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**MISSION STATEMENT**  
 Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative will operate as a competitive provider of energy services and a partner with local communities, with a focus on safety, service and integrity.

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This organization is an  
 equal-opportunity provider.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

## The particulars of field design



**EACH MONTH**, I receive a report from every co-op department head. These reports are essential, in that they provide accurate summaries of the various departmental groups' work activities for the previous month.

For an organization like Blue Ridge to succeed, all our individual sectors and their respective work actions must operate in harmony with one another. I believe we're seeing that coordination because I know the cooperative is delivering a high level of service to our members. Safety is our number-one priority, but member service is close behind.

### Functioning effectively

I could devote this article to any number of our workforce units that enable the cooperative to function effectively. However, I've decided this month to spotlight the employee team that makes up our field design group, which is housed within the co-op's engineering department.

The title of field design technician is quite descriptive because these individuals carry out most of their work in the field. They meet with members on site to discuss what might be involved in extending a new electrical service to their premises or perhaps upgrading their service. A large body of their work includes drawing up specs for new or improved power-distribution facilities, as outlined in the cooperative's four-year Engineering Work Plan.

### Designated for replacement

In addition to their staking responsibilities, these technicians obtain hundreds of right-of-way easement documents each year from members and other

**I know the cooperative is delivering a high level of service to our members.**

landowners. These easements are then forwarded to the co-op's member services group to be recorded at local county courthouses. Our field design folks also work with our operations department to schedule testing of the cooperative's wood utility poles. Poles found to be nearing the end of their useful life are designated for replacement. For the 12 months of 2020, these field design technicians staked about 3,600 construction jobs and executed nearly 700 right-of-way easements. They also prepared service orders for more than 900 poles to be changed out.

Their efforts produce the benefits of better service reliability for our members and a safer environment for both members and employees alike. Needless to say, these technicians represent an important feature of our Blue Ridge business plan. Like their fellow employees in our other working groups, their contributions are critical to the progress of the cooperative's operation.

As Blue Ridge is now embarking upon another new year, it's reassuring for me to know I have a team of professionals standing with me. We're looking forward to 2021 and the further opportunities it will offer for your cooperative to keep supplying you with quality service.

**JIM LOVINGGOOD**  
 President and CEO



AMANDA KEASLER

## Is an electric vehicle in your future?

2021 IS BEING TOUTED as the year of the electric vehicle with a growing number of car manufacturers offering SUVs, sedans, hatchbacks and pick-up trucks. Today's EVs have improved considerably over the past few years and their benefits have grown as well. They are cleaner for the environment and save on fuel and maintenance costs. Most importantly, they can go much further on a single charge with impressive speed and performance.

Blue Ridge purchased a Nissan Leaf in 2011. On a full charge the Leaf would travel almost 100 miles. This year, the co-op purchased a new Chevy Bolt with a range of 259 miles. Employee Amy Childress drives the vehicle almost daily and couldn't be more pleased.

"Electric vehicles have come a long way in the past nine years," says Childress. "This second generation EV for me brings a level of confidence I didn't have before. The driving performance

◀ The Chevy Bolt can travel 259 miles on a single charge. Co-op members can purchase a charger for their residence and receive a rebate from Blue Ridge.

of the Bolt is comparable to any full-size automobile, and it's comfortable and spacious inside. If it matches your lifestyle, it's a perfect driving solution."

Driving an EV means you'll have to plug in. More locations with charging stations are being added for those who need an option while traveling long distances. However, the most convenient way to charge your vehicle is right at home.

Right now, Blue Ridge is offering a \$500 rebate to any member that purchases and installs a ChargePoint Home Flex Level 2 charging station at their residence. This charger can be purchased from Amazon for \$649. The rebate is available until December 31.

If you want more information or to view the rebate agreement, visit the Energy Services section at [blueridge.coop](http://blueridge.coop).

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**New year, new ways to save**

**IS SAVING MONEY** on your list of 2021 new year's resolutions? You can go ahead and check that one off, because Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative gives you great ways to save on products, entertainment, travel and healthcare.

The Co-op Connections card and mobile app is a money-saving tool that connects you with discounts at home and anywhere you go on everything from hotel stays to prescription drugs. You can earn up to 20% cash back at thousands of online retailers like Amazon.com and Walmart.com. Get the best deals on lodging, flights, car rentals and theme parks. Experience savings on restaurants, golf, automotive and movies with neighborhood and national retailers. You can even save on concerts, sporting events and theater tickets.

The pharmacy discount has been widely used by members of Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative, resulting in savings of over

\$58,000 on prescriptions in 2020 alone. All-time savings total almost \$4,000,000. Save 10% to 85% on most prescriptions at over 60,000 pharmacies including CVS, Walgreens, Target and many more. Just present your card to save an average of 46% at locations nationwide.

You can also save on hearing aids, lab testing, dental, vision and diabetic needs. Even if you have insurance, present both cards at the pharmacy to receive the lowest price, immediate family included.

If you don't already have a card, you can print one out from the website. The cutting-edge mobile app is compatible with Androids, iPhones and iPads. Just download the Co-op Connections app and take the discounts with you on the go. It will even locate the deals nearest you.

Visit [connections.coop](http://connections.coop) to find out more and connect to a card that will help you save and live healthier every day, all year long.