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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.

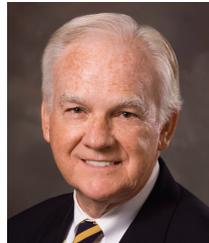
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## Safety, economic development updates

WHEN 2014 CAME to a close, we also noted that, as of Dec. 31, it had been 1,218 days since the Blue



Ridge Electric Cooperative workforce had last suffered a lost-time accident. Aug. 31, 2011, was the date that particular accident occurred.

In the history of the cooperative, that's the longest period our employee team has ever worked before breaking an accident-free streak. What's more, for each subsequent day on the job without a further undesirable event, our employees are setting a new safety record.

I can't begin to describe how proud I am of this ongoing achievement. As I've mentioned numerous times in previous monthly reports to you, safety is our number-one priority here at Blue Ridge. We want our employees to be safe, and that concern for safety extends to those we serve with electricity and to the members of the general public.

### Few and far between

Fortunately, our employees are favorably disposed toward the ideal of a safe working environment. That mindset manifests itself in their day-to-day performance. It's important to have a quality safety program, and it's essential that management should exercise real leadership in implementing that program. Be that as it may, unless the individual employees see the value of working safe, the goal of an accident-free workplace isn't going to be realized. The fact that our lost-time accidents have been so few and far between offers ample evidence that our workforce is truly on board.

Turning to another subject, I want to give you an update on recent economic-development activity within the Blue Ridge service area. Before the end of December, the cooperative



Crews discuss the changing of a three-phase pole and the measures they will follow to complete this job safely.

directed Rural Development Act funding amounts of \$200,000 each to both Anderson and Oconee counties.

### No impact on rates

These RDA dollars are actually deferred license-tax obligations the cooperative would typically pay yearly to the S.C. Department of Revenue. However, the Rural Development Act permits each taxpaying utility in the state to channel up to \$400,000 of these tax monies to local job-creating projects. These fund transfers have absolutely no impact on members' electric rates, and the Blue Ridge board of directors has to give approval to these ultimate expenditures.

Oconee committed to use its allotment to pay for land purchased as the site for an industrial park. In Anderson County, officials were to put their RDA funds toward the construction of a shell building within an already-thriving, county-owned commerce center. Both of these counties are to be commended for their efforts to attract good-paying jobs to the Upstate. The cooperative is more than willing to partner with Anderson, Oconee, and other counties in bringing these kinds of undertakings to a positive conclusion.

**Charles E. Dalton**  
*President and CEO*

## Port Bass substation now operating



LISA HOLDNER

### BLUE RIDGE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

energized its new Port Bass substation in mid-January and then began adding electrical load to the facility toward the end of that same month. The 28-MVA station is designed so that its capacity could be doubled in the future, if necessary.

Initially, four main three-phase distribution circuits will feed from the Port Bass apparatus. That number could also be doubled to accommodate subsequent growth on the system.

Blue Ridge received assistance with this project from its wholesale-electricity provider, Central Electric Power Cooperative. In order to supply the new substation, Central crews spent a good portion of 2014 constructing a 10-mile-long transmission line to the site.

Among the benefits derived from the new facility, Blue Ridge officials pointed to three that were considered most prominent:

- ▶ Shifting of electrical load from existing substations—both the Oakway and Fair Play substations would see significant portions of their load moved to Port Bass.
- ▶ Better service reliability for existing members—many members in southwestern Oconee County would now find themselves situated much closer to their source of central-station power, which should translate into an even better level of service.

**Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative Oconee County board members (L to R) Joel Davis, Len Talley, and Mendel Stone performed a recent inspection of the utility's new Port Bass substation.**

- ▶ Ample capacity to meet future growth in the geographical area—such growth could prove to be substantial with, for example, the county's commitment to extend sewer service along the Interstate 85 corridor, expected industrial development within the Golden Corner Commerce Park, and the planned commercial/resort complex at Sanctuary Point.

The cooperative's president and CEO, Charles Dalton, said the Port Bass structure was a welcome addition to the Blue Ridge power grid. "I'm excited about all the positives associated with this latest accomplishment. Truthfully, the one that I'd put at the top of the list is the electrical load we're transferring from the South Union backbone feeder that emanates from our substation at Oakway. Without question, the South Union circuit was the most heavily loaded feeder on the cooperative's entire system. Solving that potential problem means more-dependable service for our members, and quality service is always a priority at Blue Ridge."

Port Bass is the 33rd substation to be erected on the cooperative's distribution network. The Blue Ridge system serves 64,000 members via 7,000 miles of power lines.

## Blue Ridge Fest will bring out the best

**BLUE RIDGE FEST** is set to bring the best in great entertainment again to raise money for 12 local charities. On May 8, Fest goers will be entertained by Johnny Tillotson ("Poetry in Motion," "It Keeps Right On A Hurtin'"), Shirley Alston Reeves and the Shirelles, and the Swingin' Medallions with their classic sound.

"With the level of entertainment we have planned for Blue Ridge Fest this year, we are expecting record crowds," says Blue Ridge President and CEO Charles Dalton. "Add to this the excitement of having hundreds of classic cars on the grounds, a hundred supportive sponsors, and we have the making for a very successful charity event." Please be with us on May 8 for a night of great times for great causes.

## Special events will highlight the 2015 Annual Meeting

**IT'S A SPECIAL YEAR**—the year that Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative will celebrate its 75th Anniversary. While the actual anniversary date is Aug. 14, we will celebrate this occasion at our annual meeting on **Thursday evening, April 30**. A special door prize will be given to commemorate this event.

If you have pictures or other memorabilia you would like to share with us, contact Amy Childress at [samy.childress@blueridge.coop](mailto:samy.childress@blueridge.coop) or (800) 240-3400. We also invite anyone with a 1940-vintage automobile to bring that vehicle to the annual meeting where a special area will be set aside for viewing. Again, please contact us if you would like to participate, so we can have plenty of space allotted to these automobiles.

What a great way to celebrate the past! We hope you will make your plans to be with us on April 30 for this special anniversary party!