



BARC Hosts Annual Meeting

Members and guests gathered on July 17 at BARC Electric Cooperative's Highland Belle office in Lexington, Va., for the co-op's annual meeting.

Board President Keith Swisher reported a rewarding and challenging year for the utility industry. BARC receives its generation and transmission from Old Dominion Electric Cooperative, which "continues to benefit BARC by planning and forecasting energy demands for our members." Crews have been constructing a new 3.5-mile transmission route from the solar field in Millboro, Va., increasing our load capacity. He also added how BARC Connects continues to expand

fiber broadband with 1,366 miles and now 5,000 customers connected. BARC also went through a major software conversion to allow the cooperative to work more efficiently for our members. We appreciate members' patience during this transition.

An important note to our membership is that cooperatives operate at cost and can authorize capital credits based on patronage in the event of margins. Each year, the board evaluates the upcoming needs to maintain the system and provide services. The capital credits remain as equity until such a time as they can be retired. For many cooperatives, this can be a 20-to-30-year time frame as that is the typical debt funding term. It is important to maintain reasonable equity ratios to meet Rural Utility Service requirements. "Even though lower equity ratios are slowing down our capital credit retirements, we continue to give back to our membership by right-of-way credits, approved by the SCC, \$765,000 in 2023," Swisher commented.

In BARC's 86th year, "We are focused on maintaining safe, reliable and affordable electricity, as well as expanding broadband and renewable energy services," said Swisher. "We are proud of our employees and their accomplishments throughout 2023." He also extended a huge thank you to the lineworkers for their hard work in this difficult heat these last several weeks.

Board Secretary/Treasurer John Quantz reported, "Co-ops across our region battled

similar trends throughout 2023 — low kWh sales due to a year of mild weather and continuously rising interest rates. We saw a slight decrease in energy costs from our major power supplier due to a decline in the cost of natural gas. BARC passed these savings on to our membership by reducing the power cost adjustment rate on Aug. 1, 2023. An average residential member consuming 1,000 kWh in a month recognized a total savings of \$4.29."

"We are focused on maintaining safe, reliable and affordable electricity, as well as expanding broadband and renewable energy services."

—Keith Swisher, BARC Board President

"Despite the challenges of 2023, I am happy to report that we did end the year with positive margins," Quantz added. "The new rate structure implemented on Jan. 1, 2023, proved instrumental to this outcome."

BARC CEO Bill Buchanan spoke about the importance of system reliability from the standpoint of effective right-of-way maintenance, with more than 2,200 miles of overhead line to maintain. He also celebrated the co-op's milestone

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Office Hours: M-F, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
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Chief Executive Officer
Bill Buchanan

Local Pages Editor
Amanda Cunningham

BARC Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

BARC Connects Celebrates 5,000th Customer

BARC Connects fiber broadband is celebrating a huge milestone last month of 5,000 customers connected to its world-class fiber broadband services.

BARC Connects is a wholly-owned broadband subsidiary of BARC Electric Cooperative, providing fiber-to-the-premise service, including high-speed internet and phone, to consumers in Bacova, Brattons Run, Bustleburg, Cornwall, Effinger, Estaline, Fairfield, Falling Springs, Glasgow, Hot Springs, Lexington and Warm Springs.

BARC Connects broke ground on the project in 2017 and began mainline construction building infrastructure to bring world-class internet service to the communities the co-op serves. BARC Connects began connecting consumers in early 2018 and continue connecting both traditional electric service consumers and non-BARC electric consumers with dependable broadband service that previously only existed in densely populated metropolitan areas.

BARC Connects celebrated the company's achievement with its 5,000th customer, Fern Plecker, a small business owner in Bath County. Plecker owns The Hairstyling Shop in Hot Springs, Va.

"The Hairstyling Shop is very excited to have great internet," says Plecker. "BARC Connects has been good to us."

Camp Mont Shenandoah business manager, Katie Stites, says, "BARC Connects provides reliable, first-class service so that Camp Mont Shenandoah can continue to provide a bright future for generations of young women."

The Virginia Horse Center, located in Lexington, Va., has recently partnered with BARC Connects. Manager Matt Crookshanks says that having BARC Connects high speed internet has allowed their shows to better utilize iPads for faster scoring and live streams.

According to Ecco Adesso Vineyards, BARC Connects has supported the family business since its inception in

"BARC Connects provides reliable, first-class service so that Camp Mont Shenandoah can continue to provide a bright future for generations of young women."

*—Katie Stites, Business Manager
Camp Mont Shenandoah*



The Hairstyling Shop in Hot Springs is honored to be BARC Connects 5,000th customer.

2020. As a farm winery with on-site vineyard cottages, reliable high-speed internet is crucial for operations and providing guests with excellent service.

Philip Clayton, of Lexington, said in 2015, "I learned that phase one of construction would come near, but miss our small neighborhood on House Mountain. I immediately started calling, emailing and physically visiting our neighbors. I was able to obtain 53 potential households that indicated they would be interested. Modifications of the initial map of construction we made to include our neighborhood. We've enjoyed high-speed internet and phone service since 2019 and have been very pleased with both!"

BARC Connects CEO Bill Buchanan says, "BARC Connects has achieved this milestone through the power of this strong community, our entire team, and partnerships working together to connect and transform the lives of rural Virginia. We are grateful to our loyal customers and businesses for their support and trust in BARC Connects."



Business Manager Billy Reid works with Matt Crookshanks to bring BARC Connects service to the Virginia Horse Center in Lexington.

BARC Annual Meeting

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achievement of 750,000 hours worked with no lost-time incidents.

Buchanan emphasized the importance of cooperatives and the cooperative model. Electric cooperatives were established in the 1930s and 1940s to provide electric service to rural areas that investor-owned utilities deemed too unprofitable to serve. There are nearly 900 electric cooperatives in the U.S.

Buchanan also spoke on the broadband grants and how they are key to expanding broadband to rural areas. Over 300 electric cooperatives have been successful in obtaining funding that has contributed 40-75% of the capital required to build out their fiber networks. BARC has been less fortunate in broadband grants to support these projects. Buchanan noted, "To date, BARC has received less than 5% support on its broadband efforts. The largest challenge we face is the cost per passing is higher than the grants will support due to the sparsely populated areas and the high cost of constructing in rock."

The following board members were reelected to three-year terms: directors John Quantz, Tommy Ford and Jason Black. More than 1,000 members voted by returning their proxy designation cards and were entered into a drawing to win \$150 bill credits. The following members were announced as winners:

- District 1 – William Snow
- District 2 – Karen Hickman
- District 3 – Dora Sanders
- District 4 – Rick Tufaro
- District 5 – Rogers Beavers
- District 6 – John Retzlaff
- District 7 – Kathy Sweeney

BARC Supports the Bath County Fair

Sept. 21 | 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

Millboro Elementary School
411 Church St., Millboro, VA 24460



Enjoy these fun activities:

- Magic Show • Carnival Games • Free Carriage Rides
- 4-H Poultry Show & Sale • Dog Show • Door Prizes
- Knockerball • Local Food & Craft Vendors • Raffles

Bring your best to this year's contests:


Baked goods, crafts, photography and more!

Check out another great festival:

Visit the Bath County Chamber Harvest Festival from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. on Sept. 28 in downtown Hot Springs. Enjoy live music, festive food, crafts, chili cookoff, a farmers' market and more.

▶ Visit countyofbathchamber.org.



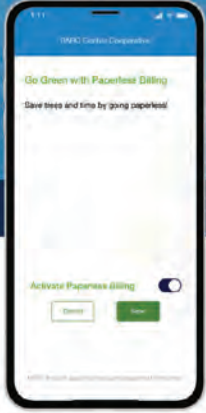



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