Best Practices ...

Using Social Media to become

*The Trusted Resource for Information*

Renée Whitener
Director of Public Relations
Blue Ridge Electric
Interest in Joining Your Utility's Social Media (2011-2014)

- 18 to 34
- 35 to 44
- 45 to 54
- 55 to 64
- 65 or older

Touchstone Energy®
FlexPay

...talking about her children's experience with FlexPay

HeartPay is an online payment service for "pay-as-you-use" electric energy that removes the difficulty of predicting your electricity usage. When you want it, it appears on your screen. You can pay weekly, monthly, or when the amount is below your budget. [http://www.heartpay.com]

Frequently Asked Questions:

Do I need to set up a way to pay every time I use FlexPay?

No. You only need to set up a way to pay for FlexPay, if you're already a Blue Ridge Electric member, or we will add a meter to your address at the time of your first payment, and you can set up your payment plan.

Does FlexPay replace a traditional paper bill, or is it calculated daily and you pay as you go, as for a credit card?

Yes and no. Your regular monthly bill will be calculated each month, and you can pay electronically or by mail. If you choose to use FlexPay, you can pay your bill as you go, like a credit card. You can also view your account history online.

How much money should I have on my FlexPay account?

You can have as much or as little as you like on your account. If you run out of money, you will be charged a late fee.

Can I pay with my FlexPay account if I'm a new member?

Yes, you can use FlexPay with your new account.

Can I pay with my FlexPay account if I'm a business member?

Yes, you can use FlexPay with your business account.

If you have any questions, please contact our customer service at [phone number].
We will be operating the CoolBarn system today, July 20, from 3 to 6 p.m.

We have conservation events during times of peak demand. Peak demand times occur when everyone uses a lot of electricity at the same time...and the hottest days of the year create times of peak demand.

During a conservation event, your device receives a wireless signal that will put your air conditioner compressor into a "conservation mode." This signal coordinates your A/C or heat pump with others in... See More

Reduced energy rates will go into effect for customer-members on May bills. This new energy rate will be lower than it's been in almost 10 years. http://www.smeaco.coop/.../SMECO_Rate_Reduction_Approved.aspx
BGE volunteers with Art with a Heart for 9/11 day. #NeverForget
Not many people know the devotion and sacrifice that it takes to be a lineman, but as a lineman’s daughter, I do! When the power is out, they are out. It doesn’t matter what is on their to-do list: Christmas morning, supper time, birthday parties, basketball games, or even sleep... when duty calls they must go! Nor does the temperature matter, the weather conditions, or the time of night when the phone rings, they get up and they go to work.

Growing up, my brother and I somewhat resented the job... we didn’t think it was very fair that we had to wait to open our presents on Christmas morning because our dad had been working out in the bitter cold for 24 hours straight. But as I have matured and looked back on my childhood as a lineman’s daughter, I learned many valuable life lessons from my father’s job that I hope carry through my life.

1. Put others before yourself.
2. Sleep can wait, get your presents straight.
3. Plans can change, you’ve gotta be able to roll with the punches.
4. Be patient, be persistent, and be proud.
5. Lineman put in many long, cold, hard hours to make sure that we have light, comfort, and warmth. It’s easy to take these luxuries for granted, however I think it’s extremely important for these guys to know how much each and every one of us appreciates the exceptional job they do.

So... THANK YOU to all of the linemen out there! A very special thank you goes out to my dad and my very own lineman, Kat!
Do you ever wonder what your support of The Wig Bank helps provide? When this beautiful lady on the left walked in to the Wig Bank, she felt down and discouraged from battling cancer. Just look at her now! Betty Hartley took part in our “Look Good, Feel Better” makeup program and received a wig, custom styled by the other beautiful lady in this photo: Diane Smith. Diane is a Wig Bank Board member who volunteers by helping women learn new ways of applying makeup and selecting the perfect wig—and then styling it just for them! Studies show that people with a positive attitude do much better when battling cancer. The Wig Bank helps women restore self-esteem and gives them a bright spot of hope and encouragement. Thank you to EVERYONE who supports The Wig Bank of Caldwell County! THIS is why we exist!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Published</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Targeting</th>
<th>Reach</th>
<th>Engagement</th>
<th>Promote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09/09/2015 24:02</td>
<td>We had the honor to serve this week. This beautiful lady, Elizabeth Pope, second from left. She's show</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1K</td>
<td>130</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/02/2015 10:09 a.m.</td>
<td>Our updated website is live! Check it out! <a href="http://www.wigbank.org">www.wigbank.org</a> nickgreene.com Thank you for your</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>654</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/25/2015 10:15 a.m.</td>
<td>Do you ever wonder what your support of The Wig Bank Helps Provide? When This beautiful lady on</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.2K</td>
<td>646</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/20/2015 9:28 a.m.</td>
<td>The Wig Bank of Caldwell County's cover photo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>69</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/20/2015 9:23 a.m.</td>
<td>The Wig Bank of Caldwell County Proudly Serves the community by supporting people Who are fight</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>682</td>
<td>74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/17/2015 9:44 p.m.</td>
<td>Summer Bash good times from Saturday night!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>124</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/17/2015 7:45 p.m.</td>
<td>Now THAT was fun</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/17/2015 2:41 p.m.</td>
<td>Here's something to make you happy on a Monday!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>296</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/16/2015 5:36 p.m.</td>
<td>Summer Bash scenes from last night - great times with great people, raising money for a great cause</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>75</td>
<td>39</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/15/2015 11:59 p.m.</td>
<td>Love this event</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>73</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/15/2015 10:23 PM</td>
<td>Great times at Summer Bash!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>104</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NUVI is a real-time social media analytics platform with stunning visualizations, a simple user interface, and industry-leading reporting capabilities. NUVI gives you the tools you need to leverage the conversation.

Your data is displayed across beautiful visualizations that provide actionable insights in real-time.
Rappahannock Electric Cooperative

September 10 at 10:53am ·

We love to hear from our members through social media. However, we've had to remove a few posts this week because they contravened REC's social media policy. We'd like to remind everyone not to post personal account information to our wall or public posts regarding personnel matters.
Caldwell County WX @WXCaldwell · Jul 20
@NickolasJosephh @blueridgeemc Estimated Power Restoration is 8 PM... You are 1 of only 27 homes without power...

Nick and Caldwell County WX retweeted you
Jul 20: Linemen are working to restore power resulting from storms. Please call our PowerLine at 1-800-448-2383 to report an outage.

Drew Bolick, Mara Macchia and Nick favored your Tweet
Jul 20: @NickolasJosephh To ensure it's accurately reported, please call 1-800-448-2383

Indee Jo favored a Tweet you were mentioned in
Jul 20: My power is out. Help me..
@blueridgeemc

Nick retweeted you
Jul 20: @NickolasJosephh To ensure it's accurately reported, please call 1-800-448-2383

Nick @NickolasJosephh · Jul 20
My power is out. Help me..
@blueridgeemc
Blue Ridge Electric @blueridgeemc • Jul 20
Check our online, live outage map anytime 24/7 for estimated restoration times at BlueRidgeEMC.com. Report outages at 1-800-448-2383
One of the areas where utilities can have the **biggest impact** on customer service satisfaction is with **outage communications**.
More than **80%** of utility consumers want **proactive communications** during an outage.

*Source: J.D. Power*
Utility executives agreed on these four points:

- Customers want **accurate outage information** that is consistent across all communication channels.

- If customers can’t get this information from their utility, **they will use social media** to generate and share this information among themselves.

Source: Market intelligence firm IDC report
Crisis Communication Plan

As part of our ERP

Includes templates for posts, Q&As, safety tips, graphics, photos
Melanie Davis Marshall  Watauga Democrat: Any idea on how long the restoration will take?

Renee Robbins Whitener  Hi Melanie, the storm damage is so extensive in Watauga, we know restoration will go into Saturday and probably Sunday. Hope you’re getting the news releases I’m sending (let me know if not) but I’ll also keep this site udpated. Keep safe...the roads are really bad in Watauga, our linemen report.

Melanie Davis Marshall  Thank you Renee. I appreciate the update. I am out of town and trying to keep up. Wishing you the best, Melanie
Renee Robbins Whitener

Kenneth, just wanted to say thanks for keeping folks so updated on power restoration on your FB as well as the stations and goblueridge.net....

Kenneth Reece

Renee, Thank you for your help. I don’t think either one of us knew when I called you Christmas morning just how big this was going to turn out to be. And since I was there from the start I found myself becoming more invested into getting the word out, especially since I started getting a ton of text messages from facebook friends that still have family here in the area.

That outage map is a real handy tool to see what is going on, granted as we talked about last week it does take the human factor out of it by not talking to you every hour like the old days. But when our phones and internet went down at the stations I was still able to check the outage map on my iphone and update my facebook status using that information.

I certainly found that working with you again thru phone, the net, email and text was a pleasure. Unlike some other electric companies in the area that made it impossible to reach their offices or a human to let us know what was going on neighboring non-BREMCO counties.

Thanks again for all the help on your end, hope we don’t have to go through this again this coming weekend (for the 3rd one in a row)

KR
Call Powerline at 1-800-448-2383 to report an outage.

Blue Ridge Members: 72,560
Out of Service: 13,438
Percentage - in Service: 81.48%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Affected</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Watauga</td>
<td>11,847</td>
<td>47.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashe</td>
<td>825</td>
<td>3.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avery</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>99.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caldwell</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>1.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilkes</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>3.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alleghany</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL AFFECTED</strong></td>
<td><strong>13,438</strong></td>
<td><strong>18.51%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Members: 72,560
Total Affected: 13,438
Oldest Outage: 62 Hr, 09 Min

Instructions:
* Click on zip code number in table to show outage details by zip code
* Click on map icon to show outage details
* Double click on map to zoom in
* Drag left button to pan the map
* Use scroll wheel to zoom in and out
Outage Map

Statistical data

(Mostly accessed from Watauga Democrat, Mountain Times, and BRE’s Facebook® page.)
Downed power lines can still be Highly Dangerous

A power line can be just as deadly on the ground as it is in the air. If you see a downed power line, go to a safe place and contact your local Blue Ridge Electric office immediately. No one — not even emergency professionals — should ever approach or attempt to handle a downed power line. So stay safe — stay far away from downed power lines until a trained Blue Ridge Electric line crew repairs the problem. For your own protection, if you see a downed power line, please report it by calling any local Blue Ridge Electric office or our toll free line at 1-800-451-5474.

www.BlueRidgeEMC.com
**The steps to restoring power**

**Step 1.** Transmission towers and lines supply power to one or more transmission substations. These lines usually run above ground and can be damaged by a hurricane or tornado. This can affect thousands of people if power is lost to one line, so if there is damage here it gets attention first.

**Step 2.** A co-op may have several local distribution substations, each serving thousands of customers. When a major outage occurs, the local distribution substations are checked first. A problem here could be caused by failure in the transmission system supplying the substation. If the problem is detected at the substation level, power may be restored to a large number of people.

**Step 3.** Main distribution supply lines are checked next if the problem cannot be isolated at the substation. These supply lines carry electricity away from the substation to a group of customers, such as a town or housing development. When power is restored at this stage, all customers served by this supply line could see the lights come on, as long as there is no problem farther down the line.

**Step 4.** The main supply lines, called tap lines, carry power to the utility poles or underground transformers outside houses or other buildings. An additional local substation is located here. Restoration efforts are directed toward these locations, which are closest to the greatest number of customers.

**Step 5.** Sometimes, damage will occur on the service line between your house and the transformer on the nearby pole. This can explain why you have no power when your neighbors do. Your co-op needs to know you have an outage here, so a service crew can repair it.

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**After a major power outage**

The main goal is to restore power safely to the greatest number of members in the shortest time possible. The major cause of outages is damage caused by falling trees. That’s why your electric cooperative has an ongoing right-of-way maintenance program. This illustration explains how power typically is restored after a major disaster.

---

Report your outage to the cooperative office, employee or service crew and they will assess the problem and repair it as quickly as possible.

Individual households may receive special attention if loss of electricity affects life support systems or poses another immediate danger. If you or a family member depend on life support, call your cooperative before an emergency.
Positive consumer comments increased when photos were posted.

Blue Ridge Electric Membership Corporation: This photo shows crews working to put up 40-50 foot power poles by hand in some remote locations in their recent power restoration efforts.

Tonya Severt Hamby: This picture was the photo of the day for 12-28-09, on the website for Ray's Weather. It was taken by Jeff Harper.

2 people like this.

Stephanie Smith Hickey: Man I hope that is near my house! Thanks for all the work, I'll be so happy when our power's restored.

Donna Testerman Outen: You GUYS ROCK!!!!! THANK YOU for all your hard work! I am thankful that GOD blessed this world with men like you! Prayers and Thanks going out to you!
Dec. 26 Outage Update 7AM

Lenoir, North Carolina (December 26, 2009--7 a.m. update) - Some 260 line technicians are in the field this morning working to restore power to those affected by one of the worst ice storms in years in the High Country.

Blue Ridge Electric Membership Corporation

Some 260 line crews were in the field early today working to clear trees, replace broken poles and downed power lines to restore power to 15,000 in Watauga County and 6,000 in Ashe County. Call 800-448-2383 to report outages; check status at tinyurl.com

* Click on zip code number in table to show outage details by zip code. * Click on map icon to show outage details * Double click on map to zoom in * Drag left button to pan the map * Use scroll wheel to zoom in and out

Blue Ridge Electric Membership Corporation

View our outage map for the latest numbers regarding power outages: http://tinyurl.com/yonrlt Line technicians are on the scene restoring power to thousands affected by the Christmas Day ice storm.

tinyurl.com

* Click on zip code number in table to show outage details by zip code. * Click on map icon to show outage details * Double click on map to zoom in * Drag left button to pan the map * Use scroll wheel to zoom in and out
Blue Ridge Electric Membership Corporation

Scam alert: be aware of scam artists posing as Blue Ridge workers trying to gain access to homes. While Blue Ridge officials may knock on your door to speak to you from outside, they don't need access inside your home to restore power. If you have doubts, call us at your local district office or the general toll-free number: 1-800-451-5474 to speak with a Blue Ridge employee to confirm identification. 16 hours ago.

Blue Ridge Electric Membership Corporation

Still battling tough conditions to get the last 60 back on....

Watauga County, N.C. -- Utility workers have had to get creative to get to some remote areas.

10 hours ago · Comment · Like · Share

Sherry Cline likes this.

Sarah Griffith Hawkins Watauga thanks you for all of your hard work! 9 hours ago · Delete · Report

Write a comment...

Blue Ridge Electric Membership Corporation

Only 60 outages remain in Watauga County as of 8 p.m. and linemen continue to work in the field tonight toward full restoration. If you're still without power, call Blue Ridge Electric at 334-330-1414 or 1-800-418-2222 between 8 and 5.

Watauga County, N.C. -- Utility workers have had to get creative to get to some remote areas.

10 hours ago · Comment · Like · Share

Sherry Cline likes this.

Sarah Griffith Hawkins Watauga thanks you for all of your hard work! 9 hours ago · Delete · Report

Write a comment...
Blue Ridge Electric Membership Corporation Outages are at 19,000, with Watauga and Ashe counties most affected by the ice storm. Restoration work will continue into the weekend as crews repair downed lines and broken poles and remove fallen trees from roadways to reach outage locations. If you’re in Watauga County and have special medical needs, contact Emergen...

See More

View all 7 comments

Becky Pelley
Be safe when you guys are out there! Thanks for the updates, my folks live out on Pine Run Rd.
December 25, 2009 at 9:18pm · Delete · Report

Blue Ridge Electric Membership Corporation
Thanks! Will do
December 25, 2009 at 10:49pm · Delete

Write a comment...

Blue Ridge Electric Membership Corporation Outages may be extended due to trees on roads blocking access to outage locations and continued icy weather affecting power lines. Be prepared to stay safe, and if you have special medical needs you may want to contact local Emergency Management officials for assistance if needed. Blue Ridge line crews will continue to...

See More

Blue Ridge Electric Membership Corporation Blue Ridge Electric has a plan for restoring power as safely and quickly as possible. Line technicians are on the scene restoring power to some 21,000 members without power due to a Christmas Day ice storm. See our plan for power restoration here:

Restoring Power After a Major Outage
tinyurl.com

The major cause of outages is damage caused by fallen trees. That's why Blue Ridge Electric has an ongoing right-of-way maintenance program. However, restoring power after a major outage is a big job that involves much more than simply throwing a switch or removing a tree from a line.
New “home” page included quick and easy access to the most current and accurate information available as well as familiar links to information normally housed within our regular website.

Some 260 line technicians are in the field this morning working to restore power to 15,000 in Watauga County and 6,000 in Ashe County affected by one of the worst ice storms in years in the High Country. Linemen are cutting their way through trees blocking roads and access to outage locations where ice has also heavily damaged power lines and poles. Restoration work will continue today and into Sunday.

- Renee Whitener, Director of Public Relations
Statistical data for the dark web site immediately following the storm.
"Power restoration is nearing completion in Ashe County today and in the more damaged Watauga County, full power restoration is expected Wednesday. Line technicians are in full force in both counties working into the evening hours. We want to thank everyone who’s had a part in feeding and housing them so they can continue working on power restoration efforts even in these tough conditions."

- Renee Whitener, Director of Public Relations
"The Christmas ice storm of 2009 is going to go down right up there with Hurricane Hugo as one of the biggest challenges we’ve faced.

Thank you again for your patience and perseverance."

- Doug Johnson, Chief Executive Officer

The Latest
- December 31, 2009 - Outage Restoration Complete in Watauga County (2 AM)
- December 31, 2009 - Scam Artist Alert
- December 30, 2009 - Final Outages in Watauga County Nearly Restored (8 PM)
- December 30, 2009 - Final Outages in Watauga County Nearly Restored (3:30 PM)
- December 30, 2009 - Final Outages in Watauga County Being Restored - Power Alert on Scam Artists Posing as Blue Ridge Employees (11 AM)
- December 29, 2009 - Outages Continue Decreasing - Ashe County Fully Restored; Watauga County: 642 (9 PM)
- December 29, 2009 - Outage Numbers Decreasing - Watauga County: 1,992; Ashe County: 27 (4:30 PM)
- December 29, 2009 - Special Alert: Ashe County Outage Restoration Wraps Up Today - Watauga County: Linemen Continue Working to Restore 2,300

Resources / Related Content
- Photos / Local Assistance and Help
  - Watauga Democrat
  - GoBlueRidge.Net
  - 580 The Farm
  - WBTV 3
  - Photos and Videos
  - Ray’s Weather

- Stay Away from Downed Power Lines
- Steps to Restoring Power
  - Find us on Facebook
Carole Coates Wish I could personally thank all of the BREMCO folks for your hard work during the last week to get everyone’s power back. And a special thanks to your families and friends for sharing you during this holiday season. All of you are our heroes.

Dave Pickard Great job and thanks for all your hard work and missing Christmas with your families. I know it was hard to work 3 days at French Broad and come home to this.

Barbara Woods Woodie I just want to say a BIG THANK YOU to you all!!

Blue Ridge Electric Membership Corporation A "thank you" message from CEO Doug Johnson and info on the storm and power restoration process. Happy New Year to all!

Blue Ridge Electric tinyurl.com
Facebook: Consumer “Thank you” Forum

Elizabeth Kingsley Shukis The commitment, dedication, and perserverance is something this Co-Op has shown significantly in this time of need. I am thankful for each individual who unselfishly gave their time away from thier families at Christmas to help those without electricity. The men and women working are to be admired and praised and I a...

See More

Karen Smith Haury Thank you all for your hard work and dedication. We truly appreciate you!

Wee-Cycle Childrens Consignment Sale Thank you Blue Ridge! Our family greatly appreciates the restoration of our power.

Celeste Crowe Mucho Grande thanks to all the line techs and others working to resore power for us. Ya’ll rock!!

Jill Kuykendall My apartment has been without power since Dec. 25. However, I know linemen from various co-ops are working hard to restore power throughout the county. Thank you for your dedication. Your hard work is appreciated!

Stephanie Smith Hickey Man I hope that is near my house! Thanks for all the work, I'll be so happy when our power's restored.

Donna Testerman Outen You GUYS ROCK!!!! THANK YOU for all your hard work! I am thankful that GOD blessed this world with men like you! Prayers and Thanks going out to you!

Brittney Trivette We just got our power back on with in the last 2hrs. after it went off early Friday morning. Thank you for all your hard work!!!! There have 3 trucks since Sat. morning working on our road trying to restore power. Again, thank you so much!!!!!

Tamera Rogers Presnell Thank you so much for your hard work!!! Our family has prayed for the safety of the workers and their families who were without them during Christmas. We are sooooo grateful!!! We got power this morning, and my six year-old is happily playing all of his Christmas Wii games, and I am happily drinking a cup of hot coffee!!
Questions?