



Berkeley Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy Cooperative

TO REPORT OUTAGES

Call: 1-888-253-4232

DISTRICT OFFICES

Hours: 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

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AWMemberRequests@bec.coop

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Goose Creek, SC 29445

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Powering our state's future



MIKE FULLER

President & CEO

AS THE CEO of Berkeley Electric Power Cooperative, I'm proud to lead an organization that plays a critical role in keeping South Carolina's lights on. Our state is growing rapidly, with new residents, businesses and industries driving unprecedented demand for electricity.

South Carolina's growth is exciting but also presents significant challenges. New industries and residential developments are increasing electricity demand, while older coal plants are closed down. To address this, we need new power generation, and we need it now. The recent legislative session marked a significant step forward with a bill allowing Santee Cooper and Dominion Energy to collaborate on a new natural gas-fired power plant in Colleton County. This plant, expected to generate enough electricity to power about 1.2 million homes, will be the first major new generation project in the state since 2008. By combining resources, Santee Cooper and Dominion estimate savings of 30% on construction costs, which helps keep rates lower for our members.

One of the organizations that plays a key role in helping us achieve this goal is Central Electric Power Cooperative. Central is the generation and transmission cooperative for South Carolina, serving 19-member distribution cooperatives, including Berkeley Electric, that deliver power directly to homes and businesses. Central doesn't own power plants directly but acts as a strategic partner, purchasing electricity in bulk from providers such as Santee Cooper and Duke Energy. This cooperative model allows us to secure utility-scale power at lower costs, which we pass on to our members. By working together, we achieve efficiencies that individual cooperatives couldn't manage alone.

This new plant serves as a cornerstone of our "all-of-the-above" energy strategy. While renewables like solar are part of the mix, they can't fully replace traditional sources such as coal or natural gas because solar panels don't generate power at night, and batteries alone can't meet the consistent demand of a growing state. Natural gas, nuclear and other sources provide the reliability we need, especially during peak times such as scorching summer days or freezing winter nights. This balanced approach ensures flexibility, allowing us to shift to lower-cost options when prices fluctuate, ultimately benefiting members.

Rising costs are a reality we can't ignore. Over the past five years, the price of equipment, labor and supplies has surged, with some major components doubling in cost. We're tackling this challenge in a number of ways, such as working with Central to partner with suppliers like Santee Cooper to optimize operations, and securing lower-cost power contracts outside our traditional agreements. We also work with our sister cooperatives on statewide programs to reduce energy consumption. For example, we support initiatives such as Beat The Peak alerts, which encourage members to adjust their thermostats during high-demand periods, easing strain on the system and lowering costs for everyone.

As a not-for-profit co-op, every decision we make—from supporting new generation to investing in member education programs such as Berkeley's energy audits or AI-driven tools like Bidgely—aims to keep power reliable and affordable. South Carolina's future depends on decisive, long-term solutions and Berkeley, along with Central Electric, is committed to leading the way, ensuring our state remains powered for decades to come.

Sincerely,

Michael S. Fuller



Berkeley Electric wants to showcase the year-round beauty of the Lowcountry. The 2026 calendar will be divided into the four seasons—Winter (December-February), Spring (March-May), Summer (June-August) and Fall (September-November).

Three photos will be chosen to represent each season. Members can submit up to four digital entries. If one of your photos is chosen it will be featured in our 2026 calendar. **Plus, you will win \$100.**

All submission must be in landscape orientation (horizontal). Please send the highest resolution image possible. Cell phone images are typically not print quality.

Email submissions to micahp@bec.coops with the subject line "Calendar Contest." Indicate which season your photos represents. **You must be a BEC member to enter and win.**

Photos must be submitted by Sept. 24.



BERKELEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE recently held its first Annual Job Fair & Career Expo at its Moncks Corner headquarters.

Approximately 200 residents learned about job opportunities and benefits at Berkeley Electric and enjoyed a free lunch dedicated to military veterans. They also took advantage of professional coaching, including help with resumes and interview skills, and met with community partners who were also on site.

Based on its success, Berkeley Electric plans to make it an annual event.

Member advisory: door-to-door sales

BERKELEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE has received an increasing number of calls from members asking if a salesperson who knocked on their door represents the co-op. The short answer is no.

These individuals may offer energy services or payment plans, falsely claiming they are affiliated with the co-op. They may also ask to see your meter or a copy of your bill. Please be aware:

- ▶ **No door-to-door sales** Berkeley Electric does not use door-to-door sales for any of our services. These representatives are not associated with our cooperative. Berkeley Electric employees or contractors will also never ask to enter your home.
- ▶ **Unauthorized agreements** Any agreements made with these representatives are solely with the company they represent and are not supported or endorsed by Berkeley Electric.

We don't partner with solar companies

While we support renewable energy and your right to explore alternative energy options, Berkeley Electric doesn't partner with any solar companies. If you are considering a solar system:

- ▶ Contact us first for a free evaluation to ensure the proposed system meets your needs.
- ▶ Ensure your home is energy efficient before installing solar panels. Solar energy does not automatically lower your electric bill, especially if your home has air/duct leaks or an inefficient HVAC system. Also, make sure your roof is in good condition before installing.
- ▶ Claims of free solar panels or eliminating your bill are likely scams.

BEC energy efficiency services

Berkeley Electric does offer the following free and low-cost services to improve your home's energy efficiency:

- ▶ Free energy audits.
- ▶ Low-interest home improvement loans.
- ▶ Smart thermostat rebates.

For more information or to discuss these services, please contact Berkeley Electric Cooperative at 1 (800) 327-9615. We are here to help you make informed decisions about your energy needs.



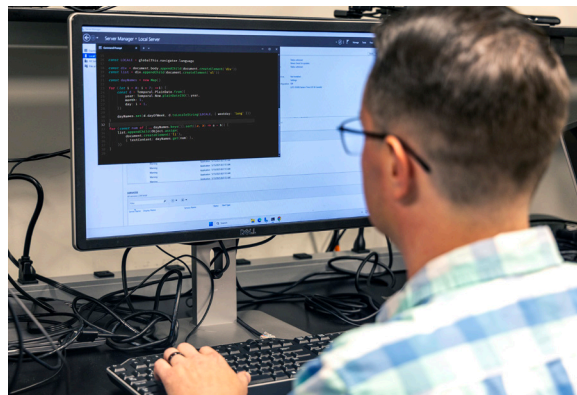
Bob Jenkins
Trustee, District 8

Empowering members through AI

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) is revolutionizing how organizations operate, and Berkeley Electric Cooperative is no exception. To put it simply, the way AI works is by training computers to think and respond like humans do. This enables AI models to simulate advanced reasoning and greatly improve efficiency in tasks, especially those involving raw data. Artificial intelligence has been around in some fashion since 1956, but it didn't hit the mainstream until around 2022 with platforms such as ChatGPT. Now, a few short years later, it's a powerful tool that is showing up everywhere from internet search platforms to the drive-thru at your local fast-food restaurant.

At Berkeley Electric, we are also incorporating AI to improve efficiency and member service. One standout tool is Bidgely, which analyzes meter data collected every 15 minutes to provide detailed insights into home energy use. By identifying patterns from appliances such as HVAC systems and water heaters, Bidgely is able to break down your bill to show how much you spent on each appliance in a month. This helps members understand and control their energy costs. In fact, Bidgely recently helped a member discover their heating and cooling systems were running simultaneously, allowing them to resolve the issue quickly and saving them significant costs.

Internally, Berkeley Electric is using AI to enhance cybersecurity and IT operations. The co-op's IT department uses it to monitor logs and verify IP addresses as members sign in to their account, so it can flag anomalies such as unexpected logins from distant locations. AI also monitors server health and backups, reducing manual oversight and



MICAH PONCE

Berkeley Electric is integrating AI to improve efficiency and member service across departments like IT and Operations.

boosting reliability. These tools allow staff to focus on critical tasks while ensuring the security of our members' data.

Looking ahead, Berkeley Electric is exploring AI integration into its Smart Hub platform. Partnering with NISC, our software provider, the co-op is developing an AI tool to assist members with queries like, "Why did my bill go up?" or "How do I update my phone number?" This tool, currently in internal training, is designed to streamline member interactions.

Berkeley Electric is also researching how other cooperatives use AI to predict tree growth in right-of-way corridors so we can optimize trimming schedules based on species, growth rates and weather. This approach could further improve Berkeley Electric's efforts to maintain reliable service in the Lowcountry's unique environment.

Most importantly, however, is the fact that we emphasize responsible AI use, with an internal policy ensuring confidentiality, legal compliance, and human oversight. AI outputs are reviewed to avoid errors, and we also prioritize our members' privacy. While our meters continually collect data, it's only accessed to address specific issues, not for constant monitoring.

By adopting AI tools such as Bidgely, enhancing cybersecurity, and planning Smart Hub integration, Berkeley Electric is leveraging AI to deliver efficient, transparent, and member-focused services, all while maintaining a human touch.

Sincerely,

BERKELEY AT-A-GLANCE	MAY 2024	MAY 2025
Total kWh sold	422,189,023	447,484,146
No. meters served	129,469	135,416
Avg. residential kWh/meter	1,144	1,111
Avg. residential bill/meter	\$176.12	\$188.59
Miles of line	6416	6552
Avg. daily high temperature	86	85
Avg. daily low temperature	67	66



CANYON DURHAM

This summer, Berkeley Electric sent (from left, front) Jaliyah Bess, Alyssa Holcomb, Trinity Fletcher, Serenity Rauchut, Skilah Colleton, (back) Jay Jenkins, Zihlj'Qhei Taylor, Carter Hawkins, Jayce Romack and Yidong Ye to Cooperative Youth Summit where they visited the governor's office.

Investing in bright futures

A VISIT TO the governor's office, lessons in public speaking and a Q&A session with a state legislator seems like a jam-packed summer.

Thanks to Berkeley Electric and South Carolina's electric cooperatives, 10 local high school students experienced those things and more in the span of just four days in July.

Alyssa Holcomb, Jaliyah Bess, Carter Hawkins, Jayce Romack, Serenity Rauchut, Skilah Colleton, Trinity Fletcher, Jay Jenkins, Yidong Ye and Zihlj'Qhei Taylor represented Berkeley Electric at Cooperative Youth Summit, an exploration of the state's capital, civic engagement and the cooperative business model. Berkeley Electric public relations specialist Dana Jenkins served as a chaperone on the trip.

"This definitely encouraged me to want to develop more in my community and know more about co-ops," says Ye, a junior at Academic Magnet School. "I knew co-ops were giving back to their own members but experiencing it firsthand has transformed the way I think about it."

The students, 51 in all from across the state, learned about South Carolina's contribution to space exploration at the State Museum, met with some of Gov. Henry McMaster's top advisers in his office at the State House and were exposed to the importance of safety around electricity at the CEEUS facility in West Columbia. CEEUS is the materials supplier for the state's electric cooperatives.

"I'm around a lot of linemen, so I just wanted to see what that life was like," says Romack, a junior at Berkeley High School. "There is a lot of OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) and personal protective equipment stuff because linemen have a very dangerous job."

Cooperative Youth Summit isn't just about visiting interesting places and



JOSH P. CROTZER

Trinity Fletcher (middle) joined other students on rides in various electric vehicles.

PHOTOS BY JOSH P. CROTZER



Hawkins (far left) and his presentation teammates, pictured with former cooperative executive Lou Green, each won \$1,000 in the Orator's Arena.

meeting interesting people. An important objective of the annual summer program is to develop students to be leaders in their community and to learn about the role co-ops play in those communities.

Guided by former television personality and co-op executive Lou Green, the students worked in teams to develop presentations related to current political and

cultural debates such as regulating artificial intelligence and subsidizing electric vehicles. Each group took a stance on the issues in front of their peers and a panel of independent judges. Hawkins was a member of the highest-scoring team in the Orator's Arena for their presentation: "The death of creativity: On the misuse of A.I. in modern society." Hawkins

and his teammates were each awarded \$1,000.

"We were scrambling at first, trying to figure out how to start," says Hawkins, a junior at Timberland High School. "But we learned to be patient, stick together and have faith in one another."

Cooperative Youth Summit students also learned about civic engagement and government from John Frick, the vice president of government relations at the Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina. And state Rep. Micah Caskey answered questions from the students and encouraged them to consider public service in their futures.

"It was a great opportunity to learn about how our government works and how the electric cooperatives help us in many ways," says Cane Bay High School junior Rauchut. "It was cool to hear from different people about what they do."

WANT TO GO NEXT SUMMER? High school sophomores and juniors interested in participating in Cooperative Youth Summit or Washington Youth Tour in 2026 are encouraged to visit ecsc.org/youth. Washington Youth Tour takes place June 14–19, 2026, and Cooperative Youth Summit is July 13–16.

CANYON DURHAM



Rauchut (right) and the other 50 Cooperative Youth Summit students helped the South Carolina WIRE chapter pack 500 bags of essentials for deserving children as part of their Kids Closet initiative. WIRE is a statewide community service organization of the state's electric cooperatives.



Ye discusses proposals with other Youth Summit students during an exercise in which they were tasked with "passing" hypothetical health care legislation.

Powering McClellanville



Tim Mobley, former vice president of engineering & operations, discusses the need for a transmission line to serve McClellanville during a town hall meeting in 2019.

A POTENTIAL SOLUTION to persistent power problems for McClellanville members may finally be on the horizon after more than 25 years. The project, spearheaded by Central Electric Power Cooperative and Berkeley Electric, has reached a pivotal milestone. In August, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service approved a critical environmental impact analysis, marking the final major federal hurdle for the initiative. This approval paves the way for a 23.3-mile, 115-kilovolt transmission line that will connect a new substation off Highway 17 in McClellanville to an existing connection point near Highway 41 in Jamestown. The proposed line's preferred route will primarily follow existing rights-of-way and cleared roads to minimize environmental disruption and construction costs.

Why is it needed?

Residents and businesses in McClellanville endure an average of 11 hours without electricity each year—38 times more than the rest of the state's electric cooperative members. The primary cause is a vulnerable distribution line connected to a Dominion Energy substation more than 20 miles away in Mount Pleasant.

Without the proposed transmission line, it is difficult to backfeed, or re-route, power to members during an outage. Any disruption that occurs along the distribution line often leaves all the members further downline without power. Shortening the distance that the electricity must be transmitted also improves power quality.

What's next?

Central Electric needs to obtain final state permits and secure a loan from the Rural Utilities Service. Once those steps are completed, construction is expected to take three years.

Do you have unclaimed funds?

AS A MEMBER of Berkeley Electric Cooperative, you are also an owner. When you make a payment to Berkeley Electric, a portion of that payment goes directly toward your "capital" investment in our electrical system. Unlike investor-owned utilities that generate profits on behalf of shareholders, not-for-profit electric cooperatives return any profits, or margins, to their members in the form of capital credits. Capital Credits are disbursed on an annual basis in years in which the cooperative has generated a profit. The board of directors determines the percentage of payout. Active members will receive a bill credit, and inactive members, with a valid mailing address, will receive a mailed check.

If a retired capital credit check is mailed to a member but never cashed, or if the member has moved and the co-op doesn't have updated contact information, these funds become unclaimed capital credits.

Berkeley Electric maintains a searchable list of these unclaimed capital credits on its website at berkeleyelectric.coop which is updated annually. The database can be found under the "My Co-op" menu, which links to the Capital Credits page where members can click on the "Unclaimed Capital Credits" button in the banner. If your name appears in the database, please contact the cooperative to verify the information and to claim the funds. To claim funds, contact the Accounting Department by calling the cooperative at (843) 899-9120.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Take advantage of "shoulder months," which refer to the transitional periods between peak heating and cooling seasons. During the fall, these milder weeks typically occur between September and November. Shoulder months offer a great opportunity to reduce home energy consumption as the need for extensive heating or cooling is reduced. Look for simple ways to boost indoor comfort without running your heating and cooling system. Use ceiling fans and open windows on breezy days to ventilate your home. On cooler days, add a layer of clothing and avoid running the heat.