

Membership MATTERS



Members Only NEWS

For Members of Blue Ridge Electric

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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

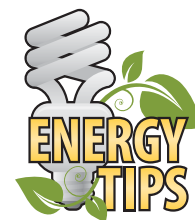
New Membership Benefit *Carolina Country*: Informational AND Fun!

In an effort to keep our members informed about the latest energy information, environmental efforts, and energy efficiency tips, Blue Ridge Electric will begin sending the *Carolina Country* magazine to all members starting in January. While some members have already requested *Carolina Country*, now all members will automatically receive a free monthly issue of this award-winning magazine.

Published by our Statewide electric cooperative association, *Carolina Country* is also filled with stories about interesting North Carolina people and places, delicious recipes and other helpful information.

Sending you *Carolina Country* is also a cost-saving way to send members the monthly newsletter from Blue Ridge Electric: *Membership Matters*. Beginning in January, you'll find *Membership Matters* inside the *Carolina Country* magazine instead of as an insert in your electric bill. Be sure and check *Membership Matters* each month for information more specific to you and your cooperative.

We hope you enjoy your new membership benefit of *Carolina Country* and the new way we'll be delivering *Membership Matters* to you each month!



Plug your home's leaks. Install weatherstripping or caulk on leaky doors and windows. These inexpensive fixes can help you save up to 10 percent on energy costs.

Install low-flow showerheads. If you do not already have them, low-flow showerheads and faucets can drastically cut your hot water expenses and reduce water usage. These actions can save up to 10-16 percent of water heating costs.

Source: www.consumerenergycenter.org

Membership MATTERS



Steps to Restoring Power

Whether we're building a new substation, replacing aging power poles, or trimming trees too close to power lines, Blue Ridge Electric works every day to keep your power reliable. Yet no matter how well we maintain our electric infrastructure, severe weather sometimes harms our system, leading to power outages for members.

The major cause of outages is damage from fallen trees. That's why we have an ongoing right-of-way maintenance program to protect over 7,000 miles of power lines serving the cooperative's 72,000 members.

Restoring power after a major outage involves much more than simply throwing a switch or removing a tree from a line. The main goal is to restore power safely — for members and linemen — in the shortest amount of time possible.

Even before an outage occurs, Blue Ridge Electric employees are prepared with a plan of action. Our plan for quick, safe power restoration includes:

Step 1: Transmission structures and lines that supply power to one or more transmission substations are restored first. These main delivery lines receive first priority because they serve tens of thousands of people.

Step 2: Restored next are distribution substations, which "step down" or reduce voltage from transmission lines so it can be distributed to thousands of members.

Step 3: Main distribution supply lines are restored next if the problem cannot be found at earlier check points. These are the lines on power poles along roads.

Step 4: The final power supply lines, called "tap lines," are restored next if needed. These lines "tap off" the main distribution lines.

Step 5: Damage can also occur on the service line leading from the transformer pole into your home. This can explain why your neighbors have power and you don't.

The fastest way to report an outage is by calling our automated Powerline at 1-800-448-2383.



THE *Perspective*

An Editorial by Chief Executive Officer Doug Johnson



Technology is Key in Keeping the Lights On

It is clear that fixing the economy and the need for a national energy policy are emerging this fall as the top two national issues. Furthermore, we need a national energy direction that includes clean electric generating resources to meet the growing electricity needs of American consumers.

As your provider of safe, affordable, and reliable power, it's our job to make prudent, long-term energy decisions that will benefit you and the communities we serve for decades to come. But today those decisions are mixed up with politics like never before. Every question of supplying power is being impacted by the debate surrounding how best to meet climate change goals. While North Carolina has already implemented a Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard (REPS) requiring all state utilities to incorporate more renewable energy into power supply portfolios, federal level legislation to limit carbon dioxide emissions is still under development. However, national energy legislation that incorporates climate change goals is becoming more likely, although specifics are still being debated in Congress. Cost will certainly be an issue, and cooperatives are working as advocates on behalf of our consumers to ensure a balance between cost to the consumer and any new legislation that is enacted.

There is no doubt that a cleaner environment will depend upon massive national investments in new technology for energy generation. This investment is needed soon to find a balance in meeting both our energy needs and climate change goals. The Electric Power Research Institute estimates it will take a research investment of \$1.4 billion a year from now until 2030 to develop new technology such as carbon capture and storage for our nation's coal powered plants.

Once we have the advantage of this advanced technology, we can develop "cleaner" power plants that burn coal and isolate carbon dioxide emissions. The gas can then be compressed and pumped for permanent storage deep underground. Many experts believe that with the right financial commitment from the federal government, cost-effective carbon capture and storage technology could become commercially available around 2020.

Yet, this is just one potential piece of the puzzle, and until our elected officials agree to provide the necessary direction and funding, uncertainty remains.

You can be assured that Blue Ridge Electric is working with our elected officials to help ensure they understand the connection between funding technology now, cleaner power generation for the future, and cost to the consumer. With the financial market challenges our country is experiencing it will be a considerable challenge for our lawmakers to find the necessary resources without over-burdening consumers with new energy taxes. Energy and the economy are clearly the two largest issues facing a new president and Congress next year.

At Blue Ridge Electric, we're dedicated to keeping you informed about the issues facing the electric energy industry and how they may impact consumers. And as a cooperative, delivering the most reliable power at the lowest possible cost to our members is our first and foremost goal.



Our Energy, Our Future A Dialogue With America

As a new Congress and a new president takes office soon, it is more important than ever to ensure our elected officials understand the need to balance consumer cost with any new legislation addressing climate change. We, as electric cooperative members, must call on elected officials to provide this leadership. We need a plan people can live with today while we deal with the climate change problems of tomorrow.

Go to www.OurEnergy.Coop and type your address. There you'll be able to send information to your representatives in Washington to help educate them on this important issue.

Far too often questions don't get asked by policy makers until plans go wrong. We believe it makes sense to know the answers before the laws are passed. You can help your elected officials and yourself by having this conversation.



More News

For Your Protection

In an ongoing effort to ensure the security of your personal information and prevent identity theft or fraud, Blue Ridge Electric is reviewing several practices for both new and existing members.

Identity theft can occur when someone obtains a piece of personal information such as your electric account number or social security number and uses it for other purposes such as opening another account or line of credit. Identity fraud occurs when someone gives a fictitious address, name or social security number. Identity theft and fraud costs consumers and businesses hundreds of thousands of dollars annually.

To help prevent fraud, new members establishing service with the cooperative will be requested to provide more detailed information including: driver's license, previous address and/or social security number.

To help prevent identity theft, we are implementing "account masking," which members will notice on receipts if you're paying your bill in one of our offices. Account masking simply means that your account number appearing on your payment receipt will now have the significant digits replaced with asterisks (*). This security measure hides most of your account number while providing enough information (the last four digits) to be meaningful to you.

To further protect your information, Blue Ridge Electric also implements cyber security measures such as firewalls and password protection for your accounts when you use our pay-on-line services. Paper documentation within our cooperative is also securely collected and shredded on-site.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is requiring these new measures for the banking, credit card and utility industry to help protect consumers against identity theft. We're pleased to implement these measures to help protect our members.

FOR SALE

Rose pattern king comforter w/two queen-size pillows w/ matching shams, good condition, \$150. Call 336-246-3694.

1999 Fleetwood Discovery motor home, 36', diesel, 275 Cummins engine, slideout, excellent condition, \$60,000 OBO. Call 434-250-8548 or 434-251-5735.

Oak dresser chest w/drawers and mirror, \$60; light cherry four-poster bed, \$75; Monitor heater, \$400. Call 828-260-3340.

Large showcase w/light and mirror. Located in Mtn. City, TN antique store. Need to sell soon, \$350. Call 828-758-4818.

Collectible liquor decanters, never opened, different prices. Call 828-758-7320.

WANTED

2001 Chrysler Sebring convertible, red w/tan top and tan leather interior. Excellent condition a must! Call 828-264-4663.

Gorham silver, Camellia pattern. Contact John W. Jackson, PO Box 112, Blowing Rock, NC 28605.

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