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AUTOMATED OUTAGE REPORTING

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PICKENS

P.O. Box 277
734 West Main St.
Pickens, SC 29671

OCONEE

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2328 Sandifer Blvd.
Highway 123
Westminster, SC 29693

MISSION STATEMENT

Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative will operate as a competitive provider of energy services and a partner with local communities, with a focus on safety, service and integrity.

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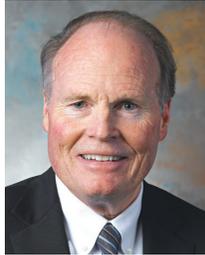
Jim Lovinggood

This organization is an equal-opportunity provider.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

OITP—a visionary project



THE YEAR JUST recently ended signaled a return to substantial new-member growth on the Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative system. One segment of those new members, commercial and industrial (C&I), is comparatively small in number.

It also, however, represents

the potential for significant increases in kilowatt-hour sales. In some cases, brand-new plants and businesses attached to the Blue Ridge grid during 2018. We also had some of our existing large-power loads to undergo expansions that resulted in greater energy consumption.

By my own calculations, the addition of new C&I members over the last 10 years has produced an extra \$30 million in kWh sales. It's now been more than 10 years since Blue Ridge last implemented an increase in our retail per-kilowatt-hour charge. During that same time period, we've absorbed a number of wholesale-rate increases from our power supplier. That boost in C&I revenues is largely responsible for our record of rate stability.

Support for economic development

It's also true that the cooperative has been active in supporting economic-development projects within our service territory. I could cite a good many examples of such projects. In this report, I'm going to focus my observations on an undertaking that's situated in Oconee County's geographical midsection. Although it's relatively new, the Oconee Industry and Technology Park (OITP) is making some impressive progress.

Blue Ridge played an important part in getting this commerce center off the ground, and today, Baxter Industries has a new plant operating there, with phased expansions planned for the future.

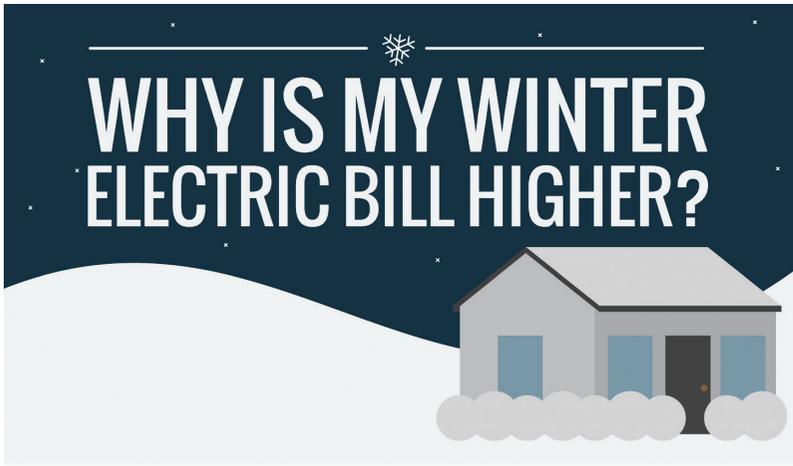
Furthermore, in 2018, Tri-County Technical College opened the doors to its new Oconee campus on the OITP grounds. That educational facility will soon have a close neighbor. The School District of Oconee County has plans to construct its career center on a nearby tract. In addition, there are indications that at least two more industrial prospects are currently giving serious consideration to locating within the park.

A unique job-creating initiative

When all is said and done, Oconee County will be the proud home of a unique job-creating initiative. Students will definitely have opportunities to further their education at the OITP complex. At the same time, many of them will also be positioned to obtain some practical, hands-on experience at the adjacent industries.

As best as I can determine, OITP is South Carolina's first-of-its-kind project that seeks to blend classroom learning with onsite, on-the-job training. I tip my hat to Oconee County officials for their superb vision and effort in making this job-creating incubator a reality.

JIM LOVINGGOOD
President and CEO



IT'S JUST A FACT—cold weather is hard on your electric bill. The heat runs longer, the water coming into your water heater is colder and takes more energy to heat, plus your family typically stays indoors more with the television and lights on. Although it's March, we're still a number of weeks away from spring and warmer weather. So what can you do to conserve some of those kWh's you're using? Here's a list of quick tips that can help.

- ▶ Seal air leaks and insulate well to prevent heat from escaping and cold air from entering your home.
- ▶ Reduce waste heat by installing a programmable thermostat. We'll even help you pay for a smart thermostat—give us a call.
- ▶ Turn off lights when not in use.
- ▶ Lower your water heater temperature. The Department of Energy recommends using the warm setting (120) degrees during fall and winter months.
- ▶ Unplug electronics like kitchen appliances and TVs when you're away.
- ▶ Open blinds and curtains during the day to allow sunlight in to warm your house.
- ▶ Close blinds and curtains at night to keep cold, drafty air out.
- ▶ Use power strips for multiple appliances, and turn off the main switch when you're away from home.
- ▶ Wash clothes in cold water, and use cold-water detergent whenever possible.
- ▶ Replace incandescent light bulbs with energy efficient LEDs, which use at least 75 percent less energy.

Visit our website for more energy saving suggestions. And remember, the bill you receive this month represents energy you used as much as a month ago. Our member service representatives have weather information on file and can easily share with you the conditions we had during the dates of your bill. As always, if you need assistance, do not hesitate to call us at (800) 240-3400.

Commitment to Zero Contacts brings safety to the forefront

Safety has always been a priority at Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative. In the early 80's the logo that still is used by the co-op today incorporated the tag line "Service second only to safety." Following that principle, safety meetings are held weekly in Pickens and Oconee, and a manager of safety arranges programs and reviews safety rules for all employees. With such an emphasis on safety, the co-op has been awarded the coveted President's Safety Award several times. This award is given to the co-op who scores the highest in all areas of safety among the twenty co-ops in the state.

However, Blue Ridge Co-op President and CEO, Jim Lovinggood is taking safety one step further. He explains, "Last year a program was introduced by NRECA, Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange and electric co-op statewide safety leaders. It is called the Commitment to Zero Contacts initiative and is designed to provide CEOs, senior leaders, and field personnel with ideas and resources we need to help eliminate serious injuries and fatalities (SIFs) due to electrical contact and enhance co-op safety programs. I committed to this program, and we are ready to bring it to our employees."

At the February board meeting, trustees signed a resolution stating the importance of the health and welfare of co-op employees and members. They committed to join the Commitment to Zero Contacts nationwide effort and provide resources to assist the implementation of this initiative. Employees will be making individual commitments in March. Safety still remains our number one focus—there is nothing more important than assuring that each employee returns home to their family at night. With some new resources, it is about to receive a new emphasis.



Oak Ridge Boys to headline Blue Ridge Fest

BLUE RIDGE FEST is an important event in the Upstate. Now in its 22nd year, this event that brings together great talent and classic cars to raise money for local charities promises to be one of the best with a new mix of entertainment. It will all begin at 5:30 p.m. on Friday, May 3, at the Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative outdoor facility on Main Street in Pickens. This concert-like venue provides seating, a display of hundreds of classic automobiles and lots of food.

Opening the evening will be **Jim Quick and Coastline**. A melding of the genres that make up the musical culture of the South, including country, blues, soul, southern rock and jazz, Quick's take on music is not to be tuned out. He's been touring the Southeast for more than 20 years and has released more than 11 albums including his newest, *Down South*. Having appeared many times at Blue Ridge Fest, Jim Quick's "Coastline Crazies" return year after year to hear and see this high energy group.

Bringing the sounds of beach music to the stage will be one of America's all-time favorite recording acts, **The Tams**. Probably known best for their 1968 gold hit, "Be Young, Be Foolish, Be Happy," The Tams entertain crowds around the globe nearly 300 days a year. The group began performing in local taverns and nightclubs for \$1.25 each. The pay during these early days only provided enough money to buy matching multi-colored Tam O'Shanter hats which awarded them the nickname The Tams, a name that would eventually be known around the world.

This year's headline band is one you will not want to miss. **The Oak Ridge Boys** will be on stage in what will be their "farewell tour." Theirs is one of the most distinctive and recognizable sounds in the music industry. The four-part harmonies and upbeat songs have spawned dozens of country hits and a Number One Pop spot and earned them Grammy, Dove, CMA, and ACM awards. The group has scored 12 gold, three platinum, and one double platinum albums and had more than a dozen national Number One singles and over 30 Top Ten hits. They will be performing their many hits including: "American Made," "Fancy Free," "Elvira," and "Bobbie Sue."

Join us in Pickens as we share Great Times for Great Causes on May 3. Admission is \$25 for adults and \$15 for children 7-12. Blue Ridge Fest is the largest employee volunteer event in the Upstate. Visit blueridgefest.com to buy tickets or for information.



Oak Ridge Boys



The Tams



Jim Quick and Coastline

All Aboard for Blue Ridge Fest!

May 3, 2019 • Downtown Pickens, SC

Featuring

THE OAK RIDGE BOYS

also THE TAMS

and JIM QUICK & COASTLINE

5:30 pm-10 pm
Blue Ridge Electric Co-op
734 W. Main St., Pickens, SC

- ADULTS \$25
- CHILDREN (ages 7-12) \$15
- 6 & Under FREE

Come in a classic car (1989 or older) and \$30 admits a carload of up to four! Line-up begins at 2 pm. Gates open at 3 pm for classic cars. Dash plaques are available for the first 400 cars.

Proceeds benefit Upstate charitable organizations.

For more information, call 800-240-3400 or visit online at blueridgefest.com.



*"Largest Cruise-In
in the Upstate"*

22nd Annual





Fostering a child includes so much more than just providing a place to stay.

Blue Ridge Fest charity supports foster children

EACH YEAR, employee volunteers from Blue Ridge pour over almost 100 applications for funding from Blue Ridge Fest. The process is difficult, and often a favorite charity is not chosen because another's need is determined to be greater by the group. Funding is provided for the entire Blue Ridge Co-op service area. During its 21-year history, donations of \$2.8 million have been provided to almost eighty different charities. With the support of almost 100 sponsors, employees vow to make each year the best. This year, a relatively new charity was chosen for the first time. Here is the story of Fostering Faithfully, who answers a need for a special group of children and families.

In 2017, Fostering Faithfully began a mission to help foster children and foster families in Oconee and Pickens counties. There were too few homes available for foster children. Although the need was and continues to be great for foster families, Fostering Faithfully Executive Director Abby Crooks sought out tangible ways community members could serve foster children and assist families. The organization offers a

monthly support group for families, duffel bags full of things a child needs when placed with a new family, raises funds for additional training for foster families, and much more.

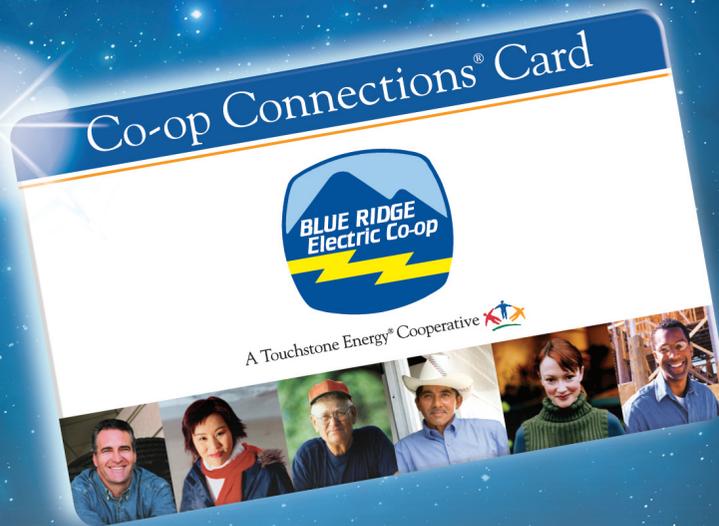
The mission of Fostering Faithfully is to recruit, encourage, and equip foster families to serve children well so foster children will receive the best care in a family right here in our community. Currently 230 volunteers assist in the resource center, serve on the meals team, offer respite care for foster parents, fundraising and more. This group of dedicated volunteers contributed approximately 4,700 hours last year.

Abby Crooks, executive director feels especially blessed to have Fostering Faithfully selected as one of the charities to receive Blue Ridge Fest funds. She explains, "Fostering Faithfully is honored to have Blue Ridge invest in our mission in such a tremendous way! Fest funds are going to provide hundreds of birthday sponsorships, car seats, cribs, duffel bags, recreational scholarships, and new shoes for kids coming into foster care in Oconee and Pickens counties. As Oconee and Pickens counties need over

150 new foster parents, this support will allow us to continue to provide meals, training scholarships and support to families licensing or choosing to stay in the trenches of foster care to be a family-for-a-season to kids from crisis situations. Nationwide, half of all foster parents quit within a year of their first placement, and we want to change that here in our area by continuing to provide an ecosystem of community support for foster families and the kids they love. We are thankful to BREC for partnering with us this year."

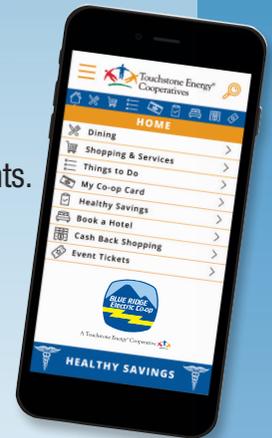
Other charities that will receive funding from Blue Ridge Fest include: A Child's Haven, Anderson Free Clinic, Anderson Interfaith Ministries, Cancer Association of Pickens County, The Dream Center of Pickens County, Feed a Hungry Child, Golden Corner Food Pantry, Grace's Closet, The Lachlan McIntosh Tannery Foundation, North Greenville Crisis Ministry, and Pickens County Meals on Wheels. If you would like information on any of these organizations, please visit blueridgefest.com.

Go Beyond The Card.



Co-op Connections®: The One Card That Does It All!

- It's **FREE** to all Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative members.
- **Look for local businesses and pharmacies displaying the Co-op Connections sticker.** For a list of participating businesses, pharmacies and other health care providers, visit blueridge.coop or at connections.coop.
- **This card is recognized nationally** by participating businesses, pharmacies and other health care providers.
- **Co-op members can receive 10–85% discounts on many prescription drugs***, as well as all kinds of other discounts.
- **“Cash Back Mall” portal for online shopping** at more than 3,000 leading merchants.
- **The card is teamed up with Coupons.com** to bring you valuable coupons—every day!
- **Download the free Co-op Connections app** from the App Store or Google Play for savings and information on the go.



For more information, visit connections.coop.

** The pharmacy discount benefit is NOT insurance and is not intended as a substitute for insurance.*



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