

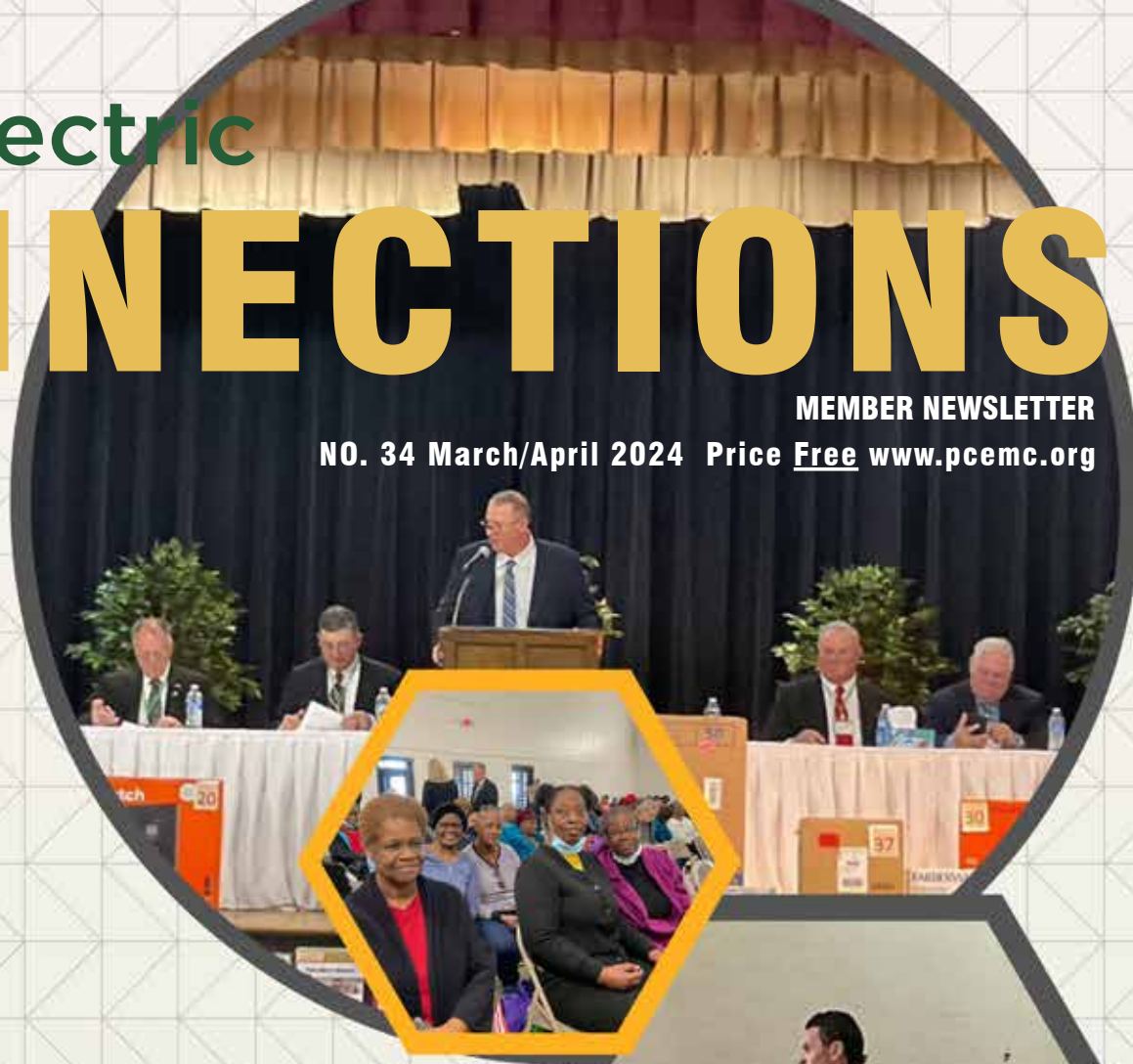


PC Electric

# CONNECTIONS

MEMBER NEWSLETTER

NO. 34 March/April 2024 Price Free [www.pcemc.org](http://www.pcemc.org)



**PC Electric holds its 85th Annual  
Membership Meeting and  
discusses "challenging 2023"**



# CONNECTIONS

MAGAZINE

**No. 34 March/April 2024**

Connections Magazine is the  
official publication of PC Electric

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## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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### **Chad Nichols**

Safety Training & Projects Coordinator

### **Jill Copeland**

Manager of Member Services and  
Communications

# Employee

**MAR**

Rhonda Fortie	38 Years
Chad Brown	17 Years
Chad Nichols	13 Years
Jacob Rice	9 Years
Nick Desormes	2 Years

## Milestones



## Happy Easter!

PC Electric will be closed on  
Friday, March 29, 2024  
for the Easter holiday.

A dispatcher will be on duty to take emergency or outage reports.  
[www.pcemc.org](http://www.pcemc.org)  
225-638-3751

**FEELING LUCKY? LOOK FOR  
YOUR ACCOUNT NUMBER  
TO WIN A BILL CREDIT!**

If you see your account number published  
inside this issue, call PC Electric by April  
30, 2024, to receive a \$25.00 credit on  
your bill. Your account number can be  
found on your billing statement.

## GOOD LUCK!





Consultant fees also put a strain on the coop. Much of that cost stemmed from spending much of the year negotiating a power contract with NextEra Energy.

The energy cooperative has 10,675 members and meters and 60 miles of transmission line.

PC Electric will spend a “sizable amount” of money to replace poles along La. 1 that support (2058800) the transmission lines.

“When those lines go down, it knocks out between 6,000 and 7,000 of your customers,” PC Electric President Jimmy Ewing Jr. said. “We’ve had outages approaching nine hours, which is really bad.”

Some of the lines are up to 50 years old. PC Electric has also spent \$350,000 in Bayou Sorrel and Plaquemine to install underground cables in that area as a means of improving reliability.

PC Electric has corrected that issue by hiring a company to fly drones over the lines and poles and found the problems. When some of those lines go down, it happens in places that are difficult to access.

Other challenges this year have (2098200) come from a drought that lasted nearly six months, as well as excessive heat in the summer and below-normal temperatures in the winter, Ewing said. Those issues have had a crucial effect on rates for electricity. It’s a problem all consumers share, he said.


“Remember, we’ve got to pay our electricity bills, too,” Ewing said.

Several PC Electric employees celebrated service milestones in 2023. These employees were recognized at the end of the meeting:

--Pam Bergeron, 25 years  
--Buster Roy, 20 years  
--Philip Mayer, 15 years

--Keith Derozan 15 years  
--Jill Copeland, 15 years  
--Tyler Bordelon, 15 years

--Jerry Derbes, 15 years



## PC Electric discusses “challenging 2023” during the annual membership meeting

The electrical co-op that serves Pointe Coupee, West Baton Rouge, and Iberville parishes hopes for a better outcome in 2024 after the challenges it faced last year.

Higher bills during December and January led to disgruntled customers, PC Electric General Manager Myron Lambert said during (568901) the energy co-op’s annual meeting Wednesday at the William H. Scott Civic Center in New Roads.

The customer discontent stems from power supplier CLECO/Cajun’s decision to pass along a fuel surcharge for the operating months of November and December.

The move spiked the normal surcharge of 3.5 cents in October to 6.5 cents in December and 9.5 cents in January.

“We do not agree with this charge, and I want you to know right off the bat that the board has met, and we are fighting it,” General Manager Myron Lambert said.  
PCE paid both bills under protest.

The board members expressed their displeasure about the surcharge to Louisiana Public Service Commission members Davante Lewis and Dr. Craig Greene.  
PC Electric paid both bills under protest, Lambert said.

“I can promise you we’re not happy with it, and we don’t agree with it,” he said.

In the past, CLECO/Cajun has opted (1389600) for alternative solutions, but “They chose not to do that this time,” Lambert said.

“CLECO Cajun has chosen to put the money in their pockets and pass it on to you, and we’re fighting for you every minute.” The money will be refunded to the customers if the outcome favors PCE, he said.

In addition, PC Electric had a negative margin of \$883,523 for the fiscal year ending Dec. 31, 2023. Repairs to the transmission lines cost the co-op \$5 million, while the interest was also “pretty substantial,” Secretary-Treasurer Ralph B. Chustz said.



# WHATEVER IT TAKES: POWERING LIFE, FROM A LINeworkERS PERSPECTIVE

*Lineworkers are ranked as one of the 10 most dangerous jobs in the country. The lineworkers at PC Electric work rain or shine, in often challenging conditions to ensure you have reliable electricity. We're celebrating Lineworker Appreciation Day on April 8, 2024. The following column was written by Chad David, one of our many dedicated lineworkers.*

My name is Chad David, and I'm one of 15 lineworkers at PC Electric who work every day in all weather conditions to make sure our community has the power to live their lives. I hope this will give you a better look into what we face and more importantly, why we do it.

**The Danger** - A lot of people know linework is dangerous because we work near high-voltage electricity. Move just the wrong way or lose focus for a split second, and it could be deadly. You have to be aware of your surroundings and the safety of the person next to you. We often work on energized power lines, and you can't always tell they are energized by just looking at them. You're working with an element of danger that requires concentration, and there is no margin for error. The environment compounds the pressure, because when you need power most is usually when the weather is worst. I'm often working in storms with rain, wind, extreme heat and cold, in the dark, or on the side of the road next to fast-moving traffic. Yes, it's dangerous, but that's what we're trained to do.

Many may not realize it, but we undergo years of training before we can officially be called a lineworker. We typically start as a groundperson, helping crews with tools and keeping job sites safe, then we transition to (2541400) apprentice status, which typically spans four years.

After an apprenticeship, with more than 7,000 hours of training under our belts, we transition to journeyman lineworker status—that's when we're considered officially trained in our field.

But the education is ongoing. Lineworkers continuously receive training to stay mindful of safety requirements and up to date on the latest equipment and procedures.

**The Physical Demand** - The daily expectations of a lineworker are physically demanding. Loading heavy materials, climbing poles and in and out of buckets is physical work. A lot of times, we go places the trucks can't, so I might be hiking through the woods loaded down with 40 pounds of personal protective equipment. But that's the job.

**The Sacrifices** - There are some sacrifices to being a lineworker. I'm often first on the scene of an emergency, seeing things that are devastating like car accidents, structure fires and damage from severe storms. You don't know what type of situation you're going to face or when you're going to face it. We get calls at all hours and in the middle of the night. I've missed a lot of family events, but my family is very supportive, and it pays off in the end. We make sure there is nothing standing in the way of helping our friends and neighbors get back to normal life.

My co-op is my second family, and the line crews are a brotherhood (and sisterhood). In this work, you have to depend on the person beside you in life-or-death circumstances. It's a culture of trust, teamwork and service. It's all about keeping the teammate beside you safe and the lights on for everybody else.

I have a lot of pride my work. Even when it's cold and wet, I know I'm working to keep people warm. There's a lot of satisfaction in hearing someone yell "Thank you" from the window after the lights come back on or seeing people flipping the light switches on their porches after an outage is restored.

PC Electric and its employees are members of this community. We live in the same neighborhoods. We shop at the same stores. Our kids go to the same schools. If your lights are off, there is a good chance ours are off too. So, you can trust that we are doing our best to get the lights back on as quickly and safely as possible—so you can get back to normal life.



This air fryer chicken and veggies recipe is super easy to make, full of flavor, and a complete meal in under 20 minutes



### Air fryer chicken and vegetables

1 pound boneless/skinless chicken breast, chopped into bite-size pieces

(approximately 2-3 medium chicken breasts)

1 cup broccoli florets

1 zucchini, chopped

1 cup bell pepper, chopped

1/2 onion, chopped

4 cloves garlic, minced

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 tablespoon Cajun seasoning

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon pepper

1 tablespoon Italian seasoning (or any other spice blend of choice)

1 tablespoon fresh chopped parsley, for garnish

1/2 teaspoon red chili pepper flakes, optional

Chop all the ingredients into bite-size pieces. Cut even-sized pieces (2538500) so the chicken and veggies cook evenly in the air fryer.

Toss chicken and veggies with olive oil and seasoning.

Spread everything in the air fryer and cook for 10 minutes, stirring halfway. Chicken should be golden brown on the edges and cooked through.

### Energy Efficiency Tip!

**Lengthen the life of your clothes dryer with regular cleaning. Clean the lint filter after every load, which improves air circulation and safety. Check the lint trap opening to ensure it's clean. Use a vacuum to (2107301) remove any lint that's fallen inside the opening. If you use dryer sheets, check the lint filter for residue buildup. Remove any residue with hot water and a nylon brush or toothbrush. Over time, dryer sheets can leave a film on the filter, which can affect the performance of the motor.**