

# POWER

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COVER: photo by Sara Hunter Photo LLC

**TAKE NOTE****Scholarship Applications****WILL MAIL IN YOUR FEBRUARY BILL**

**TWENTY SCHOLARSHIPS VALUED AT \$2,000 EACH WILL BE AWARDED AT OUR ANNUAL MEETING ON JUNE 14.** Applications for the 2025 scholarship drawing will be mailed with every SLEMCO bill in February. The entry deadline is Thursday, May 15, at 4:30 p.m. in the Lafayette SLEMCO office; mailed entries must be postmarked by May 15.

When you receive the form, fill out the application if you, your spouse, your dependent child or legal ward plan to attend an accredited university or trade school in Louisiana this fall. *Lucky Number: 1303431500.*

Due to Internal Revenue Service rules, applicants who are dependent children must not turn 24 during 2025. The IRS prohibits parents from claiming children as dependents during the year they turn 24, even if they are full-time students.

Any applicants turning 24 during 2025 must have their own SLEMCO account. They can't be sponsored by a parent or guardian, but they may be sponsored by a spouse, since all SLEMCO accounts are considered community property under state law.

If you need more than one application, photocopy both sides of the one you receive in your February bill or download one from [www.slemco.com](http://www.slemco.com). Only one application per student will be accepted so everyone has the same chance to win. Duplicate entries will be voided. Make sure to fill out the application completely and sign the form where indicated. Eligibility requirements are listed on each form, so please read them carefully.

Questions about SLEMCO scholarships should be directed to Tonya Chenier at 896-5384. Completed applications should be mailed to the SLEMCO Scholarship Program, 2727 SE Evangeline Trwy, Lafayette, LA 70508. *Lucky Number: 4516269900.* ☎

**Entries received after the May 15 deadline will be ineligible.  
One entry per applicant will be accepted.  
Duplicates will be discarded.**

✳ Only SLEMCO customers, their spouses, children or legal wards are eligible to win a scholarship. A member cannot sponsor grandchildren, nephews, nieces or friends except as their legal guardian. Children cannot be considered a dependent if they will turn 24 years of age anytime during 2025.

✳ The scholarship monies can be used by undergraduate students to attend, on a full-time basis, any public or private Louisiana university or trade school as accredited by the University of Louisiana System, Louisiana State University System, Southern University System, Louisiana Community and Technical College System, Louisiana Board of Regents Proprietary School System, Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities or the US Department of Education.

✳ All applicants must have graduated from high school with at least a "C" average. Continuing college or trade school students must have at least a 2.0 cumulative grade point average (on a 4.0 scale). Graduate or doctoral students do not qualify. Scholarship winners can only win once.

✳ The sponsoring SLEMCO member must have been a member for the past 12 consecutive months, as of May 15, 2025.

The applicant is not required to attend the annual meeting on June 14, but the sponsoring member or member's spouse must attend to claim a scholarship. If a member or spouse is applying, either spouse may attend the meeting to claim the scholarship.

# Carl Comeaux

*Dedicated to serving our communities*

**LAFAYETTE PARISH BOARD MEMBER CARL COMEAUX OF CARENCRO IS A** local business leader who sees fundamental similarities between his own company and SLEMCO.

“Whether a company is in automated data acquisition and control like mine is, or electricity like SLEMCO is, wise and prudent business practices are equally as important,” he explained. “Good business is good business, no matter the industry.”

He sees SLEMCO as a pillar of Acadiana communities, standing tall on an impressive mix of “old-school” values combined with progressive, forward-thinking goals and objectives.

“Everyone has good things to say about SLEMCO,” he said. “We’re old-school and new-school. We stand firm on the values that make up our history – value, honesty, integrity and dedication to community, all the while embracing best practices, changes and challenges that exist in a complex, modern electric distribution industry.”

He learned about SLEMCO as a youngster, from his father, who faithfully looked for his account number hidden in each issue of SLEMCO Power, and attended our Annual Meetings.

“My Dad was what I called a “6 a.m.-er,” he fondly recalled. “He’d drag me to the annual meeting with him back when I had

little interest to be there. Today, I am the 6 a.m.-er at the Annual Meeting each year.”

Comeaux takes his responsibility as a board member seriously, as he works with fellow board members to make certain that we do what it takes to provide a reliable source of electric power to our customers.

“As a board, our highest priority is to balance reliable, high-quality service to our customers at fair and reasonable rates,” he explained. “Today’s electric industry is very complex and, more importantly, very competitive,” he added. “Demand for power is growing exponentially as new technology like data centers come online. It’s our responsibility as a board to make sure that the market conditions of supply and demand for retail power don’t adversely affect our customers.”

His dedication to SLEMCO and his role in guarding its legacy, culture and values don’t come without a return reward for Comeaux.

“I’m actually very thankful for Carl’s position on SLEMCO’s Board,” said his wife, Jenny Comeaux. “He’s often so focused on his own work at Energy Solutions Technology LLC, that he doesn’t often get outside of his “box” of focusing on work. Being on SLEMCO’s Board has given him the opportunity to do that, learn about the electric industry and share his experience and business success with SLEMCO.”



Carl and Jenny Comeaux

Photo by Mary Laurent

“I’m a life-long learner,” explained Carl. “I’ve always been eager to learn new things. My position on the board has allowed me to learn about the electric industry and given me the opportunity to share a different business perspective on important SLEMCO issues and vice versa.”

If recent history is any indication, the future of the electric industry should give him plenty of chances to learn. He and the rest of the board are always looking ahead to see what challenges and opportunities are in both the near and distant future.

“Our priority as a board is to position SLEMCO for success in handling future changes coming to our industry, no matter who holds the energy reigns in Washington, DC or the State of Louisiana,” he said.

Carl and his wife Jenny have two grown children and two grandchildren, with a third expected in a few weeks. The family enjoys traveling together and Carl has hunted a lot in the past, but as most of us can understand, when asked what they enjoy most when not working, they smiled broadly and said in unison, “Grandbabies.” ☺



**What can you do with SmartHub?**

Go Paperless

View your electric bill anytime

Sign up for automatic payments

## PAYING YOUR BILL HAS NEVER BEEN EASIER

### MAKE AUTOMATED CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS ANYTIME

SLEMCO residential customers can pay their bill with a credit or debit card through our automated system by calling 1-855-938-3582. Payments post within 15 minutes to your account. *Lucky Number: 4502537200.*

### PAY BY BANK DRAFT OR CREDIT/DEBIT CARD

It’s fast, easy, convenient and available to all customers. SLEMCO’s A.P.O. (Automatic Payment Options) Program saves you time by automatically paying your SLEMCO bill. (residential customers payment by credit/debit card only).

### DRIVE UP TO OUR KIOSK

Visit one of two 24-hour kiosks in our Lafayette office drive-thru to pay your bill with a credit card, cash or electronic check. ☺

Visit your SmartHub account or register as a new user at <https://slemco.smarthub.coop/ui/#/login>. You can also download the SmartHub app for your smartphone.



**LUCKY NUMBER WINNERS!**

### FIND YOUR ACCOUNT NUMBER AND WIN \$100 CREDITS!

WE’VE HIDDEN 10 SLEMCO ACCOUNT NUMBERS IN THIS ISSUE OF THE MAGAZINE. Look to see if you find your SLEMCO account number. If you do, call Michelle Courville at (337) 896-2504. Once she verifies you as a winner, she’ll credit \$100 to your SLEMCO account. *Lucky Number: 2034812506.* ☺



# ROAD WARRIORS

## There and Back

**O**n Sept. 12, SLEMCO relief crews traveled to Houma, working side-by-side with SLECA crews for a week to help restore power in the wake of **Hurricane Francine**. *Lucky Number: 3056480001.*

Sept. 26 marked a second storm, **Hurricane Helene**, making landfall in Florida as a Category 4 hurricane near the mouth of the Aucilla River in the Big Bend area. SLEMCO line workers left early morning bound for Florida to assist Talquin Electric Cooperative in their power restoration efforts. Thirty-seven line workers with varying skill sets, including overhead and underground line construction and tree-trimming, bucket trucks, digger-derricks, material handlers, off-road equipment, pole trailers and utility trailers were sent to help workers safely and efficiently restore power. On Sept. 29, crews moved a little farther east to assist Suwannee Valley Electric Cooperative, where they battled to replace poles, wire and other equipment so power could be restored. Suwannee Valley restored power to 47% of their 28,000 members. Our team of 37 joined over 1,100 more storm warriors to get life back to normal in the Big Bend area of Florida.

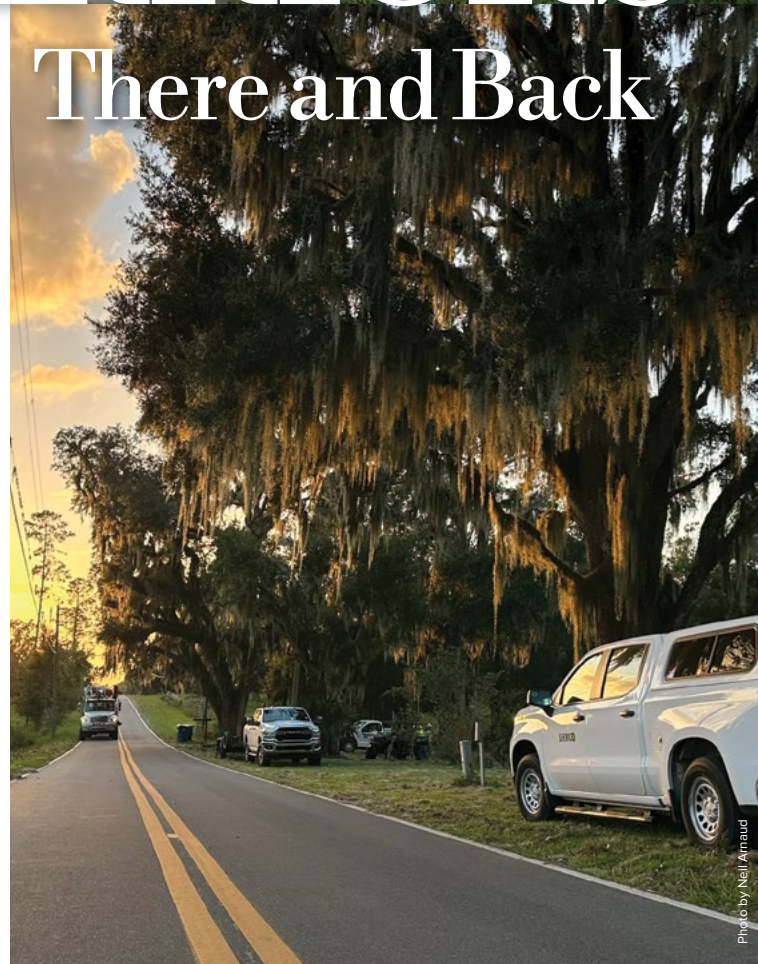




Photo by Sara Hunter Photo LLC

SLEMCO's team, along with nearly 1,450 more from other mutual aid crews, made steady progress at Suwannee Valley Electric Cooperative. When asking a lineman how they were doing, with a smile still in his voice he said, "It feels just like home over here at Suwannee Valley." While it's wonderful to help our neighbors in need, it's even better when your mission is successfully accomplished. Our storm team returned home safe and sound on Oct. 4. *Lucky Number: 3064107200.*

What comes after Deja Vu? Maybe, Deja Trois? SLEMCO got the call from Withlacoochee River Electric Cooperative on Oct. 7, requesting mutual aid crews for power restoration after **Hurricane Milton** hit their service territory along the West Florida coastline. Despite challenges like washed-out or flooded roads, fallen trees and sand that fell right back into the

holes dug for replacing poles, there was a united front working hard to get things back to normal for the entire WREC service area. SLEMCO storm crews working in Florida arrived safely back in SLEMCO territory on Oct. 17. *Lucky Number: 3225114000.* 🍀



Photo by Brady Conesux



Photo by Sara Hunter Photo LLC



Photo by Neil Arnaud



Photo by Sara Hunter Photo LLC



Photo by Paul Gaudry

# A Whooping Big Comeback



story and photos by JAMES EDMUNDS

Football has touchdowns. Baseball has home runs. And Louisiana wildlife has whooping cranes.

For more than half a century, the whooping crane (*Grus Americana*) was not to be found in Louisiana. They were reintroduced in 2011 with a small group of birds, and today the population is several dozen strong and growing. These towering beautiful birds, which stand up about eye-to-eye with an adult human, are making a big comeback.

"This is truly a multi-decade process," explains Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) Wildlife Biologist Sara Zimorski, who oversees the state's Whooping Crane Reintroduction Program from facilities at the White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area in coastal Vermilion Parish.



This crane has no identification bands because it was hatched and fledged in the wild, and biologists had not yet been able to capture and band it.

"Whooping cranes are a long-lived species with a slow reproductive rate, so it can take many years to make advances in the population."

The results in the first dozen-plus years of the program are encouraging.

"Louisiana cranes are good parents," Zimorski says. "We have been pleased to see that the survival rate is higher than we anticipated."

The Audubon Species Survival Center in New Orleans houses 16 of the cranes in captivity, which produce a dozen or more eggs per

year, from which a handful emerge as birds healthy enough to be brought to White Lake and eventually released there when they are about six months old.

In recent seasons, these imported chicks have been supplemented by successful mating pairs laying their own eggs in the wild, a major step forward for the program. Zimorski and her crew closely monitor all of the birds, continually enriching the science of the magnificent creatures. "We are learning so much, and have so much more to learn," she says. "For instance, we are pleased that we have a good survival rate for the chicks that do get hatched, but there is a higher embryo mortality rate than we anticipated, so we are making a concentrated study of what may be causing that."

As the cohort of whooping cranes has grown to the neighborhood of 80 birds, the group is spreading out beyond the boundaries of the conservation area. "Most of the wild-born chicks were hatched in private crawfish fields," Zimorski notes.



Wildlife Biologist Sara Zimorski keeps close watch over a growing population of whooping cranes.

*"We are grateful that local farmers have accommodated the cranes, as well as our need to move about in their fields to do our monitoring work."*

Pursuing that science may be a bit more demanding as the population grows, Zimorski acknowledges, but then smiles and says, "What a great problem to have." 🌱

# let's get COOKING



Winter foods are about the comfort they bring as much as the taste. While gumbos take center stage around here, soup, chili and the like, cooked low and slow, are every bit as good. The following are taken from *Louisiana Lagniappe*, a compilation of four cookbooks, and once a popular wedding gift in the 70s and 80s. You can still purchase this culinary gem online for \$15.00.



For extra copies of these recipes or to email a copy to a friend, visit SLEMCO POWER magazine at SLEMCO.com.

## Cajun Style Lentil Soup

- 1 lb. dried lentils
- 1 stem celery, chopped
- Salt, to taste
- 2 tbs. prepared roux
- 1 lb. Tasso, cut into pieces
- Pepper, to taste
- 2 qts. water

Soak the lentils in cold water for three hours, rinse and drain. Place the lentils in a deep soup pot along with the bite-size Tasso pieces. Put in the chopped celery, the roux and the water. Simmer for three or four hours or until Tasso is tender. Add more water if it reduces too much during the cooking period. Taste for seasoning and add salt and pepper to suit your taste.

## Acadian Style Chili for Two

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 small onion, diced, about ½ cup
- 1 small bell pepper, diced
- ½ stem celery, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 can tomatoes (No. 2 ½ size)
- 1 can red kidney beans (No. 2 ½ size)
- 2 tbs. chili powder
- 4 tbs. oil
- 2 ½ cups water
- Salt, red pepper, black pepper, to taste

Measure the oil into a heavy sauce pot placed over medium heat. When sizzling hot, add beef. Cook and stir until slightly browned and no longer pink. Add onions, bell pepper, garlic and celery. Cook five minutes, stirring frequently. Reduce temperature to simmer. Add rest of ingredients and stir well. Cover and simmer for 45 minutes, stirring occasionally. Season to taste. Serve piping hot with crisp crackers.

## Lobster Chowder

- 4 lobsters, 2 lbs. each
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 2 cups whipping cream
- 1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- Cracker crumbs
- 1 tbs. flour
- 4 cups milk
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 4 tbs. butter
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Cook the lobsters in simmering, salted water for one hour. Split the lobster and crack the claws. Remove the meat from the body and claws, setting aside the green paste from the bellies.

Crush the shells. Cover them with 1 cup boiling water and simmer for 10 minutes.

Put the milk and cream in a large saucepan. Add the water from the lobster shells, the onion and the garlic. Scald the liquid. Keep hot over simmering water for 30 minutes. Strain.

Return the liquid to the saucepan.

Mix the flour, butter and reserved lobster green paste until smooth. Stir the paste, bit by bit, into the liquid. Add the Worcestershire sauce, salt and pepper.

Cut the lobster meat into small pieces and add to the liquid. Cook over simmering water for 30 minutes.

Roll crackers to fine crumbs. Just before serving, stir in the crumbs.

## White Beans and Tasso

- 1 lb. package dried white bean
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 tbs. cooking oil
- ½ lb. Tasso
- Handful of onion tops
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 large bell pepper, chopped
- ½ lb. pork sausage

Place the beans in a pot with enough cold tap water to cover and soak overnight.

Next day, put the pieces of Tasso to boiling with enough water to cover. Boil for a half hour then add pieces of pork sausage and continue to boil for another half hour. Drain the beans. Season them with salt and pepper. Stir in the onion, bell pepper and oil. Add the boiled Tasso and sausage. Cook for 1 ½ hours, stirring every now and then. Add onion tops and cook until wilted. When cooked, the beans should be mashed together. Serve over hot rice, cook in a separate pot with slices of raw onion on the side.

## Sweet Potato Biscuits

*A soup's best friend*

- 1 cup flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 cup cooked, mashed sweet potatoes (or canned sweet potatoes)
- 1 tsp. salt
- ½ cup sugar
- 3 tbs. shortening
- ⅓ cup milk

Sift together the flour, salt and baking powder. In a bowl, mix the sugar and sweet potatoes together. Add shortening and beat until smooth. Add the dry ingredients to potato mixture, alternately with the milk. Blend well.

Roll out on flowered board on table top. Cut with biscuit cutter. Place in greased baking pan. Bake at 400 degrees for 20 minutes.

## Café au Lait

*You know you have an authentic Cajun cookbook when at least one recipe is without measurements. Here is it. On your first attempt, portion the ingredients for one cup.*

Caramelize sugar in a skillet. Pour in coffee, then add the mixture to a saucepan of hot milk for the "best café au lait you ever dunked a piece of toasted stale French bread into."

# UTILITY BILL ASSISTANCE

Help When You Need It Most. Ask Us How to Apply.

You may be eligible for SLEMCO's deferred billing program, available for pre-qualified customers in the event of an "energy emergency," as declared by the Louisiana Public Service Commission (LPSC). And under such an emergency, a prequalified customer would be able to defer partial payment of their utility bill over a three-month period.



## WHEN IT APPLIES

An "energy emergency" is characterized by inordinately high utility bills which are the product of one of the following factors: high gas or other fuel costs, unusually inclement weather necessitating extensive use of utilities, or any other circumstances as determined by the LPSC. The LPSC has the authority to determine what constitutes "inordinately high bills," "high fuel costs" and "unusually inclement weather."

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE

Only specific groups of customers can pre-qualify for the deferral and pre-qualification is mandatory. Once an "energy emergency" has been declared, new applicants will not be eligible for bill deferral until the next energy emergency. *Lucky Number: 1039123003.*

## ELIGIBLE GROUPS PLUS REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

**Customers who are at least 65 years old and whose incomes do not exceed 150 percent of the poverty level established by the federal government.** A copy of your tax returns from the previous year will be required.

**Customers of any age who receive food stamps or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).** You must show a copy of government documents including, but not limited to, a Letter of Certification issued by the Parish Office of Family Support or some other proof that you are receiving Food Stamps or TANF.

**Customers whose sole income consists of Social Security benefits.** Provide a copy of your previous year's tax returns and governmental documents including, but not limited to, a letter from the Social Security Administration office stating the benefits that are being received.

**Governmental entities as identified by the LPSC who provide vital services, the absence of which could result in "imminent peril" to public health, safety and/or welfare.** Documents that confirm that the customer is a governmental entity and identifying the services it provides must be shown.

**Those customers who need life-sustaining, electrically operated equipment or life-sustaining medical treatment that requires electricity.** You must provide a letter signed by a licensed physician which states the diagnosis and prognosis of the patient and also states that "electricity is necessary in sustaining the life of his/her patient."

## HOW TO APPLY

Enrollment in the program is simple. If you qualify, call SLEMCO's Customer Services Department at (337) 896-5200 weekdays (except holidays) from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and an application will be mailed to you. *Lucky Number: 3425012506.* The application must be filed in the name of the person who is listed on the SLEMCO account; a copy of your current driver's license or valid, pictured identification card is required for residential customers in addition to the requirements detailed above. *Lucky Number: 3205205003.* Ⓡ

