

RISING COST OF FOOD OUTPACES POWER

South Carolina LIVING

AIKEN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Maze days

Fall on the farm
is for family fun

CEO MESSAGE

The real value of electricity

SC RECIPE

Squash appeal

SC BACKSTORY

Missile memory



**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.



The real value of your electricity

WE KNOW THIS year has been challenging for many household budgets. As your local co-op, we understand the

frustration of seeing power bills rise due to increased energy use during periods of extreme weather, especially as the cost of so many other everyday necessities continues to increase.

We're also feeling the squeeze, as the costs of maintaining our electric system—labor, materials and wholesale power—only continue to rise. We're managing the same way that you are—carefully, with an eye on every dollar. It's our responsibility to be good stewards of your co-op and your money. We must ensure every dollar you spend with us delivers real value. We believe that's the case.

Here is how we put those dollars to work for you.

- ▶ We hire, train and employ lineworkers who keep our system running and respond quickly to outages. Our lineworkers live in this community. Many are Aiken Electric members. When your lights go out, so do theirs, and they may already be on the road to restoring your power before you've even finished calling the outage number.
- ▶ We operate and maintain an electric system—thousands of miles of line and poles—that delivers all the power you need, the instant you need it.
- ▶ We staff our office with dedicated member services staff. Whenever you need help, you can talk to a local human being. They're your neighbors, and they are on your team. They can answer your questions or connect you with an expert. They understand your concerns and can get you the help you need, whether it's paying a bill,

"Aiken Electric isn't owned by investors. It's owned by you and every other member we serve."

enrolling in levelized billing or exploring ways to conserve energy and save money.

- ▶ We make strategic investments in our community. We work to bring jobs and opportunities to our area through economic development. That growth brings additional revenue that helps offset our rising cost of doing business. Through charitable programs such as Operation Round Up, Washington Youth Tour, Cooperative Youth Summit and the Safety Magic Show, we help neighbors in need and create opportunities for the next generation.

Now, here's where your money doesn't go—to shareholders on Wall Street. Aiken Electric isn't owned by investors. It's owned by you and every other member we serve. Any margin left over after covering the cost of providing safe, reliable power goes straight back to members through capital credits. In 2025, Aiken Electric returned \$800,000 in capital credits retirement.

That's the value of cooperative electricity. It's safe. It's dependable. And it comes from a local partner that is investing in this community and answers to you.

APRIL M. COLLINS
Chief Executive Officer

The rise in average U.S. costs: 1940-2025

