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Pickens
P.O. Box 277
734 West Main St.
Pickens, SC 29671

Oconee
P.O. Box 329
2328 Sandifer Blvd.
Highway 123
Westminster, SC 29693

Mission Statement
Blue Ridge will be a competitive, quality provider of energy and other services, maintaining its history of integrity and adapting to the challenges of a changing world. While exercising leadership in the community, the organization's focus will be on exceeding customer expectations.

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

A beneficial labor study

SOME MONTHS AGO in this report, I provided an update on the significant commercial and industrial growth that



was occurring on the Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative system. That trend is continuing, with about a dozen large electrical loads now in various stages of progress toward bringing their operations on line.

Furthermore, a good number of other business prospects are currently eyeing this region for potential plant locations. I think it's likely that all of these firms would have as their top priority the hiring of quality individuals to join their respective employee teams.

Blue Ridge endeavors to play a part in efforts to strengthen our community's workforce. For example, we're very supportive of both Tri-County Tech and Greenville Tech. Those schools are doing a wonderful job of equipping local students with the particular skills needed to serve these new industries.

Each of S.C.'s 46 counties

Another initiative that has our cooperative's backing is a comprehensive labor study that's underway in each of South Carolina's 46 counties. The S.C. Power Team, an economic-development organization formed by the state's 20 electric cooperatives and Santee Cooper, is underwriting this survey. Site Selection Group (SSG), a leading economic-research firm, has been hired by the Power Team to conduct the study. Please view the SSG ad found elsewhere in this magazine.

SSG isn't relying on just traditional third-party data sources. Their representatives also want to hear

directly from members of the workforce. They'll be gathering responses from local residents about their skills, training, current jobs, and interest in certain career paths. The strictly confidential individual survey can be found at scpowerteam.com/workforce, and requires only about five minutes to complete. I encourage you to check it out.

\$500 VISA gift card

The Power Team and SSG are planning to leave the survey open at least through the end of the summer. Also, participants can elect to be entered into a drawing for a \$500 VISA gift card at the conclusion of the study.

I would appreciate your consideration and support of this beneficial undertaking. If you would like further information, please contact either Chris Shwinden (cshwinden@siteselectiongroup.com) or Carrie Garcia (cgarcia@siteselectiongroup.com). Blue Ridge is also providing the survey link on members' monthly power invoices. In addition, members can link onto the survey at either the cooperative's website or on Facebook. You could very well be doing yourself a favor with your participation in this study. I urge you to join this effort.



Charles E. Dalton
President and CEO



AMANDA MACHEN

Co-op solar farm begins production

SINCE LATE 2016, representatives of your co-op have shared information with you regarding our community solar initiative. Blue Ridge and South Carolina's 19 other cooperatives are in the process of creating the largest network of community solar installations in the state. With construction having been completed in July, members can view Phase 1 of the Blue Ridge Community Solar Farm on a site adjacent to Chastain Road Elementary School and the Pickens County Career and Technology Center. The farm is visible from U.S. Highway 123.

"Community solar is a good fit for both electric cooperatives and our members," says President and CEO Charles Dalton. "There are co-op members who desire the benefits of solar power, but don't want the inconvenience of constructing and maintaining solar panels on their homes. We've done the work, so that our members can have access to a renewable resource, if they choose to do so."

Zach Hinton, vice president of economic development and

Visible from Hwy. 123 with the Pickens County Career and Technology Center in the background, Blue Ridge Electric Co-op's first solar farm is completed and is now producing renewable energy that's being sold to its subscribers.

government relations, has been involved with the project since its beginning. "We're excited about finishing this first phase. There are 31 members who've purchased blocks of power in the solar farm. With testing almost complete, Blue Ridge will start applying credits to these members beginning in late August or early September."

Construction of the Phase 2 (Oconee County) version of the community solar farm project will get underway in September. Completion of this project, combined with Phase 1, will offer our co-op members a total of 250,000 watts of renewable energy.

Thirty-four Blue Ridge members have signed up to buy blocks of solar power to be produced by the Oconee community installation; however, a few blocks remain unsold. If you have an interest in renewable energy and would like to learn more, please contact Tim Mays at (864) 647-6647.



Get Connected with Member Connections

STAY IN TOUCH with your electric cooperative through *Member Connections*—A Monthly eNewsletter from Blue Ridge Electric Co-op. We'll bring you the latest news once each month. Sign-up is simple.

1. Go to blueridge.coop and click on the newsletter signup at the top of the page or scan this code
2. Complete registration with email address and name



There will be news, features and lots of information provided monthly to you on your phone, iPad or computer. Sign up today!

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