

APRIL COLLINS TAKES HELM AS CEO—PAGE 4

South Carolina LIVING

AIKEN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

CEO MESSAGE

A simple
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FOND FAREWELL

Long-serving
employee
retires

Good dog

Why the Boykin
Spaniel is dear to
South Carolina's
heart



**Aiken Electric
Cooperative, Inc.**

aikenco-op.org

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The mission of Aiken Electric Cooperative, Inc. is to empower communities by providing reliable, competitively priced energy and other services desired by our membership.

CO-OP NEWS EDITOR

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AEC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



A simple promise

IF YOU'VE LIVED in rural South Carolina for any length of time, you know the value of things that last.

You know the comfort of familiar faces. You know the pride that comes from doing honest work and doing it well. And you know that when something is built on strong values, it can stand the test of time.

That's how I think about Aiken Electric Cooperative.

I was raised in Edgefield, where I learned early on the importance of community, hard work and looking out for one another. Those values have guided me throughout my life and career. I've spent more than 20 years at Aiken Electric—working alongside people who care deeply about the members we serve and the communities we call home. From my first days as an accounting intern to the role I serve in today, I've seen what makes this cooperative special: neighbors serving neighbors, employees who stay for decades and leaders who plan not just for today, but for the long haul.

As Gary Stooksbury begins a much-deserved retirement after more than 31 years as CEO, I'm grateful for the steady leadership he's provided and the strong foundation he leaves behind. Over the past several months, Gary, the Board of Trustees and I have worked closely together to ensure a smooth transition—one that keeps Aiken Electric moving forward while staying true to who we are.

On page 5, you'll read the story of a 43-year employee whose dedication reflects that same sense of longevity and commitment. It's a reminder that Aiken Electric is more than a utility—it's a place where people build careers, raise families and invest in their communities for generations.

As I step into this role, my promise to you is simple: we will continue to provide safe, reliable and competitively priced services, and we will continue to show up for the communities we serve—just as we have for nearly 88 years.

Thank you for allowing us to serve you. I'm proud to be part of this cooperative and honored to help carry its work forward.

APRIL M. COLLINS
Chief Executive Officer

About April Collins

APRIL COLLINS has dedicated more than two decades to Aiken Electric Cooperative, building her career from the ground up and gaining experience in every stage of the cooperative's operations.

Raised in Edgefield, Collins brings strong local roots, and a deep understanding of the communities AEC serves.

Career at Aiken Electric

- ▶ Accounting Intern (2004)
- ▶ Accountant (2005–2010)
- ▶ Controller (2010–2017)
- ▶ Vice President, Finance & Technology (2017–2025)
- ▶ Chief Operating Officer (2025–2026)
- ▶ Chief Executive Officer (Effective March 1, 2026)

Education

- ▶ Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (Accounting), USC Aiken
- ▶ Master of Accountancy, University of South Carolina
- ▶ Master of Business Administration, USC Aiken

Certifications

- ▶ Certified Public Accountant (CPA)
- ▶ Certified Management Accountant (CMA)
- ▶ Cooperative Financial Professional (CFC & NRECA)

Professional Involvement

- ▶ Member, SC Association of Public Accountants
- ▶ Member, Institute of Management Accountants
- ▶ Member, Association of International Certified Public Accountants

Forty-three years of commitment

LYNN WEST JOINED Aiken Electric in 1983, at a time when IBM Selectric typewriters, Rolodexes, mimeograph machines and landlines were essential tools of the job. Over the years, she not only adapted to change, but she embraced it, growing alongside the co-op.

Now, West is looking forward to another transition. After serving Aiken Electric Cooperative for 43 years, she will retire this summer.

“Lynn’s retirement is extremely bittersweet, but more than deserved,” says Bill Inman, AEC vice president of Strategic Services. “She’s been around for all of it, and she knows how to do it all.”

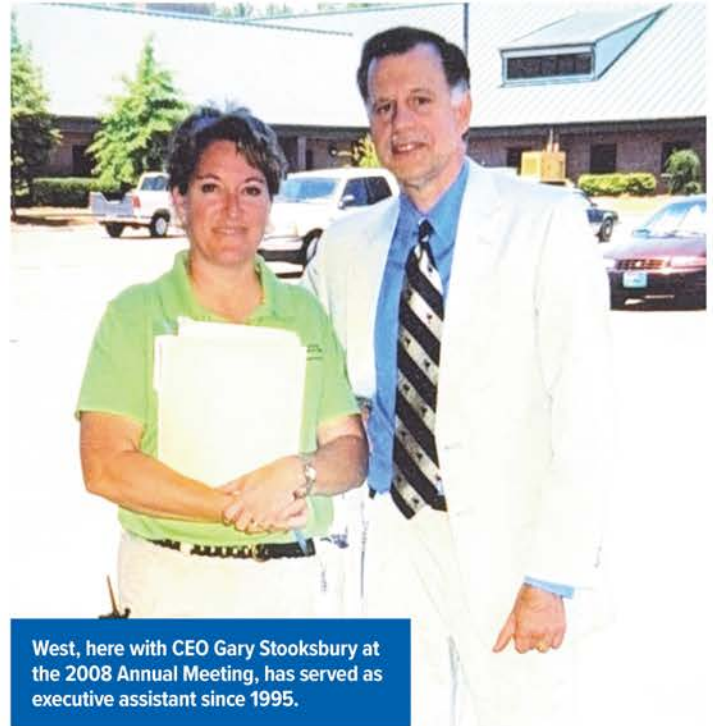
West joined Aiken Electric as a system planning clerk. In 1987, she became secretary of Administrative Services and served as acting administrative assistant to the executive vice president and general manager. Two years later she was named the benefits secretary, followed by administrative assistant of the Marketing Department in 1990, and administrative assistant to the executive vice president and general manager in 1991. She became executive assistant to the CEO in 1995 and was promoted to senior executive assistant in 2016.

As executive assistant, West provides direct administrative support and serves as a key liaison between the CEO, Board of Trustees, senior management and internal and external stakeholders of Aiken Electric Cooperative and its subsidiaries. She says she is thankful for Gary Stooksbury’s leadership and trust he has placed in her over the 31 years they have worked together.

West also found a profound sense of service to others while working at the co-op. Concern for community is one cooperative principle and she witnessed and participated in countless efforts where AEC employees gave back, volunteered and supported the communities they serve.

West’s commitment to service, learning and adapting inspired her two sons, Cody and Trevor, to pursue careers within the cooperative system themselves. Cody is office manager at Edisto Electric Cooperative and Trevor serves as an energy services specialist at Mid-Carolina Electric Cooperative. West is appreciative of her family for their love, encouragement and support over the years.

Today, West describes her



West, here with CEO Gary Stooksbury at the 2008 Annual Meeting, has served as executive assistant since 1995.



A co-op family—West shares a moment with her sons Trevor (center), an energy services specialist at Mid-Carolina Electric and Cody, office manager at Edisto Electric.



Any time there was a major storm, you could find West scrambling eggs for crews bright and early. Here, she oversees catering during the Hurricane Helene response.

retirement as bittersweet.

“I will truly miss those day-to-day relationships I have with my fellow employees and the trustees” she says, “and so many more friendships I have developed over the years with colleagues both inside and outside of South Carolina.

“I have always taken pride in my work and feel honored to have been part of the AEC family for 43 years. My memories are many and it has been such a wonderful career and journey. I am very grateful for the personal and professional growth that I’ve experienced during my career.”

In retirement, West plans to spend more time with her family, especially her three grandchildren, and friends while creating memories and enjoying life to the fullest.