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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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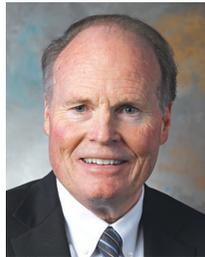
Jim Lovinggood

This organization is an equal-opportunity provider.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

## A great annual meeting, a truly remarkable charity fundraiser



**WITHIN A PERIOD** of just eight days, Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative hosted two incredibly successful events. Our April 25 annual meeting and our Blue Ridge Fest charity fundraiser on May 3 each produced very gratifying results.

In this report, I'm going to review the annual meeting first because it's indeed the most important item on our yearly calendar. That April evening saw 3,009 strong cooperative members register for the meeting, which was again held at our Pickens equipment facility. We managed to pack quite a few items into the business-meeting agenda without taking a great deal of time to do so.

As is our practice, we used part of the program to pay homage to both God and country. Special recognition was extended to all the military veterans and present armed forces members who were in attendance. We also introduced all the local elected officials who had joined us. In addition, appreciation was extended to six area high schoolers scheduled to represent Blue Ridge at either the upcoming Washington Youth Tour or the Cooperative Youth Summit.

The two main matters of business were my management report and the election of candidates to serve on the cooperative's board of directors. In a nutshell, I was pleased to report that Blue Ridge had met all its financial goals in 2018 without raising electric rates. I also cited various system projects that held the promise of even greater service reliability for our members. In the director election, incumbent board member Spencer Dalton prevailed over Jason Dennis in a Pickens County District race. Greenville-Spartanburg director Kenneth Southerlin and Joel Davis representing Oconee County were reelected without opposition. We thank

and congratulate all these individuals.

Next, what a time Blue Ridge Fest proved to be! With the possible exceptions of some previous high-school football games, I'd suspect the Fest attracted the largest attendance ever seen within the town of Pickens. All told, more than 8,000 persons gathered on our Pickens office campus for the festival. These included many classic-car enthusiasts who were there to view over 400 vehicles that came for the cruise-in.

However, there's little doubt that the big draw was the musical entertainment. The preliminary acts—Jim Quick and Coastline, plus The Tams—certainly had their ranks of loyal fans on hand. In the final analysis though, it was readily apparent that The Oak Ridge Boys attracted a huge number of their followers to the show. I believe it's safe to say those folks didn't leave disappointed. In my view, it was an electrifying performance by what is a truly professional quartet.

Here's the best news of all: Blue Ridge Fest 2019 earned a record \$235,000 in net proceeds! That sum comfortably eclipsed last year's total of \$225,000. In the coming weeks, those funds will be divided among 12 nonprofit, human-help agencies operating in this four-county territory. I humbly take my hat off to all the Blue Ridge employees, their family members, and the others in the community who volunteered to work the Fest. A shout-out is also in order for our 100-plus corporate sponsors. The good they've done will continue to live on through the benevolence these charities extend to struggling families and individuals all across this region.

**JIM LOVINGGOOD**  
President and CEO

# Blue Ridge Annual Meeting...What an enjoyable night!



Visiting with neighbors and other co-op members is a good way to spend the evening. Free hot dogs, moon pies, chips and crackers make the meeting even more enjoyable.



Kristie Tate from Easley won the grand prize—a 2008 Chevrolet truck. Julia Lance held the winning ticket for the \$500 bill credit while dozens of other members walked away with prizes and gift cards.



Zoe Thomas, 9, carries her mom's annual meeting gift, a Toastmaster slow cooker. This gift was given to each registered member in attendance. Membership has its privileges!



Sugar Babe finds drive-through registration at Blue Ridge Electric's 2019 Annual Meeting is sweet indeed. He came through with Wilma Kelly and her son, Robert Kelly. Registering them is Blue Ridge's Haley Troyer.

Linemen raised the flags near sunset during the co-op's April 25 annual meeting. What an appropriate way to begin this event.

WALTER ALLREAD

## This is my co-op—turning night into day



DENISE MCCORMICK

**I AM SURE** that the younger generation of today cannot possibly know or appreciate what a giant step toward prosperity the coming of electricity was to the rural areas of South Carolina. It opened up a new world for us. We had to learn many new ways of doing work, and we learned about our world and how other people lived.

Those people who never lived without electricity could not imagine how much extra work was involved in doing simple chores all day and every day during each season of the year. Today, we all take our bright lights and ample water for granted. Even if electricity is off because of weather or some other calamity, we have the assurance that hard-working linemen will soon have the electricity “back on.”

There were many chores and jobs which had to be done every day. Someone worked hard to keep the lamp globes cleaned of smoke and dirt. The bottom part of the glass lamps had to be full of kerosene. Water was “drawn” from the deep well for many uses besides drinking.

Water was always needed for wash-day, cooking, bathing, scrubbing the home’s wooden floors. The children even drew numerous buckets of water for the mules’ troughs. For some reason it was the children’s job to draw water for the mules that had been working in the cotton, corn, or wheat fields. I could never understand why the “sharecroppers” did not draw their own water. I guess they were hot, tired and hungry. If this was lunchtime, they had to hurry back to the fields to get as much done as possible during daylight hours. No tractors with lights had been designed or manufactured.

There was no electricity in the school buildings, so all classes and other activities were held during daylight hours. Of course, there was no indoor plumbing and no school lunches. But, we did have huge windows.

Moving ahead to the year 1936. I was 10 years old. Rural Electrification in South Carolina was talked about a lot. We knew we were supposed to get electricity, but we didn’t know how or when. I do not remember holes being dug and poles being erected. I did not see the lines being attached to the poles. The workers would have been working only during daylight hours, so I suppose we were always in school. It all seemed to happen then by magic.

The anticipated day finally arrived. I remember how all the family gathered in one room in our old house at almost dusk. Daddy pulled the chain which turned on the 40-watt bulb which was hanging down at the

end of a cord. Since the ceilings in the old house were so high, it was a little too high for us children to reach that little chain. Never before had there been such a bright light in that room. I had never before observed the dark, smoky, ugly walls of that room. That 40-watt bulb made everything so bright to my young eyes. Daddy told us that day that electricity was going to cost us \$5.00 a month. Five dollars was a lot of money for a farm family coming out of the Great Depression. Daddy also warned us not to touch that chain because we might get shocked.

It was not long after that day we purchased both a radio and a refrigerator. After school each day, my mother allowed me to sit in front of the radio and listen to the “Soap Operas.” We turned the dial of the radio loud enough for Mother to listen while she worked.

The most wonderful addition was the refrigerator. We had two really good treats. Besides keeping the milk cold, there were ice trays which made ice cubes to use in our sweet tea on Sundays. Also, Mother made ice cream. She would skim the cream from the day-old milk, add sugar and freeze ice cream. (It was thick pure cream.) It was a delightful chore to take a serving spoon and stir the ice cream as it was being frozen. There were two good parts to that: We got to leave the refrigerator door open longer, and of course, each time we had to taste the ice cream to see if it was freezing properly. Then we licked the big spoon.

At the time the lights came

on, I was in awe of what was happening, but I did not know, at that time, that appreciation should have been expressed to many people for their forward vision and continued hard work to get electricity to rural areas. For the last eighty plus years, I have been thankful for Blue Ridge Electric Co-op and for the foresight and hard work of many—including Mr. A.J. Hurt, Mr. David W. Stribbling, and Mr. Grayson Dalton whom I knew. They, as well as many others, never gave up until a cooperative was established, one which has grown steadily for the last 79 years.

I know that my life and the lives of thousands have been blessed, made easier and more fulfilling because of the hard work of many leaders for the last 79 years. Thank you.

*Mrs. Edna N. (Nicki) Harris is a strong advocate for Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative. Having lived the first ten years of her life without power on a rural farm in Oakway, Mrs. Harris remembers well what it was like to live in that generation. The oldest of six children, she was the daughter of Jim and Lena Nicholson. Her father had 200+ acres divided into six farms that were worked by sharecroppers. Always active in the community, Mrs. Harris was married in 1948 to Theo Harris who later served on the Blue Ridge Board for a number of years. Her grandson, Joel Davis, owner of J Davis Construction Inc, is the current board Chairman.*

*This is a condensed version of Mrs. Harris’s story. For her complete narrative, please visit our web site [blueridge.coop](http://blueridge.coop).*

# Blue Ridge Fest celebrates a successful night

**BLUE RIDGE FEST** has a reputation—good food, great entertainment, and an amazing car show. This year was no disappointment. With one of the largest crowds ever to attend this event, twelve selected charities will share in \$235,000 raised by this annual event.

When Blue Ridge Fest was established, the vision of Charles Dalton was that through the efforts of one weekend of giving, people in the local communities would see tangible benefits. The rewards from that one weekend have been great. To date, more than \$3 million dollars have been given to 75+ local charities providing help to thousands of individuals in Oconee, Pickens, Anderson and Greenville counties.

President and CEO Jim Lovinggood is thankful to all that contribute to the success of Blue Ridge Fest. “It’s hard to imagine all the effort that goes into an event like this. Our employees, sponsors, media partners and volunteers are all responsible for the funding we’re able to provide our chosen charities. The needs are so great, and I am proud that we can help make life better for the clients these organizations serve. I would be remiss not to thank those who come to Blue Ridge Fest and enjoy the music, food and cars each year. We hope you’ll be with us again. If you haven’t been to Blue Ridge Fest, I hope you’ll come next year.”



John Cessarich of WYFF 4 receives the Charles E. Dalton Founder's Award from Jim Lovinggood at this year's Fest. The award was presented in appreciation for his constant support and promotion of the event, helping to make it one of the most successful in the Upstate.

DENISE MCCORMICK



ROB BELKNAP

The Oak Ridge Boys entertained the audience with many of their classic gospel and country hits. A crowd favorite was “Amazing Grace” that they sang at the funeral of President George H. W. Bush.



ROB BELKNAP

With perfect weather, the crowds had hundreds of classic cars to see and enjoy. A record attendance of 8,000 attended the 22nd Annual Blue Ridge Fest helping to raise a record \$235,000.

# Blue Ridge Fest Raises \$235,000 for Local Charities!

Thanks to our sponsors, entertainers, classic car enthusiasts, Blue Ridge Electric Co-op employees, and all who came to enjoy a great time for great causes!

THE OAK RIDGE BOYS



THE TAMS



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## Look to your thermostat for savings this summer

**WE'RE ALL ALWAYS** looking for ways to save on our power bills. As a Blue Ridge Co-op member, you can save and purchase a smart thermostat for your home at the same time. Pay a discounted price for an easy to program Ecobee thermostat and agree to allow the cooperative to control the thermostat during peak periods, and the savings are yours.

**Saving energy dollars can be as easy as programming your Ecobee thermostat to provide a comfortable temperature to match your family's needs. Keep even the most versatile family cool this summer-morning, noon, and night.**



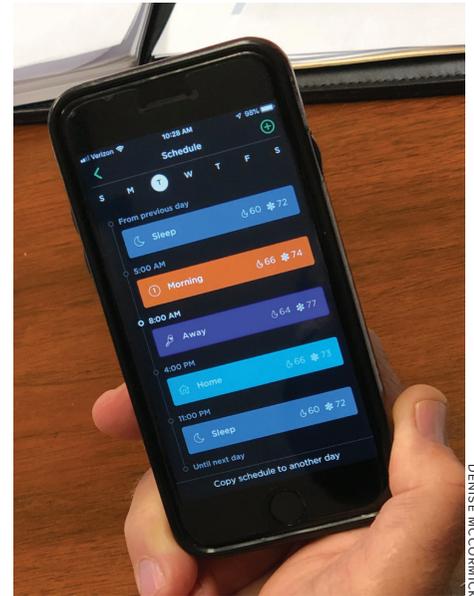
TIM MAYES

During the summer months, the thermostat will be controlled approximately five or six times a month during a system-wide peak period. By limiting the amount of power used by members during the time we are expecting high power consumption, Blue Ridge can reduce power costs. These savings equate to lower power bills for you.

What does a control cycle look like? Below is an example of a typical summer event assuming your thermostat is set to 75 degrees.

- 3-4 p.m. Thermostat adjusted to 73.
- 4-5 p.m. Thermostat adjusted to 77.
- 5-6 p.m. Thermostat adjusted to 78.
- 6-7 p.m. Thermostat adjusted to 79.
- After 7 p.m. Thermostat returns to 75, control relinquished.

If you would like more information on this smart thermostat program, contact one of the trusted energy experts at Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative at [blueridge.coop](http://blueridge.coop) or (800) 240-3400.



DENISE MCCORMICK

From your smart phone, make changes to your home's settings and be assured that it will be just right when you get home. You can also automatically set the thermostat to reflect the cooling or heating needed for each part of the day and be comfortable around the clock.

## A Cool Deal on a Smart Thermostat!

Blue Ridge Electric's **Smart Thermostat Program** offers members the opportunity to purchase an **Ecobee 3** or **Ecobee 4** smart thermostat at a discounted rate. As a participant, the member will allow the cooperative to control the thermostat during peak periods.

**Receive a discount on a smart thermostat...**

Ecobee 3: \$85 *Retail Price: \$169*

Ecobee 4: \$145 (w/Alexa) *Retail Price: \$249*

Installation fees: \$50 for 1 thermostat; \$75 for 2  
**... and help your co-op with power costs.**

*\* Member reimbursed after 36 months*



For additional information or questions, please call **800-240-3400** and speak with an energy expert.

