



Plugged in to Altamaha EMC

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The Official Newsletter of Altamaha Electric Membership Corporation

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

You Are a Member, Not a Customer

That's the co-op difference!

Many businesses use the word “member” to describe their customers. Places like Sam’s Club or Costco and even American Express like to refer to their customers as members. You pay a fee to buy their goods and services, but that is really all you get for the “membership.” No right to vote for the Board of Directors or to participate in any meaningful way in the organization.

At Altamaha EMC, membership really does mean something more than just the right to buy electricity. Co-ops of all types are founded on seven cooperative principles that give us guidance and strategic direction. Membership also gives you rights as an owner of this co-op.

Brett Fairbairn, director of the Center for the Study of Cooperatives at the University of Saskatchewan in Canada, makes the case that member relations is not just part of what co-ops should be doing, but in fact is the fundamental core business of the cooperative. He lays out the three strategic concepts that any co-op must get right in order to survive and thrive:

Economic linkage

Altamaha EMC is connected to you. There is a business relationship that serves you (the member) and the co-op. Since co-ops are solely owned by people in the community, they have a mutual interest to ensure that both the co-op and the member do well and prosper.

Transparency

As an owner of the co-op, you have a right to know how it operates and how decisions are made that directly impact you. If the co-op is transparent and combines this trait with integrity and fairness, it will build trust with the members.

Cognition

In this case, cognition is best defined as how your co-op thinks. It includes the current and historical identity, the mission and the sense of shared values with co-op members. Research, education and training are critical functions that Altamaha EMC must conduct on an ongoing basis to ensure that we always have the best information to make decisions.

The cooperative business model is the best one on earth, but like any enterprise, it is up to the human beings who work at the co-op, who serve on the board



and the members like you to ensure that the principles and values do not fade over time.

First and foremost, Altamaha EMC strives to be thought of as a member-owned cooperative that gives you the best value of any utility. If we succeed, our community thrives and you will always value being a member – not a customer.

-Romanous Dotson, CEO/General Manager

Engaging millennials through Co-ops Vote

What makes the 2016 presidential elections unique? It isn't just the heavily televised primary season or the candidates. In fact, it has less to do with whom we vote for and everything to do with who will be voting. For the first time, all of the millennials (people ages 18 to 35) in the country are old enough to vote.

The question is: Will they vote? Millennials have the lowest voter turnout of any age group; just 46 percent voted in the last presidential election. Only 20 percent of people ages 18 to 29 cast a ballot in 2014.

This is one of the reasons Georgia's electric cooperatives are participating in a national, nonpartisan program to help get out the vote and to make sure the young voters in rural America go to the polls in November. This initiative, called

Coops Vote, is designed to boost voter turnout among co-op members and raise awareness of the pressing issues facing rural America.

Co-ops Vote works to engage young voters using a variety of tools, including videos, social media ads and a #VotingYouth portal on the Coops Vote website (*vote.coop*). Anyone can follow Co-ops Vote on social media and check out the website to see this outreach.

No matter what your age, please visit the Co-ops Vote website and take the quick and easy pledge to become a co-op voter. You'll be joining co-op members across the country in sending a powerful message: America's electric cooperative members are voting in 2016 and expect elected leaders to address the issues facing co-ops and rural communities.



With 42 million cooperative members in 47 states, electric coops can stand together as a powerful voice in this year's elections. Join us in becoming a co-op voter and cast your ballot on Nov. 8.

Cooperative Solar: Solar Energy With None of the Hassles

If you're interested in the benefits of a rooftop solar system but don't think you can afford it, your home is shaded, your homeowners' association has strict covenants, or you're a renter, Cooperative Solar may be for you.

That's because Cooperative Solar allows you to choose just

the right amount of solar energy from your EMC's offsite solar energy facilities. As a Cooperative Solar subscriber, you'll receive clean, affordable, renewable solar energy directly from your EMC's portfolio of solar energy resources. And it's all very easy!

For more information, contact:



ALTAMAHA

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greenpoweremc.com/solar

Tips for Mosquito Control



Mosquitoes love warm weather and we certainly have more than our fair share of heat here in Georgia. By taking a look around your home, you can reduce or eliminate areas where mosquitoes live. The Georgia Department of Public Health offers these tips for mosquito control.

Around your home:

- Drain or get rid of areas or containers that hold water.
- Maintain swimming pools with proper chemicals; cover or drain if not in use.
- Pull tight any plastic sheeting or tarps used to cover yard items.
- Clear plants and weeds away from edges of ponds.
- If you have clogged ditches and pipes, clean out leaves, dirt and debris so water flows freely.
- Fill low places, tire ruts, puddles, and hollow stumps with dirt or sand.
- Repair leaky pipes and outdoor faucets.
- Treat small areas of water that can't be drained with larvicides, following label instructions.

Protect yourself from biting mosquitoes:

- Install screens on windows and porches and keep them in good repair.
- Keep car windows and garage doors closed at night.
- Trim or remove overgrown shrubs, grass, weeds, vines and ground covers. These areas provide cool/dark/damp areas where mosquitoes rest.
- Avoid using flower- or fruit-scented products.
- Wear protective clothing, such as long sleeves, long pants and socks.
- Treat clothing and outdoor gear, such as boots and tents, with permethrin products, or purchase pretreated items.
- Wear light-colored clothing; mosquitoes are attracted to dark colors.
- Use Environmental Protection Agency-registered insect-repellent containing DEET, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus or Picaridin.

For more information, visit dph.georgia.gov/zika.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Consider insulating your water heater tank, which could reduce standby heat losses by 25 to 45 percent and save you about 4 to 9 percent in water heating costs. You can find pre-cut jackets or blankets available from around \$20.

Source: energy.gov

2016 Annual Meeting November 2



Mark your calendars for the 2016 Annual Meeting on Wednesday, November 2, 2016 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 2nd.

It's Hurricane Season

Hurricanes and other fall storms not only damage property, but they also can cause health and safety hazards. Your reaction when a storm blows your way can head off a disaster. So be prepared. Some tips:

- Know when a storm is coming. Listen to weather reports constantly during this hurricane-prone season.
- Once a storm knocks out power, unplug all major electrical appliances. This could prevent an electrical surge from damaging the motors of those appliances when the power is restored.
- Unplug basement appliances; storms often cause basement flooding.
- After the storm, turn off the electricity to areas of the home that got wet. If you step in water—even a puddle—that is touching a plugged-in appliance, you could be electrocuted.
- Don't turn your flooded or wet appliances back on until an electrician inspects them and gives you the OK.
- Keep the refrigerator door closed during power outages. Food will stay good for four to six hours in an unopened refrigerator.
- If someone in the house is on life-support or relies on any electric medical device, make a plan for where to take the person in case of a power outage. The local hospital can help you with the plan.





Member RECIPES

Barbecue-Stuffed Peppers

Ingredients

1 pound ground beef
1/2 cup diced sweet onion
1 tablespoon Joe Kem's BBQ seasoning rub (or your favorite brand)
1/2 cup dill pickles, chopped
1 cup Joe Kem's BBQ sauce, divided (or your favorite brand)
2 cups potatoes, diced small
Salt and pepper, to taste
6 medium bell peppers, cut in half, seeds removed
1/4 cup water



Directions

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. In a large skillet, cook ground beef until pink is gone. Add onions to the pan and cook 2-3 minutes. Drain excess fat off meat then add seasoning rub and 1/2 cup barbecue sauce. Let simmer several minutes. While meat is cooking, cook potatoes in salted water until almost tender, about 2-3 minutes once it boils. Drain potatoes then add to meat mixture. Add chopped pickles, stirring to combine. Adjust seasoning and salt and pepper to taste. Divide mixture evenly among peppers. Place peppers in an ovenproof dish and drizzle remaining barbecue sauce over top of peppers. Pour 1/4 cup water in bottom of pan. Cover pan with aluminum foil. Bake about 1 hour or until peppers are tender. Serves 6-10.

—*Courtesy of Georgia Grown*

Visit Georgia Grown's website, www.georgiagrown.com, for more great recipes from farms and producers across our state.

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.