



Connection

PIEDMONT ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBER NEWSLETTER | JULY 2024



How to Curb a Summer Spike

For many, summertime conjures memories of ice cream cones, the glow of fireflies, days spent at the lake or beach and a/c units cranking out relief from the summer heat.

That last one often comes with the memory of a higher power bill as the longer an air conditioner runs, the more energy it uses. This edition of our newsletter is full of great tips on how to save money and energy so you can spend more time reminiscing about that last scoop of ice cream.

Change Your Air Filters

When your air filters are dirty, your air conditioner has to work harder to push cool air through your home, which can lead to higher bills. Changing your air filter each month is a simple way to help your system work more efficiently so you can save. After replacing it, set a monthly reminder to change it for maximum efficiency.

Unplug Devices That Are Not in Use

Plugged-in electronics and appliances use energy even when you're not actively using them, which can lead to higher bills. Walk around your home and unplug any devices you're not using. This can include gaming consoles, air fryers, TVs, etc.

Adjust Your Thermostat

Adjusting your thermostat by a few degrees can help you save on cooling costs on these hot summer days. We recommend setting it to 78°F in the summer, but even a small adjustment of a few degrees can make a difference. To make this even easier, use a programmable or smart thermostat to set a schedule for your system so you can save without thinking about it.

Replace Your Light Bulbs

Replace traditional incandescent light bulbs in your home with LED alternatives. Energy-efficient LED light bulbs last longer than traditional ones and use less energy to light your home.

Seal and Insulate Your Ducts

Seal and insulate your ducts to prevent conditioned air from leaking and wasting electricity.

Adjust Your Water Heater

Did you know that about 20% of your home's energy use goes toward water heating? Adjust your water heater by a few degrees to help you save on your electricity bill. We recommend 120°F as a comfortable yet efficient water heater setting. For extra savings, you can install a water heater insulation blanket to prevent heat loss in your tank.

Want even more tips? Follow us on Facebook and Twitter, where we'll post reminders about the actions to take. Together, we can all save!

IMPORTANT DATES

July

A peak demand month

As temperatures rise, so does energy use. Be mindful to conserve energy where you can during hot weekday hours from 1-6 p.m.

July 4

Independence Day

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

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Do you need extra time to pay your bill?

To learn about the options available to you visit pemc.coop/payment-extensions.

Summertime Savings

Temperatures are rising, but we have programs to help you keep your bills from doing the same! Join our energy-saving programs to start saving as soon as possible.



Time-of-Day

Enrolling in our time-of-day rate gives you access to reduced rates for the energy you use during off-peak hours. This includes weekends, most holidays and 19-20 hours of each weekday, so you can pay a lower rate most of the month!

During the summer months try to shift your energy consumption away from 1-6 p.m. weekdays to maximize your savings. On average, members who participated last year saved approximately \$20 per month.

Are you ready to start saving? Visit pemc.coop/smart-energy to learn how to join these programs. This is a no-risk program. Call 800.222.3107 to learn more.

Load Management

Another way to save is by joining our air conditioner or water heater load management program. After you enroll, we'll install a load control device which intermittently cycles off your air conditioner and electric water heater to help reduce usage.

Besides keeping your cooling and water heater bills in check, you'll also receive bill credits for your participation. The air conditioning program offers credits ranging from \$2.50 to \$7.50 per month from June through September, while the water heater program provides a flat \$1 credit per month all year.

Smart Thermostat Savings Program

Do you have a Nest smart thermostat? If so, you're already one step closer to savings. When you join our smart thermostat savings program, you allow Piedmont Electric to remotely adjust your thermostat by a few degrees via your home's Wi-Fi network on extremely hot days.

Of course, you always have the freedom to readjust it if you want. By joining, you'll receive a \$2.50 monthly credit on your bill from June through September, along with a \$50 initial rebate.

Beat the Peak

When you enroll in Beat the Peak, you'll receive alerts via text message or email notifying you of expected peak times. This allows you to manage your energy consumption during these periods, which helps reduce your energy use and lower your bill.

As a bonus, working together to reduce our energy demand during peak times may lower the price we pay to our wholesale power supplier. We then pass along those savings to you, our members.

Interested in joining? Call us at 800.222.3107 or visit our website at pemc.coop to enroll today!

Summertime Savings ...Continued!

The savings don't stop there! Here are some tips and tricks you can use to continue saving energy and money this summer.

Reverse Your Ceiling Fans

During the summer, switch your ceiling fans so they turn counterclockwise by flipping the small switch on the base of the fan. Making this small change helps to push cool air down, so you can feel a breeze in the room and stay cooler without adjusting your thermostat. Remember to turn off your fan when you're not in the room to save on energy costs.



Caulk Around Your Doors and Windows

When there are gaps around your doors and windows, cold inside air can leak outside, causing your system to work harder to keep your home comfortable. This is an easy fix with the right tools! Use caulk or weather stripping to fill in these holes to help improve your home's energy efficiency.



Close Your Blinds During the Day

On hot summer days, one of the easiest ways to save money is by closing your blinds and curtains to keep excess heat out of your home. By taking this simple action, your home will naturally stay cooler without putting extra strain on your air conditioning system.



Have You Heard About the Latest SEER Changes?

SEER2, an abbreviation for Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio 2, signifies a shift in how HVAC systems are evaluated. Instead of focusing solely on cooling efficiency, SEER2 considers the total heat extracted from the conditioned space throughout the annual cooling season. This holistic approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of system performance, paving the way for enhanced energy efficiency and sustainability.



Continue the Savings!

We're here to help you save all summer long with our DIY energy advisor tool, which gives you a personalized report about what uses the most energy in your home and tips on how to save. Use this and our other money-saving calculators by visiting pemc.coop/energy-calculators.

How We Restore Power After Summer Storms

We're in the middle of summer storm season when there's a higher chance of outages due to inclement weather. As your trusted co-op, our job is to restore power as quickly and safely as possible, which is why we stay prepared year-round.

Have you ever wondered about the power restoration process? Here are the 5 steps we take when there's an outage in our service area:

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, hard hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of consumers 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 consumers. 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 consumers 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. Always call to report an outage to help line crews isolate local issue.

AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

Cooperatives Stick Together

To help provide safe and reliable power to our members Piedmont Electric has formed mutual aid agreements with other local electric cooperatives.

In cases of extreme storms and outages, lineworkers from those co-ops will come to our service area to help with restoration efforts and our lineworkers return the favor when needed. Working together in times of need helps us better serve our members during inclement weather.



Are You Ready for Summer Storms?

Before summer storms move into our area, make sure you're prepared by visiting pemc.coop/outage-center/be-prepared to see helpful tips. You should also check your SmartHub account to see if Piedmont Electric has your updated contact information on file so you can get important outage notifications delivered to you.

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 or website chat 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.

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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 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.