



Berkeley Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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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

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Moncks Corner, SC 29461
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MCMemberRequests@bec.coop

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Balancing act



MIKE FULLER
President & CEO

Electricity is essential for nearly every aspect of daily life—so essential that most members rarely think about how it’s produced and delivered to our homes. It’s no surprise that electricity is always top of mind for us and never more so when we come close to running out as we almost did at the end of January during Winter Storm Enzo.

Luckily, we avoided the need for rolling blackouts, in part because behind the scenes, a network of experts is working daily (and even by the minute) to anticipate how much electricity you need before you even use it. We’re all connected to the electric grid, so ensuring the right amount of electricity for all involves a complex process of forecasting energy demand, planning for capacity and securing enough supply to meet your needs.

That’s a big job in South Carolina, where our state’s rapid population and economic growth has driven a sharp increase in energy demand. That growth, coupled with a lack of new power generation plants, has the state balanced on the edge of failure, especially during winter months when demand is the highest.

Powerful sources

First, electricity must be generated at a power plant using either traditional sources—coal, natural gas and nuclear energy—or from renewable sources, such as solar energy and hydropower. Electricity supply changes throughout the day because demand fluctuates based on consumers’ needs. For example, Berkeley Electric knows we need to ensure more electricity in the mornings when you’re starting your day, and in the evenings when you’re cooking dinner, running appliances and watching TV. Demand also increases when weather patterns change, such as extremely warm or cold temperatures.

At Berkeley, we work closely with Central Electric Power Cooperative, our wholesale power provider, to secure enough electricity for our communities, using a diverse mix of energy sources to generate the power we deliver to your home or business. By maintaining a diverse mix, we have options to ensure reliable power at an affordable cost.

Looking ahead

Berkeley Electric remains committed to providing affordable, reliable energy to our members. That’s why we are preparing now for increased demand and other challenges that could compromise our local electric supply.

One of the main causes of the energy shortage was the failure of the V.C. Summer nuclear project. Recently, outside parties have shown interest in potentially purchasing and finishing the nuclear project. As long as the sale of V.C. Summer doesn’t create additional financial burdens for our members, we have no objections as its completion would provide critical energy needed to keep up with South Carolina’s growth.

Electricity use in the U.S. is expected to rise to record highs this year and next, and demand for electricity could at least double by 2050. At the same time, energy policies are pushing the early retirement of coal- and natural gas-fired power plants, which make up the backbone of America’s power supply. Potentially losing these generation sources could put the reliability of our power grid in jeopardy.

Managing the balancing act of electricity supply and demand is a complex job, which is why we have partners in place to direct the electricity you need from the power generating sources to your homes and businesses.

Sincerely,

Michael S. Fuller



Budget now for winter weather

- 34% more heating needs vs last 30 days
- 609 Heating Degree Days vs 382 HDD last year
- Avg. low temperature 35 degrees vs 43.3 last year
- January cold snap appears on February billing cycle

Winter weather in the Lowcountry seems to have found its home in the early part of the new year with extreme cold snaps occurring each of the last several years. These cold snaps can also find a home in your wallet as they often increase your home's electrical use despite your best efforts. They can also catch members using traditional billing by surprise because the increased electric use is billed a month later when temperatures may have once again warmed up.

When temperatures drop below 35 degrees, heat pumps do not work as efficiently. To help maintain thermostat settings when temperatures are at 35 or below, heat pumps use twice to three times the daily/hourly kWh usage compared to above 40 degrees. That means your electric bill can increase noticeably without you making any changes in your routine. With winter still lingering, pay close attention to your electric heating which can account for up to 50% of your monthly bill.

Berkeley Electric recommends downloading the free Smarthub app that allows members to monitor their electric use daily and set high usage alerts. Members can also sign up for free Beat the Peak alerts which will notify them of peak demand periods. By reducing use during peak times, members can help lower overall energy costs for the entire system. Berkeley Electric's pre-paid billing program also provides daily usage reports which allows members to notice changes more quickly. For even more tips on how to save energy, visit us online at berkeleyelectric.coop.

Returning to college?

Scholarships for women available

The Jenny Ballard Opportunity Scholarship is for women who are resuming academic journeys that have been interrupted or delayed.

Applications for one-time awards are now open for female members of Berkeley Electric. Sponsored by Women Involved in Rural Electrification (WIRE)—a service organization associated with South Carolina's electric cooperatives—and named after one of its founding members, the \$2,500 scholarships are awarded based on need and personal goals. The deadline for applying is June 1.

An online application for the 2025 WIRE scholarship can be found ecsc.org/wire. The scholarship will be awarded based on the information provided in the application.

Applicants for the program must:

- Be a member of Berkeley Electric or another South Carolina 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 2025 or spring 2026 semester, with funds paid directly to the college or university. E-mail inquiries can be sent to Peggy Dantzler at the Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina - peggy.dantzler@ecsc.org.



BEC member Tanesha Simmons was a 2024 Jenny Ballard scholarship recipient for her role as a Student Concern Specialist in the Charleston County School district.

It snowed y'all!



MEADE AGENCY



BERKELEY ELECTRIC

OK, who had “snow” on their bingo cards for 2025? Berkeley Electric’s system held up well as Winter Storm Enzo brought arctic temperatures and enough white stuff to make a complete mess of the Lowcountry for several days in late January. The first measurable snowfall since 2018 caused peak demand to approach the historic high set on Christmas Eve 2023 but temperatures were just warm enough that power suppliers avoided the need for rolling blackouts.

While the co-op’s engineering department closely monitored power load levels, crews were in the field addressing 24 sustained outages, including three larger outages, affecting about 5,200 members. Cold-related equipment failure in the Camelot subdivision in Goose Creek affected 441 members, and a tree knocked out power to 590 meters in the Cherry Point area on Wadmalaw Island. Santee Cooper also dropped transmission to Berkeley’s Whitesville substation but was able to restore service within an hour to the 4,176 members.

Mutual Aid

Although snow is a rare event in the Lowcountry, crews from Berkeley Electric are no strangers to working in wintry conditions. Just a couple of weeks before snow descended on our area, Berkeley crews headed north to assist Southside Electric Cooperative in Virginia to deal with the after effects of Winter Storm Blair. At the peak of the storm, Southside had over 14,000 outages and 34 broken poles. As part of the cooperative principle of Cooperation Among Cooperatives, Berkeley sent several trucks and 11 crew members including: Tommy Cox, Trey Littlejohn, Max Gilston, Perry Binnar, Matt Avery, Chase Sweat, Jake Lawrence, Chris McKnight, TJ Grooms, Marcus Gariepy and Matt Gaskins.



(Above) Substation crews repair cold-related equipment failure in Goose Creek. Overall, the co-op’s system performed well under heavy strain caused by Winter Storm Enzo.

(Left) Berkeley Electric sent mutual aid crews to Virginia to assist Southside Electric Cooperative with outage restoration in the wake of Winter Storm Blair.

High School all-stars inspire local kids

BY JOSH CROTZER

When it comes to high school it can seem like the spotlight always shines on the football players. Over the holiday season, however, a large group of football players from all over the state made sure the spotlight was shining on deserving kids instead.

It must have been something to see in the middle of the day at the Target Superstore in Myrtle Beach, 86 all-star football players selected to play in the Touchstone Energy Bowl leading 44 elementary school children around the store on a holiday shopping spree

It certainly impressed one local resident.

“I can’t think of a nicer thing than what I just saw,” says the shopper, who asked to be referred to only as John. “Especially seeing those young men, how strong looking they were, and how happy the kids’ faces were.”

The players took a break from their week of practice leading up to the bowl game to help deserving kids from Myrtle Beach Elementary and Myrtle Beach Primary schools.

Each student was given a \$150 gift card and a player from each team—North and South—to help them find items on their list. The shopping spree is a part of the week-long Touchstone Energy Cooperatives Bowl experience, sponsored by South Carolina’s electric cooperatives.

As for John, who came into the store in search of a back-scratcher, found a cause he could back. He connected with electric cooperative officials and committed to donating money to next year’s shopping spree.

The shopping spree wasn’t the only thing that made game week special. The night before the bowl game, a line crew from Horry Electric set up hands-on demonstrations on the field so the players could explore careers as cooperative lineworkers. Players put on personal protective equipment and took turns using various lineworker tools.

The shopping spree and lineman demonstration were part of a week of experiences for the players which included nine players in Berkeley Electric’s service territory from high schools that included Ashley Ridge High, Berkeley High, Cross High, James Island High, Philip Simmons High, Stratford High as well as Timberland High.

South Carolina’s Touchstone Energy Cooperatives sponsor the bowl game to recognize players for their athletic ability and character.

The North won the game 24-7.



Hendrix Beran of James Island High helps his buddy pick out shoes during a pre-game Target shopping spree as part of the Touchstone Energy Bowl.



Berkeley High’s Kevin Boone warms up before the game at Doug Shaw Stadium along with other members of the South squad.



The players also got to try their hand at a variety of lineman skills the day before the game and learn more about linework as a career.



Cruise to a finish at the Bright Ideas 5K

It's time for the 4th Annual Bright Ideas 5K and this year we're holding it on April 26 in beautiful Cypress Gardens located in Moncks Corner. The race course holds 500 participants and entry fees include a race t-shirt, finisher medal and admission to explore Cypress Gardens after racing through this unique mixed-terrain course winding through the black water swamp.

This year's race shirt and medal feature the park's iconic swamp boats which were famously featured in the romantic blockbuster, *The Notebook*. Berkeley Electric is also excited to be sponsoring a new boat in the fleet called the "Current Cruiser" so be sure to keep an eye out for it on race day!

All proceeds from the race are used to fund educational grants for local teachers through the Bright Ideas program. This program supports innovative and effective classroom education curricula that cannot be covered by traditional school financing. Both individual teachers and teacher teams are eligible for grants up to \$1,500. To date, over \$125,000 in grants have been awarded.

Teachers in public and private schools, K-12 in Berkeley Electric Cooperative's service area are eligible to participate. Be sure to join us in the race village after the 5K as we honor this year's grant recipients.



Date: Saturday, April 26
Location: Cypress Gardens
Start Time: 8 a.m.
Entry Fee: \$40

- Includes t-shirt & finisher medal
- Guaranteed t-shirt deadline March 17
- \$35 Early Bird discount ends March 3

SCAN ME