

Haiti lineman Wilbert Joseph learns new skills from SLECA employees

Since 1961, America's electric co-ops have been exporting the most successful rural electrification program ever developed. The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) International Foundation, working with American member-owned electric utilities such as SLECA, have combined forces to electrify many of the poorest towns in the Western Hemisphere.

Teams of volunteer linemen and engineers go to locations such as Pignon, a small town in north-central Haiti, to develop an electric distribution system and train local people to operate it. Among those pioneer linemen is Wilbert Joseph, who recently completed a two-week training session at SLECA, where he observed and worked with veteran line and service crews to acquire new skills. While SLECA's outstanding service and safety records made it an ideal training site, it was the French-speaking skills of several SLECA employees as well as General Manager Mike Guidry that clinched their selection.

While there are some differences between the Creole French that Joseph speaks and the Cajun French spoken in parts of south Louisiana, "we managed to make ourselves understood," declares SLECA 30-year veteran employee Eric Lapeyrouse who became Wilbert's close friend as well as translator during his two-week stay.

Joseph is one of four employees at the only electric cooperative serving about 500 members on the island of Haiti. Created with the aid of Hosean International Ministries, the missionary group helped Cooperative Electrique de Pignon (COOPELEP) get started about four years ago when volunteers from Minnesota cooperatives arrived to help set 400 poles, build the system and train local people to operate it.

Pignon Pastor Edmund Sainval notes consumers at the co-op have experienced a 60-75 percent savings over conventional fuels once needed for personal generators, lanterns and candles. Businesses can now stay open longer while local residents can use three internet cafes and attend evening church services.

Joseph explains in a three-way interview with SLECA employee Eric Lapeyrouse translating that there's many differences between co-ops in Haiti and in Louisiana. The two used service vehicles donated to build COOPELEP in 2005 no longer work so any work on the system has to be done manually. Wilbert got an opportunity to learn about three-phase commercial service as well as underground systems at SLECA, neither of which is now available at the Haiti co-op, but will be essential to attract commercial development.

Initially, power distributed by the cooperative came from one large generator donated by Donald Trump that was operated for limited periods daily, but over the past four years another generator has been added, expanding electric use and greatly improving the quality of life for cooperative members.

Joseph hopes to return some day to Louisiana with his wife and two sons. "Life is very different in America," he observes, recalling a visit to New Orleans and how linemen use rubber gloves to work on "live" power lines while the power lines in Haiti are de-energized to perform work. He was also surprised by the colder weather since he doesn't even own a winter coat and very much enjoyed Louisiana food and hospitality.

While training at SLECA, Joseph stayed at the Bed and Breakfast operated by Elaine and Lawrence Bush, the in-laws of SLECA Manager of Finance Roy Landry. Elaine also speaks French and Joseph praised her cooking skills.

Though Joseph returned to Haiti on Dec. 13, SLECA General Manager Mike Guidry, who also serves as an officer on the NRECA Board of Directors, declares, "The NRECA International Program exports the self-help success of rural electrification across the globe. Co-ops such as SLECA provide material, vehicles and training that enable others to improve their quality of life in a process that began in rural America 70 years ago. To Joseph and his fellow cooperative members, we here at SLECA are proud to have been his hosts and wish him and his co-op all the best." "Bon Chance, mom amis!"



Wilbert Joseph and Eric Lapeyrouse

It's a Kid's Christmas Drawing Contest winner

AnnaRose M. Serigny, daughter of Amber Serigny who resides in Ashland Subdivision off Grand Caillou Road in Houma, was the winner of SLECA's seventh annual "It's a Kid's Christmas" Drawing Contest. In addition to a \$100 gift certificate from Southland Mall, AnnaRose's drawing was featured on an outdoor billboard courtesy of Lamar Advertising for the holiday season (Acct. No. 2654483800). AnnaRose is shown receiving her gift certificate from SLECA's Manager of Member Services and Communications Joe Ticheli.

Hundreds visit Christmas open house

Hundreds of children visited SLECA's Amelia office on Dec. 9 where Santa greeted them with refreshments and picture taking. Santa was originally scheduled to visit the Houma office on Dec. 11, however, due to inclement weather conditions he went directly to the schools where he presented four \$25 Wal-Mart gift cards and other goodies to the children. He also presented two gift cards and goodies at SLECA's Christmas Open House at the Amelia office.

SLECA News



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Alexander Doyle, President
South Louisiana Electric Cooperative Assn.
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Qualifying for SLECA's Board of Directors set for February

Qualifying for SLECA's Board of Directors for Co-op districts 4, 5 and 6 will get under way in February.

Qualified SLECA members who wish to seek election as a director of District 4, 5 and 6 must file their applications at SLECA's main office at 2028 Coteau Road, Houma from 7:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. from Monday, Feb. 2, through Thursday, Feb. 5. Applications can also be filed Friday, Feb. 6, from 7:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Elections will be held at the district meetings (Acct. No. 4352374205).

Only members who officially qualify will be eligible to run for director: nominations will not be allowed from the floor at the district meetings. To be eligible, a member must qualify for the district in which they reside.

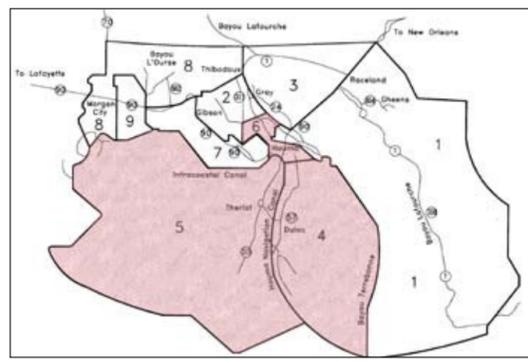
The District 4 meeting will be held at the Grand Caillou VFW Hall in Dulac on Monday, March 23.

The District 5 meeting will be held at the Bayou Dularge Recreation Center Gymnasium in Theriot on Wednesday March 25.

The District 6 meeting will be held at the Mulberry Baptist Church in Houma on Tuesday, March 24.

Meeting registration begins at 6 p.m. and closes at 7 p.m. Only those in line at registration closing time can complete registration to vote. All district meetings begin at 7 p.m.

The details and guidelines for qualifying for the board of directors are outlined in the accompanying excerpts from the bylaws.



SLECA By-Laws

being asked to resign, he will be given thirty (30) days additional written notice; provided, further, any party affected by the foregoing may make arrangements with the Cooperative to pay any arrearages on a work-out plan approved by the Board so as to remain a member in good standing and thus eligible to be either a candidate for election to the Board or to remain on the Board. (Amended at a meeting of the membership held on April 28, 1988.) (Amended at a meeting of the membership held on April 10, 1992.)

(C.) Blood relatives of employees of the Cooperative shall not be permitted to qualify and run for the Board of Directors. Blood relatives are defined as direct ascendants, descendants and collateral relations; that is, mother, father, son, daughter, grandfather, grandmother, brother, sister, aunt and uncle. (Amended at a meeting of the members held on April 26, 1984).

SECTION 4 (A). NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF DIRECTORS. Not less than twenty (20) days prior to any meeting in which directors are to be elected, the Board of Directors shall serve notice of a separate meeting of the members of each district from which directors will be elected to be held at a suitable place in such district for the purpose of selecting a director to represent such district and the members located within such district, the notice of such meeting shall be delivered to each member located in such district in the same manner as provided in Section 3, of Article III, and shall indicate the district to which such member belongs. The notice shall state names of the persons running for director and shall state the exact time and place of the meeting. The meeting shall, however, be opened for discussion of any other matters pertaining to the business of the Cooperative, regardless of whether or not such matters were listed in the notice of the meeting; and recommendations with respect thereto may be submitted to the Board of Directors of the entire membership.

The district meeting shall be called to order by the director representing the district or by another designated representative of the Board of Directors, or in his absence, by any member residing within the district. The members shall then proceed to elect a chairman, who shall be someone other than a director, and who shall appoint a secretary to act for the duration of the meeting. Forty members residing in the district shall constitute a quorum. Members must be present to vote. In the event no quorum exists at the district meeting, the election from that district will be held at the regular annual meeting. However, only members from any district lacking a quorum at the district level would be allowed to constitute a quorum for that district (a quorum being a minimum of 40 members) at the annual meeting and vote for the candidate(s) who previously qualified for director as provided for herein. It will not be necessary for there to be a quorum at the regular annual meeting to conduct the district election, provided that district has a quorum of at least 40 of its members present at the regular annual meeting. (Amended at a meeting of the membership held on April 28, 1988.)

SECTION 4 (B). ELECTION OF DIRECTORS. Nominations for directors shall not be allowed from the floor at the district meeting. The election for directors from the various

districts shall take place at least twenty (20) days and not more than forty-five (45) days prior to the annual meeting and newly elected directors shall take office and be sworn in at the annual meeting. Notice of the time for directors to qualify as a candidate for director from a district shall be given to the members at least ten (10) days prior to the time of qualification. (Amended at a meeting of the membership held on May 29, 1986.)

SECTION 4 (C). PROCEDURE FOR VOTING FOR DIRECTORS. The Board of Directors is authorized and directed to enact policies to insure and protect the sanctity of the ballot at all elections for members of the Board of Directors. Voting shall be by secret ballot and can be by voting machine or by ballot box. No member or employee of the Cooperative shall be authorized to fill out the ballot of another member or assist another member with his or her ballot. If a member needs assistance in casting his ballot, this assistance may only be furnished by a person designated to do so by the Board of Directors of this Cooperative and approved by the candidates in the election. After the member has received his official ballot he shall be directed forthwith to the ballot box to cast his vote. No unauthorized person shall be in the voting area during the time that members are receiving their ballots and casting their votes.

The candidate receiving a plurality of the vote shall be declared as the elected director from the district. In the event there are more than two candidates and the top two candidates receive the same number of votes there shall be a second election between the top two candidates. In the event of another tie the Board of Directors shall select a director from among said candidates who were tied. In the event there are only two candidates and there is a tie there shall be no second election and the Board of Director shall select the director from among said candidates who were tied. (Amended at a meeting of the membership held on May 29, 1986.)

SECTION 4 (D). PENALTIES FOR VIOLATING THE VOTING PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THESE BYLAWS AND THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS. Any employee of this Cooperative who violates any of the election procedures established by these bylaws and by the board of Directors shall be discharged from his employment. Any member of this Cooperative who violates any of the election procedures established by these bylaws and by the Board of Directors may be terminated in his membership after a hearing concerning the charges against him before the Board of Directors. Any member may bring charges against another member for violation of election rules. Thereafter the accused member shall be informed in writing of the charges at least ten days prior to the hearing before the Board of Directors at which the charges are to be considered and shall have an opportunity to be heard in person or by counsel and to present evidence in his own behalf.

The question of whether or not to terminate the membership for violation of the election rules shall be voted on by the Board of Directors and any decision made by the Board of Directors may be appealed to the membership at either the annual or special meeting. (Amended at a special meeting of the members held on August 19, 1971.)

SLECA Christmas lighting contest winners announced

Nine area residents from Houma, Gheens, Donner, Gray and Morgan City are the winners of South Louisiana Electric Cooperative Association's (SLECA) annual Christmas Lighting Contest. A total of 29 entries were received in SLECA's nine service districts. Judging took place on December 22nd. Each of the nine winners will receive a \$100.00 cash prize. Every year the contest is open to SLECA residential consumers and entries are judged on workmanship, originality, color, scale and proportion, suitability to Christmas and neatness. (Act. No. 1453606404)

This year's winners are: Teddy Duplantis, 5678 Shrimpers Row, Houma; Severn Berger, 482 Bayou Dularge Rd., Houma; Diana and Joe Talamo, 105 Del Rey Blvd., Houma; Cathy Authement, 121 Nottingham Trail, Houma; Melvin Guidroz, 128 Cypress Villa Lane, Gheens; Beverly McDonald, 101 Oak St., Donner; Norris Ledet, Jr., 301 Maxine Blvd., Gray; Carl Gaudet, Jr., 1288 Hwy 662, Morgan City and Gilda Henderson, 1011 Ciro St., Morgan City.

"Every year the judging gets tougher and tougher," said SLECA General Manager Michael J. Guidry. "Some residents start planning their Christmas decorations months in advance in preparation for the contest."

Guidry said that it's unbelievable how much work goes into these holiday displays. The decorations get bigger and more elaborate each year.

"You don't have to travel far to get into the Christmas spirit," said Guidry. "It's right here in our own backyard."

SLECA is a locally owned electric cooperative serving over 16,000 consumers in Assumption, Lafourche, St. Mary, St. Martin and Terrebonne parishes and is a Touchstone Energy Cooperative.

Across the Board

November 10, 2008

Present were directors Alexander Doyle, president; David Luke, vice-president; Brian Rivet, secretary; Terry Trahan, treasurer; Tracy Duval, J. D. Boudreaux, Eroy Acosta, Roger Dale DeHart, Larry J. Daigle and Lloyd Gibson, advisor. Also attending were Michael Guidry, general manager; James Funderburk, attorney, and Penny Antill, benefits administrator supervisor.

After the invocation and pledge, the board approved 123 new members, the minutes of the October 6th regular board meeting and the ALEC report (Acct. No. 8052788700).

The financial report, approved by the board, highlighted interest earnings, cash on hand, rate comparison showing SLECA having the lowest rates compared to other area utilities, line loss, kilowatt hour sales for the month, cumulative sales to date, cost of service, equity, TIER, electric and total revenue versus cost per kilowatt hour.

Following an update on upcoming schools, meetings and events, Mr. Guidry reviewed the following items: (1) SLECA continues to have the lowest rates in the area; (2) NRG refused Exelon Corporation's all-stock bid of \$6.2BB; (3) Co-op loan availability from CFC has not been adversely affected by the recent financial difficulties due to CFC's strong credit rating; (4) A recent article discussed the pros and cons of burying power lines but, at this time, the technology doesn't exist at a price that makes sense"; (5) Bill Schmidt, CEO of Beauregard Electric, is resigning, effective year-end, to accept the CEO position at Polk-Burnett EMC in Centuria, Wisconsin; (6) The formula rate plan that allows the cooperative to operate within a "range of revenue" may not work very well for SLECA; (7) SLECA and other cooperatives are considering a hurricane rate rider to recoup some of the expenses incurred as a result of hurricanes and to build up "storm funds;" (8) An assessment and cost estimates have been completed to restore power to the camp lines; (9) A contractor has been hired to build a line to the new Energy Center development in Gray and to do other, primarily storm-related, work and a service crew will be contracted to help out SLECA's servicemen; (10) SLECA will attempt to have FEMA assist in making line improvements to deter future storm damages; (11) SLECA has resumed sending disconnect notices and will soon begin collection activity but will still work with individual members; (12) The recent NRECA study detailing data collected regarding income levels for consumers by co-op zip codes and weighted by co-op membership in those areas show that SLECA's area is at an average income below the national average; and (13) SLECA experienced a cumulative fuel savings of \$5,072,088 as a result of the board's decision to go with the actual fuel rate instead of a fixed rate.

Following approval of the manager's report and expenses and the safety report, the board ratified a resolution giving Mr. Doyle authority to sign a mineral lease with Petroleum Land Services on behalf of SLECA.

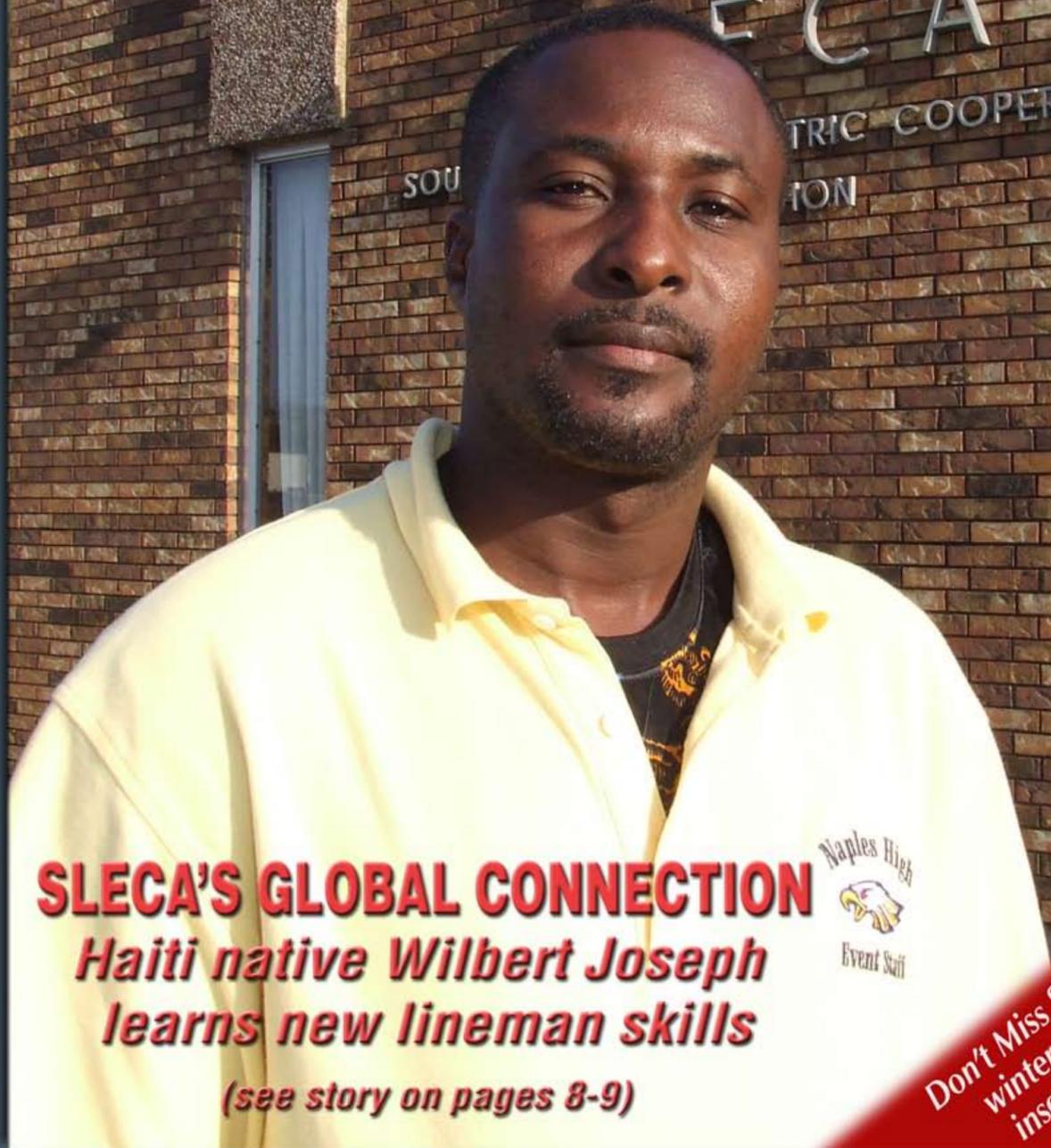
The board then approved the attorney's report and fees and the incentive and storm consideration as presented by the general manager.

The meeting was then adjourned. You may obtain copies of the minutes by contacting SLECA, P.O. Box 4037, Houma, LA 70361 or by calling (985) 876-6880 or 1-800-256-8826.

Your Cooperative Connection

LOUISIANA COUNTRY

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SLECA'S GLOBAL CONNECTION

*Haiti native Wilbert Joseph
learns new lineman skills*

(see story on pages 8-9)



Don't Miss SLECA's
winter savings
insert in this
issue