



**Berkeley Electric
Cooperative**
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

TO REPORT OUTAGES
 Call: 1-888-253-4232

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MIKE FULLER
 President & CEO

A year of growth

WITH ANOTHER BUSY YEAR behind us, I want to share some exciting developments and key projects designed to serve our growing membership that were discussed during our Annual Meeting.

Last year, we focused heavily on making the most of the internal expertise we have here at the co-op. This included cross-training that led to a permanent leadership switch between departments. Amy Langdon and Bryan Reece switched their roles as vice presidents of Member Service and Information Technology. This move provides a fresh perspective and better departmental flow, as their roles are inherently connected.

We also welcomed a familiar face back to the leadership team. Tony Simmons, a long-time employee who briefly retired, has rejoined us as the vice president of Strategy and Risk Management. Tony's return, coupled with his 40-plus years of experience, is a huge benefit to the co-op, helping us align all departments with our strategies and goals.

Innovation to empower our members

We are constantly looking for ways to use new technology, including artificial intelligence (AI), to benefit you, our members.

One of the most impactful new tools we've rolled out is Bidgely, an energy usage management tool integrated directly into our Smart Hub application. While we could always tell you your total monthly usage, Bidgely uses an algorithm to identify and break down the energy use of specific appliances such as your refrigerator, hot water heater, and HVAC use. This is a game-changer for high usage issues and energy audits, giving you the power to understand and manage your energy use without having to download new software.

Community investment and outreach

It should be no secret that our commitment to the community goes beyond poles and wires. Through a grant of more than \$250,000 from Google, we partnered with Hope Repair and Pointe North Church to launch an energy efficiency program. This program is specifically designed to help low-income members with poor indoor air quality and potentially dangerous space heaters in their homes. We are installing highly efficient mini-split heat pumps, which drastically reduce utility costs and improve the residents' quality of life. This partnership not only stabilizes the local grid but best of all, there is absolutely no charge to the member for this critical work.

Protecting our system

Starting this month, we will launch a new maintenance program focused on our underground system. Given that we now have more underground lines than overhead, this is essential for resiliency and safety. This program involves clearing a 10-foot space around the opening door of the electrical equipment box, 15-feet above and a 4-foot space around the other sides.

Although we already clear around boxes as needed, this systematic approach to underground safety and reliability is needed to make sure we are not outpaced by the growth of our system. It will also ensure our crews have adequate room to work during routine maintenance and, crucially, speed up restoration times after storms.

We appreciate your support and look forward to another year of finding new and innovative ways to serve our members.

Sincerely,

Ready for an experience you won't forget?

Your co-op has two amazing trips planned this summer. Juniors: Apply for the Washington Youth Tour. Sophomores: Apply for the Cooperative Youth Summit.

Juniors: Experience Washington, D.C., with hundreds of students from across South Carolina and the country, meeting lawmakers and touring all the sights. Your electric co-op will cover your round-trip plane ticket, tours and meals. In other words, it's all free!

Sophomores: Experience South Carolina's capital like never before. Tour the Statehouse, meet lawmakers and see how co-ops are preparing for our state's energy future. Plus, there's plenty of fun with visits to popular Columbia attractions like the South Carolina State Museum. Your electric co-op will cover all your expenses.

We've made it easy to apply for either FREE trip. Apply by February 18, 2026.



Washington Youth Tour: June 14-19, 2026



Cooperative Youth Summit: July 13-16, 2026



Applications available: berkeleyelectric.coop/youth-tour
Application deadline: February 18, 2026



**Berkeley Electric
Cooperative**
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Robert Vandross
Trustee, District 1

Investing in future generations

Students and teachers—it's time to apply!

IT'S THE START of a new year, and the perfect time for your students to make resolutions that will help improve their future. Instead of just aiming for better grades, now is the time for them to make plans to seek out the opportunities like the scholarships and leadership trips offered by their local electric cooperative. Resolving to apply now is a sure step toward securing funding and experience that will help light the way to a brighter future.

Washington Youth Tour and Cooperative Youth Summit

Deadline Feb. 18

Washington Youth Tour is an extraordinary opportunity for high school juniors to experience the nation's capital. Every year, Berkeley Electric sponsors local students to join peers from across the country on this weeklong journey. Participants not only tour iconic landmarks like the U.S. Capitol but also engage in leadership workshops and meet with lawmakers to discuss issues that matter to them.

Another exciting leadership experience is Cooperative Youth Summit. Held in Columbia, this trip is available to high school sophomores. Both trips are free of charge as well as an investment in cultivating future leaders. Students can apply online at berkeleyelectric.coop.

Educational grants

Deadline March 12

The Bright Ideas Educational Grants program supports teachers by funding creative classroom

projects. We know it can be challenging for educators to find funding when trying to bring unique learning experiences to their students. Through this program, Berkeley Electric provides up to \$1,500 grants to those teachers who go above and beyond to engage their students in meaningful ways. Whether it's a problem-solving STEM project or an art initiative that fosters creativity, these grants help turn ambitious ideas into reality.

These grants have funded robotics kits, environmental science experiments and even innovative history projects that bring the past to life. By giving teachers the tools they need, we're enriching the educational experience for thousands of students across our service area.

Scholarships

Deadline March 27

Our Operation Round Up Trust Scholarship program provides scholarships to deserving students seeking to further their education. The scholarships are funded by the generosity of Berkeley Electric members who round up their monthly bills to the nearest dollar.

Each of the ten \$2,500 scholarships will help ease the financial burden for families and open doors for graduating seniors that might otherwise be out of reach.

Operation Round Up is a true community effort. Every small contribution from our members adds up to create life-changing opportunities for students. Knowing that Berkeley Electric played a role in helping them achieve those dreams is incredibly rewarding.

Investing in the future is a cornerstone of any thriving community, and at Berkeley Electric Cooperative, we take our responsibility to heart. We believe that by empowering students and educators, we're building a brighter future for everyone. These programs are just a few ways we live out the cooperative principle of "concern for community."

Sincerely,

Robert Vandross
Trustee, District 1

BERKELEY AT-A-GLANCE	SEPT. 2024	SEPT. 2025
Total kWh sold	422,537,422	459,693,728
No. meters served	131,444	136,962
Avg. residential kWh/meter	1,146	1,098
Avg. residential bill/meter	\$175.77	\$185.11
Miles of line	6471	6604
Avg. daily high temperature	85	85
Avg. daily low temperature	69	67



MICAH PONCE

Honoring our veterans

BERKELEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE recently had the honor of hosting a Quilts of Honor presentation at its Moncks Corner headquarters. Each Quilt of Valor® is a quality, handmade quilt that is officially recorded and then awarded to a service member or veteran who has been touched by war. Twelve veterans, including several Berkeley Electric members, received a quilt crafted by the Berkeley Modern Quilt Guild.

Please join us in thanking all veterans for their courage and sacrifices with gratitude and respect. To view photos from the event, visit the "Community Events 2025" gallery at berkeleyelectric.smugmug.com.

Smarthub security upgrade

With cyber threats evolving and becoming more sophisticated, ensuring the security of your accounts and personal information is more critical than ever. Berkeley Electric is now offering an added layer of security for your Smarthub account by using two-factor authentication.

Two-Factor Authentication is a powerful tool for securing online accounts. By requiring multiple forms of verification, it adds layers of security, making it much more challenging for unauthorized individuals to gain access.

Simply sign up and choose your method of notification to start receiving a unique passcode that will allow you—and only you—to access your Smarthub account. To participate proactively, sign in to your Smarthub account and then under the "Settings" menu, navigate to "Security" and finally "Two-Factor Authentication."

By adopting a robust security strategy that includes Two-Factor Authentication, strong passwords and security phrases, you can significantly enhance your protection against unauthorized access and cybercrime.



BERKELEY ELECTRIC

Board Trustee Willis Sanders

presents defensive lineman Michael Bennett with his bowl trophy in front of a home crowd at Cross High School.

Local athletes go bowling

The state's top high school football players faced off in the 2025 Touchstone Energy Cooperatives Bowl in early December at Doug Shaw Stadium in Myrtle Beach. Sponsored by South Carolina's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives and organized by the S.C. Athletic Coaches Association, the annual North-South all-star game recognized 88 athletes for their performance on and off the field.

Twelve local seniors represented BEC:

- ▶ **Ryan Campbell** and **Malquan Pimentel**—Ashley Ridge
- ▶ **Connor Dantzler**—James Island Charter
- ▶ **Quin Mahoney**—Bishop England
- ▶ **Braedyn Reaves**—Goose Creek
- ▶ **Jordan Ravenell**—Summerville
- ▶ **Michael Bennett**—Cross
- ▶ **Nick Buggie**—Lucy Beckham
- ▶ **C.J. Falotico**—Philip Simmons
- ▶ **JQ Crosby**—Stratford

The Touchstone Energy Bowl isn't just about football though. Forty-four students from Horry County Schools experienced an early Christmas in the form of a shopping spree for much-needed items for themselves and their families. Students were paired with two players from the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives Bowl—one from the North squad and one from the South—and given a \$150 Target gift card to fulfill their wish lists.

Before game day, players also took part in Lineman Demo Day, an interactive event where players, coaches, and staff can explore careers in the electric utility industry.



PHOTOS BY BERKELEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Annual meeting sets record again

BEC employees were bundled up and ready to register on the first day in Awendaw where just over 1,000 members participated.

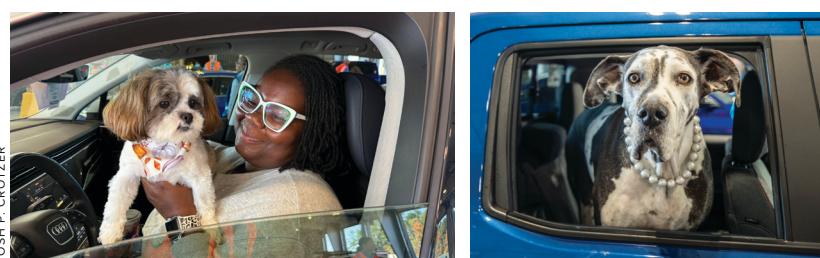
FOR THE FOURTH YEAR in a row, Berkeley Electric set a record for attendance at the 2025 drive-thru annual meeting. John Mack of Ladson, who was also featured in the October edition of *South Carolina Living*, was first in line to start the meetings off in Awendaw. Sheryl McMillian slipped in just under the wire on our last day in Moncks Corner to become the final member to cast their vote in the trustee elections.

This year saw the election of two new board members. Newcomer Clay Helms ran unopposed for the open seat in District Two representing Awendaw and was automatically elected along with incumbent candidate, Bob Jenkins, who was also unopposed in Johns Island. In the contested race for the District 5 seat representing Goose Creek, challenger Debbie Chatman Bryant was elected in favor of incumbent Denver Lee Clayton.

Visit our website for a video recap of this year's meeting along with a list of all the door prize winners at berkeleyelectric.coop.



This year's annual meeting saw all kinds of rides from modern e-bikes to classic muscle cars, like this recreation of NASCAR legend Richard Petty's iconic #43 Plymouth Roadrunner.



Just because it's a drive-thru meeting doesn't mean you can show off your fit, as these adorable puppies demonstrated with their stylish accessories.



John Mack didn't let an early morning flight keep him from being first in line at this year's Annual Meeting.



Debbie Chatman Bryant (center) became one of two new board members this year and will represent District 5.



Paul Culver rode home in style after winning the Grand Prize of a 2012 Chrysler 300 at this year's meeting.

JOSH P. CROTZER



Don't crowd the box

We understand the desire to landscape around electrical equipment boxes, such as transformers and switch gears, so they aren't noticeable. However, this equipment is a key component of delivering electricity to area homes and businesses.

The right-of-way clearance boundaries established and posted on the sticker on the electrical equipment itself need to be respected and maintained for your safety, and the safety of our crews. Do not plant or place permanent structures within 10 feet of the door side of the box, within 4 feet of all other sides, or less than 15 feet above the box itself.

Lawn grass, mulch, decorative rock and potted plants are permitted. Small statues, flags and even benches are also permitted as long as they can be easily moved by two people.

If you need advice on how to safely beautify the area around your electrical equipment, contact Berkeley Electric Cooperative's Vegetation Management Department at (843) 761-8200 ext. 8419 or vegetation@bec.coop.

STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

In accordance with Federal and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible State or local Agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program alleging discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed complaint form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W. Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov.

To reach Berkeley Electric Cooperative regarding this policy please contact Louise Meade, VP of Human Resources, at 843-761-8200 or louisem@bec.coop.

BRIGHT IDEAS 5K
BERKELEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

APRIL 25

CYPRESS GARDENS

LACE UP YOUR
Sneakers
TO HELP LOCAL
Teachers!

EARLY BIRD SAVINGS →

SCAN ME