



JACKSON
ELECTRIC MEMBERSHIP CORPORATION™

JEMCOnews

A PUBLICATION FOR JACKSON EMC MEMBERS

CLEARING THE WAY

JACKSON EMC'S
VEGETATION MAINTENANCE PROGRAM
HELPS PROVIDE RELIABLE ELECTRICITY

JULY 2020 | IN THIS ISSUE

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SMART ADVICE ON BUYING A SMART THERMOSTAT
BE AWARE OF UTILITY SCAMS



HOME IMPROVEMENT

One of the TV shows I enjoyed watching years ago was “Home Improvement.” In the show, comedian Tim Allen’s character was always enjoying his family, cars—and of course—power tools. Every time I think of that show, I can still hear that grunt Allen’s character, Tim “The Tool Man” Taylor, made when exploring a new tool. If you’re familiar with the show, you’re probably thinking about that grunt right now too!

In the show, Tim was obsessed with building or modifying things around the home. He was always looking for ways to make household appliances or machines work harder or faster – leading to his catchphrase, “More power!”.

In reality, American households have been, on average, using less electricity to power their heating and air conditioning systems, appliances and electronics in their homes since the mid-1990s. Sorry, Tim!

You may be wondering how energy use per household has declined when it seems like we have more appliances, electronics and possibly even more tools than Tim would

have had in the 1990s. Well, we’ve improved our homes.

For starters, many new homes are made with better materials and insulation to improve a home’s energy efficiency. Building homes with more energy efficient windows, heating and cooling systems, and using tighter construction techniques to keep air flowing within homes means residents need less energy to heat and cool their homes. We partner with builders to build Right Choice™ homes that are energy efficient.

Next, newer equipment in our homes – like heating and cooling systems, and water heaters – along with appliances, electronics and lighting all use less energy than previous decades. For example, an ENERGY STAR®-certified LED lightbulb uses at least 75% less energy than traditional incandescent bulbs. If you’re looking to buy one of these items, consider buying an ENERGY STAR®-certified product to reduce your energy use. This issue of *JEMCO News* has advice on buying a smart thermostat – which can also help you save energy in your home.

Finally, we’re doing a better job with our habits to save energy. Steps like turning off the lights when you leave a room and running the dishwasher only with a full load of dishes are helping to reduce our energy use. Jackson EMC has always helped educate members about how to save energy, including tips you can find in *JEMCO News*, on our website and social media.

Tim the Tool Man wanted more power to improve his home. The truth is, new building materials and the items inside our homes that use electricity have become more efficient to help us save energy – which is something to grunt about!

Have a story you want to share about energy efficiency improvements in your home? Send me an email at chip@jacksonemc.com.

Chip Jakins, President/CEO

NEED TO KNOW: WAYS TO SAVE ENERGY WHILE WORKING FROM HOME



Working from home can often lead to increased energy use. When you’re spending more time working at home than in the office, Jackson EMC offers these easy, energy efficient steps that can decrease energy use and, in return, help you save money.



PRACTICE TEMPERATURE CONTROL

Keep your home’s thermostat set at 78 degrees in the summer and 68 degrees in the winter. Also, consider switching to a programmable thermostat. These thermostats can save as much as 10% per year in energy costs.



TURN OFF LIGHTS, APPLIANCES AND TOOLS WHEN NOT IN USE

As you use more energy throughout the day, cut back where you can. Remember to turn off lights and devices you aren’t currently using in order to reduce energy and save money in the long run.



UNPLUG CHARGERS WHEN NOT IN USE

Chargers left plugged-in to an outlet can be stealing unnecessary energy, even when they aren’t in use. Commit to unplugging computer and phone chargers when you’re not actively using them and be mindful as you cut down on standby power.



SWITCH TO ENERGY STAR® CERTIFIED OFFICE EQUIPMENT

Using ENERGY STAR® certified computers, laptops and printers can help lower daily energy use. These certified, energy efficient devices are perfect for cutting down on usage while working from home.

SMART ADVICE

ON BUYING A SMART THERMOSTAT

Heating and cooling costs account for around half of your energy bill, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. To reduce your energy use, and in turn, save money, consider making the switch to a programmable thermostat. With the right thermostat – and settings – you could save energy while staying comfortable in your home.

Smart thermostats are Wi-Fi enabled and may be controlled remotely through a tablet, smartphone or voice control. Some models use multiple sensors to monitor temperatures in various parts of the home. By doing so, a smart thermostat can help balance heating or cooling in your home. It can also track your temperature preferences to optimize a heating and cooling schedule.

Each smart thermostat has its own features to help you save energy, which may include:

CONTROLLING YOUR THERMOSTAT FROM ANYWHERE

Using a smartphone, you can control the temperature of your home while on the go.

GEOFENCING

This feature allows your smart thermostat to detect when you've left your house to set your HVAC system on a setting that will save energy, according to ENERGY STAR®.

When you're on the way home, the thermostat uses your phone's GPS to adjust the temperature again to ensure you arrive to a comfortable home.



REPORTS

Most smart thermostats offer an option to view reports about how often you use your HVAC system. The reports may be available on an app provided by the smart thermostat, such as Nest or ecobee, or may be emailed to you. The reports allow you to see how much energy you use to heat and cool your home and/or how often your HVAC system is operating.



If you're interested in buying a smart thermostat, be sure it's compatible with your heating and cooling system, and is ENERGY STAR® certified, which can help you save more energy.

LEARNING TEMPERATURE PREFERENCES

As you adjust the temperature up or down, the smart thermostat records it and learns how to schedule temperature settings based on your preferences.

JACKSON EMC RESIDENTIAL MEMBERS CAN SHOP THE JACKSON EMC MARKETPLACE FOR SMART THERMOSTATS, INCLUDING THOSE WITH REBATES.



JACKSONEMCMARKETPLACE.COM

CLEARING THE WAY



JACKSON EMC'S
VEGETATION MAINTENANCE PROGRAM
HELPS PROVIDE RELIABLE
ELECTRICITY

WHEN IT COMES TO
PROVIDING RELIABLE ELECTRIC
SERVICE YOU DEPEND ON,
TRIMMING TREES AND VEGETATION
AROUND POWER LINES CAN MAKE
A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE.

The number one cause of power outages is tree limbs coming in contact with power lines. Properly maintaining the area around power lines reduces the likelihood of a prolonged outage caused by trees. It's also important to keep trees around power lines trimmed for safety. Trees are excellent conductors of electricity. If a tree has grown into a power line, electricity can travel to the ground and create an electrocution hazard.

In an effort to continually provide safe and reliable electric service to members, Jackson EMC strives to keep electric lines clear of trees, brush and foliage through its vegetation maintenance program.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: HOW OFTEN DO YOU TRIM THE TREES ALONG THE COOPERATIVE'S POWER LINES?

A: Jackson EMC has more than 14,000 miles of energized lines across 10 counties. Of that, about 6,200 miles are overhead wires that require vegetation maintenance. We follow a six-year maintenance plan, so we reach every line on our system within six years; then, we start again. The six-year period starts by trimming around our power lines and equipment. Then, every other year, we use a non-toxic herbicide to maintain the area. Our crews work year-round to maintain trees and vegetation around our power lines and equipment.

Q: HOW WIDE IS THE AREA YOU TRIM ALONG A POWER LINE?

A: By law, Jackson EMC has access to the space below power lines and 15 feet on each side of power lines. This space, called the right-of-way, gives us a path to maintain or repair the cooperative's power lines to ensure reliable electric service for everyone. Our crews and contractors need this space to safely maneuver utility vehicles to install, repair and maintain electrical equipment.



Q: WHO PERFORMS VEGETATION MAINTENANCE?

A: Our tree maintenance contractors are certified arborists to ensure trees are properly trimmed to protect the health of the tree. Jackson EMC uses contractors with specialized expertise for its tree and vegetation maintenance. These crews are highly skilled in the field of arboriculture and use proven industry-standard pruning techniques, proper tools and safety practices.

Contractor crews are supervised by Jackson EMC personnel. When trees are being trimmed, Jackson EMC's supervisors are in the area and a notice that the contractor is working for Jackson EMC is posted on all contractor vehicles.

Q: WHO ARE JACKSON EMC'S CONTRACTORS FOR TREE AND VEGETATION MAINTENANCE?

A: Jackson EMC's contractors dedicated to tree and vegetation maintenance are Townsend Tree Services, Kendall Vegetation Services, Taylor Tree Services, Asplundh, McAllister Utilities and NaturChem. A Jackson EMC employee is responsible for overseeing contractors performing tree and vegetation maintenance.

Q: WHAT DO YOU DO WITH THE TREE LIMBS THAT ARE TRIMMED?

A: Tree limbs are chipped. Members interested in receiving mulch from the chipped limbs may call Jackson EMC at 1-800-462-3691 to request mulch.

Q: WHAT IF I WANT TO TRIM A TREE THAT'S CLOSE TO A POWER LINE?

A: Don't go near or touch a tree that's touching or very close to a power line. It's a safety hazard. If a tree is too close to a power line, call us at 1-800-462-3691 to request an inspection. If the tree is outside of Jackson EMC's tree maintenance guidelines, we'll create a safe environment for you to trim it.

Q: HOW DO I REPORT A TREE THAT APPEARS UNSAFE NEAR A POWER LINE?

A: If you see an immediate electrical hazard, stay clear and call 911. Always assume power lines are energized and dangerous. If a tree or branch poses a threat of falling on power lines or equipment, report it to Jackson EMC by calling 1-800-462-3691.

Q: HOW CAN I MAKE LANDSCAPING SAFER NEAR POWER LINES AND EQUIPMENT?

A: Before you begin any digging project, call 811 first to have underground utilities, such as power lines, properly marked. Avoid planting trees directly under power lines. Small trees, such as crabapple trees, should be planted at least 20 feet away from power lines. Medium-sized trees, like dogwoods, should be planted at least 40 feet away, and large trees, such as Leyland cypress, should be planted at least 60 feet from power lines. Keep shrubs and structures at least 10 feet away from a pad-mounted transformer, which could block our crews' access to equipment for repairs.

Q: HOW DO YOU NOTIFY MEMBERS ABOUT UPCOMING TREE AND VEGETATION WORK?

A: Affected members should receive a notice on their door, where possible, 1-2 days prior to planned maintenance taking place. There are cases when a tree must be trimmed or removed without prior notification, such as following damage from a storm.

Q: IF I HAVE A CONCERN ABOUT TREE AND VEGETATION MANAGEMENT WORK NEAR MY PROPERTY, WHO DO I CONTACT?

A: Call Jackson EMC at 1-800-462-3691. A supervisor will contact you about your concerns.



All of Jackson EMC's supervisors assigned to a contractor crew for tree and vegetation management are certified arborists – a designation showing their specialized knowledge and expertise in the care of trees.

Some of Jackson EMC's line crews – those who build and maintain the cooperative's electrical distribution system – are also certified arborists. Linemen and journeymen interested in becoming certified arborists complete classes covering biology, soil science, plant disorders and health, and more. After passing a test, they're certified by the Georgia Forestry Commission for three years.

THE PANTRY AT HAMILTON MILL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, resulting in unprecedented economic challenges for many families, Hamilton Mill United Methodist Church's food pantry adjusted how it distributes food to people in need.

For a decade, the Dacula-based food pantry has been providing a variety of fresh, frozen and canned foods during its weekly distributions. When people began to lose their income due to the pandemic, they turned to community resources, like Hamilton Mill UMC's food pantry, to provide food for their families.

"It's your neighbor," said Ryan Jones, director of The Pantry at Hamilton Mill UMC. "It's the people down the street who are facing difficulties economically."

Suddenly, the food pantry went from serving an average of 180 families a week to 400 families a week. As a result of the growing community needs in response to the pandemic, the Jackson EMC Foundation recently awarded several organizations, including The Pantry at Hamilton Mill UMC, with emergency grants. The food pantry received an emergency grant for \$2,500 to provide emergency food assistance in Barrow, Gwinnett and Hall counties.

"It was uplifting to have the Jackson EMC Foundation proactively reach out to us and ask how they could support us," Jones said.

The emergency grant will allow The Pantry at Hamilton Mill UMC to purchase more food for people in need, according to Jones. With the grant funds, the food pantry can buy enough food to serve 625 families for a week.

As the need for the food pantry has grown during the pandemic, the organization has also faced the challenge of having to support the weekly food distribution with fewer volunteers, Jones said. Many of the food pantry's long-time volunteers have been unable to help due to their own risk factors, such as underlying medical conditions, during the pandemic.

While practicing social distancing among volunteers, the food pantry launched a drive-thru model to distribute food at the beginning of the pandemic. Vehicles line up in the church's parking lot on Pine Road early each Saturday morning to receive food, according to Jones. Volunteers work in smaller groups to organize food The Pantry receives from its local community partners and distribute food on Saturdays. The Pantry is open every Saturday, from 8-11 a.m.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PANTRY AT HAMILTON MILL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, VISIT HMUMC.ORG/THEPANTRY

MEMBERS MAKE IT DELICIOUS



Berry Trifle



INGREDIENTS:

- 1 frozen rectangle pound cake
- 1 large container whipped topping
- 1 package vanilla pudding mix
- 2 cups milk or evaporated milk
- 1 package frozen sliced strawberries, thawed, and fresh strawberries for topping
- Lime juice to taste

DIRECTIONS:

Prepare pudding per directions on box, using milk or evaporated milk for taste preference. Mix whipped topping into pudding until smooth. Stir sliced strawberries with lime juice and set aside.

Cut pound cake into cubes or strips and loosely layer the bottom of your trifle dish. Dollop several spoonfuls of the pudding mixture on top of the cake. Layer several spoonfuls of strawberries on top of pudding. Repeat layering the pudding mixture and strawberries until gone, ending with pudding mixture on top. Decorate the top with slices of fresh strawberries.

“My uncle shared this recipe with me years ago. I carried it off to college, and, then, later as a dish to share.”

— ERIN WILLIAMS, LILBURN

SEND US YOUR BEST RECIPES: RECIPES@JACKSONEMC.COM OR MAIL TO:
COOPERATIVE COOKING | JACKSON EMC | PO BOX 38 | JEFFERSON, GA 30549
FIND MORE RECIPES AT WWW.JACKSONEMC.COM/RECIPES.

OPERATION ROUND UP®: YOUR DONATIONS AT WORK

The Jackson EMC Foundation board of directors awarded a total

\$139,150 IN GRANTS

during its May meeting, including \$37,650 in emergency grants to nonprofits responding to COVID-19, \$97,000 to organizations and \$4,500 to an individual.

ORGANIZATIONAL GRANT RECIPIENTS:

\$15,000 | **J.M. Tull-Gwinnett Family YMCA**, for its emergency childcare program for frontline employees affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and its hunger relief program for Gwinnett County children and senior citizens who have been affected by the pandemic.

\$15,000 | **Georgia Mountains YMCA**, in Gainesville, for its crisis childcare program for families of first responders, medical professionals and other essential employees affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

\$7,650 | **Geekspace Gwinnett**, a nonprofit makerspace, for supplies to make approved face shields and masks for first responders and healthcare workers in Gwinnett County hospitals.

\$7,500 | **Good News Clinics** in Gainesville, which provides free medical and dental care to the underserved and uninsured residents of Hall County, to provide clients of its Sam Poole Medical Clinic with laboratory tests that help physicians to determine their health care needs and provide appropriate care.

\$7,500 | **North Gwinnett Cooperative** for its Prescription Assistance Program, which covers the cost of non-narcotic/controlled substance prescriptions for senior citizens and families who qualify for assistance, to provide consistent access to medication when costs or co-pays are expensive.

\$7,500 | **NSPIRE Outreach Ministries**, serving at-risk and homeless men and women in Barrow, Gwinnett and Hall counties, for assistance with housing for its transitional program.

\$7,500 | **Project Adam**, an organization focused on the prevention and treatment of alcohol and drug dependency for men in Barrow, Banks, Clarke, Franklin, Gwinnett, Hall, Jackson, Madison and Oglethorpe counties, to provide community treatment services.

\$7,500 | **Salvation Army, Athens**, for its Pathway to Hope Program in Clarke, Madison and Oglethorpe counties to provide shelter and re-housing assistance and financial literacy through case management for families in crisis.

\$7,500 | **Salvation Army, Gainesville**, for its Pathway to Hope Program in Banks, Barrow, Hall and Jackson counties, to provide shelter and re-housing assistance and financial literacy through case management for families in crisis.

\$7,500 | **Salvation Army, Gwinnett**, for its Financial Emergency Services Program, which provides rent and mortgage assistance to Gwinnett County residents in need to prevent homelessness and stabilize families in crisis.

\$7,500 | **St. Vincent De Paul Society, Flowery Branch** to help fund direct aid for housing assistance, including rent, mortgage and temporary housing for Gwinnett, Hall and Jackson county families in crisis.

\$7,500 | **St. Vincent De Paul Society, Lawrenceville** for its Food4Kids program that prepares and packages nutritional food bags for children in low-income families during the summer.

\$7,500 | **St. Vincent De Paul Society, Gainesville** to help fund direct aid for housing assistance, including rent, mortgage and temporary housing for Hall County families in crisis.

\$5,000 | **Muscular Dystrophy Association**, to provide technology and program materials to help the organization transition to a virtual summer camp for children living with neuromuscular disease in all of Jackson EMC's service area.

\$5,000 | **Salvation Army, Toccoa**, for its Pathway to Hope Program in Franklin and Lumpkin counties, to provide shelter and re-housing assistance and financial literacy through case management for families in crisis.

\$5,000 | **Ser Familia**, a comprehensive social services program for Latino families in Buford, to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate mental health counseling services, including domestic violence counseling, sexual abuse and suicide counseling.

\$2,500 | **Sugar Hill United Methodist Church**, to purchase fresh and nutritious balanced food for its Summer Sack Lunch Program for school-age children in Gwinnett County.

INDIVIDUAL GRANT RECIPIENT:

\$4,500 to help purchase a new HVAC unit for a **senior citizen**.



FOR MORE INFORMATION, INCLUDING LATEST GRANT AWARDS AND HOW TO APPLY FOR A GRANT, VISIT JACKSONEMC.COM/FOUNDATION.

NEED TO KNOW: CALCULATING YOUR CAPITAL CREDITS

One of the benefits of being a member of a cooperative is receiving capital credits.

Jackson EMC is a not-for-profit electric cooperative owned by our members. Each year, amounts collected above the cost of providing electric service are credited to members' capital accounts based on their patronage (total billing less sales tax).

Your 2019 capital was 6.895% of your total patronage. See the example to calculate your capital credit.

This notification is for all rates, except QF, LPS, LGS or MBS (you can find your rate designation printed on your monthly bill). Members with those rates have received a separate notification.

Example for Calculation of 2019 Capital Credits

Amount of bills for 2019 (excluding sales tax)
x Allocation Patronage (6.895%) =
Your Dollar Allocation

FOR EXAMPLE

IF YOUR 2019 POWER BILLS TOTALED \$500
Amount of Bills for 2019 (excluding sales tax) x
Allocation Patronage = Your Dollar Allocation
\$500 x 6.895% = \$34.48

IF YOUR 2019 POWER BILLS TOTALED \$1,500
Amount of Bills for 2019 (excluding sales tax) x
Allocation Patronage = Your Dollar Allocation
\$1,500 X 6.895% = \$103.43

JACKSON EMC OFFICES

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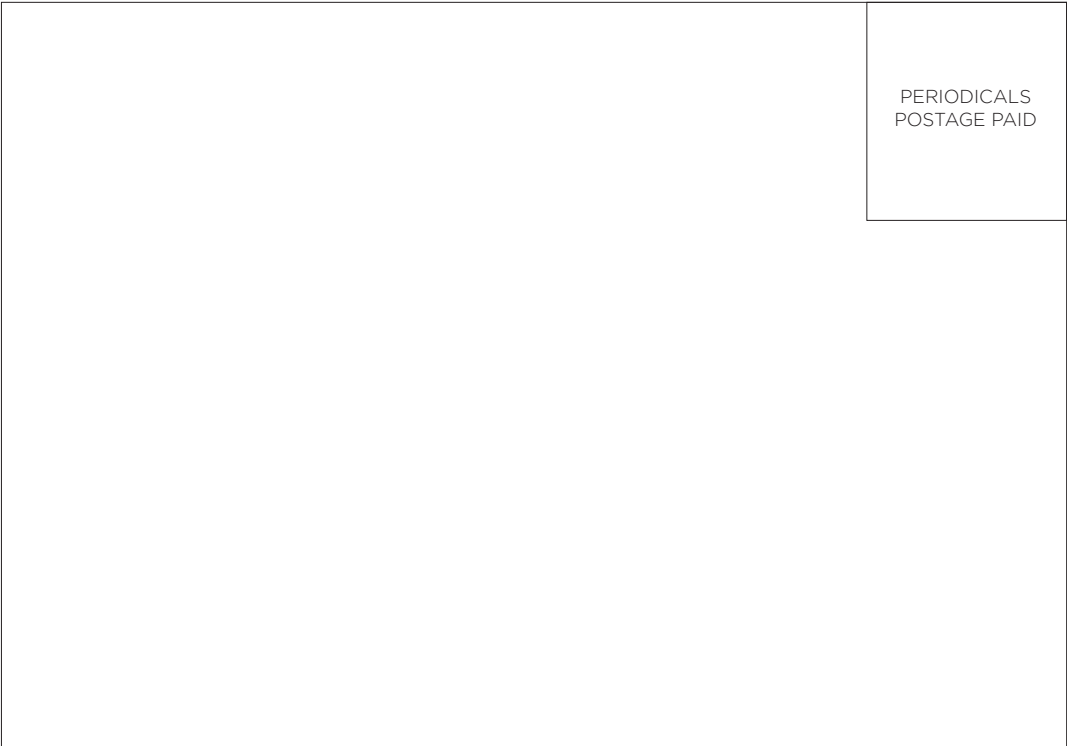
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EMC SECURITY

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BE AWARE OF UTILITY SCAMS

If you receive a call, email or text demanding an immediate payment of your electric bill, be careful - it could be a scam. Scammers often use a time of crisis, such as the recent response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as a way to scam consumers. The scammers may threaten to disconnect your power if you don't immediately make a payment, often by using a prepaid credit card.

**Jackson EMC will never demand an immediate payment over the phone or email.
If the request seems suspicious, there are steps you can take to protect yourself:**



ASK QUESTIONS

A legitimate representative from a utility company would know your account information, such as the amount of your last bill payment. If they don't have that information available, hang up the phone or don't respond to text or email messages.



TAKE YOUR TIME

Beware of calls, texts or emails asking you to act quickly - usually within a few hours. Don't be rushed. Tell them you will verify whether the request is legitimate with the utility.



PAY JACKSON EMC DIRECTLY

Be suspicious if a caller tells you to pay your bill with a specific payment option, like a prepaid debit card. Always pay your bills directly to Jackson EMC - whether online, by phone, via the MyJacksonEMC mobile app, automatic bank draft, mail or in person at a local office.



PROTECT YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION

Never provide or confirm personal information (Social Security number, date of birth) or financial information (bank account information or debit/credit card information) to anyone initiating contact with you, either by phone, in-person, or email, claiming to be a utility company representative.



LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW TO PROTECT YOUR INFORMATION AT JACKSONEMC.COM/SAFETY-AND-SECURITY.