



CONNECTION

PIEDMONT ELECTRIC MEMBERSHIP CORPORATION MEMBER NEWSLETTER | JUNE 2021



Kick back, relax and save while you're on vacation!

While you're out having fun in the sun on vacation, you can save money on your energy bill back at home. All it takes is a little planning beforehand. Before you pack for your next trip, spend a few minutes making adjustments around your home to make sure you're not using excess energy while you're out of the house.

Adjust your thermostat

There's no sense in cooling your house while you're out, so make sure you adjust your thermostat before you leave. You can set it as high as 85°F while you're out to save on cooling costs as long as you don't have pets staying at home. If you have a smart thermostat, don't forget to turn it back down to 78°F shortly before you get home so you come back to a comfortable temperature.

Also, if you have a smart thermostat, make sure you check out the next page to learn about our smart thermostat savings program!

Change the temperature on your water heater

Before you head out of town, adjust the temperature on your water heater so you're not paying to keep a reserve of hot water when you're out. Just be sure to set a reminder to change it back once you get home.

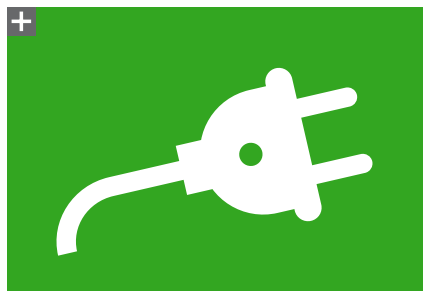
If you're interested in saving energy and money with your water heater year-round, turn the page to learn about our load management program.

Close curtains and blinds

Keep your house cooler while you're gone by closing the blinds and curtains to keep out radiant heat. As a bonus, it may help keep your home safe while you're gone by preventing any passerby from realizing you're out of town.

Unplug what you can

Did you know that appliances use energy when they are plugged in, even when you're not using them? That means that plugged in TVs, gaming consoles, coffee makers and other electronics are all contributing to your energy bill when you're on vacation. This energy use is called phantom energy. Unplug anything that's non-essential while you're gone to save energy.



Check to see sneaky culprits of energy use

Don't know which appliances use the most phantom energy? Try out our free calculator to see how much it costs to keep common household appliances plugged in while not in use at pemc.coop/phantom-load-calculator.

IMPORTANT DATES

June 20-26

National Lightning Safety Awareness Week

June 20

Father's Day

July 4

Independence Day

Piedmont Electric offices will be closed on July 5 and employees will be on call.

22 **More is less**

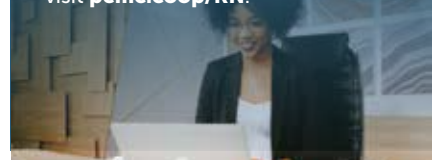
23 **RiverStreet Networks Update**

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Important announcement about our partner program with RiverStreet Networks

There are exciting new updates available about our broadband pilot program with RiverStreet Networks! Turn to page 23 to learn more about the latest updates in our efforts to help bring reliable, affordable internet services to areas within our community.

To learn more about RiverStreet Networks and how to show your interest in better internet, visit pemc.coop/RN.



More is less...

Yes, you read that right! As a Piedmont Electric member, the more programs you sign up for, the less your bill can be. The "bundle and save" concept isn't just for insurance; it's for your energy bill too! This is especially true during warm weather months as the heat affects your cooling costs.

Here are a few programs and tools that can help you keep your bill lower during the summer.

Time-of-day rate

How would you like to pay a lower rate for the energy you use? When you join our time-of-day rate, you get half-priced power for the energy you use during off-peak hours. Weekends, most holidays and 19-20 hours of every weekday are considered off-peak which means there are plenty of opportunities to save money. Learn how to sign up at pemc.coop/timeofday.

TIME-OF-DAY

Smart thermostat savings program

If you own a Nest thermostat, you can receive a \$50 rebate by joining our smart thermostat saving program. Plus, you'll save money during the summer by letting Piedmont Electric make slight adjustments to your thermostat through your in-home WiFi on very hot summer days. Claim your rebate and sign up at pemc.coop/thermostat.



Load management

Sometimes it's easier to manage your energy use when you don't have to think about it. Our load management program does the work for you! When you sign up, you can choose to get a load control switch on your air conditioner or water heater (or both!). These will automatically cycle on and off to help you save energy and money. Plus, you'll get credits on your bill and an initial \$25 credit just for participating. Sign up at pemc.coop/load-management.

LOAD MANAGEMENT

Beat the Peak

Did you know that part of our power supply cost depends on the amount of energy our co-op uses collectively during peak times? When we work together to lower use during peak times, we all save money. By joining Beat the Peak, you'll get text or email reminders about expected peak times so you can plan to reduce your energy. Learn more at pemc.coop/btp.

BEAT THE PEAK

SmartHub

If you're not paying much attention to your energy habits throughout the summer, you could end up surprised with your electric bill. Using our SmartHub app, you can easily monitor your energy use and make adjustments. You can also set up alerts and reports so you know when you're using more energy than usual. Download the SmartHub app for your phone or log in at pemc.smarthub.coop.



For more information, call us at **800.222.3107**.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT**Broadband available in Person County**

Our broadband pilot program with RiverStreet Networks continues to make progress.

Person County

A wireless internet expansion project is under way in Person County as the result of RiverStreet Networks acquiring NC Lightleap in 2020. NC Lightleap was selected by Person County in their earlier efforts to develop a network solution with the buildout of communication towers.

RiverStreet Networks will offer service in large portions of Person County with overlap in parts of Caswell, Durham, Granville and Orange counties in North Carolina and Halifax County in Virginia.

The green areas on the map to the right show the areas potentially available for service.

In an effort to express your interest and get on the list, let your voice be heard by visiting [Join.BuildPiedmont.com](https://www.joinbuildpiedmont.com) today! RiverStreet Networks representatives will follow up with you when the service is available in your area.

Caswell County

We are pleased to announce that funding coupled with interest from members in Caswell County has resulted in the future buildout of a wireless network to 2,918 households and businesses in Caswell County. This is made possible by funding awarded to RiverStreet Networks from the NC GREAT Grant Program in the amount of \$1.5 million. RiverStreet Networks will provide the match for this project of \$1.1 million. Stay tuned for further updates on the progress in Caswell County in future Carolina Country magazines.

While these projects will take time to complete, Piedmont Electric and RiverStreet are committed to bringing a better internet solution to those who need and want it.



Map of areas in Person and surrounding counties potentially available for service.

Visit our website at [Join.BuildPiedmont.com](https://www.joinbuildpiedmont.com) to view pricing and available discounts. For more information, please call RiverStreet Networks at **844.238.0131**.

Preparation is powerful

Hurricane season officially starts on June 1. While we don't usually get the worst of the season here in North Carolina until later in the year, we do get our fair share of summer thunderstorms now. Follow these preparation tips to make sure you're ready the next time a storm is in the forecast.

Create a go-to emergency kit

Help keep your family safe by creating an emergency kit. Make sure you keep your kit in a safe, easy-to-access place and don't forget to replace supplies once you use them so your kit is always ready.

We recommend filling your kit with:

- Basic first aid items like bandages and medication
- Flashlights and extra batteries
- Drinking water (a supply of 1 gallon per person, per day for at least 3 days)
- Shelf-stable foods like protein bars and canned soups
- Hand-crank radio
- Whistle that can be used to signal for help
- Manual can opener
- Hand sanitizer
- Power banks for cell phones
- Battery-operated fan

Opt in to outage alerts

If you lose power during a storm, make sure you get the latest updates from your co-op. Sign up for outage notifications now so you're prepared later. You can opt in to text alerts by texting **pemc** to **800.222.3107**.

Then, if you're experiencing an outage, you can text **#status** to get the latest information available. You can also report an outage by texting **#out** to **800.222.3107**.

In order to participate in this program, we need your cell phone number on file. Call us at **800.222.3107** or visit SmartHub at **pemc.smarthub.coop** to update or verify your contact information.

Sign up for Strike Guard to protect your electronics

Summer storms often lead to power surges which can damage your valuable electronics. When you sign up for our Strike Guard program, you can purchase or lease surge protectors that offer two-level protection against surges. Learn how to sign up at **pemc.coop/strikeguard**.

As your cooperative, you can have peace of mind that we'll always be ready to respond when bad weather strikes! Make sure to follow along on our website and social media accounts for the latest updates about storms and outages.

Annual meeting recap

On Friday, April 16, we held our virtual annual meeting from our Hillsborough office. We discussed the 2020 Annual Report, the election results for our board of directors and Piedmont Electric's response to COVID-19.

A total of 1,133 members voted in the election of our board of directors with 270 members voting by paper ballot and 863 members voting by online ballot. The following members were elected to the Piedmont Electric Board of Directors: Cy Vernon (District 3), Bill Barber (District 7) and V. Kay Scurlock-Ferguson (District 8). The two members who won the \$100 bill credits for voting in the board election were Deborah Wilson Windham from Orange County in District 1 and Karel Leemkuil from Orange County in District 2.

If you missed our online meeting, you can watch it online at **pemc.coop/annualmeeting**.

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 & General Manager

DIRECTORS

Bill R. Barber, Chair
Randy Kinley, Vice Chair
Sam T. Woods, Secretary
Richal Vanhook, Treasurer
Steven P. Bailey, Stephen C. Long, V. Kay Scurlock-Ferguson, 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.