



Plugged in to Altamaha EMC

SEPTEMBER 2015

The Official Newsletter of Altamaha Electric Membership Corporation

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

Take Charge with Pay•Your•Way

Altamaha EMC's innovative new prepay program for residential accounts allows you to take charge of your electric bills by paying for your electricity before you use it. This approach gives you more flexibility and control over the use of electricity. Some advantages of **Pay•Your•Way** are:

- No more surprises when you get your electric bill each month
- Notifications allow you to better monitor your energy use and budget for electricity costs
- Timely notices enable you to know immediately if your energy use increases significantly so you can take corrective action to resolve problems that will increase your bill



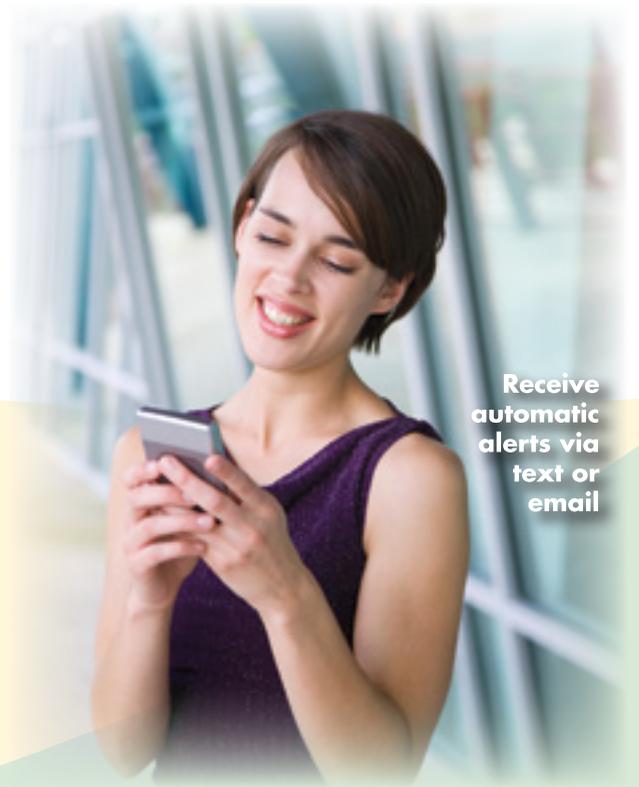
- You control the payment schedule – pay monthly, weekly or more often

• If you have an existing account with us, we will credit your deposit from that account to your **Pay•Your•Way** account.

- Additional deposits, late fees or reconnect fees are not applicable to **Pay•Your•Way** accounts
- If your **Pay•Your•Way** account is disconnected, you will be reconnected automatically when a payment is made and applied to the account that raises the credit balance above \$50

• Payments can be made at all three Altamaha EMC offices during normal business hours, by telephone, or on our website at www.altamahaemc.com

- Payment methods include cash, check, money order, e-check, debit or credit card
- **Pay•Your•Way** includes a debt management feature that provides a way to spread a pre-existing



Receive automatic alerts via text or email

delinquent balance due over an extended period of time

- Automatic alerts and notifications can be sent via text or email

For more information on **Pay•Your•Way**, contact us today by calling 912-526-8181.



CO-OP CONFERENCE INSPIRES YOUNG LEADERS

Earlier this summer, cooperatives across the state, including Altamaha EMC, hosted the 31st annual Georgia Cooperative Council Youth Leadership Conference at the Georgia FFA-FCCLA Center in Covington.

Avery Phillips of Lyons was one of 51 teens who gathered July 13-17 to build and enhance their leadership skills and learn about cooperatives and the role they play in communities across the state.



Avery Phillips

In addition to networking and forming friendships, the camp promoted teamwork through a series of exercises, training and presentations, including a field trip to Snapping Shoals EMC in Covington and Godfrey Dairy Farm in Madison. Other outdoor adventures included challenging low/high ropes and mud courses to encourage personal development and team building skills.

Students participated in a personality assessment seminar as well as a Congressional Insight workshop run by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). The workshop provided a view of the skills needed to be an effective member of Congress and provided examples of the variety of responsibilities placed upon legislators—from managing staff, responding to media inquiries,

monitoring legislation, to attending round-the-clock meetings with constituents, lobbyists and colleagues.

According to Gale Cutler, chair of the Georgia Co-op Council board of directors and public relations coordinator at Georgia Electric Membership Corp., attendees gain a greater awareness of how co-ops operate and the impact of co-ops in their local community and nation.

“These students will likely become leaders within their communities, so we feel a responsibility to teach them the principles upon which cooperatives were founded and operate today and how co-ops differ from other business models,” she says.

For example, the conference included a discussion of the diversity of industries represented by co-ops. Cooperatives come in different shapes and sizes and include a broad collection of industries such as agriculture, health care, electric, housing, food, purchasing, finance, insurance, education, child care, telecommunications and technology. Examples include Land O’ Lakes butter, Ocean Spray cranberry juice, Nationwide Insurance, Ace Hardware and REI Outdoors.

To hear different perspectives from different co-ops, the group heard presentations from the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, NRECA, Farm Credit Associations, Southern States, Dairy Farmers of America, and the EMCs of Georgia.

To be eligible to attend the Youth Leadership Conference, students must exhibit leadership potential, complete at least their freshman year of high school, apply as a first-time attendee and attend as a guest of their local cooperative.

The 2015 Cooperative Youth Conference was sponsored by the Georgia Cooperative Council and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development.

Start saving with a *DIY* home energy audit

As temperatures begin to drop and your energy focus turns from cooling your home to heating it, consider using this time to increase energy efficiency and cost savings for the colder months ahead. Whether your home is old or new, chances are you are spending more on energy costs than necessary.

Armed with some basic knowledge and a little time, you can conduct a baseline energy audit of your home to identify where you are losing energy (and money). Use a checklist and take notes on problems you find as you walk through your home. Remember, the audit itself won't save you money unless you act on your findings.

DIY 101

So, where to start? If your home has multiple levels, work from the top down. Begin in your attic or highest floor, and work your way down to the first floor or basement.



- **Insulation and air leaks (drafts)** –

According to the Department of Energy, improving your home's insulation and sealing air leaks are the fastest and most cost-effective ways to reduce energy waste and make the most of your energy dollars. Check to see whether there is sufficient insulation in the attic. Are openings containing piping, ductwork and chimney sealed?

- **Electronic devices** – Inventory all of the electronic devices you have and how often you use them. Computers, printers, DVD players, phones and gaming consoles are notorious “vampire power” users – they drain energy even when not in use. If items can be turned off without disrupting your lifestyle, consider plugging them into a power strip that can be turned on and off (or put on a timer).

- **Lighting** – Note where you still have incandescent lights. Can you replace them with CFL or LED upgrades? Do you have nightlights? If so, consider replacing them with LED nightlights. Are there places where you can install motion sensor lights in low use areas, such as a closet, porch or garage?

- **Thermostat/indoor temperature** – Do you have a programmable thermostat? When was the last time it was programmed? Is the date and time correct? If they are not, this could throw off the automatic settings. During the fall and winter, consider setting the temperature lower during the day and/or times when no one is home and at night when people are sleeping?

- **Appliances and cleaning** – Appliances are large energy users, and if yours are more than 10 years old, they are likely not as energy efficient as today's options. How and when you use them also make a difference. Do you wash your clothes in hot water, or can you use cold water instead? Do you use your washer, dryer or dishwasher during the day? Consider running them at night, during off-peak times. Does your hot water heater have a blanket? If not, consider insulating it. Make sure your dryer vent isn't blocked – this will not only save energy, it may also prevent a fire.

Evaluation

Once you have completed the audit, take a look at the findings. Prioritize actions that you can take based on your time and budget, weighing where you can get the most impact for your investment. Increasing your home's energy efficiency will make your family comfortable while saving you money.

Energy Efficiency
Tip of the Month



Don't let vampires suck the life out of your energy efficiency efforts! Unplugging unused electronics – otherwise known as “energy vampires” – can save you as much as 10 percent on your electric bill.

Source: energy.gov

Taking savings to the next level

For additional information on how you can be more energy efficient, contact our Member Services Representative, Van Henriott, at 912-526-2118.

Celebrate Farm Safety in September

Working on a farm can be dangerous. As a reminder, farm communities have celebrated National Farm Safety and Health Week every September since 1944.

This year's observance is Sept. 20-26.

Nearly 400 farm workers die each year on the job, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and many of those deaths are preventable.

During National Farm Safety and Health Week, share these safety tips with friends and family members who work in agriculture:

- Equip tractors with a roll-over protective structure.
- Ride your tractor alone. Most are designed for one passenger.
- Affix a "slow-moving vehicle" sign to your tractor before you drive it on the highway to alert other drivers that you will not exceed 25 mph.
- Wear protective equipment for all farm work, especially when using power tools. Safety goggles, dust masks, face shields and hearing



protection should be readily available to anyone on the farm.

- Keep power tools in good condition, and check the cords and plugs for wear before using.
 - Power tools should be properly grounded or double insulated.
 - Don't leave children unsupervised or give them chores they can't safely handle. Stress the importance of safety.
 - Organize a Farm Safety Day for the children in your farm community.
- Plan games and activities that teach about safety.

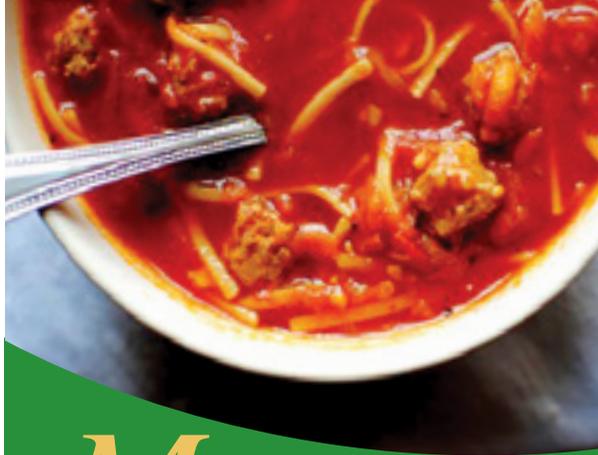
Altamaha EMC's 2015 Annual Meeting

Mark your calendars for the 2015 Annual Meeting on Wednesday, November 4, 2015 at 2:30 PM at Southeastern Technical College in Vidalia. All members are invited to attend.



In addition to the annual financial reports, election of three seats on the board of directors and the general business session, many prizes will be given away. Refreshments will be served following the meeting.

We look forward to seeing you on November 4th.



Member RECIPES

Spaghetti & Meatball Soup



Ingredients

1 cup soft bread crumbs
3/4 cup milk
2 eggs, lightly beaten
1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
3/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon pepper
2 pounds Johnsonville® Ground Mild Italian Sausage
4 cups beef stock
1 jar (24 ounces) marinara sauce
3 cups water
1 teaspoon dried basil
Parmesan rind, optional
8 ounces angel hair pasta, *broken into 1-1/2-inch pieces*
Additional freshly ground Parmesan cheese, optional

Directions

To make soft bread crumbs, tear bread into pieces and place in a food processor or blender. Cover and pulse until crumbs form. One slice of bread yields 1/2 to 3/4 cup crumbs.

Preheat oven to 400°. In a large bowl, mix bread crumbs and milk. Let stand 5 minutes; drain. Stir in eggs, cheese and spices. Add sausage; mix lightly but thoroughly. Shape into 1-in. balls. Place meatballs on a greased rack in a 15x10x1-in. baking pan. Bake 12-15 minutes or until cooked through. Transfer meatballs to a 6-qt. slow cooker. Add stock, marinara sauce, water, basil and, if desired, Parmesan rind. Cook, covered, on low 6-8 hours to allow flavors to blend. Discard Parmesan rind. Stir in pasta; cook, covered, on high 15-20 minutes longer or until pasta is tender. If desired, serve with additional cheese.

Yield: 8 servings

– *From the kitchen of Marilynn Hopkins*

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.