



BARC Electric Cooperative News

Keyser's Corner



Michael Keyser
CEO/General Manager

Building a Foundation for BARC's Future

January is the traditional time for reflection. It is good practice to pause, at least for a moment, and look back on what you accomplished in

the last year and to think about what the new year will bring.

Looking back, 2015 was a watershed year for BARC Electric Cooperative. We continued implementation of major projects and initiated some others. In every case, the efforts positioned BARC and its members well for the future. Let's take a look at some of the more visible accomplishments.

Our fiber-to-the-home project evolved from concept to fully developed plan. Listening to you, we understand that our members hunger for access to high-speed Internet service. What I find quite interesting is the parallel between broadband and rural electrification 75 years ago. Back then, the established electric utilities did not want to string lines to remote areas due to long returns on investment. As a result, electric cooperatives like BARC were created to bring power to rural America.

Fast forward to today and the parallels to broadband are eerily similar. Just like the lack of electricity hindered economic and personal growth, the lack of reliable and affordable high-speed Internet in rural America poses the same problems. Who wants to stay in, let alone move to, an area where they cannot access high-speed Internet? Statistics over the last decade have shown a mass migration to urban centers and a decline in rural populations as a result.

We believe it is our mission to take the lead in providing Internet service to our members. Service that is reliable, affordable, and capable of offering the speeds for not only today, but also tomorrow's needs. We are extremely proud to be involved in this pioneering effort for our members, and see 2016 as a year of tremendous growth. Please go to barc.crowdfiber.com for more information.

2015 also saw the launch of our community solar project. Renewable energy is important to our future energy supply. Many of our members have expressed interest in "going solar" only to find out that it is very expensive. Besides, unless you are a real techie or have other motivations, most members don't really want the panels, inverters or

We believe it is our mission to take the lead in providing Internet service to our members. Service that is reliable, affordable, and capable of offering the speeds for not only today, but also tomorrow's needs. We are extremely proud to be involved in this pioneering effort for our members, and see 2016 as a year of tremendous growth. Please go to barc.crowdfiber.com for more information.

the maintenance responsibility, they just want the renewable energy.

As your power supplier, we took a look at this situation and the available options. One of the newest concepts in the solar market is community solar. Here, BARC builds a solar array large enough to serve many customers. Those customers subscribe to a portion of the output. The result is the subscribers are able to get solar power without the cost or hassle of owning the system.

BARC ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

P.O. Box 264
Millboro, VA 24460-0264
1-800-846-2272

Office Hours: M-F, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
www.barcelectric.com



Come join us on Twitter @BARCElectric
Or Tweet the CEO @BARCBoss



Come join us on Facebook
www.facebook.com/BARCElectricCooperative

CEO/General Manager

Michael Keyser

BARC Electric Cooperative is an equal
opportunity provider and employer.



Tina Glenn

Have leftover
pumpkin? Here
is a good way
to get rid of it.

TINA's Tastings

CREAMY PUMPKIN SOUP

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Tablespoon olive oil | ½ teaspoon cinnamon |
| 1 large onion, diced | 2½ teaspoons curry powder |
| 3 stalks celery, diced | pinch of cloves |
| 2 carrots, diced | 1 cup low-fat milk |
| 2 cups pumpkin | salt to taste |
| 6 cups chicken broth | |

Add olive oil to large pot. Add onion, celery and carrots; saute for about 5 minutes to soften vegetables. Add pumpkin, broth and spices; simmer for 15 minutes. Puree soup in blender and return to pot. Whisk in low-fat milk and reheat before serving. Add salt to taste.

BARC is on the leading edge of this new trend. During 2015, we won two grants totaling \$750,000, and I even spoke at a White House community solar summit! By the time you read this, we will have awarded the contract for construction of a roughly 500 kW system expected to go online by summer of 2016. Customer interest in the project has been overwhelming, suggesting that a second project is not only possible but necessary. Please go to barcelectric.com/communitySolar for more information. Or if you are interested in subscribing, give us a call.

As you might expect, our single-largest expense in providing your electric service is purchased power. It represents about 60 percent of your monthly bill. To this end, our purchased-power portfolio is comprised of several sources, including Old Dominion Electric Cooperative (ODEC), the Southeast Power Administration, and Morgan Stanley Capital Group. In recent years, the influx of inexpensive natural gas

and the slowdown in the economy has led to reduced prices in the wholesale electric market. We have worked hard to lock in our purchased-power contracts at these low prices. This keeps your rates stable and hedges against future increases.

We are always looking for ways to be more efficient and effective in our daily operations. During 2015, we acquired a former elementary school in Rockbridge County. This facility will now become a base of operations for our Rockbridge crews, enabling us to be more productive by reducing “windshield time” and responding more quickly to outages. It will also be the home of our community solar project.

Speaking of outages, no one likes an outage. But when an outage happens, you want as much information as possible concerning the cause and when the lights will be back on. While our outage management system (OMS) isn't new, in 2015 it became a truly integral part of our outage management. We now obtain more

detailed data on outages and their causes than ever before. This data is analyzed and reviewed monthly by management and the Board, and we have found it very helpful in improving our operations to reduce interruptions of all types.

I am very proud of the staff at BARC for the things we accomplished in 2015. But I will close here with a look forward. 2016 is going to be a building year for us. We are going to take the momentum from our 2015 efforts and expand our solar and Internet projects. We will continue to make operational improvements so you receive safe, reliable and affordable power. I encourage you to let us know how we can improve. A key way to do this is through our survey — so if you are selected to respond, please take the time to do so. I promise you that they are read by every level of the organization.

I want to personally wish you and your families a very prosperous and healthy New Year and thank you for your support.

'How Can I Reduce My Electric Bill?'

by Tom Tate, Contributing Writer

We hear this from our members quite often. The answers vary, depending on the situation. Everyone's home uses energy differently. If you took two identical homes built next to each other, their energy use would be different. Why? There are a number of reasons. First, there is family size. This has a huge impact on energy use. You know, teenagers taking long showers and standing for what seems like hours looking into the refrigerator for something to eat.

Construction details are another factor. True, the two houses were built by the same contractor to the same plans and

specifications. However, each is different and will have quirks and characteristics that impact energy use.

Maintenance comes into play as well. If one homeowner is more diligent about the maintenance of energy-using systems than the other, different energy use.

I could go on but you get the picture ... your home uses energy in a unique way. This is the main reason why it is frustrating to compare your energy bills to people “with houses just like mine.”

If you are interested in **learning how your home uses energy** so you can make changes to save, you are reading the right article. The best approach is to analyze your home and get a firsthand idea of where your energy dollars are going. BARC offers two tools to help you do that.

The first is the topic of this article, an **online energy audit**. This audit is the best I have ever come across and I have tried a bunch. One from a national laboratory out West required the proverbial “rocket science” to use. After 45 minutes to complete the first page, I gave up. Others are so simplistic they seem worthless. Our tool offers a pleasant blend of easy-to-use features and high accuracy. It is so accurate, it is the only online audit that the EPA accepts as proof of energy-efficiency improvements.

Knowledge is power

Your greatest tool in efforts to reduce energy costs is good information. BARC's “Learn About Your Energy Use” tool gives you the information you need to start saving today. Please give it a try.

Let's get started. You access the audit from our home page, www.barcelectric.com. Click the top button in the upper right-hand corner labeled, “Learn About Your Energy Use.” **Be sure to have your account number handy.**

This takes you to the audit's **home page**. We want to run the audit so click the button on the left labeled, “Home Energy Calculator.” Keep this page in your favorites as there are lots of other useful tools here.

On the *Home Energy Calculator* page you are getting ready to learn how your home uses energy, powerful information indeed. There are three options. Choose the top option for the “**Comprehensive**” report.

Now you will find yourself on the **first of nine input pages**. Don't worry, the claim is this will **take 10 minutes or less** and you can count on that being true. Take as long as you like though, no points are awarded for fastest finish.



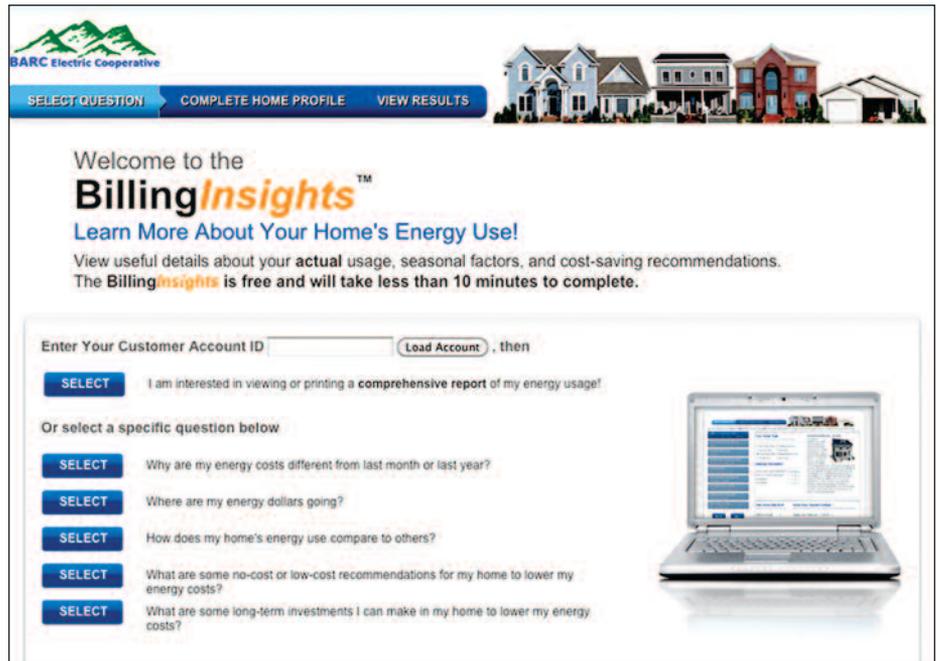
Audit home page — click on the Home Energy Calculator button.

Time to start clicking buttons and making selections. Be as accurate as you can. If you are unsure of an answer, make your best guess or click, “*I don’t know,*” and let the audit use information from local data.

All done? Now it is time to see the results, so click the “*Calculate*” button and let the audit work its magic.

Scroll down and look at the results. The audit offers a lot of information and suggestions for reducing your total energy bill. For instance, my audit told me I can save \$111 per year by increasing my air-conditioning temperature from 75 to 78.

The results also show the effect of weather on energy use. Yes, it may seem obvious that weather drives energy use. But, having it laid out in such detail brings it home. It is also a great way to look back at previous months and see how your use has changed with the weather.



The first page of the audit. Enter your account number and click the top “Select” button.

Local data means great accuracy

A nice feature of the audit is the fact that it is loaded with BARC’s rates, the local rates for other fuels like propane and data about the types of homes in the area. Finally, it uses the weather patterns of the BARC service area. These are just some of the reasons why the audit is so accurate.

Move all the way to the bottom of the first page (it’s really long) and you will see some additional options that are shown in the image below. You can check out other ways to save energy or you can ask a specific question that will lead to a reply from a BARC employee.

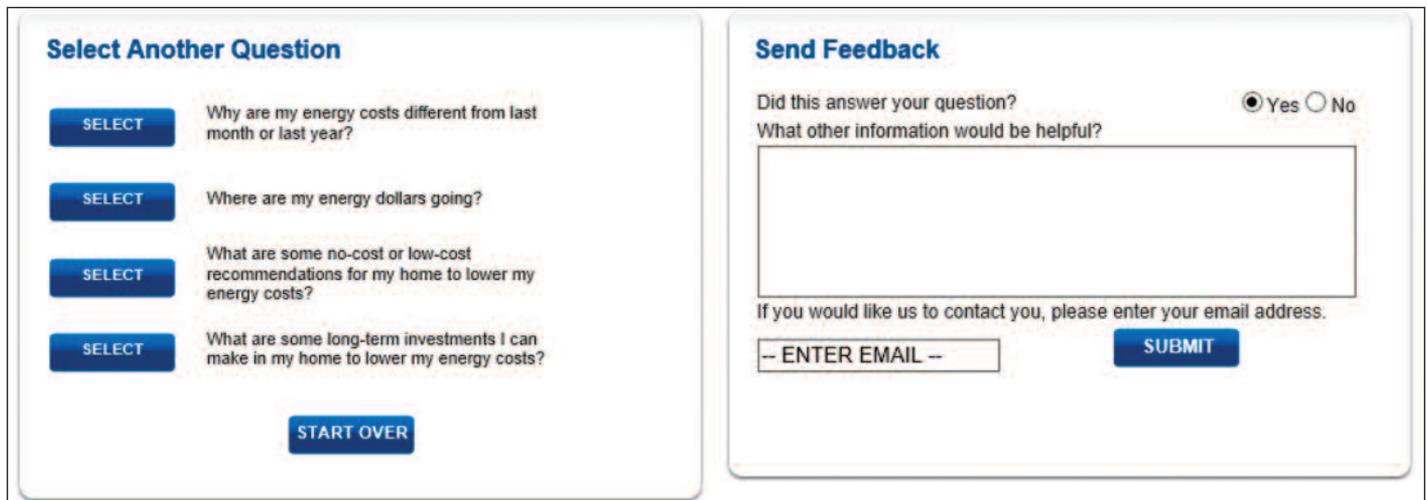
When you are finished, I recommend you **get a copy of your audit**. You can have it emailed, download as a Word document or print it. As mentioned, knowledge is power, power in this case to help you save energy and reduce costs.

There are a ton of **other tools** available (remember the advice to bookmark the first page?). They include excellent

resources for **teaching kids** about what uses energy. These are a great way to help your kids chip in towards saving energy. If you are a **teacher**, they might fit beautifully in your energy or conservation modules.

Look for more on these other tools in future articles and remember, if you have a question on how to save energy, a BARC employee is just a call or email away.

Want to access the audit from your smartphone? Here’s the QR code to make it happen.



At the end of your report, you can use these options to do more research or contact us!