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**FOR ALL YOUR CUSTOMER SERVICE NEEDS**

Call Toll-Free (800) 240-3400

**AUTOMATED OUTAGE REPORTING**  
1-888-BLUERIDGE

**PICKENS**

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734 West Main St.  
Pickens, SC 29671

**OCONEE**

P.O. Box 329  
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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.

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Jim Lovinggood

This organization is an equal-opportunity provider.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

## Hot topic: water-heater rebates



**FOR MANY YEARS** now, Blue Ridge members have received assistance from our energy conservation advisor. This employee possesses a broad understanding of what constitutes the wise use of electricity in a residence.

Often, his personal, up-close look at a home will reveal steps a family could take to reduce their electricity consumption.

One particular appliance that regularly attracts his scrutiny is the electric water heater. This wonderful unit is able to supply instant and abundant hot water to a home's occupants. When it's working properly, it's truly a blessing.

### Dangerous fumes

A British painter, Benjamin Waddy Maughan, is credited with patenting the first residential water heater in 1868. His invention used natural gas to heat the H<sub>2</sub>O, but it didn't have a flue for the ventilation of the gas vapors. Consequently, the device was unsafe for household use. Later refinements added safety features such as a flue that could evacuate the dangerous fumes. Even today, either a gas or propane water heater must be installed adjacent to an outside wall, so that the gas vapors can be released into the outer air.

During the last 30 years or so, electric water heaters have really come into their own. The fact that an electric model can be located anywhere within a home's interior represents a genuine advantage. In addition, it operates at a higher level of energy efficiency than its fossil-fuel counterparts. On top of that, manufacturers of electric water heaters are finding ways to make them even more efficient.

### Cash incentive

Water heaters are durable, but they don't last forever. After a good many

years, they'll pass their prime and their efficiency begins to decline. That's where the discerning eye of the cooperative's energy conservation advisor can ride to the rescue. He can usually tell when a water heater is on its last legs, and he has a nice cash incentive he can then share with the member: Blue Ridge offers a \$200 to \$300 rebate toward the replacement of the old unit. In the last six years, nearly 2,900 co-op members have availed themselves of this rebate. Also, for members converting from a natural gas or propane water heater to an electric model, the rebate is either \$500 or \$600.

Whether or not our energy conservation advisor has visited your dwelling, you might have already realized that it's time to change out your existing hot water source. I encourage you to contact us at Blue Ridge to arrange for your rebate. It's a simple process.

You're also encouraged to look over the information that's included in this month's magazine about our charity fundraiser, Blue Ridge Fest. That May 1 event is fast approaching, and I want to issue a cordial invitation for you to join us for an enjoyable evening. Also, next month's edition of *South Carolina Living* will be devoted to the cooperative's annual meeting, which is scheduled for Thursday, April 23. We're working hard on preparations for what is the number-one occasion on the Blue Ridge calendar. If you come, I can promise you a warm welcome, an inspiring program, and an honest assessment of the progress your cooperative continues to make. I hope to see you there.

**JIM LOVINGGOOD**  
President and CEO

## Apply now for 2020 WIRE scholarships

**WOMEN RETURNING** to school to earn college degrees may now apply for financial assistance from the 2020 Jenny Ballard Opportunity Scholarship program.

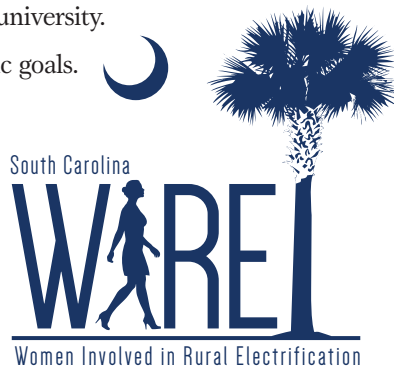
Sponsored by Women Involved in Rural Electrification (WIRE), a service organization associated with South Carolina's not-for-profit electric cooperatives, the scholarship is a one-time award based on financial need and personal goals.

Application forms for the 2020 WIRE scholarship are available at your local electric cooperative and at [SCLiving.coop/scholarship](http://SCLiving.coop/scholarship). Applicants for the program must:

- ▶ Be a member of a South Carolina electric cooperative.
- ▶ Have graduated from high school or earned a GED at least 10 years ago.
- ▶ Be accepted into an accredited S.C. college or university.
- ▶ Demonstrate financial need and clear academic goals.

Recipients will receive scholarships for the fall 2020 or spring 2021 semester, with funds paid to the college or university.

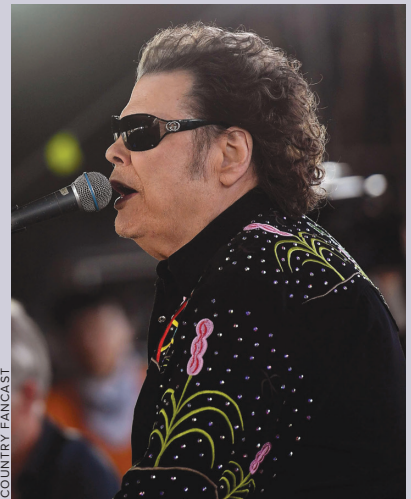
Please submit applications by June 1. Apply online at [ecsc.org/content/wire-scholarship](http://ecsc.org/content/wire-scholarship), by email to [peggy.dantzler@ecsc.org](mailto:peggy.dantzler@ecsc.org) or by mail to Peggy Dantzler, The Electric Cooperatives of S.C., Inc., 808 Knox Abbott Dr., Cayce, SC 29033.



### BLUE RIDGE EXTRA

#### Great Times! Great Causes!

There's more local co-op news ahead! See the Blue Ridge Extra section, starting on Page 20A, where we tell you all about the Blue Ridge Fest, featuring entertainers Ronnie Milsap (pictured), Restless Heart and The Tams.



COUNTRY FANCAST

## Plan Your Monthly Budget More Easily With Predictable Power Bills

### Introducing *Budget Billing*...

Even though the amount of electricity you use can change with the seasons, your monthly bill doesn't have to.

With **Budget Billing**, you pay the same amount each month, based on the average of your previous year's monthly usage.

This is a great way to plan your monthly budget more easily with predictable monthly power bills- *and it's FREE!*

Give us a call today to find out if you qualify for **Budget Billing**.



800-240-3400  
[blueridge.coop](http://blueridge.coop)



# Ronnie Milsap shares talents at 2020 Blue Ridge Fest

**EXCITEMENT IS BUILDING** with the announcement of this year's entertainment for the 23rd annual Blue Ridge Fest. Held in Pickens on the campus of Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative, this event has grown each year and now boasts a crowd of more than 5,000. This year holds something for every music lover with the appearance of Ronnie Milsap, Restless Heart, and the ever-popular Tams.

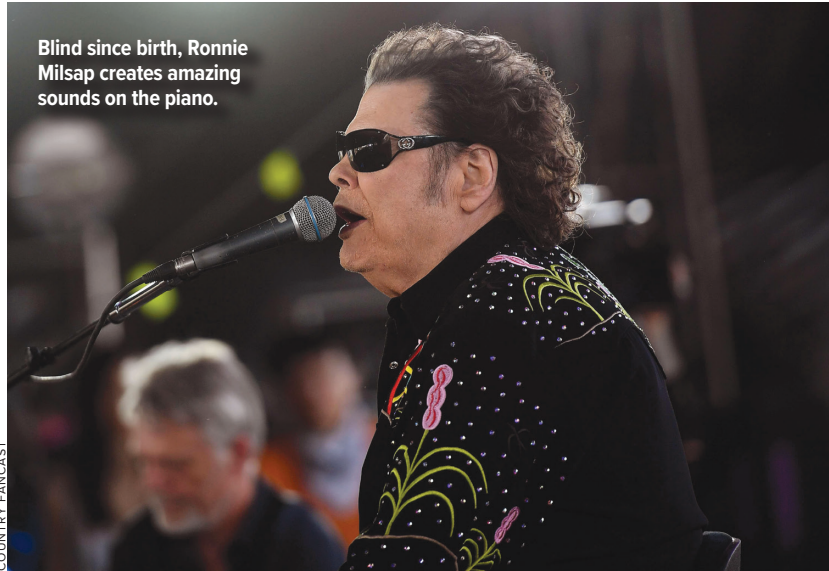
With a career beginning in 1973, Ronnie Milsap is one of music's most popular and influential performers of the 70s and 80s. His first #1 hit, Pure Love, came in 1974 and from that point on, his career soared with hits and awards. Milsap was named the Country Music Association's Male Vocalist of the Year in 1974 and would receive the same honor in 1976 and 1977. Throughout his career he has had 40 number-one country hits and won six Grammys and eight CMAs.

His 1981 hit "Smoky Mountain Rain" introduced him to a larger audience when it crossed over to the pop charts. Along with "Smoky Mountain Rain," some of his other big hits were "Lost in the Fifties Tonight," "I Wouldn't Have Missed it for the World," "What a Difference You Made in my Life," and "It Was Almost Like a Song."

Restless Heart, an American country music band, formed in 1984. They have released seven studio albums and two greatest hits albums and have enjoyed one of the most successful careers in country music history. Placing over 25 singles on the charts, with six consecutive #1 hits, four of their albums have been certified Gold by the RIAA. Restless Heart has won awards including the Academy of Country Music's Top Vocal Group trophy. Their hits include "I'll Still be Loving You," "When She Cries," "The Bluest Eyes in Texas," and "That Rock Won't Roll."

The Tams need no introduction to Fest attendees. They have appeared a number of times and entertained the crowd with their music, their songs and their choreography.

All of this great entertainment will be at the Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative office on Main Street in Pickens on Friday, May 1. We hope you'll join us for a night of Great Times for Great Causes.



Blind since birth, Ronnie Milsap creates amazing sounds on the piano.

COUNTRY FANCAST



FILE



Restless Heart, together since 1984, has more than 25 hit songs.

The Tams return with crowd-pleasing songs and choreography.



DIGITAL JOURNAL

# Blue Ridge Fest invests in 'Great Causes'



**THE TAGLINE** on the Blue Ridge Fest logo says it all—Great Times! Great Causes!

One of the area's premier events, Blue Ridge Fest has enjoyed success over its 22-year history. Because of that success, many charitable agencies have received funding from this employee- and sponsor-supported event. Last year alone, Blue Ridge Fest raised \$235,000 for 12 local charities. Over the past 22 years, nearly \$3 million has been divided among more than 70 agencies across the area served by Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative.

Blue Ridge CEO Jim Lovinggood takes pride in the results: "Our employees have shown year after year that they care about the communities they call home. We know there are people that have a

difficult time providing for themselves and their families. Our goal is to help as many of them as we can through the money we raise. Charles Dalton introduced the idea of an employee charity event, and we continue that tradition, now in its 23rd year."

An employee charity committee reviews applications and selects recipients of Blue Ridge Fest funds each year. This year's charities are A Child's Haven, CFK, Inc., Feed a Hungry Child of Pickens County, Foothills Alliance, Foothills Care Center, Golden Corner Food Pantry, Grace's Closet, Hospice of the Upstate, North Greenville Crisis Ministry, Oconee Presbyterian Service Fund, Service Dogs for Veterans, and United Christian Ministries.

Julie-ann Shannon (second from left), executive director of Grace's Closet, thanked all who participated in Blue Ridge Fest last year. She said, "This generous gift will allow us to provide clothing, new shoes, hygiene items, school supplies, and weekend food to Oconee County students. These items help build self-confidence by meeting the basic needs of our youth. The generosity of Blue Ridge Fest fosters community support across the Upstate. This is a unique opportunity for individuals to come together and have a fun time while improving the lives of many."

The most rewarding moment of this process is when the checks are presented to the different organizations with sponsors and employees on hand. We hope you will do your part in making 2020 a success by being a part of a great night on May 1.

An Evening of Great Music & Vintage Cars!

Featuring the Legendary

# RONNIE MILSAP

*"Smoky Mountain Rain", "It Was Almost Like A Song", "Any Day Now"*



Also

# RESTLESS HEART

And **THE TAMS**

**FRIDAY, MAY 1, 2020**

5:30 pm-10 pm at Blue Ridge Electric Co-op, 734 W. Main St., Pickens, SC



*Largest Cruise-In  
in the Upstate!*

*Proceeds benefit Upstate  
charitable organizations.*

TICKETS \$40 • CHILDREN 12 & UNDER FREE • CRUISE-IN: \$40 Admits a Classic Car and Includes 2 Event Tickets

For more information, call 800-240-3400 or visit online at [blueridgefest.com](http://blueridgefest.com).



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### MAKE BILL

**PAYING** easy with a monthly draft from your checking or savings account. Plus, we'll give you a \$20 bill credit when you sign up for bank draft. It's so easy—just complete the form at right and mail it to Blue Ridge along with a cancelled check from your bank. Or make it even easier by going to blueridge.coop and completing the form online. Act now and get your \$20 credit!

### Bank Draft Authorization Form

Blue Ridge Co-op Account Number(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Bank \_\_\_\_\_  Checking  Savings

#### A VOIDED CHECK MUST ACCOMPANY THIS FORM

Please mail this form and a voided check to:  
Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative, Inc. ATTN: Amy Duke  
P O Box 329 · Westminster, SC 29693

\*Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

\*I hereby authorize Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative to draw drafts against my account for payment of my electric bill(s). I further authorize the bank to pay these draws from my account. This draft is to remain in force until my intent to withdraw is give in writing or by phone to Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative and the bank at least 30 days prior ro the presentation of a draft or revoked by Blue Ridge Electric for two dishonored drafts within a year.

You will continue to receive your electric bill each moth. A message will appear on your monthly electric bill stating TO BE PAID BY DRAFT. Once this message appears on your statement, your bill will be drafted 3-4 business days prior to your Due Date.

# ELECTRICITY AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

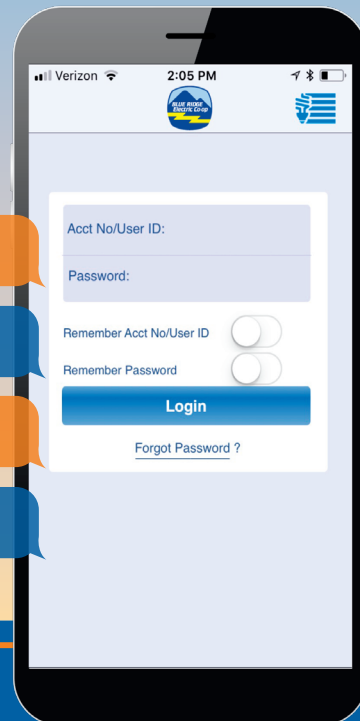
Download the free BREC app to manage your account from the palm of your hand.

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View the outage map



*We're proud to help power your lives*