



CONNECTION

PIEDMONT ELECTRIC MEMBERSHIP CORPORATION MEMBER NEWSLETTER | AUGUST 2020



You are our top priority



STEVE HAMLIN
President & CEO

Looking out for our members through challenging times

On May 30, Governor Roy Cooper issued Executive Order 142, which extended the prohibition of the disconnection of utilities for nonpayment. This extension is in effect through July 29, 2020.

We support Governor Cooper's plan to help members impacted by this crisis. Before the executive order was originally issued in March, Piedmont Electric made the decision to suspend disconnections for nonpayment, connect members who had been previously disconnected and to waive late fees for those with past due bills.

Piedmont Electric is helping members with past due bills including long-term payment arrangements, applying deposits toward past due balances and offering debt recovery for members using prepay billing.

While the Piedmont Electric bills incurred during the time of the executive order will have to be paid back, we want our members to know we are here to work with them. We will be contacting members with past due bills via email, mail and phone calls to assist however we can.

If you are ready to repay a past due balance or would like help applying for assistance through your local social services office, please give us a call at **800.222.3107**.

This month we're continuing our discussions on the COVID-19 pandemic and how it is impacting our members. Please keep in mind this article was sent to the publisher in July 2020 and this is an evolving situation. For the latest on our COVID-19 response, please visit pemc.coop/covid-19.

Helping those in need

As a cooperative with ties deeply embedded in our communities, we believe that we need to play a part in helping our members get back on their feet.

Piedmont Electric's Helping Hand Foundation has contributed more than \$50,000 to energy assistance for Piedmont Electric members. While this will help many families across our community, we ask all those who are able to contribute to our COVID-19 Relief Fund. Your donation will make a difference!

Ways to donate

- Donate online by visiting pemc.coop/donate
- Donate by check: PEHHF COVID-19 Relief Fund
Piedmont Electric Membership Corporation
PO Drawer 1179
Hillsborough, NC 27278
- Donate over the phone by calling **800.222.3107**

As the situation evolves, we'll continue to communicate with you about any updates to our assistance programs and policies so you have all the information you need.

IMPORTANT DATES

August 15

Bright Ideas early bird deadline

September 7

Bright Ideas final deadline

September 7

Labor Day

Piedmont Electric offices will be closed and employees will be on call.

- 18 **Cool energy-saving tips**
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August right-of-way maintenance

PERSON COUNTY

Johnnie Jones Road
Surl Mt. Tirzah Road
Oxford Road
Mill Creek Road
Tom Webb Road

TRANSMISSION

Eno to Carrboro
New Hope
Mebane Oaks




Our Bright Ideas program supports local educators' projects both in the classroom and online! Visit pemc.coop/brightideas to apply for a grant of up to \$2,000 for an innovative class project.

BEAT THE **HEAT** WITH THESE **COOL** ENERGY-**SAVING TIPS**

With the extra time at home this year, you've probably never been more aware of how much energy you use and how it impacts your bill. And, during these hot August days, it's natural to stay inside, watching a few extra hours of TV.

If you're anything like us, you get inspired by the before and after transformations on home renovation shows. Well, this month, instead of turning on HGTV, look to PEMC for some inspirational home update ideas!

NO-COST ENERGY-SAVING TIPS****

Close your shades

During the summer, sun streaming in through the windows raises your home's temperature, causing your AC to run longer to keep you cool. Each morning, close the shades in your home to keep the sun out and your home comfortable.

Rethink your laundry habits

Instead of doing several small loads of laundry each week, try to only run your washer and dryer when you have a full load. Since the appliances use about the same amount of energy no matter how full they are, it's best to fill them up for maximum efficiency.

Get creative with your meals

Using your oven in the summer warms up your home, causing your air conditioner to run longer to keep your house cool. A few days per week, skip the stove and cook out on the grill instead. Or, make nutritious options that don't require a stove – like smoothies and salads – to help you save energy and money.

Adjust the temperature in your refrigerator

Is your fridge too cold? Set the temperature in your fridge at 40°F to keep your food stored safely for the right price. Additionally, make sure your freezer is at 0°F for optimal performance.*

**According to the United States Food and Drug Administration.*

LOW-COST ENERGY-SAVING TIPS****

Use caulk to seal gaps around your home

Gaps around your windows and door frames can let warm air into your home and cool air outside. Buy some caulk from your local home improvement store to seal in the gaps and keep you cool for less.

Install a smart thermostat

A smart thermostat can learn your habits over time and adjust itself to help keep you comfortable and save energy. You can also use it to set a schedule so you're not paying to cool your home when you're out. To save even more, you can join our smart thermostat savings program with an Ecobee or Nest model and your home WiFi. Learn more at pemc.coop/thermostat.

Replace your showerheads

Change out the showerheads in your bathroom with energy-saving, low-flow alternatives. Not only will you save on water use, but you'll be using less hot water which helps you save on energy.

Install a water heater wrap

By insulating your water heater, you'll help reduce heat loss from the tank. If you can feel heat around the outside of your tank, that means it's losing heat and could benefit from a water heater insulation wrap.

For even more ways to save energy and money, visit pemc.coop/101-energy-saving-tips.

What are you paying to heat your water?

Do you know how much of your energy costs are due to your water heater? According to Energy.gov, on average, water heaters account for about 17 percent of a home's energy use. Of course, this percentage varies based on the number of people in your home and how much hot water you use.

That's where our water heater calculator comes in! Using this powerful and free tool, you can estimate the annual cost of your water heater energy use.

How does it work?

Simply visit pemc.coop/water-heater-calculator and enter the information specific to your home. Then you'll see a graph comparing the annual water heating cost for each type of fuel.

Knowledge is power when it comes to saving energy and money. By using our water heater calculator to determine how much you're spending, you can start to make adjustments to your hot water habits and see how it impacts your bill.

Start calculating today at
pemc.coop/water-heater-calculator.

Want to spend less on heating your water?

Join our water heater load management program and we'll help you save! Visit pemc.coop/load-management to sign up or learn more.

Right-of-way trimming reduces outages and blinks

On the first page of our newsletter, we list the roads in our service area that will be receiving right-of-way clearing that month. But what does this actually mean? Here's a quick overview of why right-of-way maintenance is important.



WHAT IS A RIGHT-OF-WAY?

A right-of-way is the area around our lines that Piedmont Electric has access to in order to maintain or repair the electric system. A right-of-way along a transmission line is 50 feet on both sides of the line, while a right-of-way along a distribution line is 15 feet on either side. This gives large utility vehicles the necessary space to maneuver when work on the lines is needed.

WHY DO YOU TRIM VEGETATION AROUND THE RIGHT-OF-WAY?

We trim back the tree limbs in select areas so that they do not interfere with power lines. We understand the importance of trees and vegetation in our communities and will only remove limbs as necessary.

By performing preventative trimming we remove limbs that could potentially fall on or otherwise contact our lines. This helps us provide more reliable service to our members and restore outages more quickly when they occur.

We operate on a three-year right-of-way cycle, meaning that we'll be in your area once every three years to trim tree limbs near our power lines.

WHY IS THIS MAINTENANCE IMPORTANT?

When trees or limbs fall on our power lines, particularly during severe weather, there's a greater chance of power outages within our communities. By performing regular right-of-way maintenance, we can reduce the risk of outages due to fallen trees.

When outages do occur, right-of-way preventative maintenance helps shorten the duration of the outages because power lines are easy to access and not overgrown with trees.



Mike Johnson
Right-of-Way Supervisor
at Piedmont Electric

Help us by planting properly!

Planting the right tree in the right place helps keep our right-of-way clear. Learn how with our Right-of-Way Supervisor Mike Johnson at pemc.coop/planting-guide.

PIEDMONT ELECTRIC CONNECTION

Published monthly for the members of Piedmont Electric Membership Corporation Piedmont Electric is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Report outages, make payments and access account information by phone 24-hours-a-day by calling 800.222.3107.

Voice instructions will direct you through the system.

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

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IF YOUR POWER GOES OUT, CALL OR TEXT 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 or "#status" for an update on your outage.

Our automated outage reporting system uses your phone number to determine your service location. Update the number connected to your account online through SmartHub, by completing the form on your monthly bill or by calling 800.222.3107.

Please note that it may take up to 24 hours for our system to recognize new cell phone numbers in the text outage alert program.