



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

MONCKS CORNER
 1732 US-52 West
 Moncks Corner, SC 29461
 (843) 761-8200/825-3383
 MCMemberRequests@bec.coop

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
 Robert Vandross, *District 1*
 Sheila Powell, *District 2*
 Wayne DeWitt, *District 3*
Board Chairman
 Sam Gourdine, *District 4*
 Denver Lee Clayton, *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

Storm season on horizon



MIKE FULLER
 President & CEO

SPRING IS ON our doorstep, and like many of you, I'm looking forward to more opportunities to be outdoors, enjoy warmer weather and enjoy the new life the season brings.

I am also glad that we were able to make it through hurricane season and the rare snowstorm we experienced with minimal damage

or interruptions to service. Although Hurricane Helene caused more than 16,000 outages along with at least 15 broken poles, crews were able to restore power within two days. And despite the five inches of snow Winter Storm Enzo dumped on us, we only experienced one substation outage that was quickly cleared.

Some of that was luck of the draw but I like to attribute most of it to our level of preparedness. Although we have moved safely through that part of the year, unfortunately, spring and summer can also create perfect conditions for severe storms.

Preparedness is key

As I mentioned, Berkeley Electric crews are always prepared and standing by to respond should power outages occur in our area. When severe storms cause power disruptions, our line crews take all necessary precautions before they get to work on any downed lines.

It is equally important, however, for our members to also practice safety and preparedness to protect their families during storms and outages. The first step we recommend is to make sure your contact information is up-to-date. Having the correct contact information on file, especially your current phone numbers, helps ensure your outage is recorded properly in our system and aids us in planning restoration efforts.

Storm resources

The Federal Emergency Management Agency recommends the items below as a starting point for storm and disaster preparedness, but you can visit [ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) for additional resources.

- ▶ Stock your pantry with a three-day supply of nonperishable food, including canned goods, energy bars, peanut butter, powdered milk, instant coffee and water along with other essentials such as diapers and toiletries.
- ▶ Confirm that you have adequate sanitation and hygiene supplies including towelettes, soap and hand sanitizer.
- ▶ Ensure your first-aid kit is stocked with pain relievers, bandages and other medical essentials, and make sure your prescriptions are current.
- ▶ Set aside basic household items you will need, including flashlights, batteries, a manual can opener and a portable, battery-powered radio or TV.
- ▶ Organize emergency supplies so they are easily accessible in one location.

In the event of a prolonged power outage, turn off major appliances, TVs, computers and other sensitive electronics. This will help prevent damage from potential power surges and will also help prevent overloading circuits during power restoration. That said, do leave one light on so you will know when power is restored.

I hope we don't experience severe storms over the spring and summer months, but we can never predict Mother Nature's plans. At Berkeley Electric, we recommend you make a plan today—because storm preparedness is always our best defense.

Sincerely,



Yeehaw y'all

It's almost time for the 2025 Lineman's Rodeo! This year, the showcase of safety and skill will be held at York Electric Cooperative as cooperative lineworkers from across the state take part in friendly competitions. The event is free and will take place from 8 a.m. until noon on March 21-22.



Hold your horses

The date for Berkeley Electric's popular Arbor Day Tree sale has been changed! We'll still offer energy-saving trees to our members at half-price, but the new date will coincide with South Carolina's official Arbor Day on the first Friday in December.



New sheriff in town

Berkeley Electric's annual pole inspection is currently underway with a new contractor, Koppers Utility Services. They will be operating primarily in the Awendaw area, and their work may require them to enter your property. Please call the co-op with any questions.

MILITARY APPRECIATION FISHING EXPERIENCE

MAY 1
CANAL LAKES FISH CAMP
6:00 AM - 2:00 PM

WE WANT TO SHOW OUR VETERANS OUR APPRECIATION WITH AN
ALL-EXPENSES PAID, GUIDED FISHING TRIP

UP TO 12 VETERANS CAN APPLY ONLINE AT
BERKELEVELECTRIC.COOP

OR FILL OUT & RETURN TO:
BERKELEY ELECTRIC CO-OP, ATTN. YAJAIRA BESS • PO BOX 1234, MONCK'S CORNER, SC 29461

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

SERVICE BRANCH: _____ PHONE: _____

DO YOU REQUIRE MOBILITY ASSISTANCE? YES NO Must have valid fishing license



Wayne Dewitt
Chairman, District 3

Protecting our communities in a digital age

We live in a time where technology is a part of nearly every aspect of our lives and the importance of cybersecurity has become a major concern for both organizations and individuals. With how quickly cyber threats are evolving, it is more important than ever that we take measures to safeguard member data, as well as critical components on our system.

With my background in law enforcement, I am familiar with the topic of cybersecurity, but I wouldn't consider myself an expert. Luckily, we have several here at Berkeley and they shared the steps the co-op is taking on Power Talk. If you aren't familiar, Power Talk is the co-op's monthly podcast covering a wide variety of important topics and community events with episodes posted on Berkeley's YouTube page.

Cybersecurity—co-op level

The term cybersecurity covers everything we put in place to protect member data, co-op equipment and to protect your files. The first line of defense is a firewall, a security system that monitors and controls network traffic while blocking unauthorized access and malicious traffic. This is an essential part of keeping our data and systems safe as cyber threats become more sophisticated.

Movies have trained us to think of cyber threats as some lone hacker banging away on his keyboard in a basement. In reality, cyber-attacks are carried out by large, increasingly corporate organizations. Victims of ransomware attacks that shut down your system until you pay may even be offered customer service to help them recover their files after the ransom is paid.

Even at Berkeley Electric, we see hundreds of attempted intrusions daily from individuals all the way up to nation-states. This is one of the reasons that we are participating in Project Guardian, a Department of Energy Program designed to improve cybersecurity at electric cooperatives of all sizes. It is also why Berkeley is committed to continuous training and education for all employees as a frontline defense against cyber threats.

Cybersecurity—member level

As a member, you may not have access to regular cyber security training but there are still ways to protect your data and your finances. One of the main threats to be aware of is called "phishing." This is a type of social engineering where the hacker tries to manipulate you into voluntarily revealing sensitive information like Social Security numbers and online passwords.

They do this by sending official looking emails or directing members to look-a-like websites while creating a situation that makes the members feel like they have to act quickly—such as the threat of having their power disconnected. The scammers can also spoof phone numbers to fool caller I.D. and make it look like the co-op is calling.

The key to avoiding these traps is to verify the information yourself before taking any action. If it is an email or website, never click on any hyperlinks or use a provided call back number. Either do a web search of your own or call your local co-op office for more information.

The same goes for phone calls where the scammer tries to make you pay immediately over the phone or use a specific type of payment. Remember, Berkeley Electric does not take live payments over the phone and will not specify the use of prepaid credit cards or gift cards.

When it comes to cybersecurity, we must get it right all of the time, but the hackers only have to get it right once. With evolving threats at our doorstep, a collective approach to education, awareness, and proactive measures in cybersecurity remains our best defense.

Sincerely,

BERKELEY AT-A-GLANCE	NOVEMBER 2023	NOVEMBER 2024
Total kWh sold	370,603,109	382,267,723
No. meters served	126,032	131,788
Avg. residential kWh/meter	965	892
Avg. residential bill/meter	\$135.36	\$137.05
Miles of line	6359	6482
Avg. daily high temperature	70	73
Avg. daily low temperature	48	54



BRIGHT IDEAS 5K

Let's Romp in the Swamp

It's here! The 4th Annual Bright Ideas 5K is back on April 26 at Cypress Gardens in Moncks Corner. This unique course winds along paths through a black water swamp over a mix of terrains including asphalt, gravel, dirt and boardwalks. This certified race course holds up to 500 participants and entry fees include a race t-shirt, finisher medal and admission to explore Cypress Gardens after the race where you can recreate the famous boat scene from the romantic blockbuster, *The Notebook*.

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. Individual teachers and teams can apply for grants up to \$1,500. To date, more than \$100,000 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.

The grants have funded projects ranging from building coops and raising chickens to music therapy and using virtual reality in the classroom.

DATE: APRIL 26, 2025

LOCATION: CYPRESS GARDENS

START TIME: 8 A.M.

ENTRY FEE: \$40

**ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT
LOCAL TEACHERS**



SCAN ME



PRESENTED BY:



Lifelong member trusts BEC with energy upgrades

BY JOSH P. CROTZER

AS A CHILD, on the rare occasions the power went out in her Jamestown home, Lavolia Rhodes could lie in bed and hear the Berkeley Electric Cooperative linemen working nearby and fall asleep knowing that electricity would be restored when she awoke.

“As long as I can remember, there has been Berkeley Electric,” says Rhodes. “I trust them because they’ve been with me throughout my life.”

So, when her 14-year old heating and air conditioning system struggled to keep her home comfortable last summer, she turned to her co-op. Berkeley Electric’s Home Advantage program allowed Rhodes to borrow the \$8,800 needed for a new HVAC unit and other efficiency upgrades, a 5% interest loan she’s paying back in installments as part of her monthly Berkeley Electric bill.

“When I heard about the Home Advantage program, I knew it’s what I needed to do,” says Rhodes. “I’m a widow, and these things can be scary, but it really was an easy process.”

The process included a full energy audit and final inspection provided by one of Berkeley Electric’s energy consultants, Josh Laughter. Laughter was able to pinpoint places where conditioned air could escape from the home. Laughter also provided Rhodes with a list of licensed local contractors, from which she chose Air Concepts Solutions of Summerville to install the unit, weatherize her home and add an Ecobee smart thermostat.

“The tighter your home is, the more you’re going to retain that conditioned air,” says Laughter. “She got a more efficient unit, which helped her bills go down. That’s the goal, that our members save money on their electric bill to offset the cost of the loan payment.”

Laughter says Rhodes was one of 78 Berkeley Electric members helped by the Home Advantage program in 2024, providing more than \$925,000 in low-interest loans for



Lavolia Rhodes can rest secure and comfortable in her Jamestown home after BEC’s Home Advantage program helped her get a new HVAC unit.

JOSH P. CROTZER

“I trust them because they’ve been with me throughout my life.”

energy-efficiency upgrades. Each one of them can depend on Laughter and fellow energy consultant Loretta Moore to support them before, during and after the work is done.

“I tell members, just because you’ve got a new unit doesn’t mean you can’t give me a call,” says Laughter. “We spend so much time with them, we want to make sure we get things right. I’m 42, so my hope is that I’m retired before it’s time for them to get another new unit.”

Rhodes hopes even more people can take advantage of the program this year.

“People that need home improvements should call the energy experts at Berkeley Electric,” she says. “It’s a great program. I’ve got a new unit with all these bells and whistles, and my energy savings take care of the loan payment.”

See more of Lavolia Rhodes’s story at scliving.coop/rhodes.

Take advantage

Berkeley Electric’s Home Advantage program is best for members who are replacing an HVAC unit or are making other energy-efficient investments. Applicants must be a member of Berkeley Electric for at least 12 months. The process is simple:

- ▶ Apply for the loan on our website or a district office.
- ▶ After loan approval, an energy consultant provides recommendations and a list of approved contractors.
- ▶ After the loan closing, the contractor completes the work and BEC conducts a post-inspection.
- ▶ A lien is recorded on the property as

a security for the loan. Members make payments through their electric bill.

For more information about Home Advantage or any of the other Berkeley Electric Cooperative energy saving and rebate programs, call (800) 327-9615 or visit berkeleyelectric.coop.

Making your voice heard

South Carolina electric cooperatives rally at the State House

THE RELIABILITY OF your electricity service is central to Berkeley Electric Cooperative's mission. The cooperative exists to provide all the power members need when they need it. That's why Berkeley Electric works diligently to build and maintain the infrastructure that brings electricity to your homes and businesses.

Of course, not everything is in the co-op's hands. Acts of God such as hurricanes and ice storms can wreak havoc on the system that delivers that power, no matter how much we plan and prepare.

Another important factor is the availability of the electricity we generate as a state. For a long time, South Carolina has had plenty of electricity to meet members' needs. But availability could become a real challenge in the future.

"Our power supply isn't growing fast enough to keep up with our state's rapid growth," says CEO Mike Fuller. "South Carolina needs more electricity, especially for frigid winter mornings and sweltering summer afternoons when the power grid strains to meet peak demands."

Government policies and regulations play an important role in deciding whether enough energy is available. They always have, from the legislation that allowed for the creation of electric cooperatives in the 1930s to the government's role in hydroelectric power plant construction to the recent regulations requiring the shutdown of coal-fired power plants.

"As a member-owned co-op, we believe our service to our members includes doing everything in our power to make sure our state and country's energy policies enable us to deliver you all the power you need, when you need it, and at a price you can afford," says Fuller. "That's why Berkeley is fortunate that these elected officials are our friends and neighbors and that they understand the needs of the co-op members and the

communities we serve."

That work is critical again this year as the S.C. General Assembly considers energy policies that will determine how we meet your power needs.

On Feb. 13, a day we call Co-op Day at the State House, our board members and employees joined other electric cooperatives in bringing your voice to policy makers. On behalf of the hundreds of thousands of co-op members across our state, we expressed a vision for a future

that keeps electricity safe, reliable and affordable.

"It was a great day of collective action by South Carolina's electric co-ops," says Fuller. "But it is far from the end of our efforts to help shape our state's energy policies for the better. As we move forward, rest assured Berkeley Electric Cooperative is doing everything in our power to safeguard South Carolina's energy future."



Linemen from electric cooperatives across South Carolina joined Governor Henry McMaster on the staircase in the State House.

TRAVIS BELL