

# The LAMPLIGHTER

Official Member Newsletter of Washington EMC

June 2024

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

## Energy scams unmasked

Consumers with water, gas and electricity connections have long been targets for utility scams.

But in today's digital world, every swipe and click increases the risk of potential scams.

Scammers are more sophisticated than ever before, and they understand our increasing reliance on technology. With increased knowledge of e-business practices, scammers have adapted their tactics to trick unsuspecting consumers through a variety of methods.

Washington EMC wants to help you avoid energy scams, whether a financial loss or leak of your personal information. This month, I'd like to share updates on some of the latest utility scams, as well as tips to help

you stay safe from even the craftiest scammers.

### Recent utility scams

Scammers typically disguise themselves—physically or digitally—as utility employees or representatives to steal consumers' money or personal information. A common trick is to claim a consumer's bill is past due and threaten to disconnect service if payment isn't received immediately. Scammers approach consumers through a variety of means, including phone calls, text messages, emails and in-person visits. However, the digital line of attack is increasingly more common.

For example, new capabilities disguising caller ID, or spoofing, can



Wendy Sellers  
President/CEO

make the phone number you see on caller ID appear to be from a trusted source. Spoofing makes it easier for scammers to deceive you because it's more difficult to immediately verify the call. Another recent scam uses fraudulent websites that are identical to a utility payment webpage. What's worse, these pages are often promoted on search engines to trick consumers into clicking and making a payment.

Another type of scam involves phone calls, text messages or emails claiming you overpaid your electric bill and will receive a cash or banking refund. This offer may seem too good to be true, and it is. It's likely a scam aimed to steal your personal information.

### Spotting a scam

There are several red flags you can watch for to identify an energy scam.

Scammers often use high-pressure tactics to create a sense of urgency,

*Continued on page 20C*

### SIGNS OF AN

## ENERGY SCAM

#### High-Pressure Tactics

Scammers will pressure you, creating a sense of urgency. Claims that your power will be disconnected without immediate payment are common with utility scams.

#### Sketchy Payment Methods

Scammers may ask for unusual payment methods like gift cards or cryptocurrency. In these cases, it's likely a scam.

#### Dodgy Communication

Whether an email, text message or letter, utility scams typically include poor grammar, spelling errors or unusual email addresses. These are common warning signs of a scam.





An electric membership corporation

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Website: [www.washingtonemc.com](http://www.washingtonemc.com)

Wendy Sellers, President/CEO

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#### OFFICE HOURS

8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Monday through Friday

#### PHONES

Local (478) 552-2577

Long distance (800) 552-2577

#### 24-HOUR CALL CENTER

To report a power interruption  
please call:

Local (478) 552-2577

Long distance (800) 552-2577

#### BRANCH LOCATIONS

12860 Broad St.

Sparta, GA 31087

*Closed on Thursday*

100 W. College St.

Wrightsville, GA 31096

*Closed on Wednesday*

#### Convenient bill pay options include:

##### Drive-thru payment window

319 N. Smith St., Sandersville, GA 31082

Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

##### Pay your bill online

[www.washingtonemc.com](http://www.washingtonemc.com)

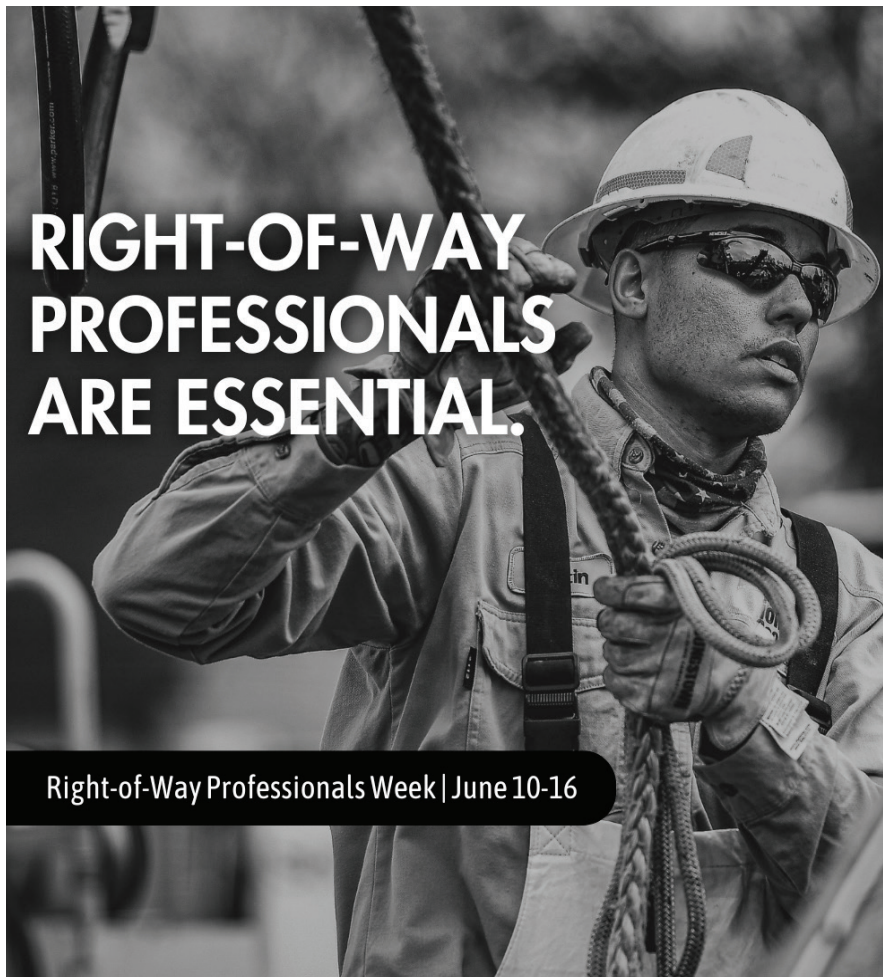
##### Use the free Washington EMC mobile app

Look for WEMC in the

App Store or Android Market.

##### Pay by phone

(478) 552-2577 or (800) 552-2577



From left, Washington EMC Right-of-Way Crew Members William Conley, Charles Harrell and Jon Daniel Glover.

# Have a safe Father's Day

**K**eep Father's Day happy by keeping dad safe, even as he tries out his new electric gifts.

Warn your dad that home repairs can be a dangerous undertaking when electricity gets involved, so he needs to use care with electrical equipment and steer clear of power lines.

A bit of common sense and caution while working outside this spring and summer can keep everyone safe.

Some tips:

- A ladder—even a wooden one—can cause a fatal shock if it touches a power line.
- Inspect power tools and cords for frayed or broken wires and cracked cases before plugging them in.
- Unplug outdoor tools and appliances when you're not using them. Store them out of reach of children.
- Wait for things to dry off before



working outdoors after it rains. Even damp grass can be dangerous when using electricity.

- When carrying ladders, aluminum siding, poles and other long objects, don't forget to look up. More than

20% of people who die in electricity-related home repair accidents have touched a power line with a ladder or building material.

- Keep your projects at least 10 feet away from power lines.

## Energy scams unmasked, *Continued from page 20A*

such as claiming your electricity or other services will be disconnected if a payment isn't made immediately.

Additionally, scammers may ask for unusual payment methods like gift cards or cryptocurrency. If someone is pushing for an unusual payment method, be very wary.

You've probably noticed that many digital scams like emails or text messages include poor grammar, spelling errors and odd email addresses. These should be considered red flags. So when you see these interesting forms of communication, consider using more caution as it's likely a potential scam.

### What Washington EMC will (and won't) do

Washington EMC will never initiate a call to demand an instant, immediate payment and threaten to disconnect your service without

prior notices or warnings. We strive to resolve challenging situations and work with our members to avoid disconnects.

Washington EMC will never ask for your full Social Security number or banking details over the phone or through email. We do verify the last four digits of your Social Security number and certain banking information to ensure accuracy of account holder and payment method. We offer several secure payment options, including in person, over the phone, online at [www.washingtonemc.com](http://www.washingtonemc.com), scheduled payments and our mobile app, WEMC Mobile.

### TEXTalerts system up and running

As a reminder, every member of Washington EMC was automati-

cally enrolled into our new outage reporting system called TEXTalerts. It was initiated in May and members received a welcome text and simple instructions on opting out of the system if they do not wish to participate. Text the word OUT to (478) 552-2577 to opt out.

If you're ever in doubt about a potential energy scam, call (478) 552-2577 so we can assist. Washington EMC wants to help protect you and our community against utility frauds, and by notifying us about potential scams, you can create the first line of defense. We encourage you to report any potential scams so we can spread the word and prevent others in our community from falling victim.



# Stay Connected All Summer Long!

*Keep your cool with fiber internet from Connect, powered by Washington EMC.*

## Why Connect?

- No data caps or throttling.
- Phone services also available.
- Affordable pricing for every household.
- Internet in partnership with your local cooperative.
- And more!



SCAN ME

### Let's Connect!

Check availability at [www.conexonconnect.com](http://www.conexonconnect.com), call us at (844) 542-6663 or scan our QR Code!

