaving more than 7 million Floridians, including more than 24,000 SVEC consumer-members, in the dark.

The 2018 season is predicted to be just as strong and may turn out to be one of the strongest hurricane seasons in 70 years.

Global Weather Oscillations, the producer of one of the most accurate predictions of the 2017 hurricane season, anticipates 2018 will bring 16 named storms, eight hurricanes, four major hurricanes, and the potential for four United States hurricane landfalls. Florida could receive devastating storms with sustained winds over 110 mph.

There are three factors that cause meteorologists to expect a strong hurricane season. Warmer-than-normal water temperatures in the Atlantic Ocean, favorable upper-level winds over Bermuda, and the

weakening of El Nino patterns, which typically lead to stronger hurricane seasons.

This year's abnormally high prediction means you and your family must effectively prepare for the 2018 hurricane season, which runs from June 1 to November 30. In addition to extensive planning and preparation ahead of this year's hurricane season, SVEC, in coordination with Seminole Electric Cooperative, created a hurricane guide to assist in your emergency planning. This guide includes information such as tips for reporting an outage, generator safety information, helpful links, phone numbers and more.

It is easy to forget just how damaging these storms can be. Don't wait to form your plan for the 2018 hurricane season. Download our hurricane guide at svec-coop.com or pick one up in our office lobby today. ■



SVEC achieves first automated power restoration

Suwannee Valley Electric Cooperative has achieved its first successful automated restoration of power following the installation and implementation of an Advanced Distribution Management System (ADMS).

An ADMS enables a utility to automate the fault location, isolation and power restoration processes. The system's provider, Advanced Control Systems (ACS), believes SVEC is among a select group of about 10 percent of the nation's electric cooperatives that have adopted ADMS technology.

ADMS automatically detects the location

of an electrical fault, automatically performs switching to isolate the fault, and then reroutes the flow of electricity to restore power to customers who are out but who are not in the section of lines where the fault is located. The entire process greatly reduces the amount of time many consumers are without power.

"We plan to complete systemwide ADMS implementation in the second quarter of 2019, with other improvements to reduce the duration of outages and the number of 'blinks' on the system to follow," says SVEC Director of Engineering Kurt Miller.



Kevin Sullivan, CEO of ACS, says the decision to move to an ADMS platform is a big decision for any utility.

"We're honored that SVEC chose ACS as their partner in this effort, and it's always exciting to see a utility reach the milestone of their first automated restoration," Sullivan says. ■

BOARD MEMBERS

The Operation Round Up® board of directors will oversee how the rounded up funds will be used to support the needs of teachers in local schools.

Menieca Kennedy

SVEC District: 1

Home: Jasper

Menieca Kennedy, a third-generation educator, recently retired from the Hamilton County School system after 29 years of service. During her career, she taught kindergarten, third grade and fifth grade. She also served as an instructional coach in mathematics. She is a member of the First Baptist Church in Jasper.

Donna Wade

SVEC District: 2

Home: Wellborn

Donna Wade is a retired administrative secretary from the Suwannee County School system. She is an active officer in the Home and Community Education organization through the extension office. She is past president and an active member of the McAlpin Community Club, and she is active in her church.

Sylvia Taylor

SVEC District: 3

Home: Live Oak

Sylvia Taylor has served as a volunteer and student mentor in Suwannee County schools for over a decade.

Matt Buchanan

SVEC District: 4

Home: Mayo

Matt Buchanan is a lifelong resident of Lafayette County. A fifth-generation farmer, he is the owner of a native-tree nursery, a member of the Middle Florida Baptist Assembly board of directors and a deacon at Brewer Lake Baptist Church. He has six children, all of whom attended Lafayette County schools.

Michelle C. Lord

SVEC District: 5

Office: Vice President

Home: Live Oak

Michelle Lord assists her

husband in running his business, Lord Farms. She also serves as president of the Suwannee High Academic Boosters.

Michelle Aderholt

SVEC District: 6

Home: Branford

Michelle Aderholt has taught at Branford Elementary School for 12 years. Earlier, she taught for three years in Lafayette and Columbia County schools. Michelle also serves as a Sunday school teacher and trustee at her church.

Delores Howell

SVEC District: 7

Office: Treasurer

Home: Jasper

Delores Howell is a retired educator and grandparent of children who attend local schools. She serves on the foundation board out of a desire to help enhance the educational environment for students and teachers.

George Scott

SVEC District: 8

Office: President

Home: Wellborn

George Scott recently retired from Florida Gateway College as facility director. He served as chair of the College Senate and now serves as a guardian ad litem volunteer, assisting students who are the most needy in the system. He is pleased to be able to work on the foundation board to help advance local education.

Francene H. Folsom

SVEC District: 9

Office: Secretary

Home: Mayo

Francene H. Folsom holds a bachelor's of science degree in elementary education from Florida State University. She has taught for 30 years, and she is now a kindergarten teacher at Lafayette Elementary School.