

JEMCOnews

A PUBLICATION FOR JACKSON EMC MEMBERS



5 Ways to Save Energy When You're Away



JULY 2023 | IN THIS ISSUE

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THINKING ABOUT SOLAR? WE CAN HELP
STAY COOL THIS SUMMER BY BEING PROACTIVE



READY FOR NEXT SEASON

Can you believe that we're just a few weeks away from the start of college football? I'm a big fan and enjoy cheering on my favorite teams.

If you follow teams in the off season, you're probably hearing a lot about football teams preparing for the upcoming season. This time of year, it's common to hear about how teams are building their strength, developing a game plan for next season and working together as a team.

Just as sports teams are working hard to improve their game before the season starts, we're also working proactively to provide you with reliable electricity.

You may have noticed crews trimming trees and vegetation near power lines and equipment. Tree limbs coming in contact with power lines is the number one cause of power outages. By proactively and strategically trimming vegetation near our energized lines, we can reduce the number of outages. This work is especially important during the summer when winds from storms could cause trees to damage power lines.

Speaking of storms, it's not unusual for our area to experience severe weather during peak seasons. Our storm plan ensures we have the people, supplies and communication channels in place to restore power as quickly as conditions and safety procedures allow. Our line crews undergo extensive training throughout the year for safely restoring power, and our office personnel are trained to help with logistics support during major storms.

Our service area covers 10 counties in Northeast Georgia - that certainly means we're on the road a lot. In fact, our fleet vehicles travel the equivalent of 140 trips around the world each year! The bucket trucks, pickup trucks and other Jackson EMC vehicles you see in the community are a crucial part of serving homes and businesses. Our auto shop crews ensure those vehicles are prepared to run smoothly. They have a schedule for preventive maintenance on our fleet vehicles that exceeds manufacturers' recommendations.

We're also thinking ahead about serving our growing membership. In the past two

years, we've added over 10,000 meters to our system. This area of Georgia continues to experience some of the highest growth rates in the country. Our engineers play a crucial role in developing long-term plans for installing new power lines, upgrading substations, and managing our power supply. They anticipate the needs of our members and ensure we are prepared to serve them effectively.

Just as your cooperative is prepared to serve you, we give you insights on how to be proactive about saving energy. This month's issue of *JEMCO News* has plenty of tips on steps you can start to take today.

Have a story on how you took steps to lower your energy use? Share them with me at chip@jacksonemc.com.

CHIP JAKINS
President & CEO

Protect Yourself from Utility Scams

Imagine: You get a phone call from a utility provider claiming you've overpaid your bill. Instead of crediting your account, the company wants to give you a "refund" on your credit card. The caller asks you for your credit card number, which should be a red flag — because it's a scam.

Criminals often contact customers of utility providers, like Jackson EMC, through unsolicited calls or emails to get personal information that can be used against you. Imposter scams - when criminals pose as someone from a company you trust - are the most common type of scam reported to the Federal Trade Commission.

"We encourage all members to be aware of the ways criminals may try to trick you into providing personal information," said Brent Cochran, director of customer service at Jackson EMC. "In particular, people who are elderly or don't speak English as their first language are often targeted by criminals."

RED FLAGS Be aware of any potential red flags, including:

- **Unsolicited calls, emails or texts from someone claiming to represent a utility company.**
- **Offers to give you money or "refunds" directly on your credit or debit card, or bank account.**
- **Requests for your credit or debit card number, especially if you didn't initiate the communication.**



IF ANY REQUEST SEEMS SUSPICIOUS, CONTACT JACKSON EMC AT 1-800-462-3691. LEARN MORE AT [JACKSONEMC.COM/SAFETY-AND-SECURITY](https://www.jacksonemc.com/safety-and-security).

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Stay Cool

This Summer by Being Proactive

HVAC units get a workout in the summer. You can take steps to ensure your HVAC unit is ready to keep your home comfortable when it's warmer outside.

Regular maintenance checks can help your unit last longer, work more efficiently and keep your energy costs lower. Follow these steps to keep your HVAC unit working smoothly.

HAVE YOUR HVAC SYSTEM INSPECTED

Doing this every six months will help your unit run properly throughout the year, including the higher demand seasons, like summer. During an inspection, a technician will typically check the motor, belts and the fan blade, lubricate moving parts, and identify any potential issues.

CHECK THE DUCTWORK

When you have leaky ductwork, you're allowing conditioned air to escape. Seal any air leaks and tears in the ducts permanently with mastic or a rated metal duct tape. If you don't feel comfortable doing this, you can contact a professional.

CHANGE AIR FILTERS REGULARLY

One of the most important - and easiest - things you can do is to check your air filters every 1-2 months. If they're dirty, replace them right away. Clogged air filters restrict airflow and cause your system to work harder. Clean filters save 5-15% on your energy bill.

GIVE YOUR HVAC SOME SPACE

The more airflow your unit has, the more efficiently it can operate. Keep at least six feet of space above and two to three feet of space around your outdoor unit free from bushes, grass, a fence or trash bins. Inside, avoid blocking indoor supply and return vents with furniture.



TO FIND A QUALIFIED CONTRACTOR NEAR YOU, VISIT OUR PARTICIPATING CONTRACTOR NETWORK AT [JACKSONEMC.COM/CONTRACTORS](https://www.jacksonemc.com/contractors)



Ways to Save Energy When You're Away

Planning to be out of town for a few days this *summer?*

You may think that an empty home means you'll save money on your energy bill. The reality is there are devices at your home always using electricity, even if you're not there.

To save energy when you're away from home, follow a few simple steps:

ADJUST THE THERMOSTAT.

Setting your thermostat a few degrees higher than normal – but no more than 85 degrees – can help reduce the amount of energy your HVAC uses when you're away for a few days. By doing this, you'll prevent excessive heat and humidity buildup. When you're back home, we encourage you to keep your thermostat at 78 degrees in the summer for energy savings.



FOR MORE ENERGY-SAVING TIPS, VISIT [JACKSONEMC.COM/WAYSTOSAVE](https://www.jacksonemc.com/waystosave)

An illustration of a two-story house with a brown roof, white columns, and a garage. Four blue circular callouts are overlaid on the image, each containing a tip for saving energy. The background features stylized clouds and trees.

CLOSE BLINDS AND CURTAINS.

Windows allow light, which can warm up your home more in the summer. Closing blinds and curtains provides an extra layer of insulation from excessive heat and reduces strain on your HVAC when cooling your home.

SET A TIMER.

Use a timer on indoor and outdoor lights to turn them on a few hours each night. Using a timer to turn on and off lights — instead of leaving lights on — saves energy and provides security by creating the appearance that someone is home.

TURN DOWN THE WATER HEATER.

A water heater accounts for an average of 13% of a home's energy bill. A water heater will continue to keep water in the tank hot, whether you're home or not. By lowering your water heater a few degrees — but no lower than 120 degrees — you can save energy. Be sure to turn it back up when you return home.

PULL THE PLUG.

Unplug "energy vampires," which are electronic devices that use energy even when they're turned off. Unplug coffee makers, TVs, laptops, printers, chargers, etc., when not in use.

\$123,696 IN GRANTS RECENTLY AWARDED

The Jackson EMC Foundation board of directors awarded \$123,696 in grants to organizations during a recent meeting.

Organizational Grant Recipients:

\$15,000 to Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, in Suwanee, for its Opportunities Academy Program to educate rising 10th and 11th grade students in Gwinnett County Public Schools in medicine, health and behavioral sciences.

\$15,000 to University of North Georgia Foundation Inc., for its Steps to College Program, which provides summer high school courses for English learners throughout Jackson EMC’s service area to earn credit toward graduation.

\$15,000 to Books for Keeps, a nonprofit organization serving Clarke County for its Books as a Bridge Bookmobile summer program to provide guaranteed access to books during the summer to children who might otherwise have none.

\$15,000 to DIVAS Who Win Freedom Center Inc., for its Freedom Experience and Freedom Boutique Program to assist with rent to create a safe space for women in Barrow, Clarke, Franklin, Gwinnett, Hall, Jackson and Madison counties overcoming addictions, prostitution and sex trafficking.

\$15,000 to Adventure Bags Inc., for its Serving Children in Crisis, One Bag at a Time Program, to create and distribute comfort bags for displaced children through local DFCS offices, domestic violence shelters, fire departments, group homes and children’s shelters in Jackson EMC’s service area.

\$15,000 to The Lawrenceville Cooperative, an emergency food bank for residents of Lawrenceville and Dacula in Gwinnett County, for its Emergency Assistance Program to purchase food from local food banks and/or local grocery stores.

\$15,000 to St. Vincent De Paul Society of Jefferson, for its Emergency Financial Assistance to Families in Crisis Program that provides funds for rent and mortgage to families in crisis.

\$10,000 to MUST Ministries Inc., for its summer meal program, which provides breakfast and lunch to needy children in Gwinnett County five days per week for nine weeks.

\$5,000 to Freedom Path Counseling, to provide one-on-one and group counseling services for residents in Clarke, Barrow, Gwinnett, Hall and Madison counties.

\$3,000 to Horizons Atlanta, for staff support for its Summer Enrichment Program for students living in marginalized areas in Clarke County to build on their literacy, mathematics, swimming and other life skills.

\$696 to The Craddock Center Inc., to provide 115 participants with books for its Summer Send Off Program, an educational and cultural program for young children and families in Lumpkin County.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO APPLY FOR A GRANT, VISIT JACKSONEMC.COM/FOUNDATION

Community Impact
Sleep in Heavenly Peace

Sleep in Heavenly Peace, a national organization with more than 340 chapters, works to ensure children have a bed to sleep in each night. The nonprofit works with community members to build and supply beds for children ages 3-17 who have inadequate sleeping situations and, who may be sleeping on a couch or floor.

A recent \$10,000 grant from the Jackson EMC Foundation helped fund supplies for 40 fully-furnished twin beds for children in need in Hall County. The organization identifies needs through school counselors or social workers, and volunteers set up a portable assembly line to complete the process.

“This is designed to involve as many people as possible from the community,” said Ric Williams, Belmont chapter president for Hall County. **“It really is a great mix of helping people in need in the community and engaging people to volunteer in the community.”**

The Belmont chapter of Sleep in Heavenly Peace serves Hall County and was started by Williams in January 2022. With a background of teaching in low-income schools, his passion for helping kids in need drove him to open a chapter of Sleep in Heavenly Peace in his community.

“I have seen what poverty does to a child,” said Williams. “We are incredibly appreciative of the Jackson EMC Foundation and its donations.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE BELMONT CHAPTER OF SLEEP IN HEAVENLY PEACE, VISIT SHPBEDS.ORG/CHAPTER/GA-BELMONT.



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*We accept Visa, Mastercard, Discover, and debit cards with the Visa or Mastercard logo.

MEMBERS MAKE IT DELICIOUS

Mexican Street Corn Chicken



Recipe submitted by
GEORGIA HUDSON, Hull

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 lbs.** boneless, skinless chicken breast (4-6 thin chicken breasts)
- 2 cans** sweet corn, drained
- 1/4 cup** mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup** sour cream
- 1/2 Tbsp.** lime juice
- 1 1/2 tsp.** chili powder
- 1/2 tsp.** salt
- 1/2 tsp.** garlic powder
- 1/4 tsp.** cayenne pepper (optional)
- 1/4 cup** queso fresco, crumbled
- 1/4 cup** cilantro, chopped

DIRECTIONS:

In a large bowl, mix sweet corn, mayonnaise, sour cream, lime juice and chili powder. Place chicken breasts flat in a casserole dish and season with salt, garlic powder and cayenne pepper. Spread corn mixture evenly over top of chicken. Bake at 350 degrees, uncovered, for 30-40 minutes or until the chicken is cooked through at an internal temperature of 165 degrees. Remove from the oven and top with crumbled queso fresco and chopped cilantro.

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: [jacksonemc.com/recipes](https://www.jacksonemc.com/recipes).

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YOUR COMMUNITY.**

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Thinking About Solar? We Can Help.

Interested in solar energy, but don't know where to start?

Our website has tools to help you decide your next step with renewable energy, including:

Cooperative Solar

Receive solar energy without installing solar panels at your home when you participate in our Cooperative Solar program, which includes an online, real-time dashboard where you can monitor daily solar production.

Rooftop Solar Assessment Tool

Answer simple questions about your home and goals for using solar energy to get an estimate of your solar generation potential, utility costs and potential payback.

Green Power

Sign up online for our Green Power program and choose how much renewable energy you want as part of your monthly electricity use.

Before installing rooftop solar panels, be sure to contact Jackson EMC to evaluate your electricity needs and complete our interconnection agreement for safety and reliability. Call us at 1-800-462-3691.



LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE TOOLS AND PROGRAMS AT JACKSONEMC.COM/RENEWABLES.