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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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Jim Lovinggood

This organization is an  
equal-opportunity provider.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



## Your co-op's scrappy side

**IN WEBSTER'S NINTH** *New Collegiate Dictionary*, the word "scrappy" is defined as "having a determined spirit." I believe that description could be applied, in a positive way, to Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative and to many other organizations that are part of the co-op family.

One of the areas in which scrappiness can manifest itself is that of government relations. Be it at the local, state or federal level, Blue Ridge will not hesitate to intercede with government officials when the well-being of our members is at stake.

Unfortunately, in today's business environment, electric cooperatives, investor-owned utilities and municipal power systems alike are looking on with concern at recent rulings being considered in Washington, D.C. These public proclamations would carry the consequence of shutting down certain baseload generating facilities while making it more difficult to build new power plants. If allowed to stand, these directives will lead to more blackouts, higher costs and uncertainty for families and businesses.

Consequently, Blue Ridge is staying in regular contact with our senators and congressmen. Creating the laws that govern our state is an important and often difficult task. These men and women have been elected to do what is best for our state and that includes Blue Ridge and all our members.

Fortunately, we have a delegation that supports our mission to operate as a competitive provider of energy services. They understand that cooperatives are here to do good and serve others. We applaud their efforts throughout the year to look out for the best interests of our members and thank them for always being willing to meet and discuss the issues most important to us.

Much attention was given this year to the South Carolina Energy Security Act, which is co-op supported because it secures our energy future in South Carolina. Promoting energy efficiency and renewables, it also allows for a joint construction project to build a natural gas plant in the lower part of the state. If our state continues to grow as projected, we will be facing an energy shortage in the future. This bill has been assigned to a conference committee for further consideration. Be assured that your co-op will continue to play an active role in the energy decisions made that affect our ability to serve you.

I'm also pleased to point out that an avenue now exists for you to lend your voice to this and other related issues. Scan the code below or go to the Voices for Cooperative Power (VCP) website at **voicesforcooperativepower.com**. There you can join with other co-op members to communicate your perspective. You'll have the opportunity to stand up for the ability of your co-op to deliver affordable and reliable services to you and your neighbors. In addition, you will receive regular VCP updates that explain how you can be involved.

You can be assured that we will continue to be actively involved in decisions being made that affect our industry. Additionally, we are looking for ways to control costs and let you exercise some control over those costs. Together, we have the power to shape a more cost-effective energy future.

**JIM LOVINGGOOD**  
President and CEO





Nick Adams (left), director of technical training and compliance for The Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina (ECSC), and Mike Couick, CEO of ECSC, present Jim Lovinggood (right) with the President's Safety Award.

## BREC wins President's Safety Award

BY JOSH P. CROTZER

**AT BLUE RIDGE ELECTRIC** Cooperative, the focus on safety is consistent, repetitious and endorsed by leadership at the cooperative.

That recipe resulted in the co-op winning the 2023 President's Safety Award, given to electric cooperatives in South Carolina with the fewest OSHA recordable accidents. Among Blue Ridge Electric's 167 employees, only one suffered an injury that resulted in lost time at work last year.

"We deliver the message every week," says David Black, manager of safety and loss control. "Safety is one of those things that you've just got to go out and preach it."

Blue Ridge Electric is the only electric cooperative in the state that holds

weekly safety meetings. Black follows up with frequent visits to crews in the field to "make sure they're doing what they're supposed to be doing." But Black says the co-op's strong culture of safety starts at the top with "buy-in" from CEO Jim Lovinggood and the rest of the leadership team.

"We're proud of our safety record here," says Lovinggood. "It's something we take very seriously. We don't think we're more perfect than anybody else, but boy, we've worked at it."

However, Black says the winner's plaque they received isn't the goal.

"It's great that we won and I'm excited about it, but it's not about winning an award," Black says. "It's about going home at the end of the day to see your family."



David Black (left), Blue Ridge Electric's manager of safety and loss control, talks with a crew before they head into the field.

## Text notifications coming

**BLUE RIDGE ELECTRIC** Cooperative is rolling out a new outage texting system for its members. We know you depend on us to safely deliver electricity 24/7. Now if there is a problem, you will be informed quickly through a text message.

Partnering with TextPower, we will have the ability to send customized messages to thousands of people simultaneously—something that could never be accomplished by phone.

In June, co-op members who have a mobile phone number associated with their account will be sent an introductory text enrolling them in the outage texting system. In that initial text, there will be an opportunity to opt-out by typing the word QUIT.

Members should know there will be no solicitations associated with these texts, only information on emergencies, status updates and outage restoration.

Visit [blueridge.coop](https://blueridge.coop) for more information and look for an introductory text on your mobile phone.

## Get Power Outage Text Updates

With your mobile number attached to your account, we can text you with up-to-date information on an outage affecting you. And, you can report an outage via text.

Visit [blueridge.coop](https://blueridge.coop) for more information on this new outage communication system, **Text Power**.

