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Three Smart Home Technologies to Help You Save Energy

Smart technology continues to transform the way we live, making our homes more comfortable, convenient and energy efficient. By connecting to your home WiFi, smart devices can automate everyday tasks like lighting, climate control and even security. They can also communicate with each other to help you manage energy use more efficiently.

While not all smart home products are designed specifically to save energy, many of them do just that. Below are three smart home technologies that can help lower your energy bills. And with Altamaha EMC's 1 Gig fiber service, your devices can stay connected with the speed and reliability they need to perform at their best.

1. Smart Thermostats

Your thermostat is one of the most effective tools for managing energy use, since heating and cooling typically make up the largest portion of your utility bill. Smart thermostats allow you to adjust your home's temperature from anywhere using a smartphone app. Many models even learn your schedule and automatically adjust settings to optimize comfort and efficiency.

According to the United States Department of Energy, a smart thermostat can reduce heating and cooling costs by more than 8 percent each year. With models starting around 65 dollars, most pay for themselves in energy savings within a year.

2. Smart Lighting

Smart LED bulbs use less electricity than traditional incandescent bulbs and offer the convenience of remote scheduling and control through your phone. You can choose from a wide variety of shapes, brightness levels and colors to suit your home's style and needs.

Many smart bulbs feature built in motion sensors that automatically turn lights on or off based on activity in the room, making it easy to avoid leaving lights on unnecessarily. Starter kits range from 70 dollars to more than 300 dollars, depending on how many bulbs and features you need.

3. Smart Plugs

Smart plugs are an affordable and easy way to cut energy waste from devices that continue to draw electricity even when turned off, which is commonly called phantom load. These small devices plug into a standard outlet and connect to your WiFi network, allowing you to control non smart devices like coffee makers, lamps and phone chargers through an app or smart speaker.

With a set of four starting around 25 dollars, smart plugs are a great first step into the world of smart home automation and energy savings.

Whether you are just getting started or looking to upgrade your current setup, these smart technologies are a smart investment. And with Altamaha EMC's 1 Gig fiber service, your smart home devices can stay connected with fast and reliable internet that keeps everything running smoothly. It is one more way we are working to bring convenience, value and efficiency to our members.

For more information about our fiber service or tips on saving energy at home, give us a call or visit www.altamahaemc.com.



Operation Round Up Spotlight

Supporting Compassionate Care for People and Pets

Through Operation Round Up, Altamaha EMC members continue to make a powerful impact on the lives of both people and animals across our communities. Two recent grants highlight how rounding up spare change can fuel essential services that improve the health and well-being of our neighbors, whether they walk on two legs or four.

Diamonds in the Ruff

South GA received a \$3,000 grant to support its mission of reducing pet overpopulation through spay and neuter services. This animal welfare organization focuses on rescuing, rehabilitating, and rehoming pets in need while also addressing the root causes of pet homelessness. By providing access to essential veterinary care and educating the public on responsible pet ownership, Diamonds in the Ruff is making a lasting difference one animal at a time. Every procedure funded by this grant helps prevent countless unwanted litters, reducing the burden on overcrowded shelters and giving more animals a chance at a healthy and happy life.



Bread of Heaven was awarded a \$1,500 grant to help purchase food from Second Harvest of Savannah for their weekly drive thru food distributions. Each Friday, cars line up in Vidalia, Uvalda, or Soperton to receive boxes of food that provide crucial nourishment to families facing food insecurity. Bread of Heaven is committed to showing love through action, and with help from Operation Round Up, they are able to stretch their resources further and serve more people in need. Community members are encouraged to follow Bread of Heaven on Facebook to stay updated on the dates and locations of upcoming food drives.

Thanks to the generosity of Altamaha EMC members who round up their bills each month, organizations like Diamonds in the Ruff South GA and Bread of Heaven can continue their vital missions. Together, we are building a stronger and more compassionate community, ensuring that both people and pets receive the care and support they deserve.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

TIP OF THE MONTH

Replace your cooling system's filter regularly to maintain strong airflow and boost energy efficiency. A clean filter means your system doesn't have to work as hard, saving energy and lowering your utility bills. Factors like allergies and pets in the home can impact how often filters should be replaced. Check the filter every month and replace it as needed. Changing filters regularly also reduces wear and tear on your cooling system, helping extend the life of the unit.

Source: energy.gov

TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS



Delete deceptive emails. If you receive an email that appears to be from your electric utility but you are unsure about it, delete it. Never click on a link, open an attachment or send a reply to an untrusted source. When in doubt, contact your utility directly to report suspected email scams.

Source: [Utilities United Against Scams](https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/energy-scams)





Don't Risk It!

Nearly two in five U.S. homeowners will put themselves and their communities at risk this year by digging without calling 811 beforehand.*

**CGA 2021 Omnibus Study*

Always contact 811 before digging to avoid service disruptions caused by damaging buried utilities.



August 11 is 811 Day: Call Before You Dig to Protect Fiber and Other Utility Lines

Did you know that a single shovel in the wrong spot could knock out your internet or power and possibly cause serious injury? August 11 is recognized across the country as a reminder to **always call 811 or submit a ticket online before you dig**. Whether you are planting a tree, installing a fence or starting a backyard project, using 811 is not only smart and safe, it is also the law and completely free.

Altamaha EMC encourages all members to contact Georgia 811 before digging to help prevent utility damage, service interruptions, costly repairs and potential harm to yourself or others. This is especially important when it comes to fiber. Our fiber drops, which are the fiber lines that run from the road to your home, are often buried just a few inches below the surface. That means something as simple as digging with a shovel in your yard could cut your fiber line, knock out your internet and lead to expensive repairs. But when you contact 811 first, utility companies are notified and send professional locators to mark underground lines so you can dig safely.

Here is how the 811 process works. First, at least three business days before you plan to dig, go to www.Georgia811.com or call 811—provide some basic information including your contact details, the location on your property where you plan to dig, the nearest intersecting street, specific directions to your property, the type of work you are doing, the date you plan to start and how long you expect the project to take.

After your ticket is submitted, Georgia 811 notifies all utility companies in your area. Each company will

send a professional locator to your site to mark their underground lines using paint or flags. Each color of paint corresponds to a different type of utility. These marks show you exactly where it is safe to dig and where you need to use caution.

Once the utility lines have been marked, you can view the responses from each company in the Positive Response Information System, also known as PRIS. This online system shows you which companies have marked their lines or confirmed there are no utilities in your digging area. Always check the PRIS system before you begin any digging. If something is missing or you are unsure, call 811 again and Georgia 811 will re notify the necessary utility companies.

If all utility members have responded and there are no visible signs of unmarked utilities, it is safe to begin digging. However, if you are using heavy machinery, be sure to understand the tolerance zone. This is the designated space around each marked utility line where you must proceed with extreme care to avoid accidental damage.

At Altamaha EMC, we know how important it is to stay connected. Accidentally cutting a fiber line not only affects your home, but it can also disrupt service to your neighbors. By calling 811 or submitting an online ticket before you dig, you are helping protect yourself, your property and your community.

This August 11, and every day, remember to call 811 or visit www.Georgia811.com before you dig. It is free, easy and the safest way to start any outdoor project.

Annual Meeting Information and Director Election Process

Altamaha EMC will hold its 2025 annual meeting at Southeastern Technical College in Vidalia, Georgia, on Wednesday, November 5, 2025. Official notice of the time, date and place will be provided to each member in advance of the meeting. Director elections will be held at the annual meeting for District 2, comprised of the cooperative's service territory within Treutlen County; District 3 comprised of the cooperative's service territory within Montgomery County and District 5 comprised of the cooperative's service territory within Laurens County. The following is a summary of the provisions of the cooperative's bylaws pertaining to the process for the election of directors:

Section 3.03 Qualifications of Directors.

Qualifications to become or remain a nominee or a director of the cooperative: Must be eighteen (18) years old or older on the date of election. Must be a member and bona fide resident of the district represented and receive service from the cooperative at his or her primary residence. May not, within five (5) years prior to the election, have been an employee of the cooperative. May not be a close relative of any person who is an employee or director of the cooperative. May not be employed by or hold a financial interest in a competing enterprise or a business selling electric energy or supplies to the cooperative. May not be the incumbent or candidate for a salaried elective public office. May not have been convicted of a felony.

Section 3.04 Nominations by Nominating Committee.

The Board of Directors appoints a nominating committee comprised of independent members of the cooperative. The nominating committee meets not less than sixty five (65) days prior to the annual meeting and nominates one or more candidates for the directorships that are to be filled at the annual meeting. Written notice of the names of the members of the committee and the meeting date for the committee will be provided to the members prior to their meeting and shall be posted at the cooperative's headquarters.

Section 3.05 Nominations by petition.

Other nominations for director elections may be made by written petition signed by not less than one hundred (100) members which shall be submitted to the Secretary of the cooperative or his nominee not less than forty five (45) days prior to such meeting.

Section 3.06 Posting of the notice of nominees.

The Secretary shall be responsible for posting at the headquarters of the Cooperative the nominees for the election made by the nominating committee and by petition and if feasible, shall include same in the notice to the members for the meeting at which the election is to be held.

Section 3.07 Restrictions on Other Nominations.

Except in the event that all candidates nominated by the nominating committee and petition are deceased, or withdrawn in writing from candidacy prior to the election, no other nominations shall be in order.

Section 3.08 Election procedures.

Directors shall be elected by a plurality vote of those members from the applicable voting district, or those authorized to vote for them pursuant to Section 2.05 of these bylaws as set out below, at the meeting in which the election is to be held. Should two or more candidates tie for the highest vote, then run-off ballots shall be taken among them.

Section 2.05 Representation of Members.

Unless it is made to appear otherwise by writing executed by the member and filed with the Secretary or his designate prior to a meeting of the members, a person eighteen (18) years of age or older residing in the primary residential abode of the member, who presents himself or herself to the Secretary, or his designated registrar(s), prior to a meeting of the members, as a representative of such member, shall be deemed to act and vote for the member he purports to represent and in as full and ample manner as if the member had been present and personally acting at the meeting. The presence of the member purported to be represented by such person shall, however, revoke the authority hereby created and only the member shall be entitled to act and vote at such meeting. Except as is expressly provided for herein, no other person shall have the authority to represent, act or vote for any member at a meeting of the members.

Section 2.07 Credentials and Election Committee.

Section 2.07 of the bylaws provides for a committee of not less than five (5) nor more than fifteen (15) independent members to oversee the nominating, registration and election processes and to resolves disputes relating to same.

2025 Nominating Committee: The Nominating Committee is scheduled to meet at the headquarters office in Lyons on August 14, 2025. This committee consists of the following members: Chris Hopkins, Gary J. Walden, Jimmy Glover, Randy Moseley, Brad Dollar, and Blake Daniels.



Member RECIPES

Mini Blueberry Crumbles

INGREDIENTS

Filling

- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1-1/2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 4 cups fresh blueberries
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

Crumble

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup light brown sugar
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 cup cold butter, cut into pieces



DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

For the filling: Put sugar, cornstarch and cinnamon in a medium bowl, whisking to combine. Add blueberries and lemon juice to the bowl, folding into dry ingredients until evenly coated. Divide into 6 (1-cup) ovenproof ramekins. Set aside.

For the crumble: In a food processor, combine sugar, light brown sugar, flour and cinnamon. Pulse dry ingredients 1-2 times to combine. Add cold butter pieces to the food processor. Pulse until mixture forms pea-size crumbs. Divide evenly over filling in ramekins. Place ramekins on a baking sheet and bake for 30 minutes or until bubbly and golden.

Serve as-is or with ice cream or whipped cream. Serves 6.

-Courtesy of Georgia Grown