



**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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 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

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## Keeping our options open

**WE’VE ALL HEARD** the phrase, “Don’t put all your eggs in one basket.” This popular saying is often used as a

warning to be careful about what you’re about to do. Another way of putting it is to hedge your bets by using multiple options, and this also holds true when it comes to providing power.

One area this strategy applies to is Berkeley Electric’s common-sense approach to the current energy transition. We know consumer interest in renewable energy continues to grow. We’ve seen this trend here in South Carolina, particularly in the construction of solar farms.

Recent innovations and advances in technologies have made renewables more practical and affordable. Over the last few years, Berkeley Electric has seen the fuel mix used to generate its power increasingly utilize a variety of renewable sources such as solar, biogas from landfills and biomass like wood pellets. And it’s not just us. Nationally, there’s increasing reliance on renewable energy sources at the same time we’re seeing fossil fuel plants taken off-line, often ahead of schedule.

So how do we balance the challenges of grid pressure and a changing fuel mix? Renewables are certainly beneficial for the environment. They are limited resources though until battery storage technology catches up because the sun does not always shine, and the wind does not always blow. These are important considerations as our primary responsibility is to provide electricity around the clock to our communities. To do this, we still need to use other forms of energy to provide base load generation. These are generally fossil fuels such as coal and natural gas that can provide power on demand 24/7

instead of being weather dependent. That’s why there is value in maintaining a diverse mix of fuel sources—especially since it also allows us to control costs by using the most cost-efficient fuels to meet demand. The same holds true for choosing energy providers.

Berkeley Electric Cooperative is what’s known as a distribution co-op. We do not generate electricity ourselves but, instead, purchase it from Central Electric Power Cooperative. Central buys bulk power on behalf of all the cooperatives in the state to get the best price possible. That power is then transmitted to Berkeley’s system and distributed to our members’ homes by the poles and wires we own and maintain. Central, in turn, maintains power purchase agreements with multiple utility providers. By not locking into a contract with a single provider, Central is able to provide both the fuel mix we need and is able to control costs by shopping around for the best available price.

Reliable. Safe. Affordable. These are the cornerstones on which Berkeley Electric provides energy to its members. As I’ve mentioned in my last few columns, there are a lot of competing pressures making it a challenge to keep the cornerstones of our service intact. However, as long as we keep our options open and continue to avoid putting all of our eggs in one basket, Berkeley will be able to provide the power our members need at a price they can afford in today’s ever-connected world.

Sincerely,

**MIKE FULLER**  
 President & CEO



Berkeley Electric now offers audio and video podcast versions of its two radio shows that feature community leaders, industry news and energy tips.

## Time to tune in

WITH THE POPULARITY of podcasts growing, Berkeley Electric is now offering online versions of its two long-running radio shows. Audio editions of both Power Talk and Conversaciones Electrificantes can now be found on popular podcast streaming platforms including Spotify, iHeartRadio and Apple Podcasts.

For a behind-the-scenes look, members can also watch the shows in studio with video versions hosted on the co-op's YouTube channel. Power Talk can still be listened to live each Saturday morning on WJNI 106.3 FM at 10 a.m. and if you habla español, tune in at the same time to La Raza 103.9 FM or Tu Música 95.5 FM for Conversaciones Electrificantes.

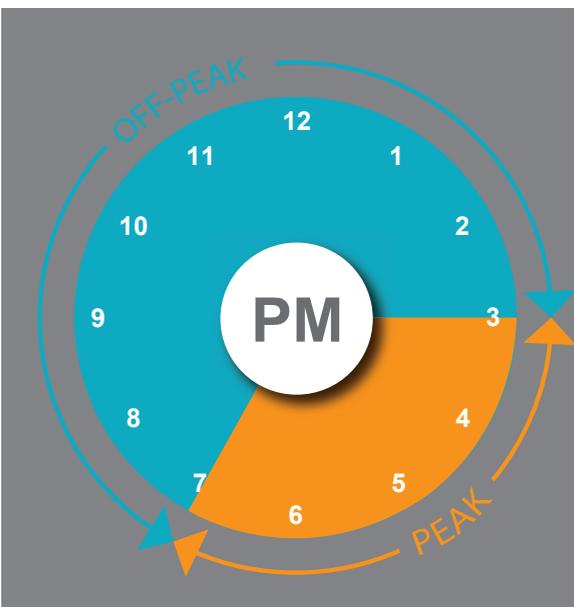
Both shows feature community leaders and information as well as industry news and energy tips. The shows are recorded in the co-op's new recording studio located in the Moncks Corner headquarters. The on-site studio eliminates two hours of drive time and offers greater flexibility for producing shows.

## Protecting our members

WHAT STARTED OUT as a routine energy audit ended up as a possibly lifesaving visit for a member in McClellanville. While investigating a high bill, Energy Specialist Josh Laughter noticed that the member was paying around \$500 a month during the cold season and discovered an issue with their HVAC system. When Laughter and Mike Sowder of Air Concept Solutions visited the member's home to take a closer look, they quickly realized that the newly installed thermostat had been wired incorrectly. Further investigation found melted wires in the air handler and when the HVAC unit was cut on a small fire occurred. Luckily, the fire happened while they were on-site to extinguish it and could disconnect the heat strips to prevent further problems. With the help of Air Concepts, the thermostat and heat strips were safely fixed and now the member's bill has dropped from \$500 a month to around \$100-\$150.



An incorrectly wired thermostat led to high bills and a potentially deadly electrical fire at a member's home in McClellanville.



## CHECK THE HOUR BEFORE USING POWER

Berkeley Electric's Time-of-Day rate (TOD) is a voluntary program that rewards members with a lower electric rate for shifting energy-intensive tasks - such as laundry, cooking and heating/cooling - away from peak hours. Summer peak hours are from 3 pm to 7 pm and are in effect from April-October. These are the few hours each day where demand for electricity is the highest and most expensive.

The more you can shift energy use away from the peak-time the more you save but it requires an active change in habits to achieve maximum savings. Members can estimate how much they can save on the Time-of-Day rate by using the interactive calculator on Smarthub. The calculator is located on the "Explore Usage Management" tab or by clicking the green button at the bottom of the screen.

OFF-PEAK RATE: 5.91¢ per kWh\* PEAK RATE: 28.2¢ per kWh\*

\*rates reflect power cost adjuster & do not apply to members on regular residential rate (11.12¢)



**Sheila Powell**  
Trustee, District 2

# When the lights go out, so do they

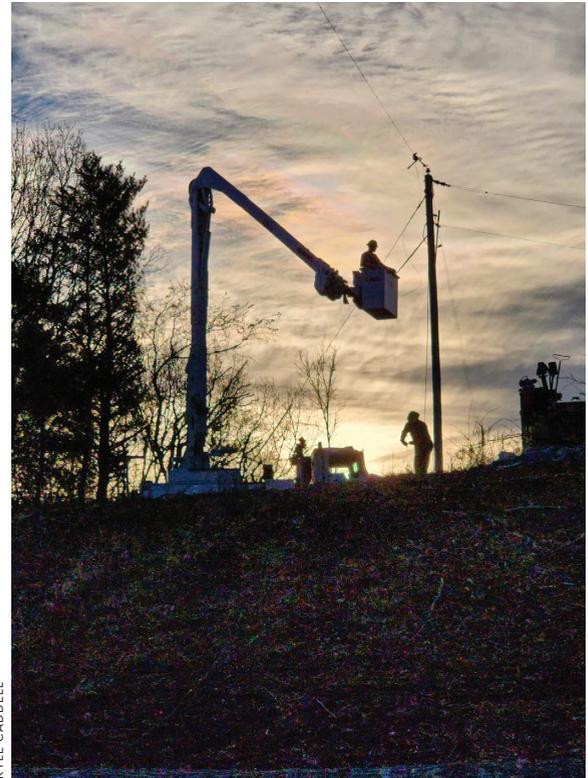
**ELECTRICITY IS AN** essential part of modern life, and we often take it for granted. We turn on our lights, charge our devices and power our appliances without thinking twice about where the electricity comes from. However, behind the scenes, there are lineworkers working tirelessly to ensure that we have a reliable and safe supply of electricity.

Linemen not only serve a vital role on our own system but they also come together for other communities in the aftermath of severe weather. A perfect example is when crews from Berkeley Electric recently traveled nearly 500 miles to Kentucky to help the members of Jackson Energy Cooperative in the wake of a storm that spawned straight-line winds that broke at least 75 poles and left over 13,000 members without power.

Not only did our linemen leave their own families behind for nearly a week but they also faced the challenge of working in mountainous terrain on an unfamiliar system in difficult conditions. Let's not forget that even their everyday job consists of work in all kinds of weather conditions, climbing high utility poles and working with high voltage electricity, which can be deadly if not handled properly.

Despite the risks and challenges of the job, lineworkers are committed to keeping the lights on for their communities. They often work long hours, including nights, weekends and holidays, to respond to power outages and emergencies. As the saying goes, "when the lights go out, so do linemen."

It is important to note that lineworkers not only serve our communities during times of crisis but also during times of growth and development. Their work enables the creation of new jobs and businesses, the expansion of healthcare facilities and educational institutions and the growth of our economy as a whole. Redwood Materials, Nexton Elementary and the new Roper Hospital are just



KYLE CADDELL

**BEC crews recently drove to Kentucky to assist a sister co-op after strong storms left 13,000 members without power.**

a few examples of the type of projects vital to our service territory.

As we continue to rely more and more on technology and electricity, the demand for skilled lineworkers will only increase. Nationwide, there are approximately 120,000 electric lineworkers. Berkeley Electric has more than 85 lineworkers, foremen and superintendents that are responsible for maintaining more than 6,000 miles of power lines across three counties. They are often the unsung heroes who keep our daily lives running smoothly, which is why we are proud to recognize them on Lineman Appreciation Day to show our gratitude and appreciation for their hard work. So, as we officially celebrate them on April 18, let's also take a moment to remember to #thankalineman the next time we see them...even if the lights are on.

Sincerely,

<b>BERKELEY AT-A-GLANCE</b>	<b>DECEMBER 2021</b>	<b>DECEMBER 2022</b>
Total kWh sold	325,915,000	408,282,747
No. meters served	116,012	121,279
Avg. residential kWh/meter	1,052	1,477
Avg. residential bill/meter	\$141.25	\$185.38
Miles of line	6097	6230
Avg. daily high temperature	70	62
Avg. daily low temperature	48	42

# Summerville's Tisdale wins Pay it Forward competition

BY JOSH P. CROTZER

**PRINCESS TISDALE IS** from Summerville, one of the fastest growing communities in the state. So, she has seen first-hand the benefits of strong economic investments and succeeding schools.

In her freshman year at South Carolina State University's Dr. Emily England Clyburn Honors College, Tisdale and three classmates explored ways other rural communities in South Carolina might similarly thrive. Their proposal, "The Rural Entrepreneurship and Education Pipeline Project," earned them the University's top prize in the Pay it Forward competition. The competition, sponsored by South Carolina's electric cooperatives, challenges students to search for solutions to pressing social and economic problems in the state's rural areas.

Tisdale, Jadon Reed of Orangeburg, Rejoice Aneale of Springdale, Maryland, and Cleotilde Perdue of Ridgely, West Virginia, were each awarded \$1,000 for their proposal to establish mentoring connections between students and post-graduates of local institutions of higher education. Their research focused on the communities of Orangeburg, Ehrhardt and St. Matthews.

"Orangeburg has all the resources to grow and develop economically," says Tisdale, whose Summerville home is served by Berkeley Electric Cooperative. "It's a matter of changing the perception of what it can be, a thriving college town."

Dr. Harriet Roland, dean of Clyburn College, advised the



(from left) Dr. Harriet Roland, Dean of the Elizabeth Clyburn Honors College Summerville, Summerville native Princess Tisdale and South Carolina State University president Alexander Conyers.

winning students on their project and also received \$1,000.

"This was a tremendous learning opportunity for our students," says Roland. "The great thing about this competition is that it makes them more engaged with rural communities and how these types of projects can work to their advantage."

South Carolina State was one of the three state public universities participating in the competition, including the University of South Carolina and Clemson University. The team from the University of South Carolina won the statewide competition, and a grand prize of \$5,000.

## Returning to college?

### Scholarships available for women

**APPLICATIONS ARE NOW OPEN** for the Jenny Ballard Opportunity Scholarship, a one-time award available to adult female members of Berkeley Electric whose pursuit of a college degree has been interrupted or delayed.

Sponsored by Women Involved in Rural Electrification (WIRE)—a service organization associated with South Carolina's electric cooperatives—the \$2,500 scholarship is based on need and personal goals. The deadline to apply is June 1.

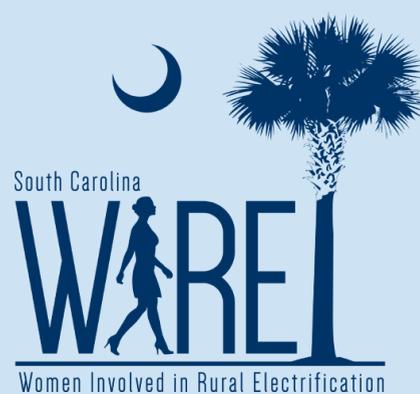
"I know there are many among our members who are pursuing a degree after making necessary sacrifices for their family," says Brianna Johnson, BEC WIRE coordinator. "We salute

them and encourage them to apply for this scholarship."

Applications are also available at your local electric cooperative. The scholarship will be awarded based on the information provided in the application.

Applicants for the program must:

- ▶ Be a member of Berkeley Electric Cooperative;
- ▶ Have graduated from high school or earned a GED at least 10 years ago;
- ▶ Obtain acceptance into an accredited college or university.
- ▶ Demonstrate financial need.



Recipients will receive scholarships for the fall 2023 or spring 2024 semester, with funds paid to the college or university.

To apply online, visit our WIRE page under "My Community" at [berkeleyelectric.coop](http://berkeleyelectric.coop) or go to [ecsc.org/wire](http://ecsc.org/wire).

## Charging ahead with EVs

**YOU'VE LIKELY HEARD** that most automakers are transitioning many or all their new vehicles to electric-only models over the next 10 years. Regardless of the type of car you drive today, the electrification of the transportation sector is underway. While this transformation is happening quicker in larger cities, it has already begun here in the Lowcountry, as well.

Berkeley Electric Cooperative regularly receives inquiries about electric vehicles from members and has also started to work with local businesses and municipalities to install charging networks. Local dealership McElveen Buick GMC in Summerville, which offers the all-electric HUMMER EV, recently installed a dual-head public charger with the help of the co-op. This is part of a GM initiative to provide EV chargers at all dealerships and McElveen is already planning to install another charger by year's end.

"The same situation is happening with Berkeley Ford," says Eddie Plowden, director of energy services. "I see this happening with any dealership that offers electric vehicles. They will have to in order to stay competitive."

The co-op is also working with the Pilot gas station in Jedburg to install a dual 350-kW charging station and there are also plans to install 11 EV chargers at the Refuel station in Camp Hall.

Electric vehicle chargers are also popping up in other places as well. Berkeley is currently working with the Town of Seabrook Island on plans to install a charger and, last year, installed a free charger at town hall for the City of Goose Creek. Goose Creek officials are looking toward the future as well with plans to install additional chargers at Central Creek Park.

"The town is also in the initial stages of requiring new houses to be built with the right amperage to handle level 2 EV chargers," says Bert Walling, director of key accounts and government relations.

### Member resources

Berkeley Electric offers a variety of resources for members considering making the switch to electric vehicles including:

**ChooseEV:** Berkeley's free web-based tool provides members with a savings calculator, info on EVs, a public charging map and tips to choose the best EV for their lifestyle.

**Optiwatt:** a free app available to EV owners that helps automatically schedule their EV to charge when electricity rates are the cheapest. Users save an average of 60% when charging their EV by using Optiwatt while using the off-peak rate.

**Time-of-day rate:** a voluntary program that rewards members with a lower electric rate for shifting energy-intensive tasks—such as charging EVs or doing the



PEYTON DRESS

Berkeley Electric hosted an EV drive-in for members to show off their rides and learn more about electric vehicles. Free chargers are also available at the Moncks Corner and Johns Island offices.



PEYTON DRESS

An increasing number of Lowcountry automobile dealerships are installing public chargers as part of the transition to EVs, including McElveen GMC in Summerville.

laundry—away from peak hours. Peak hours are the few hours each day where demand for electricity is the highest and most expensive. The co-op is closely monitoring the growth of EVs on its system to ensure that the added demand does not negatively affect reliability. The load of a direct current (DC) charging station is comparable to adding a large commercial account.

"The growth and the vehicles are coming," Plowden says. "What's great is that the co-op already has tools to help educate its members. We're not advocating for or against. We're just here to help them make the choice that's best for them."

I guess you could say we're ahead of the curve trying to help our members with this new product. We are all up to speed at BEC."

# BRIGHT IDEAS 5K

**/// LAST CHANCE**

**4/22**

DATE

**8 AM**

START

**\$40**

FEE

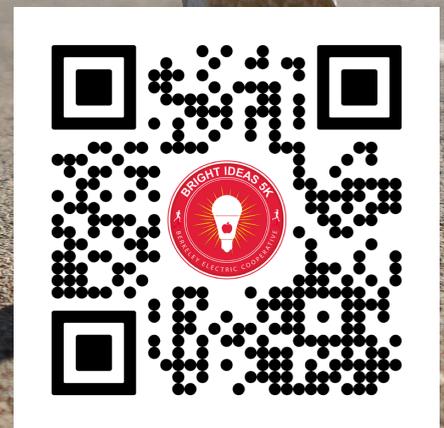
PRESENTED BY:

**HELP SUPPORT  
LOCAL TEACHERS**

[SCAN ME]

**CYPRESS  
GARDENS**

**MONCKS  
CORNER**



**PARIC**  
EXPERIENCE. EXCELLENCE.