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**Mission Statement**  
Blue Ridge will be a competitive, quality provider of energy and other services, maintaining its history of integrity and adapting to the challenges of a changing world. While exercising leadership in the community, the organization's focus will be on exceeding customer expectations.

**Board of Directors**  
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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

## My Final Report

**FOR THE LAST** 36 years in these pages, I've been privileged to share a monthly report with Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative members. With my retirement in January now just a couple of months away, this article represents my final one as your president and CEO. Space won't permit me to cover everything I'd like



to say. What I'll attempt to do is hit some highlights from what's been a personally rewarding career.

One factor of which I'm particularly proud is that my years at the helm have been punctuated by generally rapid growth on the Blue Ridge system. When I assumed the president's position in 1982, the cooperative was serving 29,000 members. That number has climbed to 66,000 today.

To contend with the addition of so many new members, Blue Ridge has been on a steady course of improvements to our distribution system. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been expended to strengthen and expand a network that now entails 7,000 miles of power lines. As part of that process, 10 new substations have been erected, and three existing stations have been rebuilt.

### A two-fold purpose

All these projects have been undertaken with a two-fold purpose: 1) to stay ahead of growth on the system; 2) to improve service quality for all cooperative members. Add to that mix an aggressive right-of-way maintenance program, and you have what I see as a fulfillment of our mission of exceeding members' expectations.

During my years at Blue Ridge,

I've encouraged our employees to be conscious of their responsibilities to the communities we serve. I'm pleased to say they've taken my admonitions to heart and enthusiastically volunteered their time and energy in support of some very worthy causes. Of course, I especially take pride in their efforts on behalf of both the cooperative's annual meeting and our Blue Ridge Fest charity fund-raiser. Without fail, the members of our workforce go all out to make both of those events successful, and they accomplish much good in the process. The nearly \$3 million that Blue Ridge Fest has contributed to area human-assistance agencies over the last 20 years speaks for itself. In so many ways, Blue Ridge has become the go-to organization when it comes to community service.

One other pleasing trend I'd cite is economic development. Within the last 12 months alone, 14 commercial and industrial accounts have either received permanent service or are in the planning/construction phase. Another four of our established industries are currently undergoing significant expansions. Moreover, all these C&I members will consume higher volumes of kilowatt-hours. That's a factor that will help hold down electricity prices for all co-op members in the years to come.

### A quality-of-life issue

My personal interest in industrial recruitment has entailed more than simply seeking a positive impact on members' power costs. I also view this as a quality-of-life issue. New industries mean more jobs locally and additional sources of tax revenues for our county governments. Furthermore, area merchants and other businesses benefit from enhanced commerce generated

by these new workers. Those are matters of some importance to the cooperative's residential members. Consequently, I've always tried to keep those considerations in front of me as part of my involvement in this aspect of my job.

Looking to the future, Blue Ridge will continue to employ the best in technology to ensure our members receive high-quality service. The AMI metering devices we're now installing at member premises will raise cooperative-delivered service to more-efficient and more-reliable levels. For example, the AMI model will instantly notify Blue Ridge the very moment the power goes out at any member location.

Speaking of the future, Jim Lovinggood, the cooperative's vice president of engineering, will become your new CEO in January. Jim has worked at Blue Ridge for 35 years himself, and I can assure you he's well-equipped to take on this job. He'll inherit ingredients that have made my time at the cooperative so rewarding: I've been accountable to what's an outstanding board of directors, I've worked alongside a team of dedicated employees who are truly second to none, and I've had the pleasure of leading an organization that's supplying an essential service to some of the best people in the world. Upon entering retirement, I'll take a host of wonderful memories with me. You can also be assured that as long as we have breath, Libby and I will be the biggest boosters of Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative you'll find anywhere!

**Charles E. Dalton**  
President and CEO



## 'Tis the Season!

May  
the lights of  
this season fill you with  
warmth and a joyous spirit!

### ANNUAL TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY

Tuesday, November 21 at 5:15 pm

Join us as we light the tree on the lawn at the co-op office in Pickens. Music will be provided by Pickens Presbyterian Church, and Rev. Nath Briley will have a short devotional. Light refreshments will be served.

<b>THANKSGIVING</b> Closed Thursday, Nov. 23 & Friday, Nov. 24	<b>CHRISTMAS</b> Closed Monday, Dec. 25 & Tuesday, Dec. 26	<b>NEW YEAR'S DAY</b> Closed Monday, Jan. 1, 2018
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Although our offices will be closed for the holidays to allow our employees to spend this time with their families, dispatchers will be taking emergency calls, and crews will be on standby. You may also access much of your account information or report an outage by using the BRECC app that can be downloaded for your device.