



Keyser's Corner

BARC Mobile App

Faster, More Accurate Outage Reporting at Your Fingertips.

Michael Keyser
CEO/General Manager

A lot has happened with your cooperative during 2016 ... the inauguration of the first community solar garden in the Commonwealth of Virginia, approval to move ahead with the fiber-to-the-home project, and numerous system enhancements to modernize the cooperative.

It is safe to say that one of the things members least like are power outages. With our connected, digital lives, members are dependent upon reliable electric service for all facets of modern life. When outages occur, customers want a modern means of promptly and accurately reporting outages to get power restored as fast as possible.

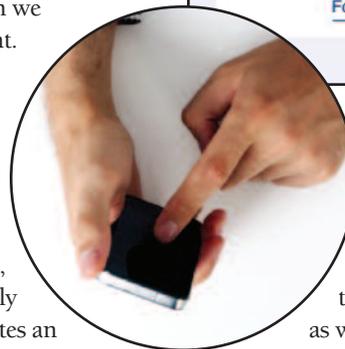
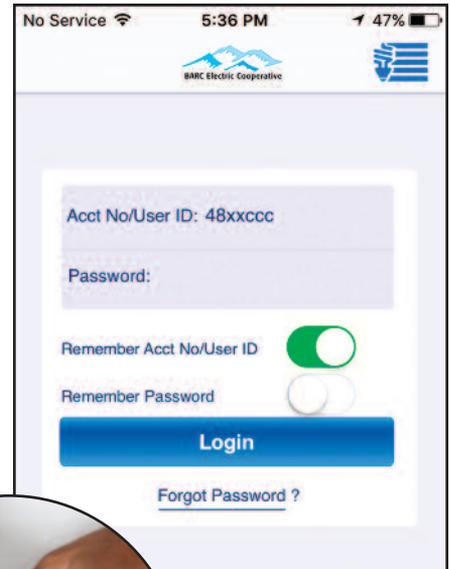
I encourage every customer with a smartphone to use the BARC Mobile app for outage reporting. Once it is connected to your BARC account (see below for more information), reporting an outage is

literally just a couple of taps away. Outage reporting through BARC Mobile is easy and the fastest way for your outage information to get into our outage management system.

Here's how it works. Our system map shows every customer location we serve and all system equipment. But our grid is not "smart." It cannot tell us when your power goes out, yet (that requires a robust communication network, hence the fiber project).

When you report an outage, BARC Mobile interfaces directly with our system map and creates an alert pinpointed to your account location. No need for telephone calls or people entering data. Our dispatchers see the alert and immediately dispatch a crew to the outage. Accuracy is vastly improved along with speed of response.

But there is more. Unlike the telephone call, BARC Mobile will also provide a notification once power is restored. This is



especially useful if you have left your home during an extended outage.

BARC Mobile is more than just outage reporting, as well. It provides a full suite of account-management features.

Pay your bill, see your usage, and more, right in the palm of your hand.

The telephone option still exists, but nothing beats BARC Mobile for speed, accuracy and efficiency. You can learn more about the capability of the BARC Mobile app on our website, at barcelectric.com/appsupport.

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CEO/General Manager
Michael Keyser

BARC Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

How do I set up the BARC Mobile app as a first-time user?

After downloading the app, you must first establish an online account through our web-based customer portal. To set up an online account, you may follow the steps below, or call us at (800) 846-2272 and we would be glad to assist.

1. Navigate your browser to www.barcelectric.com.
2. Click on "Customer Portal" in the top right corner.
3. Go to "My Account" and select "Create User ID," then select "Continue."
4. Complete the account information form, then click "Submit."
5. Login and enjoy. You are now set up on both our customer portal and our mobile app! Your login/password will be the same for our customer portal and mobile app.

Winter Tips

by Tom Tate

November in Virginia can be quite nice. I think it is my favorite month right after October. While the leaves are generally long gone, there is still a crisp feel and the sunlight takes on a different hue. You can walk the woods with greatly expanded vistas and still not be bundled up like the Michelin Tire Man.

Right on its heels will be winter and if you didn't button things up around the house before now, here are some tips to help you keep Old Man Winter outside where he belongs while you keep your home comfortable inside.

Take a look around the exterior of your home.

When closing the storm windows (if you use them) is a good time to do this. Wherever you see a gap, plug it to reduce air leakage. Most common spots for gaps are around windows and doors and around vents and pipes that come into the house.

By now it is probably too cold to use caulk but there are options. I happen to like the closed-cell-foam backer rod sold in the hardware stores. Its main purpose is to fill large cracks so when you apply caulk, you can use a lot less. It is also good for a temporary patch. Not pretty but does the job. Don't use it around anything that gets hot as it will melt.

Wait for a breezy day and walk around inside your home. Go to each window and door and feel for drafts. At one time the EPA recommended using incense for this task as you could see the smoke move in the draft. That advice has been gone for quite a while but it did work. Like outside, caulk and weather-strip the areas where you feel a draft.

Blessed with an older home and those marvelous windows with antique glass? Even with storm windows, you can experience drafts. My favorite remedy for these situations is to use the window film that goes over the windows inside and then shrinks tight with a hair dryer. The film is practically invisible and the reduction in drafts is pronounced. I have a couple of windows in my own home that I leave covered all year.



SOURCE: TOUCHSTONE ENERGY



SOURCE: HONEYWELL

Above: Take a look around the exterior of your home. Wherever you see a gap, plug it to reduce air leakage. Most common spots for gaps are around windows and doors and around vents and pipes that come into the house. Left: Invest in a programmable thermostat. For central heating systems, you can't go wrong with one.

Compartmentalize your home. Close off sections that you do not use regularly. This is ideal for homes with baseboard electric heat. Set the thermostat to a low setting (mid-50s works) and close the door. Baseboard hot water can receive a similar treatment, just close the vents to about three-quarters on the baseboard registers. If you have forced air, be a bit more cautious about closing the doors. This can affect the system's balance and performance. Instead, close the vents by half or two-thirds.

If you have open arches rather than doors in hallways, use spring-loaded curtain rods and hang heavy drapes to contain heat in areas you occupy most often. I can tell you from personal experience this is quite effective.

Invest in a programmable thermostat. For central heating systems, you can't go wrong with one. I have used them for nearly 40 years and they are great for reducing the heating bill. Some offer preprogrammed routines that follow federal recommendations for temperature settings. All allow you to specify your own. If at all possible, keep it at or below 70. Studies report cooler being healthier in the winter.

Look into the new smart thermostats. Still pricey, they have some amazing features. I have owned both the Nest and the Honeywell Lyric. The Nest is the

easiest by far to set up and use, but the Lyric allows me to geo-fence. That means as soon as I drive a particular distance away from my home, the system goes into Away mode. When I return, it goes to Home mode and preheats the house. On both you can also check and control temperatures with your smartphone.

I will close with my annual advice on how to properly use electric space heaters. First of all, don't spend a few hundred dollars on those that have fancy cabinets or tons of bells and whistles. For a tenth the price you can get a utilitarian model that produces exactly the same amount of heat. It may not look as sleek but the objective is comfort, so save your money.

In terms of operating them, do not let them run continuously. Only run them when you are in the room with them. This is like the advice we give for lighting, if you are going to be gone for any length of time, turn it off. Same goes for electric space heaters. If you let just one heater run 24/7, you can add over \$100 to your monthly heating bill. So much for any savings in that situation.

With some simple steps you can save money and stay comfortable. Not a bad combination in my book.

Tom Tate writes about a variety of topics of interest to BARC Electric Cooperative and its members.



Five Gift-Worthy Holiday Gadgets

by Tom Tate

There's never a wrong time for gadgets, but around Christmas even the most Scrooge-ish in terms of gadget getting and giving lightens up. So, I want to offer some ideas for consideration. Let's get started.

LED lighting is without question the most economical way to go. It can reduce the lighting bill to a mere fraction of what it was with incandescent bulbs. But it doesn't offer a whole lot of pizzazz. Here's an LED bulb that will end that shortcoming. From a company called Plumen comes an LED that makes a socket hanging on a wire look elegant. Okay, so it is \$170, but it can serve as a chandelier so think of the savings there. They have other LED bulbs that make a statement as well for less.

usshop.plumen.com/products/plumen-003-led-light-bulb

The Sony Xperia Ear takes your personal assistant from your smartphone and puts it in your ear, evidently right where it belongs. This fairly inconspicuous earpiece responds to head motions and



voice commands. Ask it for your schedule, have it send a message, acknowledge something with a shake or nod. This definitely takes smartphone use to hands-free. Priced at \$225. Available from Sony.

www.sonymobile.com/global-en/products/smart-products/xperia-ear

How about a personal hydration monitor? If you are an exercise fanatic or just want to keep a healthier lifestyle, the LVL Personal Hydration Monitor is the latest in wrist-worn-activity and vital-sign monitors. But it



just doesn't check to be sure you don't become walking human jerky, it also monitors sleep, heart rate and more. Available from Kickstarter with July 2017 delivery starting at a pledge of \$99.

www.kickstarter.com/projects/lactate-threshold/lvl-the-first-wearable-hydration-monitor

I recently spotted a gentleman wearing a T-shirt that sported the original Nintendo game controller with the text, "Classically Trained." That reminded me of the fun I had when my son played his Nintendo and that I can soon relive that fun with the forthcoming Nintendo NES Classic. It is a scaled-down replica of the original console and comes with 30 games already installed. \$59.99 available Nov. 11, 2016.



www.nintendo.com/nes-classic

The Blue Ridge Mountains offer fabulous opportunities to hike and camp so some outdoors gadgets are always in order. Famous for their stacked leather-handle fighting knives from WWII, Ka-Bar offers the Tactical Spork Tool. Reminiscent of the hobo knife that packed a fork and spoon into a pocket knife, the Tactical Spork updates the materials and simplifies the design. Perfect for a can of beans out on the trail. Available at Amazon for \$12.



www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/B01FYJ6ICK/uncrate-20

This could go on forever but I'll draw it to a close. Hopefully some of these items will pique your interest and find their way under the tree this Christmas.



Tina Glenn

TINA's Tastings

This is a very simple recipe for your busy holidays. It is from one of our members, Olivia Haney.

BERRY COBBLER

- | | |
|----------------|----------------------------------------|
| 1 stick butter | 1 cup milk |
| 1 cup sugar | 3 teaspoons baking powder |
| 1 cup flour | 2 cans of fruit pie filling (any kind) |

Melt butter in a 9"x13" pan. Mix sugar, flour, milk and baking powder and pour into butter. Add fruit on top. Bake at 350 degrees for 35 to 45 minutes.

Please share your recipes for possible publication by sending them to Tina Glenn at BARC Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 264, Millboro, VA 24460.