



Smart Thermostats: Living up to the Hype

In a time when we are more conscious than ever about our energy usage, investing in a smart thermostat could be one of the most important energy-saving decisions you make. Knowing how to use your smart thermostat can save you energy and money!

How smart thermostats work

Self-learning thermostats, like Nest and Ecobee, actually pay attention to your habits at home. After just a few days of changing your thermostat consistently, it will automatically start to adjust its temperature settings based on the data collected. Most learning thermostats come with an app where you can easily view your data, change what the system has planned and adjust the temperature – all from your smartphone.

Your smart thermostat can recognize when you're home and when you're away and adjusts the temperature accordingly. These automatic adjustments will keep your home comfortable while also saving you energy and money by reducing your heating or cooling while you are away from home.

Programmable, or scheduling, thermostats also save money by lowering energy usage, but they aren't quite as customizable as a self-learning thermostat. These thermostats work without a smartphone and you can schedule the temperature settings on a weekly basis for things like when you wake up, leave home, return home and go to bed, on the device. If you tend to stick to a rigid weekly routine, this could be a good option for you.

Comparing costs

While self-learning thermostats are more expensive than programmable thermostats, proper use will lead to higher savings. No matter which thermostat you choose, it often pays for itself in the first year. A smart thermostat not only helps you go green but saves green as well.

IMPORTANT DATES

April 9
Thank a Lineman Day

April 22
Earth Day

April 27
80th Annual Meeting of the Members

Orange High School
500 Orange High School Road
Hillsborough, NC 27278

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Starting on January 1, 2019, we will no longer offer LED bulb rebates for residential members.



Steve Hamlin President and CEO

Controlling costs despite upward pressure

As your not-for-profit cooperative, we are always focused on keeping costs low while also providing you exceptional service. We want to work with you to help you control your energy costs. By working together, we can make changes that will also help us control your co-op's costs. When we save, you save. While we continuously work to drive down costs, there are upward pressures on the cost our cooperative incurs.

Duke Energy rate increase

Last year, Duke Energy submitted rate increase requests to the North Carolina Utilities Commission.

If approved, every Duke customer, including wholesale customers like Piedmont Electric, could see an increase in their bill.

Coal ash

A big component of Duke's request is for the closing of their coal ash ponds across the state. While Duke Energy shareholders are paying for the clean-up of the Dan River spill, Duke would like its customers to pay for its coal ash clean-up at other sites through their rate increase.

Piedmont Electric's portion of the coal ash costs are estimated to be about \$17 million, but are subject to the results of the Duke rate cases presently before the Utilities Commission.

This could result in a higher bill for us from Duke Energy.

Low natural gas prices

Piedmont Electric members have long enjoyed rates that are below the state and national average.

Falling natural gas prices have been good for member's monthly bills as natural gas is a large component of our generation fuel mix. However, falling natural gas prices affect solar generators in that there is a direct

correlation to the avoided cost rates we pay to our members who are solar producers.

With the abundance and low price of natural gas, the avoided cost reflects the price of natural gas which continues to decrease.

We decreased our avoided cost in May 2017 and we anticipate doing so again next month.

Federal tax changes

Last year, Congress passed one of the largest changes to our federal tax code in more than 30 years which included a reduction of the corporate federal income tax.

As a not-for-profit, your cooperative does not pay federal or state income tax. However, we still pay many other taxes including property, sales and payroll tax among others.

While we do not see a direct tax savings, we hope to see a savings through our contracts with Duke Energy. We expect a portion of their requested rate increase to be offset by the reduction in their federal income tax bill.

What it all means

Your electric cooperative will continue to do everything it can to keep costs low even in a volatile cost environment with upward pressures.

Fluctuations in our month-to-month costs often show up on your bill in

the wholesale power cost adjustment (WPCA) line as either a credit or a charge. We have been able to pass along a WPCA credit on your bill since November 2014 and we hope that will continue.

However, if costs continue to rise we may be forced to consider raising rates to keep up with the costs of doing business.

What you can do to help

We are your energy partner and as such we want to help you use your power efficiently. We offer free advice and a variety of programs to help you manage your energy use and offset some of the increases from these factors we've discussed.

Visit our website, check out our social media pages or call 800.222.3107 for more information on these great programs and more to come!

- Free energy audits
- Load Management
- Beat the Peak
- Time-of-Day Rates
- Electric vehicle rates
- Energy efficiency and renewable energy rebates and loans
- Energy calculators
- Usage alerts and notices
- HVAC technical advice

I hope to see you at our Annual Meeting of the Members on April 27 where our future plans will be discussed.

Save the Earth & Save Money!

Celebrating Earth Day - Sunday, April 22

Here at Piedmont Electric, we challenge ourselves on a daily basis to create and follow initiatives that will reduce our carbon footprint as your energy-efficient electric cooperative. As we celebrate Earth Day this year, we encourage you to consider making a few small changes in your daily lifestyle that benefit the Earth and your wallet.



Paperless billing

One of the quickest and easiest ways you can “go green” is by signing up for paperless billing. Piedmont Electric’s online bill payment portal, SmartHub, offers an eco-friendly and convenient

way to manage your account. Simply log in to SmartHub, click “My Profile”, select “Update My Printed Bill Settings” and turn off the “Printed Bill Status.” Other features of SmartHub include: checking your energy usage, automatic payment set-up and updating account information. To access your SmartHub account, visit pemc.smarthub.coop.



Electric vehicles

These past few years we have added electric hybrid vehicles to our fleet and we are encouraging co-op members to do the same. Members who own or lease a plug-in electric vehicle (EV) are

rewarded with a special time-of-day rate for charging their vehicles overnight.

To learn more about our EV rate schedule and to sign up for EV time-of-day rates, visit pemc.coop/electric-vehicle-rate.



Community solar

Piedmont Electric is proud to make solar energy possible for all our members through our Community Solar program. Piedmont Electric members have the option of leasing up

to 15 solar panels a month. You then receive a credit on your bill for any energy that the panel creates. Our two solar farms, located in Roxboro and Caswell, contain more than 1,800 panels and generate up to 3,000 kWhs of electricity each day. That’s enough energy to power 70 average American homes a day! Interested in joining the Piedmont Electric solar panel community? Contact Jay Berry, Piedmont Electric Energy Specialist, at 919.644.3449.



Even more programs

Piedmont Electric offers several other programs that can help save you money and increase cleaner energy use. These programs include: free energy audits, energy efficiency rebates and loans,

Load Management, Beat the Peak and Time-of-Day Rates. To sign up for any of these programs, call 800.222.3107 or fill out the form at pemc.coop/contact-us.



pemc.coop/save-energy-money

Go online to find a full list of ways to save energy on Earth Day and every day to come!

Lineman Appreciation Day

Piedmont Electric invites our members to take a moment on April 9 to thank a lineman for the work they do. If you've ever used electricity, then a lineman has had an impact on your life.

We encourage you to show your support for the men and women who put their lives on the line for our cooperative.

Learn more at pemc.coop/thankalineman or visit us on Facebook or Twitter using **#ThankALineman** to leave a kind word!

PIEDMONT ELECTRIC CONNECTION

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2500 NC Highway 86 South
PO Drawer 1179
Hillsborough, NC 27278

OFFICE HOURS

Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–5 p.m.
800.222.3107

Piedmont Electric is an
equal opportunity provider
and employer.

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IF YOUR POWER GOES OUT, CALL US AT 800.449.2667

Our automated outage reporting system uses your phone number to determine your service location.

That's why it's important to update the number connected to your account. If your number has changed, let us know by completing the form that comes with your monthly bill or by calling 800.222.3107.

Pay account and access account information by phone 24 hours a day by calling 877.999.3394. Voice instructions will direct you through the system.