



**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) 761-8200/825-3383  
 MCMemberRequests@bec.coop

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Robert Vandross, *District 1*  
 Clay Helms, *District 2*  
 Wayne DeWitt, *District 3*  
*Board Chairman*  
 Sam Gourdine, *District 4*  
 Debbie C. Bryant, *District 5*  
 Willis Sanders, *District 6*  
*Board Vice Chairman*  
 Connie P. Shuler, *District 7*  
*Secretary/Treasurer*  
 Robert Jenkins, *District 8*  
 Henry H. Chavis, Sr., *District 9*

**PRESIDENT & CEO**

Mike Fuller

**CONNECT WITH US ON SOCIAL:**

- @BerkeleyElectricCooperative
- @berkeleyelectriccoop
- @BerkeleyElectricCooperative
- @BerkeleyElectricCooperativeInc



**MIKE FULLER**  
 President & CEO

## Partnerships help build community

**WHEN MOST PEOPLE THINK** about an electric cooperative, they think about the lights staying on and the bills staying manageable. And yes, that's our core mission. But during my career in co-ops, I've come to understand something that doesn't show up on any balance sheet. One of the most powerful things we can deliver isn't electricity—it's partnership.

At Berkeley Electric, we've always believed that our responsibility extends beyond the meter. We exist to serve our members, and our members are our neighbors. That means when someone in our service territory is struggling—when a family can't afford to heat their home safely, or when a leaking roof triggers a chain reaction of damage that rolls through a household already stretched thin—that's our concern too. The cooperative model was built on that ethic. But as our service territory grows and the needs of our community deepen, we can't do it all alone. That's where the impact of strategic business partnerships becomes apparent.

### A new round of funding

After a successful first year, I am pleased to announce that Google has decided to renew its energy efficiency grant and double the funding to \$500,000 for the second round. This will be a continuation of the work we did last year of making critical energy-efficiency upgrades to members' homes and will allow us to further expand those efforts.

When Google first approached us about targeting energy affordability for vulnerable members, it was a natural fit. We know who is struggling with high energy bills. We have certified energy auditors on staff. We have trusted community relationships. What we sometimes lack is the funding to reach people who need help.

The Google grant fills that gap—and then some. But what makes this partnership truly exceptional isn't just the dollars; it is how we stretch them. We partnered with Hope Repair, the volunteer-driven outreach ministry of Pointe North Church, which has completed critical home repairs for more than a thousand local families. We brought in local HVAC veterans who knew the specific challenges of Lowcountry homes—the moisture, the aging ductwork, the failing insulation. And by purchasing highly efficient mini-split systems in bulk, we drove down per-unit costs and extended the reach of every grant dollar. The result was 50 homes transformed in 2025.

The impact goes far beyond lower utility bills, however. One member, whose husband suffers from a respiratory condition, told us that cleaner air in their home has measurably improved his health. Another family had their power costs drop by 40%. These aren't just statistics—these are real results for real people.

### The power of partnership

When a company like Google chooses to invest in the communities where it operates, and when a cooperative like ours provides the on-the-ground expertise and trusted member relationships to use those resources wisely, the impact is multiplied in ways neither could achieve independently.

As a cooperative, we know that work is always better when we do it together, because the lights we're keeping on aren't just the ones in your living room. They're the ones that light a path toward a healthier, happier and more sustainable community.

Sincerely,



## Co-op delivers more than power

**WHEN A CONTRACTOR** accidentally broke a major supply line in March, Berkeley County Schools found themselves high and dry and in need of water during the incident that lasted several days.

Thanks to a close working relationship with the school district, Berkeley Electric was notified of the need and delivered more than 2,600 bottles of water for the students and staff.



## Getting to the root of the problem

**DID YOU KNOW** that planting vegetation near underground electrical equipment can lead to an outage? Roots from trees and shrubs can grow into the box if planted too closely, and heavy foliage, such as ornamental grass, can block airflow and cause overheating.

Help us by maintaining a 4-foot clearance around the sides and back of padmount transformers, and a 10-foot clearance at the front where the cabinet door opens. Be sure to never play, plant, or build structures near electrical equipment. It endangers everyone's safety and can delay the restoration of power.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**, visit the **Vegetation Management** page under "My Energy" on our website at [berkeleyelectric.coop](http://berkeleyelectric.coop).



## A bird's eye view

**MEMBERS CAN GET** a bird's eye view of an osprey nest by tuning in to the co-op's new nestcam as a pair make their seasonal home at Berkeley Electric's headquarters.

The cooperative was notified by a homebuilder in 2022 that ospreys had built a nest on a pole that was in the way of a housing development in the Highway 52 area. Because it is illegal to disturb a bird's nest under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, nothing could be done with the pole or nest at that time.

Later that summer, after the fledglings left, Berkeley Electric reached out to the Center for Birds of Prey. They provided the design for a nesting platform, which was built by the co-op's corporate services team and installed at the top a pole located nearby.

Ospreys are known to return to the same nesting site year after year, so the hope was that they would adopt the new platform. Because the new pole was installed specifically for the osprey pair, there is no electrical hazard at the new location. This is a significant improvement from the previous site, where the birds had built their nest among high-voltage lines on an existing pole.

The birds returned to the new nest location in the spring of 2024. The co-op's IT department installed a camera in December 2025 and started a livestream, which the public can enjoy by visiting Berkeley's website at [berkeleyelectric.coop](http://berkeleyelectric.coop) or by watching the livestream on Berkeley Electric's YouTube channel.

As of early April, the osprey had laid two eggs, and the male can often be seen delivering fish to the female. It typically takes slightly longer than a month for the eggs to hatch, and osprey chicks usually take their first flight approximately two months after hatching.

Be sure to follow us on social media to get updates on the osprey pair and to take part in a contest to name the chicks once they hatch.



Wayne DeWitt  
Trustee, District 3

## Not one of the usual suspects

**LIVING IN THE LOWCOUNTRY**, we are used to disruptions caused by Mother Nature. Hurricanes, tropical storms, the occasional ice storm and even the odd tornado are all featured in our local rogues' gallery. If you were paying attention about a month ago, though, you would have seen a new danger making its way onto the stage—wildfires.

South Carolina recently imposed a statewide burn ban across all counties, prohibiting outdoor burning, including campfires and yard debris. The lack of rain and low humidity created perfect conditions, just waiting for a spark.

While we were lucky enough to make it through that drought period without incident, gone are the days when wildfires were primarily confined to the western United States. Rising temperatures, prolonged drought and shifting weather patterns are creating dangerous conditions in places that historically experienced few major fires. Today, more than 30 states, including South Carolina, face elevated wildfire risk. The reality is clear: wildfire risk is no longer regional—it is national.

At Berkeley Electric Cooperative, protecting our members and the communities we serve is our highest priority. As we recognize National Wildfire Awareness Month in May, I want you to know that wildfire mitigation is not seasonal work for us. It is a year-round commitment embedded in how we operate and invest in our local system.

One of the most important ways we reduce wildfire threats is through our comprehensive vegetation management program. Overgrown trees and power lines are a dangerous combination, particularly during dry and windy conditions. Throughout



U.S. FOREST SERVICE

**Wildfires have become a nationwide issue that are a new source of potential electrical outages.**

the year, Berkeley Electric crews—along with our trusted local contractors—proactively trim and remove vegetation that could come into contact with power lines and other critical infrastructure. While it may not always be visible, it is one of the most effective tools we have for preventing ignition and maintaining reliable electricity.

In addition to boots on the ground, Berkeley is leveraging advanced technology to strengthen our system. We are deploying specialized power line sensors that continuously monitor equipment performance and alert us to potential issues before they escalate. Advanced imaging tools and system analytics allow us to detect abnormal conditions and respond quickly. By investing in these modern technologies, we are identifying risks early and addressing them before they become emergencies.

Wildfire mitigation also requires thoughtful public policy. Managing electric infrastructure in and around public lands can present unique challenges. That is why we support practical, commonsense solutions such as the Fix Our Forests Act, which would streamline the ability of electric cooperatives and other utilities to maintain power lines on federal lands and reduce hazardous “fuel” buildup.

At Berkeley Electric, we take this responsibility seriously. While we are committed to doing our part, wildfire prevention is a shared responsibility. There are important steps each of us can take to protect our homes and neighborhoods. Like Smokey Bear says, “Remember, only you can prevent forest fires.”

Sincerely,

| BERKELEY AT-A-GLANCE        | JAN. 2025   | JAN. 2026   |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Total kWh sold              | 490,496,295 | 492,099,913 |
| No. meters served           | 133,072     | 137,694     |
| Avg. residential kWh/meter  | 1,679       | 1,382       |
| Avg. residential bill/meter | \$231.33    | \$222.59    |
| Miles of line               | 6515        | 6646        |
| Avg. daily high temperature | 55          | 60          |
| Avg. daily low temperature  | 32          | 37          |

## Your tools to beat the heat

### New ways to save on summer energy costs

BY JOSH CROTZER

**FOR MOST LOWCOUNTRY** households, summer heat can lead to increased energy use. But Berkeley Electric members have the tools to be ready and proactive.

“We want to give members lots of ways to manage their energy use,” says Eddie Plowden, director of energy services at Berkeley Electric.

The cooperative already contacts members through its proactive high-bill program when energy data alerts the co-op to unusual spikes in usage. Now, new self-service tools extend that same awareness to members who want to monitor their own usage.

#### Getting ahead

One new tool is the high-usage alert through the SmartHub account management app on your computer or mobile device. Members can set a daily or hourly energy-use threshold and receive notifications via text or email when they exceed it. Plowden recommends that members identify their typical daily energy peak through SmartHub’s usage history view.

“If you set the threshold a little bit lower (than that peak), you’ll get a couple of notices during the year,” Plowden says. “It’s a good way to be aware so that you can make adjustments.”

High-usage alerts also allow members to catch hidden issues with major appliances, such as a cooling system or a leaking water heater line that can quietly but drastically increase power consumption.

“You’d know about it right away,” Plowden says. “Then we can work with the member on figuring out what is causing the problem based on the hourly usage data.”

#### Appliance intelligence

Bidgely AI goes a step further. The artificial intelligence-powered energy analytics tool identifies the unique power use profile of each appliance in a home and estimates how much of a member’s bill goes toward cooling, water heating, cooking and more. That breakdown appears in each member’s SmartHub portal and is updated each billing cycle.

Members can improve Bidgely’s accuracy by providing details about their home’s size, heating and cooling equipment and other appliances.

This summer, Berkeley Electric will activate Bidgely’s projected bill feature: a mid-cycle estimate of a member’s next bill, giving them time to act before the meter reads.

“If you know your bill is going to be higher than expected, you can make adjustments,” Plowden says. “It allows a member



**BEC not only offers a variety of online tools but also an entire series of money-saving tips by our own energy guru, Eddie Plowden.**

to be aware of how their bill is trending and not be surprised.”

Members can access these tools through their SmartHub app online or on your mobile device.

#### More ways to save

For members needing a more hands-on approach, Berkeley Electric’s energy services team conducts in-home energy audits to help identify inefficiencies and equipment issues that data alone may not capture.

The cooperative also offers a program through which members can either purchase an Ecobee smart thermostat through Berkeley Electric or connect a compatible smart thermostat they already own. Both options reward participation with a one-time \$150 bill credit and annual credits of up to \$75.

To find out more, log into your SmartHub app, visit [berkeleyelectric.coop](http://berkeleyelectric.coop) or call (800) 327-9615.

#### SELF-HELP TOOLBOX

These member tools are available now through the SmartHub app online or on your mobile device.

**High-usage alerts**—Get a text or email when your daily use spikes.

**Energy breakdown**—See your bill broken down by appliance.

**Home profile survey**—Answer a few questions to sharpen Bidgely’s estimates.

**Bill analysis**—See why one bill was higher than another, appliance by appliance.

**Projected bill**—A mid-cycle estimate of your next bill.

**My recommendations**—Personalized, energy-saving tips.

Reliable backup power when it matters most.



Install Now & Receive

**12YR** PowerPlus  
WARRANTY

Exclusive Offer Valued at \$1,499

Plus get \$500 off installation

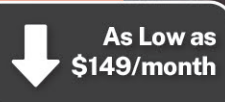
Offer Ends: June 30, 2026. \* Terms & conditions apply.



12-Year  
Warranty  
Included



Turn-Key  
Installation



As Low as  
\$149/month

**866.942.3366**

**CanterPower.com**

Schedule Your  
Free Estimate



**Berkeley Propane**  
A Subsidiary of Berkeley Electric Cooperative

Berkeley Electric Cooperative owns, operates and maintains electric distribution and transmission infrastructure that supply electricity to homes and businesses throughout Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester counties. Canter Power Systems is the nation's #1 residential generator installer and Berkeley Electric Cooperative's preferred provider, seller, and installer for this exclusive offer. Offers valid on new Canter customers only. Warranty is included with purchase of Generac air-cooled system plus maintenance plan. Financing subject to qualification. Terms and conditions apply and subject to change. See Canter for complete details. Offers expire 6/30/2026.

## Safety, family drive linemen

BY JOSH P. CROTZER

**LOTS OF REASONS** compelled Berkeley Electric’s Ashby Freeman to compete in his fifth South Carolina Lineman’s Rodeo—co-op pride, lineworker brotherhood and the satisfaction of doing a job well.

But it really comes down to two small faces in the crowd.

“That’s why we do it,” says Freeman, looking toward the spot he’d last seen his wife and sons, aged 5 and 1. “I’ve got two boys, and I want them to see what I do. Who knows? Maybe they will follow in my footsteps one day.”

The annual rodeo mirrors the challenges lineworkers face when they are working with energized lines. This year’s event in March, sponsored by The Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina, drew more than 40 apprentices and 14 journeyman teams to compete in events such as the hurtman rescue, overhead bell changeout, and obstacle course in front of family and friends. The event was hosted by Black River Electric and Santee Electric at the Clarendon County Industrial Park in Manning.

Freeman, along with crewmates Bobby Jackson and Kevin McHoney, finished third overall in the journeyman division. They placed third in the hurtman rescue event the B-phase bell changeout events.

Berkeley Electric’s other journeyman crew of KJ Rhode, Carter Nelson and Britt Pipkin took second overall, placing first in the obstacle course event and first in hurtman rescue.

Owen Ford captured first place in the apprentice division’s bell changeout event. Other apprentices competing included A.J. Legette, Brandon Fowler, Samuel McCants, Shane Scarborough and Ethan Dawson.

While skill and speed earn the competitors trophies, it’s not the main emphasis of the South Carolina Lineman’s Rodeo. The strict judging criteria are designed to reinforce safe and essential daily practices.



Several Berkeley Electric linemen took home hardware, including (left to right) Kevin McHoney, Ashby Freeman, Bobby Jackson, Britt Pipkin, Robbie Harrelson, Carter Nelson, KJ Rhode and Owen Ford.

For Freeman and the rest of Berkeley Electric’s lineworkers, safety is always the focus.

“That’s what we live and breathe every day,” says Freeman. “Nothing changes, even when we don’t have anyone watching us.”

The habits sharpened at the rodeo carry directly into real-world storm response, where crews work long hours in unpredictable conditions.

“We definitely put what we do here in play out in the field,” says Freeman. “During storm season, sometimes we’re working to get something energized around a lot of water, and you can’t get the bucket to it, so that means we’re climbing poles.”

The rodeo’s festival-like atmosphere also included activities for families and a live-line demonstration, presented by Berkeley Electric, to teach the importance of safety around power lines.

### Lineman’s rodeo events

**EACH EVENT** is built around a real-world task lineworkers perform on the job. Crews start with a perfect score of 100 and lose points for any safety lapse. Time is recorded only as a tiebreaker.

**Hurtman rescue**—A crew or individual responds to a simulated injured lineman (mannequin) at the top of a 40-foot pole.

**B-phase bell changeout**—Replacing failed bell insulators on a multi-phase overhead line.

**Vertical line transfer**—Working from a pole, a journeyman crew transfers an energized conductor from one position to another.

**Obstacle course**—Competitors maneuver tools, materials, and conductors through a defined course on the pole.

**Drop-in pin & insulator changeout**—An apprentice climbs to the crossarm and replaces a failed pin-style insulator without losing control of the line.