

Plugged in to Altamaha EMC

APRIL 2017

The Official Newsletter of Altamaha Electric Membership Corporation
Serving: Toombs, Montgomery, Emanuel, Treutlen, Laurens, Johnson and Tattnall

BE PREPARED BEFORE A STORM STRIKES

In the event of a power outage, be prepared by keeping the following items in an easy-to-find emergency supply kit.

WATER
Three-day supply, one gallon per person per day.

TOOLS
Flashlight, extra batteries, manual can opener, battery-powered or hand-crank radio, NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert.

FIRST AID KIT AND PRESCRIPTIONS
First aid supplies, hand sanitizer and at least one week's supply of prescriptions and medications for the family.

Learn more at www.ready.gov

Source: American Red Cross, Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Thunderstorm Safety Tips

When thunderstorms are rolling your way, stay safe with these helpful tips:

- Listen to local news or NOAA Weather Radio for emergency updates. Watch for signs of a storm, like darkening skies, lightning flashes or increasing wind.
- Postpone outdoor activities if thunderstorms are likely to occur. Many people struck by lightning are not in the area where rain is occurring.
- If a severe thunderstorm warning is issued, take shelter in a substantial building or in a vehicle with the windows closed. Get out of mobile homes that can blow over in high winds.
- If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to be in danger from lightning. If thunder roars, go indoors! The National Weather Service recommends staying inside for at least 30 minutes after the last thunder clap.
- Avoid electrical equipment and telephones. Use battery-powered TVs and radios instead.
- Shutter windows and close outside doors securely. Keep away from windows.
- Do not take a bath, shower or use plumbing.
- If you are driving, try to safely exit the roadway and park. Stay in the vehicle and turn on the emergency flashers until the heavy rain ends. Avoid touching metal or other surfaces that conduct electricity in and outside the vehicle.
- If you are outside and cannot reach a safe building, you should avoid the following: high ground, water, tall or isolated trees, and metal objects such as fences or bleachers. Picnic shelters, dugouts and sheds are NOT safe.

Altamaha EMC Revises Retail Rates

The board of directors, management and staff at Altamaha EMC make every effort to provide our members with reliable electricity at the most affordable price possible. Many factors come into play when calculating the cost of the electricity you use every day. Despite our best efforts, the costs associated with generating and distributing electricity continue to increase.

Altamaha EMC obtains the electric energy we provide to you from several sources. Some power is provided from several different generating plants that we jointly own with other utilities in the state. In recent years, the increase in electrical demand in Georgia has required the construction of new and additional generating plants. Regulatory issues have required the installation of pollution control equipment on existing fossil fuel plants.

Altamaha EMC's direct distribution costs have increased over the past five years. We are paying more for copper, aluminum, line transformers and other materials that are a significant factor in the cost of distributing electricity.

We recently conducted an in-depth rate study to determine where our rate structure needs to be to continue providing reliable and affordable electricity in the future. When you combine all the factors mentioned above, these increases in costs will not allow us to continue billing you under the current rate structure. Effective May 1, 2017, Altamaha EMC retail rates will change. Please see the chart below for an approximation of how your monthly bill will be affected.

Even with the rate adjustment, the good news is that most members will not see a big difference in their monthly electric bill. The increased costs discussed above have been indirectly reflected in your bill for the past

several years. These costs are now simply being appropriately reallocated to the cost per kilowatt-hour.

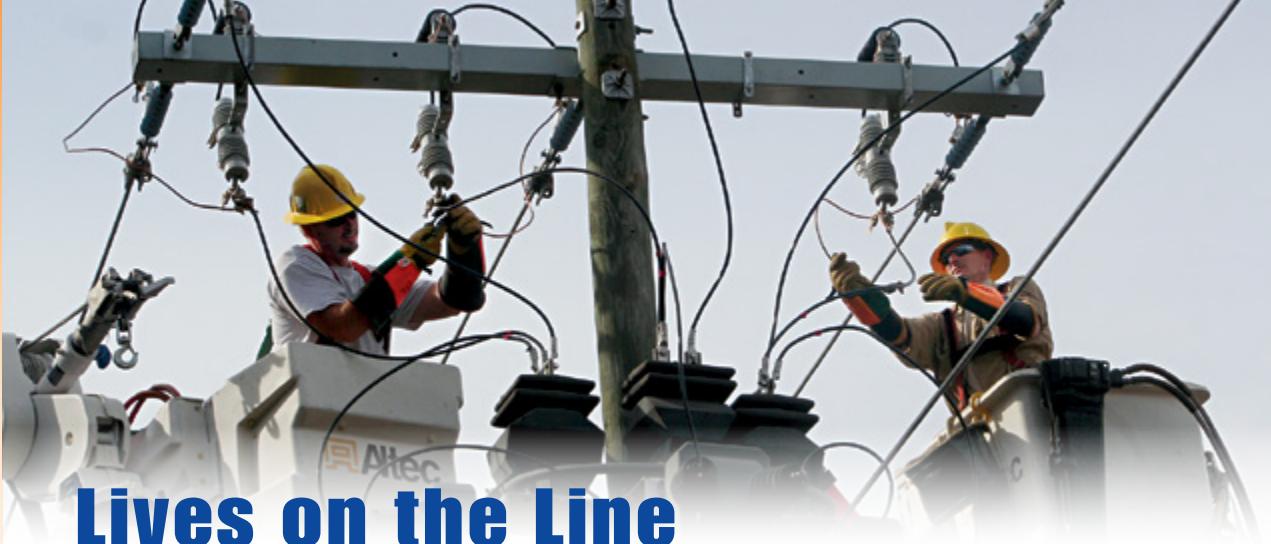
One additional change is our current residential rate will now be split into two groups – a residential rate and a general use rate. The residential rate will include residences with consistent monthly usage above 250 kwh per month. The new general use rate will consist of accounts such as non-commercial storage buildings, wells, shelters, hunting clubs, club houses, golf cart houses, etc. that have a monthly usage below 250 kwh per month. The monthly facilities charge for a residential rate account will increase from \$17.50 to \$20.00. The general use rate monthly facilities charge will increase from \$17.50 to \$21.50.

While no one likes a rate increase, we will continue to work on improving efficiency and controlling costs to offset as much of these factors as possible. As always, Altamaha EMC's mission is to provide the best possible service at the most economical price.

Additional Adjustments Effective May 1, 2017

The monthly residential facilities charge will be \$20.00. The monthly general use facilities charge will be \$21.50.

Month kWh Usage	Current Cost	Revised Cost	Difference
750	\$105.85	\$110.22	\$4.37
1000	\$132.80	\$137.79	\$4.99
1500	\$186.70	\$192.94	\$6.24
2000	\$240.59	\$248.08	\$7.49



Lives on the Line

April is National Lineman Appreciation Month, a time designated to recognize and thank the extraordinary linemen who dedicate their lives to keeping the lights on in our local communities.

We depend on our entire staff to keep Altamaha EMC running smoothly, but it is our linemen who often find themselves in dangerous and challenging situations so our lives may be a little bit brighter and safer every day. These brave men repair damaged lines and maintain critical infrastructure for our communities. Without their hard work and commitment to the job, our co-op would not thrive. No matter the time—day or night, weekday or weekend—if the lights go out, so do they.

Perhaps you have seen them raising their bucket trucks in howling winds and torrential rains, or in freezing and icy conditions. They work around the clock near high-voltage power lines until electricity is restored to every member in our co-op community.

Altamaha EMC linemen maintain 3,479 miles of line in our seven-county service territory. In addition to aiding members in our local area, our linemen are always willing and eager to volunteer when a neighboring community, county or state is in need after a major outage occurs.

We hope you will join us in thanking the many linemen—both locally and around the world—that light our lives. ***Remember, your power works because they do!***

Make every day Earth Day with simple energy savers

Earth Day is on April 22 this year. Here are 10 ways to celebrate by saving energy at home:

- Call a qualified air-conditioning technician to service your central air-conditioning system. HVAC equipment needs service every year to head off major problems and keep the system running smoothly all summer.
- As long as the spring weather is mild, open a window instead of turning on the air conditioner. Draw soft spring breezes into the home by turning on your ceiling fans.
- Cook outside on the grill as soon as the weather permits it. When you don't turn on your kitchen's cooktop or oven, you don't heat up your house.
- Close the shades. It's tempting to leave them open on beautiful, sunny spring days. But if it's hot outside, that heat can find its way into your house through the windows and tempt you to crank

the A/C up unnecessarily.

- If it's sunny but not hot outdoors, throw those curtains open and let the natural daylight illuminate your home. Then, turn off the lights. You won't need them.
- Don't have a programmable thermostat yet? It's time. It will help you limit how much energy you use by automatically turning the temperature up or down as needed.
- Seal the ducts in your central air-conditioning system. Leaky ducts can increase your cooling costs as much as 30 percent.
- Caulk around windows and electrical outlets so cool air can't escape your house and hot air can't get in.
- Keep your home's humidity levels low by running kitchen and bathroom exhaust fans—but only until the smoke or steam clears. Running them too long will suck more than humidity and odor from your home. Those fans can send



your comfortable, conditioned air out of the house.

- Change your A/C filter. A clogged filter forces your system to work harder and use more energy. It also can send the dust and allergens it collects right back into your indoor air.

All Altamaha EMC members who visit our office on April 21st will receive a special Earth Day gift!

What is **Operation Round Up?**

This community-oriented program allows members to round up “the change” on their electric bill to the next highest dollar, with the money going into the Altamaha EMC Foundation fund.

Operation Round Up was started in 1989 by Palmetto Electric Cooperative in South Carolina. Nearly 200 electric cooperatives across the United States have implemented this program to benefit their local communities.

How Does the Program Work?

Operation Round Up is just what the name implies. Each month, members who wish to participate allow Altamaha EMC to automatically round up their electric bill to the next highest dollar amount. For example, if your bill is



\$168.42, your bill will be rounded up to \$169.00. This means your contribution for that month would be 58 cents. The extra money is deposited into the Altamaha EMC Foundation fund. This fund is administered by the Altamaha EMC Foundation board of directors.

All money will be used to provide funding for various charitable organizations in our local area. Operation Round Up funds will NEVER be used to pay utility bills, fund political campaigns or

added to the Altamaha EMC operating budget.

All donations are tax deductible.

When will Altamaha EMC begin Operation Round Up?

August 1, 2017 is the launch date so members will see the first “round up” on their August bill.

What if I can't or don't want to participate in the program?

We realize not everyone is willing or able to participate in the program. You are able to opt out of this voluntary program by calling our office.

Your small change can make a difference. Working together we can improve our communities and make a difference in the lives of our neighbors.

Meter System Conversion Nearing Completion

We are nearing completion of converting our entire meter system from AMR to AMI. As part of this conversion, we built new towers in certain areas of our service territory. These towers will be used to house communication equipment for both the AMI system and our dispatch radio system. Construction of our new tower on Tom McDonald Road in Vidalia was completed in late February.

The AMI system utilizes digital meters as well as computer technology to measure electric use at homes and businesses more precisely than was possible with analog meters. The digital meters communicate via radio or the existing power lines. AMI benefits members with greater accuracy in billing, faster outage restoration, operational savings versus manual meter reading and detailed data that can be used to manage electric use more accurately.





Member **RECIPES**



Country Meatloaf

Ingredients

2 lbs. ground chuck
3 tablespoons French's Worcestershire sauce
1/2 of medium chopped onion
1/2 tbs Season All salt
1/2 tsp sage
2 large eggs
1 packet maple and brown sugar instant oatmeal
Ketchup

Directions

Mix all ingredients and place in pan. Top with ketchup. Bake at 350 degrees for 50-60 minutes.

-From the kitchen of Gerald Kellison

Each month, our newsletter features recipes submitted by our members. If you have a favorite recipe and would like to share it with other readers in the Altamaha EMC service area, send a copy, complete with name, address and daytime phone number to: Tammye Vaughn, Altamaha EMC, P.O. Box 346, Lyons, GA 30436. Each month, a recipe will be selected for publication. The member who submitted the featured recipe will be given a \$10 credit on their next Altamaha EMC bill. Due to limited space, not all recipes received will be featured. Recipes printed in *Plugged In* are not independently tested; therefore, we must depend on the accuracy of those members who send recipes to us.