



blueridge.coop

FOR ALL YOUR CUSTOMER SERVICE NEEDS
Call Toll-Free (800) 240-3400

AUTOMATED OUTAGE REPORTING
1-888-BLUERIDGE

PICKENS
P.O. Box 277
734 West Main St.
Pickens, SC 29671

OCONEE
P.O. Box 329
2328 Sandifer Blvd.
Highway 123
Westminster, SC 29693

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.

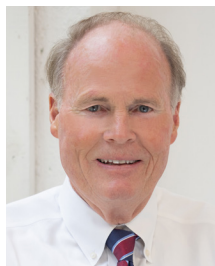
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Len D. Talley, *Chairman*
J. Mendel Stone, *Vice-Chairman*
Franklin M. Loofer, Jr., *Secretary*
Will Anderson, *Treasurer*
Gresham Barrett
J. Spencer Dalton, Jr.
Jimmy Lee Dodgens
William G. Elrod
Kenneth G. Southerlin

PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Jim Lovinggood

This organization is an equal-opportunity provider.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



A timely legislative update

SCHOOL IS OUT FOR summer, and the same can mostly be said for our state lawmakers and their time in Columbia.

It was another busy legislative session that began Jan. 14 and ended May 8. Senators and representatives will soon return to the State House to finalize a state budget. But for all intents and purposes, the hay is in the barn until January 2026.

In reading media reports and speaking with our local delegation, I can tell you that most of their committee and session time was consumed by lawsuit reform, school choice and tax policy. But energy was also a primary focus for lawmakers.

The House and Senate agreed to send H. 3309 to Gov. Henry McMaster's desk one day before the session ended. If you read Member Connections, our monthly eNewsletter, you'll have seen news clips about this bill in recent editions. For those who haven't, I'll spend this column recapping some of the major policy changes to our industry.

- ▶ This vast and sweeping bill started its legislative journey in 2024. Its primary purpose is to address the growing energy needs across South Carolina, which continues to experience a population boost. Just look around our community.
- ▶ With Gov. McMaster's signature, state-owned Santee Cooper and Dominion Energy will build a 2,000-megawatt natural gas plant on the site of a former coal-fired plant in Colleton County. After the failed V.C. Summer expansion in 2017, lawmakers understandably wanted more oversight into major power plant construction projects. While this project is hours away from our homes, it will ultimately reduce the strain on our

grid by creating more power generation through a cleaner form of energy that the legislature approves of.

- ▶ The bill requires the Governor's Nuclear Advisory Council to develop a strategic plan to advance power generation. Utilities are encouraged to also explore the potential for advanced nuclear power options, such as small modular reactors. Also referred to as SMRs, these can be developed more easily and deployed in a wider area than large nuclear plants. This technology hasn't gone live in the United States yet but is operational in China and Russia.
- ▶ The state permitting process for power projects has been streamlined. The process has historically been used to cause indefinite and expensive delays of the construction of new power plants, transmission lines and pipelines. But now, with set time limits for decisions and appeals, these projects can receive final approval faster, which is critical to ensuring we can keep up with South Carolina's growth.

An overwhelming number of our local lawmakers supported these reforms. I want to thank all our lawmakers for taking the necessary time on this. All co-ops in the state successfully made the case that this bill benefits South Carolinians by ensuring we will have an ample supply of electricity for years to come.

JIM LOVINGGOOD
President and CEO

Extreme heat impacts reliability

SUMMER IS HERE. This means that when outdoor temperatures soar, electricity use rises. That's because air conditioner units, likely your most significant appliance, typically run longer and more frequently to counteract the sweltering heat. Since we all tend to use electricity at the same time, that puts significant stress on the electric grid.

At Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative, we partner with Central Electric Power, our generation and transmission cooperative, to maintain reliable electricity, including during peak summer months. We work with Central Electric to make sure we have the resources and infrastructure that keep the electric grid resilient. However, regional electricity demand can sometimes exceed available supply during prolonged heat waves. Although rare, this can lead to situations where energy conservation becomes critical, and in extreme cases, rolling power outages may be necessary.

Blue Ridge will promptly inform you about these conditions through social media updates, text alerts and e-newsletter blasts. Our co-op continues proactive efforts—such as regular maintenance and system upgrades—to enhance grid resilience, especially during extreme weather.

Here are easy ways to save money on your utility bill, while also helping the electrical grid:

- ▶ Set your thermostat a few degrees higher, especially when you're out of the home, reducing the strain on your cooling system. Your cooling system must run longer to make up the difference between the thermostat temp and the outdoor temp.
- ▶ Use caulk and weatherstripping to seal leaks around windows and doors. Air leaks and drafts force your cooling system to work harder than necessary.
- ▶ Run major appliances such as dishwashers, dryers and ovens during off-peak hours (early morning or late evening) when the demand for electricity is lower.
- ▶ Use ceiling fans to make a room feel a few degrees cooler. Set the fan blades to rotate counterclockwise, which pushes cool air down for a windchill effect.
- ▶ Close blinds, curtains and shades during the hottest part of

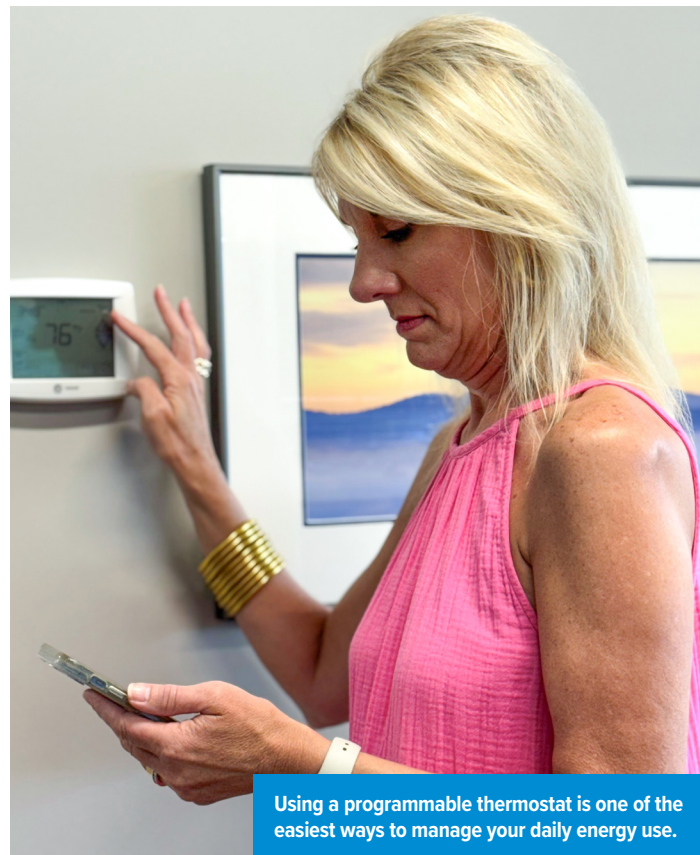


PHOTO BY BLUE RIDGE ELECTRIC

the day to minimize indoor heating. Consider blackout curtains with thermal backing or reflective lining to block heat and light.

- ▶ Opt for energy-efficient cooking methods, such as air fryers or slow cookers. Air fryers use about half as much electricity as a full-sized oven.

Understanding the impact of high energy demand is crucial for maintaining a reliable power supply. By adopting energy conservation practices during periods of extreme heat, not only can you save money on your electric bills, but you can also contribute to the resilience of the electric grid.



Beware of meter cheaters

Some scammers will pose as utility workers or contractors affiliated with your electric utility by knocking on your door and claiming to be employed or hired by Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative.

They may claim they are there to reset, repair, replace or inspect your electric meter or other utility-related device. But you should not allow them access to your home or equipment.

Blue Ridge employees always will be in uniform, driving a marked vehicle and also have employee identification. If you are uncertain about one of these visits, call Blue Ridge at (800) 240-3400 to verify the employee working on your meter is a co-op employee or contractor. Taking this simple step can help protect you from falling victim to utility scams.