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Automated Outage Reporting

1-888-BLURIDGE
www.blueridge.coop

Pickens

P.O. Box 277
734 West Main St.
Pickens, SC 29671

Oconee

P.O. Box 329
2328 Sandifer Blvd.
Highway 123
Westminster, SC 29693

Anderson

1212 North Fant St.
Anderson, SC 29622

Greenville

3751 Highway 11
Travelers Rest, SC 29690

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.

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Storm preparation includes right-of-way maintenance, system upgrades

RECENTLY, ON A morning television news program, I watched as a groundhog in Pennsylvania came out of his den and, not seeing his shadow, supposedly forecast an early spring. I'm not sure a groundhog



can correctly predict the weather in our region of the country; however, I hope this time he's right. We've been dealing with a winter that will be remembered for a long time. Heavier-than-average snowfalls and brief

periods of sleet and freezing rain, coupled with months of below-average temperatures, have conspired to deal quite a blow to our area.

Blue Ridge has been fortunate to avoid mass, extended outages during any of these weather events. Certainly, there were many factors that came into play, including temperatures, atmospheric conditions, direction of the winds and moisture, and just some old-fashioned luck. However, co-op crews have also been busy preparing for winters like this. Our continued emphasis on right-of-way maintenance and system upgrades has laid the groundwork for limiting interruptions of service during even the worst of storms.

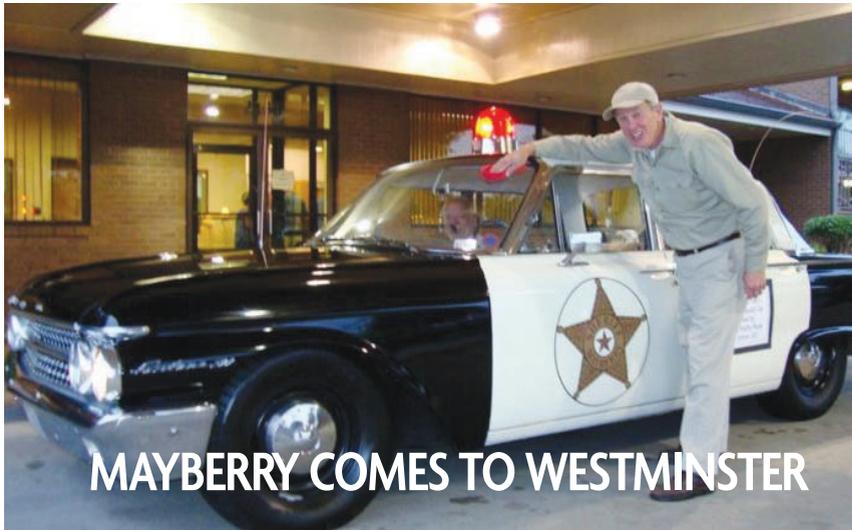
Our engineering and operations groups have worked together to pursue moving a considerable number of distribution lines from wooded areas to locations adjacent to open roads or highways. Many of these lines were built 50 or more years ago across farm fields or pastures that are today largely inhabited by trees and underbrush. A good example of this type of upgrade can be found along Cobb Bridge Road in the Westminster community. Another area that

underwent a similar line relocation is served by our Pickens substation, where poles and wires that traversed the former Sangamo property were moved out to Reece Mill Road. In both of these examples, as the lines were moved, they were also upgraded to a larger wire size in anticipation of additional electric load coming onto these parts of our system. Similar examples can be found in Anderson and Greenville counties as well.

Regardless of the efforts the cooperative makes to insure reliable service during the worst of weather conditions, we have no control over winter temperatures. Months of cold weather have surely taken their toll across our system, with many of our members seeing some of the highest electricity use they've ever had. This elevated consumption translates into higher-than-average bills, in spite of no increase in the cooperative's rates since 2008. Blue Ridge representatives continue to work with members that are confronted with high bills. In addition, the cooperative maintains a list of area agencies that will assist lower-income households with utility bill payments. Along with Levelized Billing and low-interest heat-pump loans, these options are helping many members lower their power bills, while also reducing their energy use.

I'd like to point out the information on the adjacent page that highlights details of two very important events that will be held at the co-op office in the spring—our annual meeting on May 9 and Blue Ridge Fest on May 13-14. We look forward to seeing you at both.

Charles E. Dalton
President and CEO



MAYBERRY COMES TO WESTMINSTER

TOM RUSK

SINCE OCTOBER 1960, folks have enjoyed *The Andy Griffith Show*. Still in syndication after 50 years, the show crosses all generations with its humor and great life lessons. As with most areas of the Southeast, there are hundreds of Mayberry fans in the northwest corner of South Carolina. With that in mind, the city of Westminster will become the city of Mayberry for two days this spring—April 15-16.

The official host of this Mayberry Comes to Westminster festival is Rodney Dillard, one of the original “Darlings” family band members who was featured in five episodes of *The Andy Griffith Show*. Joining Rodney are several Mayberry look-a-likes or tribute artists. Headlining is David Browning, the Mayberry Deputy, who for the last 22 years has portrayed the infamous Barney Fife all over America.

Along with the Mayberry Deputy will be Allan “Floyd the Barber” Newsome, Gary “Gomer” Crain, Tim “Goober” Pettigrew, and Phil “Ernest T. Bass” Fox. Also joining the festivities will be Jeff “Howard Sprague” Branch, Bob “Briscoe Darling” Munday, and Christie “Anndylina Wash” McLendon, “Charlene Darling’s” daughter. In addition to visiting with folks at several stores in the downtown area, they will take part in a talent show on Saturday evening.

Also performing at the talent show will be the VW Boys Band from Bristol, Tenn. They feature music and comedy much like the original “Darlings” performed on *The Andy Griffith Show*.

Several other venues are planned including a Mayberry Days parade, a cruise-in featuring vintage autos, an “Aunt Bee” and “Opie” look-a-like contest, a whistling contest, art-and-craft displays, food venues and much more. For more information, visit www.jneg.org.

Gary “Gomer” Crain shines up the Mayberry squad car before the big parade at Mayberry Days 2009 in Mt. Airy, N.C.



LIZA HOLDER

Energy-saving advice is always available at the Blue Ridge Annual Meeting.

May events on the horizon

May is a very special month for members of Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative. The Annual Meeting of Members is scheduled for Monday, May 9, at the usual location—the cooperative’s equipment facility at 734 West Main Street in Pickens.

Registration for the meeting will open officially at 5:30 p.m. and then close at 7 p.m. sharp. Every Blue Ridge member who registers in person will receive a valuable door prize and be eligible for the drawings for dozens of prizes that will be given away later that evening.

A new item has been added to this year’s annual meeting menu! Free hot dogs will be available for attendees or they can still enjoy a Moon Pie and crackers. Free soft drinks will also be available for everyone.

Following the business meeting, everyone is invited to sit back and enjoy the Little Roy and Lizzy show. Both Lizzy and Little Roy spring from the original Lewis Family that played and sang at a good number of previous Blue Ridge annual meetings down through the years.

Just four days after the annual meeting and at the same location, we’ll host our charity fund-raiser, Blue Ridge Fest. For the fest’s Friday Beach Night show and dance, our lead entertainer will be the “King of the Twist”, Chubby Checker. Additionally, we are planning for more than 500 classic cars that evening, followed by our Motorcycle Charity Ride on Saturday morning.

In conjunction with the weekend fun, a 2011 Polaris Ranger XP 800 ATV and a \$5,000 cash prize will be given away in separate raffles. Proceeds for Blue Ridge Fest will be used to fund 13 charities serving Anderson, Greenville, Oconee and Pickens counties. Mark your calendar and plan to join us at these two events.

New service offers a little reminder to keep you up-to-date

Do you find it harder to remember all the things you need to do each day? Blue Ridge now has the capability to remind you each month when your utility bill is due and the amount of that bill. The reminder can be sent either as an e-mail message or as a text message to your phone. Call center manager, Beverly Crenshaw is excited about this new service. “Many times during the day, our representatives will talk to someone that simply forgot the bill was due. This reminder will be sent five days prior to the due date and should help people eliminate an unnecessary late fee on their account.”

A number of alerts and reminders are

available from your co-op—everything from a past-due reminder to a message that advises you that your payment has been credited to your account.

This service will be available beginning March 1 and will automatically be added to all accounts that have an e-mail address on file.

If you want a little help remembering it’s time to pay your bill or you would like to know your payment has been received, just call (800) 240-3400. A member service representative will be happy to add an e-mail address to your account or indicate you would like a text message sent to your cell phone. We are here to serve you any way we can!