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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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This organization is an
equal-opportunity provider.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Shift energy use to off-peak and save

LAST MONTH, we announced our transition to a new rate structure that takes effect beginning with your

September reading cycle that will be reflected in your October bill. I want to share with you ways that you can control your energy use and reduce costs.

Our new rate structure is named the EmPOWERment rate because it gives you control of your bill. This new rate emphasizes shifting energy use to off-peak hours when costs are lowest. The peak hours are seasonal, so you'll want to be aware of the hours that affect your bill. In the warmer months the afternoons are PEAK usage times—3 to 6 p.m., April 1—Oct 31. During winter months, the PEAK times are in the morning—6 to 9 a.m., Nov. 1—March 31.

Energy charges are impacted by the types of devices and appliances you use and when you use them. These devices and appliances fall into three categories.

Small loads

While it will always be true that “every little bit helps,” some appliances in your home warrant less attention than others. Televisions, ceiling fans and radios typically use less than 100 watts per hour. Washing machines are larger appliances, but their energy consumption is relatively low, about 500 watts per load, for most models. It's always a good idea to be mindful of how much you use these devices, particularly during peak hours. However, they do not deserve as much attention as other appliances in your home.

Larger loads that only run for a few minutes

Some appliances in your home place a large demand on the system, but only for a few minutes at a time. Toasters and microwaves, for example, are usually used for only a few minutes, but they are

in the 1000- to 1200-watt range. Your hair dryer is around 1500 watts, but again, it takes only a few minutes to dry your hair. The EmPOWERment rate restructure has a PEAK charge of \$13 per kilowatt based on your highest SINGLE hour of energy use in your billing cycle, so these appliances have a smaller impact but still should be used off-peak when possible.

Larger loads that run for a long time

Heavy loads and longer run times check both boxes. I already mentioned a washing machine but what about an electric clothes dryer? Both run for about an hour per load, but a dryer can use 10 times the energy. Similarly, popping a bag of popcorn requires around 1100 watts and runs for a few minutes. Baking a cake in the oven requires around 3200 watts and likely runs a full hour.

Heating and air conditioning systems are the most significant drivers of electricity costs. Lowering the temperature a few degrees in the winter peak hours and raising it during summer peak hours will maximize savings. If you have a programmable thermostat, set it to automatically adjust during peak hours.

With our new rate structure, running any of these devices during the 21 off-peak hours each day will yield significant savings. So, try to shift long running, larger loads to off-peak hours. Remember, our member services team is here to help our members transition to this new rate structure.

Call (800) 240-3400 if you have questions. For more information and tips, visit blueridge.coop/empowerment.

JIM LOVINGGOOD
President and CEO

Local students gain new perspectives on Youth Tour

BY JOSH P. CROTZER

AFTER CONCLUDING what had been a moving journey through the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Colin Gilstrap encountered an unexpected and uplifting moment in the museum's lobby.

Gilstrap joined several other South Carolina high school students to hear 87-year old Holocaust survivor Esther Rosenfeld Starobin share her incredible journey of escaping Nazi Germany.

"I've never understood feeling the weight of the world until I went into that building," Gilstrap says. "It was remarkable that (Starobin) lived through such a horrific experience and was still able to tell us about it with some humor."

Gilstrap's experience was a part of Washington Youth Tour, an all-expense-paid trip to the nation's capital. The rising senior at Pickens High School was among three local students sponsored by Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative on the trip, including Sara Beth Brock of Easley and DJ Holland of Seneca.

A total of 57 students representing cooperatives across South Carolina spent six days in the nation's capital area visiting historical and educational sites, including George Washington's Mount Vernon, the National Pentagon 9/11 Memorial and Arlington National Cemetery.

The National Museum of the Marine Corps was the highlight of Brock's experience because her grandfather was a Marine.

"To reflect upon what all of these great men and women did for our country and for our freedom, it's just really awesome," says Brock. "They put their life on the line for us to be able to live in this free country and they deserve everything and more that the museum provided for them."

The youth tourists also spent a day at the U.S. Capitol where



JOSH P. CROTZER

Blue Ridge Electric sponsored (from left) Colin Gilstrap, Sara Beth Brock and DJ Holland to experience their nation's capital on Washington Youth Tour.

they toured the complex, visited Congressional offices and met with staff members. Afterwards, U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham and U.S. Sen. Tim Scott spent time talking with the students and answering their questions on the Capitol steps.

"You can talk about Washington in the classroom, but being able to see it for yourself is really awesome," says Brock. "I'm grateful to Blue Ridge Electric to be able represent my town and my co-op."

A few changes can lead to savings

AMY CHILDRESS has used the past few months on Blue Ridge Electric's new rate as a learning experience, not only for her, but her busy family.

As a member of Blue Ridge, the pilot rate was offered to employees to gain real-time experience with how the rate can positively impact members by focusing on WHEN energy is used as opposed to HOW MUCH energy is used. There is a three-hour window, also known as PEAK hours, when the focus is on using less energy. Those three hours are from 3 to 6 p.m. during the summer months, and 6 to 9 a.m. during the winter months.

Childress and her family have been learning to manage their energy use.

"My children are grown but still in and out of the house between work and college," Childress says. "They learned to be aware of when we use power and how it affects what

we pay each month. By delaying laundry, bumping the air conditioner up a few degrees and using ceiling fans during PEAK hours, we all have developed new habits."

Childress says a timer was also added to their pool pump.

"We used more kilowatt hours during the billing period," she says, "but because of when we used those kilowatt hours, our bill was actually less than the same time last year."

Childress uses the member portal on the Blue Ridge website to monitor her daily energy use.

"It's easy to compare our energy use, daily or monthly," she says, "and to be aware of how we are using energy during those peak hours. To be honest, the thought of moving to the new rate made me a bit nervous. However, my family made a few adjustments that are now part of our daily routine."



DENISE MCCORMICK

BREC member Amy Childress knows summer months can bring some of the highest energy bills of the year. By raising her thermostat a few degrees, she can see savings in energy use and still stay comfortable.