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**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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## Member-friendly programs



**AS I'M PREPARING** this month's report, about two-thirds of the continental U.S., including our own region, has now endured 10 straight days of below-normal temperatures. Actually, "**way-below-normal temperatures**" would be a more-accurate description. That

many consecutive days of truly frigid weather are a rare occurrence in our Southern part of the world.

Such a prolonged cold snap will inevitably produce higher electric bills for many Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative members. That, unfortunately, is an unavoidable outcome. In the face of extremely low outdoor-thermometer readings, a home's HVAC system has to put in some extra-hard work to keep the living space comfortable.

**On the blink**

I daresay some of our members might have been holding their breath, hoping their heating unit wouldn't go on the blink during the deep chill. If you suspect your system could be on its last leg, I have some good news for you. Blue Ridge has a heat-pump loan program that, through the years, has assisted thousands of co-op households.

A member can obtain a low-interest (7.5 percent) loan directly from the cooperative to finance the installation of a new high-efficiency electric heat pump. In addition, our member service team has a long list of certified area

HVAC dealers from which to choose for performing this replacement. What's more, the loan payments can be included on the member's monthly power bill.

Another home appliance that can undergo stress because of cold weather is the water heater. I'm pleased to note that Blue Ridge can also help out in that regard. If your water-heating unit is in need of a change-out, the co-op offers a cash rebate to help support that

undertaking. Our water-heater rebate offering is now barely four years old, but more than 2,000 members have already taken advantage of it.



**Just the ticket**

A new, high-efficiency electric water heater and/or heat pump might be just the ticket for you and your family. I encourage you to call, email, or visit your local Blue Ridge office for more information about either or both of these member-friendly programs.

If I've learned anything during my 35 years of association with Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative, it's that our

entire workforce is dedicated to serving our members well. That commitment to quality certainly extends to the administration of the two programs I've just discussed in this month's report. In these and all other aspects of our business, we're here for you.

**JIM LOVINGGOOD**  
 President and CEO

# Combat winter bills and add comfort to your home

**SOUTHERN WINTERS CAN** be unusually frigid some years. We have certainly experienced chilly temperatures along with snow and a little ice already this winter.

One of the biggest users of energy in your home during these times is your heating system. At Blue Ridge we feel so strongly about the impact an efficient heat pump can have on your winter heating bill that we'll finance the purchase of a new unit. With approved credit, a Blue Ridge dealer can install a high efficiency heat pump in your home, and the payment will be added to your bill. Blue Ridge members can pick up an application at either co-op office or find one online at [blueridge.coop](http://blueridge.coop). We are YOUR co-op and we're here to help.



AMANDA MACHEN

Energy advisor, Steven Hoxit, attests to the difference an efficient heating system can make, "High bills in the winter are usually related to an old heating system or poor insulation. If these issues are resolved, bills are much more manageable when the temperatures drop below 10 degrees as they have this winter."

## Apply by June 1 for WIRE scholarship

**WOMEN WORKING TO** earn college degrees can apply by June 1 for financial assistance through the 2018 WIRE Jenny Ballard Opportunity Scholarship.

The annual scholarship provides a one-time \$2,500 award to a woman who is an electric cooperative member, who has been out of school for several years and who is ready to complete her education.

Application forms are now available for the 2018 WIRE scholarship. The program is open to women who may not have been able to attend college after high school but now want to further their education. WIRE (Women Involved in Rural Electrification, a community service organization affiliated with the electric co-ops in South Carolina) awards the scholarship based on financial need and personal goals.

Applications are available here at Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative or by download from [SCLiving.coop](http://SCLiving.coop).

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