



# MEMBERSHIP *matters*

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER  
FROM BLUE RIDGE ENERGY

SEPTEMBER 2017

## Is an electric vehicle right for you?



Jason Smith, senior communications analyst using Caldwell district's Level 3 EV charging station

Would you give up your Ford F-150 if you could save \$300 a month on gasoline, enjoy more time with the people you love, *and* indulge your passion? That's exactly what Jason Smith did! This summer, he traded his truck for an all-electric Nissan Leaf.

"I wouldn't switch back," said Smith, who works as senior communications analyst for Blue Ridge Energy and formerly ran an alternative energy company.

"My little girl is 13 and this technology is evolving in her lifetime. I wanted to show her this is a viable option and how to use this technology for a better future," said Smith, noting that electric vehicles (EV) like his Leaf have zero emissions. "I also like experimenting with new technology," he added.

Savings and lifestyle are also benefits. In addition to gas savings, EVs have fewer parts than a traditional vehicle so they're lower maintenance. Early adopters are even enjoying tax credits of up to \$10,000 or more!

Many like the convenience of charging overnight at home. For long trips, EV owners see charging stations rapidly increasing. They include Blue Ridge Energy's new Level 3 EV charging station at the Caldwell district office featuring the fastest charger on the market. Charging stations are easy to find with apps such as ChargePoint or PlugShare. "My Leaf even came with a navigation system that shows charging stations along any route I'm driving," Smith said.

"It's no different than stopping to get gas — except now we charge while shopping, eating dinner or tossing a football," said Smith. In fact, towns such as Blowing Rock and West Jefferson are capitalizing on the trend with their own EV charging stations with the help of utility grant funds that Blue Ridge Energy helped secure.

"A lot of people don't know they want an electric vehicle until they use one," Smith concluded.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

# the perspective

From Blue Ridge CEO Doug Johnson



## Making life better

Making life better for the people we serve is more than a slogan – it's how we approach every decision, every plan and every employee's daily work here at Blue Ridge.

Our Powerful Solutions effort was created out of this desire. Members now have more options available from Blue Ridge Energy to help lower their energy bills, participate in renewable energy, lower or finance the cost of making homes more comfortable and energy efficient, and other helpful home programs.

The newest Powerful Solutions program is a network of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations! The fastest EV charger on the market is now available at our new Caldwell district office, conveniently located just off Blowing Rock Blvd. for those traveling through Lenoir to the mountains. The Level 3/DC Fast Charger can fully power a vehicle in 30 minutes!

Additionally, your cooperative helped secure funding for Level 2 EV charging stations in Blowing Rock and West Jefferson.

As electric vehicles become more affordable due to federal tax credits and manufacturer rebates, consumers are seeing the value — including in our service area. (Be sure to read the article in this newsletter about a Blue Ridge employee who recently made the switch!)

Multiple factors are behind the growing adoption of electric vehicles: many like the environmental benefits and doing their part to support cleaner transportation; maintenance costs can be lower due to fewer moving parts than gasoline-powered vehicles; and others like the new technology and lifestyle they represent.



Caldwell District's new Level 3 EV charging station

Why would your electric cooperative be involved? Doing our part for a smarter, cleaner environment is one way Blue Ridge Energy is making life better for our members. But supporting electric vehicle growth by helping provide charging stations can also help keep your rates down. How?

Charging vehicles during off-peak periods can help manage your cooperative's load demands, which in turn helps

reduce the cost we pay for wholesale power. And that benefits members. Wholesale power we distribute to members is the largest expense of your cooperative. Anything that helps lower and control wholesale power cost will benefit members with more stable rates for years to come. As electric vehicles grow in popularity, the value this can have for members and your cooperative can be significant.

Your cooperative is always looking to the future to find new, innovative ways to hold down your rates while providing clean, affordable, reliable electricity. We hope you agree: life is better in the Blue Ridge area!