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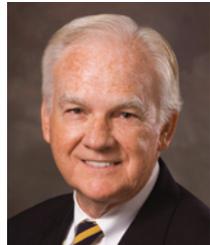
Mission Statement
Blue Ridge will be a competitive, quality provider of energy and other services, maintaining its history of integrity and adapting to the challenges of a changing world. While exercising leadership in the community, the organization's focus will be on exceeding customer expectations.

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Job training is essential



SOME MONTHS AGO in my monthly report, I commented briefly about the emphasis Blue Ridge places on occupational training. There are any number of good reasons for that emphasis.

Foremost among them all would be safety. That would encompass the safety of our members, the general public, and our employees. The better our employees are trained to do their jobs, the safer they're going to work. That's important to anyone who has dealings with the cooperative. The benefits of an effective training program are borne out in the excellent safety record the Blue Ridge team has achieved.

A higher standard

Ongoing job training is also directly related to the level of service the cooperative supplies to our members. This organization's business culture includes a built-in recognition of the fact that ours is a member-owned utility. In our view, that requires a higher standard when it comes to the delivery of power and all that goes with it. The cooperative's tradition of quality service—quality service that keeps on improving—speaks for itself. Enhanced training opportunities for members of our workforce contribute to the strides we're continuing to make in providing reliable service.

Job training is essential to many other aspects of the cooperative's performance. Fortunately, we have access to several different options for seeing our employees are properly

equipped to address the tasks assigned them. It's truly hard to beat on-the-job schooling for developing the necessary skills and disciplines for professional job fulfillment. Blue Ridge always has plenty of that kind of training in progress.

A menu of educational pathways

Beyond these in-house efforts, the cooperative looks to a host of training choices that are available through Southern Wesleyan University, Tri-County Technical College, and the electric cooperatives' Statewide Association. Together, these institutions offer a menu of educational pathways that is relevant to every Blue Ridge department or working group. I believe very strongly in employee training, and I encourage our folks to take advantage of the chances for advancement that are at their disposal.

At the end of the day, I have the utmost confidence in the cooperative's workforce. I can testify to that, because I'm convinced all of them have the needed tools to perform their assigned duties well. On top of that, I don't think there's any doubt that each of these individuals is better personally for his or her participation in our formal training program. The bottom line for you, the member, is that your electric service is in good, capable hands.

Charles E. Dalton
President and CEO

Memorial Day closing

All Blue Ridge offices will be closed on Monday, May 29, to celebrate Memorial Day. Emergency crews will be on standby, and dispatchers will be answering the telephones around the clock. Have a safe and happy holiday as you remember the many who have given their lives for our country.

Magic is in the air

CHRIS DIXON HAS been using magic as a way to teach electrical safety to young people for more than 25 years. His program combines curriculum-based messages educators want students to hear with an entertaining, fun-filled magical delivery that makes them want to listen!

This year, Blue Ridge sponsored *Making Accidents Disappear* at two local schools—Dacusville Elementary and Orchard Park Elementary. Charlotte Rochester, Assistant Principal at Orchard Park, said Dixon's method was "informative and hilarious." Principal Josh Wittrock added, "Through their laughter and fun, our students learned tips that might very well save a life one day. We are fortunate to have Blue Ridge as a partner in our efforts to educate our students."



Students at Orchard Park Elementary laugh and learn with Magician Chris Dixon.

LIZA HOLDER

Students see and take part in magic tricks while learning three words they need to remember when playing around power lines—**STOP**, stop what you are doing; **LOOK**, check your surroundings for any danger; **THINK**, is this safe? These words along with some advice from a "talking outlet"

make the message of electrical safety fun and easy.

May is National Electrical Safety Month, and we hope you can use these same words to teach your children or grandchildren a message that can save their life.

Apply by June 3 for WIRE scholarship

WOMEN WORKING TO earn college degrees can apply by June 3 for financial assistance through the 2017 WIRE Jenny Ballard Opportunity Scholarship.

The annual scholarship provides a one-time \$2,500 award to a woman who is an electric cooperative member, who has been out of school for several years, and who is ready to complete her education.

Application forms are now available for the 2017 WIRE scholarship. The program is open to women who may not have been able to attend college after high school, but now want to further their education. WIRE (Women Involved in Rural Electrification, a community service organization affiliated with the electric co-ops in South Carolina) awards the scholarship based on financial need

and personal goals.

An applicant for the WIRE scholarship must:

- ▶ be a member of a South Carolina electric cooperative
- ▶ have graduated from high school or earned her GED at least 10 years ago
- ▶ be accepted into an accredited



PUBLIC DOMAIN

S.C. college or university, and

- ▶ demonstrate financial need and personal goals.

Women who have previously obtained a four-year college degree are not eligible. Applicants may have previously earned a two-year degree or some college credits. The scholarship, which can be used for the fall 2017 or spring 2018 semester, will be paid jointly to the winner and her college of choice.

Applications are available at your local electric cooperative or by download from SCLiving.coop/scholarship. The deadline to apply is June 3. Mail your completed application to WIRE Scholarship Committee, Attention: Bobbie Cook, Aiken Electric Cooperative, Inc., PO Box 417, Aiken, SC 29802, or fax to (803) 641-8310.