



UPCOUNTRYFIBER  
FOUNDATION

2024

ANNUAL REPORT

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Second Year of Community Impact





The Upcountry Fiber Foundation was created because we care deeply about our community. Our neighbors are warm and honorable people and we created a foundation to reflect those traits. That's why the Upcountry Fiber Foundation supports local initiatives throughout the Upstate with a special focus on youth development, arts and cultural enrichment, human services and basic needs for people and animals alike.

Since Upcountry Fiber's inception, our goal has been to provide those who are underserved with high-speed internet service. We believe that living in a more rural area is no reason to be left behind. Our reason for being is to make a positive difference in our community, and we continue through our foundation to demonstrate our care and concern for those who live here. Some people in our community might not always feel seen. But we see them. We care about them. We appreciate them. And we'll continue to do our best to make their lives better through our businesses and our foundation.

We hope that you will join us in supporting worthy nonprofits in Anderson, Oconee, Pickens, Northern Greenville and Northern Spartanburg counties. Together, we can expand how far and wide of an impact we can collectively make.

Jim Lovinggood  
Upcountry Fiber Foundation Co-Chairs

Jeff Wilson

Upon Jeff Wilson's retirement in February 2025, Chris Townson was named CEO of West Carolina. Townson brings 30 years of telecommunications industry experience to the role, most recently serving as CEO/GM of DeKalb Telephone Cooperative (DTC Communications) in Alexandria, TN, since 2016. During his tenure at DTC, he jointly spearheaded the creation of Trilight, an innovative collaboration between seven telephone cooperatives that expanded broadband access to electric cooperatives and municipalities. Townson will continue Wilson's work with Upcountry Fiber and Upcountry Fiber Foundation in his role.



# 2024 UPCOUNTRY FIBER FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Upcountry Fiber Foundation's Board of Directors is comprised of members of Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative and West Carolina boards. They meet quarterly to review grant applications and to discuss the future business of the endowment.



**Spencer Dalton**



**Jimmy Lee Dodgens**



**William Elrod**



**Aimee Gray**



**J. Robert Hester**



**Jim Lovinggood**  
(co-chair)



**Eric McCall**



**Len Talley**



**Mike Thomas**



**Jeff Wilson**  
(co-chair)



# RAISING FUNDS FOR UPCOUNTRY FIBER FOUNDATION

## UPCOUNTRY FIBER CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

On November 4, 2024, Upcountry Fiber Foundation held a charity golf tournament at The Cliffs at Keowee Vineyards to raise money to support the nonprofit's endowment. Tournament players learned more about the foundation's mission at breakfast and post-round lunch gatherings.

Upstate business and community leaders participated in Upcountry Fiber Foundation's charity golf tournament for a day of philanthropy, networking and golf. Nineteen teams comprised of 76 people and 17 organizations played golf that day to support the mission of Upcountry Fiber Foundation. Thanks to our presenting sponsor, ElectriCom, and other Upstate businesses, the tournament raised nearly \$100,000.

Charity events like the golf tournament could not take place if it weren't for the support of our sponsors. A special thanks goes to our presenting sponsor, ElectriCom. Additionally, thank you to the team at The Cliffs at Keowee Vineyards, who helped us bring our vision to life.



### ElectriCom

#### Reception Sponsor

Calix

#### Golf Cart Sponsor

Sumter Utilities

#### 360 Booth Sponsor

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Meridian Cooperative

#### Driving Range Sponsor

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& Service, Inc.

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CEEUS

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#### Closest to the Pin Sponsor

Preferred Sales Agency

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Tantalus Systems | Trehel | Community Journals  
Hughes Commercial Properties | NISC  
Lekson Associates, Inc. | McNair, MeLemore,  
Middlebrooks & Co LLC

#### Team Sponsors

Priority One Security | AFL | Palmetto Engineering &  
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Ritz Transformers | Dura-Line | Pivot | Internetwork  
Engineering, A Presidio Company | OFS  
Tantalus Systems | McMillian Pazdan Smith | NISC  
Diamond T Promotional Gear | Tiencken Law Firm





# UPLIFTING THE UPSTATE THROUGH HYPER-LOCAL PHILANTHROPY

From education to youth services, from culture to health and human services, the Upcountry Fiber Foundation focuses on helping our local community at the grassroots level. Selected nonprofits provide services that make a profound, direct and immediate impact. Grantees must operate and serve Anderson, Northern Greenville, Oconee, Pickens or Northern Spartanburg counties.

In 2024, our second year accepting grants, Upcountry Fiber Foundation:

Received **37** grant requests, totaling  
**\$313,470**

Awarded **14** grants, totaling  
**\$68,000**

Awarded



## 2024 Grants Distributed

<b>AIM</b> Housing Rehabilitation Program	\$ 5,000
<b>Anderson Five Educational Foundation</b> Promoting Literacy Among Children	\$ 5,000
<b>Cancer Association of Anderson</b> Cancer Care Program	\$ 3,000
<b>Grace's Closet</b> Closet Stocking for Oconee County Schools	\$ 3,000
<b>Habitat for Humanity of Anderson County</b> Affordable Homeownership Program – Magnolia Ridge	\$ 3,000
<b>Hagood Mill Foundation</b> Native American Celebration	\$10,000
<b>Mary Sunshine House</b> Independent Living and Support Program for Adult Autistic Community	\$ 5,000
<b>Meals on Wheels - Anderson</b> Anderson Meal Delivery Program	\$ 5,000
<b>Meals on Wheels - Pickens</b> Pickens Meal Delivery Program	\$ 5,000
<b>Roper Mountain Science Center</b> Outreach Program for Pickens and Oconee	\$ 5,000
<b>Sleep in Heavenly Peace</b> No Kids Sleep on the Floor in Our Town!	\$ 8,000
<b>Soapstone Preservation Endowment, Inc.</b> Furnishing the Historic One-Room Soapstone School	\$ 5,000
<b>The Tribble Center Special Needs Foundation</b> Day Program and After-Hours Program Services	\$ 3,000
<b>Wild Hearts Equine Therapeutic Center, Inc.</b> Equine Therapy Services	\$ 3,000

# GRANT RECIPIENT SPOTLIGHTS

Our goal is to support local nonprofit organizations that will make an immediate and direct impact on the people they serve. In 2024, Upcountry Fiber Foundation awarded a total of \$68,000 in grant funding. The funds were divided between 14 deserving local charities. Here's how they put the money to use to help our neighbors in need.

## SLEEP IN HEAVENLY PEACE, INC. NO KID SLEEPS ON THE FLOOR IN OUR TOWN!

Sleep in Heavenly Peace (SHP) was awarded \$8,000 to see that “No Kid Sleeps on the Floor in Our Town!” SHP chapters utilize volunteers to build and provide fully furnished twin beds for local children, ages 3-17, who sleep on floors, couches and other inadequate situations.

Volunteers deliver the beds, fully furnished with frames, mattresses, sheets, pillows and blankets. SHP partners with local organizations, churches, businesses and community members to build the beds. Chapter leadership and the core team show volunteers how to take a pile of wood and construct twin bed frame components with drills, sanders and saws. During community “Build Days,” volunteers learn about the organization and the need in their town, as they transform piles of lumber into twin bed frames. Following each “Build Day,” volunteers deliver the beds to local families that families that requested support and meet the appropriate qualifications.

The SC-Easley Chapter of Sleep in Heavenly Peace services kids in Anderson and Pickens counties. Smiles are the mark of success, as one more child is off the floor and sleeping in their own bed. With the \$8,000 in grant money, 32 beds were provided to children, including lumber, mattress, pillows and all linens.





## MEALS ON WHEELS – ANDERSON

### DELIVERING HOPE FOR OUR SENIOR AND DISABLED NEIGHBORS IN ANDERSON COUNTY THROUGH MEAL DELIVERY AND INTERACTION

Community leaders started Meals on Wheels – Anderson to address the hunger and isolation facing the senior and disabled homebound individuals in Anderson County. After 48 years, Meals on Wheels – Anderson serves 670 individuals across Anderson County on a daily basis.

Meals on Wheels - Anderson serves seniors aged 60 and over, as well as adults of any age with disabilities who struggle to obtain and prepare meals on their own due to physical or mental challenges. Being homebound, this group is at a higher risk of social isolation and depression, often going for days without seeing anyone except for a Meals on Wheels - Anderson delivery driver.

The \$5,000 grant funded 714 meals that were delivered to recipients by a friendly driver who interacts with and checks on the individual.





## ROPER MOUNTAIN SCIENCE CENTER OUTREACH PROGRAM FOR PICKENS AND OCONEE COUNTIES

Roper Mountain Science Center ignites the natural curiosity of all learners to explore and shape their world. Since 1985, they've delivered curriculum-based, hands-on learning for students, offered inspiring educational programming for the public and produced state-of-the-art training for science teachers.

Each year, more than 50,000 students from 46 school districts in 23 counties participate in their hands-on, standards-based science learning labs.

Roper Mountain Science Center was awarded \$5,000 to support program fees for on-site field trips and Science on Wheels outreach programs for children in Pickens and Oconee counties. These visits benefited teachers and students by helping them to better understand SC's new science standards being tested. The grant enabled:

- Eighty-five sixth grade students from West-Oak Middle School in Westminster (71% poverty) to participate in "Clouds, Climates and Catastrophes! Stage" in December 2024.
- Four hundred sixth grade students from Gettys Middle School (69% poverty) in Easley participated in the center's new engineering labs in March 2025.





# THE TRIBBLE CENTER

## PROMOTING ABILITIES AND QUALITY OF LIFE FOR OUR NEIGHBORS

Tribble Center is dedicated to improving the lives of people with disabilities and special needs in Oconee and Pickens counties. They provide comprehensive, person-centered, innovative services that promote independence, inclusion, self-determination and a quality of life that would otherwise be out of reach. They strengthen and create relationships with the community that increases the awareness and advocacy between the people served at Tribble Center and the community.

Tribble Center was awarded \$5,000 for their Day Program and After-Hours clients who are eligible for S.C. Department of Disabilities services but are still waiting on funding to participate.





# LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE AND WAYS TO HELP

Upcountry Fiber Foundation was created because we care deeply about our community. The foundation exists to create a stronger connection between people in need and the local grassroots organizations that provide help. We'll continue to make their lives better through our foundation.

To be added to our mailing list once more details for future charitable events are available, visit [upcountryfiberfoundation.com/contact](https://upcountryfiberfoundation.com/contact) to fill out our form. We will be in touch soon!

Upcountry Fiber Foundation accepts donations, in addition to event sponsorships, to help fund our grants. If you would like to donate, please mail your check to:

## **Upcountry Fiber Foundation**

Attn: Daja Davidson

734 West Main Street

Pickens, SC 29671








## CONTACT

 **Website:** [upcountryfiberfoundation.com](http://upcountryfiberfoundation.com)

 **Mailing Address:** 734 West Main Street, Pickens, SC 29671

 **Email:** [info@upcountryfiberfoundation.com](mailto:info@upcountryfiberfoundation.com)





Upcountry Fiber Foundation is a registered 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Donors will receive gift acknowledgment for their files. The amount of a sponsorship contribution that is deductible for federal income tax purposes is limited to the excess of money contributed by the donor over the value of goods or services provided by Upcountry Fiber Foundation. Donors should consult a tax professional for advice on what they may include as a tax deduction for IRS purposes.

