

Membership MATTERS

Members Only NEWS For Members of Blue Ridge



Be An Informed Energy Consumer

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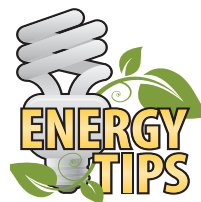
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OFFICE HOURS
8:30 am - 5:00 pm, Monday - Friday
Night deposit available.

Visit us on the web:
www.BlueRidgeEMC.com



The first step to taking a whole house energy efficiency approach is to find out which parts of your house use the most energy. A home energy audit will pinpoint those areas and suggest the most effective measures for cutting your energy costs. You can conduct a simple home energy audit yourself by visiting BlueRidgeEMC.com and clicking on the Energy Tips leaf icon, or you can call an independent energy auditor for a more comprehensive examination.

Welcome to a new way of ensuring you're well informed as an energy consumer and member of Blue Ridge Electric!

You'll now receive this member newsletter, *Membership Matters*, inside each monthly issue of *Carolina Country*, the magazine published by the electric cooperatives of North Carolina. Through *Membership Matters*, we'll continue informing you of important local news that affects you as a member of Blue Ridge Electric: annual membership meetings, director elections, power reliability and customer service updates, and other vital information.

By sending you *Carolina Country*, we're better able to meet member requests for more energy information: ways to make your home more energy efficient that help you control your usage and costs, tips on living "greener," information on renewable energy, and state and national environmental policies. You'll also find more reports on how cooperatives are working to ensure members continue to receive affordable, reliable electricity.

We hope *Carolina Country* helps you to be a more informed energy consumer. And don't forget to check each issue for *Membership Matters* with the news you need as a member of Blue Ridge Electric.

Membership MATTERS



Introducing GreenSmart

Blue Ridge Electric is excited to announce GreenSmart, our new family of energy efficiency programs coming throughout 2009. GreenSmart is our effort to help members implement energy efficiency measures to save energy and control costs while protecting the environment for future generations. Renewables will also be included.

GreenSmart needs you – our member-owners – to be effective. We're asking for your participation in programs we'll be offering throughout the year such as selling discounted energy efficient products like compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) and water heater wrap kits that we'll be offering in our district offices and online. We provide a wealth of energy efficiency advice through our web site at BlueRidgeEMC.com, this newsletter, and now through your new monthly magazine, *Carolina Country*.

The GreenSmart commitment also means we're implementing environmentally friendly technology like "smart meters." These meters automatically report your energy usage to the cooperative without having an employee drive to each location to read the meter on your property. This means we'll reduce the number of vehicles on the road and cut down on pollution and traffic while saving fuel. Eventually, smart meters will also provide members with real time information to help better monitor your own energy usage and control your energy bill.

The GreenSmart effort will also help achieve legislative goals in North Carolina's Renewable Energy and Energy Portfolio Standard (REPS). By 2018, cooperatives like Blue Ridge Electric are required to obtain at least 10 percent of our power from renewable sources and through energy efficiency. While energy efficiency programs offer an effective, low cost way to begin meeting the requirements, Blue Ridge Electric will also be looking to include more renewable energy sources such as solar into our power supply.

The family of GreenSmart programs offers members opportunities to participate in energy efficiency programs, control their energy costs, and help ensure we have a healthy environment for future generations. Working together, Blue Ridge Electric and our members can make a world of difference.



Smart Solutions for Our Energy Future

The dust has settled from the fall election, and this month we turn our eyes to Washington, D.C., as Barack Obama takes office as the 44th president of the United States. A severe economic recession remains the major focus for elected officials, but the Obama Administration also promises an increased focus on national energy policy. As all of us paying electric and energy bills every month can attest, the two go hand-in-hand. It is crucial that any energy policy discussed in Washington be balanced with the cost impact for consumers.

Through the nationwide grassroots awareness campaign called "Our Energy, Our Future™," cooperative consumers all across the country have contacted their elected officials with three critical energy policy questions focused on capacity, technology, and affordability. With a new president and a new Congress taking office, electric cooperatives will need to continue pressing for answers and helping elected officials understand the need to ensure consumers have affordable, adequate electricity while crafting environmental legislation.

On a daily basis, Blue Ridge works hard to provide you with safe, affordable, and reliable electricity. We believe you deserve superior electric service so that you can rely on all of its benefits at your home or business.

Yet, the answers on how to balance affordability while ensuring adequate supply and effective environmental policy from a nationwide, long-term perspective won't be simple for policy makers for a variety of reasons. Electricity use across the United States is steadily climbing, we are experiencing high costs for construction materials, and there is a lot of uncertainty about climate change goals. We expect to see a global initiative place strict limits on carbon dioxide emitted by power plants. Until there is more certainty about our national carbon emissions policy,

we can expect utilities to be hesitant about investing in new base load coal generation. We also need a clearer national policy on the development of nuclear power plants which, once constructed, emit no carbon dioxide or other air pollutants.

There's no single answer on how to keep power flowing and electric bills affordable but the electric utility industry believes it will take a variety of new generation resources and technologies to ensure reliable, affordable electricity in the coming years. We know our nation must invest in renewable energy, clean coal technology, nuclear power, an updated transmission grid, and broad improvements in energy efficiency.

Of course, implementing all of this on a large scale will require a massive investment of government resources, private investment and strong leadership. As consumer advocates and industry leaders, we will be very involved with our lawmakers to provide expertise on what strategies are affordable, sustainable, and technologically feasible.

As cooperatives who are consumer advocates of the members we serve, we believe all of this must be grounded in goals and public policy that puts consumers first. You can help in this effort and make an impact by telling members of Congress your story — why affordable electricity is important to you and your family. Tens of thousands of electric cooperative members have done so already, and as a result cooperatives have sent more than 1.5 million messages to Congress, calling attention to our nation's impending electricity crisis.

For a quick e-mail link giving you a way to easily contact your elected officials, please visit our web site at BlueRidgeEMC.com. Or visit the web site created by electric cooperatives for this purpose at OurEnergy.coop. Please help us by making your voice heard in Washington and help guide our policymakers toward a GreenSmart energy future!

An Editorial by Chief Executive Officer Doug Johnson



New Energy Usage Tool

To help members better track their energy usage, you'll soon see a new 12-month energy usage graph on your bill. Many of you asked for this feature to be added back to the bill, and we're pleased to be bringing back this tool that helps you see — at a glance — information about your electricity consumption. We hope this new tool helps you better track any changes in your household's electricity usage and also helps you manage your energy costs.



More News

Board to Appoint Nominating Committee

At their January board meeting, the Board of Directors will appoint a Nominating Committee consisting of 12 members who will select candidates to fill four available board seats this year.

Nominating Committee members may not be employees, agents, officers, directors, close relatives, or known candidates to become directors. The committee should have adequate representation reflecting the number of directors from each district, except one member representing the membership-at-large who must be of the minority membership and may be a resident of any district.

The committee will meet February 26 to develop the slate of board candidates for available seats. A list of the candidates will be posted in each Blue Ridge Electric office the week after the February 26 meeting of the Board of Directors.

Additionally, nominations by petition must be made at least 95 days prior to the 2009 Annual Membership Meeting on June 13. Petitions must be signed by 15 or more members in good standing, with each signing his or her name as it appears on their electric service bill. Deadline for petitions is Tuesday, March 10. Petitions will be posted in each Blue Ridge Electric office beside the list of nominees from the Nominating Committee.

Information about board nominees will be sent to each member next May.

The following are qualifications to serve as a director of Blue Ridge Electric:

- Must be receiving electric service from Blue Ridge Electric at their primary residence
- Must not be a close relative of an incumbent director or of an employee of the cooperative
- Membership must not have been suspended at any time during the 12 months preceding the annual meeting
- Must be at least 18 years old
- Must not be employed by or in a position to financially gain from a competing enterprise of the cooperative or its subsidiary, or a business selling electric energy or supplies to the cooperative
- The Director-at-Large seat is reserved to represent the minority membership of the cooperative. Only African American, Native American, Asian, or Hispanic members are eligible for this seat.
- Must not have been employed with the cooperative for the previous six years if a nominee is a former cooperative employee.



TEAMSTS

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.