



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

MONCKS CORNER

1732 US-52 West
 Moncks Corner, SC 29461
 (843) 761-8200/825-3383
 MCMemberRequests@bec.coop






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Preparing for the future



AT BERKELEY ELECTRIC, one of our most important jobs is to keep the price of electricity affordable and we have been very successful in doing that over the past few years. But not everything is in our control.

We have watched as both

Dominion and Duke Energy filed for rate increases again this year, and just recently Santee Cooper announced that they would increase their rates as well.

As you may know, Berkeley Electric is a distribution cooperative, meaning that instead of generating our own power, we buy it from other utilities. The majority of that power comes from Santee Cooper. Given that 75 cents of every dollar we collect is spent on the electricity we distribute to our members, any price increase from our power providers impacts what we must charge our members.

How will this affect members?

Unfortunately, we do not currently know exactly how Santee Cooper's price increases will ultimately affect our members. Collectively, South Carolina's electric cooperatives are Santee Cooper's largest customer, purchasing 70% of the energy the utility generates. This gives the co-ops a seat at the bargaining table, and we are in negotiations over how these cost increases will affect us.

What we do know is that Santee Cooper is proposing an average 4.9% base rate adjustment that would increase their residential customers' bills by an average of 8.7% while commercial and industrial rates would increase by 4.1% and 2.8% respectively.

These proposed adjustments are currently open to a public comment period. These proposed rate adjustments don't impact what Santee Cooper charges the electric cooperatives right now, but we expect they will soon seek to substantially raise their electric rates for us as well.

Why are their rates increasing?

As Santee Cooper's largest customer, South Carolina's electric co-ops are also contractually obligated to pay about 70% of Santee Cooper's costs for large capital projects like the construction of new power plants. That includes V.C. Summer, the failed nuclear project that Santee Cooper and SCE&G abandoned in 2017. Most of the debt associated with that project is already factored into your bill, but the outcome of the "Cook" class-action lawsuit regarding V.C. Summer is a primary driver of their rate increase.

As part of the settlement that ended the lawsuit, Santee Cooper had to freeze its electric rates until 2025. During that time, Santee Cooper accumulated an additional \$744 million in unbudgeted costs that the utility will seek to pass on to their consumers, including Berkeley Electric, when the rate freeze ends at the end of this year.

Another major driver is inflation. In addition to its effect on everyday items, inflation has also increased our cost of doing business. This includes the costs for the materials needed to build and maintain our system as well as increased costs for things like health care and benefits for our employees.

And, of course, there is the impact of energy policy. Over the past few years, the EPA has mandated a lot of changes to how we produce and deliver power, changes that carry additional costs.

What are we doing about it?

As a not-for-profit electric cooperative, Berkeley Electric does everything possible to provide power at near-cost and hasn't increased base rates since 2017. We are looking at new rate structures and other ways to reduce the impact of these changes on our members and will keep you informed as more information is available.

Sincerely,

MIKE FULLER
 President & CEO



PEYTON DRESS

Reading with the RiverDogs

Berkeley Electric partnered with the Charleston RiverDogs again this year to bring back the popular event, Reading with the RiverDogs. Sponsored by the cooperative, bilingual players spent an afternoon reading to local children in both English and Spanish at the John's Island Public Library. The children also got to meet the mascots, get signed autographs and enjoy a free lunch and prizes.



SUSAN SELVEY

DEADLINE IS APPROACHING

Calling all local artists! We want to see your original masterpieces—paintings, sketches, mixed media, watercolors and more! Send a digital copy of your artwork our way and, if it is chosen, it will be featured in our 2025 calendar **plus you win \$100.**

The contest ends Sept. 30. All submissions must be landscape orientation (horizontal) and print quality so send us the *highest resolution* image possible. Please note that cell phone shots are typically not print quality. E-mail all submissions to micahp@bec.coop with the subject line "Calendar Contest."

You must be a BEC member to enter and win.



MICAH PONCE

Honor a veteran

Berkeley Electric Cooperative is offering members a chance to honor local service men and women by purchasing an engraved paver for its new veterans' memorial. Located by the lobby of the new Moncks Corner facility, the monument features a patio with more than 100 bricks honoring local service men and women. Pavers are \$30 each and there is no limit on the number of pavers that can be purchased.

Please return the form below or apply online at berkeleyelectric.coop by Oct. 31. If purchasing a paver, please enclose payment and three line engraving with the form or stop by your local district office.

VETERANS MEMORIAL

Enclose payment of \$30 per paver.
Make your check payable to Berkeley Electric Co-op.



MEMBER NAME _____

ACCOUNT NO. _____

Paver Inscription (3 lines/13 spaces per line including spaces):

□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□

Return by 10/31/24 with bill payment or mail to Berkeley Electric Co-op, Attn: Yajaira Bess, PO Box 1234, Moncks Corner, SC 29461

PLEASE NOTE: Pavers will not be installed until early 2025.



Henry Chavis
Trustee, District 9

We can help you save

IT'S NOT GOING TO THE GROCERY STORE that I've come to dislike. It's leaving. That is when I find out just how much it costs to purchase a few bags of essentials. I don't blame my grocer, though. Costs have risen for everything. We're seeing it at Berkeley Electric Cooperative, too.

Inflation isn't just driving up the price of eggs. For example, we've talked about how utility poles cost much more than they did a few years ago. The price of electric transformers has also soared from \$874 in 2019 to \$1,360 today. Meanwhile, the cost of other essential materials such as pad mount transformers, wooden crossarms and primary cable has also increased dramatically in recent years.

Berkeley Electric also carries some of the highest property tax burdens in the counties we serve. And, as you know, interest rates have risen significantly in recent years. In order to deliver the reliable power you have come to expect, we borrow money to make upgrades to our electrical systems. Those higher rates have caused our interest expenses to increase. I think it's important for members to be aware of these challenges and how we'll respond.

Ways to save

Because Berkeley Electric is a not-for-profit organization, we aim to provide safe, reliable power at the most affordable price for our members. This means helping you save money on your electric bill and providing services to help make life easier.

Smart Thermostat Program Members can receive a free smart thermostat after rebate and installation, or they can enroll an eligible smart thermostat

device for a \$50 incentive. This program helps reduce wholesale power costs by allowing Berkeley Electric to adjust your thermostat a few degrees during peak periods. Members will also receive a \$50 incentive each year they participate in the program.

HomeAdvantage Loan This program offers a home energy audit in which our experts assess air leaks, insulation gaps and other common problems that can make your home less energy efficient. Our experts will recommend the latest energy-saving technologies for heating, cooling and lighting improvements in your home through a low-interest loan that you pay through your electric bill. The recommended improvements are designed to pay for themselves in six years or less. In many cases, the savings offset the cost of the loan meaning no additional out-of-pocket costs for the member.

Beat The Peak Sign up to receive a notification at times when you can help reduce electricity use—that is when you can beat the peak need for electricity. This helps lower costs for all members. It also has the added benefit of helping you become better informed of how your electricity use varies during the day and across the seasons of the year.

Heating & Cooling Rebates Berkeley Electric offers members two ways to save on a new HVAC system. Members can receive up to \$3,000 in rebates and tax incentives when they install a new, high-efficiency dual fuel heat pump, which uses electricity for cooling and gas for heating. The co-op also offers rebates of \$250 per ton when installing a ground source heat pump through its Earth Connect program.

If you have questions about energy efficiency or any of our programs and services, feel free to call us. We're here to serve our members and you can learn more by visiting berkeleyelectric.coop. You have our promise that we will be transparent and proactive as we work to keep your power affordable.

Sincerely,

BERKELEY AT-A-GLANCE	MAY 2023	MAY 2024
Total kWh sold	370,156,183	422,189,023
No. meters served	123,830	129,469
Avg. residential kWh/meter	958	1,144
Avg. residential bill/meter	\$145.68	\$176.12
Miles of line	6282	6416
Avg. daily high temperature	81	86
Avg. daily low temperature	62	67



PHOTOS BY JOSH P. CROTZER

▲ Local high school students (from left) Sarabi Owens, Alexis Mitchum, Cerina Hayes, Owen Lownes, Aniyah Bryant, Cameron McCoy, Aiyasia Chisolm, Griffith Jackson and Chloe Good represented Berkeley Electric at the Cooperative Youth Summit.

◀ Sarabi Owens, who's always looking for opportunities to lead, took a turn at Gov. Henry McMaster's desk.

Local students make their voices heard

Cooperative Youth Summit encourages civic engagement

BY JOSH P. CROTZER

Sarabi Owens, a high school junior from Mount Pleasant, thinks there should be more young people advocating for the youth in her community. She and eight other local teens are now better prepared to step into that role after a summer experience in civic engagement catered just for them.

At the Cooperative Youth Summit in July—an education initiative sponsored by Berkeley Electric and South Carolina's other electric cooperatives—Owens, Aniyah Bryant of Moncks Corner, Aiyasia Chisolm of Summerville, Chloe Good of Moncks Corner, Griffith Jackson of Johns Island, Cerina Hayes of Moncks Corner, Alexis Mitchum of Bonneau, Owen Lownes of Moncks Corner and Cameron McCoy of Moncks Corner learned how to make their voices heard during a four-day exploration of their state capital, advocacy and the cooperative business model.

"This was a program based around leadership, which is something I'm interested in," says Owens, a junior at Cyber Academy of South Carolina. "I

learned about speaking your mind, but also to be patient and observe."

Berkeley Electric's student delegates were among 45 high school students from across South Carolina who visited Gov. Henry McMaster's office and later heard from South Carolina legislators Rep. Micah Caskey and Sen. Mike Fanning about their role and responsibilities as future voters and leaders.

"I really enjoyed seeing all that history, and sitting in the governor's chair was really amazing," says Jackson. "When you come here, you can find out about what your future might look like."

A visit to Newberry Electric gave the students an on-the-ground glimpse of how



Aniyah Bryant received some higher education during a visit to Newberry Electric Cooperative and a lift in one of their bucket trucks.



Chloe Good (left) and Griffith Jackson (right) helped stuff bags of essential items that will be given to temporarily homeless youth through a co-op affiliated program called Kid's Closet.

an electric cooperative operates. Many of them were also lifted above the co-op in a bucket truck.

The students were also a part of Soda Pop Co-op, a student-run, mobile market selling snacks and drinks with a board of trustees and staff. Mitchum was named to the Soda Pop Co-op board of directors.

Throughout the week, Youth Summit students participated in a team competition in which they developed presentations related to current political and cultural issues such as banning TikTok and subsidizing electric vehicles. Jackson's team, which argued against EV subsidization, won the competition, and each winning student received a \$1,000 prize.

Tropical Storm Debby soaks service area

ALTHOUGH THE PREDICTED HISTORIC LEVELS of flooding did not accompany Tropical Storm Debby as it crawled across Berkeley Electric's service territory in August, over 20,000 members were impacted by outages caused by the slow-moving rainmaker. Many areas did experience flooding as the co-op monitored the storm in preparation to de-energize equipment before rising waters could cause extensive damage and extended outage times.

Since the development of its major storm plan in the wake of Hurricane Hugo, Berkeley Electric has invested in hardening its system against storms and high-water events. De-energizing key pieces of equipment before they can be damaged by flood water or storm surge is just one of the lessons learned following the historic flood in 2015 and hurricanes Matthew and Irma. The co-op has also upgraded and relocated key pieces of equipment susceptible to flooding, especially along its coastal service area. Additionally, Berkeley has installed remote cameras to monitor key areas prone to flooding.

Tropical Storm Debby proved to be unusual, however, as many of the larger outages associated with the storm had unexpected causes. In the early stages of the storm, a tornado ripped through Moncks Corner destroying the Arby's restaurant, damaging Wal-mart and several other stores, as well as tearing down lines in the Mitten Lane community. An early morning vehicular accident also broke two utility poles causing a nearly ten-hour outage in the Summerville area.

And finally, if you are not familiar with the 2006 cinematic masterpiece, *Snakes on a Plane*, the plot revolves around the chaos caused by finding snakes in an unlikely place. Although we didn't need to call upon the services of Samuel L. Jackson, Berkeley Electric did have its own bit of snake-related chaos. Snakes seeking higher ground invaded two co-op substations to avoid rising waters and one of them was responsible for large outages in the Cane Bay area affecting 3,300 members.



Tropical Storm Debby spawned a tornado that damaged businesses and power lines in Moncks Corner.



An early morning car crash destroyed two utility poles in Summerville, leading to an almost 10-hour outage.



A snake fleeing rising floodwaters caused a major outage in the Cane Bay area despite the wildlife guards installed in the substation.



Rising flood waters in College Park Estates endangered switch gears feeding the nearby substation.

Co-op trustees earn certification



Board chairman Wayne Dewitt (left) and CEO Mike Fuller (right) present trustees Sheila Powell and Denver Clayton with their director's certificates.

BERKELEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE is governed by a nine-member board of trustees elected from its membership. Extensive training is required to enable trustees to perform their duties and two of the co-op's trustees took the next step on their journey to serve co-op members. Sheila Powell (Dist. 2) recently received the Director Gold Credential certificate from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) while Denver Lee Clayton (Dist. 5) received his Credentialed Cooperative Director certificate, which requires courses on basic competencies expected of board members.

EV expansion underway

GERMAN TECHNOLOGY GIANT BOSCH is moving forward with plans for expanding its Dorchester County plant to build electric motors in the latest push toward boosting South Carolina's stature in the growing electric vehicle manufacturing sector. The company is expanding its factory by 75,000-square-feet and expects to hire 350 workers by 2025 to support the production.

To aid this expansion, Berkeley Electric is upgrading its system serving the area by extending its distribution lines. While constructing the new lines, the cooperative is also taking the opportunity to extend them to its New Hope substation. In addition to serving Bosch, this new line will give the co-op another option to tie-in to its larger distribution system providing more options for back feeding, or rerouting power, to decrease outage restoration times and overall increasing the reliability of its system in that area.

► Crew Leader Chris Newbold works on constructing a new pole that will serve the Bosch expansion and increase reliability.



BEC volunteers recently distributed thousands of school supplies to local students during back-to-school events.

Back to school with BEC

Co-op employees braved the summer heat as they recently spent the weekend handing out more than 4,000 composition notebooks, pencil pouches and other supplies at two separate events. The Goose Creek Kids Fest and OneBerkeley Festival were both held in early August to help local students gather needed supplies to head back to school. Berkeley Electric participates in dozens of career fairs, touch-a-truck events and school safety demonstrations each year as part of its commitment to community.