



[www.blueridge.coop](http://www.blueridge.coop)

**FOR ALL YOUR  
 CUSTOMER SERVICE NEEDS**  
 Call Toll-Free (800) 240-3400

**AUTOMATED OUTAGE REPORTING**  
 1-888-BLUERIDGE

**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 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.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
 Joel Spencer Dalton, Jr., *Chairman*  
 Len D. Talley, *Vice-Chairman*  
 Franklin M. Looper, Jr., *Secretary*  
 J. Mendel Stone, *Treasurer*  
 Ben G. Bolt  
 Joel R. Davis  
 Jimmy Lee Dodgens  
 William G. Elrod  
 Kenneth G. Southerlin

**PRESIDENT AND CHIEF  
 EXECUTIVE OFFICER**  
 Jim Lovinggood

This organization is an equal-opportunity provider.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

## Right-of-way maintenance a major line item



**IN MY AUGUST REPORT** to you, I tackled the issue of overhead power lines versus underground cable. The purpose of this month's article isn't to cover some of the same "ground." Instead, I want to address the challenge of service reliability as it

relates to the thousands of miles of overhead facilities on the Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative system.

Those poles and wires cross a service territory that's largely mountainous and rural. Each of these two features represents a test to our mission of delivering dependable electricity. On top of that, the five counties we serve are heavily wooded. That's important because an estimated 99% of the cooperative's outages are caused by either trees or tree limbs coming into contact with energized power lines. Most often, those trees are outside the boundaries of our right-of-way corridor.

Now, I count myself among those folks who truly love trees. The many varied tree species that grow here add so much to the scenic beauty that characterizes our Upstate region. Local residents and visitors alike find they enjoy the loveliness, tranquility and other attributes that our abundant forested areas have to offer.

### An inescapable reality

There is, however, another side to that coin. In the electric-distribution business, we're faced with an inescapable reality: Trees and power lines simply do not mix. The right-of-way that's home to the cooperative's 7,100 miles of power lines has to be cleared of trees and other undergrowth on a regular cycle. Otherwise, virtually all 69,000 Blue Ridge members would be plagued with unrelentingly poor service. What's more,

our crews would spend so much of their time chasing outages that their other responsibilities would be compromised.

Consequently, right-of-way maintenance is a major line item in the cooperative's annual budget. At any one time, we have multiple crews at work on our system. A good portion of this vegetation management is accomplished utilizing mechanical means. This involves personnel operating bush-hogs and chainsaws and using bush axes.

### Licensed, professional workers

For a couple of decades now, Blue Ridge also has employed two types of herbicides to control tree and other plant growth within portions of the right-of-way. Our experience with both herbicides has been satisfactory. The cooperative's licensed, professional workers apply the doctor-approved herbicides only during the growing season. These individuals are extra careful to avoid herbicide contact with any fruit trees, crops or ornamental plants located on a member's property. In addition, these applications have proven to be harmless to both livestock and animals in the wild. Bottom line: We have tried-and-true confidence in the safety of these herbicide treatments. In similar fashion, other utilities, as well as agencies such as the South Carolina Department of Transportation, also use herbicides.

Our desire to provide quality service to our members drives essentially everything we do as representatives of your Blue Ridge organization. The cooperative's vegetation-maintenance program is

**JIM LOVINGGOOD**  
 President and CEO



## We have a new look

Welcome to the new Blue Ridge Co-op Member Service Portal. It has all the same features as My Energy Online along with a Quick Pay option. This allows you to pay your account from the home page without using your login—a quick option if you're away from home.

Next time you need to connect or disconnect service, report an outage, or need usage or bill information on your account visit [blueridge.coop](http://blueridge.coop) and log in to the Customer Service Portal. If you have questions or need a representative, call us at (800) 240-3400. We're your electric cooperative, bringing you power and more.

## Is your information current?

**IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE** that it will be cold soon and there's always a chance that winter storms will affect our system. One way you can help us help you is by ensuring that we have your most up-to-date phone number and email address.

Current contact information helps speed up power restoration and provides you with updated reports quickly. When

you associate your phone number and email address with alerts and reminders, there are several types of notifications you can receive, including outage information and the status of your bill payment.

These are just a few of the things we can help you with when we have your most current information. To update your contacts, visit [blueridge.coop](http://blueridge.coop), click the "manage account" box, then select "Account Profile" under the Account tab. This information can also be added or

changed on the Blue Ridge app by selecting "My Account" and then "Account Profile." If you have questions, please give us a call at (800) 240-3400.

## Changes effective Oct. 1

All classes of large power accounts will have a \$25 increase in the basic facilities charge and a 4.41% increase in the Peak KW charge.

Schedule EC/Residential Service accounts will be moved to Schedule R/Residential Service.

# Keeping You in Touch Rain or Shine!

With the Blue Ridge Mobile app, you can report and access outage information anytime day or night.

The Blue Ridge Mobile app from Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative is free and gives you quick access to your account whenever you need it!




The Blue Ridge Mobile app also allows you to:

- ◆ make bill payments
- ◆ check on monthly energy usage
- ◆ review bills and payment history
- ◆ set up payment reminders
- ◆ check account balance

Download your FREE Blue Ridge Mobile app on all your smart devices at the App Store or Google Play.






A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

[blueridge.coop](http://blueridge.coop)

1-800-240-3400

