

Plugged in to Altamaha EMC

VOLUME 15

NO. 10

MAY 2015

LYONS, GA

The Official Newsletter of Altamaha Electric Membership Corporation

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

Putting Safety First

It's May – and Altamaha EMC is celebrating National Electrical Safety Month. While safety for our members is top priority year-round, Electrical Safety Month is a time to acknowledge the importance of safety excellence.

This year, we're focusing on electrical safety in the home. Electricity is the cause of over 140,000 fires each year, resulting in more than 500 deaths, 4,000 injuries and 1.6 billion in property damage, according to Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI).

There are many measures you can take to ensure the safety of your loved ones. Use these helpful tips from ESFI to safeguard your home.

In the kitchen

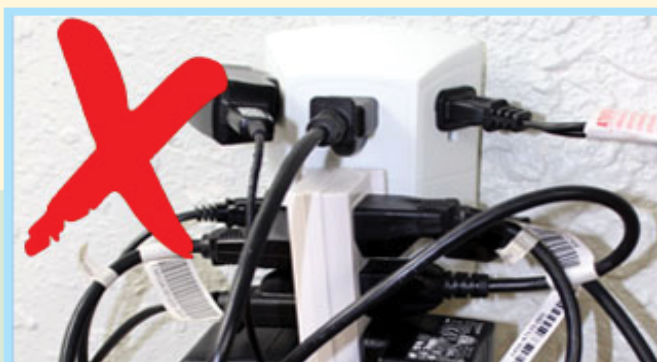
- Vacuum refrigerator coils every three months to eliminate dirt buildup that can reduce efficiency and create fire hazards.
- Ensure all countertop appliances are located away from the sink.
- All appliance cords should be placed away from hot surfaces. Pay particular attention to cords around toasters, ovens and ranges. Cords can be damaged by excess heat.
- The top and the area above the cooking range should be free of combustibles, such as potholders and plastic utensils. Storing these items on or near the range may result in fires or burns.

Light the way to safety

- The wattage of the bulbs you use in your home should match the wattage indicated on the light fixture. Overheated fixtures can lead to a fire.
- Check lamp cords to make sure they are in good condition – not damaged or cracked. Do not attempt to repair damaged cords yourself. Take any item with a damaged power cord to an authorized repair center.
- Extension cords should not be used to provide power on a long-term or permanent basis. Have additional receptacles installed by a professional to provide power where needed.

Be prepared

- Nearly two-thirds of fire deaths result from fires in homes without working smoke alarms. Smoke alarms should be located on every level of your home, inside each bedroom and outside each sleeping area.
- Test smoke alarms every month. Batteries should be replaced at least once a year – or sooner if indicated in the manufacturers' instructions. All smoke alarms should be replaced *at least* every 10 years.
- Talk to your family about an emergency plan in the event of a fire in your home. If you have small children, include them in planning an emergency escape route – they are more likely to remember the plan if they're involved in creating it.



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Do You Need Pay•Your•Way?

Pay•Your•Way is a pay-as-you-go plan that allows you to purchase electricity when you want, in the amounts you want. Instead of receiving a paper bill each month, your electricity use is calculated daily. **Pay•Your•Way** members never pay a late fee.

If it would be easier for you to make a smaller payment more often, rather than one large payment each month, **Pay•Your•Way** may be for you.



Think of it as driving your car. You fill up with fuel, drive around and refuel when your tank gets close to empty. With **Pay•Your•Way**, you purchase electricity, use and monitor it and purchase more when your credit balance runs low.

Pay•Your•Way lets you:

- Pay no deposits
- Customize your payment schedule
- Buy electricity at your convenience
- Monitor your electricity use

Need more information? Call us at 912-526-8181.

Ready to change your account to **Pay•Your•Way**? Come into one of our offices to sign up:

- 611 West Liberty Avenue, Lyons
- 730 US Hwy #1 South, Swainsboro
- 1016 2nd Street, Soperton

Stay connected by updating your contact information

In the utility business, we know rough weather will occur, and sometimes power outages simply can't be avoided. But did you know there are steps you can take to ensure your electricity is restored as quickly and safely as possible? By keeping your contact information up to date, you can take full advantage of the services Altamaha EMC offers.

You may have noticed prompts through our monthly newsletters and bill messages requesting your updated contact information. If we don't have the correct phone number linked to your home address, it makes it much more difficult for you to report an outage.

Remember the old days when you had to speak to a customer service representative in order to report a power outage? Waiting on hold could be frustrating and time consuming. Today, with the press of a button, you can easily report an outage. At Altamaha EMC, we use the phone number you provide to link your service address to our outage management system. For example, if you call us to report an outage, our automated system instantly recognizes your phone number and can determine the particular service address for which you are reporting an outage. Once you give our system a response, your outage is reported. It's that simple! *But remember* – this only works if your current phone number is linked to your service address.

Updating your contact information is helpful because it also speeds up the power restoration process. With correct information, our outage management system can predict the location and the possible cause of an outage, making it easier for our crews to correct the problem.

You can also sign up for email and text alerts to remind you of your due date, receive payment confirmations, etc. Call us today at 912-526-8181 to make sure your contact information is up to date.

Do-it-yourself electrical work can be dangerous

May is National Electrical Safety Month, and Georgia's electric cooperatives are teaming up with the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) to warn homeowners about the dangers of attempting to perform home electrical improvement and repair projects without hiring a qualified electrician.

Never attempt a project beyond your skill level.

“Working with electricity requires thorough planning and extreme care, and cutting corners can be a costly mistake,” cautions ESFI president Brett Brenner.

“Whether you are a first-time do-it-yourselfer or a ‘weekend warrior,’ practicing safe habits can prevent electrical fires, injuries and fatalities when it comes to home electrical projects.”

The U.S. home improvement market nearly doubled in size between 1995 and 2005, reaching a high of \$280 billion a year, according to the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University. Over the same period, emergency rooms reported ever-increasing numbers of visits related to injuries from home workshop equipment.

Many of these homeowners were critically injured while attempting to perform home electrical work themselves.

“National Electrical Safety Month is a great time to review electrical safety practices,” says Brenner. “Many electrocutions and home electrical



fires can be prevented simply by understanding basic electrical safety principles and adhering to safe practices.”

The best way to protect your family and your home against the risk of electrical fires or electrocution is to hire a qualified, licensed electrician to perform any electrical work. If you decide to undertake a home electrical project yourself, consider these important safety tips:

- Never attempt a project beyond your skill level. Knowing when to call a professional may help prevent electrical

fires, injuries or fatalities.

- Always turn off the power to the circuit that you plan to work on by switching off the circuit breaker in the main service panel.

- Make an effort to learn about your home electrical system so you are able to safely navigate and maintain it.

- Test the wires before you touch them to make sure the power has been turned off.

- Use a ground-fault circuit interrupter with every power tool to protect against electrical shock hazards.

- Be sure to unplug any lamp or appliance before working on it.

- Never stand in a puddle or on a damp floor when working directly on or near electricity.

- Always have your work inspected upon completion to ensure that it has been done correctly.

Visit www.electrical-safety.org for more information about ESFI and National Electrical Safety Month.



Harness nice weather to lower your energy bills

Spring is finally here. Open your windows. When it's comfortable enough to walk outside without a coat, turn off your furnace and invite the fresh air in. You'll give your house a much-needed post-winter airing-out, and you'll also save on energy bills if you stop relying on your heating system when you don't really need it.

Here are three other ways to take advantage of mild spring temperatures and save energy at the same time:

Turn on the ceiling fan. Most fans have a switch that will change the direction of the blades. Set it so the fans push air down. That usually means they spin in a counterclockwise direction, but check the instructions that came with the fan to be sure. In the winter, fans should pull air up. But in the spring, you want to feel the "wind" the blades create. It will keep you comfortable so you won't turn on your air conditioning prematurely.

Open the curtains. Combined with open windows, the extra daylight we get during spring makes it a feel-good season. Let the sunshine into your home. It will warm it up and brighten it enough that you might not need your electric lights during the day. When the outdoor weather turns hot, keep the drapes closed during the day. Inviting too much heat into a room will force your air conditioner to work harder, which is counterproductive.

Wash clothes and dishes after dark. Your washing machine and dishwasher produce heat while they're running, so if you run them after the sun goes down on warm spring days, they'll help keep your house comfortable after dark. That could mean you won't have to turn the heater back on if the temperatures drop a little bit in the evening.

HOLIDAY CLOSING NOTICE

The offices of Altamaha EMC
will be closed Monday, May 25th
in observance of Memorial Day.

We will reopen at 8:00 AM on Tuesday, May 26th.



Member RECIPES



Blueberry Yum Yum

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 sticks butter
- 3 cups graham cracker crumbs
- 1 cup milk
- 2 packages Dream Whip
- 1 large package cream cheese
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla flavoring
- 2 cans blueberry pie filling

Directions

Melt butter and mix with graham cracker crumbs. Blend milk, Dream Whip, cream cheese, sugar and vanilla together. Press half of crumbs into the bottom of a 13" x 9" dish. Spread half of the cheese mixture on top of crumbs. Top with blueberry pie filling. Add remaining cheese mixture and top with remaining crumbs. Chill 24 hours before serving.

—From the kitchen of Brittany Gooden

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.