

Along these LINES

MARCH/APRIL 2024



Unexpected Rescue

Patrick Tanner's workplace CPR training helps in rescuing his granddaughter at home **Page 20**

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along the Mighty Mississippi

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Electric Cooperatives Focus on Reliability

Electric cooperatives invest in modernizing infrastructure, implementing innovative grid technologies and adopting best practices in maintenance and operations to enhance reliability.

Additionally, they often engage in community outreach and education to ensure members understand the importance of energy conservation and the cooperative's efforts to maintain a reliable power supply.

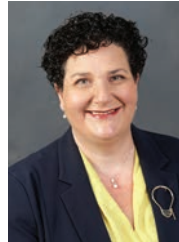
Recently, your Louisiana electric cooperatives formed a first-of-its-kind coalition to solve the grid resilience challenges threatening the state's economic vitality and protect remote, rural, disadvantaged communities from increased climate-related threats and external risks compromising energy safety, reliability and resilience. All six Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives member cooperatives in the coalition have been affected by at least one, if not more, named disasters in the past three years, including hurricanes and severe winter storms.

The coalition applied for a grant to implement grid enhancements. If this

coalition is selected by the Department of Energy, Louisiana Electric Cooperative consumer-members will see the benefits of these enhancements at a third of the cost, thanks to the government grants.

Louisiana electric cooperatives aim to create a more resilient and robust electrical grid, ultimately reducing the frequency and duration of outages by combining the following strategies: investing in infrastructure upgrades, implementing smart grid technologies, grid modernization, vegetation management, microgrids, investing in resiliency planning, remote monitoring and control, enhanced communication and coordination, education, and preparedness.

As part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Grid Deployment Office is administering a \$10.5 billion Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships Program to enhance grid flexibility and



Addie Armato

improve the power system's resilience against growing threats of extreme weather and climate change.

These programs accelerate the deployment of transformative projects that help ensure the reliability of the power sector's infrastructure so all American communities can access affordable, reliable, clean electricity anytime, anywhere.

In the wake of several natural disasters, industry leaders and elected officials continue to focus on the importance of reliability. Our core values have always been providing safe, affordable, reliable electricity. While there is no guarantee the coalition will receive these funds, your Louisiana electric cooperatives continue to seek creative, low-cost solutions to improve your quality of life. ■



Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives Inc.

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- COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL MARKETING SPECIALIST** Contley Bourgeois
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Build a co-op future **Page 12**

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Volume 39, Issue 2

Mission

DEMCO is focused on enhancing the quality of life for members by providing safe, reliable and competitively priced energy services.

Along These Lines (USPS 4089) is published bimonthly by the Association of Louisiana Electric Co-ops Inc., 10725 Airline Hwy., Baton Rouge, LA 70816, in partnership with Pioneer Utility Resources.

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DEMCO is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



DEMCO and other electric cooperatives stand apart from municipal utilities and investor-owned utilities due to our distinctive business structures.

We take pride in being owned and governed by the members we serve, and we are committed to a not-for-profit approach to our rates and services.

DEMCO prioritizes community ownership, democratic control and reinvestment focusing on financial sustainability rather than profit maximization. Our cost-based rates are designed to cover the expenses of providing reliable and affordable electricity, demonstrating our dedication to serving the community.

A key aspect of DEMCO's legacy is our commitment to educational programs for area youth, including annual essay contests, scholarship programs, bucket truck demonstrations, electrical safety demonstrations, educational magic shows and trips to Washington, D.C. These programs have enriched the lives of countless students and embody our cooperative values.

In January, DEMCO welcomed 12 bright young students into the 2024 Youth Cooperative Ambassador Program. During my conversation with these 9th and 10th grade students, I shared the compelling story of DEMCO's inception, rooted in the early 20th century when communities united to address the need for electricity in rural areas.

Established in 1938 as a not-for-profit cooperative business, DEMCO continues to place our members and their collective well-being at the core of everything we do.

Our not-for-profit, local ownership approach to rates and electric service provides us with unique opportunities to make a positive impact on our community. As we embrace the Youth Cooperative Ambassador Class of 2024, we not only empower them as future leaders but also contribute to the ongoing legacy of community-driven initiatives that define the essence of our cooperative values. (Story on page 8)

MyDEMCO Registered Member Accounts

Congratulations to these DEMCO members, winners of the random drawing for a \$50 gift card. You will each receive a gift card in the mail!

Carl V. Jose L. Kendrick F. and D. Dunnam



**DEMCO BOARD ELECTION
DIXIE ELECTRIC MEMBERSHIP CORPORATION
CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

2024 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
Saturday, May 11, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.

LOCATION OF MEETING
DEMCO Headquarters Facility
16262 Wax Road, Greenwell Springs, LA 70739
(Elections in Districts 1, 2, 7 and 11)

**February 12, 2024 –
March 8, 2024**

Publish the Calendar of Events in the official journal of each parish, including the date, time, and place of the meeting of the Nominating Committee.

**March 12, 2024 –
March 14, 2024**

Pre-qualification period. Members interested in seeking a position on the board of directors are required pursuant to DEMCO bylaws to appear in person between these dates to determine eligibility as prescribed in the corporation's bylaws. Candidates not pre-qualified will not be eligible to seek a position on the board of directors.

March 21, 2024

DEMCO Governance Committee will meet at 3:30 p.m. on this date, if needed, to determine eligibility of director candidates who have pre-qualified. Only candidates who have pre-qualified will be considered.

March 21, 2024

DEMCO Board Meeting at 5 p.m., at DEMCO Headquarters. The Committee on Nominations will be appointed at this meeting.

March 21, 2024

The Nominating Committee meeting begins at 5:05 p.m. at DEMCO Headquarters, 16262 Wax Road, Greenwell Springs, LA, with results of the meeting to be posted March 22, 2024.

March 22, 2024

Beginning on this date, pre-qualified director candidates may obtain a petition to run for a seat on the board of directors. DEMCO bylaws require 50 valid signatures for the petition to be validated.

March 22, 2024

This is the Record Date for the 2024 Annual Membership Meeting. A final list of those

members eligible to vote in DEMCO's 2024 Annual Membership Meeting will be prepared.

April 8, 2024

Petitions must be returned to DEMCO headquarters office by 4:30 p.m. and received by the CEO and General Manager's office.

April 18, 2024

The Governance Committee will meet at 3:30 p.m. on this date, if needed, to validate each petition and post the results as required by the corporation's bylaws on this date.

**April 22, 2024 –
April 26, 2024**

The Official Notice of the 2024 Annual Meeting will be mailed to all members of the cooperative during this time.

April 22, 2024

Ballots for the 2024 Annual Meeting will be mailed to members of the cooperative on this date. Members should receive their ballots by Saturday, April 27, 2024 — VOTE and mail your ballot immediately.

May 3, 2024

The deadline for receiving ballots for the 2024 Annual Membership Meeting is 4:30 p.m. on this date — DO NOT DELAY — VOTE

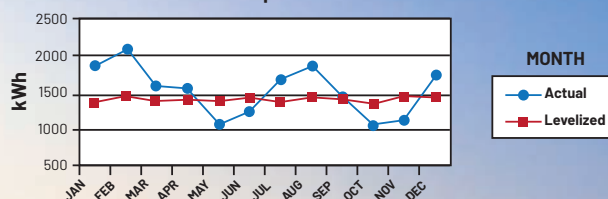
May 6, 2024 – May 7, 2024

Ballots will be counted during this period by the certified public accountants selected by DEMCO to conduct the annual meeting. Candidates will be advised as to the time and place that the ballots will be counted.

May 11, 2024

Annual meeting and election results announced at 10 a.m., at 16262 Wax Road, Greenwell Springs, LA 70739.

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Levelized BILLING

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To enroll or learn more, visit DEMCO.org/Levelized

Building BRIGHTER COMMUNITIES

Member-students can apply for one-year scholarships of \$1,250 for each of two consecutive semesters awarded in a random drawing at the DEMCO annual membership meeting. **The DEADLINE is May 6, 2024.**

For eligibility requirements and to enter, visit DEMCO.org/Scholarships

Celebrating Louisiana: Washington, D.C., Mardi Gras



Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives CEO Addie Armato, right, and her husband Joe Langlois, left, visit with Speaker of the House Mike Johnson.



Addie with U.S. Rep. Garret Graves.



Addie, center, with National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Will Michell and Speaker Johnson's chief of staff, Ruth Ward.



ABOVE: U.S. Sen. Bill Cassidy and Addie.
RIGHT: Joe, U.S. Rep. Julia Letlow and Addie.



Leading Louisiana: Gov. Jeff Landry Inauguration



Attending Gov. Jeff Landry's inauguration are, from left, Jeff Davis Electric Cooperative General Manager Mike Heinen, Angie Heinen, Sharon Landry, Gov. Landry, Joe and Addie.



Help Fund a Scholarship, Gain a Chance to Win!

Donate \$1 to the Sandy Stockwell Cooperative Youth Leadership Scholarship Fund, and you could win a portable Hisencn flat top propane grill.

To buy a ticket, visit your electric cooperative.

The drawing is in July at the Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives' annual meeting banquet in Baton Rouge.

You do not need to be present to win. The winner will be contacted by phone.



SPARKING

Cyrin Price, Liberty High School senior and intern in DEMCO's communications and governmental affairs department, introduces DEMCO CEO Randy Pierce on January 9 to the 2024 Class of Youth Cooperative Ambassadors at their orientation meeting. PHOTOS COURTESY OF DEMCO



Co-op Careers

DEMCO welcomed three high school seniors into the world of cooperative careers as student interns during the 2023-24 school year.

Employed by the East Baton Rouge Parish school system,

participating students earned not only valuable hands-on experience but also a Carnegie credit—credits awarded for successful completion of

continues on page 17

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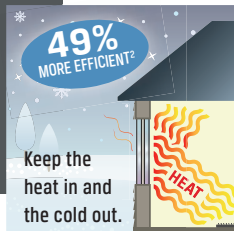
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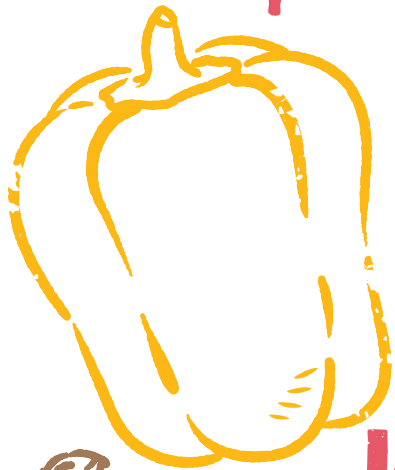


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Sharing Creole WITH THE WORLD



Panderina D. Soumas sells a Creole seasoning blend, packaged food mixes, a cookbook of Creole recipes and more. PHOTOS COURTESY OF CHEF PAN

By Cheré Coen

Panderina D. Soumas calls Bossier City home, but her roots run deep in New Orleans cuisine. The Big Easy's her hometown and that of her ancestors. She credits those family members for her love of Creole cooking and what she incorporates into the food products she sells under Heritage Creole Creations.

Panderina sells a Creole seasoning blend, packaged food mixes, a cookbook of Creole recipes, both new and old, and some of the creamiest pralines in Louisiana. What she doesn't sell is Cajun or trendy.

"I try to be different than others," Panderina says. "It's strictly Creole."

Chef Pan, as she likes to be called, was raised with typical New Orleans dishes, such as red beans and rice, jambalaya and "gombo," the West African spelling of gumbo meaning okra. Enslaved Africans brought okra seeds from their homeland, and many attribute the name of gumbo, either spelling, to those early Louisianans.

A Delicious Family History

Louisiana Creole cuisine is a mixture of African influences as well as Spanish, French and Native American. When she was growing up in New Orleans, her use of cumin and curry blended Spanish influence with her family's West African heritage. One grandmother added Caribbean flair to her gumbo roux.

"My grandmother made roux from scratch, and she dropped in a cinnamon stick at the end for a few minutes," Chef Pan says.

Her New Orleans backyard produced much of what her family used in their recipes. In addition to growing okra, they had pecan, bay leaf and lemon trees. Her grandmother dried peppers and used them and bay leaves when she boiled her rice.

There was always something cooking that filled the house with a delicious aroma.

"My grandmother would say in her patois, 'If you can't smell the food, don't eat it,'" Chef Pan says with a laugh.

Her father's military career took the family many places, but the culinary entrepreneur settled in Bossier City. It's where she creates her products and ships them across the country.

One of her most popular items is the Creole Explosion Seasoning Blend. She won't name the ingredients, but typical of her heritage, it includes cumin, cinnamon and a little curry. It's got a bite, but there's more flavor than heat.

"I named it explosion for a reason," Chef Pan says, adding that she puts a little seasoning packet in her food mixes as well. "It's a seasoning you can use on everything."

Sharing the Sweetness

When Chef Pan first moved to Northern Louisiana, she noticed a lack of her hometown's favorite—and famous—specialty.

"Pralines are more of a South Louisiana thing," she says. "A lot of people here called them peanut patties."

Her Creole origins called them by a different name, as well. "Most people of Creole heritage would call them 'pah-leens,' with the R silent," she explains.

When she added Chef Pan's Creole Pecan Pralines to the lineup, people started demanding the sugar and pecan goodness.

"It's an art," she says of mixing the sweet combination of sugar, cream and pecans. "You have to watch that sugar and cream because it can burn. And humidity plays a part. Sugar and dampness do not go together."

As with all Louisiana dishes, how they're created can incite passionate disagreements.

"I had an aunt who used regular milk, one who used evaporated milk and one aunt who used a little of both," Chef Pan says.

The bottom line is the final product.

"Don't want to toot my own horn but mine are pretty good," she says.

She is working on a new website, but folks wanting to sample her products can reach her through her Facebook page: Panderina Soumas (Chef Pan). ■

Chef Panderina Soumas' Louisiana Creole Jambalaya

- 3-5 tablespoons cooking oil
- 1 pound of andouille sausage, sliced into rounds
- 1 pound boneless skinless chicken thighs, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 2-3 teaspoons of Creole Explosion Seasoning Blend
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 green bell pepper, diced
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 2 stalks/ribs celery, chopped
- 4-5 cloves of garlic, smashed and minced
- 3-4 bay leaves
- 1 14-ounce can crushed tomatoes
- 1 14-ounce can of petite diced tomatoes
- 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon file powder (optional)
- 1½ cups of long-grain white rice, uncooked
- 3 cups of chicken broth
- A few shakes of Big Easy Creole Hot Sauce
- Sliced green onions and chopped parsley, to garnish

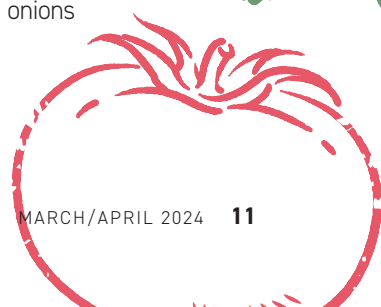
INSTRUCTIONS

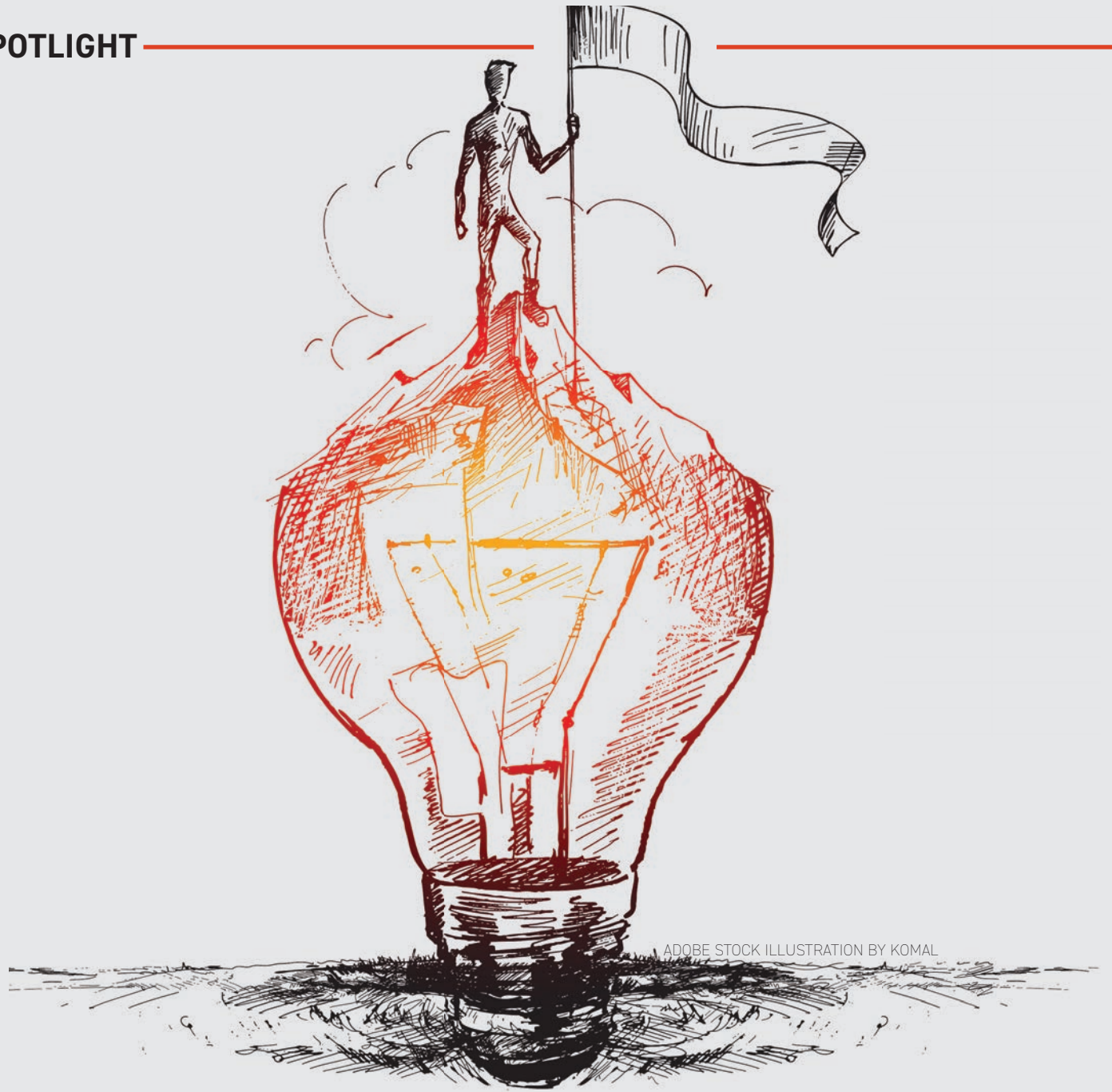
Heat 1-2 tablespoons of oil in a large pot or Dutch oven over medium heat. Season the sausage and chicken pieces with half of the Creole Explosion Seasoning Blend. Brown sausage and chicken in the hot oil until done. Remove with slotted spoon and set aside.

In same pot, add 2-3 tablespoons of oil. Saute the onion, peppers and celery until soft and transparent. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant. Stir in the tomatoes (crushed and diced), a few shakes of Big Easy Creole Hot Sauce, Worcestershire sauce, the remaining Creole Explosion Seasoning Blend, optional file powder and chicken and sausage. Cook for 2-3 minutes, while stirring occasionally. Last, add in the rice and chicken broth.

Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low-medium simmer. Cover and let simmer on medium-low for about 20 to 25 minutes or until liquid is absorbed and rice is fully cooked. Turn off heat, stir gently and cover with lid for an additional 2-3 minutes. Season with a little extra Creole Explosion Seasoning Blend, if needed, and remove from heat. Adjust spiciness with extra Big Easy Creole Hot Sauce. Serve immediately with sliced green onions and parsley for garnish.

Louisiana Creole jambalaya is one of Chef Pan's most well-known dishes.

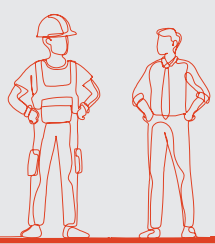




ADOBE STOCK ILLUSTRATION BY KOMAL

ENERGIZE YOUR CAREER

Build a co-op future



By Cheré Coen



ABOVE: Heath Lemieux has worked various jobs for Jeff Davis Electric Co-op for 26 years. After Hurricane Rita devastated his home in 2005, the co-op provided him with a camper, an example of how cooperatives support their employees. **RIGHT:** Darrell Crumpler retired from Beauregard Electric Cooperative in February after a career spanning more than three decades.

Working for an electric co-op may seem straightforward—keeping the lights on for area homes, farms and businesses—but it requires skilled professionals, many of whom labor behind the scenes. While lineworkers work in any weather to repair and maintain utility poles, the office staff provides customer service, management, technical support, billing and more. Together, they bring customers the reliable and affordable service they deserve.

“In addition to who you see, the linemen, there’s a whole business support group behind that,” says DEMCO CEO Randy Pierce.

Randy started working for the Natchitoches Valley Electric Membership Co-op straight out of college and then worked for Cajun Electric Power Co-op for eight years. Before moving to DEMCO, he served as the CEO and general manager of the Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives for 22 years.

He values the variety of career opportunities co-ops offer, and he especially appreciates they are locally

owned, operated and governed by members of the communities they serve.

“The utility industry is a service industry and the co-op industry even more so,” Randy says of his not-for-profit, member-owned corporation. “We provide critical electric services in areas that couldn’t get it otherwise.”

More Than a Job

It’s because co-op staff members work so closely, including during natural disasters, that a cooperative feels like family. This tightknit connection is one reason employees consider their roles more than simply jobs—they have careers.

Heath Lemieux began working for Jeff Davis Electric Co-op after graduating high school, starting as a helper to lineworkers in Johnson Bayou near the Gulf of Mexico. He now works in the co-op’s office in Jennings. Heath has performed many duties over his 26 years, but one year stands out. When Hurricane Rita devastated his home in 2005, Jeff Davis provided him with a camper he could live



in until he could relocate. Other co-ops donated funds and materials to assist him and others affected by the storm.

“We’re a small co-op, but they treat us like family,” Heath says. “It’s been a great place to work. They’ve always taken care of me.”

Shannon Soudelier also began his career as a helper, working for South Louisiana Electric Cooperative Association after finishing high school in August 2005.

“When I first started, I didn’t know what





Randy Pierce started as a communicator and is now the general manager of DEMCO. He also served as the CEO and general manager of the Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives for 22 years.



Verdie Mae Knight, at left and far right above, marked 65 years at Washington-St. Tammany Electric Cooperative last November.



a lineman was,” he says with a laugh. “I thought it was a light switch in my house.”

Right after Shannon took the job, Hurricane Katrina barreled into New Orleans, followed by Rita a month later in Louisiana’s southwest corner. Shannon met many co-op members from around the state and country who arrived to help and was amazed at how quickly they restored electricity to a struggling state.

“Working for a co-op, it’s a family,” he

says, including those who are only in-state to help during a disaster. “You might talk to some people once or twice, but it’s like you’ve known each other all your life. If you need help, it’s a brotherhood. They’re just a phone call away if you need something.”

ALEC raised more than \$2 million after the twin storms of 2005, Randy says, and co-ops throughout 30 states sent help.

“We move resources where they need to be,” he says of the nationwide coalition of cooperatives. “We form relationships during disasters that sometimes last a lifetime. For electric co-ops, it’s just a way of life.”

DEMCO Serves

Julie Burns didn’t know what the job of a meter reader entailed when she signed up 45 years ago to work with DEMCO. Today, she’s a meter reading technician in Greenwell Springs. In addition to the great job benefits, such as on-the-job training, medical benefits and tuition assistance, Julie appreciates the opportunity to give back to her community. Each year, DEMCO gives its employees an opportunity to serve in the community.

“It’s something we enjoy, and it also helps somebody else,” she says. “We try to give back to the community.”

Randy agrees that working at a co-op offers more than just a paycheck.

“It’s great pay but also nonprofit work,” he says. “While we don’t have a profit motive, our goal is to provide quality service. At the end of the day, you’ve provided work in the community that’s needed. And there’s a lot of things you can do over and above to help your community.”

A Solid Profession

Because electric cooperatives provide an invaluable service to communities, their employees have the peace of mind that comes with job security.





Shannon Soudelier, front row, fifth from left, went with other SLECA representatives to Coteau Bayou Blue Elementary for the clap-in tradition for students taking the LEAP test. DEMCO's Julie Burns shows Linda Sanders how to find information on a member's meter.

“Co-ops aren’t going anywhere,” says Shannon, who’s worked for SLECA for 18 years. “The public needs electricity. You’ve got to be there to keep the lights on. It’s an awesome career. As a lineman, you’ll have a career forever.”

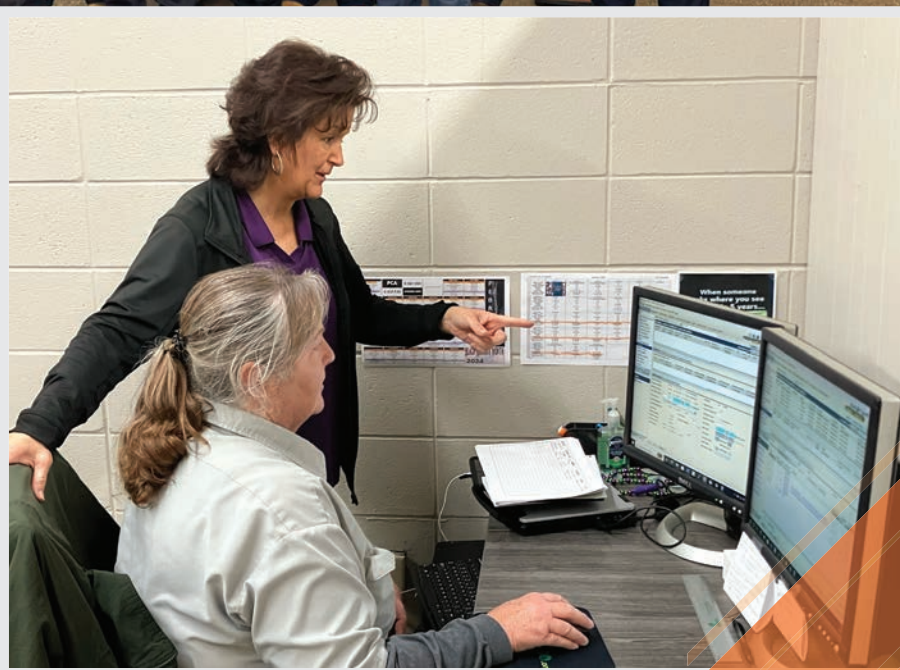
Verdie Mae Knight marked 65 years at Washington-St. Tammany Electric Cooperative last November, and she isn’t thinking about retirement anytime soon. After high school, she knew she wanted to remain close to her family’s dairy farm but was unsure which path to take. She says her life started when the phone rang, and WSTE asked her for an interview.

“That was the happiest day of my life,” she says. “It’s been a wonderful career for me.”

She’s now a WSTE billing supervisor and cherishes helping her community.

“I think it’s a really good opportunity to work for a co-op,” Verdie says. “I’ve met a lot of people. I’ve enjoyed working with them.”

Darrell Crumpler was lead lineman at Beauregard Electric Cooperative and the 2023 Outside Employee of the Year. He started at BECi in 1992 and retired in February. He enjoyed the work, benefits, and his relationship with the people he served and coworkers.



“It’s just a good job,” Darrell says. “The benefits are unmatched, and there is nothing like working for a co-op.”

Considering Working for a Co-op?

Heath recommends thoroughly examining what a co-op job entails. Because lineworkers must work through any weather at all hours of the day, the job can take a toll on both lineworkers and their families.

“Linework is not for everyone,” Heath says. “It’s a great job, but you have to be built for it. You need to be fit.”

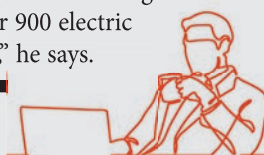
Other positions to consider include engineering, human resources, marketing, accounting and more.

“If I were to recommend someone to pursue a job at DEMCO, I think one of the most important benefits we have going today is the new technology for the future,” Julie says. “Learning something new daily in our job is a great benefit to myself and mostly for our company and members.

“Do it, definitely,” Julie concludes. “You will have a good, stable future.”

Employees can move to other cooperatives and bring their benefits with them, Randy says.

“One of the great things about working for a co-op is there are over 900 electric co-ops around the country,” he says. “That’s a huge advantage.” ■



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continued from page 8

courses—and a stipend for their 155-hour internship.

Internships were organized around the Five Pathways to Bright Futures Career areas, a collaboration with the Baton Rouge Area Chamber, East Baton Rouge parish school system and other stakeholders.

This innovative program was designed to provide seniors with immersive work-based learning experiences tailored to match their career aspirations and post-secondary plans. These career areas directly align with the current and emerging job market in the Baton Rouge area.

Cyrin Price, a student at Liberty High School, worked alongside the communications and governmental affairs team at DEMCO. Cyrin assisted in planning and participated in community events and outreach.

Banti Duodeh, another student at Liberty High School, worked in the engineering department. Banti focused on measuring and assessing the structural strength of poles while engaging in the fielding process under the guidance of experienced professionals.

Nicholas Bush, representing Broadmoor High School, was part of the finance department. Nicholas' internship gave him practical insights into financial operations while working alongside professionals in the field.

“It was a pleasure to have such bright-minded students contribute to real work challenges and projects,” Chief Financial Officer Peggy Maranan says.

“From Day One, these students were eager to learn and experience our electric cooperative work environment,” Community Relations Specialist Chanon Martin says. “It was rewarding for us to have students among us, and to see them lean into the experience, learning and building confidence.”

DEMCO offers youth programs as part of its dedication to serving the community. For more information on this and other community programs, visit [DEMCO.org/Community](https://www.demco.org/Community). ■



ABOVE: Nicholas Bush, of Broadmoor High School, worked alongside financial professionals during his internship.

TOP: Intern Banti Duodeh, of Liberty High School, meets with Caleb Herring, of DEMCO's engineering department.

ALEC Visits MISO



Louisiana Electric Cooperative representatives visited the Midcontinent Independent System Operator facility in Little Rock, Arkansas, in October. MISO is an independent, not-for-profit, member-based organization focused on managing the flow of high-voltage electricity across its region and facilitating one of the world's largest energy markets. TOP LEFT: Representing Jeff Davis Electric Cooperative, from left, are John Berken, Heath Lemieux, Kevin Sonnier, Reggie Murphy, Eric Gautreaux, Johnathan Nunez, Anya Killmer, Byron Hardee and Thomas Precht III. TOP RIGHT: Representing Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives, from left, are Conley Bourgeois, Addie Armato, Aarron Graham and Don Caffery.



South Louisiana Electric Cooperative Association General Manager Matt Peters represented the co-op on the tour.



On behalf of DEMCO, from left, are Eric Ouber, Ken Lofton, Matt Gibson and Trent Bigner.



From left, Beauregard Electric Cooperative Inc.'s Dale Peterson, Kevin Aycocock and Brian Zelenak, general manager, made the trip to Arkansas.



Nickey Smith represented Washington-St. Tammany Electric Cooperative.

Visit a place where the trees *have knees*, and the water *keeps secrets*.

The Natchez Trace has many scenic stops, but one stands out for its otherworldly beauty. Cypress Swamp takes visitors on a half-mile boardwalk tour of a fascinating wetland environment packed with cypress trees (and their mysterious knees), vibrant green algae-covered water, and, very frequently, juvenile alligators lurking just below the surface. There's no need to bring hiking gear, as the swamp is located just a few steps off the roadway. Learn more at [VisitMississippi.org/OutdoorAdventure](https://www.visitmississippi.org/outdooradventure).

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Cypress Swamp | Canton, Mississippi

Unexpected Rescue

Workplace CPR training helps Patrick Tanner in resuscitating his granddaughter

Oftentimes, on-the-job training can seem mundane and unnecessary. However, DEMCO's basic CPR and first aid training has proven—more than once—to save lives.

In October 1994, St. Francisville district office senior warehouseman Patrick Tanner was hurt on the job. An electric shock from contact with energized equipment stopped

Patrick "Paw" Tanner's CPR training helped save the life of his granddaughter, Paisley.
PHOTOS COURTESY OF PATRICK TANNER

Patrick's heart. His partner on-site performed CPR to save his life.

After 30 years with DEMCO, Patrick has had some form of the CPR training himself every year. He always felt like he was just going through the motions until he had to put his training to use.

"My son and my granddaughter were at my house," he recalls, "and my son had to go outside and work on his car. My granddaughter went outside with him and was playing in the car, acting like she was driving."

Not long after, Patrick heard his son shouting for help. He had found his daughter in the pool unresponsive and brought her inside the house.

"I don't know how, but I got down there and started giving her mouth-to-mouth," Patrick tearfully remembers about that day. "My daughter-in-law did compressions, and we brought her back. It was a joint effort without even talking."

His granddaughter, Paisley, started coughing after a couple of rounds of CPR. They then took her to the hospital. The instant teamwork from Patrick and his daughter-in-law, Chelsea, had saved her life.

DEMCO's training for its workforce is in basic CPR and first aid, which refers to the immediate assistance provided by individuals who are present at the scene of a cardiac arrest before professional help arrives. Employees receive a refresher course every 18 months that includes online and hands-on instruction.

Safety Coordinator Jacob Overhultz says that in his 26 years with DEMCO, the company has been proactive with safety training and CPR.

"The company as a whole adopted the approach that every employee is trained in it," Jacob says. "It's almost like muscle memory. It's required to do the job. They not only have it on the job but also bring it back to their personal life."

Patrick's experience happened this past summer, and he says Paisley turns 3 this year and is back to her "spunky, spitfire" self after spending a night in Children's Hospital in Baton Rouge.

"It's an everyday afternoon, and it can happen quick, and you can save a person quick. For a 6-foot-4-inch man to holler for me, you could hear it in his voice that something was wrong," he says about his son. "He knows that in my line of work, we need a lot of training. It's just a call to action."

Even though the life-saving story of his granddaughter often brings him to tears, Patrick likes to tell it.

"I've always done (the CPR training), and it feels like you're going through the motions, but you don't think about it until you need it," he says. ■



Back to her spunky self, Paisley plays with a family dog, Monnie.

Untangling Power Line Myths vs Safety

Power lines deliver electricity to homes and businesses and are essential to our modern way of life. We see them everywhere, so it is sometimes easy to forget they can be potentially dangerous. Myths abound when it comes to power line safety.

To help protect our communities, it's crucial to end power line misconceptions.

Understanding power line safety helps prevent accidents and protect lives. Everyone is encouraged to play it safe with electricity. ■

01 I'm safe as long as I don't touch power lines.

Lines can energize the air around them. If too close, electricity can jump to you, leading to injury/death.

01

02 If birds can sit on power lines, it's safe for humans to touch them, too.

There's no difference in voltage in the distance between a bird's feet, so no circuit is created. Electric shock occurs if a person touches a line while touching the ground.

02

03 Wooden ladders are safe around power lines.

Wood is not a sufficient insulator. Only use nonconductive ladders around power lines and maintain a safe distance.

03

04 It's safe to trim trees near the power lines.

Branches could strike power lines and you at the same time, causing physical harm or death. This should be left to the professionals.

04

05 Power lines are insulated, so they're safe to touch.

Touching a power line, even if it appears insulated, can deliver an electric shock.

05



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