

# idea corner

## 4-H Amp Camp

Special interest camps launch 4-Hers into useful applications of subject matter and link them in life-long relationships with top resource people. Such is the case for the South Carolina Electric or Amp Camp, which for the past decade has introduced hundreds of 4-Hers to top electric personnel.

Amp Camp leaders annually initiate the novice camper to elementary fundamentals and lead the 4-Hers through a series of specialized learning centers. Crafts, swimming, games, and tours to local manufacturing plants complement workshops generating a total camping experience for about 90 campers a year.

Power company engineers and home service representatives, along with Extension agents, conduct workshops on wide ranging electrical energy topics from motors, which "make your day go hum," to lighting



*At Amp Camp, 4-Hers learned about wiring to prevent home fires.*

and safety. Traditional camping events, laced with a sprinkling of learning activities, build a palatable agenda the 4-Hers enjoy. This is the only 4-H activity I've evaluated in which the members didn't admonish us to "cut out the long boring speeches."

Our 4-H Electric Energy program uses Amp Camp as a vehicle for reaching and training volunteer leaders. South Carolina hasn't traditionally had a strong volunteer leader structure. Thirty scholarships that pay all expenses have enticed leaders to participate in this camping experience.

Four days at camp ignite a spark in the leaders for the Electric Energy program. Interactions with donors, agents, and specialists and experiences shared with fellow leaders highlight their stay. They leave Amp Camp ebullient with ideas and materials ready for use in their local programs.

In South Carolina, Amp Camp is well-supported with money and personnel from the 3 power companies who are donors for the total 4-H Electric Energy program. The donors provide the scholarships that enable the leaders to attend. These resources, coupled with the enthusiastic support of the donors and agents, create a meaningful camp. Without their support, Amp Camp would be a burden for us at Clemson.

The success of this program is gratifying. If you can generate a similar cooperative spirit among your donors and agents, then a specialized electric camp would be an asset to the statewide program.

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