



Plugged in to Altamaha EMC

DECEMBER 2015

The Official Newsletter of Altamaha Electric Membership Corporation

Serving: Toombs, Montgomery, Emanuel, Treutlen, Laurens, Johnson and Tattnall

Tips for a Safe and Happy Holiday Season

The holidays are upon us. That means celebrations with friends and family, travel, decorations, cooking and shopping. Altamaha EMC wants you to stay safe during the holidays, so here are a few tips to consider as you gear up for the season. We can't guarantee that the hustle and bustle of the season won't leave you with a few frayed nerves, but we can certainly help you avoid frayed wires.

Inspect your seasonal items

Many of us have treasured holiday mementos that we bring out of storage and proudly display every year. The holidays are also a time when we dust off specialized cooking gadgets that allow us to prepare our favorite seasonal treats. These items are often handed down through generations and might lack modern safety features. Take a few moments to carefully inspect all your holiday items to ensure everything is in safe, working order. A few things to look out for include:

- Brittle insulation on wires
- Rodent damage to wires
- Chafed or frayed wires, especially at stress points
- Worn switches with the potential to short circuit
- Corroded metal parts
- Broken legs, unstable bases and other tip-over hazards

Extension cords are temporary

Extension cords are designed for temporary use and should never be used as a long-term solution.

Never defeat safety devices

There are reasons why some devices have fuses, some plugs have three prongs instead of two and one prong is wider than the other on two-prong outlets. When those safety features get in the way of your grand holiday décor plans, you might be tempted to tamper with or defeat those features. Don't do it! If your plugs won't fit together, that means they're not designed to work together. Rather than tampering with a safety feature, find a safe solution.



Look up and live

When working outside with a ladder, be mindful of the location of overhead power lines. Always carry your ladder so that it is parallel to the ground. Before placing your ladder in an upright position, look around to ensure you are a safe distance from any power lines.

Over time, tree branches can grow around power lines running along the street and to your home. If those branches come in contact with power lines, they can become energized, too. If your holiday plans call for stringing lights through trees, this can create a safety hazard. If you notice tree limbs that are too close to electric lines, contact Altamaha EMC.

Stay away from your service connection

The overhead wire bringing power from the utility pole to your house is dangerous. You should treat this line the same way you'd treat any other power line on our system. Maintain a safe distance – even if that means a small gap in the perfect gingerbread house outline of lights.

Read the fine print

Take a few minutes to read and understand the specifications and limitations on your lights and other electrified holiday decorations. The tag at the end of an extension cord will tell you if it's rated for outdoor use, whether it will remain flexible in cold temperatures and how much energy it can safely handle. Similarly, holiday lights will tell you how many strings can be safely linked together.

Don't forget about the kids...and pets

If you have small children, you've probably spent a great deal of time making sure every square inch of your home is childproof. But sometimes the joy of celebrating the holidays with our little ones makes us a little less vigilant about electrical safety. Make sure your holiday décor receives the same level of safety scrutiny you apply to all of the permanent items in your home. Curious and mischievous pets can present similar challenges. Make sure Fluffy isn't nibbling on all those extra wires or using your tree as her personal back scratcher or jungle gym.

79th Annual Meeting Highlights

The 79th annual meeting of the members of Altamaha EMC was held on November 4th at Southeastern Technical College in Vidalia. A total of 800 members registered for the meeting.

The theme for this year's meeting was ALWAYS ON. Romanous Dotson, Altamaha EMC General Manager/CEO, addressed the crowd to discuss how Altamaha EMC is ALWAYS ON the job to serve our members. Bryan Isgett of McNair, McLemore, Middlebrooks and Co. reviewed the cooperative's financial reports showing the sound financial position of Altamaha EMC.

Directors Alex Grindler, Danny Shepherd and Brett Williams were each re-elected by acclamation to a three-year term on the board.

Door prizes were awarded after the meeting adjourned. All members and guests were given a bucket with prizes and treated to refreshments as they left the meeting.



A special thanks to Crosby Equipment of Swainsboro for allowing us to use the Kubota tractors to pull the shuttles.



Green Power EMC staff met with members interested in discussing solar power and other renewable energy sources.



Stella Kate Baker of Swainsboro was all smiles after receiving her EMC bucket.



Ms. Jane Baker of Soperton was the winner of a door prize.



Pendleton Creek Community Church of Vidalia was the winner of the \$200 grand prize.



These two lucky ladies head home with door prizes and attendance gifts.

Cooking up holiday energy savings

For many of us, the best holidays involve home-cooked meals and wonderful aromas of turkey, stuffing and baked goods wafting throughout the house. It means a busy kitchen and a bustling house full of family and friends. If this rings true for you, despite the increased kitchen activity, you still have an opportunity to save energy during the holidays.

Cut carbs (carbon) painlessly

In addition to being the “heart of your home,” your kitchen could pump savings back into your wallet. According to the Department of Energy, cooking accounts for 4.5 percent of total energy use in U.S. homes. This number, combined with the energy use associated with refrigeration, dishwashing and hot water heating means that as much as 15 percent of the energy in the average American home is used in the kitchen. So, saving energy here can have a significant impact on your household budget.

For example, when preparing side dishes, baked goods, soups and such, consider using small appliances like a crock pot, toaster oven, microwave or warming plate instead of your conventional oven or stovetop. These small appliances are a smart, energy-saving alternative, typically using about half the energy of a stove.

Seal in efficiency

When using your oven, don't peek! Opening the oven door can lower the temperature by as much as 25 degrees and causes your stove to work harder (consuming more energy) to return to the desired cooking temperature. If your recipe calls for baking the dish more than an hour, it is not necessary to preheat the oven. If your oven is electric, you can likely turn the oven off for the last five to ten minutes of cooking and allow the residual heat to complete the job. Clean burners and reflectors increase efficiency and offer better heating, so don't neglect this small but important task.

Just as keeping the oven door closed seals in efficiency and enables the stove to operate more economically, the same rules apply to the refrigerator and freezer. Keep the doors closed as much as possible so cold air doesn't escape. However, leaving the door open for a longer period of time while you load groceries or remove items you need is more efficient than opening and closing it several times.

If you are entertaining a large group, you may be able to give your furnace a brief holiday. When your oven is working hard and you have a house full of guests, the heat from the stove and the guests will keep your house comfortable, enabling you to turn down the thermostat.

Clean up with energy savings

When it's time to clean up, extend fellowship to the kitchen, and wash and dry dirty dishes by hand. This uses less energy than a dishwasher. However, don't leave the water running continuously, or you will waste energy. If you do use the dishwasher and rinse dishes before loading them, use cold water. Run the dishwasher with full loads only, and if possible, use the energy-saving cycle. Note that dishwashers that have overnight or air power dry settings can save up to 10 percent of your dishwashing energy costs.

By adapting these efficient practices in your kitchen, energy savings will be one more thing to be thankful for this holiday season.



Holiday cooking efficiency tip:

Every time you open the oven door to check that dish, the temperature inside decreases by up to 25 degrees! Hold off on peeking inside so that your oven doesn't have to work harder than necessary to heat holiday treats.

Leave the heat on—even during your winter vacation

Heading out of town for a winter vacation? Don't let your pipes freeze while you're gone. It's tempting to shut the heat off for a week or two if your house will be empty. But if you do, you might come back to a cold, soggy mess.

The water that flows through your home's plumbing pipes can freeze if your home gets too cold. Because water expands when it freezes, it could burst your pipes and flood your house.

So turn the heat down, but not off, before you travel this winter.

Leave the heat set at a minimum of 55 degrees, which is warm enough to keep your pipes from freezing. The same goes for your vacation home; don't turn the heat completely off, even if the home sits empty most of the winter.

Even if you're not traveling this winter, put away your outdoor hoses for the season and close inside valves that supply water to those hoses. After everything is shut off, turn the outdoor spigots on and leave them on so that any stray drops of water that remain in the



pipe can expand without bursting the pipe.

Inspect your home for water supply lines that are located in an unheated basement, crawl space, attic or garage, or in kitchen or bathroom cabinets under the sinks. Insulate those pipes to keep them warm.

Give the Gift of Electricity this Holiday Season

Looking for a good gift for a family member or friend?

**Altamaha EMC has
the answer for you...
a POWER
GIFT CERTIFICATE!**



Sometimes finding the perfect gift is almost impossible. Sizes, tastes, even needs differ with every person. But almost everyone has an electric bill. So, what better gift to give someone you care about than the gift of electricity.

The Altamaha EMC POWER GIFT CERTIFICATE makes it easy for you to provide a credit on a relative or friend's electric account. Just provide us the member's name, address and if possible their account number. We'll handle the rest. You may pay by cash, check or debit/credit card.

Altamaha EMC will provide you a certificate to give to them, or at your request, we will mail the certificate to them. Power gift certificates can also be given anonymously.

Stop by our office or call us today for more details.

HOLIDAY CLOSING NOTICE

The board of directors, management and employees of Altamaha EMC extend to you and your family our best wishes for a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous and Happy New Year!

In observance of the holiday season, the offices of Altamaha EMC will be closed December 24, December 25 and January 1.

In the event of a power outage or related problems, standby personnel will be on duty. You can report power outages by calling (912) 526-8181 or (800) 822-4563.



Member RECIPES

Toffee Snowball Cookies



Ingredients

1 cup room temperature butter
5 tablespoons sugar
2 teaspoons vanilla
1 tablespoon water
1/4 teaspoon salt
2 cups flour
2 cups finely chopped pecans
3 ounce mini chocolate chips
powdered sugar

Directions

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper, set aside. Cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add vanilla and water, mix well. Stir flour and salt into mixture. Blend in pecans, toffee bits and mini chocolate chips. Roll into balls and flatten. Bake for 15 to 18 minutes or until lightly golden. Remove from oven. While cookies are still warm, roll in powdered sugar. Once cooled, place cookies into airtight container with lid and top with powdered sugar again to coat well.

– From the kitchen of Anita Shepherd

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.