



Berkeley Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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
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*
Sam Gouridine, *District 4*
Denver Lee Clayton, *District 5*
Willis Sanders, *District 6*
Connie P. Shuler, *District 7*
Robert Jenkins, *District 8*
Henry H. Chavis, Sr., *District 9*

PRESIDENT & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Mike Fuller

CONNECT WITH US ON SOCIAL:



@BerkeleyElectricCooperative



@berkeleyelectriccoop



@BerkeleyElectricCooperative



@BerkeleyElectricCooperative

Debt is not a four-letter word



ROBERT VANDROSS
Trustee, District 1

In 1940, with the help of federal loans, Berkeley Electric Cooperative built power lines to provide electricity to its first member - Gippy Plantation. More lines were quickly built to begin serving rural areas that investor-owned utilities refused to enter due to their low profit potential.

Today, Berkeley Electric serves more than 130,000 members over 6,500 miles of line that stretch from Kiawah to Cross. Just like in the early days of rural electrification, grants and government loans remain critical to improving infrastructure and investing in economic development projects such as Redwood Materials battery recycling, Thorne Pharma, Amazon, ZEB Metals and expansions happening at Google and Gerber. These key accounts not only bring hundreds of jobs but also represent a major source of revenue for Berkeley that helps the cooperative grow and keep rates stable.

It is important to note that, unlike investor-owned utilities, electric cooperatives operate as not-for-profit organizations. We operate transparently by auditing and publicly publishing our financial data annually as well as sharing compensation reports on our website's member portal. That is because our goal isn't to maximize shareholder returns but to serve our members by providing reliable and affordable electricity.

Because of our structure, cooperatives often borrow money to build and maintain infrastructure, such as power lines and transformers; expand services, and purchase power. This debt financing model allows us to focus on long-term sustainability rather than short-term profits.

How electric cooperatives are funded

One major funding source for electric cooperatives is the U.S. Department of

Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service (RUS). Originally established as the Rural Electrification Administration in 1935, RUS provided loans that enabled cooperatives to bring electricity to rural communities that investor-owned utilities had long ignored.

Long-term loans fund major infrastructure projects such as power lines and substations, ensuring rural areas have access to electricity even when costs are high. Short-term loans help manage cash flow and emergency expenses. Instead of using surplus revenue to pay off debt more quickly, co-ops return excess funds to their members through Capital Credits—a benefit investor-owned utilities don't offer.

Why debt is necessary

Expanding and upgrading the power grid is costly, especially as demand for electricity and broadband services grows. Electric cooperatives spread these costs over time through debt financing, making grid maintenance more affordable for our members. This approach ensures that rural communities continue to receive reliable power without excessive upfront costs.

Strength of the cooperative model

In personal finances, having a high debt-to-income ratio isn't ideal. But in the co-op model, it's just part of doing business. Debt is a tool that allows us to meet the needs of our members without burdening them with higher costs.

With 85 years of electric service under our belt, Berkeley Electric has a proven record of managing this balance to deliver safe, reliable, affordable services.

Sincerely,



CALLING ALL PHOTOGRAPHERS -- we want to showcase the year-round beauty of the Lowcountry! This year's calendar will be divided into the four seasons - Winter (Dec.-Feb.), Spring (March-April), Summer (June-Aug.), and Fall (Sept.-Nov.). Members can submit up to four digital entries. If one of your photos is chosen, it will be featured in our 2026 calendar **plus you win \$100.**

The contest runs from July 1 thru September 24. All submissions must be landscape orientation (horizontal) and please send the **highest resolution** image possible. Cell phone shots are typically not print quality. E-mail all submissions to micahep@bec.coop with the subject line "Calendar Contest" and indicate what season your photo represents. **You must be a BEC member to enter and win!**

Need proof of residency before your child heads back to school?

Download a copy of your bill from your Smarthub account.

Available online at berkeleyelectric.coop or through our free mobile app.

Propane upgrades tanks



This year, Berkeley Propane introduced an innovative program to improve service efficiency and customer convenience by installing advanced sensors on propane tanks.

"The tank monitors are seamlessly attached to the propane tanks, continuously tracking the volume and relaying real-time data back to our team," explained Stephanie VanElls, manager of propane services.

Previously, technicians manually inspected each tank at customers' homes and reported the volume to the office—a time-consuming process. The new sensors streamline operations and offer significant benefits for customers. "These sensors help prevent unexpected run-outs, saving our customers from costly emergency refills," said Josh Reigle, manager of propane operations. "While there's an installation fee and customers must opt into the program, the sensors provide a cost-effective solution in the long run."

Berkeley Propane has already equipped 500 tanks with these sensors and aims to expand the program to all propane customers. Beyond reporting to the office, the sensors connect directly to customers' smartphones via the Nee-Vo app. This user-friendly app allows customers to monitor their tank levels, track usage, and easily contact Berkeley Propane for support.

With this cutting-edge technology, Berkeley Propane is committed to delivering smarter, more efficient service to its valued customers.

A lineman's job is never done

Summertime might be a time for a welcome break for many of us, but when it comes to linework it is an almost endless cycle of maintenance, construction and training. This is especially true at Berkeley Electric, which is the largest and one of the fastest growing cooperatives in the state. Not only did the co-op grow by over 4,300 residential accounts last year, there was also significant commercial and industrial growth, including new businesses and expansion of existing ones.

A major project recently completed in the Moncks Corner district was spurred by the need to install a new water line to the Camp Hall Industrial Park on Volvo Car Drive. Crews spent weeks building five spans of overhead primary along Highway 176 to connect 3-phase service to a booster pump. They also reworked 15 poles to make room for the water line along the proposed route.

Mutual aid is also an important part of a lineman's duties. It was needed earlier than normal this storm season when a storm cell moving across the state in earlier June suddenly intensified. Berkeley Electric crews were dispatched to Laurens Electric in the Upstate to assist with restoring more than 15,000 power outages and to Mid-Carolina Electric outside of Columbia which experienced over 3,000 outages.

To safely keep up with the demands of the job, Berkeley crews undergo year-round training. Crews showcased the fruits of their labor at the SC Lineman's Rodeo where they placed first overall and then against stiff competition at the Gaff N' Go Rodeo in Virginia where team members K.J. Rhode, Britt Pipkin and Robbie Harrelson came home with a 1st place finish in the 15 kV Crossarm Change Out event.



Berkeley Electric linemen K.J. Rhode, Britt Pipkin, and Robbie Harrelson brought home hardware from the Gaff N' Go Rodeo in Virginia, which attracts the best lineworkers from the East Coast and beyond.



Moncks Corner crews finish reworking the last of 15 poles along the route of a new water line needed to serve the Camp Hall Industrial Park area.



Summertime is a busy time for our crews who traveled upstate to provide mutual aid to sister cooperatives in restoring thousands of outages after a strong storm cell moved across the state.

Are you wired for service?

We're looking for a few good women.

If you have a love for community service then we encourage you to share that passion. Add your efforts to ours by undertaking projects that directly benefit your neighbors in a way that is immediate and impactful by joining your local W.I.R.E. chapter.

W.I.R.E. stands for "Women Involved in Rural Electrification" and is rooted in the cooperative principle of "concern for community," one of the seven guiding principles of Berkeley Electric Cooperative. WIRE's mission is to enhance the lives within our local communities through advocacy, education & community service.

Currently, the chapter is split into two groups – Moncks Corner WIRE and Awendaw WIRE – to help meet the individual needs of our communities. Each group meets quarterly, typically at 12 p.m. on either Wednesday or Thursday. Berkeley Electric is also working toward establishing groups in its Goose Creek and Johns Island districts. To find out more about participating, e-mail Brianna Johnson, BEC public relations representative at briannaj@bec.coop.

Service with a purpose

Founded in 1981 with the motto of "People Helping People," the primary purpose of WIRE is to serve as a community service organization that addresses the needs of those affected by hardships and disasters while promoting social good within the cooperative's service areas.

The statewide organization seeks to provide aid to individuals and families impacted by events such as tornadoes, hurricanes, and house fires, as well as to support local institutions like homeless shelters, children's homes, and other non-profit organizations. By focusing on vulnerable populations,



Awendaw WIRE members visit local senior centers to spend time with residents and share community news and information on helpful social programs



MC WIRE members help pack produce like fresh fruits and vegetables to improve financial stability and healthy eating habits in their community

such as the elderly, low-income families, and children, WIRE aims to enhance the quality of life in the communities it serves, fostering a sense of togetherness and mutual support.

Projects and partners

Part social gathering and part social service, each of the quarterly meetings typically includes a meal and a featured speaker or community project. Berkeley Electric's WIRE chapters engage in a variety of service projects that reflect their commitment to helping those in need and strengthening community ties. The organization also partners with well-known non-profits like Habitat for Humanity, the Kay Phillips Advocacy Center, and the Foodshare Tri-County, which amplify WIRE's impact.

Locally, the Berkeley Electric WIRE chapters focus on initiatives tailored to the needs of their communities. These initiatives often involve assisting local non-profits, like Jean's Angels, which provides resources for victims of traumatic experiences including a mobile laundry and shower trailer. Another notable project is their support for local schools, like St. James-Santee Elementary School, where WIRE contributes to educational programs and resources that enhance learning opportunities for students.

Additionally, WIRE administers the Jenny Ballard Opportunity Scholarship, a \$2,500 one-time award given to a woman who is a cooperative member and seeks to further her education later in life. This scholarship empowers women who may not have had the opportunity to attend college immediately after high school, reflecting WIRE's commitment to personal and professional development.

Who can participate?

WIRE is an inclusive organization that welcomes a diverse group of women connected to the electric cooperative movement. Eligible participants include Berkeley Electric Cooperative members, employees, employees' wives, retirees formerly associated with electric cooperatives, directors, and directors' wives. Participation is voluntary, and members are encouraged to contribute at a level that suits their availability and skills. Whether through hands-on volunteering, fundraising, or leadership roles, WIRE members play a critical part in driving the organization's initiatives forward.



WIRE members load backpacks full of school supplies and toiletries for students at Cross and St. Stephen Elementary

2024 Contributions/Projects:

- Loaded backpacks with school supplies and hygiene kits for students (St. James Santee Elementary-Middle, Cainhoy Elementary, Cross Elementary, St. Stephen Elementary)
- Created emergency bags with supplies for homeless students (Berkeley County School District)
- Packed/distributed care packages for Jeans Angels
- Donated hygiene items for Charleston Dorchester Mental Health Center
- Collected socks & hygiene items for seniors (Lake Moultrie Health and Rehab)
- Packed food boxes for Trident United Way's FoodShare program
- Gathered groceries for families-in-need (Various families in Tri-county)
- Provided Christmas gifts (Berkeley County Guardian Ad-Litem, MUSC Children's Hospital & Kay Phillips Child Advocacy Center)

2025 Contributions/Projects (to-date):

- Collected classroom supplies (St. James Santee Elementary-Middle)
- Provided clothes, hygiene items, puzzles & coloring books for seniors (Pruitt Health)
- Donated gifts for Teacher Appreciation Month
- Helped build a home with East Cooper Habitat for Humanity
- Volunteered with Awendaw and South Santee Seniors to celebrate Mothers Day and Elder Americans Month

Small change that changes lives

It only takes \$6 to change a life. Not \$6 a day. Not \$6 a week or even a month. For an average of \$6 a year, you can help make meaningful changes in your community by supporting local charities and providing critical home repairs for fellow cooperative members.

Operation Round Up is a voluntary charitable program designed to support local communities by rounding up members' monthly utility bills to the nearest dollar. For example, if a member's electric bill is \$75.50, it would be rounded up to \$76.00. The extra 50 cents would go into the Operation Round Up fund. Members are automatically enrolled in the program when they sign up for service but can opt-out at any time. Contributions are tax-deductible.

The collected funds are managed by an independent board, composed of cooperative members, which reviews applications and distributes grants to support community initiatives and helps members with home repairs such as roof and HVAC replacement and installing wheelchair ramps. The board meets monthly to review requests.

In 2024, there were a total of 107 applications completed, including 105 individuals/families and 2 organizations totaling \$503,381.91. The board also allocated \$25,000 for 10 scholarships to be awarded to graduating seniors that meet income and eligibility requirements.

"We wanted to express our thanks to all of you who made the decision to help us. 'Thanks' will never be a good enough word. We are both old-school and had a hard time accepting your generous help. Your Trust Board member was so kind and went out of her way to help us in other ways. Who would have believed my power company would help us with heat and air conditioning. All I can say is thank you and may God bless you all and keep you," - Gloria, Goose Creek.

Operation Round Up provides \$2,500 scholarships for up to 10 graduating seniors who are the children of BEC members



All aboard for your cooperative journey



DATES TO REMEMBER:

- Aug. 21 - Deadline for nominating committee candidates (Dist. 2, 5, 8)
- Sept. 19 - Deadline for petition candidates (Req. 50 signatures)
- Nov. 12-13 & 18-19 - Annual Meeting of Members voting

Berkeley Electric Cooperative is not like other electric utilities. While sharing the same primary mission of delivering safe and reliable power, co-ops complete this mission with the help and guidance of their communities. Unlike traditional utility companies, electric cooperatives have a board of trustees elected from within the membership, making them truly representative while playing a crucial role in powering local businesses, homes, and schools.

We want you

Have you ever considered running for a position on your cooperative's board of trustees as a petition candidate? While it might not be the first thing that comes to mind for many members, it's essential to recognize the power of active member participation. Our board members are tasked with making informed decisions on long-term priorities and investments that keep our cooperative running smoothly. That's why we're on the lookout for talented and engaged members like you who are willing to put their skills to work on behalf of their friends and neighbors.

To make your voice heard

At the heart of every cooperative is a commitment to democratic principles. The board is elected by its members during the annual meeting and acts as their voice, shaping

the direction of the cooperative and making sure decisions are made in the best interests of the community they represent. Your voice matters, and joining the board allows you to ensure that your concerns are heard and addressed. Board trustees maintain open lines of communication with the members and make decisions in a fair and unbiased manner. By running for the board, you actively contribute to building trust between the board, management, and the membership, ensuring that our cooperative operates with the highest level of integrity. All it takes to get started is to be a member in good standing who lives in one of the districts up for election - along with the signatures from 50 current members.

Your mission

While the day-to-day operations are handled by our dedicated staff, major decisions are made by the board. Their mission? To look out for the health of the cooperative and the communities it serves. And don't worry if you're not an expert in cooperative governance - we offer specialized training opportunities like the Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) program to help you make informed decisions.

Serve your community

Remember, the real power of our cooperative lies within its membership. By stepping forward to serve on the board, you can make a significant impact on our cooperative's success. We love our community, and we want to help it thrive. If you share the same commitment and want to contribute in a meaningful way, we hope you'll consider running for a board position.