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**OCONEE**

P.O. Box 329  
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 Westminster, SC 29693

**MISSION STATEMENT**

Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative will operate as a competitive provider of energy services and a partner with local communities, with a focus on safety, service and integrity.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Joel R. Davis, *Chairman*  
 Joel Spencer Dalton, Jr.,  
*Vice-Chairman*  
 Len D. Talley, *Secretary*  
 Franklin M. Looper, Jr., *Treasurer*  
 Ben G. Bolt  
 Jimmy Lee Dodgens  
 William G. Elrod  
 Kenneth G. Southerlin  
 J. Mendel Stone

**PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

Jim Lovinggood

This organization is an equal-opportunity provider.



A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

## Annual Meeting registration—a gratifying success



**THE “GRAND EXPERIMENT”** of drive-thru registration for Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative’s 2020 Annual Meeting of Members succeeded far beyond my wildest dreams. Coronavirus-induced restrictions on large gatherings of people required procedures that would minimize close physical

contact among all individuals involved in the registering process. Consequently, the Blue Ridge team devised a plan that would enable our members to remain in their vehicles throughout.

On three consecutive days—May 19, 20, and 21—members could present their information at either the Oconee or the Pickens office and participate in the Annual Meeting. The format allowed each individual to cast a ballot, which included voting on (1) a director candidate, (2) some bylaw amendments, and (3) a question regarding at-large districts. Next, they would receive their door prize, plus a goody bag, and then be on the road again. Each registered member’s name was automatically included in the random drawings for the 35 door prizes that were given away on the closing evening of the event.

In the final analysis, a record 6,843

**Blue Ridge Electric’s Gabe Bolding directs a member to the registration station inside the cooperative’s Pickens truck facility.**

members participated. Even so, traffic flowed smoothly, and the entire exercise took no more than a few minutes for any one vehicle. Also, the votes were overwhelmingly in favor of both the bylaw changes and the existing at-large means of electing directors. In the Anderson County director contest, incumbent Ben Bolt prevailed over challenger Rick Driver by a margin of 4,683 to 925. Directors Len Talley (Oconee) and William Elrod (Pickens) were each unopposed in reelection bids for another three-year term on the cooperative’s board. A video of my yearly management report became available for viewing on the Blue Ridge website at 7 p.m. on May 21.

It would be an understatement to say that we received heartwarming responses from so many of the members who were part of the first drive-thru Annual Meeting. The multitude of hearty endorsements indicated that this feature should definitely be employed in the future. We’ll certainly keep that in mind as we begin making plans for coming together again in 2021.

**JIM LOVINGGOOD**  
 President and CEO



JOSH P. CROTZER

# Local student ambassadors go virtual this summer

## Annual trips redesigned due to coronavirus

IN FEBRUARY, six students were selected to represent Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative and take part in one of two educational and memorable trips. Karlyn Esuary from Liberty High School, Page Holcombe from West-Oak High School and Daniel Watson from Cyber Academy of South Carolina were chosen to attend the annual Washington Youth Tour originally scheduled for June. Neleah Clough from Greenville Technical Charter High School, and Maelyn Holliday and Annsley Lowery, both from Westside High School, were selected to attend the Cooperative Youth Summit in Columbia this July.

Despite the best made plans, the COVID-19 outbreak forced the cancellation of both events. Realizing the importance these educational trips offer to students, the Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina organized a Virtual Youth Experience June

19-26 through an internet-based video conferencing system. The two-hour per day conference allowed students to learn about cooperatives and how they are responding to the COVID-19 crisis and hear from influential speakers and elected officials from both Washington and Columbia. The participants also had the opportunity to compete for a \$5,000 college scholarship by working in teams to create a podcast detailing how the COVID-19 crisis has impacted their lives.

“During these challenging times, we have to be innovative to keep supporting our communities and members,” says Jim Lovinggood, president and CEO of Blue Ridge Electric. “We were disappointed these students couldn’t take the trips as originally planned, but we’re glad this experience was made available to them. We think it will still be one they will always remember.”



**Karlyn Esuary**  
Liberty High School



**Page Holcombe**  
West-Oak High School



**Daniel Watson**  
Cyber Academy of South Carolina



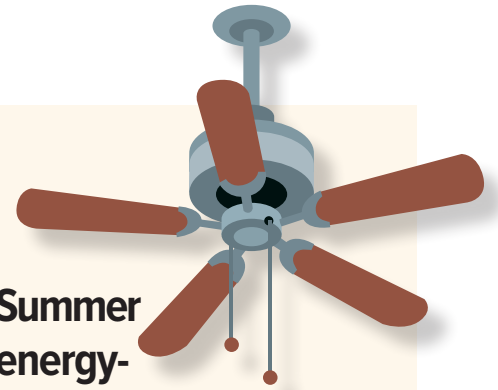
**Neleah Clough**  
Greenville Technical Charter High School



**Maelyn Holliday**  
Westside High School



**Annsley Lowery**  
Westside High School



## Summer energy-saving tips

**WHAT A CHANGE** a month can make! The cool, rainy spring is over, and summer temperatures are already hitting the 90-degree mark.

With summer heat comes summer power bills. The largest portion of your summer electric bill is associated with cooling your home. Below are some things you can do to stay cool and save money. For more tips, visit **30 Days of Summer Savings** at [blueridge.coop](http://blueridge.coop).

- ▶ Close blinds and drapes during the day to keep heat out.
- ▶ Purchase an Ecobee smart thermostat at a discounted price.
- ▶ Turn off lights and ceiling fans when you leave a room.
- ▶ Keep your garage door down. A cooler garage means a cooler home.
- ▶ Plant trees and shrubs to shade the exterior of your home.
- ▶ Replace disposable air filters or clean permanent filters once a month to maximize efficiency.
- ▶ Use solar lighting to brighten up your outdoor space. Solar lights are easy to install, low maintenance, and provide free electricity.
- ▶ Download the BREC app, watch your daily energy use and look for ways to save.