



The LAMPLIGHTER

Official Member Newsletter of Washington EMC

May 2025

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

We're here to help you save

When summer heats up, our electric bills tend to increase as air conditioners work overtime, driving up home energy consumption. Washington EMC is your local not-for-profit electricity provider, and we are committed to helping you beat the heat without breaking the bank.

As the temperatures get hotter over the next few months, we want to make sure you know about a range of energy-saving offerings designed specifically with you in mind. By taking advantage of these programs, services and suggestions, you can manage your summer energy consumption and costs.

Levelized billing

One program that can ease the wide fluctuations in summer and winter energy costs is a levelized billing plan.

When you sign up for Washington EMC's levelized billing plan, your energy bill is calculated by averaging your previous 12 months of use.

Using this plan, your monthly energy costs are easier to budget and manage, especially during seasonal variations when bills tend to increase based on the weather. Levelized billing is a great option for anyone on a fixed income or those with highly variable seasonal needs.

Home energy audit

Washington EMC's energy advisers are available to conduct a free energy audit of your home to identify areas where energy is wasted and provide recommendations on ways to improve efficiency and lower your monthly bills.



Wendy Sellers
President/CEO

To schedule your audit, visit www.washingtonemc.com and look under the Member Resources tab for the Home Energy Check Up section. Fill out the online form to set up a personalized checkup on your home's energy efficiency.

You have the power

Small combined actions can have a big impact on summer energy bills.

The best way to lower energy use during summer months is to raise the thermostat to the highest setting that's comfortable. Industry experts suggest 78 degrees in the summer, but increasing the temperature 7-10 degrees during the day, when no one is home, can help as well.

Ceiling fans can also help you feel cooler but remember to turn them off when you leave the room. On warm summer nights, fire up the grill to keep additional heat out of the kitchen.

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STAY COOL. STAY EFFICIENT.

We're here to help you beat the summer heat. Take advantage of our efficiency programs and energy-saving recommendations designed to help you stay comfortable and cut costs all summer long.





An electric membership corporation

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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

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

Cream of Brie Soup

Courtesy of Georgia Grown

4 tablespoons butter

1 cup onion, finely diced

1/2 cup celery, finely diced

1/2 cup carrot, finely diced

4 tablespoons all-purpose flour

6 cups chicken broth or chicken
stock

1/2 cup half-and-half

2 teaspoons seasoning salt or
herbes de Provence

White pepper, to taste

1 teaspoon hot sauce

8-ounce wheel French brie with
rind, diced

Finely chopped parsley for garnish

Diced apple, for garnish

French bread, for serving

In a medium saucepan over medium
heat, melt butter and add vegetables,
cooking until softened, 3-4 minutes.

Add flour and stir to coat vegetables.
Cook while stirring for 3-4 minutes.



COURTESY GEORGIA GROWN

Gradually whisk in chicken broth or chicken
stock, stirring to prevent lumps, then add
half-and-half. Whisk until smooth. Bring to a
boil, then lower to a simmer.

Add seasoning salt or herbes de
Provence, white pepper, hot sauce and
French brie. Stir until cheese is melted.

Using an immersion blender, puree
until smooth. Adjust seasoning. Garnish
with chopped parsley and/or diced
apple and serve with crusty French bread.
Serves 6-8.

Holiday office closing

All Washington EMC offices will be
closed Monday, May 26, in observance
of Memorial Day.

We're here to help you save,

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Remember to change air filters often
so your cooling system doesn't have
to work harder than necessary. The
use of window coverings to block the
sun's heat can have a great effect in
reducing energy consumption.

The U.S. Department of Energy's
website at www.energy.gov/energysaver/energy-saver is a great
source for ideas to save on cooling
and heating, as well as educational
information on the different types of

air-conditioning systems, heat pumps
and energy-efficient appliances.

Don't let energy bills take a toll on
your summer fun. Washington EMC
is here to help manage your energy
use, whether through efficiency pro-
grams and services or energy-saving
advice from our local energy advisers.

Contact us to learn more about
practical strategies to lower your use,
trim your bills and make this summer
a breeze for you *and* your wallet.

Landscaping to save energy

By Miranda Boutelle

Thoughtful landscape planning and superior design can help reduce energy costs year-round. According to the United States Department of Energy (DOE), carefully positioned trees can save up to 25% of a typical household's energy use. When selecting the right trees and other foliage, research what is best for your local climate. Select native species naturally adapted to your location for lower maintenance.

Strategically placed deciduous trees allow for summer shade and passive solar heat gain in the winter when leaves have fallen. This can lead to energy savings in the summer and winter.

Slower growing trees might take longer to provide maximum shading benefit, but their roots are typically deeper, and branches are stronger. These factors can make them less likely to be damaged by wind, snow or ice, and be more drought-resistant.

Plant large trees far enough away from your home to prevent damage from falling branches or root damage to your home's foundation.

Keep in mind: If you have a rooftop photovoltaic solar system, even a small amount of shade can significantly reduce energy production. Consider smaller plantings closer to the home to shade walls, windows or hardscaped surfaces, such as driveways and sidewalks.



Keep landscaping clear of HVAC and air-conditioning units to ensure maintenance access and airflow around equipment.

Windbreaks can also be beneficial for energy savings in windy areas. The DOE says windbreaks reduce wind speed by as much as 30 times the windbreak's height. That reduces wind chill near your home and can lower heating costs. The DOE recommends planting two to five times the mature tree's height away from your home.

Plant evergreen trees and shrubs for windbreaks and consider adding fences or earthen mounds to help lift the wind up and over your home. In cold climates, they offer the added benefit of serving as a barrier to snow to keep it from piling up against your home.

Keep landscaping clear of dryer vents, heat pumps and air-conditioning units to ensure access for maintenance and airflow around those locations.

If you live in an area at risk of wildfire, create a defensible space around your home. Consider hardscaping with gravel, bricks, pavers or stone shaded by fire-resistant awnings or covers. Plant fire-resistant plants with proper spacing of plants and trees from your home and other structures on your property. Also, clear dead leaves, branches and vegetation near your home so wildfires won't have fuel to threaten your home.

When landscaping, always consider safety first. Call 811 or visit call811.com before you dig to ensure you know where any underground power, gas, water or sewer lines are located. The national 811 Underground Service Alert program routes you directly to your local resources.

Be mindful of overhead power lines, too. Look up and check the surroundings before setting up ladders. Be thoughtful when planting new landscaping that could encroach on power lines. Utility equipment should have at least 10 feet of clearance, when possible.

As you prepare to refresh your yard for the coming spring and summer months, consider ways you can boost your energy efficiency for more comfort and savings year-round.

Miranda Boutelle is COO at Efficiency Services Group in Oregon, a cooperatively owned energy efficiency company. She writes on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing nearly 900 electric co-ops.



Plant trees that provide shade during the heat of the summer.

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the switch. *Will you?***

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