



**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  
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 GCMemberRequests@bec.coop

**JOHNS ISLAND**  
 1135 Main Road  
 Johns Island, SC 29455  
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 JIMemberRequests@bec.coop

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## Data centers and their impacts

**AS PRESIDENT** and CEO of Berkeley Electric Cooperative, I'm proud to

be part of a team that serves a unique territory spanning nearly 6,000 miles of distribution line and 37 substations. The area Berkeley Electric serves includes the world-renowned Kiawah and Seabrook islands, a fast-growing metro area and many rural communities, as well as the Francis Marion National Forest. The cooperative's service territory is also home to one of the world's leading technology companies, Google. Their data center is not only a significant economic driver for our community, but it also directly benefits all Berkeley Electric members.

### What is a data center?

If you browse the internet, then you are familiar with search engines. Google is ranked as the most popular search engine in the world. Once you hit "enter," Google returns over a million search results in seconds on virtually any topic.

A data center contains the computing infrastructure needed to produce those results including servers, storage drives and network equipment. As one of the largest search providers in the world, bringing the necessary equipment to central locations helps maximize the efficiency of their operations, which is especially important as data and programs increasingly move to cloud storage.

### Economic impact

Google is one of the largest corporate investors in South Carolina. Their Berkeley County data center employs several hundred people, providing well-paying jobs and boosting local businesses. This kind of investment strengthens our tax base, funding essential public services in our county.

Data centers like Google's positively transform our energy landscape. Their

consistent, high-volume energy use allows us to spread our costs across a larger consumer base, significantly lowering the cost per kilowatt-hour for everyone. Berkeley Electric is proud of the partnership with Google and can count on them to proactively curtail use during critical peak-load conditions. It's a win-win for all members.

### Community involvement

Beyond economic benefits, I believe large tech companies like Google have a responsibility to be good neighbors, and their record demonstrates that commitment. Since Google arrived in Berkeley County more than 15 years ago, they have worked to build a brighter future for generations to come. Google has invested in the Berkeley County School District by donating millions in grants. One such grant funded the nationally acclaimed STEM van called iTOW (Innovative Technology on Wheels), which travels to rural parts of Berkeley County providing fun, hands-on learning opportunities. Berkeley Electric is proud to team up with Google this year as they sponsor the Bright Ideas 5K, a fundraiser for the cooperative's Bright Ideas Education Grant program.

Berkeley Electric is also committed to a clean energy future, and Google is a crucial partner. We continue to explore ways to increase renewable energy within our mix to serve their needs.

I'm proud to have Google as a key member and look forward to working with them to serve Berkeley County for years to come.

**MIKE FULLER**  
 President & CEO



Taylor Bennett  
Berkeley High



Aniyah Bryant  
Berkeley High



Aiyasia Chisolm  
Berkeley High



Chloe Goode  
Berkeley High



Cerina Hayes  
Berkeley High



Griffith Jackson  
St. Johns High



Owen Lownes  
Berkeley High



Alexis Mitchum  
Timberland High



Azj'saeyna Owens  
Cyber Academy of SC



Jermanee Washington  
Timberland High

MICAH PONCE

## Local students Summit bound

**BERKELEY ELECTRIC** is proud to support students who reach new heights and is excited to announce the ten delegates selected to represent the cooperative during this year's Cooperative Youth Summit. These student leaders will experience South Carolina's capital like never before. The rising sophomores are: Taylor Bennett, Aniyah Bryant, Aiyasia Chisolm, Chloe Goode, Cerina Hayes and Owen Lownes of Berkeley High School; Alexis Mitchum and Jermanee Washington of Timberland High School; Griffith Jackson of St. Johns High School; and Azj'saeyna Owens of Cyber Academy of S.C. The students had to submit an online application and video profile to a panel of judges to be selected.

During Cooperative Youth Summit, the students will 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 as they network with hundreds of fellow cooperative students from across the state during this all-expenses paid leadership experience. You can learn more about the trip by visiting "My Community" at [berkeleyelectric.coop](http://berkeleyelectric.coop).



## Trust board awards \$25,000 in scholarships

**GRADUATING SENIORS** in Berkeley Electric's service territory were recently each awarded a \$2,500 scholarship to further their educational goals. The scholarships were provided through the Operation Round-Up program where participating members allow the co-op to "round up" their electric bill to the next highest dollar. In addition to scholarships, the funds are used for critical home repairs. This year's recipients are:

- ▶ Aniya Ravenell—Berkeley High School
- ▶ Mercy Fletcher—Goose Creek High School
- ▶ Denzel Jefferson—Odyssey Online Learning
- ▶ River Young—St. Johns High School
- ▶ K'Layah Maxwell—St. Johns High School
- ▶ Serenity Pearson—Stratford High School
- ▶ Paisley Dever—Summerville High School
- ▶ Makayla Hampton—Timberland High School
- ▶ Israel Robinson—Timberland High School
- ▶ Talon Lee—Timberland High School



Each year the Bright Ideas 5K raises money to provide grants for deserving local teachers like last year's recipients

MICAH PONCE

## Co-op, community fund teachers

**THE FUTURE JUST GOT** a little brighter for a group of local teachers who were recipients of this year's Bright Ideas Education Grant program. Forty-eight Lowcountry educators representing more than 20 schools received grants of up to \$1,500 to support classroom projects not covered by traditional funds. Berkeley Electric awarded \$50,000 in total through the grant program.

Funds for the program were raised through the Bright Ideas 5K. More than 400 local runners and walkers signed up for the race held at Cypress Gardens on May 4. For a full list of this year's recipients, visit [berkeleyelectric.coop](http://berkeleyelectric.coop).



**SHEILA POWELL**  
Trustee, District 2

# Anatomy of a power outage

**DURING A SUMMER** storm, a bolt of lightning strikes a power pole near your home. Your lights flicker briefly, then go out. Things become quiet as your home’s devices, with their motors and fans, stop running. Members start to report the outage online and by calling the co-op’s outage number at (888) 253-4232.

Our Outage Management System helps us to determine outage locations and direct crews to the affected areas. As a line crew pushes their dinner aside and heads out to the outage location, the system operator is estimating the number of members without service.

The line crew slowly drives through the affected area, inspecting every pole, wire and transformer. The cause of the outage is quickly discovered—a burn mark across the surface of a transformer means the transformer has blown. The crew readies their truck and equipment, ensuring it’s safe to begin working.

Less than an hour after finding the cause of the outage, the crew loads its tools and gear back onto the trucks. This time, the problem was easy to spot, the repair was straightforward, and the weather cooperated. But no two outages are exactly alike.

When you’re experiencing a power outage, you want it to end as soon as possible. But our lineworkers must be deliberate, efficient and cautious when working around high voltage electricity. Every action to restore power is carefully planned so they can spot potential hazards. Lineworkers must follow standard procedures and safety requirements to ensure the repair is effective and sound. Working that way may take a little extra time, but it means our lineworkers make it home safely.



Berkeley Electric’s lineworkers must follow standard procedures and safety requirements when restoring an outage.

The next outage could occur in severe weather or be located far off a main road. It could involve a fallen tree that needs to be cut with chainsaws or a broken utility pole that needs to be replaced. In any case, our lineworkers will always get to the location and fix the problem as quickly as safety allows.

Our power poles, lines and other infrastructure are attractive targets for lightning. Outages also can occur from a variety of causes—fallen trees, vehicle crashes and even curious critters, like snakes and squirrels. Our members may not always know the cause of an outage, or what was involved in restoring power, but thanks to our lineworkers, the lights come on and life goes back to normal.

This is why your cooperative invests in technologies and equipment that protect the power grid and prevent outages. And it’s also why the lineworkers, who put themselves at risk to return your life to normal, are some of our favorite people.

*Sheila Powell*

BERKELEY AT-A-GLANCE	FEBRUARY 2023	FEBRUARY 2024
Total kWh sold	326,394,540	373,505,625
No. meters served	122,101	127,117
Avg. residential kWh/meter	905	1,057
Avg. residential bill/meter	\$122.21	\$151.67
Miles of line	6243	6378
Avg. daily high temperature	73	67
Avg. daily low temperature	50	44

## New technology improves outage recovery

**BERKELEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE** is dedicated to delivering safe, affordable and reliable power to its members and is constantly searching for ways to reduce the length of power outages. Whenever there was an outage in the past, linemen would have to ride up and down the road or walk through miles of right-of-way to find the source of the outage. This changed when the co-op upgraded its system using digital meters with two-way communication which alerts System Control when there is a loss of signal. The co-op is also able to send out a signal, or ping, to the affected area to determine a general location for the outage before crews even roll out into the field, cutting down on the amount of time spent searching for the outage source.

### The next step in reliability

Starting this month, Berkeley Electric is taking the next step in further improving its approach to outage detection and response by installing Smart Faulted Circuit Indicators (FCIs) on its underground service cabinets. These units, dubbed Smart Grid Solutions (SGS), feature an adaptive learning capability. By analyzing the patterns of normal operating currents, these devices can swiftly differentiate between routine fluctuations and genuine faults, enabling rapid outage identification with improved accuracy.

The units also come equipped with dual displays to guide crews to trouble spots with ease. Once installed, the fiber optic LED displays will be mounted on the outside of the underground cabinet making them visible and audible from the road. These cues will quickly guide crews to the affected equipment during the day or night, cutting down further on the amount of time spent searching for the source of the outage.

The benefits also extend beyond detection. With a self-resetting feature, SGS FCIs streamline troubleshooting efforts for line crews and, in most situations, the units are able to draw power from the lines they monitor eliminating the need for battery replacements. Additionally, the new units are more resilient to being submerged in water, including salt water.

The cooperative had issues with a high rate of failure with the previous FCIs after a couple of high-water events a few years ago. This was problematic when crews returned to the field to identify a trouble spot, but the indicators weren't working because they were submerged or had been water damaged.

Berkeley Electric currently plans to install 5,000 units annually on its underground distribution system. This will be a mix of installations in new equipment, and installation during underground inspection as well as maintenance.



MICAH PONCE

New fiber optic fault circuit indicators (FCIs) will provide visual and audible signals to help crews locate and restore outages more quickly for members.



MICAH PONCE

Crews will install 5,000 fault indicators per year on the co-op's underground distribution system. The new FCIs are more resistant to water damage and the majority will be self-powered, reducing maintenance needs.

## Crowning our first Community Champion!

**IT'S OFFICIAL!** Myriam Martinez is our first Community Champion of the year. This special program was created with the support of Norsan Media and the Charleston RiverDogs to recognize those who make a positive impact in the Lowcountry's Latin-American community.

Martinez founded "Mujeres Latinas de Carolina del Sur," (Latina Women of South Carolina) which focuses in general in efforts to safeguard and protect the environment and motivate and raise awareness about care, preservation and conservation of the planet is now of great importance at the community level.

"My passion is to protect and preserve wildlife and the natural world, working to defend the rights of animals and support conservation efforts," Martinez says.

Although slight in stature, Martinez brings enormous heart and energy to helping communities and individuals rethink their habits to move towards more sustainable ones that build a more equitable future.

In addition to being an entrepreneur and community leader, Martinez is the head of her household. She arrived in the United States from her native Colombia almost 18 years ago with her two little girls, in search of the American dream,



NORSAN MEDIA

Representatives from Berkeley Electric, Norsan Media and the RiverDogs congratulate the co-op's first Community Champion of the summer, Myriam Martinez (holding certificate) of Mujeres Latinas de Carolina del Sur.

which she has definitely found.

Martinez shares one of the cooperative's guiding principles of environmental stewardship, which has been with her since childhood.

"One time in a school biology class, we were given a toad to dissect and I challenged the activity jokingly asking 'why don't we dissect you instead to see what you look like inside?' to the professor", she says.

To learn about the service opportunities offered by Mujeres Latinas visit them at [mujeres-latinas-sc.org](http://mujeres-latinas-sc.org) and to nominate the next Community Champion visit [berkeleyelectric.coop](http://berkeleyelectric.coop).

## Local educator earns grad credits through EnlightenSC

BY JOSH P. CROTZER

**IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG** for Molly West to realize how much she didn't know about energy.

Earlier this year, the guidance counselor at Bishop England High School in Charleston was one of 13 educators from across South Carolina to take "Energy in the 21st Century," a free University of South Carolina graduate course sponsored by Berkeley Electric Cooperative and The Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina (ECSC). The course explored the history, economics, science and modernization of the energy sector and its impact on the global economy.

"I immediately became aware that there was so much that I didn't understand about energy production," says West. "I could tell from the first class that the course would have a huge impact on me."

For her final project, West presented to a panel of judges—including State Superintendent of Education Ellen Weaver—about how to decarbonize the economy while meeting the increasing demand for power.

In addition to three graduate credits, West and the other members of her project team—Andrae Walker and Cashauna Christie-Bowers, both of Colleton County—were each awarded \$250.

West reaped even more benefits from the course.

"The class gave me a perspective on how important educating people and encouraging out-of-the-box thinking is so that innovation keeps moving," she says. "I am more aware of what it takes to ensure that we have consistent, sustainable power. This has been one of my favorite courses, ever."



JOSH P. CROTZER

Molly West (right) teamed with Andrae Walker and Cashauna Christie-Bowers, both of Colleton County, for the course's final project, a presentation about how to decarbonize the economy while meeting the increasing demand for power.

# 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.

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



**Grand Prize \$2,500**

**Your Local Co-op Prize \$1,000**



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

Visit [ecsc.org/WhoPowersYou](https://ecsc.org/WhoPowersYou) for full contest rules



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The power of human connections.®