



# CONNECTION

PIEDMONT ELECTRIC MEMBERSHIP CORPORATION MEMBER NEWSLETTER | FEBRUARY 2021



## We LOVE our community

As a local cooperative, our members and employees are a part of our community. That's why giving back is so important to us.

We can't thank you enough for your donations to our Helping Hand Foundation which makes it possible to continue supporting our students, local non-profits and members in need. Here are a few ways that you've helped us spread the love to our neighbors recently.

If you'd like to help us in our continued efforts to support our community, you can round your bill up to the nearest dollar amount, schedule a monthly donation, make a one-time donation or donate your future capital credits. Learn more by visiting [pemc.coop/donate](http://pemc.coop/donate). We couldn't do it without you!

### COVID-19 relief

During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Helping Hand Foundation helped support individuals in need of bill assistance. So many of you that had a few extra dollars to spare stepped up in a time when our neighbors needed it most and you truly made a difference in their lives. As of December, we've been able to offer more than \$70,000 in energy assistance to members in need thanks to your help.

### Bright Ideas

The unique circumstances of the 2020-2021 school year meant that our teachers needed more support than ever before. Last October, we proudly awarded more than \$50,000 to teachers through Bright Ideas grants, helping to support their innovative (and sometimes virtual!) class projects.

Since the inception of our Bright Ideas program, we've given \$600,000 in grants to local teachers.

### Food drive

During the holiday season, we know that times can be tough. However, no one should have to worry about putting food on the table.

In December, we donated \$4,000 to local schools we serve to help those in need.

### College scholarships

We understand that high school seniors face an important decision about starting the next chapter of their lives. Our college scholarship program offers seven high school seniors a chance to continue their education with \$2,000 scholarships.

We also support our community by awarding two, \$1,500 scholarships at each of the three local community colleges to students who are Piedmont Electric members. These 13 scholarships help empower members throughout our community.

If you have a high school senior, they can apply for a scholarship at [pemc.coop/scholarships](http://pemc.coop/scholarships) until the March 31 deadline. Students interested in our local community college scholarships can apply through their college's scholarship application.

### IMPORTANT DATES

**February 14**  
Valentine's Day

**March 31**  
Basketball camp applications due

College scholarship applications due

- 22 **What's in a bill?**
- 24 **Statement of non-discrimination**



### An Invitation for Trans4mation

Helping Hand Foundation grant recipient

This local organization offers life skills to students to help them deal with everyday life.

*"It has been our honor to receive the generous donation from the Helping Hand Foundation last year. As you can imagine, we have used it to its fullest potential and are so grateful to have been able to represent Piedmont Electric throughout the year. With the challenges of COVID-19 we have remained vigilant in making sure to do the most good in our communities. We could not have done all of these wonderful things and touched all of these precious lives without you."*

**Cozetta Caldwell, Executive Director**  
An Invitation for Trans4mation

# What's in a bill?

When you receive your bill from Piedmont Electric, the basic understanding is that the more energy you use, the higher your bill.

But, it's a little more complex than that. There are a number of different factors that play a part in the total amount you owe each month. We've broken down the main factors that cause your electric bill to change, plus tips to help you better manage your energy use.

## Weather

One of the biggest factors that impacts your bill is the one that's hardest to control: weather. The more extreme the weather is outside, the more your home's equipment has to work inside to keep your home comfortable. That's why it's more common for your bill to be higher in the summer and winter months.

Projects like adding insulation, caulking windows and cutting back on heating or cooling can help. Planning a big home improvement project? If so give us a call so we can let you know how the changes will impact your bill. Some big projects may require upgrades to your home's electric service. Be sure to check out our rebates and loans to help with projects at [pemc.coop/rebates-loans](http://pemc.coop/rebates-loans).

## Changes in energy habits

You may think that you use energy the way that you always have, and so, your bill should be the same as it's always been. However, sometimes energy habits change slowly over time without you even realizing it.

If you are spending more time in your home than you used to or you've purchased a few new electronics or appliances, all of that adds up to more energy use. Even just spending five extra minutes in the shower each day can lead to a higher bill at the end of the month.

Fortunately, once you realize this, you can make small, energy-efficient changes that can help lower your bill.

Visit [pemc.coop/101-energy-saving-tips](http://pemc.coop/101-energy-saving-tips) for ideas on how to get started.

## Appliances

How old are the appliances in your home? The older they are, the more energy it likely costs to operate them. While it's not always possible to replace your appliances with new, energy-efficient alternatives, you can try to be more mindful of how you use them.

For appliances that only need to be plugged in when you're using them, like a coffee maker, try to remember to unplug them when you're finished so you're not paying for excess energy as appliances still use electricity even when they are turned off. To see how much it costs to operate the appliances in your home, use our appliance calculator at [pemc.coop/appliance-calculator](http://pemc.coop/appliance-calculator).

## Piedmont Electric helps you save

As a utility, we work every day to bring you value and as your local electric cooperative, we bring you an even greater value. Learn more about the programs we've designed to help you save at [pemc.coop](http://pemc.coop).

### Factors that affect your energy bill

**Weather.....**The more extreme the weather is outside, the more your home's equipment has to work to keep you comfortable.

**Changes in energy habits.....**Spending more time in your home leads to more energy use.

**Appliances.....**The older your appliances are, the more energy it takes to operate them.

**Features of your home.....**An older home with less efficient equipment could lead to a higher energy bill than a newer, more efficient home.

**Heating and cooling system.....**If your home's heating and cooling system is old, it might take more energy to keep your home comfortable.

**Water heater.....**By installing a timer on your water heater, you can save energy by heating water only when you need it.

## Features of your home

You might expect that two houses with the same square footage and the same number of people living in it will have a similar bill. While their energy-habits might be similar, it also depends on the houses themselves.

For example, if your home has good insulation, your bill will likely be less. Or, if you have an older home with old heating and cooling equipment and poor insulation, your energy bill could be higher than that of a bigger but more efficient home.

Want to learn more about how the specifics of your home impacts your bill? Check out our free home analysis tool at [pemc.coop/analyze-my-bill](https://pemc.coop/analyze-my-bill).

### Save money

For affordable, reliable power, we strive to go beyond and bring you our programs and services to help you save energy money.

When it's outside, the more your home is comfortable.

More time in your home adds up.

The more energy it likely costs.

With old heating and cooling equipment, your bill is likely to be higher than a bigger but more efficient home.

If your unit is more than 10 years old, it might not be as comfortable.

By upgrading your water heater, you can heat water only when you need it.



## Heating and cooling system

Just like any other appliance in your home, your heating and cooling system becomes less efficient over time. If your unit is more than 10 years old, it might take more energy for the same thermostat setting you've used in the past.

However, there are a few things you can do to help your system last longer. Changing your air filter monthly is a great place to start. You can also contact one of our licensed HVAC technicians for free advice about your system. Learn more by visiting [pemc.coop/hvac-technical-advice](https://pemc.coop/hvac-technical-advice).



## Water heater

Heated water is a sneaky culprit of higher bills. Every time you take a shower, wash your hands, run the dishwasher, or run the washer on the hot cycle, you're paying to heat the water you use. By installing a timer on your water heater, you can heat water only when you need it.

You can also consider joining our water heater load management program, which helps you spend less on heating your water and pays you \$1 per month for your participation. With this program, we will do all the work while you save money!

Sign up at [pemc.coop/load-management](https://pemc.coop/load-management).

Regardless of what type of home you have or how much energy you use, your local co-op is here to meet your energy needs. If you have questions about your energy use or want to know more about how you can save, send us a message at [info@pemc.coop](mailto:info@pemc.coop) or call 800.222.3107 and our team can help answer your questions.

# Have you heard the news?

We've partnered with RiverStreet Networks to expand high-speed internet into our unserved and underserved communities. The need for reliable, affordable internet is more important than ever and our broadband pilot program brings us one step closer to making that a reality for our members.

More interest is needed to ensure a broadband program would be sustainable, so don't forget to share the news with your neighbors. Learn how to share your interest, read progress reports and get your questions answered at [pemc.coop/riverstreet-networks](http://pemc.coop/riverstreet-networks).



## STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

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)

Piedmont Electric Membership Corporation is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## 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.

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

**Stephen B. Hamlin**  
President and CEO

### DIRECTORS

**Bill R. Barber**, Chairman  
**Randy Kinley**, Vice Chairman  
**Sam T. Woods**, Secretary  
**Richal Vanhook**, Treasurer  
**Steven P. Bailey**, **Stephen C. Long**, **Andrew M. Oakley**,  
**David Poythress**, **Elizabeth Townsend** & **Cyrus Vernon**

### 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.