

Wishing You and Yours
Safe and Happy Holidays

\$6 Million in Margin Refunds
Coming this Month

JEMCOnews

A PUBLICATION FOR JACKSON EMC MEMBERS

December 2014

Enter power-saving mode ⚠

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HOW TO SPEND YOUR

Energy Dollars



President/CEO
Chip Jakins

Chip Jakins

Safety: It's a Big Deal

We don't take safety for granted at Jackson EMC; it is our first priority. Whether it's our linemen working with high-voltage electricity or office personnel at their desks, we stress safety for the sake of all our employees and our members.

Working with electricity is inherently dangerous. It's why we provide extensive training that stresses safe work practices. Our line crew members and field service representatives attend mandatory safety meetings each week. We consistently remind our workers of dangers to avoid and safety guidelines to follow.

Along with undergoing regular mandatory evaluations, we invite safety experts from other cooperatives around the state to review our safety practices. Every three years a team of our peers visits our offices and questions our employees to ensure we are performing at the safest level possible. Completed in October, our most recent safety evaluation by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Safety Achievement Program found what we already knew, that Jackson EMC employees take safety seriously and practice safe work habits each day.


The observation team was impressed with the well-maintained vehicles, buildings and grounds at each of our district offices. As observers toured our service area, asking questions and watching work practices, they noticed knowledgeable employees who take pride in their jobs.

All Jackson EMC employees attend monthly safety meetings that cover topics ranging from first aid to fire

safety. Our employees know what do in the case of an emergency and they are trained in life-saving skills, like CPR. Everyone completes a defensive driving course too, keeping them, and others, safe on the road. These safety trainings help us stay safe at work, as well as when we are in the community with our friends and families.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) says safety programs that find and fix workplace hazards before workers are hurt not only reduce injuries, they also lead to higher productivity, lower costs and greater employee satisfaction. This is important to both our employees and you, our members. In OSHA's experience, companies with active safety and health programs experience 15 to 35 percent fewer injuries. Having such programs in place reduces insurance costs for the cooperative, savings that are passed on to our members.

We stress safety because it's the right thing to do, and we continuously evaluate our programs to make sure they are meeting the intended goal of keeping our employees and our members safe. This is dangerous work; scoring high in safety achievement is important. That means we are safe on your property when we work on lines and equipment and that our employees come home safe every day.

We congratulate our employees for their commitment to safety, and we wish you and yours safe and happy holidays. 

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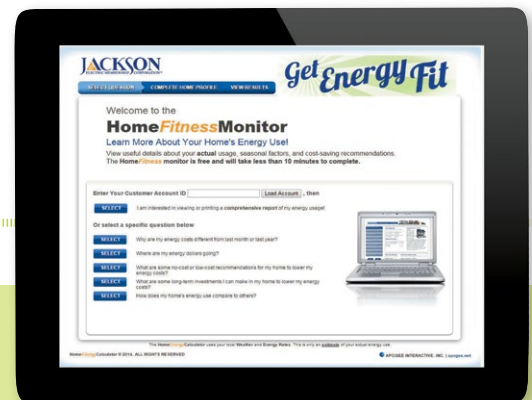
COMPLETE YOUR ONLINE ENERGY PROFILE

Jackson EMC customers can learn more about how they use energy and ways to cut costs by completing an online energy profile. Using your account number, the Jackson EMC Home Fitness Monitor can produce a comprehensive energy report with your answers to a few questions.

Use your energy report to:

- Find out where your energy dollars are going.
- Hear about no-cost or low-cost recommendations for your home that will lower your energy bill.
- Learn about long-term investments you can make at home to lower energy costs.
- Track your progress in lowering energy use at home.
- Learn why your energy costs are different from last month or last year.
- Compare your energy use to other homes with similar users.

Go to www.jacksonemc.com/energyuse to get started.



Protect Your Electronic Investment

SURGE PROTECTION PROGRAM


In 2013, Georgia homeowners filed more insurance claims for losses caused by lightning than any other state, according to data collected by the U.S. Insurance Institute. They estimate lightning strikes cost about \$674 million in damage for American homeowners each year.

Electrical currents are created in clouds as cold water droplets collide. The electricity that builds up in the cloud escapes as one of three types of lightning – two of which occur among clouds – and a third that strikes Earth: cloud to ground. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) estimates about 25 million lightning strikes hit the ground each year. When lightning hits the ground it can enter homes through electrical cabling and introduce dangerous energy surges into equipment connected to the system.

To keep electronics safe, high-quality surge protectors are a good idea, in fact Jackson EMC offers them. Single outlet protectors are available for \$17 and are

equipped with a variety of other features, including modem and coaxial protection. An eight-socket strip is available for \$88.

Protection for motor-driven appliances offered through Jackson EMC is changing. Current customers have equipment installed at the meter base; that equipment was checked when meters were read. With the upgrade to smart meters, which are read remotely, we no longer have employees at your home each month. Our new surge protection program provides customers with the same protection against surges, but without equipment to maintain. Surge protection for motor-driven appliances, such as HVAC units, refrigerators, garage door openers and water heaters, is now available through Surge HELP.[®] Fees for this protection can be added to your monthly bill with annual coverage starting at \$5.75 a month for \$2,000 worth of coverage.

More information about Jackson EMC's surge protection program is available at www.jacksonemc.com/surge. 





Enter power-saving mode ⚠️

SIGNING ON FOR ENERGY SAVINGS

By April Sorrow, Editor

I'm new to Jackson EMC; to the staff at least. I've been a member for 22 years, but I never thought too much about my electric bill. It isn't too high and I actually have it drafted right out of my checking account, the same amount each month. I just flip the switch and the lights keep turning on.

Pictured above: With young kids at home, and frequent guests, we use a lot of energy in the kitchen (both electric and caloric). Annika and Bucky working on homework while Reese dribbles, shoots or kicks one of many balls laying around is all part of a typical Tuesday night.

I never considered tapping into the tools and services Jackson EMC has to help customers cut costs – that is until I joined the public relations team here in October. Then, I started actually using all of these super easy tools I'd been reading about for years in *Jemco News*.

First, I completed my online home energy profile. I answered questions about:

- **Who lives there?** Two cute kids and two exhausted parents.
- **What type of insulation we have?** The yellow kind.
- **Thermostat setting?** A cool 72 in the summer and warm 78 in the winter because the temperature inside should be opposite to the outdoors.
- **How high we heat our water?** Lava setting.
- **Number of refrigerators and freezers?** Three. Because you never know when 100 people will show up for dinner.
- **Number of TVs and computers and how much we use them?** Lots of them, and every minute we are home.
- **How often we cook?** More often when the talented chef/brother-in-law is in town.
- **And wash our clothes?** A whole lot because those cute kids are messy, too.
- **And, alas, no pool** despite years of pleading with the other bill payer.

After answering those few questions, I learned I spend most of my money heating my house in the winter, which I will blame on my seasonal relatives. And heating my water to a near lava temperature costs a lot of money too. The food I hoard in my house waiting on the army to arrive costs about \$11 a month to keep cold. The lights my kids leave on in every room, \$8 a month.

I also saw how changes in the weather affect my bill from month-to-month and year-to-year. For instance, this fall was warmer than last year, so I am paying more to chill the air inside. My profile also tells me I can save money if I raise my

cooling setting from 72 to 78 degrees. That might not happen, but I can save even more money if I actually use the programmable thermostat I already have.

I had always heard it takes more energy to change the temperature in the house rather than maintain it; that's not true. Using my programmable thermostat to heat or cool the house just before we get home will save me nearly \$500 a year. That's a little embarrassing to learn since I actually have the thermostat.

If I could save that much by simply using something I already own. I wondered what I could save if I invested in new things, such as more insulation. I scheduled a Personal Home Fitness Evaluation with Home Diagnostic Solutions, a Jackson EMC-approved performance testing contractor. I called Paul Leroy to set it up. He told me mine was the 84th evaluation scheduled by Jackson EMC members this year.

"This will be an educational experience because there are lots of things you may have never thought of before," he said. I chose not to tell him about the thermostat.

He also let me know that after my evaluation, if I complete the recommendations made, I could qualify for a lower energy rate. And there are rebates. If I decide to upgrade our water heater, Jackson EMC will give me \$500 and another \$400 if I need a new heat pump. Stay tuned; I'll let you know how it goes. ▲



Completing my home energy fitness monitor, I learned programming my thermostat would save me a bundle.

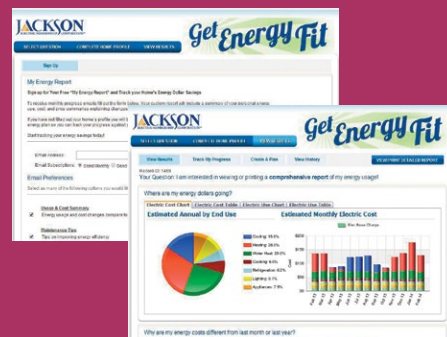


Join the Home Energy Fitness Challenge

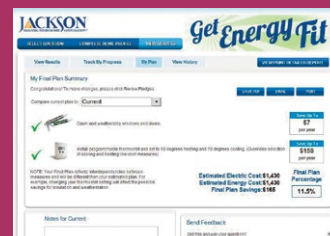
To explore your own energy use and discover your hidden savings, go to www.jacksonemc.com/challenge and:



1. **Sign up for Track My Progress.** Your Jackson EMC account unlocks information about your energy use, which can help you identify ways to save.



2. **Create your home profile at the Home Fitness Monitor for your personal energy report.** Your results are updated regularly and you can request periodic emails detailing your results.



3. **Set energy saving goals to create your own energy fitness plan.**

When you've completed all three steps, you're automatically entered in the **Home Fitness Challenge** and eligible for prizes. For more details about the contest, see the January issue of *Jemco News*.

Reese and Annika head out the front door to play without bothering to turn off the lights, computer or TV.

Our Neighbor: Inspiring Independence

Thanks to Our Neighbor, a nonprofit agency in Gainesville, young adults with special challenges are gaining the skills necessary to live independently.



The Jackson EMC Foundation recently awarded \$11,000 in grant monies to Our Neighbor to assist with life skills and exercise programs the organization provides its developmentally disabled residents. The grant will cover costs to provide occupational therapy and to educate residents about healthy lifestyles

and to supply transportation and staff to assist clients at Francis Meadows Aquatic Center in Gainesville.

With a mission to assist and inspire those with disabilities to reach maximum independence, Our Neighbor provides affordable, handicapped-accessible housing for young adults with physical and developmental disabilities. Our Neighbor's five homes currently house 15 residents.

"Many of our residents would face life in nursing homes were it not for the services we provide," says Mary Margaret Calvert, executive director of Our Neighbor.

In 2014, the emphasis of Our Neighbor programs has been on healthy lifestyles. The organization has provided caregivers, community support staff and residents with information about healthy lifestyle choices, including shopping for healthy ingredients and budgeting for and preparing healthy meals.

Exercise at Francis Meadows Aquatic Center is an important aspect of the emphasis on achieving a healthy lifestyle, according to Calvert.

"The immediate measure of effectiveness will be that our residents are healthier and stronger, requiring less assistance with daily living activities," says Calvert. "Long term, our goal is to ensure that our residents are happier and healthier, thus reducing the need for medical and psychiatric care."

Learning how to make good lifestyle choices will positively impact Our Neighbor residents and serve them into the future, according to Calvert.

"Feeling informed, healthy and strong will be strong motivators towards increased independence," she concludes.

For more, visit www.ourneighbor.org. ▲

operationroundup

Jackson EMC Foundation awards more than \$96,000 in grants

The Jackson EMC Foundation Board of Directors awarded a total of \$96,759 in grants during its October meeting, including \$88,000 to organizations and \$8,759 to individual members.

Organizational Grant Recipients:

\$15,000 to the **Gwinnett Environmental & Heritage Center Foundation**, a multi-use science, history, culture, heritage and environmental facility located on a 700-acre campus in Buford, to allow students from low-income families to attend interpretative, hands-on field studies and educational programs.

\$15,000 to the **Jackson County Certified Literate Community Program** to provide a Career and Learning Center, in partnership with the Jackson County Correctional Institution and the Jackson County Adult Education Center, that would reduce recidivism and allow inmates to successfully re-enter the community by offering literacy, basic adult and vocational education, as well as access to social services and state/national programs necessary to offenders upon their release.

\$15,000 to **Viewpoint Health**, a Gwinnett County agency providing support to clients with behavioral

health conditions, addictive diseases and developmental disabilities, to provide uninsured and underinsured clients with primary and specialty health care by assisting with copays for office visits, lab work and pharmacy screenings through Four Corners Primary Care Center.

\$11,000 to **Our Neighbor**, a Gainesville grassroots nonprofit organization dedicated to assisting young adults with special challenges, to provide developmentally disabled residents with life skills and exercise programs matched to their abilities, along with access to the Francis Meadows Aquatic Center.

\$10,000 to the **Athens YMCA** to provide 30 underprivileged children access to the after-school program, equipping them with opportunities to participate in activities such as football, soccer, basketball, mountain biking, cheerleading, modern dance, swimming, and arts and crafts.

\$7,500 to **Lekotek of Georgia**, a charitable organization providing

disabled children with accessible play, adaptive technology and toys as well as information and resources. Funding will be used to provide additional staff and services through its Duluth and Gainesville satellite offices to serve six families currently on their waiting list.

\$5,000 to **Adventure Bags**, an Auburn-based nonprofit that sources and stuffs comfort bags, which are distributed to displaced children through local DFCS offices, domestic violence shelters, fire departments, group homes and children's shelters to provide comfort and security during times of crisis.

\$5,000 to **Easter Seals of North Georgia** for its "Raising A Reader" program that distributes books to impoverished children in the Barrow, Jackson and Madison counties' Head Start/Early Head Start programs and provides parent training to engage children in reading at home to improve kindergarten readiness.

\$2,500 to the **Spirit of Joy Food Pantry** in Flowery Branch to purchase food for the more than 430 families they serve.

\$2,000 to the **Mountain Circuit CASA**, which serves abused and neglected children in Franklin, Madison and Oglethorpe counties, to help purchase computer technology that will be used to recruit, screen and train volunteer advocates.

Individual Grant Recipients:

\$3,500 to install a therapeutic tub and reclining bath lift for a **disabled woman** who suffers from a genetic musculoskeletal disorder.

\$2,890 to cover oral surgery and dentures for a **disabled woman**.

\$2,369 to make repairs to the automobile of a **disabled senior citizen** who needs transportation to medical appointments.

For more information about the Jackson EMC Foundation, or to apply for a grant, visit www.jacksonemc.com/jemcfoundation.

Statement of **Non-Discrimination**

Jackson EMC is the recipient of Federal financial assistance from the Rural Utilities Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and is subject to the following: the provisions of Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; the Civil Rights Act of 1991, as amended; Section 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1991, as amended; Section 42 of the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, as amended; 41 CFR Part 60-300, and other protected veterans; and the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Labor, OFCCP, which provide that no person in the United States on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, national origin, age, disability or Vietnam or disabled veteran status shall be excluded from participation in, admission, or access to, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under any of this organization's programs or activities. **This contractor and subcontractor shall abide by the requirements of CFR 60-300.5(a) and 60-741.5(a). These regulations prohibit discrimination against qualified individuals on the basis of their status as protected veterans or individuals with disabilities, and prohibit discrimination against all individuals based**

on their race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Moreover, these regulations require that covered prime contractors and subcontractors take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment individuals without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, protected veteran status, or disability.

The person responsible for coordinating this organization's nondiscrimination compliance efforts is William P. Ormsby, Vice President, Human Resources/Corporate Administration. If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov. Complaints must be filed within 180 days after the alleged discrimination. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible. ▲

smartconnections

JACKSON EMC RETURNS

\$6,000,000
IN MARGIN REFUNDS

Jackson EMC members will receive a check in the mail this month. Each of the approximately 207,000 members and former members will receive their share of a total of \$6 million in margin refunds in December.

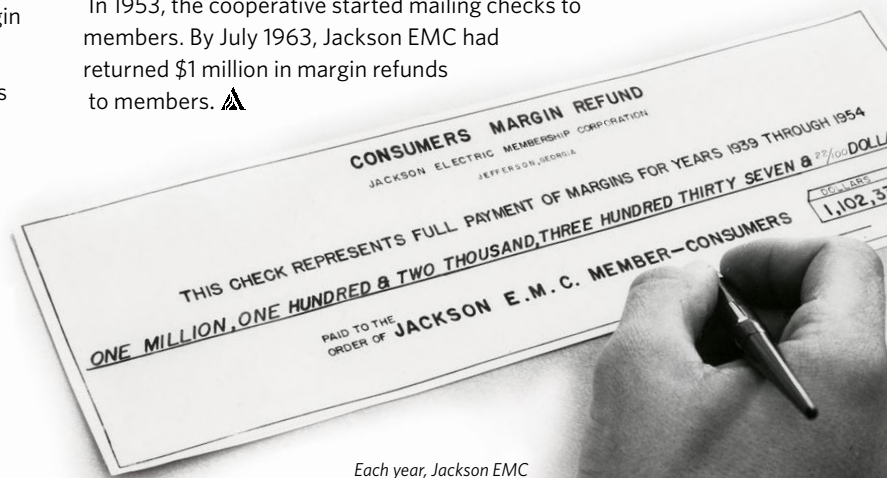
"Jackson EMC is in very sound financial condition, which allows your board to return money to you, our member-owners," says Board Chairman Otis Jones. "Because this is a not-for-profit, member-owned cooperative, a portion of the revenue left over after all the bills are paid - which we refer to as *margins* - can be returned to our members at the end of each year."

Margins are refunded for a combination of years so that both longtime and newer members, as well as former members, benefit from belonging to an electric cooperative. This year, margin refunds will go to those who received electric service from Jackson EMC in 1989 and 2013. The sum of each member's refund check is calculated according to the amount each member paid for electric service during those years.

After this December's refund, Jackson EMC will have returned nearly \$102 million in margin refunds to our member-owners since our cooperative was founded in 1938. This record of returning margins to members ranks among the highest of the 840 electric cooperatives in the nation.

Jackson EMC historically has enjoyed great success in returning margins to members. Its first margins were returned as "free" electric bills to members in December 1950 and July 1951.

In 1953, the cooperative started mailing checks to members. By July 1963, Jackson EMC had returned \$1 million in margin refunds to members. ▲



Each year, Jackson EMC refunds margins (surplus above operating expenses) to its members. By 1963, the co-op had returned more than \$1 million to members and had the highest margin refund record of any electric cooperative in the state.

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461 Swanson Drive
Lawrenceville, GA
(770) 963-6166

EMC Security
55 Satellite Blvd., NW
Suwanee, GA
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(706) 543-4009

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what's cookin'?

Cooperative **Cooking**

Each month *Jemco News* features recipes which represent the people and products of Jackson EMC. If you have a favorite recipe and would like to share it with other readers in the Jackson EMC area, send a copy, complete with name, address and daytime phone number to:

Cooperative Cooking
Jackson EMC
P.O. Box 38
Jefferson, GA 30549

Due to limited space, not all recipes received will be featured. Recipes printed in *Jemco News* are not independently tested; therefore, we must depend on the accuracy of those members who send recipes to us.

Holiday Buckeyes

Ingredients:

2 sticks butter	1 bag (12 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
1 container (18 oz.) crunchy peanut butter	1 tablespoon shortening
5/4 cups powdered sugar, sifted	

Instructions:

Melt butter in large bowl in microwave. Add peanut butter and mix until peanut butter melts. Stir in powdered sugar.

Roll the mixture into 1-inch balls. Poke a toothpick in each ball.

Cover cookie sheets with wax paper; spray with cooking spray. Place balls on cookie sheets. Place cookie sheets in freezer about 20 minutes, or until candies have hardened.

While candies are in the freezer, melt chocolate chips and shortening in double boiler. Remove buckeyes from freezer and dip each one in chocolate, leaving a circle of peanut butter where toothpick is inserted. Place dipped candies back on cookie sheets and place in refrigerator for 30 minutes to harden.

Makes about 48 buckeyes.