MAY 2022

Plugged in to Altamaha EMC | Fiber

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

ALTAMAHA EMC FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

Four local high school seniors were recently awarded scholarships through the Altamaha EMC Foundation. These scholarships are funded through Altamaha EMC's Operation Round Up program. Each year, the Foundation awards four scholarships worth $1,000 each.

The 2021 scholarship winners are: Cameron Watkins of Swainsboro High School, Connor Krosting of Treutlen High School, Matthew McCullough of David Emanuel Academy, and Elena Wilcher of Treutlen High School.

Cameron is a senior at Swainsboro High School and will be attending Georgia Southern University in the fall to pursue a degree in Computer Engineering. He is the son of Glen and Tammy Watkins of Swainsboro.

Connor is the son of Dale and Danielle Krosting of Soperton. He is a senior at Treutlen High School. He plans to attend Augusta University to pursue a degree in the medical field and become a physician assistant.

Matthew is a senior at David Emanuel Academy. He is the son of Shannon and Stephanie McCullough of Swainsboro. His plans are to attend Ogeechee Technical College to study Electrical and Industrial Systems technology.

Elena is the granddaughter of Phil and Darlene Wilcher. She is a senior at Treutlen High School and plans to pursue a degree in Information Technology from Georgia Southern University.

Altamaha EMC wishes the best to these students.

Prioritize Safety Year-Round

At Altamaha EMC, we recognize Electrical Safety Month every May, but we also know the importance of practicing safety year-round. From our co-op crews to you, the consumer-members we serve, we recognize that everyone has a part to play in prioritizing safety.

According to the Electrical Safety Foundation International, thousands of people in the U.S. are critically injured or electrocuted because of electrical fires and accidents in their own homes. Many of these accidents are preventable. Electricity is a necessity, and it powers our daily lives. But we know first-hand how dangerous electricity can be because we work with it 365 days a year.

To me, safety is more than a catchphrase. As CEO, it is my responsibility to keep co-op employees safe. Additionally, we want to help keep you and all members of our community safe. That's why you will see Altamaha EMC hosting safety demonstrations at community events and in schools throughout the year, to demonstrate the dangers of electricity. We discuss emergency scenarios, such as what to do in a car accident involving a utility pole and downed power lines. We caution students on the dangers of pad-mounted transformers and overloading circuits with too many electronic devices.

Electricity is an integral part of modern life. Given the prevalence of electrical devices, tools, and appliances, I'd like to pass along a few practical electrical safety tips.

Frayed wires pose a serious safety hazard. Power cords can become damaged or frayed from age, heavy use, or excessive current flow through the wiring. If cords become frayed or cut, replace them, as they could cause a shock when handled.

Avoid overloading circuits. Circuits can only cope with a limited amount of electricity. Overload happens when you draw more electricity than a circuit can safely handle––by having too many devices running on one circuit.

Label circuit breakers to understand the circuits in your home. Contact a qualified electrician if your home is more than 40 years old and you need to install multiple large appliances that consume large amounts of electricity.

Use extension cords properly. Never plug an extension cord into another extension cord. If you "daisy chain" them together, it could lead to overheating, creating a potential fire hazard. Do not exceed the wattage of the cord. Doing so also creates a risk of overloading the cord and creating a fire hazard. Extension cords should not be used as permanent solutions. If you need additional outlets, contact a licensed electrician to help.

I encourage you to talk with your kids about playing it safe and smart around electricity. Help them be aware of overhead power lines near where they play outdoors.

Our top priority is providing an uninterrupted energy supply 24/7, 365 days per year. But equally important is keeping our community safe around electricity. Contact us for additional electrical safety tips or if you would like us to provide a safety demonstration at your school or upcoming community event.

-Romanous Dotson, CEO

A QUICK GUIDE TO GENERATORS

With proper use and maintenance, generators provide great convenience during a power outage. Before you purchase a generator, determine your backup power needs to select the right size. Make a list of essential appliances and devices you'll want to power during an outage, then total the required wattage.

RECOMMENDED IF YOU...

... rarely lose power.

Recreational Inverter
Up to 2,000 watts
Lightweight, about 60 pounds
Quiet, easy to store
Power: fridge and a few smaller items (i.e. lamp, phone charger and home security system)

Midsized Inverter
Up to 3,500 watts
Weighs up to 150 pounds
Power: fridge, laptop, five to 10 lights, phone charger, home security system and 10K BTU air conditioner

... occasionally lose power. Transfer switch required.

Portable Generators and Large Inverters
Up to 7,500 watts
Weighs about 300 pounds
Power: fridge, gas furnace, 10K BTU air conditioner, dishwasher, multiple lights, TV, laptop and more
Ability to connect to home's breaker panel

... frequently lose power. Transfer switch required.

Home Standby
Up to 20,000 watts
Must be permanently installed; starts automatically during outage
Power: nearly all home appliances and electronics (simultaneously)
Can run indefinitely on natural gas or propane
Recommended if you frequently lose power.

SAFETY FIRST!

- Let us know if you purchase a generator that you plan to connect to an electric panel.
- Improperly installed generators can create back feed, which is dangerous to our crews and the community. **Before using the generator, disconnect the normal source of power coming into your home/business.**
- Never operate a generator indoors or in an enclosed space.

Disclaimer: Please note safety requirements may differ based on the type of generator you purchase. Thoroughly read the operator's manual and know how to shut off the generator quickly.

Source: Consumer Reports

Restoring Power Safely and Efficiently

We do our best to avoid them, but there is no way around it: power outages occasionally happen. For most Altamaha EMC members, outages are rare and only last a few hours. But when major storms impact our area, extended outages are unavoidable.

So, when the power goes out, how do Altamaha EMC crews know where to start working? How do you know if your outage has been reported? We've got answers to these questions and more, and it all starts with a safe, efficient plan for power restoration.

When the lights go out and it is safe for our crews to begin the restoration process, they start by repairing power lines and equipment that will restore power to the greatest number of people in the shortest time possible. This process typically begins with repairs to the larger main distribution lines that service a substantial number of homes and businesses. After those repairs are made, crews work on tap lines, which deliver power to transformers, either mounted on utility poles (for above-ground service) or placed on pads (for underground service). Finally, individual service lines that run between the transformer and the home are repaired.

We cannot control the weather, but we can prepare for it. Altamaha EMC keeps a supply of extra utility poles, transformers, and other equipment on hand so we can quickly get to work in the event of an outage. When widespread outages occur, multiple crews will be out in the field simultaneously working to repair damage at multiple locations. We also coordinate with nearby co-ops to bring in additional crews when necessary.

A proactive approach to maintenance helps minimize the chance of prolonged outages; this is why you see our right-of-way crews trimming trees and clearing vegetation near rights-of-way. We love trees too, but it only takes one overgrown limb to knock out power for an entire neighborhood. Trimming improves power reliability for our entire community. In addition to managing vegetation, we regularly inspect utility poles, power lines and other critical equipment to maintain a more reliable system.

If you experience a power outage, do not assume a neighbor reported it. It's best to report the outage yourself. Call us at 912-526-8181 to report all outages. You can also report outages using our mobile app.

If you have a medical condition that requires electrical equipment, please let us know, and always have a backup plan in place. This plan could include a portable generator, extra medical supplies or moving to an alternate location until power is restored. If you plan to use a generator for backup power, read all safety information and instructions before use.

Mother Nature can be unpredictable, but as a member of Altamaha EMC, you can feel confident knowing we are standing by, ready to restore power as quickly and safely as possible.

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Member RECIPES

Vidalia Onion and Potato Casserole

Ingredients

2 lbs. potatoes (red potatoes or Yukon gold depending on your preference) – peeled and sliced thin
3 Vidalia onions – thinly sliced
2 cups heavy cream
1 cup mild or medium cheddar cheese – grated
1 clove garlic
1 sprig rosemary
1 spring thyme
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoons butter
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 9" x 12" casserole dish. Heat olive oil and one tablespoon of butter over medium-low heat. Add onions and cook until soft and translucent, about 6 minutes. Bring cream, garlic, rosemary, and thyme to a boil in a saucepan over medium heat. Remove it from heat as soon as it reaches a boil. Arrange 1/3 of the potatoes in the bottom of casserole dish, overlapping slightly. Season liberally with salt & pepper. Top with half of the onions and ¼ cup of cheese. Repeat, laying another 1/3 of the potatoes, salt & pepper, the rest of the onions and another ¼ cup of cheese. Top with remaining potatoes and season with salt & pepper. Strain the cream sauce to remove herb sprigs and garlic. Pour over potatoes. Cover with foil and bake until potatoes are tender when pierced with a knife, about 45 minutes. Remove foil, top dish with remaining cheese and continue to bake until bubbly, about 15 minutes. Enjoy!

-From the kitchen of Tammye Vaughn

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.