

VICTORY JUNCTION

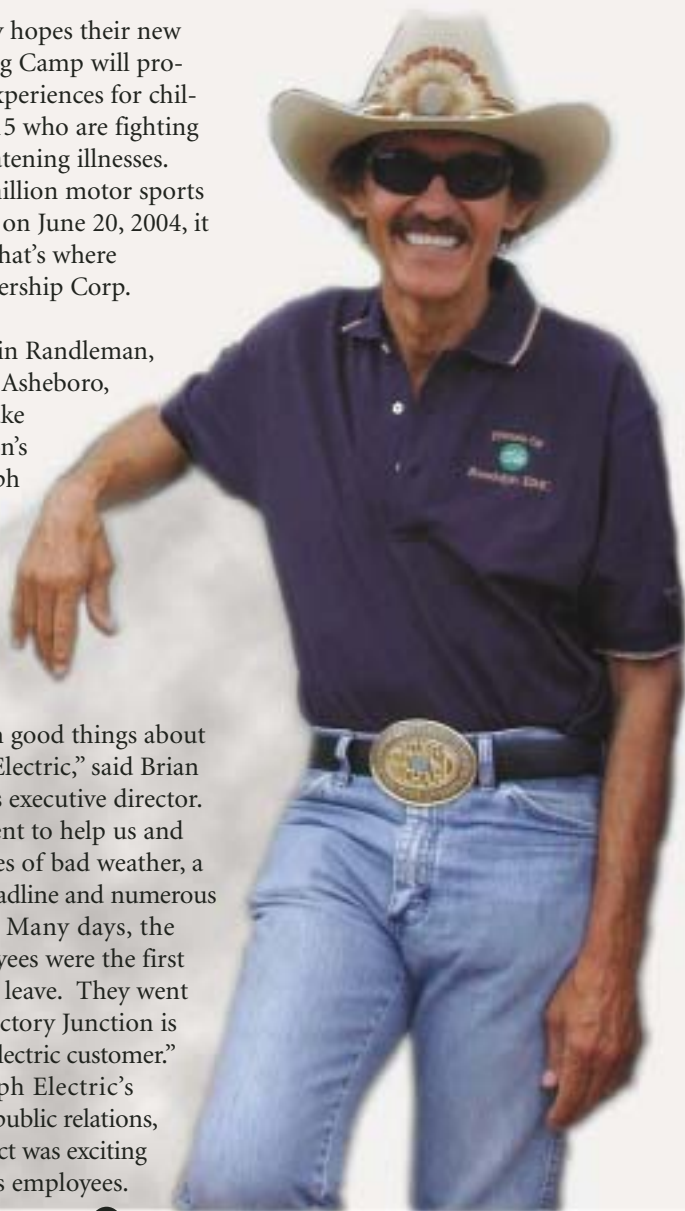
The Petty racing family hopes their new Victory Junction Gang Camp will provide “empowering” experiences for children ages 7 through 15 who are fighting chronic and life-threatening illnesses.

But before the \$25 million motor sports fantasy camp could open on June 20, 2004, it had to have real power. That’s where Randolph Electric Membership Corp. stepped in.

The camp is located in Randleman, between Greensboro and Asheboro, an area also served by Duke Power, but Victory Junction’s developers chose Randolph Electric as its electric utility. That included installing the camp’s underground electric lines and related equipment, then supplying it with power.

“I cannot say enough good things about working with Randolph Electric,” said Brian Collier, Victory Junction’s executive director. “They made a commitment to help us and stuck by it despite all types of bad weather, a very tight construction deadline and numerous unanticipated surprises. Many days, the Randolph Electric employees were the first on the site and the last to leave. They went above and beyond and Victory Junction is proud to be a Randolph Electric customer.”

Dave Rowe, Randolph Electric’s manager of member and public relations, said the high-profile project was exciting for all of the cooperative’s employees.



Dave Rowe

By Mark Brumley

VICTORY JUNCTION GANG CAMP GREW FROM THE
HEARTS OF THE RICHARD AND KYLE PETTY
FAMILIES WITH POWER FROM RANDOLPH EMC

“This is a camp that is going to serve children—children who have not had a lot of good things happen in their lives,” Rowe said. “Now’s the time for pride, when you switch from the excitement to the satisfaction of knowing that we do serve it and we’re going to serve it really well. They’re a member of our cooperative, and we’re excited to have them on our system.”

With the pride comes the added responsibility of keeping the power flowing to Victory Junction. Even though it’s a year-round camp, the kids aren’t roughing it. In many cases, the children’s medical needs demand that the electricity stay on.

“They can’t afford to be without power,” Rowe said. “Those children are in such critical need.”

Randolph Electric employees say they are confident that the cooperative won’t disappoint Victory Junction.

Victory Junction is located in one of Randolph County’s fastest-growing residential areas, so the power lines running to the camp are new. The area’s substation is frequently upgraded. All the lines, transformers and other hardware are

new. The lines are all underground. And the system has 10 times the capacity that it currently needs.

Several of the key buildings at Victory Junction, including the Goody’s Body Shop medical center, also have their own generators. And Rowe said Randolph Electric made provisions for the installation of a 1,000-kilowatt generator at some point in the future that will provide standby power to the entire camp, which has 36 buildings. He said the generator will also allow Victory Junction to reap significant savings on its electric bills, as the system would

switch to backup power during periods of peak demand.

Randolph Electric also gave Victory Junction room to grow by installing an extra 1.15 miles of conduit at the site. Conduit is the pipe that shields electrical lines.

Sherrill Lowe, Randolph Electric’s senior staking specialist who played a major role in planning the power infrastructure and coordinating its installation, said the extra conduit should prevent workers from having to dig up the ground. “It was best to go ahead and do it now so they could start landscaping and growing grass,” Lowe said.

All told, Randolph Electric installed 5.04 miles of underground power lines at Victory Junction, Lowe said. Even though the crew that installed the lines hit a lot of rock during the project, they kept moving.

“We stayed ahead the entire time,” Rowe said.

Although Victory Junction isn’t the largest project Randolph Electric has tackled, it’s the most special. Before Victory Junction opened, Sherrill Lowe took groups of his co-workers on tours of the camp. “It’s touched basically every employee at Randolph Electric,” he said.

A Petty family project

Founding and developing the camp in honor of their late son, Adam, were NASCAR driver Kyle Petty and his wife, Pattie. Adam Petty was a fourth-generation driver killed in a crash during a practice run at New Hampshire International Speedway on May 12, 2000.

The camp is located on 75 rural acres donated by Adam’s grandparents, racing icon Richard Petty and his wife, Lynda.

“What we’re doing here at Victory Junction is a medically sound, empowering environment for these kids to have fun.”

Pattie Petty
Co-founder



Victory Junction



A view of the Victory Junction Gang Camp from its balloon-shaped water tower.

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But the Pettys haven't stood alone in making their dream camp a reality. Victory Junction is the fifth of screen legend and philanthropist Paul Newman's Association of Hole in the Wall Gang Camps in the United States. Newman founded the first camp in Connecticut in 1988.

Although Kyle Petty said the family thought about naming the camp Petticoat Junction or Mayberry, they settled on Victory Junction because it conjured images of racing. That racing theme ties the entire camp together. One of the most visible buildings is Adam's Race Shop, located in a building shaped like a stock car. With racing simulators, the shop is where kids will learn about the sport.

The equestrian center, with a roof like a circus big top and sheltered riding rings, is called the Horsepower Garage. The Fuel Stop is the dining hall. The pool even has a giant motorcycle that revs and squirts water on swimmers. At the heart of the camp is an oval race track which is kind of like Main Street.

"Even the things that a kid would expect from an ordinary summer camp experience, we've gone over the top on those things," Brian Collier said.

Victory Junction's state-of-the-art medical clinic has a full-time medical staff, but brings in additional doctors and nurses depending on the disease groups of the kids visiting the camp for the week.

"What we're doing here at Victory Junction is a medically sound, empowering environment for these kids to have fun," said Pattie Petty.

Big hearts helped build it

The goal here is not to cure children. "You can't do that in one week of camp, if ever," Collier said. "Our goal is to create very powerful, empowering experiences, build up their self-esteem, and let them spend a week with children who are going through the same issues that they are going through."

Victory Junction's grand opening on June 15 was a star-studded event attended by Paul Newman, Gov. Mike Easley and some of the biggest names in NASCAR,



Mark Brumley

including Jeff Gordon and Tony Stewart. County music singer Sara Evans performed before a crowd of about 2,500 people, most of them donors.

Adam Petty and his parents learned about Hole in the Wall Gang Camps at the association's Bogey Creek Gang Camp in Eustis, Fla., in 1998 during one of Kyle Petty's Charity Rides Across America. Adam, who did volunteer work for the Starbright Foundation for seriously ill children, was impressed with Bogey Creek and wanted to build a similar camp back home. The family talked about it extensively, but set the project aside after Adam's death.

"They put all of their plans on hold for a long time and then they rekindled that dream and started again in earnest in the last part of 2000 and have been full steam ahead since," Collier said.

Donations poured in from corporations, charitable foundations, nonprofit organizations and individuals to build the camp. Kids stay free, so there will always be a need for donations to pay the \$2.5 million a year in operating costs.

Randolph Electric also made a "tremendous investment" in installing the power infrastructure at Victory Junction, Rowe said. The investment will be paid off over time through sales of power to the camp. But the cooperative wasn't seeing dollar signs when it took on the project.

"We thought with our heart, not with our wallet," Rowe said.

Mark Brumley is a freelance writer and a graduate student at Duke University. He teaches at Randolph Community College and lives in Asheboro with his wife and young son.

Actor Paul Newman (center), who founded the first Hole in the Wall Gang camp in Connecticut in 1988, at the Victory Junction grand opening (from left) country singer Sara Evans, Richard Petty, and co-founders Pattie and Kyle Petty.

Building the electric distribution system: Richard Petty in his Friends of Randolph Electric shirt joins (from left) Randolph's Doug Bullins, Tony Cole and Cronnie Davis. The project chose Randolph Electric as its power supplier.



Dave Rowe

For more information

Victory Junction is intended primarily for children ages 7 to 15 from North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia. It will provide memorable and safe experiences for children suffering from arthritis, asthma, burns, cancer, diabetes, epilepsy, gastrointestinal disease, heart disease, hemophilia, immunology deficiencies/HIV, kidney disease, liver disease, neurological disease, sickle cell disease, skin disease, and spina bifida.

Victory Junction is an independent nonprofit organization with its own board of directors and medical advisory board.

For more information, contact Victory Junction Gang Camp, 4500 Adam's Way, Randleman, NC, 27317. Phone: (336) 498-9055. Web: www.victoryjunction.org