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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.

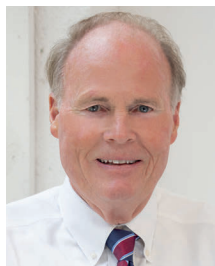
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This organization is an  
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“Lineworkers exhibit a strength that goes far beyond the physical”

## Lineworkers are wired for service

**IN THE QUIET HOURS** before dawn breaks, while many of us are still in our beds, lineworkers begin their day. They are often clad in flame-resistant clothing, hard hats, safety glasses, rubber gloves and thick, heavy boots—gear they might still be wearing hours after the rest of us have returned home from our jobs.

They are the individuals who epitomize dedication to service in its purest form. It’s no wonder that South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster recognized and thanked our state’s electric cooperative linemen during his State of the State address earlier this year. This month is also an opportunity to reflect on the essential role they play in our daily lives as we celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Day on Monday, April 14.

Amid towering utility poles and power lines, lineworkers exhibit a strength that goes far beyond the physical. Whether battling inclement weather, troubleshooting technical problems or navigating treacherous heights, lineworkers demonstrate resilience and a quiet determination to keep our lights on, our homes comfortable and our communities connected.

Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative crews travel across our five-county service territory, building, maintaining and repairing parts of our local system. Their extraordinary skills ensure our homes remain connected to the grid, businesses stay operational and emergency services remain accessible—a lifeline that connects us all.

In moments of crisis, when the lights go out and we find ourselves in the dark, lineworkers act swiftly. Their response restores normalcy, offering reassurance in times of uncertainty. Whether repairing storm-ravaged power lines or ensuring continuity during emergencies, their commitment shines when we need it most.

There is no better example of their dedication than how Blue Ridge linemen responded in the wake of Hurricane Helene’s devastation in our area. They worked long, exhausting days with little rest until the last outage was restored across our service territory.

Our lineworkers also answer the call beyond the boundaries of home. Our crews travel to fellow co-ops, near or far, when widespread outages occur and additional support is needed. Cooperation among cooperatives is one of our seven guiding principles; no one embodies this core commitment better than lineworkers.

This month, as we celebrate the remarkable men and women who ensure reliable power, let’s recognize their dedication to the local communities they serve.

The next time you flip a switch, please take a moment to remember those who make it possible—lineworkers, who are wired for service and illuminating life.

**JIM LOVINGGOOD**  
President and CEO

## Helping the next generation

IN FEBRUARY, the Anderson Civic Center once again hosted the annual Anderson-Oconee-Pickens (AOP) Showcase, where Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative left its mark on the next generation of workers.

Manager of Safety and Loss Control David Black, Lineman C Class Andy Burrell and Marketing Specialist Ashley Bowen represented the co-op and brought equipment such as hot sticks, rubber



**BREC Manager of Safety and Loss Control David Black (left) speaks with two middle school students about careers in the field, including lineman.**

gloves, hard hats and a bucket truck to engage nearly 4,500 8th graders and 100 high school seniors.

The showcase, designed to get the middle schoolers thinking about their professional future, began in Oconee County nearly 20 years ago under the leadership of former county economic development director Jim Alexander.

Anderson County Economic Development Director Nelson Burris says about 5,000 students made the field trip this year for the two-day event that connects them with professionals from various industries.

“We invite all the 8th graders from Anderson, Oconee and Pickens counties,” Burris says. “About eight or nine years ago, we also realized there were seniors at the career centers who might not be going on to college as soon as they got their high school diploma. We started offering a select number that would sit down with all the presenters. They bring their resumes and have



**Two students inspect equipment brought to the Anderson-Oconee-Pickens (AOP) Showcase by BREC employees Ashley Bowen, marketing specialist, David Black, manager of Safety and Loss Control and Andy Burrell, lineman C class.**

PHOTOS BY ANNA BASWELL

the opportunity to do mock interviews. Invariably, they would wind up leaving here with a job.”

Nelson, who has more than 30 years of economic development experience in Anderson County, praised the cooperative for its ability to connect with the younger students.

“Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative has always been a great partner with all three counties,” Nelson says. “We greatly admire all their employees and CEO/President Jim Lovinggood. They’ve always been great supporters of this showcase.”

He added that the bucket

truck was the true attention grabber. Nelson says the co-op employees engaged in conversations with the students to encourage them to consider career possibilities in the electric utility industry.

“Many young people are interested when they see the bucket truck, it sparks interest, and they always have a group of young people crowded around their booth,” he says. “The folks at Blue Ridge are open and excited to answer the kids’ questions. They have excellent questions, too. I’m sure some of these young people will apply for job opportunities at some point at Blue Ridge.”

## Returning to college? Scholarships for women available

It takes courage and vision to pursue a college degree as a working adult. Blue Ridge Electric offers an opportunity to female members who are taking that step.

The Jenny Ballard Opportunity Scholarship is for women who are resuming academic journeys that have been interrupted or delayed.

Applications for one-time awards are now open for female members of Blue Ridge Electric. Sponsored by Women Involved in Rural Electrification (WIRE)—a service organization associated with South

Carolina’s electric cooperatives—and named after one of its founding members, the \$2,500 scholarships are awarded based on need and personal goals. The deadline to apply is June 1.

An online application for the 2025 WIRE scholarship can be found at [ecsc.org/wire](https://ecsc.org/wire). The scholarship will be awarded based on the information provided in the application.

Applicants for the program must:

- ▶ Be a member of Blue Ridge Electric or another South Carolina electric cooperative;

- ▶ Have graduated from high school or earned a GED at least 10 years ago;
- ▶ Obtain acceptance into an accredited college or university;
- ▶ Demonstrate financial need.

Recipients will receive scholarships for the fall 2025 or spring 2026 semester, with funds paid directly to the college or university.

Send e-mail inquiries to [Peggy.Dantzler@ecsc.org](mailto:Peggy.Dantzler@ecsc.org).

