



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

MONCKS CORNER

1732 US-52 West
Moncks Corner, SC 29461
(843) 761-8200/825-3383

MCMemberRequests@bec.coop

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Co-op Day at the Statehouse



MIKE FULLER
President & CEO

Downtown Columbia is a ways outside Berkeley Electric Cooperative’s assigned territory, but your electric cooperative is working for you there, too.

Every year, we send cooperative liaisons to the S.C. State House to represent your

interests on everything from energy policy to economic development to broadband expansion. What happens in that big granite building can have a massive impact on your community and your wallet.

That’s why last month, Berkeley Electric took part in an event we call Co-op Day at the State House. Our people were among the hundreds of South Carolina electric cooperative linemen, staff, and trustees who visited the offices of our state representatives and swarmed the lobby to remind them of what’s important to our members and to thank them for their support.

Over the last few years, state lawmakers have debated bills that affected power costs, cooperative governance, electric reliability, and funding for crucial services your cooperative provides. This year’s session is no different. We expect legislators to focus heavily on energy issues this year as our state seeks to address the need for more generation to supply our growing demands.

We spend a lot of time talking with state leaders about energy, safety and empowering our communities. We also need to say “thank you” to the policy makers who have listened and had our back through thick and thin.

That’s why we recently presented Senate President Thomas Alexander with the first-ever Electric Cooperative Outstanding Public Service Award. The new honor recognizes distinguished leaders who have demonstrated unwavering support of South Carolina’s electric cooperatives.

Sincerely,
Michael S. Fuller



TRAVIS BELL



Co-op employees from across the state visited with legislators to thank them for their support and remind them of what is important to our members during Co-op Day at the State House



May the 4th be with you as we romp in the swamp!

Ewoks and storm troopers and Jedi...oh my! It's time for the 3rd Annual Bright Ideas 5K and this year we're holding it on May 4th, also known as Star Wars Day! You'll need to rely on the Force as you navigate this unique mixed-terrain course as it winds through a black water swamp. No, it's not on Dagobah but 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 the race.

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 can apply for grants up to \$1,000 while teams of teachers are eligible for grants up to \$1,500. To date, over \$80,000 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.



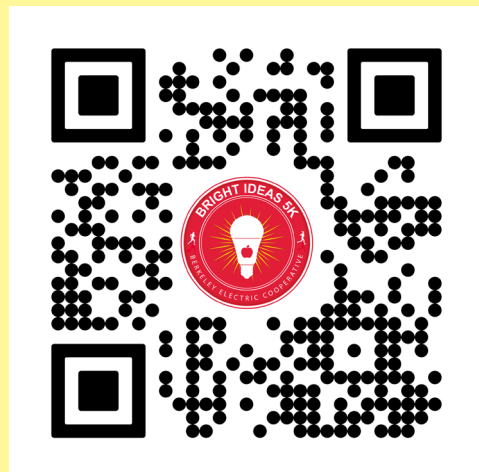
Date: Saturday, May 4, 2024

Location: Cypress Gardens

Start Time: 8 a.m.

Entry Fee: \$40

- includes t-shirt & finisher medal
- \$35 Early Bird discount ends March 4
- Guaranteed t-shirt deadline ends March 27



**SCAN CODE FOR MORE INFO
& TO SIGN UP!**

ARBOR DAY SALE



Over a thousand trees and counting

Members can reserve up to two trees for \$30 each!

It's the return of Berkeley Electric's popular Arbor Day tree sale. Members can choose up to two species selected to thrive in the Lowcountry - **Eastern Redbud**, **Magnolia Ann** and **Japanese Maple**. These trees will be sourced from a reputable regional grower. They will also arrive potted and already be 3-5 feet tall for just **\$30 each**.

At Berkeley Electric Cooperative, being a good steward of the environment is one of our core principles. That's why we're once again partnering with the Arbor Day Foundation to share the cost of these energy-saving trees with our members. In addition to beautifying your home, trees can help lower energy use, increase your property value, improve air quality and reduce your carbon footprint as well.

Reserve your trees at arborday.org/bec. Just enter your address, select your tree and the interactive planting guide will show you the best place to plant it on your property for maximum energy savings. Be sure to enter an address within the co-op's service territory to be able to take advantage of this amazing sale. **Supplies are limited!**

- Pick-up is **one day only**: Saturday, April 20.
- Pick-up times: 9 a.m. – Noon.
- Trees cannot be held, so make other arrangements, if necessary.
- Choose your pick-up location online: Moncks Corner or Johns Island district office.
- Trees are 3-5 ft. tall so bring a vehicle that can transport them.





Awendaw W.I.R.E.

HEALTH & Safety Fair

Saturday, April 13



Community Room
North 7200, Hwy 17 • Awendaw

10 a.m.–1 p.m.

FREE Screenings & Information

Vendors include:

- St. James Santee Health & Wellness
- American Red Cross
- Roper St. Francis
- East Cooper Community Outreach and many more!

PLUS!

Live-line electrical safety demos

Berkeley sets record high satisfaction scores

Berkeley Electric has received the highest American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) ranking in the co-op's history, according to members who participated in the survey last year.

Berkeley Electric members gave the cooperative a score of 94, the highest ACSI score among S.C. co-ops and among the highest in the nation. The statewide average was 86.

In comparison, Chick-fil-A, which is praised for its service, scored 85. The average score for investor-owned utilities nationally was 72 last year, while municipal utilities averaged 71. Cooperatives nationally averaged a 74 ACSI score.

This score is mirrored by real-time surveying of members after they interact with employees across the cooperative. Whether a member is establishing or disconnecting service, has a billing concern, inquiring about vegetation operations or voted at annual meeting, they receive an email with an online satisfaction survey. In 2023, more than 11,000 member surveys gave the cooperative a 96% approval rating.

Berkeley Electric also received a record high rating in the prestigious J.D. Power Customer Satisfaction Study coming in third nationwide in the residential customer category for electric utilities. Electric cooperatives dominated the category with seven co-ops ranking among the top 10 highest-scoring utilities in the nation.

Continuing the trend, Berkeley Electric was also voted among the Best Places to Work in South Carolina by its employees for the second year in a row.



Sources: ACSI® Energy Utilities Study 2022-23. S.C. electric cooperatives score based on data provided by participating South Carolina electric cooperatives collected between Nov. 2 and Dec. 15, 2023. ACSI did not regulate the survey administration or sample size. ACSI and its logo are registered trademarks of the American Customer Satisfaction Index LLC.



Behind-the-scenes inspections serve members

Annual inspections of Berkeley Electric’s overhead systems in the Goose Creek district are currently underway. Contractors from Osmose Utilities Services will be inspecting almost 11,000 wooden poles from the New Hope area to Liberty Hall and Crowfield.

Ryan Ford, system reliability technician, is responsible for the cooperative’s overhead and underground inspection programs to ensure the resiliency of the system.

“They’re proactive programs. Anytime we have unplanned outages, it’s reactive. But we catch so many things during the inspections, which allows our crews to plan the change out or repair. This typically minimizes the number of members involved and significantly decreases the outage duration as well,” Ford said.

In the past, many of the cooperative’s outages were because of the system’s age. To resolve this issue, the co-op’s 200 circuits were outage-prioritized with crews inspecting the least reliable ones first. Any hazards discovered are addressed immediately. For less critical repairs, maintenance crews run a couple of circuits behind the inspections.

Overhead efforts

We all know the perks of living in the Lowcountry – warm weather, beaches and limitless natural beauty – but those conditions aren’t so kind to the longevity of the co-op’s overhead equipment.

Federal standards require most utilities to inspect and treat overhead poles every 15 years. Based on the Lowcountry’s climate, Berkeley has to conduct inspections every eight years - almost twice as frequently. This averages out 8,000-10,000 pole inspections a year for the co-op.

During the inspection, the entire pole is examined but inspectors specifically look for top-of-pole splits and groundline decay from termites and wet conditions. These inspections range from a simple visual inspection to a full excavation checking for decay and to tapping it with a hammer to listen for hollow sounds and soft spots. Berkeley Electric’s pole-rejection rate ranges from 1 to 4 percent each year.

When a pole is rejected, the co-op reviews the system work plan to see where it overlaps with the poles that need to be replaced. This strategic approach eliminates replacing poles twice or replacing poles with lines slated to be converted to underground service.

“We assess the strength of the pole – can it wait a year? If so, we don’t want to treat poles that will be replaced or removed in the near future,” Ford said.

Some poles can be treated with a preservative sealant wrap to prolong its life and save members money. The co-op



Contractors from Osmose Utilities Services are currently inspecting poles across the Goose Creek district. These behind-the-scenes inspections increase reliability for members.

also uses split bolts and pole toppers help keep poles together and extend their life. Inspectors look for structural issues, low lines, right-of-way concerns and hazards. The cooperative also uses drone technology to help speed up inspections.

Being proactive pays off

When a storm rolls in with high winds or ice is when the hard work pays off. These proactive measures combined with other efforts, such as the hard work by the Vegetation Management Department, provide year-round preparation.

“There was a time when we would’ve had more problems on our system,” said Chris Rutledge, vice president of Engineering. “All of our proactive system improvements to be prepared for peak loads, pole change outs, conductor change outs, equipment changeouts, ROW clearing, etc. have made our system stronger than ever.”

BERKELEY AT-A-GLANCE	NOVEMBER 2022	NOVEMBER 2023
Total kWh sold	315,158,496	370,603,109
No. meters served	120,840	126,032
Avg. residential kWh/meter	815	965
Avg. residential bill/meter	\$115.90	\$135.36
Miles of line	6220	6359
Avg. daily high temperature	72	70
Avg. daily low temperature	53	48



LINEMAN'S RODEO

**JOIN US AS
LINEMEN FROM
ACROSS THE STATE
COMPETE IN
SKILLS EVENTS**

MARCH 16

**FREE TO PUBLIC • 8 AM UNTIL
FOOD VENDORS • KIDS ACTIVITIES**



SCAN ME



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MONCK'S CORNER**

