

Membership MATTERS

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Members Only NEWS For Members of Blue Ridge

Available Scholarships from Blue Ridge Electric

As part of our support of local communities, Blue Ridge Electric annually awards scholarships and youth leadership opportunities to high school seniors and adults returning to college who live in the cooperative's service territory.

This year, scholarships worth \$14,800 will be awarded based on financial need, community activity, school performance and activities, and personal interviews. For high school seniors seeking a bachelor's degree, five \$2,000 **Goodman-Hurt** scholarships are available; and for high school seniors or adults returning to college seeking a two-year degree, five \$800 **Goodman-Hurt** technical/vocational scholarships are available. An additional \$800 **Charles Suddreth** scholarship is available to a Caldwell County resident seeking a two-year degree. Scholarship applications are due by **March 31**.

The **Washington Youth Tour** is an educational week-long trip to Washington, D.C. and may be awarded to four rising seniors in the cooperative's service area. Winners will meet and talk with Congressional leaders, visit historic sites, and learn about the cooperative way of doing business. They are also eligible for college scholarships. Applications are due **March 15**.

Applications are available from high school guidance counselors, local community colleges or online at BlueRidgeEMC.com under "In the Community."



Most homes never quite shut down for the night. Dark rooms are typically spotted with tiny red and green lights of appliances and the glow of digital clocks. These "sleeping" appliances, sometimes called "vampire" electronics, cost US consumers more than \$3 billion every year and, for the average homeowner, can add 20 percent to monthly electric bills. To trim this excess energy use, turn off or unplug those vampires by using power strips.

Source: Scott Gates writes on technology and energy efficiency for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.



Members Helping Members: Foundation Presents Grants

Through the power of members joining together through Operation Round Up® as well as contributions from the cooperative's heating fuels subsidiary, Blue Ridge Energies, 11 local organizations were awarded grants totaling \$29,133 to fund programs that improve the quality of life in our service area. The grants were awarded in December by the Blue Ridge Electric Members Foundation, with grant selections made by a volunteer committee of cooperative members.

Through Operation Round Up, Blue Ridge members voluntarily choose to have their monthly electric bills rounded up to the next-highest dollar amount. The difference between the two figures – from a penny to a maximum of 99 cents – is the members' monthly tax-deductible gift.

The Blue Ridge Electric Members Foundation was created in 2006 by the cooperative to help members join together to help local communities. The Foundation helps worthy causes in Alleghany, Ashe, Caldwell and Watauga districts, where Blue Ridge Electric serves some 72,000 members. One grant was also awarded this year to a Catawba County agency due to partial funding of the Foundation by Blue Ridge Energies. In addition to communities served by Blue Ridge Electric, Blue Ridge Energies also serves Catawba County.

The Foundation also funds crisis assistance to help Blue Ridge Electric members in need of help to pay their electric bill and make weatherization efforts. More than \$34,000 was given in 2008 to deserving households. While funded by the Foundation, crisis assistance is determined by local helping agencies such as the Department of Social Services and W.A.M.Y. (Watauga, Avery, Mitchell, and Yancy County Assistance Program) which can best evaluate need and qualifications.



Local groups in the Blue Ridge service area who would like to apply for a Members Foundation grant should visit the "In the Community" tab of BlueRidgeEMC.com or call Patty Wheeler, foundation manager, at (800) 451-5474, extension 4207.

(See inside for a complete listing of grant recipients)

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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

An Editorial by Chief Executive Officer Doug Johnson



GreenSmart: A Key Partnership

We're excited to introduce GreenSmart, your cooperative's new family of energy efficiency programs we'll be offering to members in 2009, starting with a major initiative to replace traditional light bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs). (See the sidebar and your Carolina Country cover wrap for more details on our new CFL program.)

It's the right time for an effort like GreenSmart. It's the right time for Blue Ridge Electric to partner with our members to help protect our environment for future generations and control costs right now through energy efficiency efforts.

As you're well aware, consumers are bombarded with messages urging them to "Go Green." Eco-consciousness is a growing trend, and it's easy to get swept up in the green revolution and the endless choices of paper versus plastic, hybrid vehicles, organic foods, energy-saving tips and alternative fuels.

Some also believe we've reached a critical point and most of us understand that efforts to save energy, affect climate change, and protect the environment is up to each one of us.

While we at Blue Ridge Electric are balancing these efforts with ensuring you continue to receive affordable, reliable electricity, we also realize environmental change and energy efficiency must begin at home, in our own communities.

We are working to do our part. In staying true to our mission of keeping energy costs as low as possible for our members, we're working to help our members be more energy-efficient while protecting the environment for future generations.

That's why we're excited about the family of energy efficiency programs, services and efforts that we'll be offering to members this year and beyond. GreenSmart will not only demonstrate our commitment to energy efficiency, the environment, and our members, it will also offer tangible ways to promote positive change — one small step at a time.

The key to success, however, lies in a true partnership between Blue Ridge Electric and you, the member. After all, we, as consumers of energy, must all do our part by making our homes and businesses more energy efficient in every way possible. By working together we can make a much larger impact than any one of us working alone in this effort.

And one of the best parts about GreenSmart is that as a cooperative, we'll be offering products like the CFLs at prices well below retail. So, in addition to saving money on your energy bill, you'll also be saving on the items you purchase to help you become more energy efficient.

We invite you to live GreenSmart with us. Start by visiting your local Blue Ridge Electric office and taking advantage of our low prices on CFLs. I also want to urge you to change out every incandescent light bulb in your home or business. Enjoy the savings — now and on your future electric bills. Small steps can add up to make a big difference. If we each do our part, we can make a world of difference.

CFLs: Save by Buying at Your Local Blue Ridge Office

You may be aware that by changing your traditional light bulbs to CFLs you can save on your electric bill. CFLs use 75 percent less electricity and as an added bonus they last up to 10 times longer than incandescent bulbs.

But did you know that you can save even more money by buying your CFLs at your local Blue Ridge Electric district office? We're now offering discount pricing on CFLs to members to help you save on both your electric bill and your CFL bulb purchases. We hope our discount CFL GreenSmart program helps you change out every incandescent or traditional light bulb in your home!

Start experiencing the savings today by purchasing your CFLs at your local Blue Ridge office.

More News

Members Foundation Grant Recipients

Caldwell County

Adult Life Programs, Inc.,	\$4,000	to build a patio area for disabled adults
Caldwell County Health Department	\$2,533	furnishings for the Patient Counsel Room
Helping Hands Clinic	\$4,000	assist in purchase of "GAP" medications that do not have a generic option

Catawba County

Rape Crisis Center of Catawba County	\$2,000	to provide educational materials
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Watauga County

High Country Caregiver Foundation	\$500	allows unpaid family caregivers to have a break from their care giving duties
Relatives as Parents	\$1,500	support/resources for relatives serving in the caregiver role to a minor child
Hospitality House	\$5,000	capital campaign to build a new facility
Blazing Saddles	\$1,000	materials to build specially-adapted stands for the therapeutic horse riding program

Ashe County

Ashe Sharing Center	\$3,000	food for qualifying families
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Alleghany County

Alleghany Wellness Center	\$1,600	200 helmets and educational materials for youth using the new skate park
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Multiple County Projects

Parent to Parent Family Support Network	\$1,500	support for families with special needs children hospitalized in Winston-Salem
Rainbow Center (High Country Academy)	\$2,500	scholarships, computers, uniforms, transportation costs, and emergency funds for families in the Blue Ridge service area



A complete financial report for the Blue Ridge Electric Members Foundation is available at BlueRidgeEMC.com or by calling Patty Wheeler, foundation manager, at (800) 451-5474, extension 4207.

February 2009 Construction Report

All scheduled projects were completed by the end of 2008, including the following final, end-of-year projects in each district:

Caldwell District: A system improvement project off Grace Chapel Road in the Gunpowder area to improve reliability and increase capacity. Also completed was a conductor replacement on Highway 90 near Old Johns River Road to improve reliability.

Watauga Districts: A system improvement project off Linville Creek Road to improve reliability and increase capacity.

Ashe District: A system improvement project in the Beaver Creek School Road in the Baldwin area to improve reliability and increase capacity. Additionally, a system improvement project off Long Branch Road in the Lansing area to improve reliability and increase capacity.

Alleghany District: A system improvement off Pine Swamp Road in the Sparta area to improve reliability and increase capacity.