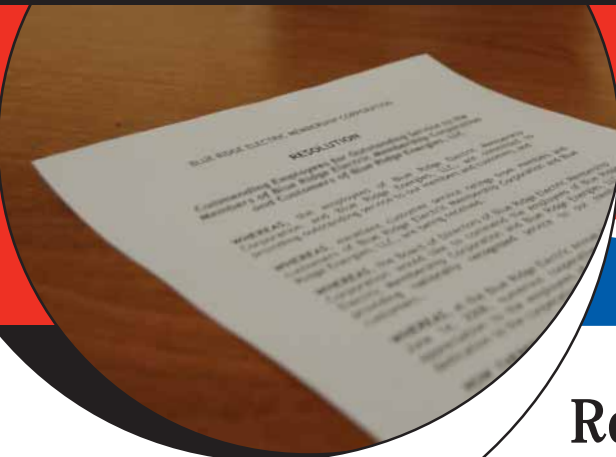


Membership MATTERS

Members Only NEWS For Members of Blue Ridge Electric



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

Visit us on the web:
www.BlueRidgeEMC.com

Resolutions Due

Members may now submit proposed resolutions for consideration at the 2009 Annual Membership Meeting.

Proposed resolutions should state their relevance to the cooperative's mission, objectives, operations, and how they relate to the membership.

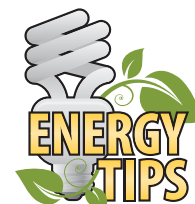
Resolutions must be in writing and received by 5 p.m., January 30. Address resolutions to Doug Johnson, PO Box 112, Lenoir, NC, 28645.

Proposed resolutions are reviewed by the Resolutions Committee for compliance with bylaws and policy. Recommendations for resolutions to be presented at the annual meeting are made by the committee to the Board of Directors at their February meeting.

The Resolutions Committee is composed of chairpersons of the cooperative's district Member Advisory Committees and members of the Board of Directors' Policy and Member Relations Committee.

Automated Meter Installations Begin in Alleghany County

STS, a meter installation contractor for Blue Ridge Electric, is currently installing automated meters in the Alleghany District service area. If you need additional information about the automated metering project, please contact your local Blue Ridge office.



Use a humidifier. Humidity makes you feel warmer in cold months. With the proper humidity level, you'll be able to turn your thermostat down to a lower temperature, save energy and still feel comfortable. About 20 to 40 percent relative humidity is recommended.

Membership MATTERS



A New Benefit for the New Year *Look For This Newsletter Inside Carolina Country Beginning in January 2009*

A new and improved way of delivering information about your cooperative and news from the electric utility industry that could affect you is coming your way next month with *Carolina Country* magazine.

Starting in January, your member newsletter, *Membership Matters*, will no longer come as an insert in your monthly electric bill. It will come to you as part of the *Carolina Country* magazine. Some of you may be familiar with *Carolina Country* but for many of you this magazine will be a new information tool that will benefit members.

Membership Matters will continue to carry timely, important news about your cooperative, updates on power reliability efforts and customer service initiatives. Delivering it inside *Carolina Country* simply gives us — and you — a more efficient way to be sure our members are informed. *Carolina Country* comes complete each month with detailed stories on the kind of information you've told us you want to know more about: products, services and other ways to become more energy efficient; tips on living "greener," and energy legislation updates that could impact you as our state and nation works to develop and implement environmental legislation. You'll also learn how cooperatives are working to ensure affordable, reliable electricity.

Published by the North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives, *Carolina Country* is also filled with entertaining stories about interesting people and places in our state as well as delicious recipes and other helpful information.

While some members have already requested *Carolina Country*, now all members will automatically receive a free monthly issue of this award-winning magazine.

Be sure to check your *Carolina Country* magazine each month for your *Membership Matters* newsletter from Blue Ridge Electric and much more!



Improved Home Energy

From the sun
From the earth
From conservation

Will Electricity Prices Come Down Now That Gasoline is Cheaper?

That's the question consumers are asking. Unfortunately, the answer is no because electricity prices are not driven by gasoline prices. While consumers are experiencing price relief at the gas pump, the fuels used to generate electricity are different from what we purchase to power our cars. The primary generation fuel for electricity in the Southeast is coal, which has more than doubled in cost in recent years due to global demand created by developing countries such as China and India.

Furthermore, several factors are colliding to create "the perfect storm" leading to price pressures that will affect all utilities and their consumers for the foreseeable future. One is increasing demand for electricity. In some regions demand will soon outstrip supply, according to the North America Electric Reliability Corporation, which oversees reliability of the U.S. power grid. And, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reports we will need to double existing generation capacity by 2020 to keep the power flowing. This means adding power plants that will be the most expensive in history thanks to escalating prices, inflation, and international competition for raw resources, labor, and expertise.

Another factor is renewable energy mandates on both state and federal levels. In North Carolina, the General Assembly passed a law requiring all utilities to obtain at least 10 to 12 percent of electricity from renewable and energy efficiency measures by 2018. Renewables are expensive, but we're committed to finding the lowest cost programs to help the environment while meeting legislative requirements and minimizing the cost impact to our members. That's why you'll see us developing energy efficiency programs and asking for your participation. Energy efficiency is one of the most effective and lowest cost ways for you and your cooperative to partner together to make a difference.

We expect Congress to pass a national energy policy in 2009, which could further impact electricity costs. To keep electricity safe, affordable, and reliable, we must convince policymakers to work for energy solutions that are economically, technically, and politically sustainable over the long term. Part of the solution is making energy efficiency a national priority. Federal assistance must be made available to the poorest 20 percent of households, allowing them to make their homes as efficient as possible to lower monthly energy bills.

New transmission facilities must also be fast-tracked, including transmission lines. Renewable generation can provide an excellent supplement to conventional fuels, but not without adequate transmission lines since many renewable energy projects will need to be located away from major population centers.

Funding must also be provided for research and development of technologies such as carbon capture and storage to help reduce power plant emissions. Construction of new nuclear plants must also be accelerated since nuclear has been proven a low-emissions producer of base load generation and can be a valuable tool in meeting growing electricity demand.

You can be assured that Blue Ridge Electric is working diligently to manage cost increases for our consumers. We're also working with policymakers to ensure any new cost is balanced with doing the right thing for the environment while keeping electricity reliable. The energy challenges we face as a nation are immense; but your cooperative is working to be part of the solution and to look out for your best interests and your budget.

An Editorial by
Chief Executive Officer
Doug Johnson



Non-Discrimination Statement

Blue Ridge Electric Membership Corporation is the recipient of Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The USDA prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call toll free (866) 632-9992 (voice) or (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866)377-8642 (relay voice users). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

More News

Tools to Help Manage Your Energy Budget

Many factors are putting pressure on household budgets. Cold weather will put added pressure on energy bills this winter. Blue Ridge Electric wants to help members by informing you of several ways to help ease the financial crunch.

Practice Energy Saving Actions:

Get the most savings out of your efforts by targeting the largest energy users in any household: heating and cooling systems, water heaters, and lighting. Start with simple steps: set your thermostat to the lowest comfortable level; reduce hot water usage and install low-flow shower heads; and replace traditional incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent lights (CFLs). Visit www.BlueRidgeEMC.com to take an energy audit and learn how to better customize your household energy efficiency plan.

Take Advantage of Budget Billing:

This payment plan helps you manage your budget by equalizing your electricity bills during the year. Your estimated usage (which is based on your prior electricity usage) is divided evenly for 12 months. Included in the twelfth month, we will "true up" the difference between your projected and actual usage. If your usage was more than projected, you pay the difference. If it was lower than projected, the credit will be applied to your next payments until it is depleted, reducing your amount owed.

Avoid Late Fees:

Everyone hates late fees but companies must charge them to cover extra administrative costs involved in managing late accounts and to ensure that consumers who pay on time are not charged more to cover these costs.

Steps to Avoid Late Fees:

- Sign up for Bank Draft to help pay on time.
- Call us as soon as possible if you cannot meet your due date. We'll work with you to make payment arrangements so that you can reduce fees and prevent accumulating a large balance.
- Try to avoid becoming subject to disconnection. By the time an account would be on the disconnection list, the bill has not been paid for two months. This is a critical time to call and work out payment arrangements to avoid further fees and keep your service consistent.
- Finally, familiarize yourself with the back of your electric bill for details and reminders on how to avoid late fees.

PURPA Comments and Meeting Notice

Blue Ridge Electric will receive comments and hold a public hearing on Tuesday, March 3, 2009, as part of its consideration and determination process for the four standards set forth in The Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (EISA 2007).

The four standards are: Integrated Resource Planning, Rate Design modifications to Promote Energy Efficiency Investment, Consideration of Smart Grid Investments, and Smart Grid Information.

The hearing will be held from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the cooperative's corporate office at 1216 Blowing Rock Blvd., Lenoir.

A decision to implement each standard will be made on or before December 19, 2009, and will be based on the cooperative's studies and the input received from members. The decisions will be communicated in writing through official notice.

For more information, visit www.BlueRidgeEMC.com or contact Brian Crutchfield, director of sustainable development, at 1-800-451-5474 or by e-mail at bcrutchfield@blueridgeemc.com.

