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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

## Broadband service to extend across Anderson County



**JANUARY 27 PROVED** to be a day of special significance for Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative. On that date, representatives of Anderson County, West Carolina Rural Telephone Cooperative and Blue Ridge announced a major broadband initiative.

Those gathered for the announcement at the local civic center included members of both the county's council and legislative delegation, as well as other county officials. I was also honored to be on the program, along with my counterpart, Jeff Wilson, CEO at West Carolina.

The very heart of the announcement was Anderson County's selection of Upcountry Fiber to take high-speed internet service to all the county's unincorporated areas. Within the last 12 months, Upcountry Fiber, which is a partnership of Blue Ridge and West Carolina, has extended broadband to more than 2,000 subscribers. Most of these new connects are in Oconee and Pickens counties. However, our goal is for the majority of Anderson County situated within Blue Ridge-assigned territory to have high-quality internet by year end.

Blue Ridge will borrow funds to

support the installation of fiber cable in those communities where we are already supplying electricity. Both the loan and its payback are expected to have no impact on the electricity rates our members are currently paying.

Locations outside the assigned co-op territory will see their Upcountry Fiber availability underwritten by federal allotments from the American Rescue Plan that were disbursed among all 46 counties. Anderson County's government has elected to devote some of its share of that federal contribution to this broadband undertaking.

In January 2021, we estimated it would take five to seven years to establish cable connections across the cooperative's entire five-county service area. Support from funds made available on the national, state and/or local level, however, would cut that delivery time in half. That's why this action by Anderson County is so important.

More than 80 years ago, electric co-ops accepted the challenge of taking central-station power to our state's vast, unserved rural areas. In 2022, quality internet access is viewed by many as just as essential as that of electric service. I readily recognize that parallel. Consequently, I enthusiastically salute these Anderson County officials who have envisioned another means of making life better for their citizens.

**JIM LOVINGGOOD**  
 President and CEO



Representatives from Anderson County Council, local school districts and members of ORS joined West Carolina CEO Jeff Wilson and Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative CEO Jim Lovinggood at the announcement of the selection of Upcountry Fiber as the provider to bring high-speed fiber internet to unserved areas of Anderson County.

# Bringing you power and more

**AS THE DATE** of this year's Annual Meeting approaches, it's a good time to remind you of the benefits you have through your membership. Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative offers a wide variety of programs and services designed to enhance the quality of life our members enjoy. We're constantly refining these programs—and developing new ones—just one way we're always looking out for you.

Let's begin by looking at managing your account with the new Member Service Portal. This convenient option can be accessed from our website with your login information. Once on the portal you can pay your bill, set alerts, change billing and payment methods and view or print your power bill. There are graphs and charts available to help you monitor your electric use, plus you can start or end service.

An additional convenience is provided by the Blue Ridge app. With you all the time on your Apple or Android device, the Blue Ridge app gives you access to account information and even allows you to view and report outages.

## Mark your calendar

### Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting

**Drive-thru-only registration**  
April 27–28

**Pickens office**  
734 West Main St.  
Pickens

**Oconee office**  
2328 Sandifer Blvd.  
Highway 123  
Westminster

**Virtual business meeting**  
April 28



As we did last year, Blue Ridge employees will guide you to the registration lanes where you will present your registration card and ID and receive your Annual Meeting gift.

Realizing the differing needs of our membership, a variety of payment options are available. Bank Draft and Credit Card Draft make sure your payment is made each month regardless of where you are or what you're doing. Two more programs, Levelized Billing and Budget Billing reduce the fluctuations in your monthly bill, allowing you to plan your budget without being dependent on your usage during those months of extreme heat or cold.

Other programs and services that might interest you are H2O Select, a rebate program that helps pay for

a replacement water heater in your home, or the Heat Pump Loan Program, granting low-interest loans to qualified members needing to replace their old heating unit with an efficient heat pump.

Several years ago, Blue Ridge formed a team of energy experts to assist you with renewables and other emerging technologies. Below are some of the offerings Blue Ridge Energy Services is prepared to bring you, in addition to assistance with solar installations. For information on any of our products or services, visit [blueridge.coop](http://blueridge.coop) or call (800) 240-3400.

## Services & Products to Benefit Your Everyday Life



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