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 Call: 1-888-253-4232

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 Hours: 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

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MIKE FULLER
 President & CEO

A year in review

AS WE CLOSE OUT another memorable year at Berkeley Electric Cooperative, I am grateful for the chance to reflect on the progress we have made together. It was a year marked by resilience, innovation and a steadfast commitment to serving our mem-

bers and communities that featured a number of key milestones.

Growth

First and foremost, the growth we've experienced in the Lowcountry has been nothing short of extraordinary. With a rapidly expanding population and business sector, the demand for reliable and affordable energy continues to grow. Our team has risen to this challenge by enhancing infrastructure and extending service to new areas while ensuring the needs of our current members remain a top priority.

Storms

This year also brought challenges in the form of severe weather events. Tropical Storm Debbie and Hurricane Helene tested our preparedness and resolve, but I am proud to say that Berkeley Electric met these trials head-on. Our crews worked around the clock to restore power and repair damages and extended a helping hand to other hard hit co-ops by providing mutual aid across the region. These efforts underscore the cooperative spirit—a shared commitment to helping our neighbors in times of need.

Lineman's Rodeo

A bright moment in 2024 was hosting the South Carolina Lineman Rodeo, a demonstration of skill, teamwork and safety in the electric industry. This event showcased the exceptional talent of our linemen and hopefully served as an inspiration for the next generation

of lineworkers. It also reminds us of the importance of investing in our workforce and fostering a culture of excellence, which was reflected in Berkeley Electric once again being named as one of the “Best Places to Work” in South Carolina.

System improvements

Reliability remains at the core of our operations, and this year we implemented critical infrastructure upgrades to meet this goal. Through grant-funded projects, we introduced self-healing systems in rural areas, which significantly reduce service interruptions by automatically detecting and addressing faults. Coupled with enhanced storm preparation measures, these advancements ensure that our members can count on us for dependable energy delivery.

Member service

Equally important is our commitment to excellent member service. High call volumes in recent years prompted us to launch cross-training programs for employees, equipping them with the skills needed to address member concerns more efficiently. This initiative has not only improved response times but also strengthened teamwork across departments, ensuring that every member interaction reflects our dedication to quality service.

As we look to the future, Berkeley Electric remains deeply committed to its members and the communities we serve. Our work is grounded in a simple yet powerful mission: to provide affordable, reliable and safe energy solutions that enhance the lives of those we serve. We are already facing significant challenges to that mission as we start this new year. However, by working together, I believe we can find the solutions we need to make this another year to remember.

Sincerely,

New pay-by-phone number



Berkeley Electric Cooperative offers its members a variety of convenient ways to pay their bill, including by phone. Please note that the phone number for our automated interactive voice recognition system (IVR) has changed to 1 (855) 938-3615.

The co-op would also like to remind members that it does not accept live payments by a member service representative over the phone. Members must use the automated phone system.

If you are asked to make immediate payment over the phone, or are asked to pay in an unusual way, such as purchasing prepaid money cards, please hang up and call your local district office with as much information as possible. Do not use a provided call back number and be aware that scammers may be able to imitate caller I.D. information to make it appear that the call is legitimate.

STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

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- (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W. Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov.

To reach Berkeley Electric Cooperative regarding this policy please contact Louise Meade, VP of Human Resources, at 843-761-8200 or louisem@bec.coop.

WELCOME to the swamp!
(Race Entrance)

BRIGHT IDEAS 5K
BERKELEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

APRIL 26 CYPRESS GARDENS

LACE UP YOUR Sneakers TO HELP LOCAL Teachers!

EARLY BIRD SAVINGS → **SCAN ME**



Henry Chavis, Sr.
Trustee, District 9

Supporting education year round

Apply now for programs & scholarships

AS WE SETTLE INTO the second half of the school year, the excitement of back-to-school fairs, new school outfits, football and even Christmas break are behind us. Now most people's attention is focused on just making it to the end of this school term, let alone planning for the next one. However, as a trustee of Berkeley Electric, I'm proud to highlight how our cooperative works year-round to support education in our community.

Washington Youth Tour, Cooperative Youth Summit

Application deadline—Feb. 12

One of our flagship initiatives is Washington Youth Tour, an extraordinary opportunity for high school juniors to experience the nation's capital. Every year, Berkeley Electric sponsors local students to join peers from across the country on this week-long journey. Participants not only tour iconic landmarks such as the U.S. Capitol but also engage in leadership workshops and meet with lawmakers to discuss issues that matter to them.

Another program growing in popularity is Cooperative Youth Summit, a four-day trip to Columbia for high school sophomores. These aren't just field trips; they are an investment in cultivating future leaders. Applications for both trips are available online at berkeleyelectric.coop.

Bright Ideas Grants

Application deadline—March 12

Closer to home, the Bright Ideas Educational

Grants program supports our teachers by funding creative classroom projects. Educators are the backbone of our community, yet they often face funding challenges when trying to bring unique learning experiences to their students. Through this program, Berkeley Electric provides up to \$1,500 grants to individual teachers or groups of teachers who go above and beyond to engage their students in meaningful ways. Whether it's a problem-solving STEM project or an art initiative that fosters creativity, these grants help turn ambitious ideas into reality.

These grants have funded robotics kits, environmental science experiments and even innovative history projects that bring the past to life. By giving teachers the tools they need, we're enriching the educational experience for thousands of students across our service area.

Scholarships

Application deadline—March 28

Another cornerstone of our educational support is the Operation Round-Up Trust Scholarship program. Funded by the generosity of Berkeley Electric members who round up their monthly bills to the nearest dollar, this program provides scholarships to deserving students seeking to further their education.

Each of the ten \$2,500 scholarships will help ease the financial burden for families and open doors for graduating seniors that might otherwise be out of reach.

What I find special about Operation Round-Up is that it's a true community effort. Every small contribution from our members adds up to create life-changing opportunities for students. Knowing that Berkeley Electric played a role in helping them achieve those dreams is incredibly rewarding.

Education is a cornerstone of any thriving community, and at Berkeley Electric Cooperative, we take our responsibility to heart. We believe that by empowering students and educators, we're building a brighter future for everyone. These programs are just a few ways we live out the cooperative principle of "concern for community."

Sincerely,

BERKELEY AT-A-GLANCE	AUGUST 2023	AUGUST 2024
Total kWh sold	473,523,800	471,937,586
No. meters served	125,362	131,187
Avg. residential kWh/meter	1,587	1,453
Avg. residential bill/meter	\$216.42	\$215.83
Miles of line	6332	6457
Avg. daily high temperature	93	90
Avg. daily low temperature	75	73

Rate change to address rising costs

AS YOUR MEMBER-OWNED, not-for-profit service provider, we have been working to keep energy price increases to a minimum. However as we have communicated over the past few months, our co-op faces significant cost increases that are beyond our ability to control and absorb. To continue delivering essential services while accounting for rising costs in our industry, a rate change will take effect on March 1.

Why is this rate change necessary?

Over the past five years, we've seen the price of critical materials, equipment and supplies double. Wholesale power costs also have risen dramatically. Because South Carolina cooperatives like ours purchase electricity from suppliers such as Duke Energy, Santee Cooper and the Southeastern Power Administration, our rates are driven in large part by the price of wholesale power from those suppliers—which is going up.

In particular, Berkeley will see significant cost increases due to the end of a court-agreed Santee Cooper rate freeze on Dec. 31, 2024.

Starting in 2025, Santee Cooper customers—including co-op members—will begin paying for the unbudgeted, extra costs that Santee Cooper incurred during its four-year rate freeze period, when the utility wasn't allowed to raise its rates to cover those costs. These charges will come on top of Santee Cooper's other planned rate increases, which will help it meet the rising prices for fuel and materials.

What does this mean for you?

After careful consideration, the Board of Trustees has approved the following measures:

- **Energy Charge** will increase from \$0.1223 per kWh to \$0.1262 per kWh
- **Service Charge** (formerly Service Availability Charge) will increase from \$0.99 to \$1.50 per day

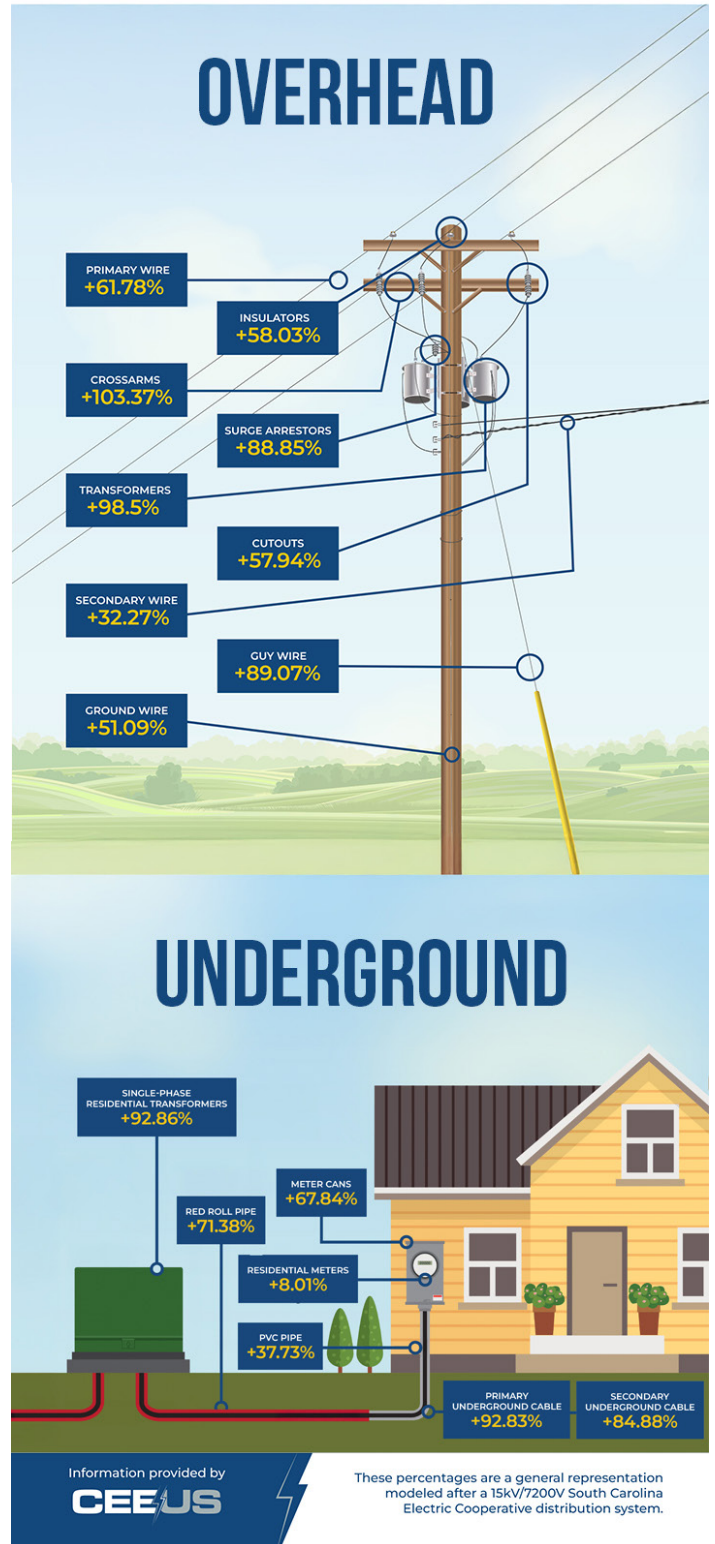
These changes are needed to address more than \$23 million in additional costs facing Berkeley Electric starting next year and will result in an 11.1% increase on the average member's bill. This percentage could be higher or lower depending on a member's electric use.

As a reminder, the service charge is a flat fee covering the fixed costs of providing electricity to a member's meter for building and maintaining the system, poles, wires, substations, insurance, property tax and other operational costs.

This concept is used to assure that the operational costs are spread fairly and equitably across all members, regardless of how much electricity they use. That is why every member pays the service charge each month to cover basic operational costs. All members are charged the same amount for the cost of operation since all members benefit from the same service.

BREAKING DOWN THE RISING COSTS FOR A SOUTH CAROLINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

JANUARY 2020 TO MAY 2024





Smooth sailing, record attendance

MICAH PONCE

FOR THE THIRD YEAR IN A ROW, Berkeley Electric set a record for attendance at this year's drive-thru annual meeting. Priscilla Smith of Awendaw was first in line, and by the end of the fourth day nearly 14,500 members had been registered. After the success of last year's paperless voting, Berkeley brought it back for a second year, along with the addition of handheld scanners to further improve the registration process. Compared to the average wait time of 45 minutes last year, members were in and out in an average time of just 10 minutes.

The registration process was also quicker because members only needed to approve last year's meeting minutes. This year, there were no petition candidates running against the incumbent board members who were automatically re-elected as a result. Retaining their seats for another three years were board trustees Wayne DeWitt, District 3; Willis Sanders, District 6; and Henry Chavis, Sr. District 9.

We also would like to congratulate all the door prize winners, including Jerry Jenkins of Goose Creek, who took home the grand prize of a 2014 Dodge Charger. To view a full list of winners, visit our website at berkeleyelectric.coop.



BEC's Eglaen Carrizales uses a new handheld scanner to register members in record time.

JOSH P. CROTZER



Priscilla Smith braved the cold and was the first member to register in this year's Annual Meeting.

MICAH PONCE



101-year-old Vivvian Huthmacher shows off her calendar after stopping by the Johns Island annual meeting day. It also turns out she is the aunt of BEC's Director of Finance!

MICAH PONCE



The Westminster Dog Show had nothing on our annual meeting. Many furry friends accompanied their humans to the drive-thru event.

MICAH PONCE

Ready for an experience you won't forget?

Your co-op has two amazing trips planned this summer. Juniors: Apply for the Washington Youth Tour. Sophomores: Apply for the Cooperative Youth Summit.

Juniors: Experience Washington, D.C., with hundreds of students from across South Carolina and the country, meeting lawmakers and touring all the sights. Your electric co-op will cover your round-trip plane ticket, tours and meals. In other words, it's all free!

Sophomores: Experience South Carolina's capital like never before. Tour the Statehouse, meet lawmakers and see how co-ops are preparing for our state's energy future. Plus, there's plenty of fun with visits to popular Columbia attractions like Riverbanks Zoo & Garden. Your electric co-op will cover all your expenses.

We've made it easy to apply for either FREE trip. Apply today!



ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES
OF SOUTH CAROLINA



Washington Youth Tour: June 15-20, 2025



Cooperative Youth Summit: July 14-17, 2025



Applications available: berkeleyelectric.coop/youth-tour
Application deadline: February 12, 2025



Berkeley Electric
Cooperative
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative