

BARC Hosts 88th Annual Meeting

BARC Electric Cooperative recently held its 88th Annual Meeting on July 15 at the Highland Belle office in Lexington, Va. The meeting highlighted operational milestones, ongoing investments in grid reliability and broadband expansion.

Board President Michael Sandridge opened the meeting by expressing sincere gratitude to outgoing President Keith Swisher for his decades of dedicated service and steady leadership.

During his remarks, Sandridge emphasized the cooperative's commitment to safety, announcing a major milestone: one million work hours without a lost-time incident. He attributed this achievement directly to the dedication of every employee choosing to prioritize safety each day.

Demonstrating a commitment to the region's youth, Sandridge also celebrated BARC's four recent Virginia, Maryland & Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives scholarship recipients, reinforcing the cooperative's mission to invest in the future of the community it serves.

Secretary John Quantz presented the cooperative's 2025 financial report,



CEO Bill Buchanan



Board President Michael Sandridge

which reflected continued investment in electric infrastructure, broadband reach and long-term stability. BARC generated \$37.8 million in operating revenue in 2025, yielding operating margins of \$551,773. While consolidated statements reflected a total margin loss of \$3.4 million, Quantz clarified this was largely due to a one-time, non-cash accounting adjustment tied to a recent bylaw revision designed to protect the cooperative's tax-exempt status. The cooperative invested \$4.3 million in electric system improvements to boost grid reliability. BARC closed the year with \$180 million in total assets and \$33.2 million in member equity. Independent auditors issued a clean opinion on the 2025 financial statements.

BARC's broadband subsidiary, BARC Connects, continued to grow, reaching 5,632 connected customers. Two newly awarded grants will allow the co-op to extend high-speed fiber service to more than 700 additional member locations while laying the groundwork for smart grid technology.

Additionally, BARC helped members transition to clean energy by financing over \$1.3 million in residential rooftop solar projects across the service territory.

CEO Bill Buchanan addressed one of the most pressing member questions: *Why are electric bills rising?* Buchanan outlined several key industry-wide cost drivers raising regional transmission charges

and Virginia's reentry into the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) have impacted costs. By state law, mandatory carbon allowance expenses are passed directly through to members without any markups or profit.

Vegetation management and right-of-way (ROW) clearing represent the cooperative's third-largest operating expense across mountainous terrain. While the cooperative maintains thousands of miles of ROW, trees — even those outside the ROW — remain a leading cause of power outages.

Buchanan concluded by highlighting the convergence of the electric and broadband networks. The expansion of high-speed internet not only powers local homes, schools and small businesses, but it also enables advanced smart meters and real-time grid monitoring — tools that will allow engineers to detect issues faster and significantly improve power reliability for all members.

A quorum was met and the following board members were reelected to three-year terms: Albert J. Lewis and Keith Swisher. 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: *Cathy J. Hodge, David E. Moore, Hilda M. Dudley, Marilyn Halsey, Stella Little, Timothy Altizer, Richard King.*

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BARC Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Rockbridge Regional Fair & Expo

Sept. 10-12

The Rockbridge Regional Fair & Expo returns to the Virginia Horse Center in Lexington, Sept. 10–12, bringing together the best of agriculture, entertainment and family fun for three memorable days.

This year's theme, "Stars and Stripes Over Carnival Lights," celebrates America's 250th anniversary while honoring the agricultural traditions and community spirit that have made county fairs a cherished part of rural Virginia for generations.

Visitors can enjoy midway rides and games, livestock shows, agricultural exhibits, home arts competitions, delicious fair food, commercial vendors and live entertainment throughout the weekend. From youth exhibitors proudly showcasing their animals and projects to families making memories on the midway, the fair offers something for every age.

New and returning attractions include a mechanical bull riding competition, Open Mic Night featuring local musicians, an



Photos courtesy of the Rockbridge Regional Fair and Expo



'80s-themed evening of music and fun, and performances by Danny and Lindsay Grant with the Cowboy & Cowgirl Circus. Throughout the fair, visitors can also enjoy the "Quilts in the Country" Quilt Show, highlighting the craftsmanship and creativity of talented quilters from across the region. Saturday morning features a farmers market and toy show, adding even more opportunities to celebrate local artisans, agriculture and community.

The Rockbridge Regional Fair & Expo is made possible through the dedication of volunteers, exhibitors, sponsors and community partners who work together each year to preserve agricultural traditions while creating new memories for families across the Shenandoah Valley.

Whether you're attending to support local agriculture, explore exhibits, enjoy the entertainment or simply spend time with family and friends, the Rockbridge Regional Fair & Expo offers a welcoming experience that celebrates the best of our community.

For schedules and exhibit details, visit RockbridgeFair.Com or follow on Facebook at facebook.com/RockbridgeRegionalFairExpo.

Bath County Fair

Sept. 9

There's no better way to celebrate the best of Bath County than at the 2026 Bath County Fair! Gather your family and friends and join us Saturday, Sept. 19, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. for a day packed with hometown fun, friendly competition and community spirit.

This year's fair is bringing back all your favorites and introducing an exciting new attraction! Children ages 2–7 won't want to miss our brand-new Stacyc and Strider Races, where young riders can show off their skills and have a blast in a fun, family-friendly competition.

Whether you're cheering on the agricultural contests, browsing the classic car show, enjoying live music or entering the Sportsman Contest, there's something for everyone to enjoy. Kids and adults alike will love the fun games, carriage



Photos courtesy of Bath County Fair



rides, the always-popular dog show and the 4-H poultry show. And don't forget to come hungry — there will be plenty of delicious food to satisfy every appetite!

From longtime fairgoers to first-time visitors, the Bath County Fair offers a wonderful opportunity to celebrate our rural heritage, connect with neighbors and make lasting family memories.

Admission is just \$10 for everyone ages 13 and older, making it an affordable day of entertainment for the whole family.

Come spend the day with us and discover why the Bath County Fair is one of the highlights of the year — there's fun around every corner!

For the latest updates, event details and contest information, be sure to visit the Bath County Fair Facebook page. We can't wait to see you on Sept. 19!

BARC Connects Helps Support Rockbridge Freedom Food Festival

It was a scorching Friday afternoon when The Late Night Stumblers took the stage at the annual Freedom Food Festival on July 3. Despite temperatures around 100 degrees, attendees flocked to downtown Lexington to eat Independence Day-themed meals, enjoy live music and reconnect with family and friends. Steve Grist, president and CEO of CornerStone Bank — the festival's presenting sponsor — opened the festival with a tribute to beloved City of Lexington Mayor Frank Friedman, followed by a moment of silence and the ringing of church bells. There was no doubt Friedman would have been at the stage dancing to the lively tunes of Mason Via and Cordovas.

Seven nonprofits partnered with kitchens and caterers to sell delicious food “cook-off” style on Main Street.

To celebrate VA250, the judges were local military veterans. Four judges taste-tested and scored each meal, awarding the Golden Spoon trophy for the best meal to Rockbridge County High School Baseball and Celebrity Chef Coach Travis Roadcap, who partnered with Pure Eats.

The festival is a fundraiser and raised over \$30,000 for distribution to participating nonprofits.

Tara Orebaugh, a member of the Freedom Food Festival steering committee, coordinated with BARC Connects on its outdoor Wi-Fi services. Orebaugh indicated that, “Billy Reid has been very helpful for the past three



years in setting up multiple outdoor Wi-Fi extenders to allow our nonprofits, kitchens and committee members to have the ability to have working internet along the streets of Lexington. We couldn't have done it without it!” The nonprofits selling Fourth of July meals reported that their internet connection was “absolutely stellar! No issues whatsoever.”

The Freedom Food Festival steering committee includes Rockbridge Regional Tourism, Chamber of Commerce Serving Lexington, Buena Vista and Rockbridge County, Main Street Lexington, and Lexington Catering Company along with numerous individuals from local businesses and organizations.

An Office with a View.





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1-800-846-2272 or visit barcconnects.net/outdoor

UPCOMING SEPTEMBER EVENTS

Sept. 7: 55th Annual Labor Day Festival with parade, music and fireworks in Buena Vista

Sept. 10-Dec. 26: Rockbridge Regional Fair & Expo at Virginia Horse Center

Sept. 12: 32nd Annual Rockbridge Beer & Wine Festival at Lime Kiln Theater

Sept. 17-26: Nothin' Fancy Bluegrass Festival at Glen Maury Park

Sept. 19: Line Dance Lex in downtown Lexington

REMINDER: DO NOT SHOOT AT OVERHEAD LINES

BARC is asking for your help this hunting season. As a reminder, do not shoot at or near electrical and fiber equipment and lines.

We are dedicated to providing our rural communities the most reliable and cost-effective electricity and the best internet services. Damages caused by shooting fiber and power lines can result in potential liability and criminal charges and can leave homes and businesses without power and internet.

We know the majority of hunters practice safe hunting and understand the potential hazards of discharging a firearm. We encourage experienced hunters who are familiar with the area

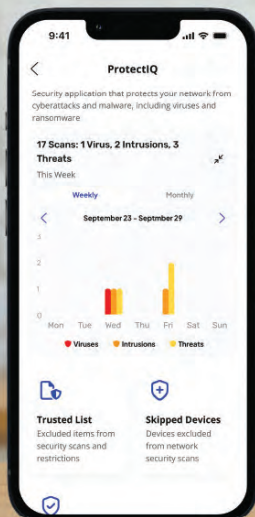


to help identify the locations of electrical equipment to younger, less experienced hunters and gun enthusiasts. Tampering with or misusing our fiber and electric lines can not only put you in danger but also affect other members who are downline.

Please respect yourself, your fellow members and our power and fiber infrastructure.

Safeguarding all your connected devices. At no extra charge.

BARC
Connects
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