



# Pitt and Greene

## Electric Membership Corporation

*“Where Customers Have A Choice”*

*Member Newsletter*

*February 2020*

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Please pay special attention to the amount due on your bill. Failure to pay the FULL AMOUNT without a special arrangement made prior to cut off day will result in disconnection and additional service charges. Don't get caught off guard.

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### **Fight the Winter Chill**

Another colder-than-normal winter is predicted for much of the country this year. Frigid temperatures can cause heating systems to work overtime, and since heating and cooling can make up nearly half of your electric bill, you may experience sticker shock when you open that bill. Instead of waiting until after a potentially high bill is in your mailbox, be proactive. There are things you can do now to help ensure you are managing your energy use and spending less.

These simple steps can help you manage your use:

- Wrap exposed pipes and water heaters that are in unconditioned spaces.
- Make sure to change your air filter once a month.
- Keep drapes closed at night and keep those that don't get direct sunlight closed during the day, too.
- Keep the fireplace damper closed when it is not in use. Keeping it open can bring cold air into the room.
- Caulk around the fireplace hearth, and caulk or weather strip around doors and windows.
- Dress for the weather, even if you are inside. Wearing proper clothing like long sleeves and pants, or wrapping up in a cozy blanket will help combat the temptation of bumping up the thermostat.

So, when temperatures fall this winter and you hear your weatherman talking about bringing in pets and plants, take the steps above to help manage your usage.

Using the tips above can certainly help you manage your energy usage, but your bill may still be higher than normal in winter months. Why?

- The weather makes a big impact on electric bills, accounting for nearly half of your bill.
- Even those with the most efficient HVAC systems will see more use in extreme weather.
- When extreme cold temperatures hit, our heaters work overtime.
- For example, even if you set your thermostat to our recommended 68 degrees in the winter, when it is 39 degrees outside, your system has to work hard to make up that 29-degree difference.
- Your heater works harder and cycles on and off more often, making your usage much higher. That means your bill will be much higher.
- Remember, there is value in comfort. For us to be comfortable in our homes, our heaters are going to work harder, but it may be worth the additional cost to you.

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**Reminder.....**

**Daylight Savings Time Begins Sunday, March 8th, 2020.  
Set Clocks Ahead 1 Hour.**



## *Manager's Message*

*By: Mark A. Suggs*

### *Teaching Youngsters the Important Lesson of Energy Efficiency*

Electronic and mobile devices, TVs, computers and gaming stations have become ubiquitous fixtures in our homes, particularly those with children. Consumer electronics coupled with the proliferation of smart home appliances, technology and electric vehicles have slowly but steadily changed our homes and lifestyles.

This ever-connected world is the modern environment in which children are growing up. And with lifestyles increasingly reliant on technology and in turn, energy consumption, teaching youngsters to save energy is an important life lesson.

#### *The Why*

But before parents can teach their children how to save energy, they must first answer the question, “what’s in it for me?” As most parents can attest, convincing kids to care about energy efficiency is a hard sell. Parents need to explain why it’s important to save energy and how it benefits the child – otherwise they will not understand the need to change their habits and will be less motivated to do so. In the simplest terms, less money spent on an electric bill can mean more money used for fun activities (that’s something children can relate to!).

Less tangible, but just as important, using less energy means running your home more efficiently, conserving natural resources and helping the environment.

#### *Learning by Doing*

Because “saving energy” is an abstract concept for children, be specific about energy efficiency actions and set an example. We know that children learn by observing what their parents do. Even if they don’t say anything, children are processing your actions. When you turn off the lights when leaving a room or unplug the phone charger once the device is fully charged, they will notice. Show them the electric bill so they can see the costs, energy use and how their actions impact the bill. Kids of all ages can learn a few simple energy-saving habits that can last a lifetime:

- \*Turn off lights, devices, computers and video consoles when not in use.
- \*Open blinds and curtains during winter days to let warm sunlight in and close them during summer days to keep your home cooler.
- \*Take them with you to buy LED lights and discuss ENERGY STAR-rated appliances.
- \*If your children are old enough to run the dishwasher or wash their own clothes, teach them to run these appliances only with a full load and during off-peak energy hours.

#### *Rewards*

Offer rewards for agreed upon milestones. Rewards provide positive reinforcement on energy-saving actions. The idea is to create a habit of being energy efficient. And for parents, this could mean less nagging about turning off the lights!

Teaching your children about saving energy is not only a creative way to spend time with them; it helps your home to be more energy efficient and can instill good habits that will benefit your child long into adulthood.

## Important Sales and Use Tax Notice

A purchaser (farmers, manufacturers and commercial laundries) that is eligible for a preferential tax rate on electricity should complete and furnish the seller/electricity supplier Form E-595E, Streamlined Sales and Use Tax Agreement Certificate of Exemption, to take advantage of qualifying reductions.

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### *Geared up for safety*

Can you imagine working a job that requires you to lift heavy equipment and perform detailed tasks near deadly high voltage? Now imagine doing this 40 feet in the air, and sometimes, in extreme weather. This is the life of a lineman.

These brave men answer when called, and they do so to ensure that you are provided with safe, reliable electric service. But how do they stay safe when working in these conditions? All linemen are required to wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at all times when on the job to keep them safe.

#### **Let's take a look at a lineman's PPE.**

**Fire resistant (FR) clothing.** While our linemen do everything possible to prevent them, unexpected fires can happen. Fires typically occur with an arc flash, this is an explosion that results from a low-impedance connection to a ground phase in an electrical system. FR clothing will self-extinguish, thus limiting injury due to burn.

**Insulated gloves.** Linemen must wear insulated rubber gloves when working on any type of electrical line. These gloves provide protection against electrical shock and burn, and are tested at 30,000 volts. Protective gloves, usually made of leather, are worn over the insulated gloves to protect the rubber from punctures and cuts.

**Hard hat.** Insulated hard hats are worn at all times to protect them from blows and falling objects.

**Steel toe boots.** These heavy-duty boots are typically 16 inches tall and designed with extra support in mind. The height of the boot shields linemen from gouges, and serrated heels provide a better grip when climbing poles. The steel toe provides sturdier support and protects from objects that could potentially pierce the feet.

**Safety goggles.** Linemen must wear protective goggles or glasses, whether working on electrical lines or clearing rights-of-way. This protects them from loose debris and other hazards.

These items make up a lineman's basic PPE. While working on electrical lines, they also may be required to wear equipment belts, tool pouches, safety straps and other types of equipment. A lineman's gear usually weighs about 50 pounds – that's a lot of extra weight when working in hazardous conditions.

So, the next time you see a lineman – be sure to thank him [or her] for keeping the lights on. But more importantly, thank them for the hard – and often times dangerous – work they do, day in and day out.

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Do you need to update your contact information? If you have a new telephone number or need to add a secondary contact to your account, please call Pitt & Greene EMC at 252-753-3128.

#### **Energy Efficiency** Tip of the Month

Are you using your fireplace efficiently? Remember to turn down the thermostat when burning a fire, and close the damper when a fire is not burning.



# *Start saving with a DIY home energy audit*

With the arrival of winter, temperatures have dropped and our energy focus turns from cooling your home to heating it, consider using this time to increase energy efficiency and cost savings for the colder months ahead. Whether your home is old or new, chances are you are spending more on energy costs than necessary.

Armed with some basic knowledge and a little time, you can conduct a baseline energy audit of your home to identify where you are losing energy (and money). Use a checklist and take notes on problems you find as you walk through your home. Remember, the audit itself won't save you money unless you act on your findings.

## **DIY 101**

So, where to start? If your home has multiple levels, work from the top down. Begin in your attic or highest floor, and work your way down to the first floor or basement.

1. Insulation and air leaks (drafts) – According to the Department of Energy, improving your home's insulation and sealing air leaks are the fastest and most cost-effective ways to reduce energy waste and make the most of your energy dollars. Check to see whether there is sufficient insulation in the attic. Are openings containing piping, ductwork and chimney sealed?
2. Electronic devices – Inventory all of the electronic devices you have and how often you use them. Computers, printers, DVD players, phones and gaming consoles are notorious “vampire power” users – they drain energy even when not in use. If items can be turned off without disrupting your lifestyle, consider plugging them into a power strip that can be turned on and off (or put on a timer).
3. Lighting – Note where you still have incandescent lights. Can you replace them with CFL or LED upgrades? Do you have nightlights? If so, consider replacing them with LED nightlights. Are there places where you can install motion sensor lights in low use areas, such as a closet, porch or garage?
4. Thermostat/indoor temperature – Do you have a programmable thermostat? When was the last time it was programmed? Is the date and time correct? If they are not, this could throw off the automatic settings. Is it set so the temperature is lower during the day and/or times when no one is home and at night when people are sleeping? Consider lowering the temperature a few degrees.
5. Appliances and cleaning – Appliances are large energy users, and if yours are more than 10 years old, they are likely not as energy efficient as today's options. How and when you use them also make a difference. Do you wash your clothes in hot water, or can you use cold water instead? Do you use your washer, dryer or dishwasher during the day? Consider running them at night, during off-peak times. Does your hot water heater have a blanket? If not, consider insulating it. Make sure your dryer vent isn't blocked – this will not only save energy, it may also prevent a fire.

## **Evaluation**

Once you have completed the audit, take a look at the findings. Prioritize actions that you can take based on your time and budget, weighing where you can get the most impact for your investment. Increasing your home's energy efficiency will make your family comfortable while saving you money.

De lunes a viernes de 8:00 a.m. a 5:00 p.m.  
252-753-3128 / 1-800-622-1362 / 252-747-7600

**CORTES DE SUMINISTRO ELÉCTRICO Y EMERGENCIAS:**  
Durante fines de semana, días festivos y después del horario de oficina  
252-753-8778

Co-op Office Hours  
Monday - Friday - 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
252-753-3128 / 1-800-622-1362 / 252-747-7600

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252-753-8778