



# CONNECTION

PIEDMONT ELECTRIC MEMBERSHIP CORPORATION MEMBER NEWSLETTER | FEBRUARY 2019



## Winter storm restoration with Lineman Donovan Williams

When freezing rain, strong winds and piles of snow blow through our territory, it can cause power outages. Winter weather commonly breaks off tree branches and causes trees to uproot and fall into the power lines, but thankfully we have our skilled and dedicated linemen ready to respond. To better understand the added difficulties of restoring power during and after a winter storm, we spoke with Lineman Donovan Williams.



**Donovan Williams** Lineman

When we arrive at an outage site, we patrol the lines in our trucks searching for the cause of the outage. We often need to survey the lines on foot when our vehicles can't drive into the woods because of snow and ice. Without a bucket truck available to help us fix the damage, we need to either climb the pole or use a chainsaw or the pole saw, a handsaw on an extendable pole, depending on the type of repairs.

Once you free up the lines, the freezing rain can cause another challenge before restoring power. The metal

reclosers/breakers that turn off the power flow when it senses trouble on the connected lines are located at the top of the pole and often become frozen in the off position. After fixing the issue on the lines, we work to break the ice and turn on the breaker by using an extendable pole tool that we call a long stick.

The cold, wet weather takes a toll on us when our hands turn numb and our clothes become soaked. Our rubber gloves are designed to protect us from electricity, not to keep us warm. We always keep a couple sets of dry clothes with us to change into throughout the day.

While we work as a team every day, this becomes especially important during storms. We know that we have each other's backs with everything from watching out for each other's safety to grabbing our tools from the truck to save someone a trip back through the snow.

Restoring power during winter storms isn't easy, but you're able to push

### IMPORTANT DATES

**March 31**

**Basketball camp application due**

**College scholarship application due**

**April 12**

**Annual meeting**

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### February right-of-way maintenance

#### DURHAM COUNTY

Saint Marys Road  
Mason Road  
Johnson Mill Road  
Windover Drive  
Ball Road



through those hard times because each time you repair a problem and restore power to another member, you get a good feeling knowing that you got a family's lights back on and that they're now warming up at home together.



## Give winter weather the *cold shoulder* with these energy-saving tips

With average winter temperatures in our area ranging from the low-30s to the mid-50s, this time of year is often associated with higher bills. However, that doesn't have to be the case! Making a few small changes in your energy use habits can make your bill more manageable.

Follow these simple energy efficiency tips to help melt away high bills this winter:

- 1.** Use cold water to wash your clothes whenever possible to save on water heating costs.
- 2.** Seal leaks around doors and windows with caulk or weather stripping to prevent cool air from coming in your home.
- 3.** Set ceiling fan blades to slowly rotate clockwise in winter to push warm air down into the room.
- 4.** Use a smart or programmable thermostat to set a temperature schedule so you're not heating your home when you're not there.
- 5.** Lower the temperature setting on your water heater to 120°F. This is warm enough to keep you comfortable without breaking the bank.
- 6.** Keep blinds and curtains open on sunny days to let the sun heat your home. But don't forget to close them once the sun sets!
- 7.** Bundle up with blankets while you are sleeping so you can lower the thermostat and still be comfortable. We recommend keeping your thermostat at 68°F in the winter.
- 8.** Wrap your water heater with an insulated blanket to prevent heat from escaping your tank.

Visit [pemc.coop/save-energy-money](http://pemc.coop/save-energy-money) for more information about how to control your bill this winter.

# Show your home some *LOVE*

with our Home Energy Advisor tool!

Have you ever wondered which parts of your home need the most love? At Piedmont Electric, our members have access to a free online tool that analyzes your home's size, insulation, HVAC system and more. After entering your home's details, you'll get a personalized list of ways to save both energy and money. You'll also receive

a detailed breakdown of your annual electric cost by month so you can make changes and start to show your wallet some love too. Visit [pemc.coop/analyze-my-bill](http://pemc.coop/analyze-my-bill) to get started!

**Here are a few tips you can use to show love to your home all year long:**



Change HVAC filters monthly

Set water heater temperature to 120°F

Insulate exposed hot water lines

Clean refrigerator coils annually

Set thermostats to 68°F in winter and 78°F in summer



# SmartHub, the smartest way to manage your bill

If you're not already using SmartHub, you're missing out!

Life is busy, let us make it a little easier with SmartHub, your one-stop shop for all your account needs. Here are some of the ways that SmartHub can help:

## Get alerts about your energy use

One of the best ways to reduce the amount of your bill is to modify how much energy you use. But how do you know if you're doing enough to make a difference? Sign up for daily alerts from SmartHub to receive an emailed snapshot of your usage sent to you every day.

You can also check your daily, weekly or monthly use at any time simply by logging into SmartHub. This allows you to see exactly how your energy-reducing efforts are affecting your bill.

Additionally, as your cooperative, we're always on the lookout for

unusual spikes in your energy use which could signal a problem at your home. We'll notify you of any irregularities we notice so you can take action before the issue results in a higher than average bill. We've got your back!

## Set up automatic payments

We know you're busy and that it can be hard to keep track of everything you need to do in a given month. If you're worried about accidentally missing a payment, let us help take one extra task off your plate by setting up automatic payments through your SmartHub account.

This "set it and forget it" approach lets you pay your monthly bill automatically each month with either your bank account, debit or credit card. Simply log in to SmartHub

and choose the Auto Pay Program under the Billing and Payments tab to set it up.

## Get help from the experts

As your trusted energy provider, we want it to be easier than ever for you to reach us when needed. Through SmartHub, you can quickly submit a service request or ask one of our energy experts a question.

We'll get back to you as quickly as possible so you can go about your day without waiting around for a response.

**+** Access SmartHub today from your tablet or smartphone with the app or on your computer at [pemc.smarthub.coop](http://pemc.smarthub.coop) to take advantage of these helpful features.

## STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

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To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027 found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](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 the requested information in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to the USDA by:

1. Mail:  
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director,  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW,  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
2. Fax: (202) 690-7442
3. Email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

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## PIEDMONT ELECTRIC CONNECTION

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### IF YOUR POWER GOES OUT, CALL US OR TEXT US AT 800.222.3107

Opt in for text alerts by texting "pemc" to 800.222.3107. Once you've opted in, report an outage by texting "#out" to 800.222.3107.

Our automated outage reporting system uses your phone number to determine your service location. Update the number connected to your account 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 800.222.3107. Voice instructions will direct you through the system.