



# Plugged in to Altamaha EMC | Fiber

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

## Annual Meeting

Altamaha EMC will hold our 2022 annual meeting on Wednesday, November 2, 2022 at Southeastern Technical College in Vidalia. Due to risks associated with COVID-19, we will practice social distancing guidelines as outlined by the CDC and limit person-to-person contact by using a “drive-through” format for this year’s meeting. The format will be the same as our 2021 annual meeting.

Members will enter the access route using Pete Phillips Drive (between Walmart and Southeastern Technical College). Employees will direct traffic to the registration area. Members will remain in their vehicles for the entire meeting.

During the registration process, members will receive the ever-popular bucket of goodies and snacks and cast their votes to approve the minutes from the 2021 annual meeting and for election of directors. Music and information will be broadcast over a designated radio station in advance of the business meeting. The business meeting will begin at 2:30 pm and will be broadcast over the designated radio station.

Concern for the health and safety of our members and employees is our utmost priority. More details regarding the annual meeting will be mailed to our members closer to the date. We look forward to seeing you (at a distance) on November 2, 2022.







# Student Leaders Attend Co-op Camp

**A**ltamaha EMC sponsored **Kate Kennedy** and **Jazlyn Denmark** to attend the 2022 Georgia Cooperative Council Youth Leadership Conference. The conference, affectionately known as “Co-op Camp,” is an engaging leadership and learning experience for students across the state of Georgia that highlights the impact of cooperatives on communities, what they do, and how youth can be a part of them.

The conference, held at the FFA/FCCLA Center July 18-22, promised the attendees a week of leadership, learning and laughter and gave them the opportunity to grow in areas of community leadership, problem-solving, relationship building and communication in a fun and relaxed environment.

Cooperatives from all over the state, including Altamaha EMC, sponsor the conference to provide a unique way for students to see what cooperatives do and why they are vital in their communities. Students not only learned about the different types of co-ops and their impact, but they also learned more about themselves and what it takes to be a leader.

New leadership skills were learned by putting them into practice while teaming up with peers and new friends. Interactive workshops for the teen participants helped them learn how to be better leaders through a personality profile session to understand how to better work with others and a leadership visioning exercise that focused on their goals.

Throughout the week students participated in encounter sessions with representatives from the Farm Credit Associations, Georgia EMC, Go Energy Credit Union, Pineland Telephone Cooperative and Adam Schwartz of The Cooperative Way. The presenters emphasized and gave examples of how their organization incorporates the Seven Cooperative Principles that all cooperative businesses follow: voluntary and open membership, democratic membership control, members’ economic participation, autonomy and independence, education and training for members, cooperation between co-ops, and concern for local communities.

“It is so important to support and encourage leadership growth for the youth of our communities. This week-long conference brings the seven cooperative principles to life for these teenagers while fostering leadership and soft skills in a fun environment,” says Tammye Vaughn with Altamaha EMC.

In addition to activities onsite at the Georgia FFA/FCCLA Center, the group also went on a field trip to two cooperatives, Walton EMC and Godfrey Dairy, to see firsthand what they had been learning about. And while leading and learning took place throughout the week, fun and games were an important part of camp as well. A challenging high-ropes course, mud course, and team building activities brought students together and helped them build meaningful friendships that made the goodbyes at the end of the week so hard.



*Kate Kennedy (left) and Jazlyn Denmark (right)*

# Ready, set, (your) thermostat!

**H**eating and cooling account for about half the energy used in a typical home, so it's a great place to use less energy. And when used wisely, your thermostat can help reduce wasted energy.

Here is some information on thermostat types, common operational misconceptions and best practices you can start today:

## Types of thermostats

Mechanical thermostats are easy to control by adjusting a dial or sliding switch. The downfall is you must make temperature adjustments manually, which is easy to forget. They are inefficient because they typically heat or cool the home beyond the set point.

If your cooling is set to 72°, a mechanical thermostat may actually cool your home to 70° before it turns off, wasting energy. Then it might not come on again until the home reaches 74°. That 4-degree temperature change is noticeable and can lead people to adjust the thermostat setting down even more, which wastes more energy.

Also, some mechanical thermostats contain mercury. You can determine that by removing the front plate and looking for small glass bulbs. If your thermostat contains mercury, replace it and find a way to properly recycle it.

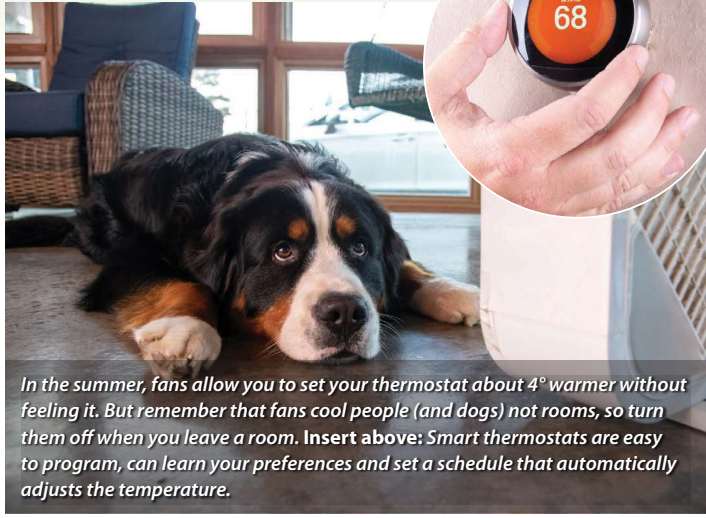
Digital thermostats are more accurate and efficient, and some are programmable, which is a great option for people who don't have internet or don't want their thermostat data tracked.

Smart thermostats—which require an internet connection—are Wi-Fi-enabled and can be controlled using a smartphone app. Programming is easier, and you can track and manage use and temperature data. However, that data is shared with the manufacturer.

Smart thermostats can learn your preferences and set a schedule that automatically adjusts the temperature. Some have geofencing, which adjusts the temperature based on the distance your smartphone is from home.

## Misconceptions about thermostats

A common misconception is the higher you turn your thermostat up or down, the faster your home's temperature will change. Turning your thermostat down to 55° to cool your home faster



*In the summer, fans allow you to set your thermostat about 4° warmer without feeling it. But remember that fans cool people (and dogs) not rooms, so turn them off when you leave a room. Insert above: Smart thermostats are easy to program, can learn your preferences and set a schedule that automatically adjusts the temperature.*

is like repeatedly pushing the elevator button and expecting it to come faster. It's likely you will forget you adjusted it and waste energy by over heating or cooling the home. Set your desired temperature for heating or cooling or program your thermostat so you don't make extreme adjustments.

Many people believe it takes more energy to heat or cool a house instead of leaving it the same temperature. The larger the temperature variance between inside and outside, the more energy your system uses. Setting your thermostat 7-10° from its normal setting for eight hours a day can save up to 10% a year on your energy bill, according to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE).

## Best practices

Use these heating and cooling tips from the DOE to add efficiency and savings to your home:

- Set the thermostat to 78° in the summer when you are home and awake, and warmer at night or when away. Set it to 68° in the winter when you are home and awake, and cooler at night or when you are away.
- Upgrade to a programmable or smart thermostat that automatically adjusts the temperature throughout the day and when you leave the house.
- When on vacation, set your thermostat to 85° in the summer and 55° in the winter.
- In the summer, fans allow you to set your thermostat about 4° warmer without feeling it. Remember: Fans cool people not rooms, so turn them off when you leave a room.

Use your thermostat to optimize energy efficiency and find a balance between comfort and affordability.

MARK GILLILAND, PIONEER UTILITY RESOURCES



# Prepare for a fall energy surge

Even if the days of remote school are a semester or two behind and your kids are leaving the house every morning as usual, your energy bills could still surge a bit once schools start up. That's because people are usually busier in the fall than they are during the summer.

Students are using the computer and printer more for homework assignments. Shorter days mean the lights go on earlier in the evening. If your family wakes up earlier than the sun comes up, then the lights go on.

Plan for what could be a bump in energy use by teaching your children how to conserve electricity and create less waste overall. Here are a few tips:

- Teach your children how to put the computer into sleep mode when they are finished using it, even if they plan on returning later. Electronics in sleep mode use about 80% less electricity than when operating at full power.
- In the market for new computer equipment this year? Computers with an Energy Star rating use 70% less electricity overall, while monitors bearing the label draw 90% less.
- Desk lamps and other concentrated task lighting create a productive work environment without wasting excess light. If your desk lamps are older, replace the halogen or incandescent bulbs with LED bulbs, which fit most fixtures and produce less heat while using less electricity.
- Consider organizing a carpool with other parents from your neighborhood to transport the kids to and from school. Not only will this save gas, but you will earn yourself a couple of mornings off.
- To help reduce waste, take inventory of school supplies before heading to the store. Supplies often come in bulk packages that won't run out before the end of the school year.
- Buy reusable sandwich bags and use lunch boxes instead of brown bags to save money and reduce everyday packaging waste.



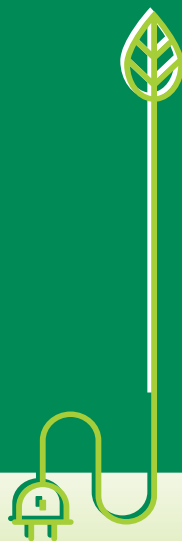
## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Water heating accounts for a large portion of home energy bills. To save energy (and money!) used for water heating, repair any leaky faucets, install low-flow fixtures and insulate accessible hot water lines. When it's time to purchase a new washing machine or dishwasher, look for models that are ENERGY STAR®-certified.

Source: Dept. of Energy



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# Member RECIPES

This recipe gives options for two varieties of savory cheese wafers. Make them with fresh rosemary and freshly cracked black pepper for one variety—or add cayenne pepper and smoked paprika to the dough for a more traditional, spicy cheese wafer. You also can vary the type of jelly used to top the wafers for other interesting flavor combinations!

## Cheesy Pepper Jelly Wafers

### Ingredients

4 ounces butter, softened  
1 pound sharp cheddar, grated  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
2 cups all-purpose flour  
1/2 cup pepper jelly (or jellies) of  
your choice, for topping



### *For Rosemary-Cracked Black Pepper Wafers*

1 tablespoon fresh chopped rosemary  
1 teaspoon fresh cracked black pepper

### *For Cayenne-Paprika Wafers*

1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper, or more, if desired  
1/4 teaspoon smoked paprika

### Directions

In a large bowl, cream together butter and grated cheese until smooth. Add salt and flour to the bowl along with ingredients for either the Rosemary-Cracked Black Pepper variety or the Cayenne-Paprika variety of wafers. Mix until ingredients are combined. Form dough into 2 logs about 2 inches in diameter. Wrap dough in plastic wrap and chill or freeze until firm. When ready to bake, heat oven to 350 degrees. Line baking sheets with parchment paper. Slice logs into 1/4-inch slices and place slices on the parchment-lined baking sheets, leaving some room between each slice. Press thumb into the center of each slice to create a defined thumbprint well. Bake for 8 minutes. Remove from oven and redefine the thumbprints in the middle of each wafer (some may have puffed during baking), then bake for another 3-5 minutes. Let cool completely. Fill each thumbprint wafer with 1/2 teaspoon pepper jelly (or other jelly of choice) and serve. *Makes about 4 dozen savory cookies.*

**Courtesy of Georgia Grown.** For recipes from farms and producers across our state, visit [www.georgiagrown.com](http://www.georgiagrown.com).