

# Membership MATTERS

## Members Only NEWS For Members of Blue Ridge Electric



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*(PowerLine® is an automated account information and outage reporting system.)*

Toll Free 1 (800) 451-5474  
*(for members outside the service area)*

To report an outage at any time,  
call one of the numbers listed above.

**OFFICE HOURS**  
8:30 am - 5:00 pm, Monday - Friday  
Night deposit available.

Visit us on the web:  
[www.BlueRidgeEMC.com](http://www.BlueRidgeEMC.com)

## Energy-Efficient Clothes Washer

Energy Star®-qualified clothes washers use the latest technology to substantially reduce energy and water consumption.

Front-loading clothes washers use a horizontal or tumble-axis basket to lift and drop clothing into the water, instead of rubbing clothes around a central agitator in a full tub. These units use less energy than conventional clothes washers by reducing the amount of hot water needed to clean clothes. Front-loading models also squeeze more water out of clothes by using spin speeds that are two to three times faster than conventional washers, thereby reducing drying time and energy use.



*At Blue Ridge Electric, we have lots of ideas to help you become an energy efficient "super hero!" Go to [BlueRidgeEMC.com](http://BlueRidgeEMC.com) and click on the Energy Tips icon.*

New top-loading models typically employ spray valves to rinse clothes instead of using a new tub of water. Repeated high-pressure rinses that remove soap residue not only reduce the energy required for water heating, but typically save an average of 15 gallons of water per wash.



### ENERGY TIPS

Qualified top-loading models also have sensors that monitor the incoming temperature, keeping it hot enough to dissolve detergent and provide high-performance cleaning, but cool enough to save energy and minimize damage to fabrics. This technology results in less hot water and less energy consumption.

*Source: NRECA Cooperative Research Network*

**Note:** Be on the lookout for a statewide Energy Star® appliance tax holiday beginning Friday, August 1, at 12:01 a.m., and ending Sunday, August 3, at 11:59 p.m.

# Membership MATTERS



## Educators: Apply Now for Grants

Teachers and principals are encouraged to apply now for Bright Ideas grants totaling \$17,000 being awarded by Blue Ridge Electric in conjunction with North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation for the 2008-2009 school year.

Bright Ideas grants provide educators with funding of up to \$1,500 per grant for innovative classroom projects that benefit students and would not otherwise be covered by the school budget. Bright Ideas has financed a variety of hands-on projects, including activities in music, art, history, language, reading, science, math, and information technology. Proposals can come from any area of the curriculum.



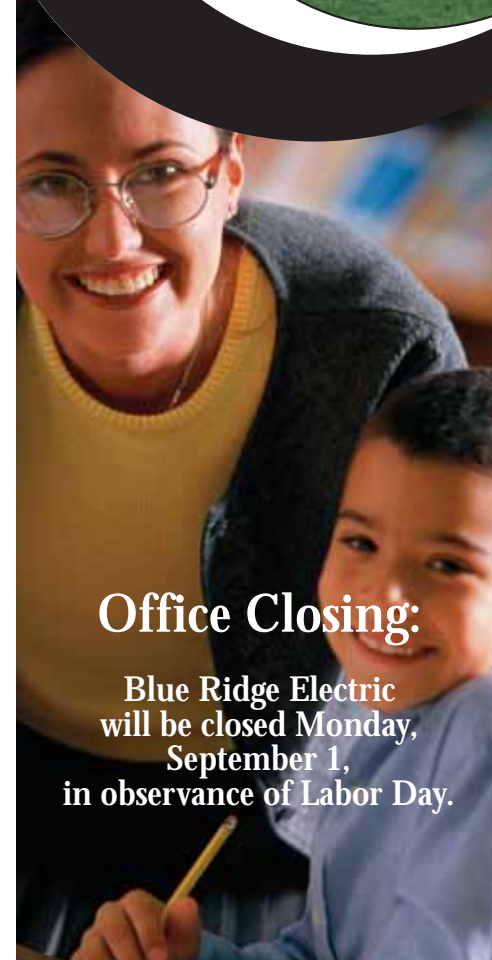
Blue Ridge Electric is in its fourteenth year of providing Bright Ideas grants as part of its support of youth and education in the communities it serves. To date, the cooperative has awarded more than \$250,000 to 293 classrooms, which has benefited more than 75,000 local students. Bright Ideas reflects Blue Ridge Electric's commitment to community and support of local education.

The application deadline for Bright Ideas grants is **September 30**. Projects must directly benefit students, provide ongoing benefits, and use innovative teaching methods. This year, a special emphasis will be placed on applications incorporating environmentally friendly ideas or projects.

Applications and full details of the Bright Ideas program can be found at [BlueRidgeEMC.com](http://BlueRidgeEMC.com) or [ncbrightideas.com](http://ncbrightideas.com). All applications must be submitted online at the web sites above. For more information, please contact **Grey Scheer**, director of community relations, at [gscheer@blueridgeemc.com](mailto:gscheer@blueridgeemc.com).

## Office Closing:

**Blue Ridge Electric will be closed Monday, September 1, in observance of Labor Day.**



# THE *Perspective*

An Editorial by Chief Executive Officer Doug Johnson



## The High Price of Natural Gas

Gasoline prices have soared to \$4 per gallon and more. The cost of groceries including essentials like milk and bread keeps climbing as well. As America adjusts to paying more for everyday necessities, Blue Ridge Electric is doing its part to keep electricity as affordable and reliable as possible.

Nearly half of electricity generation in our nation comes from coal-fired power plants. But mounting pressures to lower greenhouse gas emissions have made it more difficult and costly to build coal-fired facilities. Nuclear power doesn't emit greenhouse gases, but strong political and philosophical opposition makes building new plants very difficult. In fact, the first nuclear plants to be constructed in nearly 30 years are just getting started.

Additionally, rising costs of fossil fuels to produce electricity and power plant construction materials like steel, concrete, and copper make the industry's ability to bring sufficient generation online more difficult. As a result, natural gas has become the "bridge" fuel of choice for keeping the lights on, at least until new low-emissions technologies are developed on a large scale.

Natural gas plants are usually smaller than coal-fired or nuclear plants, can be built faster, and typically face less public opposition than other power generation options, making them a convenient alternative. Simple gas-fired turbines – similar to jet engines on blocks – can be built in approximately 18 months. A combined-cycle unit that creates steam for extra generation can be up and running in just two years. But natural gas also has its drawbacks.

The price of natural gas has tripled since 2002 and jumped 93 percent since August 2007. These price fluctuations combined with limited domestic reserves and a greater reliance on imports make natural gas prices highly volatile. As more natural gas is used for electricity, we're likely to see electric bills increase as well.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, if natural gas consumption continues at its current rate without an increase in imports, national reserves will be tapped out within 10 years. And by adding more gas-fired power plants, the nation's 300,000 miles of natural gas pipelines – already operating close to capacity – will come under further strain. If you use natural gas for heating and cooking, those costs will significantly increase, too, as more supply is used for power generation.

At Blue Ridge Electric, it has been our ongoing mission to provide you with reliable and affordable electricity. To ensure that we can continue to meet your energy needs, we have joined with other electric co-ops across the country in a grassroots campaign called "Our Energy, Our Future: A Dialogue With America."

This campaign seeks to help consumers engage policymakers on critical energy questions such as how to balance growing electricity needs and environmental goals, and how much of all this will increase electric bills. Please visit the "Our Energy, Our Future" area of [BlueRidgeEMC.com](http://BlueRidgeEMC.com) to sign up and help get the conversation started.

## It's Our Time.

It's our time to lead America in a national dialogue. About America's **climate change goals** and energy challenge. It's time to raise awareness. Have the hard conversations with our elected officials. Empower people. It's not us versus them. It's me. It's you. It's all of us. Together. It's about the energy to effect positive change. It's about **the power of conversation**. It's about the power in all of us, to find the right answers.

It's about our energy. Our future. Their future.



For more information, go to [www.BlueRidgeEMC.com](http://www.BlueRidgeEMC.com) or [www.OurEnergy.coop](http://www.OurEnergy.coop) to start the conversation today.

## More News

## Cash in on Savings With Your Co-op Connections® Card



Stretching your dollars is getting harder but with the Co-op Connections card provided to members of Blue Ridge Electric, you can enjoy savings on everything from prescription drugs to lunch to jewelry and more!

Co-op Connections is a savings card program of participating electric cooperatives across the nation, so you can save here at home AND when you travel!

Use the card anywhere you see the Co-op Connections card sticker. More than 150 businesses are participating locally and thousands participate nationwide. Click on the Co-op Connections card at [BlueRidgeEMC.com](http://BlueRidgeEMC.com) to find out everywhere you can save money with your Co-op Connections card!

Recent reports indicate Blue Ridge Electric members are saving the most in the nation on prescription drugs with the Co-op Connections Card. A total of \$133,745 has been saved by our members since the card was issued last November.

The Co-op Connections card is another way we're looking out for you!

*\* Pharmacy discounts are not insurance, and are not intended as a substitute for insurance.*



As of June 2008, the Co-op Connections® Card pharmacy discount has saved our membership \$133,745.

## FOR SALE

**2004 Chrysler Pacifica**, Butane Blue, heated leather seats, 27K mi., AWD, front & side air bags, keyless entry, premium wheels, excellent condition, \$16,850. Call 828-632-2741.

**2000 Ford Explorer XLT, V6**, 4WD, 96K miles, ex. condition, loaded w/sunroof, \$7,500. Call 336-385-8301.

**1984 Toyota FJ-60 Landcruiser**, 112K miles, originally from Arizona, stored for 9 years, great condition, \$5,400. Call 828-297-1399.

**Beauty shop equipment**, \$250. Call 336-372-8976.

**1997 Plymouth Grand Voyager SE minivan**, green, runs and looks great. \$3,000. Call 336-657-1720.

**Helleborus**, Royal Heritage strain, No. 1 perennial for shade, blooms early winter/early spring, 3" pots, \$3 each. Call 336-385-9438.

**WANTED**  
American antiques, folk art, and paintings. Contact me at [wwwpeggyjfrantz@hotmail.com](mailto:wwwpeggyjfrantz@hotmail.com).

**Used roof mowers and roof mowers** to use for parts. Call 828-297-5555.

**Baseball cards** to add to boyhood collection. Fair prices paid. Call 828-759-1427.

NOTICE - Members of Blue Ridge Electric Membership Corporation are invited to submit ads. However, no real estate, business or ads for animals will be accepted. We will place ads on a first-come, first-served basis and we reserve the right to refuse any ads due to space limitations or questionable content. Ads will be limited to a maximum of four lines. We do not accept ads for wood or coal-burning appliances, or electric thermal storage units. Prices should be included on all items. Ads should be mailed to: Cornelia Cornell, Blue Ridge Electric Membership Corporation, PO Box 112, Lenoir, NC 28645