

# Membership MATTERS



## Members Only NEWS ~For Members of Blue Ridge Electric

### Make a Difference in November

You can make a difference by starting a conversation with your elected officials about reliable, affordable, and environmentally responsible electric power. Never underestimate the power of personal contact with your elected officials at all levels.



The major questions to ask elected officials and candidates for office are:

1. Experts say that our nation's growing electricity needs will soon go well beyond what renewables, conservation, and efficiency can provide. What is your plan to make sure we have the electricity we'll need in the future?
2. Our country faces a crisis as electricity use increases faster than available supply. What are you doing to speed the development of new technology that will allow me to have the electric power I need while meeting national climate policy goals?
3. How much is all this going to increase my electric bill and what will you do to make it affordable?

Electric co-op consumers can lead the way in discussing energy issues by going to [BlueRidgeEMC.com](http://BlueRidgeEMC.com) or [OurEnergy.coop](http://OurEnergy.coop), to learn more.



At Blue Ridge Electric, we have lots of ideas to help you become energy efficient. Go to [BlueRidgeEMC.com](http://BlueRidgeEMC.com) and click on the Energy Tips icon for more information.

#### An Energy Star™ Tax Holiday is slated for November 7-9 for specific Energy Star qualified products.

An "Energy Star qualified product" is defined as "a product that meets the energy efficiency guidelines set by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the United States Department of Energy and is authorized to carry the Energy Star label." Qualified products are exempt from all state and local sales and use taxes if sold between 12:01 A.M. on the first Friday of November and 11:59 P.M. the following Sunday.

#### CORPORATE OFFICE

PO Box 112 • Lenoir, NC 28645

#### CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Doug Johnson

#### EDITOR

Renée R. Whitener

#### PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR

Susan Simmons

#### DISTRICT OFFICES

Caldwell (828) 754-9071  
Watauga (828) 264-8894  
Ashe (336) 246-7138  
Alleghany (336) 372-4646  
From Wilkes (336) 838-4655  
PowerLine® 1 (800) 448-2383  
*(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)

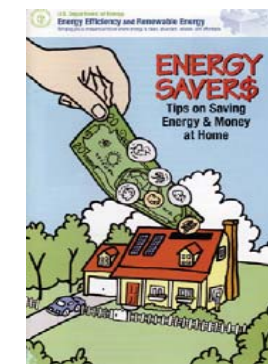
# Membership MATTERS



### 7 Tips for Energy Efficiency

We use energy every day, whether we're at home, school, work or play. Unfortunately, much of the energy we use is wasted due to inefficiency. There are a number of ways you can be more energy efficient. Here are a few easy steps to take in preparation for colder weather:

1. Find and seal air leaks inside and around the exterior of your home. Check around fixtures that penetrate walls, such as exhaust fans and electrical outlets. (Always follow the sealant manufacturer's specifications when applying.)
2. Seal leaks between moving parts with weather stripping, such as between a door and its frame. Caulk cracks between windows and walls, as well as around door frames.
3. When shopping for new windows, doors, or skylights, look for ones with the Energy Star™ label.
4. Make sure attics and flooring above unheated areas, such as crawl spaces and the garage, are properly insulated.
5. Have your furnace checked by a professional to make sure it's operating safely and at its optimal level. In addition, change your furnace filters according to manufacturer's instructions.
6. Have a programmable thermostat installed to automatically raise and lower home temperatures for energy savings day and night.
7. Survey your incandescent lights for opportunities to replace them with compact fluorescents. These lamps can save three-quarters of the electricity used by incandescents. The best targets are 60-100 watt bulbs used several hours or more a day.



Blue Ridge Electric offers resources, such as the Energy Savers Guide shown above, to help members use energy efficiently.



## Rising Costs Will Impact Bills

A combination of market place forces is currently causing price increases in the energy industry. The cost of fuels to generate electricity — coal and natural gas — are primary drivers of the increase in electricity being experienced all across the nation. While we're working hard at Blue Ridge Electric to hold down rising costs, sharp fuel price increases have ultimately led to the need for our own adjustment that will begin on November bills (see sidebar for details).

We will continue working to contain costs while providing you with the best possible power reliability and customer service. However, consumers should be aware that other factors are also putting pressure on electricity prices and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

One factor is the urgent need for new power plant construction as well as for transmission and distribution systems required to replace an aging grid and deliver the power needed for our growing nation. Over the next 22 years, electricity demand is predicted to increase 30 percent and our country has used up the excess power capacity it once had available. That means we will need to build new power plants, all at a time when costs for construction materials such as steel, copper, and concrete, and fossil fuels like natural gas and coal are skyrocketing due to demand for these products from growing economies in India and China.

Another influencing factor is renewable energy mandates occurring on both the state and federal level. In North Carolina, the General Assembly has passed a law requiring all utilities to obtain at least 10 to 12 percent of electricity from renewable resources, including energy efficiency measures, by the year 2018. Renewables are expensive, but your cooperative is committed to finding the lowest cost programs that will help the environment, meet legislative requirements, and minimize the cost impact to our members.

On the national front, pressure continues to mount to act on climate change. Congress is likely to implement a national energy policy in 2009, which could further impact electricity costs.

To keep the lights on and your electric rates affordable, Blue Ridge Electric and others are asking lawmakers to plan carefully. We need a national energy policy that supports construction of new nuclear power plants and a carbon storage technology for coal plants. We also need federal policy to build new transmission lines to connect rural regions where renewable electricity is generated to the population centers where it's consumed.

These steps will not only strengthen our nation's electric infrastructure and head off an impending electric power crisis, but significantly lower greenhouse gas emissions. Even better, they will help ensure that any climate change goals ultimately adopted remain politically and economically sustainable over the decades necessary to make a difference.

The energy challenges we face are immense. But you can be assured that your cooperative is working to be part of the solution and to look out for your best interests.

## WPCA to Begin on November Bills

Utilities all across the nation are finding it necessary to recover rising fuel costs that are affecting the price of wholesale electricity. While every effort is being made to control rising costs, Blue Ridge Electric also finds it necessary to implement a wholesale power cost adjustment (WPCA) beginning next month. Effective on November bills will be a WPCA of \$4.00 per 1,000 kwh. The typical usage for a residential member is 850 kwh per month, which means the average member will experience a monthly bill increase of approximately \$3.40.

The WPCA is a direct "pass through" charge and could change, depending on fluctuations in the cost of fuels to generate electricity.

## More News

### Avoid Electrical Hazards at Halloween

The decorative lights, fog machines, and other fun of Halloween make for entertaining times for children and adults. With these decorations, though, the risk of fire or electrocution could be lurking around the corner. Please check for the following electrical hazards to avoid an accident:

- Inspect electrical decorations for cracked or frayed sockets, loose or bare wires, and loose connections. Replace or discard as necessary.
- Provide well-lit walkways and porch lighting for trick-or-treaters.
- Don't overload extension cords or place them near, or in, snow or water.
- Make sure electrical decorations are approved by a nationally recognized certification organization like "UL" (Underwriters Laboratory) and marked for outdoor use if you are using them outside. Check [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov) or [www.ul.com](http://www.ul.com) for recalls.
- Make sure decorative lighting is protected from weather and a safe distance from anything flammable like dry leaves and shrubs.

Sources: Home Safety Council and Electrical Safety Foundation International

### Member Alert

Members may see new trucks as part of a change with one of the cooperative's vendors. Pike Electric Corporation is acquiring Shaw Energy Delivery Services, Inc. Shaw has provided contract construction services on overhead and underground electric system infrastructure for Blue Ridge Electric. Pike is also a long-time contractor with Blue Ridge Electric. Members will enjoy continued reliability and the only noticeable change will be the utilization of yellow as well as white trucks and eventually a change to the Pike name on the vehicles.

### FOR SALE

**VHS Tapes**, Star Wars I, widescreen collector's edition, \$10; Highlander series 1-4, \$20; Highlander 2 – Renegade version, wide screen \$5; James Bond 007 Collection – Moonraker \$5. Hiking baby carrier, \$5. Call after 3 p.m., 828-964-1225.

**Toro 2-turn commercial mower**, 48" cut, 18 hp Kohler engine (37 hours on engine). Paid \$5,697, asking \$4,795. Call 828-962-3355 between 4 and 9 p.m.

**Brown & Williamson tobacco cutter**, \$85; dehorner, \$49; old timey shaving mug with brush, \$25. Call 828-396-2510.

**2000 Ford Taurus**, good condition, serviced regularly, over

100K mi., \$4,000. Call 336-372-2301 any day except Sunday. If no answer, leave a message and phone number.

**1997 Dodge Dakota** w/slimline cover, bed liner, automatic, great tires, very good condition, many extras, \$4,999. Call 828-754-4614.

**Washburn Electric Guitar** (silver) with carrying case (like new, used twice). Original price, \$300. Asking \$125. Call 828-406-1536.

**2003 Keystone Laredo** fifth wheel camper with slideout and many extras, \$17,500. Call 336-372-2075.

### MISCELLANEOUS

Qualified in-home nurse seeking applications for patients. Have resumé and references. Call 828-758-2985.

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