



www.blueridge.coop

**FOR ALL YOUR
CUSTOMER SERVICE NEEDS**
Call Toll-Free (800) 240-3400

AUTOMATED OUTAGE REPORTING
1-888-BLUERIDGE

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

OCONEE
P.O. Box 329
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.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Joel R. Davis, *Chairman*
Joel Spencer Dalton, Jr.,
Vice-Chairman
Len D. Talley, *Secretary*
Franklin M. Looper, Jr., *Treasurer*
Ben G. Bolt
Jimmy Lee Dodgens
William G. Elrod
Kenneth G. Southerlin
J. Mendel Stone

**PRESIDENT AND CHIEF
EXECUTIVE OFFICER**
Jim Lovinggood

This organization is an
equal-opportunity provider.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



We've now
set our
sights on
meeting
the needs
of those
residing on
the wrong
side of the
digital divide.

A broadband prospectus

THERE'S A FAMILIAR ADAGE that we hear from time to time: "History has a way of repeating itself." That statement is ringing true in my mind, since Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative has now embarked on our much-anticipated broadband project.

More than 80 years ago, this co-op took on the monumental task of extending electric power to unserved rural areas in South Carolina's north-western corner. Our predecessors here at Blue Ridge rolled up their sleeves and initiated an undertaking that would eventually string power lines across an 1,800-square-mile territory. Bottom line: the co-op tackled that challenge because no one else was willing to do so.

Here in the year 2021, our organization is confronting a similar situation. Homes, businesses and other entities in many corners of this region are clamoring for high-speed internet service. Beginning in 1940, this cooperative assumed the task of bringing rural electrification to communities living in darkness. We've now set our sights on meeting the needs of those residing on the wrong side of the digital divide.

One of our first broadband pilot projects was completed in late February for a 130-home rural Oconee County neighborhood. Over the next few years, we're intent upon installing broadband in all those other outlying unserved and underserved areas. Working in concert with our wonderful partner, West Carolina Telephone Cooperative, we're eventually going to connect high-quality fiber cable directly to every member location that requests it.

Blue Ridge is the internet provider of last resort for our members. History has shown us that no one else is coming to do it!

Quickly, I want to cover three other items:

- ▶ Capital Credit checks totaling \$1 million will go in the mail to eligible members April 12. This will be the 39th straight year in which these dividends have been returned. To date, Blue Ridge has given back more than \$29 million to its members.
- ▶ Our Blue Ridge Fest charity fundraiser has been canceled. To our regret, the COVID-19 pandemic has made large gatherings like the Fest out of the question.
- ▶ Blue Ridge Annual Meeting of Members—April 21-22, with drive-thru registration from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. each day at both the Oconee and Pickens offices.

I look forward to sharing my next month's report with you in the pages of *South Carolina Living's* May edition.

JIM LOVINGGOOD
President and CEO



Broadband installations begin

CORINTH BAPTIST CHURCH is the first customer to receive high-speed internet service from the new Blue Ridge and WCFiber partnership. The underground fiber connection at this location is the first pilot program completed this year.

From this point, service will be available to a number of surrounding communities, as well as neighboring homes and businesses. The ultimate goal is to take fiber-to-the-home broadband service to everyone within our five-county service area who wants it. Several other pilot programs are planned throughout the year. If you are interested in broadband service, register your interest at gigupblueridge.com.

All apps are not created equal

IT SEEMS THAT EVERYONE has an app these days—whether it’s for checking your bank account, ordering food, playing games or keeping track of your physical activity. You should also take advantage of the Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative app, which provides important information about your account and service options.

For starters, whether you have one account or multiple accounts in your name, they are all accessible on the mobile app. As you might imagine, the most used function of the BREC app is the option to pay your bill. It is quick and easy to make only a few selections and have your bill paid.

However, there’s so much other information available:

- ▶ **OUTAGE MAP** Whether outages are widespread or only involve a small number, they can be seen on the app’s outage map.
- ▶ **OUTAGE REPORTING** Need to report your outage? Don’t make a call, report it on the app. With only a few clicks, your outage will be entered into our outage management system.
- ▶ **KWH USAGE** One of the most helpful additions to the BREC app is the ability to track your usage day by day. With options to view 30 days, six months, a year or search by a custom date, your usage is available at your fingertips and you have control over the power you use every day.
- ▶ **WEATHER** Sometimes it is hard to remember what the temperatures were the previous month by the time your bill arrives. With the mobile app, you have the ability to select “high temp” or “low temp” along with several other options to show specific information day-by-day so you can see how your usage was affected.

The BREC mobile app is available for Apple and Android devices. You can download the app at blueridge.coop.

You may get a survey from us

Completing it helps us provide you with reliable power



A modern electrical grid requires more than just sturdy infrastructure and dependable lineworkers to keep your power on. Delivering reliable and affordable energy to you in the future will require an understanding of how you use electricity.

What kind of heating/cooling system do you have? Which large appliances do you use the most and how old are they?

Answers to these kinds of questions allow us to plan services and programs that can benefit you and the cooperative. They even help us understand how and how much power you’ll use in the years to come.

As part of our efforts to be your trusted energy provider, we will send survey information to select members of Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative on April 12. This survey will either come as a paper copy, a postcard or an email. The postcard and email will direct recipients to an online version of the survey.

All mailings will be branded with the Blue Ridge Electric logo, but if you have any questions to ensure its legitimacy, please contact us at (800) 240-3400. Participants’ names will not be associated with their responses and information is protected by privacy agreements.