



[blueridge.coop](http://blueridge.coop)

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

**AUTOMATED OUTAGE REPORTING**  
 1-888-BLURIDGE

**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.

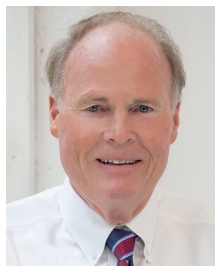
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This organization is an equal-opportunity provider.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



“We do everything we can to keep electricity flowing to your homes and businesses without interruption.”

## Protecting co-op employees

**POWER OUTAGES**, especially those lasting multiple days, are stressful for everyone—our members, lineworkers, and staff.

In the aftermath of a storm like Hurricane Helene, when the people we serve think enough of their cooperative to send notes of gratitude or offer meals to the men and women restoring their power, it's encouraging to all of us at Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative.

Most folks are kind and caring, and they want to help the cooperative in any way they can. These acts of kindness sustain and energize us during the long, challenging days of rebuilding electrical infrastructure and providing support and information to you.

Unfortunately, not everyone responds so graciously to the stress of being without electricity. Across our state, co-op employees in the field and in the office have encountered harassment and threats of violence from frustrated members.

This kind of behavior only serves to make a difficult job even harder. During any outage, major or minor, everyone at Blue Ridge Electric is doing everything possible to return electric service to our members as quickly and as safely as possible. Our employees need to be able to focus 100% on power restoration and the hazards that come with it without looking over their shoulders.

During this year's legislative session of the state General Assembly, we will join other South Carolina cooperatives in calling for stronger protections for utility crews and employees. The legislation is designed to deter threats or violence against anyone repairing critical infrastructure during a declared emergency. Possible measures include stronger penalties and safeguards aimed at ensuring responders can do their jobs to get the state back in order after a disaster strikes.

But the Legislature alone can't protect utility workers from harm and harassment. You can join your neighbors in helping. Here's how:

- ▶ Secure pets while service personnel are on or near your property.
- ▶ Ensure generators are installed and used properly.
- ▶ Stay out of restricted areas at our co-op office(s).
- ▶ Don't approach utility crews at work, even to offer encouragement. The work they are doing could be hazardous to untrained personnel.
- ▶ Drive slowly and carefully around utility work zones.

We do everything we can to keep electricity flowing to your homes and businesses without interruption. Unfortunately, Mother Nature and the realities of power distribution prevent us from perfection.

On behalf of all of us at Blue Ridge Electric, I thank you for your patience, understanding and any encouragement you can send our way.

**JIM LOVINGGOOD**  
 President and CEO

# Local all-stars run winning play

BY JOSH P. CROTZER

IT'S A POPULAR OFFENSIVE philosophy across all levels of football—if a play is successful, keep running it.

Since 2013, football players selected to the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives Bowl have teamed up to guide deserving children from Myrtle Beach schools on a Christmas shopping spree. Two days before the Dec. 5 game at Doug Shaw Memorial Stadium, 88 high school all-stars from across the state took a break from practicing to help students from Myrtle Beach Elementary School and Myrtle Beach Early Childhood navigate the aisles of a Target Superstore.

“It was a good experience seeing little kids getting the things they want,” says Gavin Thoma, a quarterback from

Seneca High School who shopped with a girl named Truth. “As soon as she got in there, we went to the toys and got her a big Barbie Dream Camper.”

Each of the 44 children were teamed with a player each from the North and South squads, tasked with helping the children find items on their lists. The lists included essential items such as coats and socks as well as whatever toys would fit into the \$150 budget. The shopping spree is sponsored by the state’s electric cooperatives.

The shopping spree wasn’t the only thing that made game week special. The night before the bowl game, a line crew from Horry Electric set up hands-on demonstrations on the football field so the players could explore careers as cooperative lineworkers. Players put on personal protective equipment and took turns performing various lineworker tasks such as drilling holes and changing out a fuse.

Other local all-stars selected to the game



CANYON DURHAM

Seneca High quarterback Gavin Thoma (left) teams with Quinn Mahoney of Bishop England High to help Truth, a kindergartener from Myrtle Beach Early Childhood, find her Barbie Dream Camper.

included Gavin Forrester of Blue Ridge High, Emari Nance of T.L. Hanna High and Matthew Hillstock of Easley High.

South Carolina’s electric cooperatives sponsor the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives Bowl in partnership with the South Carolina Athletic Coaches Association.

## Ready for an experience you won't forget?

Your co-op has two amazing trips planned this summer. Juniors: Apply for the Washington Youth Tour. Sophomores: Apply for the Cooperative Youth Summit.

**Juniors:** Experience Washington, D.C., with hundreds of students from across South Carolina and the country, meeting lawmakers and touring all the sights. Your electric co-op will cover your round-trip plane ticket, tours and meals. In other words, it's all free!

**Sophomores:** Experience South Carolina’s capital like never before. Tour the Statehouse, meet lawmakers and see how co-ops are preparing for our state’s energy future. Plus, there’s plenty of fun with visits to popular Columbia attractions like the South Carolina State Museum. Your electric co-op will cover all your expenses.

We've made it easy to apply for either FREE trip. Apply today!



ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Washington Youth Tour: June 14-19, 2026



Cooperative Youth Summit: July 13-16, 2026



Applications available: [blueridge.coop/youth-programs](http://blueridge.coop/youth-programs)  
Application deadline: February 27, 2026

