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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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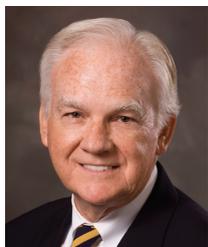


A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Blue Ridge Security honored

Solar energy spotlighted

EARLIER THIS YEAR, *The Greenville News* conducted its Best of the Upstate poll of the paper's readers. In a nominating,



voting, and tabulating process that consumed nearly three months, readers made their selections from among 200-plus nominee categories. That myriad of categories ranged from Best Antique Store to Best Veterinarian,

from Best Hiking Trail to Best Jazz Band, and on and on.

Toward the end of July, the newspaper published the results. I was honored to learn that in the category of Best Home Security, the winner was the cooperative's own subsidiary, Blue Ridge Security Solutions. That vote of support from *Greenville News* readers was certainly gratifying.

In my view, Blue Ridge Security had to earn this endorsement. A major factor in that outcome, I believe, is the emphasis the company and its employees place on delivering quality service. The security subsidiary was established in 1995. Our original purpose was that the operation would apply the same devotion to service excellence as was—and is—the ongoing practice at Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative.

The company has held closely to that purpose, and today ranks among the top 30 of America's 3,000 security providers. Along with residential customers, Blue Ridge is marketing its vast array of security products and services to many of this country's most prominent commercial and industrial firms. These Blue Ridge-served C&I locations are situated within a host of states east of the Mississippi River. For all that has been accomplished in the

last 20 years, I take my hat off to the Blue Ridge Security employee team.

Turning to another subject, I'd call attention to a new South Carolina law that is paving the way for solar-energy systems to become more accessible to our state's homeowners. Before making a commitment to solar, there are multitudes of questions to be asked and decisions to be made by the homeowner. Factors such as installing roof-top panels versus ground-mounted units would be near the top of the list. The physical tilt of the panels, maintenance of the units, insurance on the investment, warranties, and a passel of other considerations would also come into play.

Blue Ridge and our fellow S.C. cooperatives are intent on helping our members find answers and to arrive at satisfactory individual decisions. To assist you in navigating that journey, our trade association, the Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina, has established a comprehensive website devoted to solar energy. I'd encourage you to go to MySCSolar.com and get started there on your search.

Of course, if there is any way Blue Ridge might be of service here on the local level, you can always contact us. We already have about 70 members who are now employing solar at their respective residences. What we've already learned, we'll be glad to impart to you.

Charles E. Dalton
President and CEO

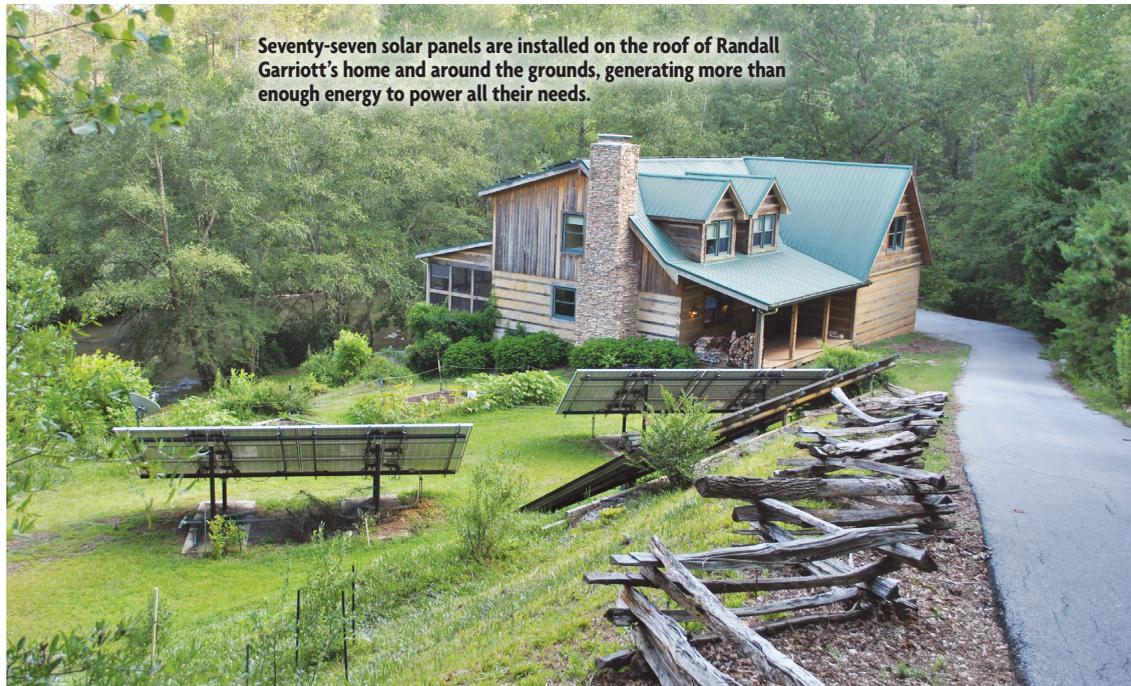


At home with solar

WITH ALL OF the information available on alternative sources of energy, particularly solar, how do you decide if it's suitable for you? For Blue Ridge member Randall Garriott, it was a decision based on interest and savings. Garriott admits, "I was intrigued by solar and the thought of being self-sufficient while living in the country." But his interest grew as he read more and more articles regarding solar power and how they could work for him. "I sat down, put pencil to paper, added in the available tax credits, and decided to purchase solar panels for my home."

Solar panels were installed over a four-year period beginning in 2010. Garriott worked through a wholesale group in California to purchase and even install some of the panels. The panels were a type of "plug and play" with installation directions included. There are a total of 77 panels at Garriott's home. Some of the panels are mounted on a ground pad, and some are on the roof. He calculates that with federal and state tax incentives included, it will take about eight years for his investment to pay for itself. The life span of his panels is 20-25 years, but they lose approximately 20 percent of efficiency during that time period.

Through Blue Ridge's net metering agreement, Garriott is credited for his excess energy provided back to Blue Ridge. "I feel like I'm helping the co-op during peak demand by adding energy to the grid." Each panel is 3' x



Seventy-seven solar panels are installed on the roof of Randall Garriott's home and around the grounds, generating more than enough energy to power all their needs.

5', and the 77 panels have the ability to generate 18 kw, but the maximum he has produced to date is 15 kw.

Garriott sees a seasonal change in the output of his panels. Last December, during the winter solstice, output was down to 1,400 kilowatt hours and back up to 2,000 in March. May's input was 2,800 kwh, the system's peak energy production thus far. With rain showers keeping them clean and no service required, the panels are maintenance free. "I'm very satisfied with my investment. With incentives, I only paid about 45 percent of the actual cost, and I'm producing more than enough energy to power my home. It's something I feel good about doing."



Solar panels can be ground- or pole-mounted. Their orientation, tilt, and shading are important considerations.

If you are interested in getting more information about interconnecting solar to Blue Ridge, please visit our website at blueridge.coop. For solar basics, visit the electric cooperative's new informational website at mySCSolar.com.

Co-ops develop MySCSolar.com to help consumer

Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative and South Carolina's 19 other electric co-ops are shining a light on solar energy with a new informational website for consumers, MySCSolar.com.

The site includes information about solar basics, finding an experienced, certified contractor to install solar photovoltaic (PV) systems, a Do the Math page that gives tips to size a PV system for a home, information about financing and tax incentives, and a calculator to determine estimated costs and savings. Other sections include a Final Checklist & Questions and provide information about Energy Storage and interconnect requirements and applications.

As a trusted source for reliable, affordable and environmentally responsible electricity for more than 75 years, the 20 independent, consumer-owned and not-for-profit electric cooperatives developed the website to help consumers make informed decisions about investing in solar power, proper installation and safety. The website is aimed at helping consumers know that technological improvements, lower prices and a new state law have paved the way to making residential solar energy systems more accessible to South Carolina homeowners.

