



# Plugged in to Altamaha EMC

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



## Committed to a Co-op Culture for All

Over the years, you've heard me expound on why and how Altamaha EMC is different—because we're a cooperative. Our business model sets us apart from other utilities because we adhere to seven guiding cooperative principles that reflect core values of honesty, transparency, equity, inclusiveness and service to the greater good of the community.

Electric cooperatives, including Altamaha EMC, have a unique and storied place in our country's history. We democratized the American dream by bringing electricity to rural areas when for-profit electric companies determined the effort too costly. Back then, cities were electrified, and rural areas were not, creating the original rural-urban divide. Newly established electric lines helped power economic opportunity in rural areas. Today, that spirit of equity and inclusion is a vital part of our co-op DNA.

### **Equal access for all**

When our electric co-op was founded, each member contributed an equal share in order to gain access to electricity that benefited individual families as well as the larger local community. Each member had an equal vote in co-op matters. That sense of equity and inclusion is still how we operate today. Altamaha EMC was built by and belongs to the diverse communities and consumer-members we serve. Membership is open to everyone in our service territory, regardless of race, religion, age, disability, gender identity, language, political perspective or socioeconomic status.

By virtue of paying your electric bill each month, you're a member of the co-op, and every member has an equal voice and vote when it comes to co-op governance. This ties back to our guiding principles of equitable economic participation and democratic control of the co-op.

We invite all members to participate in our annual meetings to weigh in on discussions that set co-op policies and priorities and to vote in the election for the board of directors.

We know members of our community have different needs and perspectives, and we welcome diverse views on all issues under consideration by the co-op. The more viewpoints we hear, the better we are able to reflect the needs of all corners of our community.

### **Inclusion**

While our top priority is providing safe, reliable and affordable energy, we also want to be a catalyst for good in our community. Because we are your local electric cooperative, co-op revenues stay right here in our community. In turn, we invest in our diverse community base through scholarship programs, charitable giving, educational programs and more. We strive to make long-term decisions that improve and enrich the communities we serve.

While today's world is radically different than it was in 1936 when we were founded, our cooperative values have stood the test of time and remain just as relevant today. We recognize that today's co-op members expect more, and my pledge to you—the members we proudly serve—is to promote a cooperative culture of inclusion, diversity and equity for all.

*— Romanous Dotson, CEO*



# Four Tips for Winter Safety

It's no surprise that winter months bring increased potential for fire risks and electrical safety hazards. This makes sense because during the coldest months, consumers are using additional electrical devices and appliances, like space heaters, electric blankets and portable generators.

The National Fire Protection Association estimates that 47,700 home fires occur each year in the U.S. due to electrical failure or malfunction. These fires result in 418 deaths, 1,570 injuries and \$1.4 billion in property damage annually. Safeguard your loved ones and your home with these electrical safety tips from the Electrical Safety Foundation International:

- **Don't overload outlets.** Overloaded outlets are a major cause of residential fires. Avoid using extension cords or multi-outlet converters for appliance connections—they should be plugged directly into a wall outlet. If you're relying heavily on extension cords in general, you may need additional outlets to address your needs. Contact a qualified electrician to inspect your home and add new outlets.

- **Never leave space heaters unattended.** If you're using a space heater, turn it off before leaving the room. Make sure heaters are placed at least three feet away from flammable items. It should also be noted that space heaters take a toll on your energy bills. If you're using them throughout your home, it may be time to upgrade your home heating system.

- **Inspect heating pads and electric blankets.** These items cause nearly 500 fires every year. Electric blankets that are more than 10 years old create additional risks for a fire hazard. Inspect your electric blankets and heating pads – look for dark, charred or frayed spots, and make sure the electrical cord is not damaged. Do not place any items on top of a heating pad or electric blanket, and never fold them when in use.

- **Use portable generators safely.** Unfortunately, winter storms can cause prolonged power outages, which means many consumers will use portable generators to power their homes. Never connect a standby generator into your home's electrical system. For portable generators, plug appliances directly into the outlet provided on the generator. Start the generator first, before you plug in appliances. Run it in a well-ventilated area outside your home. The carbon monoxide it generates is deadly, so keep it away from your garage, doors, windows and vents.







# Stay Cozy this Winter

Baby, it's cold outside! When you're feeling chilly at home, there are several budget-friendly ways you can keep comfortable without turning up the thermostat. Here are five easy ways to stay cozy this winter.

- Whether you're experiencing extremely cold winter temps or you simply "run cold," **an electric blanket can deliver warmth quicker than a regular throw or blanket.** Electric blankets can include a variety of features, like timers and dual temperature settings (if your cuddle buddy prefers less heat). This winter, consider an electric blanket instead of turning up the heat, and your energy bill will thank you.

- One of the easiest ways to stay cozy at home is to **keep your feet warm.** Our feet play a critical role in regulating body temperature, so when your feet are warm, your body automatically feels warmer. Try a pair of comfortable wool socks or house slippers to stay toasty.

- On winter days when the sun is shining, take advantage and **harness natural warmth from sunlight.** Open all curtains, drapes and blinds in your home to let the sunshine in—you'll be able to feel the difference.

- Another way to make your home cozier is to **use a humidifier.** Cold air doesn't hold water vapor like warm air, so by adding humidity inside your home, you can feel a little warmer. A favorable level of humidity inside your home can also help clear sinuses, soften skin and improve sleep.

- Beyond adding visual appeal to your home, **area rugs can also provide extra insulation and a warm surface for your feet** on cold winter days. Use large area rugs in rooms where you spend the most time. You'll enjoy the new colors and textures of the rug, and the additional warmth will help keep your home comfortable.

These are just a few ways you can stay cozy this winter without turning up the thermostat. Don't forget the hot chocolate!

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

**Replace standard power strips with advanced power strips to save energy.** Advanced power strips look like ordinary power strips, but they have built-in features that are designed to reduce the amount of energy used by standby electronics that consume energy even when they're not in use (also known as phantom load).

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) estimates that the average home loses \$200 annually to energy wasted by phantom load.

Source: [www.nrel.gov](http://www.nrel.gov)



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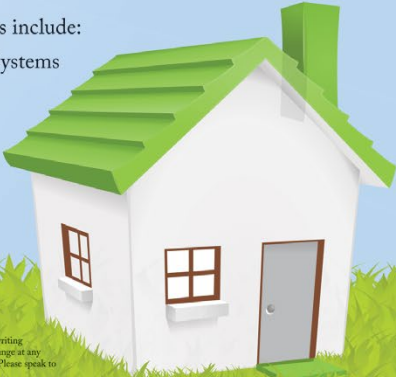
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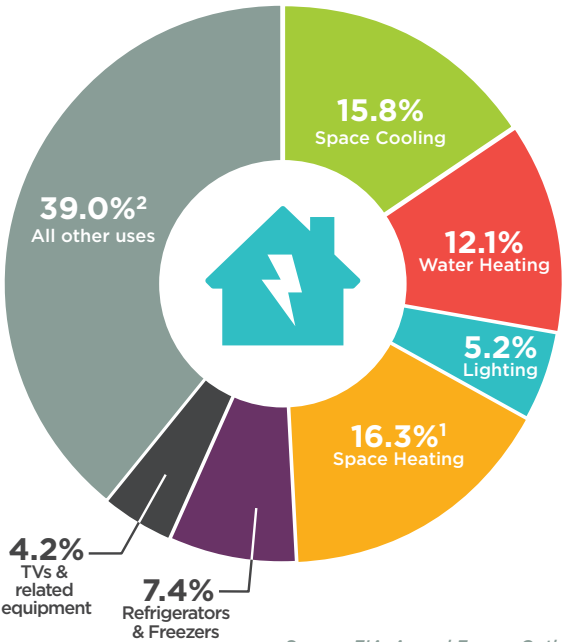


Reminder:  
Scholarship Deadline Approaching

January 29, 2021 is the deadline to submit applications for the \$1,000 Walter Harrison Scholarship. For more information, visit our website at [www.altamahaemc.com](http://www.altamahaemc.com) or call Tammye Vaughn at 912-526-2120.

How Americans Use Electricity

The latest data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration shows the combined use of clothes washers and dryers, computers, dishwashers, small appliances and other electrical equipment (noted as “all other uses” at right) accounts for nearly 40% of electricity consumption in American homes.



Source: EIA, Annual Energy Outlook 2020

<sup>1</sup>Includes consumption for heat and operating furnace fans and boiler pumps.

<sup>2</sup>Includes miscellaneous appliances, clothes washers and dryers, computers and related equipment, stoves, dishwashers, heating elements, and motors.



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# Member RECIPES

## Shrimp & Bacon Corn Chowder

6 slices bacon, cut into 1" pieces  
 1 lb. shrimp, peeled, deveined, and tails removed  
 1 tsp. paprika  
 1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper  
 Salt  
 Freshly ground black pepper  
 3 tbsp. butter  
 1 medium yellow onion, chopped  
 2 cloves garlic, minced  
 3 tbsp. all-purpose flour  
 4 cups low-sodium chicken broth  
 2 cups water  
 1 lb. baby potatoes, quartered  
 1 tsp. fresh thyme leaves  
 3 cups frozen corn  
 1 cup heavy cream  
 2 green onions, thinly sliced

In a large pot over medium heat, cook bacon pieces until crispy. Using a slotted spoon, remove from pot and place on a paper towel lined plate. To same pot, add shrimp. Season with paprika, cayenne, salt, and pepper. Cook until opaque, about two minutes. Remove from pot and keep warm. In same pot, melt butter. Add onion and cook until soft. Add garlic and cook until fragrant, about a minute more. Add flour and stir until onion is well coated. Slowly whisk in broth. Add water, potatoes, and thyme and bring to a boil. Season with salt and pepper. Reduce heat and let simmer until potatoes are fork tender. Add corn, heavy cream, and green onions to pot and bring to a simmer. Add bacon and shrimp and cook until warmed through.

**- From the kitchen of Samantha Beasley**

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.