

Blue Ridge Electric Members Foundation Accepting Grant Applications

Written by Renee R. Whitener
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The Blue Ridge Electric Members Foundation is now accepting applications for the 2014 grant cycle and will continue through the application deadline date of August 31, 2014. The grants seek to fund projects related to improving health and wellness, education, economic and community development, the environment, and other quality of life initiatives.

Grants are available for nonprofit organizations serving the Blue Ridge Electric Membership Corporation and Blue Ridge Energies service area including Caldwell, Watauga, Ashe, Alleghany, Avery, Alexander, and Wilkes, counties of North Carolina and Grayson County, Virginia.

The Blue Ridge Electric Members Foundation offers two grant opportunities: community grants that typically range from \$1,000 to \$5,000 and Impact grants for larger projects typically worth \$25,000. A total of \$91,000 is projected to be available for this grant cycle. The Foundation Advisory Committee, an all-volunteer group of cooperative members, reviews all applications and will make grant recommendations to the Board of directors at its November board meeting. Grant recipients will be announced in early December.

The Blue Ridge Electric Members Foundation was formed in 2007 to expand the cooperative's mission of helping local communities in its service area. Foundation funds are used in two ways: first, to provide crisis electric bill assistance to members who find themselves in need of emergency financial help; and second, through grants to support longer-term efforts of organizations that help sustain and build communities for improving the local quality of life.

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Funding for Foundation grants comes from members participating in Blue Ridge Electric's Operation Round Up® and Operation Round Up Plus® programs as well as contributions from the profits of Blue Ridge Energies and RidgeLink, subsidiaries of the cooperative. Nearly 30,000 members are either rounding up their monthly electric bill with Operation Round Up or adding a dollar or more with Operation Round Up Plus.

Applications for the grant cycle and helpful information about the Blue Ridge Electric Members Foundation can be found at www.BlueRidgeEMC.com or by contacting Grey Scheer, director of community relations, at gscheer@blueridgeemc.com.

Blue Ridge Electric is a cooperative utility serving some 74,000 members in Caldwell, Watauga, Ashe, Alleghany, Avery, Wilkes and Alexander counties. For more information, visit www.BlueRidgeEMC.com