



Berkeley Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

TO REPORT OUTAGES

Call: 1-888-253-4232

DISTRICT OFFICES

Hours: 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

AWENDAW

North 7200, US-17

Awendaw, SC 29426

(843) 884-7525

AWMemberRequests@bec.coop

GOOSE CREEK

2 Springhall Road

Goose Creek, SC 29445

(843) 553-5020

GCMemberRequests@bec.coop

JOHNS ISLAND

1135 Main Road

Johns Island, SC 29455

(843) 559-2458

JIMemberRequests@bec.coop

MONCK'S CORNER

1732 US-52 West

Moncks Corner, SC 29461

(843) 761-8200/(843) 825-3383

MCMemberRequests@bec.coop

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Running on empty

OUR JOB AT Berkeley Electric Cooperative is to provide our members with power that is safe, reliable and affordable.

That job is becoming increasingly more difficult, however, as South Carolina quickly outgrows its ability to generate enough power to serve the over 5 million people in the state.

Are we out of power yet? Not quite, but we came close on Christmas Eve in 2022 when major utilities were forced to implement rolling blackouts. For the first time, Berkeley Electric also had to develop a load-shed protocol to prepare for similar events in the future. This issue is only going to worsen as the state continues to grow at an accelerated pace.

Unfortunately, South Carolina hasn't succeeded in building new, large-scale base load power plants to keep up with increasing demand. In fact, we are still facing the consequences of the V.C. Summer nuclear project failure. To make matters worse, proposed federal regulations could require the shutdown of existing power plants before we can adequately replace them.

Co-op leaders across the state know that these threats to reliability are not acceptable. So, what can we do to solve this problem? The answer is simple but not easy. We must find ways to upgrade our grid by building new power plants and the infrastructure to deliver that energy to members across the state.

Berkeley supports an "all-of-the-above" approach with a diverse mix of fuel sources to ensure a stable power supply. While renewable energy remains an important part of the mix, it is an intermittent fuel source, even with the addition of battery storage. Likewise, improving the energy efficiency of homes and businesses is important but we cannot caulk and insulate our

way out of this situation. Meeting our mandate will require new sources of base load generation and, with coal and nuclear largely out of the mix, natural gas appears to be the most reliable and affordable option.

We have sounded the alarm about these challenges and policy makers have heard from us and are taking steps to help. As a distribution cooperative, we will leave it to those more directly involved to decide on where new generating plants need to be sited and what type of fuel needs to be used. However, we feel there is no question that our energy grid needs to be modernized to meet the demands of tomorrow. While the process should be scrutinized, there is no time for endless debate and critics should come prepared with real world solutions.

The decisions that are being made on how to handle this situation will have a direct impact on you as a member. To help you stay informed, the co-ops have launched the Voices for Cooperative Power website. It provides updates on current issues and legislation as well as offering a platform where members can work together to share their concerns with elected officials who are making energy policy decisions.

There's less than a quarter tank of gas left, and the "check fuel" light is about to come on. Let's find a solution together before we're all left stranded on the side of the road.

Sincerely,

MIKE FULLER
President & CEO

Students selected for leadership trip

BERKELEY ELECTRIC is excited to announce the eight students selected to represent the cooperative during this year's Washington Youth Tour. These deserving local students will get a chance to experience our nation's capital firsthand as part of an all-expenses paid leadership experience. The rising juniors representing Berkeley Electric are: Arya Glover, Brielle Vanhannegyn and Jordan Smith, Goose Creek High; Giovanna Miller, Cane Bay High; Grady Redmond, Stratford High; Jared Bazzle, Timberland High; Kelsey McBee, Berkeley Middle College; and Nicholas Brown, James Island Charter. Students had to submit an online application and complete an in-person interview before a panel of judges to be selected.

They will join other high school students from across America to spend a week in the nation's capital this June as part of a unique leadership experience. Students will take a trip to remember as they tour monuments and museums while learning about the impact electric cooperatives have on their communities. Each year, roughly 2,000 delegates from across the nation mix, mingle and make friendships that last a lifetime.

Berkeley Electric also offers a similar experience for sophomores during Cooperative Youth Summit in July and will announce the delegates in next month's edition. You can learn more about both trips by visiting "My Community" at berkeleyelectric.coop.



Arya Glover
Goose Creek High



Brielle Vanhannegyn
Goose Creek High



Giovanna Miller
Cane Bay High



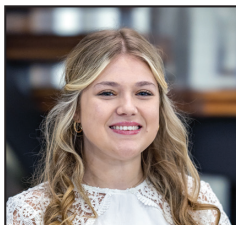
Grady Redmond
Stratford High



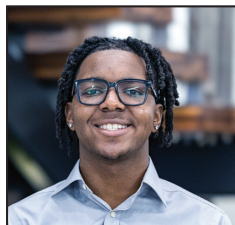
Jared Bazzle
Timberland High



Jordan Smith
Goose Creek High



Kelsey McBee
Berkeley Middle College



Nicholas Brown
James Island Charter

HELP YOUR CO-OP AND COMMUNITY!



**Voices for
Cooperative
Power**
*United for Stronger
Communities*

JOIN TODAY



SCAN ME
TO LEARN
MORE AND
JOIN TODAY.

VCP is a network of
electric co-op members
working together to
influence public policy
decisions that impact our
co-ops and our way of life.

JOIN TODAY BY VISITING



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@VOICES4COOPS



CONNIE SHULER
Trustee, District 7

Grow your summer savings

ONE OF MY FAVORITE things about summer is the opportunity for fresh, homegrown food, whether it's shopping at the local farmers' market or sharing the abundance of garden tomatoes with a neighbor. It's amazing how just a few seeds, some fertilizer and water can turn into a bounty.

When I think about energy efficiency, I think about that bounty of food, and how with just a few simple actions, you can use less electricity and reap the rewards of energy savings.

You don't need to be a farmer or gardener to know that plants need water—just like you don't have to be a lineworker or engineer to know that adjusting the thermostat or turning off lights can reduce your monthly electric bill. In fact, if you visit our website or follow us on Facebook, you know there are a lot of things you can do at home to save electricity and money.

Here in the Lowcountry, summer months bring some of the highest energy bills of the year. But why? Cooling your home accounts for a large portion of your monthly energy use, and the hotter it gets, the harder (and longer) your air conditioner works to keep you cool. There are several ways you can manage energy use at home, and we're providing a few tips that can help grow your summer energy savings.

But I'd also like to share a few ways we're here to help you save—not only during the dog days of summer but throughout the year.

One of the great things about being part of Berkeley Electric is that we're locally owned by you, our members. So instead of making profits, we can focus on helping our community. That's why we've developed incentives and programs to help you keep your money in your wallet.

BERKELEY AT-A-GLANCE	JANUARY 2023	JANUARY 2024
Total kWh sold	366,647,992	420,691,124
No. meters served	121,2762	126,906
Avg. residential kWh/meter	1,121	1,308
Avg. residential bill/meter	\$147.85	\$183.35
Miles of line	6236	6367
Avg. daily high temperature	67	64
Avg. daily low temperature	45	40

5 WAYS TO SAVE THIS SUMMER

When summer temperatures rise, so do our energy bills. Here are a few ways you can reduce energy use and grow your summer savings.

- 1. Raise your thermostat.** The smaller the difference between the indoor and outdoor temp, the more you'll save.
- 2. Install window coverings** like blinds or light-blocking curtains to prevent indoor heat gain during the day.
- 3. Seal leaks with caulk and weatherstripping** around windows and exterior doors. Air leaks force your air conditioner to work harder and run longer than necessary.
- 4. Run ceiling fans** for additional cooling but turn them off when you leave the room.
- 5. Lower your water heater thermostat** to 120 degrees to reduce standby heat loss.

Source: Dept. of Energy



- **Rebates** Berkeley offers several ways to give you money back for efficient equipment you purchase, such as smart thermostats and water heaters. Many of our rebates can be claimed by simply filling out a form. Find a list of all our rebates at berkeleyelectric.coop.
- **Free Energy Audits** Our certified energy advisors can determine the overall efficiency of your home and help you with ways to improve it. If you want to do it yourself, we can help with that too. We have online energy audits available on our website along with hundreds of easy energy tips.
- **Take control of your use** Try our Smarthub app to track your energy use. You can even get alerts when your use spikes so you can make changes in real time.
- **Rates** We offer a Time-of-Day rate that rewards members with a lower electric rate for shifting energy-intensive tasks—such as laundry, cooking and heating/cooling—away from peak hours. Peak hours are the few hours each day when demand for electricity is the highest and most expensive.
- **Ways to pay** If you're having a difficult time paying the higher summertime bills, contact us to learn about our fixed budget or leveled billing or prepaid electric program.

Most people don't know everything about electricity, and that's why we're here to help you. There are no investors making profits here. Just knowledgeable people, working for our neighbors to ensure there is electricity available when you need it. Contact us, and we can work with you to find more ways to save energy—and money.

Sincerely,

Connie P. Shuler

Dozens of poles were ready for the rodeo, starting with the opening ceremony.



Berkeley Electric hosts lineman rodeo

Event paves way for new training yard

BY JOSH P. CROTZER

GARTH BROOKS MAY not ever sing a song about him, but Kevin Mizzell does love the rodeo—the lineman's rodeo.

Over the years, Berkeley Electric Cooperative's operations manager for the Moncks Corner district has been a competitor, a judge and advisor to various South Carolina lineman rodeos—events in which lineworkers from utilities across the state take part in safety-focused skills competitions.

"I enjoy it, that's why I've been involved with it so long," says Mizzell. "It's an opportunity to show off your skills to friends and family, practice safety and experience different work that you might not do on a day-to-day basis."

So, when Berkeley Electric CEO Mike Fuller volunteered the cooperative to host the 2024 South Carolina Lineman's Rodeo, Mizzell took the reins. Soon after last year's rodeo was complete, he and the Loss Control and Training team at The Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina (ECSC) began preparations for the March festivities.

"Kevin has always been a big supporter of the rodeo and he was 100 percent all-in this year," says ECSC Director of Technical Training, Compliance and Safety Nick Adams, who coordinates the annual S.C. Lineman's Rodeo. "Outside of



PHOTOS BY KRIS MEADE


The S.C. Lineman's Rodeo featured a Kids Zone for all the future lineworkers in attendance.

ECSC, he's my right-hand man because he's done it for so many years. Both of us look at it as a great training opportunity for young linemen coming up and a great way for journeymen to fine tune their skills in the trade."

This was an ideal year for Berkeley Electric to host the rodeo. The cooperative moved into their new headquarters in Moncks Corner in 2022, so the event was an opportunity to showcase it to 98 lineworkers representing 10 South Carolina electric cooperatives and their families.

"Having the new facility really helped out," says Mizzell. "We came up with events that fit our layout and it all came together well."

The ample space and parking at the new facility off U.S. Highway 52 meant more events for children in attendance, more room for more vendors and food trucks and better viewing areas for spectators.



Ben Evans placed first in the Streetlight Replacement event.

MICAH PONCE

BEC linemen collect hardware

BERKELEY ELECTRIC didn't just showcase their facility at the S.C. Lineman rodeo. Their linemen showed off as well.

Journeyman crew results

Will Mills, William Burbage and Ashby Freeman

- ▶ 3rd Overall
- ▶ 1st Padmount Transformer Changeout
- ▶ 3rd Overhead Transformer Changeout
- ▶ 3rd Written Safety Test

KJ Rhode, Robbie Harrelson and Bobby Jackson

- ▶ 1st Overhead Transformer Changeout
- ▶ 1st Hurt Man Rescue

Joey Wilson, Kevin McHoney and Tommy Cox

- ▶ 2nd Padmount Transformer Changeout

Apprentice results

- ▶ Brandon Wise—3rd, Overall
- ▶ Ben Evans—1st, Streetlight Replacement
- ▶ Evan Mizzell—1st, Knot Tying
- ▶ Brandon Fowler—2nd, Knot Tying
- ▶ Owen Ford—2nd, EPZ Grounding
- ▶ Ryan Huxford—3rd, Knot Tying

"We try to make improvements every year," says Adams. "We were able to make a lot at Berkeley Electric—shelters for the linemen, Wi-Fi and gravel walkways. They put a lot of work into that place."

Some of the improvements were not just for the sake of the rodeo. In the months leading up to the competition, crews transformed dormant land adjacent to the new office building and operations facility into the co-op's new in-house training yard. There, all Berkeley Electric lineworkers will learn and develop the skills needed to maintain the cooperative's 6,900 miles of line.

"We'd already had a vision for it," says Mizzell.

Mizzell says lots of people deserve credit for the success of the 2024 S.C. Lineman's Rodeo, especially Berkeley Electric employees from various departments. In addition to the support from ECSC, surrounding cooperatives including Edisto Electric, Coastal Electric and Santee Electric helped erect poles and build the competition areas.

"There's definitely a good bit of labor



KRIS MEADE

Will Mills and William Burbage help bring down a 150-pound dummy in the Hurt Man Rescue event.

in it," he says "So, it's a good feeling to have so many good people throughout the state who are willing to help."

Even after all that work, Mizzell isn't looking for a rodeo rest.

"I'm looking forward to next year," he says of the 2025 S.C. Lineman's Rodeo at York Electric Cooperative. "I can't wait until it circles back around to Berkeley."



KRIS MEADE

Jordan Jackson watches her husband, Bobby, compete.

Safety comes first at rodeo

JORDAN JACKSON hears a lot about her husband's job as a Berkeley Electric Cooperative lineman.

"I feel like I could work here as much as he talks about it," she jokes. "He tells me all about the new safety rules and what he has to do every day."

At the South Carolina Lineman's Rodeo in March, she got to see that focus on safety and her husband, Bobby Jackson, in action.

Sponsored by The Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina, the rodeo features events such as a written safety test, overhead transformer changeout and streetlight replacement. Not only do the state's electric cooperative lineworkers get to show off their skills in front of family and friends, but the emphasis is on applying safe practices—more than speed—during the competitions.

That's heartening for Bobby Jackson's family members to know, since he works with high-voltage equipment every day.

"It's scary job," says his mother, Sandy Jackson. "I know they definitely take safety seriously. When you watch these events, you can tell they've practiced a lot. It's the number one concern."

All that practice resulted in a two first place finishes for Jackson's journeyman crew, Overhead Transformer Changeout and Hurt Man Rescue. But with a loving family, including three children, the ultimate goal is to come home every night.

"It's stressful, but he loves it," Jordan Jackson says of her husband's work. "So you've just got to support him."

WHO POWERS YOU?

Inspired by someone making a difference in our community? Tell their story and they could win a prize.

We know our community is filled with unsung heroes who are making a difference. Let's celebrate them! This is your chance to honor the people who are making a real difference. Winners will be selected by a panel of judges based on the impact they have on our community. All entries must be submitted by July 31.

Grand Prize \$2,500

Your Local Co-op Prize \$1,000



Berkeley Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Together, let's celebrate the power of human connections.



Visit ecsc.org/WhoPowersYou for full contest rules



**Touchstone Energy®
Cooperatives
of South Carolina**

The power of human connections.®