

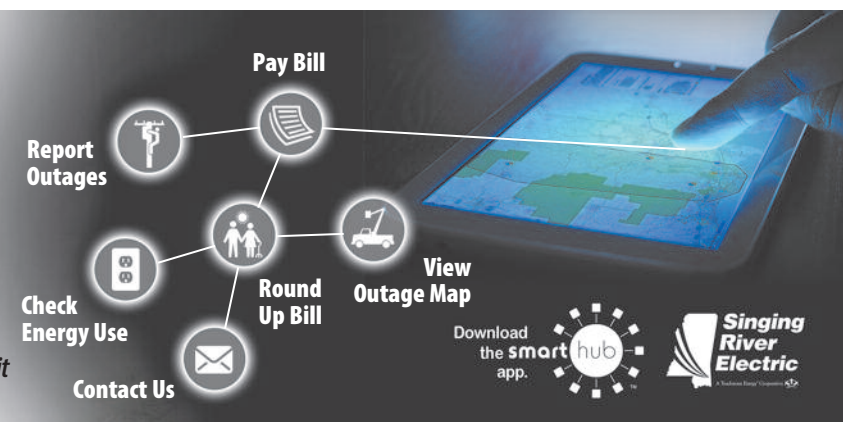


A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Singing River Electric is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

Mike Smith, General Manager & CEO
Lorri Freeman, APR,
Manager of Public Relations
Amanda Parker,
Public Relations Specialist

For more information, call
 601-947-4211/228-497-1313 x 2251 or visit
 our website at www.singingriver.com



CEO's Message



Mike Smith
 General Manager and CEO
 Singing River Electric

For many of us, an important goal in life is to be blessed with a job and career we enjoy, and later be able to retire from that career. I can truthfully say that I have been blessed to have

"Retirement comes as a blessing"

experienced that as my career is coming to a close.

My journey began in 1970 when I began working part-time for Singing River Electric as an engineering student. After graduating from Mississippi State in 1975, I began my career full-time as an electrical engineer with Singing River Electric. Since that time, I have had the opportunity to work in many roles, with my last three and a half years as general manager and CEO.

In the last 47 years, our cooperative has grown in size and has made great strides in quality and reliability of service and embraced technology to

improve the services we offer. We have also been very active in improving the quality of life of our members through industry, education and health care projects in the communities where we live and work.

I appreciate the opportunity to have been a part of such an outstanding cooperative during my career. As I have told our employees many times, along with our members, we are a family.

However, it is now time for me to spend more time with my wife, children and grandchildren and begin a new chapter in my life. Thank you for the privilege of being part of Singing River Electric for these many years.

New Year, New Bulb – Value of LED light bulbs



Jeff Gray
 Member Services Representative
gray@singingriver.com

Ring in the New Year with a new bulb. Light Emitting Diode or LED bulbs are the most efficient choice for your home or business. Manufactured to replace traditional incandescent and compact fluorescent or CFL bulbs, LEDs last about 15 times longer and save about \$80 in electricity costs over their lifetime.

LED bulbs are also safer to operate since they produce very little heat. When choosing an LED bulb, look for an Energy Star certified bulb. You can choose bulbs that have the color, lumens and watts that most closely matches the lamp fixture and your activity. A 9-watt LED will replace a 60-watt incandescent and will burn for 25,000 hours instead of 1,000 hours for an incandescent according to Energy.gov.

For more information, visit singingriver.com and join our efficiency and conservation conversations on Facebook (Singing River Electric) and Twitter (SRECooperative).

Notice of Singing River Electric Director Qualification Period

Candidates seeking election to the board of directors for Singing River Electric Cooperative must visit Singing River Electric's Lucedale office (11187 Old 63 South) and obtain a Director Candidate Packet. The forms and petitions in the packet must be completed and returned by close of business on the last business day in February (Wednesday, February 28).



IT FEELS BETTER SINCE I SET OUR THERMOSTAT TO CHEAP

We're gone most of the day, so why keep the temperature in an empty house comfortable? I'm saving money on my electricity bill just by programming my thermostat.



www.singingriver.com



Mike Smith will retire this month after 47 years at the cooperative and 42 years of full-time service. He began working for Singing River Electric in 1970 as an engineering co-op student from Mississippi State University. After graduating with an engineering degree in 1975, Smith began working full-time in the Lucedale office and he received his professional engineering (PE) license in 1979.

During this time period, Smith was one of four engineers employed by the electric cooperative. He and former Singing River Electric manager Lee Hedegaard were hired on the same day and were responsible for many daily duties including running crews and staking power lines.

■ Constructing Substations

Singing River Electric has committed through the years to build its own substations. Not every utility or electric cooperative does this; most contract the work to other companies. Over the years, Mike and fellow engineers consulted on SRE's long-range work plan as they decided where new substations were needed and began constructing them, a process still practiced today. Building the substations from the ground up allows engineers and linemen to better know their make-up and understand how each piece of equipment operates. This knowledge brings confidence when entering the substation in the middle of the night to respond to an outage. SRE members benefit from the employee's familiarity shown when handling these complex structures.

■ Adopting Automated Metering

Another area where Singing River Electric forged a new path was embracing technology to improve service. The utility was one of the first electric cooperatives in Mississippi to adopt automated meters in 2005, although the process started many years before. Mike Smith positioned Singing River Electric as a top electric cooperative in the state through the early adoption of this technology. He implemented several programs that had a significant impact on the co-op's electric and cus-

SMITH TO RETIRE as manager of Singing River Electric

tomers service functions. The first was automated metering. Back in the 1970s and early 80s, meter readers carried paper books where they cataloged the meter readings and returned to the office to transfer information. In the late 80s the books were replaced by hand-held devices. Singing River Electric worked to convert and computerize the maps. Just prior to Hurricane Katrina, Singing River Electric's management made the decision to adopt automated metering. The storm helped speed up this effort as many of the meters along the Gulf Coast were destroyed and had to be replaced. The new meters allowed the cooperative to increase efficiency in billing and offered more detailed usage data that could be passed along to the member to help them become more energy efficient.

■ Implementing Outage Management/IVR

Also implemented by Smith were the Outage Management System (OMS) and the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) automated phone system. IVR allows SRE members to access their account information and make a payment by phone at any time, day or night. Mike also wanted to give members the opportunity to report power outages using this automated phone method. To make this happen, SRE first converted its paper mapping system to a computer program and then used a computer model to bring OMS online. Today, members report outages via phone and through the



SmartHub app thanks to OMS. This system helps SRE dispatchers quickly assign a serviceman or crew to an outage and predicts how many members are affected. Members can also opt to receive a call back to verify if power is restored.

■ Promoting Economic Development

Singing River Electric has been an economic development partner in Mississippi for many years, and Mike was instrumental in this effort. SRE applied to be part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) program. Through this program, USDA provides funds to SRE to

re-lend to organizations that are retaining or creating jobs in the communities served. SRE concentrated on industrial, education and health care projects. To date, SRE has awarded more than \$6M in REDLG loans and grants. REDLG funds were also used to create a revolving loan program in 2013. To date, SRE has awarded more than \$1M in low-interest loans locally to foster economic development in Jackson, George and Greene counties.

■ Building Community

Mike was born and raised in George County and has lived his life as advocate for his home town. He has served as Rotary president and could be seen selling tickets at the George County Fair and helping with the annual Christmas parade, as well as led the board of directors for the George County Economic Development Foundation for many years. His work with the United Way for Jackson & George Counties included serving as campaign chairperson, president of the board, and executive board member to ensure both Jackson and George counties were equally represented. However, the activity closest to his heart was his work with his church. Mike and his wife, Selina, devoted much of their lives to music ministry and working with children and youth in their church.



Brian Hughey will assume the responsibilities of general manager and CEO on January 5. Brian has worked at SRE for more than 20 years. He has an electrical engineering degree from Mississippi State University.

"While Mike has served as a professional engineer and CEO, it is his gift as an educator that will leave an everlasting mark on our employees," said Hughey. "We are well positioned for the future because of his vision, leadership, and commitment to our cooperative. I will carry on his vision in this ever-changing industry."

RESTORING POWER FOLLOWING

Hurricane Nate

Hurricane Nate made two landfalls along the Gulf Coast, first in southeast Louisiana late Saturday, Oct. 7, and the second shortly after midnight in Biloxi, Mississippi, on Sunday Oct. 8. A Category 1 storm with wind speeds of 85 miles per hour, Nate was the fastest moving storm cutting its path across the Gulf of Mexico at 23 miles per hour. Singing River Electric's service area was in the northeast quadrant of the storm, which had the potential for tornadoes and increased surge.

"This was a fast moving storm, which meant we had to move faster with our planning," said Singing River Electric General Manager and CEO, Mike Smith.

"Utilizing our weather resources at the University of South Alabama Weather Center, activating our storm plan and working in conjunction with the Electric Cooperatives of Mississippi, we were able to position Singing River Electric in the best possible way to face the storm."

As the winds died down Sunday morning, Singing River Electric's outage management system displayed about 33,000 meters without power. This is slightly less than half of the 74,000 meters served. Additional help had been secured over the previous day and crews from eight Mississippi electric co-ops began arriving on Sunday afternoon to assist. Along

with contract crew members, the additions more than tripled Singing River Electric's outside work force and allowed the co-op to work quickly when making restorations.

By early Monday morning, only 1,500 meters were still without power, and by early evening that same day, power had been restored to all that could be accessed by truck.

"I am particularly proud of our linemen and grateful for the additional help," said Smith. "Many Singing River Electric members never lost service. For the remaining membership, we worked hard, safe and fast to restore power and get everyone back to normal as quickly as possible."



Serviceman Ryan Bounds removes a limb from a power line in the Shipman community in George County.

Hurricane warnings visible to I-10 travelers prior to storm landfall.



System engineer Tom Davis, above, discusses an outage with dispatcher Danielle Byrd. SRE customer service representative Mandye Feranda, right, answers member calls.



A Singing River Electric crews makes storm repairs near Leakesville.



Serviceman James Helton works late in the evening on Sunday to restore service off Gollot Road in Ocean Springs.



Sand Hill serviceman Matt Davis works off Steer Hollow Road in Leakesville after Hurricane Nate.



Thank You!

Mississippi Electric Co-ops who volunteered to assist SRE's efforts after Hurricane Nate:

- Delta Electric
- 4-County Electric
- East Mississippi Electric
- Northcentral Electric
- Magnolia Electric
- Pearl River Electric
- Dixie Electric
- Tombigbee Electric

Apprentice lineman IV Chance Adams works at Coda and Pollock Ferry Road.

The Mississippi Legislature convenes in January for the 2018 session

Singing River Electric salutes Mississippi's senators and representatives who represent our state in Washington, D.C., and at our state capitol in Jackson. We appreciate their dedication and willingness to serve in the spirit of public service to help shape the future of our state.



SENATE



Sen. Dennis DeBar Jr.
District 43: George, Greene and Wayne counties
Address: P.O. Box 1090
Leakesville, MS 39451
Years in Legislature: 7



Sen. Billy Hudson
District 45: Forrest and Perry counties
Address: 27 Troon Circle
Hattiesburg, MS 39401
Years in Legislature: 11



Sen. Joseph M. "Mike" Seymour
District 47: Jackson, Pearl River and Stone counties
Address: 15417 Indian Fork Rd.
Vance, MS 39565
Years in Legislature: 3



Sen. Michael Watson
District 51: Jackson County
Address: P.O. Box 964
Pascagoula, MS 39568
Years in Legislature: 11



Sen. Brice Wiggins
District 52: Jackson County
Address: P.O. Box 922
Pascagoula, MS 39568
Years in Legislature: 7



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



Rep. Shane Barnett
District 86: Greene, Perry and Wayne counties
Address: P.O. Box 621
Waynesboro, MS 39367
Years in Legislature: 3



Rep. Roun McNeal
District 105: George, Perry and Perry counties
Address: P.O. Box 1435
Leakesville, MS 39451
Years in Legislature: 3



Rep. Douglas D. "Doug" McLeod
District 107: George and Stone counties
Address: 1211 Bexley Church Rd.
Lucedale, MS 39452
Years in Legislature: 7



Rep. Manly Barton
District 109: George and Jackson counties
Address: 7905 Pecan Ridge Dr.
Moss Point, MS 39562
Years in Legislature: 7



Rep. Jeramey D. Anderson
District 110: Jackson County
Address: P.O. Box 311
Escatawpa, MS 39562
Years in Legislature: 6



Rep. Charles Busby
District 111: Jackson County
Address: 470 Willow St.
Pascagoula, MS 39567
Years in Legislature: 7



Rep. John O. Read
District 112: Jackson County
Address: 2396 Robert Hiram Dr.
Gautier, MS 39553
Years in Legislature: 26



Rep. Henry B. "Hank" Zuber III
District 113: Jackson County
Address: 429 Hanley Rd.
Ocean Springs, MS 39564
Years in Legislature: 19



Rep. Jeffrey S. Guice
District 114: Harrison and Jackson counties
Address: 1208 Iola Rd.
Ocean Springs, MS 39564
Years in Legislature: 10

AVAILABLE!
A free, interactive legislative app for Mississippi.

The Electric Cooperative of Mississippi offers free versions of the 2018 Legislative Roster. We hope they will be helpful in your involvement with state government.

ECM

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES of Mississippi

Our easy-to-use mobile app provides information on Mississippi's state and federal elected officials. Look for "Mississippi Legislative Roster" in the Apple AppStore. An Android version is also available through Google play.

10 Quick Tips to Avoid High Winter Bills

Looking to lower your bills this winter? Use the 10 tips below to conserve energy.

- 1 Seal air leaks and insulate well to prevent heat from escaping and cold air from entering your home.
- 2 Reduce waste heat by installing a programmable thermostat.
- 3 Turn off lights when not in use.
- 4 Lower your water heater temperature. The Dept. of Energy recommends using the warm setting (120 degrees) during fall and winter months.
- 5 Unplug electronics like kitchen appliances and TVs when you're away.
- 6 Open blinds and curtains during the day to allow sunlight in to warm your home.
- 7 Close blinds and curtains at night to keep cold, drafty air out.
- 8 Use power strips for multiple appliances, and turn off the main switch when you're away from home.
- 9 Wash clothes in cold water, and use cold-water detergent whenever possible.
- 10 Replace incandescent light bulbs with LEDs, which use at least 75 percent less energy.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy

