



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

Season's greetings from Washington EMC

The holidays! I love everything about this time of year. Just the thought of the holiday season brings a smile to my face and evokes a sense of comfort and nostalgia. Recalling family gatherings and traditions warms my heart and fills my senses.

It's a time of reflection. I'm grateful for my own family, as well as my co-op family. At Washington EMC (WEMC), we're driven by a sense of mission and purpose. Our team feels a strong connection to our community and our members, because we live here, too.

While many of our community-focused programs and activities, such as charitable initiatives like toy and food drives, ramp up this time of year, we have several programs and services in place to help our members year-round. I'd like to remind you about some of these offerings in hopes you'll find them beneficial.

We hope you'll take advantage of

WEMC mobile, an app that empowers you to monitor, manage and pay your energy bill conveniently through your phone. Our Operation Round Up program helps the communities we serve with projects, program needs and operating expenses. By simply rounding your energy bills to the next whole dollar amount, you can help others right here in our community. Through members' generous donations over the last 14 years, we've been able to donate more than \$1.5 million to those in need.

In addition to helping members save today, we're focusing on the future. In our area, we're seeing increased interest in renewable energy sources. Recent innovations and advances have led to significant cost decreases in renewable energy, making it more feasible and accessible. In recent years, Washington EMC has been able to adjust our fuel mix by incorporating more renewables. Today, 7.6% of our



Wendy Sellers
President/CEO

fuel mix is comprised of renewable energy sources, the majority of which is hydro.

But the most important investment we make is in our local youth. Washington EMC has graciously volunteered hours supporting schools, youth clubs and programs, along with providing scholarships for local students. Each year, through our Washington Youth Tour, we send high school juniors to Washington, D.C., for a weeklong immersion to experience democracy in action.

At the heart of all of these programs is you—the members we proudly serve. Looking back, I'm grateful for so many wonderful community partners and for the positive impact we continue to make.

This holiday season, I wish you and your loved ones peace, joy and prosperity. Speaking on behalf of our team at Washington EMC, I know the future will be bright, because of you.





An electric membership corporation

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Holiday decorating tips for an energy-wise home

Whether you've already decked your halls or you're just getting started, there's still time to incorporate energy savings into your holiday decor planning.

If you haven't strung your twinkle lights, be sure to use LED light strands. LEDs consume far less energy than incandescent lights, and they can last 40 holiday seasons. They're also safer because they're made with epoxy lenses, not glass, making them more resistant to breaking—and they're cool to the touch, so no burnt fingers.

If you missed Santa's memo about energy-saving LEDs and your holiday lights are already up, you can still save on lighting costs. All you need is a programmable light timer. Most models cost between \$10 and \$25, and can be purchased through online retailers like Amazon or at big-box stores like Lowe's or Walmart. With a light timer, you can easily program when you want your holiday lights turned on and off, which will save you time, money and energy. If you're using a timer for exterior lighting, make sure it's weatherproof and intended for outdoor use.

If Clark Griswold's decorating style is a bit much for your taste, consider a more natural approach. Many Christmas tree farms, and even retailers like Lowe's and Home Depot, give



away greenery clippings from recently trimmed trees. With a little twine, extra ornaments and sparkly ribbon, you can create beautiful garlands and wreaths to hang over your front door or windows. To add extra twinkle at night, you can install solar-powered spotlights to illuminate your new (essentially free) greenery. Solar spotlights can vary in price, but you should be able to purchase a quality set of four for about \$30. And because they run on natural energy from the sun, there's no additional cost to your energy bill.

Regardless of how you decorate your home for the holidays, there are plenty of ways to save energy throughout the season. Visit www.washingtonemc.com for additional energy-saving tips.



'Tis extension cord season. Use them properly.

Tis the season to unpack the extension cords and plug way too many devices into them.

Here are 10 tips from the Electrical Safety Foundation for using extension cords properly:

- 1. Never plug an extension cord into another extension cord.** They're not designed for that kind of electrical load.
- 2. Choose an extension cord designed for outdoor use** if you plan to use it outside.
- 3. Inspect your cords for damage**, such as cracks and loose wires. If they're not in good shape, replace them.
- 4. Avoid hiding an extension cord under a rug.** The cord could overheat and catch the rug on fire.
- 5. Buy cords only if they are approved by UL** or another independent testing laboratory.
- 6. Keep cords away from water and snow.**
- 7. Instead of nailing or stapling cords** to power strands of holiday lights on your gutters or walls, use plastic hangers that won't puncture the cords.
- 8. Don't cut the third prong off a three-prong plug** to force it into a two-prong outlet. Instead, buy an adapter.
- 9. Put your extension cords away** with your holiday decorations. They are designed for temporary, not permanent use.
- 10. Avoid overloading a multiple-slot**

extension cord with too many devices. That cord has to plug into an outlet that can overheat if you overload it.



Holiday closings

Washington EMC offices will close Thursday, December 23, and Friday, December 24, for the Christmas holidays. Our offices will also be closed Friday, December 31, for New Year's. For emergency service or to report a power outage, call (478) 552-2577 or (800) 552-2577



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Heading out of town for the holiday season?

Remember to unplug electronics that draw a phantom energy load. Some gadgets like TVs, phone chargers, gaming consoles and toothbrush chargers use energy when plugged into an outlet—even when they're not in use.



GATE cards are due December 31, 2021

Georgia Agricultural Tax Exemption (GATE) cards are due to Washington EMC by December 31, 2021. If GATE cards are not received by this date, accounts will be removed from tax-exempt status.

How does it work?

Qualified agricultural producers must submit their new tax exemption certificate to Washington EMC in order to receive a sales-tax exemption on agriculture equipment and production inputs.

How do I apply?

Applications may be completed electronically online at www.agr.georgia.gov or submitted by mail. We anticipate applications being available at your county Farm Bureau office. More information can also be found at www.agr.georgia.gov.

Questions? Call (855) FARM TAX or (855) 327-6829. If you would like to receive text messages with updates on the tax exemption program, simply text "GATE" to 72727.



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