



Serving members in Baldwin, Emanuel, Glascock, Hancock, Jefferson, Johnson, Laurens, Warren, Washington and Wilkinson counties

Preparing to serve you better

Providing reliable power to you is and will always be top priority at Washington EMC. These days, power reliability seems to be making news now more than ever.

As the energy industry continues to transition and more segments of the economy are becoming electrified, such as vehicles, machinery and even lawn equipment, additional pressures are being placed on our nation’s electric grid.

With the summer storm season upon us, I thought it would be a good time to tell you about a few measures we’re taking to ensure you continue receiving the reliable power you depend on and deserve.

Let me be the first to say I love trees and the charm they add to our communities, and I know you do, too. While trees provide shade and add beauty to our area, you may be surprised to



learn that, in our industry, overgrown vegetation accounts for about half of all power outages. That’s why we strive to keep the co-op’s power lines clear in right-of-way (ROW) areas. A ROW area is the land a co-op uses to construct, maintain, replace or repair underground and overhead power lines. ROW areas enables Washington EMC



Wendy Sellers
President/CEO

to provide clearance from trees and other obstructions that could hinder distribution power lines. The overall goal of our vegetation management strategy is to provide reliable power to our members, while also maintaining the beauty of our area.

Vegetation management

Generally speaking, healthy trees don’t fall on power lines, and clear lines don’t cause problems. Proactive trimming and mowing keep lines clear to improve power reliability and promotes public safety.

An effective vegetation management program helps prevent wildfire hazards and injuries to people climbing or working in or around trees adjacent to power lines. It entails on-the-ground, labor-intensive efforts involving many workers mowing and trimming vegetation to ensure

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An electric membership corporation

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Preparing to serve you better,

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Washington EMC maintains quality rights-of-way so we can better serve our members.

Our right-of-way crews take pride in their work and utilize the latest equipment, such as sky trim machines, skid steer mulchers and brush chippers, to effectively clear and maintain our power line rights-of-way.

Washington EMC also utilizes a grass-friendly herbicide treatment to further deter unwanted vegetation growth within our rights-of-way. On Washington EMC's distribution system, you will often see Washington EMC crews and Georgia Right-of-Way crews diligently working to keep lines clear of vegetation that could impact reliable power.

If ever you have questions regarding the vegetation management program at Washington EMC, please



We do our best to avoid power outages, but storm season can be unpredictable. If you're planning to use a portable generator for temporary power, know how to use it safely. It could save a life.

contact our customer service agents. They will be happy to assist you. Lastly, I encourage you to follow Washington EMC on social media so you can learn about the latest co-op updates.

Coming Soon

Keep an eye out for updated text services for outage reporting and pertinent member communication. Please update your contact information with Washington EMC to make sure you receive all communications.



Meeting demand

How Georgia's electric cooperatives are managing supply-chain disruptions

Supply-chain problems have been in the news lately, but what, exactly, is a supply chain?

Simply put, a supply chain is the network of organizations, resources, activities and technology involved in the manufacturing and delivery of a product.

Supply-chain concerns were exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic as the result of a “perfect storm” of factors, including shifts in consumer demand, labor shortages and disruptions in the freight industry. These and other factors led to unprecedented problems with the availability and cost of products across all business sectors.

Georgia's electric industry is no exception to this trend, with challenges related to the availability and cost of critical equipment and supplies, such as transformers, conductors, utility poles and meters. Electric membership cooperatives (EMCs) seeking to acquire these materials have experienced significant delays and drastic price increases. In some cases, materials can cost twice what they did before the pandemic.

Causes and effects

Workforce shortages at manufacturing facilities, the scarcity of raw materials and components, driver shortages in the trucking industry and higher fuel prices have contributed to this situation. Much-needed materials in short supply include raw wood for utility poles; chemicals for treating poles; casting materials for hardware; and the chips, also called semiconductors or microchips, that are used in meters.

Lead times for delivery also have increased. Products that once could be ordered a month or two in advance now may take a year or longer to be delivered. For example, lead times for ordering transformers jumped from one



A nationwide shortage of distribution transformers is causing delivery delays across the U.S. Procurement times have risen from two months in 2018 to more than a year today, and average costs have doubled or tripled.

or two months to as long as two years, and, for bucket and line trucks, the lead times can be four years or longer.

The availability of transformers is a primary concern because a shortage could impair an EMC's ability to restore power during outages.

“Electric cooperatives have mutual-assistance agreements to support one another after major outages, with sister co-ops sending crews to areas that face extensive restoration work. We also have seen cooperation among cooperatives when it comes to meeting the challenges of item shortages,” says Wendy Sellers, President/CEO at Washington EMC.

Sensible strategies

EMCs in Georgia are taking steps to stabilize their supply-chain security, sustainability and resilience. Some of

the changes include expanding their supplier base, forecasting further into the future and carrying more inventory. One of the successful strategies at Washington EMC is to “forecast out much longer for some items than we did traditionally, prior to the pandemic,” Sellers says.

Other strategies include retrieving idle transformers that were set in anticipation of development that has not yet occurred and removing and reusing meters from homes and businesses that no longer receive service. Many cooperatives also are staying with reliable vendors that consistently produce the necessary materials and components needed by electric utilities.

Washington EMC is “taking proactive steps to ensure that supply-chain issues will not affect the reliable service that our members expect. However, we anticipate that these issues will continue to increase our operational costs. As a not-for-profit utility, we work hard to minimize the impact of rising costs on our members,” Sellers says.

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