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**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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This organization is an equal-opportunity provider.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

## Transformer refurbishment produces savings



**AS A MEMBER-OWNED** power supplier, Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative places a strong emphasis on operating as efficiently as possible. We recognize that efficiency is directly related both to the level of service we provide and to the price you pay for the electricity

you use.

One area where our folks have long been working to create value for our members is that of transformer refurbishment. In an average month, the cooperative will physically remove around 100 transformers from the field. About one-third of those removals are related to damage sustained by these units. Lightning strikes or a transformer crashing to the ground as the result of a fallen wood pole are the most-common reasons for taking transformers out of service. These “broken” models are ultimately sold as scrap to a firm in Alabama.

Typically, the remaining two-thirds are brought in because they were scheduled to be replaced by larger-capacity transformers. Since these units are still in working condition, Blue Ridge puts them through a refurbishing process. In conjunction with the TMS organization, our employees will filter the transformer’s oil, while also testing it for PCB’s. Furthermore, the lightning arrestor and other hardware items are changed out, and a fresh coat of paint is applied. Other tests are conducted to ensure that the apparatus meets all the criteria of a well-functioning piece of equipment. Be it a scrapped or a refurbished transformer, our employees utilize a comprehensive checklist to make

certain that all environmental and other record-keeping requirements are strictly followed.

**Good as new**

Our experience has demonstrated that a rebuilt transformer possesses the same operational characteristics and life expectancy as that of a newly purchased model. In other words, the reworked unit is as good as new.

In terms of dollars and cents, the savings the cooperative realizes can be substantial. For example, a new 500-KVA pole-mounted transformer would have a price tag of around \$1,000. An equivalent refurbished unit would represent an investment of about \$235, by comparison.

**\$600,000 saved**

The bottom line is that the 60-plus transformers that undergo refurbishment each month translate into an average savings in the neighborhood of \$50,000. On a yearly basis, that adds up to \$600,000 saved. Consequently, that \$600,000 sum is an expense that doesn’t find its way into the cooperative’s retail rates.

In our role as your locally owned electricity provider, Blue Ridge takes seriously our responsibility to look out for the interests of our members. I believe our transformer-refurbishment program offers just one of many illustrations of our intent to fulfill that obligation.

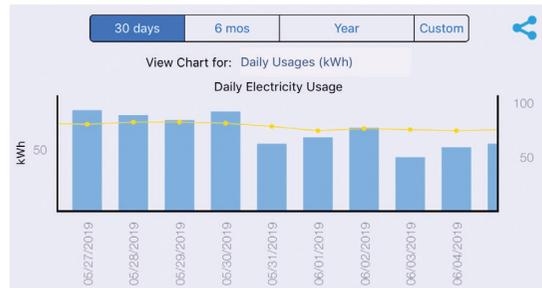
**JIM LOVINGGOOD**  
 President and CEO

# Technology can help you save on your summer bills

BY AMY CHILDRESS

**LIVING IN A** time of instant information makes the Blue Ridge Co-op mobile app one you should certainly add to your mobile device. With options to control your account and energy use, it can mean big savings for you.

When I saw my home's latest bill on the app, it was higher than I had hoped—something we all experience when those first hot days of summer come. Then, I reviewed the usage graph during the past month and was encouraged by what I saw. As you can see on the picture that came from my cell phone through my app, my usage included the Memorial Day weekend. It was a long weekend, and the temperatures were very hot in our area. We also had extra people in the house and a lot of activity inside and out. The air-conditioner, pool pump, ceiling fans and televisions were on from sunup to sundown. There were extra loads of laundry, the dishwasher was used more, and the oven



added to the heat in our home.

On June 1, we began our on-line series, *30 Days of Summer Energy Savings*. Reviewing all the simple, practical things we can do to lower our energy usage makes so much sense. My family started on this savings journey, and along with more moderate temperatures, we saw a change immediately. Now, I review

this energy graph daily and see how we did. It's one of the best tools you can have at your disposal.

If you missed our *30 Days of Summer Energy Savings*, it's not too late. Go to [blueridge.coop](http://blueridge.coop) and see them all. But more importantly, put them in use. The Blue Ridge App is available at the app store—so download it and keep an eye on your daily usage. You can also pay your bill, view your payment history, report an outage and manage account alerts—a real convenience in our “instant” world.

## “30 Days of Summer Savings” offers tips to help manage energy use during the hot summer months.

- ▶ Place a power strip near a TV in your home, plug in the TV along with any other electronics close by and turn it off when not in use for an extended period of time.
- ▶ Use a slow cooker rather than an oven. Using a slow cooker costs a third of the price of using an electric oven or stove according to the US Dept of Energy.
- ▶ Change your HVAC filter.
- ▶ Limit your shower to 5-7 minutes. Water heating can amount to 12 percent of your monthly energy use.
- ▶ Check your ductwork or have someone check your ductwork for leaks.
- ▶ When cooling or heating, keep windows locked. This ensures they are properly sealed and closes gaps.
- ▶ Set both the upper and lower water heater thermostats no higher than 120 degrees. Water heating can amount to 12 percent of your monthly energy use.
- ▶ Be sure return-air grills aren't blocked by furniture or bookcases.
- ▶ Run the dishwasher only when it is fully loaded.
- ▶ Plant trees and shrubs to provide shade on the east, south and west sides of your home. Just remember to call 811 before you dig!
- ▶ Supplement your home's cooling by turning on ceiling fans when you are in the room and turning up the AC thermostat.
- ▶ Turn off unnecessary lighting. Traditional lighting can account for 12 percent of monthly energy use.
- ▶ Wash clothes in cold water.
- ▶ Use hot water only for very dirty loads.
- ▶ Set your thermostat no lower than 78 degrees in the summer. Although this might feel warm now, it will feel cool on a 90 degree day.
- ▶ Save 6-8 percent on your electric bill for every degree your thermostat is raised above 78 degrees this summer.
- ▶ Do only full loads of laundry.
- ▶ Check to make sure your air filters are facing in the correct direction (look for arrow on side of filter).
- ▶ Consider a programmable thermostat. Installing one can save even more money this summer.
- ▶ Using caulk or foam sealant, seal gaps and holes in walls, floors, and ceilings.
- ▶ Install a water heater wrap, also known as a water heater blanket, per manufacturer's instructions.
- ▶ Water heating accounts for up to 12 percent of monthly energy use so it's important to perform simple tasks like repairing dripping faucets.
- ▶ Clean your dryer's lint trap before each load. Laundry accounts for 5-9 percent of your monthly use, so make sure the process is as efficient as possible.
- ▶ Make sure your outdoor lighting contains a photocell and/or motion sensor so it's not wasting electricity.

To see all of the summer savings tips, visit [blueridge.coop](http://blueridge.coop)

