Honoring Icons

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High and Buford High. She was introduced by her daughter Leslie Plyler and by Jenny Mills, Buford High School teacher who stated in her nomination, "She instilled a love of literature and writing in me as well as taught me the importance of seeking excellence in every aspect of my life."

Paul McKenzie served LCSD as Director of Research and Development for twenty-five years. Dr. McKenzie was introduced by Lancaster County Councilwoman and Hall of Fame member, Charlene McGriff and Sharon Novinger, Executive Director of Lancaster County Partners for Youth who shared that since moving to Lancaster in 1999, Dr. McKenzie has authored over $185,000,000.00 of APPROVED grants for the betterment of Lancaster County.

Reo King taught for thirty-six years, thirty of which were in LCSD at Kershaw Elementary School. Kelli Overcash, Kershaw Elementary School Principal shared, "She exemplifies a true servant leader, consistently placing the needs of others above her own. She has dedicated her life to uplifting those around her." She founded Mt. Calvary Outreach Summer Program, which now serves up to 100 students ages 3-15 for six to eight weeks each summer.

Nominees for the Lancaster County School District Hall of Fame may come from the following categories with no specific number required in each category: Teacher, Administrator, Board member, Community member (civic leader, politician or friend of education). Nominations are open annually May through the end of January each year.

Ten international teachers who will be returning to their home country after five years of service were recognized with a Service Award.

Forty-seven retirees were honored for their commitment to excellence. The retirees included individuals from March 1, 2025 through February 28, 2026.

The celebration was held at the Lancaster Multipurpose Building located at 870 Roddey Drive, Lancaster, South Carolina. The Lancaster High School JROTC led the Pledge of Allegiance and presented the colors. Chiffon Dinkins, LCSD Receptionist performed the National Anthem. Superintendent, Dr. Norris Williams welcomed guests and invited them to dine on a meal catered by My Sistas and I Catering, LLC. Following the meal, international teachers with five years of service received a Service Award. Retirees received a Tree of Life Bookend with an inscribed plate that read "In appreciation for your timeless service and dedication". Dr. Carl Carpenter, II, Chief Human Resources Officer, Dr. Williams and Mr. Melvin Stroble, LCSD Board Chair congratulated retirees and thanked them for their commitment to serving our students and community. Mr. Stroble closed the evening by thanking each individual for their contributions and encouraging them to remain connected by following the district on Facebook and Instagram and by downloading the Lancaster County School District app. The evening showcased how connections bring us together and make a lasting impact.

Kershaw County Library Bribes Teens with Free Movies, Pizza, and Survival Skills

CAMDEN, SC — In a bold attempt to pry teenagers away from their phones, the Kershaw County Library has officially launched its Teen Summer Reading Challenge. The library's master plan is shockingly simple: read just three books this summer and walk away with free movie tickets to Camden's Little Theater. Participants can track down an old-fashioned paper book by visiting a local branch or scouring the online catalog to have specific titles delivered with the click of a button. For those who absolutely refuse to let go of their devices, a library card also unlocks free access to thousands of ebooks and audiobooks through the Libby and hoopla apps. Yes, reading on a screen still counts.

To ensure local teens have the chance to socialize in the real world, the library is also hosting a series of exclusive, teen-only events this June:

- Tabletop Role-Playing Games (TTRPG) Night
  - What: A crash course in Dungeons & Dragons, Pathfinder, and indie one-shots followed by live gameplay. There will be free pizza, because the library knows exactly how to get teenagers to show up. Register at markw@kershawcountylibrary.org
  - When: Friday, June 5 | 6:00 PM – 10:00 PM
  - Where: Camden Library, 1304 Broad Street
- Adulting Fair
  - What: A drop-in event featuring local experts offering advice on the transition to adulthood—think car maintenance, money management, and job hunting. Prizes will be awarded to those brave enough to contemplate their future responsibilities.
  - When: Monday, June 8 | 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM
  - Where: Camden Library, 1304 Broad Street
- Ahhh, Nature! Guided Walk
  - What: Disconnect from the Wi-Fi and explore 800 acres of preserved wilderness at the Nature as Teacher Preserve. Register at jillf@kershawcountylibrary.org
  - When: Wednesday, June 24 | 9:00 AM
  - Where: Nature As Teacher, 247 Chestnut Ferry Road

For more information on these events or to join the challenge, visit the Kershaw County Library website or stop by any location, including the Camden, Elgin, or Bethune branches.

Providence Baptist Church Vacation Bible School

3334 Providence Road

Kershaw SC 29067

May 24 – 28, 2026 from 6pm-8pm

Call for information: 803-669-1851

AG & ART TOUR

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as part of Lancaster County's Ag + Art Tour on Saturday, May 9.

From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., visitors can purchase homemade jams, jellies, and soaps made by Catawba artist Marie George of Esaw Yaksu (River Mother) and pick up a "make and take" corn husk doll kit, complete with instructions to assemble on the go.

"A centuries-old tradition originating among Native American tribes, corn husk dolls were originally made among Native American tribes as children's toys," said Center Assistant Curator Sharon Simmers-Norton. "Once the crop itself was used, nothing was wasted, and the dry corn cob leaves provided a readily available agricultural material."

At 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. USC Lancaster Professor and Master Gardener Intern Claudia Heinemann-Priest will give tours of the Medicine Wheel and Three Sisters Gardens growing in the Red Rose Park across from the Center, discussing the importance of the plants and the roles they played in supporting nutrition and curing ailments. Plantings in the garden currently include mountain mint, echinacea, marigold, pennyroyal, St. John's wart, and more.

"Among our 12 medicinal plants, we've also planted the 'Three Sisters' crops of corn, beans, and squash, which is an agriculturally genius method," said Heinemann-Priest. "The corn serves as a 'heavy feeder' that provides a tall trellis, the beans utilize rhizobium bacteria to 'fix' nitrogen from the air into the soil to feed the corn, and the squash leaves act as a 'living mulch' that shades the soil to keep it moist and suppress weeds."

Admission to the event, as well as the Native American Studies Center, is free and open to the public. For more information about the Center, call (803) 313-7172 or visit www.nativeamericanstudies.org.

Economy - Santee Cooper seeks to raise electric rates more than 9% over next two years Meanwhile, Dominion is seeking permission to raise rates starting in July

By: Jessica Holdman
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Customers of South Carolina's state owned utility could again see their monthly power bills rise — by more than $13 a month over the next two years for the standard residential customer — as the early costs of a proposed natural gas plant and other construction projects come on the books.

Santee Cooper's governing board voted unanimously Friday to begin the process of raising rates for the utility's more than 220,000 direct customers, located in Berkeley, Georgetown and Horry counties.

Under the proposal, residential customers' rates would increase 4.7% starting Feb. 1 of next year and another 4.6% in 2028, according to a statement from the utility.

Industrial and commercial customers would see rate hikes between 2.1% and 2.9% each of the two years.

These rates do not apply to the roughly 800,000 customers of the state's rural power cooperatives, which buy electricity from Santee Cooper through a separate contract.

"These proposed changes are necessary to allow Santee Cooper to continue delivering the reliable, sustainable electricity that our customers expect," CEO Jimmy Staton said in a statement. "We understand customers are concerned about rising prices generally, and we will keep our costs as low as possible while also guaranteeing system dependability for the future."

To keep the lights on for a growing customer base, Santee Cooper executives say they need to build more power plants, including a planned new 2,200-megawatt power plant. That gas plant will be built in cooperation with Dominion Energy, on the site of a former coal plant along the Edisto River near Canadys.

But until the Canadys plant can be built, Santee Cooper has had to buy power from other producers "to bridge the gap," Chief Financial Officer Tami Wilson told the board Friday.

That power is expensive, Wilson said, and the utility expects to spend nearly $90 million more on the open market in 2027 compared to what it has in the budget for 2026.

In December, a legislative panel gave Santee Cooper the initial nod to begin purchasing equipment for the Lowcountry gas plant and two other projects, which the utility will begin asking customers to pay for.

The utility was OK'd to borrow up to $700 million:

$120 million for the Canadys plant
$300 million for a pair of natural gas turbines on the site of an existing coal plant near Georgetown
$270 million for the expansion of an existing natural gas plant in Anderson County

That spending is part of what's driving the rate increase, along with higher prices across the board for operations and maintenance, spokeswoman Mollie Gore said.

Santee Cooper will hold public comment meetings across multiple locations on July 27-28 and on Aug. 31, the last day customers will have to make comments.

The board will vote Oct. 30 on whether to enact an increase.

Santee Cooper's residential bills already climbed about 13% last year. Residential customers who used 1,000 kilowatt-hours a month — considered the industry standard — were asked to pay about $16 more per month after the utility came out of a court-mandated rate freeze.

Power customers had sued the Moncks Corner-based utility after cost overruns and mismanagement led to the 2017 abandonment of the V.C. Summer nuclear expansion project. That lawsuit led to the five-year rate freeze that began in 2020.

Since then, Santee Cooper has added 4,270 new customers between January 2025 and April 2026.

As for the Canadys plant, Santee Cooper and Dominion still need the permission of state regulators before it can begin construction.

Of great concern to customers is a doubling of cost estimates for the gas plant. Those estimates now sit at $5 billion — up from a $2.5 billion told to senators last August.

That early estimate was based on historical costs to build similar units. But prices have increased dramatically since then as utility companies globally rush to build similar plants, Staton said in December.

The state Public Service Commission is expected to issue its decision next month, Dominion Energy spokeswoman Rhonda O'Banion told the SC Daily Gazette.

Meanwhile, Dominion is in the midst of its own application for a rate hike.

If approved by regulators, Dominion's South Carolina residential customers who use 1,000 kilowatt-hours a month — considered the industry standard — would see another $20 tacked on to their current monthly bill, Dominion's regulatory manager John Raftery previously told the Gazette.

That would take average bills from about $157 a month to just shy of $177, starting in July 2026. This does not include potential increases for cost of fuel, which can be added to bills along the way.

The next and final public hearings in Dominion's case are scheduled for 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. on May 12 at the Public Service Commission's office in Columbia.

More ticks to avoid

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treated for it each year, according to the CDC."

A 'questing' tick perches itself on the edge of a branch and
waits for a host to walk past. (Entomology Today photo)

Although most people know that ticks are tremendously adept at attaching themselves to people and animals, many may not know why. Understanding how ticks "find" their victims can be a first line of defense, simply by knowing where to look.

Ticks seeking a host are most often found in ankle-high vegetation where they exhibit a behavior known as "questing." To quest, all ticks do is anchor themselves to the tips of grasses, leaves, or shrubs and extend their front legs and wait for an animal or human to walk by, according to Entomology Today. Ticks also like to "link" together, so they can fall on a host in a chain, bite and feed.

To prevent tick bites, experts suggest walking "in the middle of paths and wearing light-colored clothing treated with the insecticide permethrin," Stobbe adds. "And use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellents."

The risk of disease can be reduced if ticks are found early and removed immediately. "It's not necessary to go to a doctor unless you think the tick has been on you for days or if you develop a rash or other symptoms," Stobbe reports.

Written by Heather Close

Kershaw County Library Launches 2026 Summer Reading with School Support

Kershaw County, SC — The Kershaw County Library is launching its 2026 youth summer reading program with support from the Kershaw County School District, aiming to keep students reading and on track during the summer.

This year's countywide One Book experience features The Wild Robot by Peter Brown. The school district is helping to promote the program and has secured a grant to provide copies of the picture book The Wild Robot on the Island for younger readers in district summer camps, expanding early literacy access.

The library will also distribute free books to children with the greatest need. Families will explore the book's central themes of community, friendship, and nature through summer reading and hands-on experiences.

"We fully support reading during the summer. Continuing to read while school is out is essential for helping students stay on track and return ready to learn,
" said Matia Goodwin of Kershaw
County School District.

Reading Challenge Details:

Children can participate by reading books of their choice. Those who complete the challenge earn a free book to keep.

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Ages 0–5th grade: Win with 10 (read 10 books).
Grades 6–8: Strive for 5 (read 5 books).
Copies of The Wild Robot are available in print, ebook, and audiobook formats.

Summer Events:

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Revolutionary Day — May 29, 10 AM – 1 PM A celebration of community with history and activities.
Go Wild Messtival — May 30, 10 AM – 2 PM A playful kickoff focused on friendship and making new connections.
Go Wild Summer Celebration — June 20, 11 AM – 5 PM A day centered on nature with guided walks and outdoor exploration.
SC Aquarium: Mountains to the Sea — July 23 An interactive program highlighting nature and sea life.

Kershaw County Library serves the community via branches in Camden, Elgin, and Bethune, and its mobile bookmobile.

For more information, visit www.kershawcountylibrary.org.