



# CONNECTION

PIEDMONT ELECTRIC MEMBERSHIP CORPORATION MEMBER NEWSLETTER | JANUARY 2021



## Better understanding our rates

Last month we discussed that Piedmont Electric was in the process of conducting a cost of service study. This study helps us determine if the rates we charge are sufficient to cover our costs and that our charges are properly aligned with what is causing these costs.

This month, we answer some of the most common questions your local co-op gets about rates.

### What makes up our rates?

The first item on your bill is labeled “Energy charge” and is made up of more than just how many kWh you used during the last billing period. It is a combination of both variable and fixed charges.

The variable component of this Energy charge is based on how many kWh you use. It is a variable cost because this number goes up and down as you use different amounts of electricity each month. The energy we purchase from Duke Energy is the largest cost that is recovered in this manner.

Since it is a variable cost to Piedmont, we recover it in a variable way. The amount on your bill is the amount of kWh you use multiplied by the electric rate. That is why your bill will typically be higher after months of high use caused by seasonal temperatures.

The “Power cost adjustment” line item on your bill is also based on your energy use. For the last few years the power cost adjustment has been a credit to you because we have been able to provide you with power at a lower cost than was expected despite the additional costs, like coal ash clean-up costs, that have been passed along to us by Duke Energy.

Other line items on a residential member bill include an “Energy rider,” an “Efficiency rider,” a “Storm cost recovery rider,” state taxes and, for those members who participate, a contribution to the Piedmont Electric Helping Hands Foundation. The Energy rider and Efficiency rider recover the costs to comply with the North Carolina Renewable Energy Portfolio

Standard, and the Storm cost recovery rider recovers the extra cost of restoring power after the prior year’s extreme storms.

### If I completely turn off my power, why do I still receive a bill?

This is the fixed component of the energy charge on your monthly bill and it helps cover the expenses that do not change based on how much electricity you use. For example, when we build a power line from the road to your home, we incur a cost regardless of how much energy you use each month. Other examples of fixed costs include transformers, meters, taxes, right-of-way maintenance and more. This fixed cost is designed to incentivize energy efficiency and is not an incentive to sell more energy.

### What expense has the biggest impact on Piedmont Electric’s rates?

Piedmont Electric’s biggest expense is the electricity we supply to our members that we purchase from Duke Energy. Your co-op is charged for the total amount of electricity we need and the amount we need at a given time which is also known as demand. This is because the cost to produce power varies minute by minute.

Your co-op is charged more when demand is high such as winter mornings or summer afternoons. Members who conserve or shift their energy use away from these times help reduce the cost of supplying power.

### IMPORTANT DATES

#### January 1

##### New Year’s Day

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

#### January 18

##### Martin Luther King Jr. Day

#### March 31

##### Basketball camp applications due

##### College scholarship applications due

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#### Request better internet service today!

Would you like to have better high-speed broadband service in your neighborhood? We’re working with RiverStreet Networks to make that vision a reality.

Show your interest and encourage your family and friends to do so as well by visiting

[Join.BuildPiedmont.com](#) or call us at **800.222.3107** if you do not have internet access and we will get your interest recorded.

# Ring in 2021 with savings

The ball has dropped, the confetti has been cleaned up and we're at the start of a brand new year. If you're looking for ways to save more money, your co-op is here to help!

We've created this handy checklist of our favorite energy-saving programs that help put money back in your wallet. Once you sign up for a program, check it off your list and you'll be one step closer to reaching your money-saving goals.

## To-Do: Sign up for Piedmont Electric money-saving programs

### Time-of-day rates

Receive half price power for the energy you use during off-peak hours with a time-of-day rate. With this rate, you simply shift when you use energy in order to save big. On average, members save more than \$20 per month with this program, plus you can try it risk-free for a year! Sign up at [pemc.coop/timeofday](https://pemc.coop/timeofday).

### Smart thermostat savings program

If you have a Nest thermostat, you can lower your monthly bill by allowing Piedmont Electric to make slight adjustments to your thermostat via in-home Wi-Fi on very hot summer afternoons. However, you always have the option to change your thermostat back at any time. In addition to bill credits from June through September and reduced energy use, you'll receive a \$50 rebate just for signing up for the program. Sign up at [pemc.coop/thermostat](https://pemc.coop/thermostat).

### Load management - air conditioning

One of our easiest ways to save is by joining our AC load management program. You'll receive a monthly bill credit between \$2.50 and \$7.50 from June through September, plus you'll save on energy costs! We'll set up your air conditioner compressor to automatically cycle on and off during very hot summer afternoons and your HVAC fan will continue to run to keep you comfortable. Sign up at [pemc.coop/load-management](https://pemc.coop/load-management).

### Load management - water heater

You'll receive a \$1 monthly bill credit and enjoy lower energy costs when you let us help you manage your water heater's energy use. With this program, Piedmont Electric will turn off your water heater during hot summer afternoons and cold winter mornings. You likely won't even notice when your water heater is turned off as it holds a reserve of hot water, but you will notice the savings! Sign up at [pemc.coop/load-management](https://pemc.coop/load-management).

## Stay warm this winter and save while you do it

Using a space heater can help keep you cozy and warm during the winter. But, how much does it really cost to use it? Visit [pemc.coop/tools](https://pemc.coop/tools) to use our free space heater calculator today. Remember to keep space heaters away from flammable objects and always turn them off when you leave the room. Save even more by using your ceiling fans in a slow, clockwise motion to bring heated air down from the ceiling. Remember to always turn off your ceiling fans when leaving the room.

## Work *smarter*, not *harder* this year

We know you're busy. That's why we do everything we can to help take things like energy management off your plate.

By using these tools to your advantage, you can spend your time focusing on the more important things in life, while having peace of mind that your energy use – and your bill – are under control.



### SmartHub

SmartHub is a free one-stop-shop energy tool available to all of our members.

When you log in to SmartHub you can see a breakdown of your daily, weekly and monthly energy use to see exactly how much you're using. That means you will be able to quickly see the impact of your energy-saving efforts.

You can also sign up for daily usage alerts which will send you a daily email detailing your energy use. Plus, we'll notify you of any unusual spikes in your energy use, which could signal a problem in your home, allowing you to take action before it leads to a higher bill. Log in to SmartHub at **[pemc.smarthub.coop](http://pemc.smarthub.coop)** or on the mobile app. To install the app, open the app store on your device and search for the free "SmartHub" app.

### Automatic payments

If you don't want to have to think about your electric bill, set up the automatic payment option in SmartHub. This allows you to pay your bill automatically each month, either by credit card, debit card or bank account.

To set this up, visit the Billing and Payments tab in SmartHub and choose the Auto Pay Program option.

### Budget billing

Take your automatic payment one step further and make it the same thing every month when you sign up for budget billing.

With budget billing you pay the same amount every month without the highs and lows that come with the changing weather.

Learn about our other convenient tools for managing your bill at **[pemc.coop/payment-options](http://pemc.coop/payment-options)**.

### Prepay

Would you find it easier to pay your bill on your schedule? With our prepay option, you can! When you sign up for this program, you can decide how much to pay and how often to pay, as long as you keep a credit in your account.

What's even better is that no deposit is required and there are no late fees. Sign up today at **[pemc.coop/prepay](http://pemc.coop/prepay)**.

# Do you know how to handle a winter storm?

Are you prepared for the coldest months of the year? Test your winter storm knowledge with this quiz to help make sure you're ready.

## 1. You should use the emergency heat option on your thermostat if you want to heat up your home quickly.

- a. True
- b. False

## 2. Which of the following methods can you use to report an outage to Piedmont Electric?

- a. Call 800.222.3107
- b. Log in to SmartHub and select the "Report an Outage" option.
- c. Text #out to 800.222.3107 if you are enrolled in the text outage alert program.
- d. All of the above

## 3. If you see a downed power line, you should stay away from it and call 911. All downed power lines should be treated as energized.

- a. True
- b. False

## 4. In what order do linemen prioritize restoring power to ensure power comes back on for the most members in the shortest amount of time?

- a. After communicating with our dispatch center, they start at affected substations before moving on to distribution lines.
- b. After communicating with our dispatch center, they start at distribution lines before moving on to affected substations.
- c. There is no preferred method of restoration.

## 5. Only use a generator outdoors and keep it away from windows.

- a. True
- b. False

## 6. Where can you get information on outages from Piedmont Electric?


- a. Our online outage map
- b. Our social media profiles
- c. Our text outage alerts program
- d. Our website
- e. All of the above

**Answers:** 1. b. False. This should only be used in an emergency, as it is very expensive to run. 2. d. All of the above. 3. a. True. 4. a. True. 5. a. True, you should only operate a generator outdoors, away from your home. 6. e. All of the above

**+ Don't forget to prepare an emergency kit!**  
Put together the following supplies so you're prepared in the case of a winter storm:

**First aid kit • Blankets • Matches • Batteries • Battery-powered radio • Prescription medication  
Water • Non-perishable food • Personal hygiene items • Non-electric can opener**

Don't forget to restock supplies if you use them. A little preparation goes a long way!



## PIEDMONT ELECTRIC CONNECTION

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

**Hillsborough and Roxboro Office Hours:**  
Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

**Caswell Office Hours:**  
Wednesday 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.

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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.