



# Connection

PIEDMONT ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBER NEWSLETTER | JANUARY 2024



## Exciting Opportunities for Piedmont Electric Middle School, High School and College Students

We are committed to making a difference in the lives of our members and that extends to your kids! As we start the new year, it's a good time to remind you about our community youth programs as deadlines for participation are just around the corner.

### Basketball Camp Scholarships

One middle school boy and girl from our service area have the opportunity to hit the courts with our summer basketball camp scholarships. The winners of these scholarships will have the opportunity to work closely with college basketball coaches and camp staff members to develop skills that will help them reach their potential both on and off the court. During the program, campers get to stay in dorms overnight in between the sessions.

The Carolina Basketball School applications are available to rising sixth-grade boys, while the Wolfpack Women's Basketball Camp applications are available to rising sixth through eighth grade girls.

Applicants must have a parent, grandparent or guardian who is a Piedmont Electric member to be eligible. The deadline to apply is March 31 and winners will be notified by the end of April.

To submit applications for either camp, please visit [pemc.coop/basketball-camp](https://pemc.coop/basketball-camp).

### College Scholarships

Through our Helping Hand Foundation, we are proud to award scholarships to high school seniors and community college students pursuing higher education. There are seven \$2,000 scholarships available to high school seniors planning to attend a North Carolina university, college, community college or two-year school after graduation.

Applicants must have a parent, grandparent or guardian who is a Piedmont Electric member to be eligible and applications are due by March 31.

Visit [pemc.coop/scholarships](https://pemc.coop/scholarships) to apply.

We also offer six \$1,500 scholarships to members who are actively attending Alamance Community College, Durham Technical Community College or Piedmont Community College. These scholarships are awarded to two students at each institution at the start of the fall semester.

You can apply through your community college's scholarship application.

Please contact us at **800.222.3107** if you have any questions.

#### IMPORTANT DATES

##### Jan. 1

###### New Year's

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

##### Jan. 15

###### Martin Luther King Jr. Day

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

##### Mar. 31

###### Basketball Camp Applications Due

###### College Scholarship Applications Due

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### Get Ready for Winter With Piedmont Electric!

Turn to the next page to find out how we handle winter storms and learn about the steps you can take to stay safe this season.

# Our Winter Storm Recovery Process

The beginning of a new year is an exciting time to start fresh. Unfortunately, it's also prime winter storm season, which means that outages are more likely to occur. As your trusted co-op, you can rest easy knowing that we have an emergency action plan in place that helps us restore power back to our members as quickly as possible.

## Preparation is Key

We prepare for winter storms long before the seasons change. The first step in helping to prevent outages is maintaining our equipment and performing right-of-way trimming so it's less likely that trees will fall on our lines when a storm hits. This preparation helps lessen the impact of winter storms when they roll through our service area.

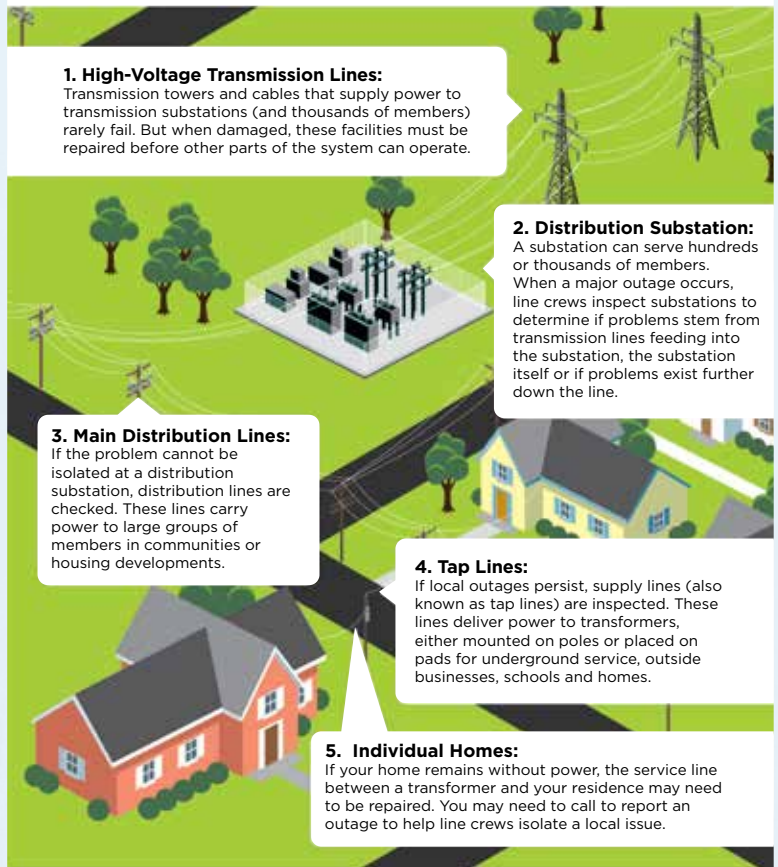
## Taking Quick Action

When a strong winter storm does hit, we take immediate steps to bring power back to your homes and businesses by doing the following:

1. Our line crews work with our dispatch center to identify the problem causing the outage. As our system reports outages, it helps us narrow in on the exact location, so we know where to send our line workers to start the recovery process.
2. Once on the scene, our line workers identify how to restore power to the most members in the shortest period of time.
3. Typically, they start by resolving issues at affected substations. Then, the crews remove fallen trees on distribution lines and replace poles where needed to restore power.

## Powering Up After an Outage

When the power goes out, we expect it to be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm or natural disaster causes widespread damage, extended outages may result. Our line crews work long hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of members in the shortest time possible. Here's what's going on if you find yourself in the dark:



### 1. High-Voltage Transmission Lines:

Transmission towers and cables that supply power to transmission substations (and thousands of members) rarely fail. But when damaged, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.

### 2. Distribution Substation:

A substation can serve hundreds or thousands of members. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to determine if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself or if problems exist further down the line.

### 3. Main Distribution Lines:

If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of members in communities or housing developments.

### 4. Tap Lines:

If local outages persist, supply lines (also known as tap lines) are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service, outside businesses, schools and homes.

### 5. Individual Homes:

If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your residence may need to be repaired. You may need to call to report an outage to help line crews isolate a local issue.

## Relying on the Cooperative Spirit

In the case of severe winter storms, the damage may be too much for our crews to fix themselves. In that case, we rely on the mutual aid agreements we've formed with other electric cooperatives. In the face of a strong storm, line workers from unaffected electric co-ops will travel to our service area to lend a helping hand so we can restore power as quickly as possible.

When these co-ops experience their own times of need, we return the favor and help them restore power to their members as well. We're all in this together with the same goal of putting our members first.

**Note:** There are times when damage occurs to your service that may require you to get an inspection from your local jurisdiction before the power can be restored.

# Be Ready for Winter Storms

Just like your co-op is prepared for potential winter outages, it's important that you are ready for the winter storm season as well. Here are a few steps you can take before and during winter storms to help keep your family safe while navigating cold-weather outages.

## Steps to Take Before Winter Storms Hit

- **Gather emergency supplies:** Put together an easy-access kit that your family can use in the event of an extended outage. Your kit should include:
  - First aid supplies
  - Blankets
  - Baby supplies like formula and diapers
  - Nonperishable food
  - Flashlights
  - Extra pet food
  - One gallon of water per person, per day
  - Batteries
  - Sand and shovels
  - Prescription medicines
  - Matches
  - Battery-powered radio
- **Charge cell phones:** Make sure your phone and any additional battery packs are fully charged.
- **Keep cold air out of your home:** Seal gaps around your doors and windows to help prevent excess cold air from entering your home.
- **Stock up on firewood:** If you have a wood-burning fireplace, make sure you have enough dry wood on hand to keep you warm.
- **Follow your co-op on social media:** During winter storms, we'll post updates on our website, Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) accounts. Make sure you're following @PiedmontEMC.
- **Update your contact information:** Make sure your phone number and email address are up-to-date by checking on SmartHub or by calling 800.222.3107. Current information is critical for us to stay in contact with you during outages.
- **Bookmark our online outage map:** Add [outageviewer.pemc.org:88](http://outageviewer.pemc.org:88) to your bookmarks list now so you have easy access to it during inclement weather.

## Steps to Take During a Winter Storm

- **Report an outage:** If you experience an outage, report it on our website or by texting "#out" to 800.222.3107. Then, you can text "#status" to get progress updates on your outage. You can also report an outage on SmartHub or by calling 800.222.3107.
- **Stay safe:** If you see a downed powerline, remember that it can carry a deadly electric current. You should never touch or drive over a downed line.
- **Conserve energy usage when possible:** Periods of prolonged cold can put strains on the energy grid. Unfortunately, this can sometimes lead to rolling blackouts across our service area. To help prevent this, reduce energy usage during periods of high demand when possible, and make sure you're prepared in the event of rolling blackouts.



## The Importance of Energy Conservation During Winter

You can help prevent the need for rolling blackouts by adopting energy-conscious practices to help alleviate demand on the grid during periods of high demand on very cold days.

Put these tips to use the next time the temperatures drop:

- Bundle up with warm blankets and clothes so you can stay warm without adjusting the thermostat
- Open shades and blinds during the day to allow sunlight to warm your home and close them at night to keep out the cold
- Rotate your ceiling fan blades to rotate clockwise, which will move warm air down into the rest of the room
- Close the damper when not using your fireplace so heat doesn't escape out of your chimney

# There's Power in Your Co-op Membership

As your electric cooperative, we pride ourselves on providing useful benefits to you so it's easier to manage your account and save money on energy costs. If you're not familiar with these benefits, sit back, relax and learn more about what's available to you as a Piedmont Electric Cooperative member!

## Easy-to-Use Tools to Help Manage Your Energy and Control Your Bills

We understand that saving on energy costs is important to all of our members. To make it easier for you to understand how you use energy and identify saving opportunities, we offer a variety of free calculators and apps on our website, which are available at [pemc.coop/energy-calculators](https://pemc.coop/energy-calculators).

You can use these tools to input data about how you use the different devices around your home to see how much it costs to use them and learn about ways to save on future bills.

## Money and Energy-Saving Programs

For even more ways to save, you can participate in any of our convenient programs that are designed to put money back in your pocket. For example, with our time-of-day rate, you'll pay half-price for the power you use during off-peak hours.

Our smart thermostat savings program and load management programs also make it easier to save money and they come with bill credits for your participation during certain times of the year.

Visit our website or call **800.222.3107** to learn more about these programs and find out how to sign up so you can start saving in 2024!

## Convenient Access to Help When You Need It

Our goal is to always be a helpful resource for our members. If you have questions, you can contact our friendly member services team online through our convenient chat option or call us at **800.222.3107** to get the answers you need as quickly as possible.

You can also manage your account via your smartphone by downloading the SmartHub app on Apple and Android devices.

Do you need assistance paying your bill? We can help with that too. Visit [pemc.coop/payment-assistance](https://pemc.coop/payment-assistance) to learn about resources available to you when times get tough.



As you can see, there's a lot to love about being a member of this co-op and we're committed to finding more ways to better serve you in 2024 and beyond.

## PIEDMONT ELECTRIC CONNECTION

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

**Hillsborough and Roxboro Drive-Thru Hours:**  
Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday  
8 a.m.-5 p.m.

**Caswell Drive-Thru Hours:**  
Wednesday 8 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Offices are closed except for scheduled appointments.  
Available by phone Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Report outages, make payments and access account information by phone 24-hours-a-day by calling 800.222.3107.

You can also pay your bill online at [pemc.smarthub.coop](https://pemc.smarthub.coop).

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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 phone number connected to your account online through SmartHub, by completing the form on your monthly bill or by calling 800.222.3107.

Use the SmartHub app to report an outage or online at [pemc.smarthub.coop/#reportanissue](https://pemc.smarthub.coop/#reportanissue) with your SmartHub login.

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.