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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.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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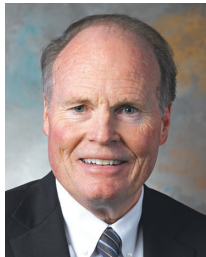
Jim Lovinggood

This organization is an equal-opportunity provider.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Blue Ridge-supplied broadband under consideration



IT HAS NOW been a couple of months since Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative forwarded a broadband survey to every member on our system. I want to thank all of you who have taken time to respond to this inquiry. The survey, coupled with an earlier small, random

sampling of members that we sent out last spring, was designed to gauge member sentiment on this matter.

Ultimately, both of these questionnaires produced very strong indications that a host of our members would be interested in the cooperative pursuing this idea of broadband service. In fact, an impressive 15-plus percent of our total membership has already responded to this last survey. Of those replying, 84 percent have stated they'd be very likely to subscribe to high-speed internet provided by Blue Ridge.

Feasibility studies

At the same time, the cooperative has sponsored a study that looked into the feasibility of such an undertaking. That study also produced some promising results. In the name of caution, we've arranged for a second feasibility analysis to be carried out. We want to build as much certainty as we can into this process before we take any major steps forward.

In addition, there are some other factors that will require our attention. For one, we don't yet know all the funding sources that might be available to support this proposed effort. We're now exploring what options might be out there.

An expectation of bipartisan support

There's also a need to clarify what modifications to South Carolina law might be required for electric cooperatives to enter the broadband business. It would be our expectation that we'd find plenty of bipartisan

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support in the S.C. General Assembly for such action. We'd certainly encourage our lawmakers to get behind this issue.

Should the cooperative decide to take on this proposition, we'd endeavor to do so in the right way. We've noted that some of your written responses to the survey expressed reservations about data caps and the throttling of speed. A high-speed internet service offered by Blue Ridge would have neither of these unsatisfactory features. It would be our intention to install a genuine fiber-to-home network that would utilize no radio frequency. Therefore, there would be zero interference with any existing radio frequencies operating in the area.

What seems apparent is that many Blue Ridge members see a real need for high-speed internet in their communities. Indeed, broadband is showing itself to be a hot topic all across today's rural America. As a consequence, management is keeping the cooperative's board of directors fully up to date on the potential this opportunity might hold. Accordingly, we believe it will be the latter part of 2020 before we'll be in a position to make a final decision. In the meantime, any questions, suggestions, or other comments from our members would be more than welcome.

JIM LOVINGGOOD
President and CEO

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June 20–25, 2020

Blue Ridge Electric's 2019 Youth Tour representatives: (l-r)

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Blue Ridge Electric's 2019 Cooperative Youth Summit representatives: (l-r)

Addison Short—Pickens High School
Brian Jones—Westside High School
Abi Broom—Pickens High School

**July 7–10,
2020**



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

To apply for either trip, visit us online at blueridge.coop.
All applications must be received no later than
Wednesday, February 5, 2020.

