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 P.O. Box 277  
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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

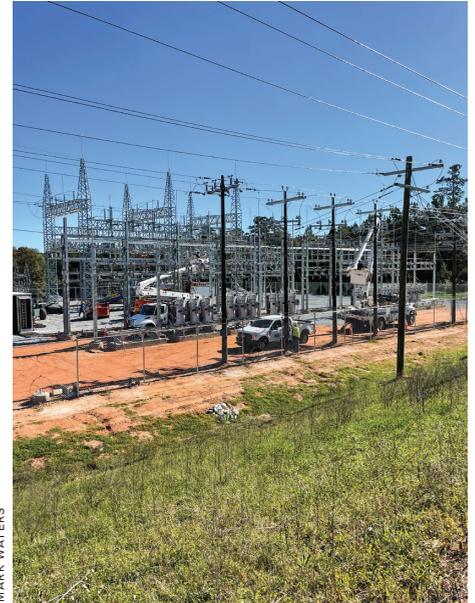


## A testament to quality service

**AT A RECENT** employee meeting, I had the opportunity to share some unique and truly impressive information: the co-op didn't experience a single backbone-feeder outage throughout the entire month of April! That was 30 consecutive days without suffering even one interruption along the extensive mileage covered by our 152 three-phase circuits. Longtime Blue Ridge employees like me couldn't recall a single instance in our past when such a phenomenon might have occurred. A number of factors worked together to bring about this accomplishment:

- ▶ An aggressive vegetation-control program. We well understand that trees and power lines don't mix. Consequently, we endeavor to clear our rights-of-way on a regular cycle.
- ▶ Our well-sectionalized Blue Ridge distribution system. We've installed reclosers and fuse cutouts all along every one of our three-phase circuits. Those devices work to confine potential trouble to the single-phase and multi-phase taps that feed off those circuits.
- ▶ The cooperative's program of relocating existing power lines. Whenever practical, our crews seek to move power lines out of wooded areas and onto less-vulnerable routes, such as those adjacent to roadways.
- ▶ Improvements we're constantly making to the Blue Ridge distribution plant. When an area's growing electrical load requires that we change out conductor to a larger wire size and install stronger poles, that "hardening" works to our advantage. These enhanced facilities are more resistant to damage that weather events, traffic accidents and the like might inflict on the co-op grid.
- ▶ The new substations we add to our network from time to time. When we energize one of these stations, we're automatically situating good numbers of our members closer to their source of central-station power, inevitably placing them in a position to receive even more reliable service.

There's no doubt in my mind that our co-op team applies quality to all the work actions I've just described. That resulting no-outage month of April should make all the Blue Ridge family proud.



MARK WATERS

**Blue Ridge Electric is constructing a new substation that will serve the western part of Oconee County. The new substation will provide continued reliability for members.**

**JIM LOVINGGOOD**  
 President and CEO

# New ways to use electricity

**IF YOU LISTEN** carefully, you can hear a quiet transformation happening. Electric appliances and equipment are becoming more popular than ever among consumers.

Advancements in technology and battery power, coupled with decreasing costs, are winning over consumers looking for comparable utility and versatility. A bonus is that use of electric equipment is quieter and better for the environment.

Inside the home, consumers and homebuilders are turning to electric appliances to increase energy efficiency and savings. Both traditional electric stoves and induction stove tops are significantly more efficient than a gas oven. Electric induction stoves, which cook food without any flame, will reduce indoor air pollution and can bring water to a boil about twice as fast as a gas stove.

Robotic vacuums, Wi-Fi connected refrigerators and other kitchen appliances are a part of a market trend of smart home technology and automation. Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative is offering a discounted price on a Smart Thermostat to members that want to help their co-op keep power costs

## Consumers and homebuilders are turning to electric appliances to increase energy efficiency and savings.

low. For details, see the information below.

Benefits of technological advancements aren't exclusive to inside the home. Tools and equipment with small gas-powered motors are being replaced with electric ones that include plug-in batteries. In the past few years, technology in battery storage has advanced significantly. Hand-held tools with plug-in batteries can hold a charge longer and offer the user the same versatility and similar functionality as gas-powered tools.

Consumers can now purchase a wider array of specialty tools that plug-in such as power inverters, air inflators and battery chargers. With more national brands offering a wider selection, including lawn mowers, leaf blowers and string trimmers, the quality of zero- or low-emissions lawn equipment is also improving.

Today, the number of electric products

available is exploding. There are electric bikes, school buses, pressure washers, utility terrain vehicles, backhoes—even airplanes and boats. With the expansion of batteries and advancements in technology, we are seeing almost anything that burns gasoline or diesel as having an electric replacement available on the market.

Electric equipment requires less maintenance, and often the biggest task is keeping them charged. Electric equipment is quieter, so if you want to listen to music or your favorite podcast while performing outdoor work, you can. On the horizon, autonomous lawn mowers (similar to robotic vacuum cleaners) will be seen dotting outdoor spaces.

Another benefit of using electric appliances or equipment is that by virtue of being plugged into the grid, the environmental performance of electric devices improves over time. In essence, electricity is becoming cleaner through increases in renewable energy generation, so equipment that uses electricity will have a diminishing environmental impact over time.

Quite a hat trick—improving efficiency, quality of life and helping the environment.

## A Cool Deal on a Smart Thermostat!

Blue Ridge Electric's *Smart Thermostat Program* offers members the opportunity to purchase an *Ecobee 3* or *Ecobee 4* smart thermostat at a discounted rate. As a participant, the member will allow the cooperative to control the thermostat during peak periods.

### Receive a discount on a smart thermostat...

Ecobee 3: \$85 *Retail Price: \$169*

Ecobee 4: \$145 (w/Alexa) *Retail Price: \$249*

Installation fees: \$50 for 1 thermostat; \$75 for 2

### ... and help your co-op with power costs.

*\* Member reimbursed after 36 months*

For additional information or questions, visit [blueridge.coop](http://blueridge.coop), or call 800-240-3400 and speak with an energy expert.

