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Reliability Requires Investment

By George McLendon, CEO and General Manager

At Altamaha EMC, our mission has always been clear to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity while supporting the communities we proudly serve. Every flip of a switch, every powered home and every business that opens its doors depends on a complex electric system working behind the scenes. That level of reliability does not happen by chance. It requires ongoing investment in our local electric grid through regular maintenance, system upgrades and new technologies.

Much of the electric infrastructure we rely on today was built decades ago. While it continues to serve our members well, aging equipment must be carefully maintained and, when necessary, replaced to ensure safety and performance. From poles and power lines to transformers and substations, every component has a lifespan. Proactive maintenance and system improvements help reduce outages, shorten restoration times and strengthen the backbone of our electric system as our communities continue to grow.

The demands on our electric grid are also changing. Homes and businesses are using more electricity than ever before, driven by electric vehicles, modern heating and cooling systems, smart appliances and expanding commercial development. To meet these increasing demands, Altamaha EMC must continue making strategic upgrades such as strengthening lines, improving substations and enhancing system capacity to ensure reliable service today and well into the future.

At the same time, new technologies are transforming how we operate. Advanced tools such as automated switching equipment, smart meters, drones and system monitoring technology allow us to identify issues faster and respond more efficiently. These innovations help minimize outage impacts, improve safety for our crews and provide valuable data that supports better planning and system maintenance. In today's evolving energy landscape, investing in these technologies is essential to maintaining the reliability our members expect.

While these improvements require careful planning and financial investment, the return is significant. A stronger, more resilient grid supports economic growth, improves service quality and helps keep our communities safe and connected. Most importantly, it ensures the power you depend on is available when you need it most.

At Altamaha EMC, our commitment to reliability goes beyond poles and wires. It reflects our responsibility to the members we serve every day. Every repair, every upgrade and every new technology we implement is an investment in your quality of life, from the comfort of your home to the success of local businesses, schools and industries.

By investing in our electric system today, we are preparing for the future and building a stronger, more resilient grid for generations to come.



Operation Round Up Spotlight

At our most recent Operation Round Up meeting, the board was proud to award two \$2,000 grants to local organizations making a meaningful impact right here in our community.

Lions Club of Lyons, Georgia – \$2,000

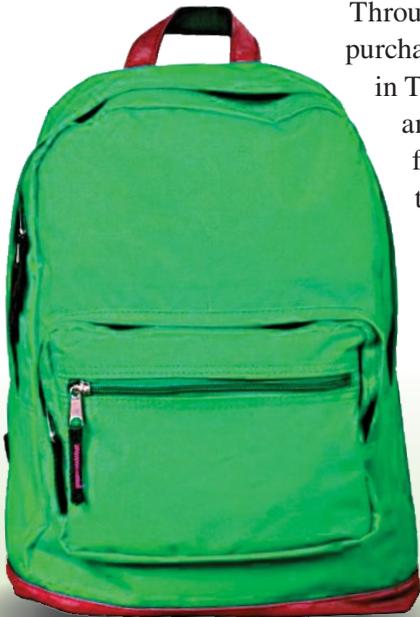
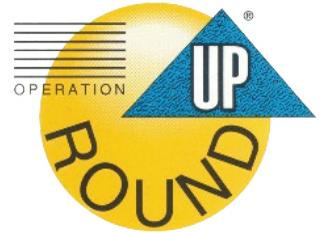
The Lions Club of Lyons received a \$2,000 grant to support the maintenance of flags and displays honoring deceased Toombs County veterans through their humanitarian initiative, Memorial Flag for Deceased Veterans. This program serves as a visible reminder of the sacrifices made by local veterans and helps ensure they are remembered with dignity and respect.



The Lions Club of Lyons is deeply committed to service and supports a wide range of initiatives, including vision care, humanitarian efforts, childhood cancer, diabetes awareness, disaster relief, environmental projects, hunger relief, youth programs, and mental health and well-being.

Toombs County Family Connection – \$2,000

Toombs County Family Connection was also awarded a \$2,000 grant to help fund the Backpack Buddies program for the 2025–2026 school year. Since 2015, Family Connection has taken on the responsibility and privilege of working with both local school systems to provide weekend food for at-risk students in grades K–12.



Through partnerships with local organizations and churches, food is purchased locally, packed weekly, and delivered to all public schools in Toombs County. The program runs from September through May and currently serves approximately 160 students countywide. Grant funds will be used to purchase food distributed weekly throughout the school year.

These grants, made possible by members who participate in Operation Round Up, help strengthen our community and improve the lives of our neighbors. Thank you to everyone who rounds up their bill to make efforts like these possible.



Home Lighting 101

Lighting is something most of us do not give much thought to until it does not work the way we want it to. Maybe a room feels too dim or a new bulb casts a color that just seems off. With a little planning, the right lighting choices can make your home more comfortable, attractive and energy efficient.

Watts vs Lumens

When shopping for light bulbs, many people still look at watts first. However, watts measure energy use, not brightness. Lumens tell you how much light a bulb actually produces. For example, an 800 lumen bulb provides about the same brightness as a traditional 60 watt incandescent bulb while using far less energy.

Today's LED bulbs are long lasting and highly energy efficient. If you have not already made the switch, LEDs can help lower your energy use while providing the same or better light. Just remember to follow fixture wattage limits to ensure safe operation.

Color Temperature Matters

Light bulbs also come in different color temperatures, ranging from warm yellow tones to bright, cool white light. Mixing bulbs with different color temperatures in the same room can be distracting. To keep lighting consistent, consider replacing bulbs in a room at the same time and choosing the same brand and color temperature.

Warm light is often preferred for living areas and bedrooms, while cooler tones work well in kitchens, bathrooms and workspaces.

Dimmers and Switches

Dimmers offer flexibility by allowing you to adjust light levels based on the time of day or

activity. They can also help reduce energy use and extend bulb life. Be sure to choose bulbs labeled as dimmable if you plan to install dimmer switches.

It is also worth considering whether your switches are convenient. Lighting that can only be controlled from one location can quickly become frustrating. For any new wiring or upgrades, hiring a licensed electrician is the safest option.

Fixtures That Do More Than Look Good

Light fixtures play an important role in how a space is lit. Ambient lighting provides overall illumination, while task lighting focuses on specific areas like desks, kitchen counters or reading spaces.

When choosing fixtures, think about function as well as appearance. A fixture that looks great but does not provide enough light or provides too much can impact both comfort and efficiency.

Smart Lighting Options

Smart lighting offers both convenience and control. With smart bulbs or switches, you can adjust brightness, set schedules and even change colors using your phone or a voice assistant. Many systems also include motion sensors, helping reduce energy use by turning lights off when rooms are unoccupied.

Keep in mind that smart bulbs require constant power, meaning the wall switch must remain in the on position. Smart switches are a great option for those who prefer using traditional switches.

Good lighting enhances both the look and feel of your home. By choosing efficient bulbs, thoughtful fixtures and the right controls, you can create welcoming spaces while making smart energy choices, something Altamaha EMC is always proud to support.

TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS

Enrolling in autodraft payments with your utility provider can help prevent certain types of utility bill scams. If a scammer contacts you with fake disconnection threats, you can rest easy knowing your bill is paid automatically through a pre-arranged, secure channel. Autodraft payments also eliminate the risk of exposing checks and personal banking info through the mail. If your utility offers autodraft payments, consider enrolling to stay on track and avoid certain scams.

Source: AARP

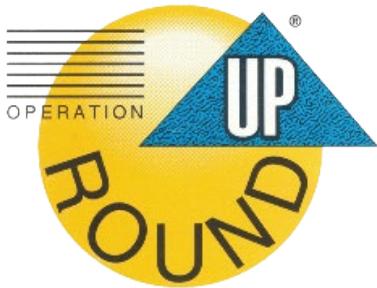


Foundation Scholarship Applications Now Available

Altamaha EMC is accepting applications for the Foundation Scholarship program. Four scholarships, valued at \$1,000 each, will be awarded to local students in March 2026.

The Foundation Scholarship program was created to help local students further their education and is funded entirely by members' donations through Operation Round Up. Applicants must be high school seniors and live in the household of an Altamaha EMC member.

Applications are available on our website at www.altamahaemc.com. You may also request an application by contacting Will NeSmith at will.nesmith@altamahaemc.com or by calling 912-526-2173. The deadline for applications is Feb. 27th.

A vertical banner featuring a stylized American flag with red, white, and blue stripes and stars. The background is dark with a bright, glowing sunburst or firework effect in the center, radiating light and sparks.

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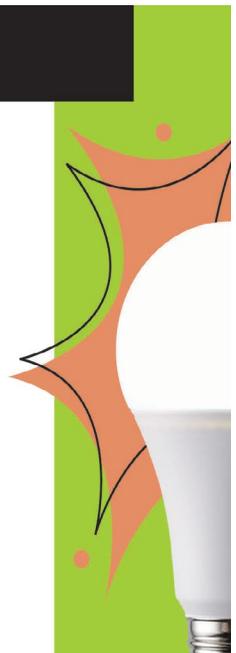
Presidents' Day

Altamaha EMC offices will be closed Monday, Feb. 16th in observance of Presidents' Day.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

TIP OF THE MONTH

Mid-winter is a great time to ensure you're making the most of your home heating system. Replace or clean filters to keep your furnace or heat pump running efficiently. Listen for strange noises and check for uneven heating—these signs indicate that the system may need servicing. Ensure vents and radiators aren't blocked by furniture or rugs as proper airflow helps your system work less and saves energy. A little maintenance along the way can prevent costly repairs and keep your home cozy through winter.





Member RECIPES

Rustic Strawberry and Blueberry Pizza

INGREDIENTS

1/4 cup sugar
1 roll store-bought sugar cookie dough
8-ounce container whipped cream cheese, at room temperature
2 tablespoons powdered sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
16-ounce container strawberries, stems removed, cut 1/4-inch slices
1/2 cup blueberries
1/2 cup strawberry jelly



DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Sprinkle sugar on a cutting board. Roll cookie dough into a 10-inch round circle, using some of the sugar on the board to prevent the rolling pin from sticking. Using a spatula, transfer the dough to a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Pinch any holes or tears in the dough and smooth out. Using a fork, poke holes across the entire surface of the dough to prevent bubbles when baking. Bake for 20-30 minutes or until just golden. Remove from the oven and press the dough down to make level. Let the dough cool. While the dough is cooling, combine cream cheese, powdered sugar and vanilla extract. Mix well to blend. Once the dough is cool, spread cream cheese mixture evenly on dough, leaving a 1/2-inch border. Arrange strawberry slices in whatever pattern you like, leaving a 3-inch area in the center empty. Pile blueberries in the center. Melt the strawberry jelly in a pot over low heat, stirring constantly. Using a pastry brush, brush all the fruit with jelly, creating a glaze. Refrigerate until ready to serve. Serves 8.

-Courtesy of Georgia Grown