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 AWMemberRequests@bec.coop

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 (843) 553-5020
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 Johns Island, SC 29455
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The power of human connections



I AM NOT SURE the last time I was so glad to turn the calendar page to November. Most years it is because it marks the start of the holiday season when we get to share thanks for what the year has brought us and spend more time with family and friends.

This year, it is because November marks the end of hurricane season.

This has been, without a doubt, the worst storm season I have experienced as CEO of Berkeley Electric. First Hurricane Debby brought historic flooding to our service territory, along with a tornado that tore a path of destruction through Moncks Corner. Although more of a rain event, Debby still caused almost 22,000 outages over several days as the storm moved slowly across our service territory.

And then there was Helene.

What Debby lacked in ferocity was made up by Hurricane Helene as it moved through Florida and both Carolinas. I mentioned that I was thankful that hurricane season was over, but I am also thankful that we were spared the worst of Helene's effects.

Although Berkeley had almost 23,000 members affected and 23 broken poles across the systems, our crews were able to restore everyone in two days. Other cooperatives were not so lucky.

More than 425,000 co-op meters were knocked out of service across the state with over 5,000 broken poles, hundreds of miles of wire destroyed with restoration efforts expected to last almost a month in some areas.

With Helene shaping up to be one of the largest storm restoration efforts in the state's history, I knew that our mutual aid efforts would need to include more than linemen. I challenged employees to think about how our skills and resources at Berkeley could be used to help our fellow co-ops and they responded.

In addition to over 60 linemen dispatched all over the state, other departments volunteered their time and skills as well.

Right-of-way crews were sent to Laurens, Broad River and Coastal Electric to assist with clearing trees and acting as distribution leaders for out-of-town crews.

Several warehousemen were dispatched to Laurens Electric and Aiken Electric to help manage the flow of materials needed for restoration efforts. Our warehouse also donated surplus materials needed for overhead line restoration to CEE-US, our statewide materials supplier, as well as lent them the use of two tractor trailers to transport materials to the Upstate.

Berkeley Propane also did its part by donating hundreds of gallons of propane to the Asheville Airport to aid recovery efforts in North Carolina.

Our inside employees also pitched in with Member Services assisting Little River Electric with billing issues and Coastal Electric with DSS reporting of SNAP benefits.

The Energy Services department sent employees to Blue Ridge Electric to answer questions about their new rate to free up the call center to handle outage calls and our Communications team assisted Edisto Electric with outage communications and responding to the flood of social media inquiries.

So yes, I am thankful that hurricane season is over and that we were spared the worst of its fury. But I am also truly thankful to the dedication of our employees and to be part of a cooperative network that is always ready to help those in need.

Sincerely,

MIKE FULLER
 President & CEO



The results are in! We are always amazed by the talent of our members and this year was no different. After multiple rounds of judging, and receiving nearly 100 stunning pieces of art, the following members will be awarded \$100 for each of their winning entries featured in the 2025 calendar.

Congratulations to our winners!

- | | |
|--|--|
| Mary Ann Baker , Moncks Corner | Hunter Chandler , Moncks Corner |
| Johnnie Stanfield , Goose Creek | Heather Deacon , Goose Creek |
| Julie Byrd Diana , Johns Island | Trina Lyn , Goose Creek |
| Cheryl Butler , Moncks Corner | Pascale Bilgis , Johns Island |
| Judy Sullivan , Summerville | Patrick Leitner , Goose Creek |
| Susan Selvey , Goose Creek | Michael Cyra , Johns Island |
| Lori Moen , Goose Creek | |

FLIP THE SWITCH TO PAPERLESS BILLING

Win \$100

Sign in to your SmartHub account, choose “Settings” and flip the switch to “go paperless” and you'll be automatically entered into a drawing for a \$100 bill credit. Berkeley Electric is giving away 10 bill credits each month in November and December so be sure make the switch for your chance to win!



- Electrical Lineworker Scholarship**
 Ready to start a new career? Apply for a full scholarship to our Electrical Lineworker Program at Trident Technical College. Apply at berkeleyelectric.coop by Nov. 22.
- 12 Days of Christmas**
 Spirits will be bright as we give away a different prize package each day from Dec. 1-12 on our Facebook page at facebook.com/BerkeleyElectricCooperative.
- Bright Ideas Program**
 Sharpen your pencils and get ready to apply for up to \$1,500 in grants for your classroom project this January. Don't forget to sign up for the Bright Ideas 5K at runsignup.com.
- Youth Tour & Summit**
 Get ready for an experience you won't forget! High school students can apply in January for one of our free leadership trips to either Washington, D.C. or Columbia.
- Trust Scholarships**
 Apply online this January for thousands in scholarships to help make your college dream a reality. Visit our Operation Round Up page for more information.



Bob Jenkins
Trustee, District 8

Third time is the charm

THERE IS AN OLD SAYING known as the rule of three that states “once is an accident, twice is coincidence, three times is a pattern.” I am glad to say that I think we have definitely established a pattern with Berkeley Electric Cooperative being named as one of the Best Places to Work in South Carolina for the third year in a row.

This survey-and-awards program is designed to identify, recognize and honor the best employers in the state of South Carolina, benefiting the state’s economy, workforce and businesses. The list is made up of 108 companies and the rankings were published in the *Charleston Regional Business Journal*, *Columbia Regional Business Report* and *GSA Business Report*.

I think it is important to note that the largest part of the scoring for this award is based on employee responses. It makes me proud to be part of a company that not only uses employee feedback to make changes for our employees but one that has created a workplace culture that makes its employees feel valued.

The Cooperative Difference

After joining the board of trustees a couple of years ago, I quickly came to realize that the cooperative's commitment to both its employees and its members were one of the aspects that set it apart from other utilities. One of the most tangible benefits for members resulting from the cooperative difference is capital credits—which were distributed to members starting in October.

As a not-for-profit electric cooperative, we believe in giving credit where credit is due—to the



members who shape our co-op. Because Berkeley Electric operates near cost, we give refunds back to our members rather than outside investors or shareholders.

In case you are unfamiliar with how capital credits work, members use the electricity we provide and pay their monthly bills, and we track their business with the co-op over time. Berkeley Electric pays all operating expenses throughout the year, and if any operating revenue is leftover, we allocate it as capital credits. When financial conditions permit, the co-op’s board of directors votes to pay capital credits back to the members. Thankfully, it has been every year since I became a board member that we have been able to apply a credit—as a line item—to your energy bill. In the short time I have been a board member, Berkeley Electric Cooperative has returned \$13,700,000 to its members.

Capital credits are just one of the many benefits of co-op membership. Giving back to our local members instead of outside parties is one of the many aspects that set cooperatives apart from other types of businesses. Our members guide every decision we make and are the reason our co-op exists. To us, you’re more than a customer, just as our employees are more than just workers.

As we journey further into this holiday season, I hope you’re as proud as I am to be part of a community-focused cooperative that puts people before profits.

From all of us at Berkeley Electric Cooperative, we hope you have a bright, blessed holiday season.

Sincerely,

| BERKELEY AT-A-GLANCE | JULY 2023 | JULY 2024 |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Total kWh sold | 471,037,301 | 448,677,969 |
| No. meters served | 124,677 | 130,905 |
| Avg. residential kWh/meter | 1,615 | 1,587 |
| Avg. residential bill/meter | \$219.79 | \$232.29 |
| Miles of line | 6318 | 6449 |
| Avg. daily high temperature | 93 | 93 |
| Avg. daily low temperature | 76 | 76 |

In the wake of the storms

THIS YEAR'S HURRICANE SEASON proved to be one for the books as Berkeley Electric Cooperative suffered the effects of two major hurricanes in back-to-back months. In August, Hurricane Debby brought historic levels of flooding to Berkeley's territory, along with 22,000 outages. The slow-moving storm dumped sheets of rain over several days as it moved across the co-op's territory. The rain-soaked ground caused trees to fall but it was the rising waters that threatened several areas. Berkeley closely monitored flood levels in case it had to de-energize equipment before any went underwater.

Although more of a rain event, Debby also spawned a tornado that tore through a commercial area in Moncks Corner,



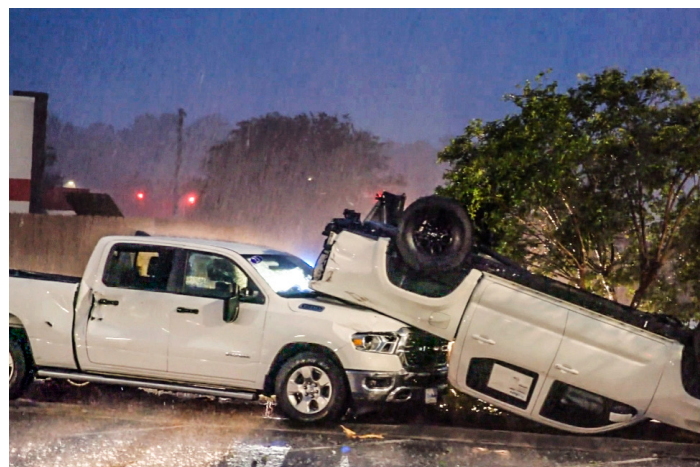
Berkeley stationed crews to monitor flood levels threatening underground equipment in College Park Estates,



Hurricane Helene left broken poles across Berkeley's territory, including two on Liberty Hall Road in Goose Creek which shut down traffic for hours.



Fallen trees, like this one off College Park Road, were responsible for over 20 broken poles system wide. Each broken pole takes a four-man crew approximately two hours to replace under ideal conditions.



Vehicles at a local used car lot were tossed in the air when a powerful tornado spawned by Hurricane Debby moved through Moncks Corner in the early morning hours.

knocking down signs, tossing trucks and demolishing a local Arby's restaurant.

Hurricane Helene delivered another strong hit to Berkeley's service territory in late September as the Category 4 hurricane brushed by the Lowcountry. Although Berkeley only encountered the outer bands of the hurricane, the strong winds broke over 20 poles across the system, leaving nearly 23,000 members without power for two days.

Helene reserved its knock out punch for the rest of the state, however, causing nearly half a million power outages for electric cooperative members and breaking more than 5,000 poles. In the wake of the storm, nearly 47% of electric cooperative members were left in the dark, some for over two weeks, a level of destruction not seen since Hurricane Hugo 35 years prior.



PEYTON DRESS



MICAH PONCE

Berkeley Electric sent two waves of mutual aid to nine co-ops around the state, as well as AS Jefferson Energy Cooperative in Georgia.

After restoring power to all its members, Berkeley Electric joined one of the largest storm restoration efforts in state history by dispatching over 60 operations personnel to co-ops across the state. More than 3,000 cooperative lineworkers and contractors worked around the clock for days to restore power. The cooperatives were joined by crews from Santee Cooper and additional help from more than 24 states. At least four of the hardest hit co-ops erected “tent cities” to house, cloth and feed this army of workers at Aiken, Blue Ridge, Broad River and Laurens electric co-ops.



TOMMY COX

BEC crews provided mutual aid to York Electric where it took 19 days to restore power to all members.

All hands on deck

One of the core cooperative principles is “Cooperation Among Cooperatives,” which during times of crisis means supplying mutual aid for outage restoration efforts. As reports came in from around the state, Berkeley Electric committed not only linemen, but personnel from other departments as well, to help its sister co-ops recover.



More than mapping

How GIS helps Berkeley Electric's efficiency

BY JOSH P. CROTZER

SEARCH FOR A PLACE TO EAT on your internet browser or smartphone, and you'll get a lot more than just dining options. You're also likely to see the restaurants' hours of operations, menus and driving directions.

Using similar technologies, that level of knowledge is easily accessed by Berkeley Electric Cooperative employees to help them maintain the co-op electrical infrastructure and better serve members.

The Geographic Information Systems (GIS) department at Berkeley Electric, led by Jason Trussell, is making sure their colleagues are fully informed, wherever they go. GIS is a system that analyzes and maps all types of data, integrating where things are with what things are like at that location.

"A lot of people think GIS is just maps," says Trussell. "But it's really about data. There is a lot of data behind the points on that map, and that information plays a huge role in a lot of different things."

Trussell and his team manage a comprehensive database that not only maps out every piece of equipment in the cooperative's service area, but provides other essential data about members, equipment and materials that are a part of the co-op's electrical system. They bring together data from multiple sources, including member service databases and the co-op's outage management system, to create a holistic



In the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, Berkeley Electric employees use the dashboard and smartphone applications Trussell's team developed to keep track of restoration efforts.



In the field, Jason Trussell and his team can easily update new equipment data, like this junction box in a recently built Goose Creek subdivision, using an iPad and an GPS location device.

PHOTOS BY JOSH P. CROTZER

view of the cooperative's operations.

Just like your phone, one of the key tools in the GIS department's arsenal is Global Positioning System (GPS) technology. The team uses GPS devices to verify the precise locations of lines and equipment, reducing the time it takes to diagnose connectivity issues and target restoration efforts.

"A lot of people rely on what we do not just to find out where things are but if they are connected properly," says Trussell. "We keep the databases up to date and make sure everything is as accurate as possible."

One of the most significant advancements spearheaded by the GIS department is the development of real-time dashboards. These dashboards provide a snapshot of the cooperative's operations, displaying critical information such as the number of members, miles of line and the status of equipment.

"These dashboards save us a tremendous amount of time," Trussell says.

As Berkeley Electric Cooperative's service area continues to grow, the GIS department is crucial in supporting this expansion. They provide developers with service territory maps, helping them determine the availability of power in new areas. This data sharing extends to emergency management and other utilities, fostering collaboration and ensuring that everyone has the information they need to make informed decisions.

Trussell is quick to highlight the contributions of his colleagues, GIS technicians Sara Wentzel, Christina Fulton and James Niemiec, who handle everything from field data collection to application development.

"It's a team effort," he says. "We all work together to ensure our data is accurate and our systems are efficient."