



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.

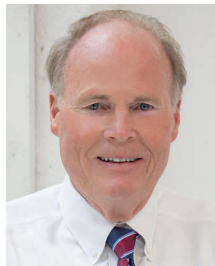
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Jim Lovinggood

This organization is an
equal-opportunity provider.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



The background on underground lines

THERE'S AN INEVITABLE question many folks ask after a big storm, when power poles break, lines are down and you are without electricity for a lot longer than anyone would like—Why doesn't Blue Ridge Electric just bury its lines underground?

It's a fair question. The short answer is that we do bury power lines when it makes sense. Currently, 31% of our system is underground.

Underground lines are generally more reliable because they aren't as susceptible to routine outages caused by falling trees and branches. We also recognize underground lines are more aesthetically pleasing. Even I would admit the most beautiful power line is one you don't see. However, burying lines doesn't make sense in every case.

While they are more reliable, underground lines still offer no guarantee against outages. A system of buried distribution lines still depends on above-ground transmission lines that can be damaged by storms.

Plus, buried lines can be knocked out of commission by flooding, mudslides, digging accidents or tree roots, and repairing underground systems typically takes longer because they aren't as easy to access.

Another challenge is cost. Burying one of the distribution lines that serves your home is about five times more expensive than building an overhead line. Burying larger transmission lines is even more expensive. The cost of burying all 7,300 miles of our system would be astronomical. We could not do it without significantly raising our electric rates.

The marginal improvements to reliability don't always justify the significant cost. So, when do we bury lines? In almost every case, it's when we're building new lines, and when somebody else will pay for it.

"Our job is to use your dollars carefully and make investments strategically to do the most good for the most people."

That could be a residential developer, a neighborhood, or a municipality that prefers underground lines and is willing to pay. That way, the members who benefit from underground lines pay those added costs, not the members who don't.

Building underground infrastructure isn't the only way we invest in reliability. We regularly replace aging poles, add technologies that improve restoration timelines, and build redundancies onto our system so a single point of failure doesn't mean an outage for an entire community. We also trim trees, inspect equipment regularly and strengthen critical connections before storm season. That's because preventing outages is better and less expensive than repairing the damage afterward.

Reliability and affordability aren't opposing goals for us. They are part of the same promise we made when this co-op was founded. Our job is to deliver both, using your dollars carefully and making investments strategically to do the most good for the most people. Sometimes that means burying a line. Sometimes it means finding other ways to improve reliability without asking you to pay more than you should.

Either way, you have my word that we're never done improving.

JIM LOVINGGOOD
President and CEO

Which rate is right for you?

Find the rate that fits your household

BY RILEY MORNINGSTAR

OVER THE LAST few years, Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative has worked to offer more residential rate options that best suit your household.

We hear from members all year, and one thing comes up often—the rate that works for your neighbor may not work for you. The three-part EmPOWERment rate fits most households well, but it doesn't work for everyone. So, we asked our rate consultants to help us develop rate options to give you more choices.

Each of these rates is revenue-neutral for the cooperative. Blue Ridge is a not-for-profit utility, and any positive margins flow back to members in the form of capital credits. We have proudly returned more than \$32 million to our membership over the last 42 years.



TIME OF USE

Time of Use is our newest rate option. Power costs less when the grid isn't working hard, and this rate passes

that difference straight to you. For the majority of the day, energy is priced well below our standard rate. During a short peak window, it costs considerably more. There is no demand charge. You pay for what you use when you use it.

The peak windows are fixed and predictable—late afternoon in the warmer months, early morning in the colder months, seven days a week. Those windows aren't set by Blue Ridge. They're set by the generators who supply our power, and they mark the hours when the regional grid is under the most strain.



EMPOWERMENT

EmPOWERment remains the rate most of our members save money on, and it's the one that most closely mirrors how Blue

Ridge itself is billed. It has three parts: an account charge covering the daily cost of keeping power available to your home, a discounted energy charge for what you actually use, and a peak charge tied to your single highest hour of use during the peak window in a billing period.

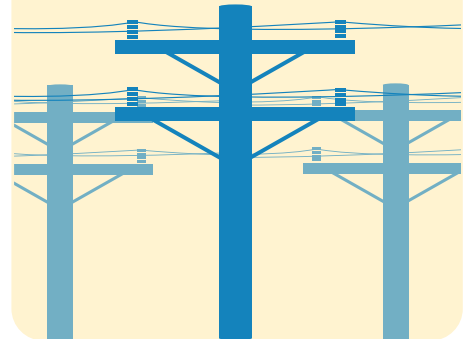
Our power suppliers don't bill us for total energy alone. They bill us for our peak demand, because the system must be built to meet that strain. EmPOWERment reflects that reality instead of averaging it into everyone's rate. A member who spreads usage out isn't subsidizing a member who doesn't.



FLAT USE (TWO-PART)

Flat Use is for members who prefer not to watch the clock. One monthly account charge, one price

per kilowatt-hour, no peak window, no demand charge. Every kilowatt-hour costs the same whether you use it at two in the afternoon or two in the morning.



ABOUT THE ACCOUNT CHARGE

A common question our co-op receives is one you may already understand—

What exactly is my account charge for? This is a fixed monthly fee to provide an active connection to the power grid, while also having power lines, poles and transformers ready to deliver power to your home. An apples-to-apples comparison would be the line access fee you pay your cell phone provider.



HOW TO COMPARE

Take time to see which rate suits your household before you switch, and you will not need a calculator to do it.



Log in at broem.ariespro.com for a full analysis built on your own usage history.



If you would rather have someone walk you through it, call us at (800) 240-3400.



HOW TO CHANGE

To move to a different rate, you need a zero balance on your account or enrollment in a cooperative-approved repayment program. You will also talk with one of our energy consultants about ways to make your home more efficient, and you will stay on the new rate for a full year before you have the option to switch again.



Scan to access your rate comparison calculator.



Our co-op is ready to help you. Just reach out.