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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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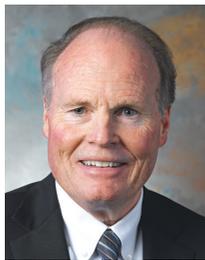
Jim Lovinggood

This organization is an equal-opportunity provider.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

## Another milestone achievement



**AS I BEGIN** my preparations for this monthly report, I find myself basking in a real state of both gratitude and pride. The focus of those good feelings is another milestone achievement by the Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative workforce. As of

this past August 4, our employee team had completed four full years of labor without a single lost-time accident. In even more-impressive mathematical terms, that's 1,461 consecutive days during which no on-the-job mishap was recorded!

### Leadership by example

While I'm elated by this accomplishment, I'm truly not surprised. I can point to at least two major reasons for this notable outcome. First of all, the cooperative has excellent leadership in the oversight of our safety program. Our manager of safety and loss control, David Black, is so diligent about promoting safe work practices to all our employees. He leads by example, and he readily understands that the business of distributing electric power involves a certain measure of danger.

**Blue Ridge's commitment to safety is displayed on every vehicle along with the co-op logo. Service Second Only to Safety means there is nothing more important than the safety of our members and employees.**



Secondly, I'm pleased to note that our workers, by their actions, have demonstrated an impressive endorsement of this strong emphasis on safety. There's a right way of performing every job action that's part of their work routine. Our men and women have ample respect for the cooperative's safety rules and regulations, and it shows in the careful manner in which they perform those many tasks.

It bears repeating that, at Blue Ridge, safety is our number-one priority. Our earnest desire is that every employee will leave the workplace at the end of each day and return home safely to his or her family. That level of concern also applies to all the cooperative's members and to the general population of our service area.

### Amazement

In a typical year, our various work crews will drive more than 2,000,000 miles in the cooperative's vehicles. These folks, in addition to their normal construction and maintenance responsibilities, are sometimes called upon to make massive repairs in the wake of severe storm emergencies. When I contemplate all they're required to undertake, I'm filled with amazement that, in four years' time, they've done their jobs without suffering a single significant accident.

In response, I have to bow my head before God in thanks for His intercession on our behalf. My hat is also off to our employees for their enthusiastic embrace of the cooperative's job training and safety program. They're looking out for their fellow workers, in addition to themselves. In the process, they're also looking out for you!

**JIM LOVINGGOOD**  
 President and CEO

# UPSTATE TEACHERS EARN GRADUATE CREDITS



COURTNEY EPTING

**TWO UPSTATE TEACHERS** went back to school this fall enlightened by a free graduate-level course sponsored by South Carolina's electric cooperatives.

Jennifer Marchbanks of R.H. Gettys Middle School in Easley and Stephanie Hudson of Westside High School in Anderson completed the 2019 Institute on Energy, Economics and the Environment: a STEM Graduate Course, held June 9–July 2 in the Columbia area. Part of the cooperatives' EnlightenSC educational program, the course provides teachers an opportunity to explore energy use in S.C. and examine how communities are impacted by the

availability of energy resources. Teachers receive three hours of graduate credit for re-certification upon completion of the course.

Each June since 2013, South Carolina's electric co-ops have sponsored this accredited graduate-level course free of charge to the state's K-12 teachers. Through in-class sessions, field trips and independent work, participants learn the basics of how electric power is

EnlightenSC course participants use an Energy Stick for a conductivity experiment. When teachers close the circuit while holding the stick, the stick makes a sound to demonstrate a closed circuit. If any teacher removes their hand, the circuit is open, and the stick does not show a conduction of electricity.

created and distributed. They develop project-based lessons that support both STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and Common Core standards integrating economics, energy and environmental issues.



Visit [EnlightenSC.org](http://EnlightenSC.org) to learn more about the program and to view lesson plans and tools for educators.

## S.C. Cooperative Youth Summit participants aid students in need

**STUDENTS WHO** find themselves without a permanent residence will have it a little easier, thanks to Women Involved in Rural Electrification (WIRE) and participants in this summer's South Carolina Cooperative Youth Summit.

Participants in the Youth Summit, a cooperative-sponsored educational program for rising high school seniors, joined volunteers from WIRE chapters across the state July 11 at Mid-Carolina Electric Cooperative in Lexington. They put together 448 bags of supplies for temporarily homeless youth. Each bag held personal hygiene items, as well as laundry detergent.

SC WIRE Chair Bobbie Cook noted, "These students come from all socio-economic backgrounds." Their families **Blue Ridge-sponsored students (from left) Addison Short, Brian Jones and Abigail Broom** helped fill 448 bags with personal hygiene items to be distributed to students in need around the state. The Kids Closet event teaches Cooperative Youth Summit participants the co-op value of concern for community.

have faced setbacks such as losing jobs, she said. "They stay with relatives, in hotels, in cars or with friends," added Cook, a retiree from Aiken Electric Cooperative.

Throughout the year, local WIRE chapters assist children and families served by electric co-ops in other ways. Some chapters provide emergency

assistance to families suffering after house fires or other catastrophes. Chapters also provide local scholarships to students in their area. Through SC WIRE, they all help fund annual scholarships for women who want to continue their education, the Jenny Ballard Opportunity Scholarship, named for a WIRE founder.



WALTER A. LUREAD