

Along the LINE

AUGUST 2021

For members of
Edgecombe-Martin County EMC



Office Reopens to Walk-in traffic

After reviewing updated CDC guidelines, combined with the increasing availability of vaccines, Edgecombe-Martin County EMC is excited to announce that our lobby reopened for walk-in traffic June 21! We continue to take special measures to protect all visitors and employees as the COVID-19 pandemic remains.

When the decision was made to close the lobby to walk-in traffic in March 2020, we were unsure how long the closure would last. During this time we have operated through our drive-thru window and virtual options to help do our part in slowing the spread of the virus, while continuing to provide the quality service our members have come to expect.

During the pandemic, your cooperative implemented several options that allowed our members to conduct business remotely. We highly recommend that members continue to utilize these options. Give us a call at 252-823-2171 or email us at memberservices@ememc.com. Our Member Services Department is available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and many service requests can be completed electronically.

To apply for service, you can visit ememc.com or email a member services representative. To make a payment you can use the drive-thru window, automated phone system (1-855-356-6358), kiosk, night deposit, or the SmartHub app. For a payment arrangement or security light and service request you can contact us through SmartHub, email member services, or call during business hours.



Save the Date for Customer Appreciation Day

Customer Appreciation Day will be held at the Cooperative on Thursday, October 7, from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. Each registered member will be treated to a hot dog lunch with chips and a drink.

Members will also be entered into a drawing to win a credit on their light bill.

We look forward to seeing you!

2021 Noel Lee, Jr. Memorial Scholarship

Hannah Cooke received a \$600 scholarship to assist with school related costs, such as tuition, books and laboratory fees.

Cooke is enrolled at Pitt Community College, working toward a degree in medical sonography.

Edgecombe-Martin County EMC supports education of our youth through a variety of scholarships, grants and learning opportunities. To be eligible for the Noel Lee, Jr. Memorial Scholarship, applicants must be a member of Edgecombe-Martin County EMC or live in a home served by the co-op.

These scholarships are intended for students who plan to attend a North Carolina accredited one- or two-year vocational, technical or community college program.

Applications can be completed online at ememc.com. Funds for the scholarships are raised through various raffles and activities of the Volunteer Action Committee of Edgecombe-Martin County EMC. To receive more information, please call Monica Speight at 252-641-9502.



EV Charging Station

Edgecombe-Martin County EMC has installed an EV charging station at our office. This station is part of an expanding electric co-op charging network, bringing the benefits of EVs to co-op members and increasing opportunities for commerce and tourism locally.

Edgecombe-Martin County EMC was awarded \$71,415.70 to fund the charger as part of a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency settlement with Volkswagen. In North Carolina, the Volkswagen funds were awarded and distributed by the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality.



This charging station will help increase local commerce, reduce emissions and bring the benefits of driving electric to our community. Our members are increasingly interested in the convenience, cost savings and environmental advantage offered by electric vehicles.

The DC Fast Charge station provides a very quick charge and is capable of charging a depleted electric vehicle's battery to 80 percent capacity in under 30 minutes. DC Fast Charge stations are usually located in high-traffic public areas or along major highway corridors. Edgecombe-Martin County EMC's office location right off of highway 64, combined with our 24-hour free Wi-Fi, offers EV drivers a safe place to recharge.

Edgecombe-Martin County EMC offers a residential rate to members who own a plug-in-electric vehicle. The rate schedule has been designed specifically for EV owners who use most of their energy overnight charging their vehicle.

Members who choose the EV rate option will receive a slightly lower rate during off-peak hours and a significant discount during "super off-peak" hours from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m., seven days a week.

Edgecombe-Martin County EMC also offers a \$200 rebate for members who sign-up for this rate.

Summer is primetime for power outages and momentary interruptions (blinks) due to increased lightning strikes, rapid seasonal growth of trees and vegetation, wildlife, increased outdoor activity related to farming, land clearing, and recreational sports.

Imagine coming home from work, you've put your bags down, and begin to preheat the oven to start dinner. That's when you see it - the blinking "12:00" on the digital clock. You reset all of the digital clocks in your house before you start dinner and wonder, "Did the power go out today?" Usually, the state of the blinking clock is caused by a blink in the electrical system. While blinks can be frustrating, they show that your electrical system is working properly. Blinking lights are a result of momentary outages that occur when some type of disturbance exists on the power line.

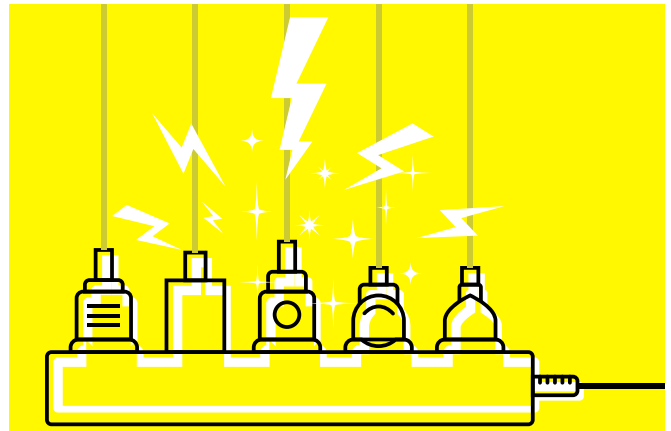
Here's a common example of how the electrical system prevents a lengthy outage:

A tree branch contacts power lines, causing a line to ground fault. Automated equipment senses the fault and shuts off power to the affected lines—but only for a few seconds. During that time the branch loses contact with the lines. Moments later, the same equipment automatically checks if the fault is still present and restores power if possible. No branch contact, no fault, no prolonged outage.

Some automated equipment will open and "reclose" the circuit multiple times to give temporary faults a longer window to clear. But this window is still very brief—roughly a minute. Members experience a handful of short outages in a row, then, if the fault clears, their power stays on. This process may repeat (several times) in strong windstorms or other disruptive weather events because vegetation and other debris frequently contact power lines.

What happens if the fault doesn't clear?

Back to the tree branch example: if a small branch falls onto power lines and stays there, in the areas where distribution automation has been installed, equipment immediately auto-switches the flow of electricity away from the fault to restore service to as many customers as possible (distribution automation). This restoration automation process further ensures fewer members experience outages of any significant length.



While blinks are a nuisance, they eliminate a lot of extended outages by protecting wires and equipment from serious damage. The alternative is costly, inefficient, and far more disruptive and lengthy outages for our members.

Edgecombe-Martin County EMC is installing distribution automation in some places on our system to enable these devices to communicate and detect faults, isolate and reconfigure the power flow from our substations automatically. It will take some time for the distribution automation to be implemented system wide, but this will continue to improve system reliability throughout our service territory.

Your cooperatives engineering and operations staff continues their work to improve system reliability, resiliency and safety. The automated metering infrastructure reports daily blink counts for every circuit on our system. When we see high blink counts on a circuit, tap or individual service we dispatch crews to investigate. Your cooperative's goal is to identify issues and proactively correct problems before our member's experience issues.

Winston Howell

Educators, the Bright Ideas Early Bird Deadline Closes Aug. 16 - Apply Now!

K-12 educators, don't miss this opportunity to win big! Submit your Bright Ideas grant application before Aug. 16 to be entered to win one of five \$100 gift cards in a statewide drawing.

This year, Edgecombe-Martin County EMC is awarding funding to teachers with innovative, hands-on learning experiences that will enrich the lives of students. The final application deadline is Sept. 15.

To learn more and apply online, visit ncbrightideas.com. Stay up to date with the Bright Ideas Education Grant program by following @NCBrightIdeas on Facebook!



Senior Beat The Heat Program

With temperatures soaring, it's critical that senior residents and those with disabilities have adequate cooling. During our hot summer months, seniors living without air conditioning or circulating air are at higher risk of heat-related injuries.

This year the co-op donated \$500 to the Edgecombe County Office of Aging to help purchase box fans for the Seniors Heat Relief Program. The fans are available to individuals age 60 or older and they must be a resident of Edgecombe County. Fans can be obtained while supplies last by calling the Edgecombe County Office on Aging at 252-641-5831. A driver's license or other valid form of photo identification must be shown to verify age and documentation showing proof of residence in Edgecombe County will also be needed.

Edgecombe-Martin also provides educational material free to the public,



in the form of booklets and pamphlets, on keeping cool and conserving energy during the summer months. If you are interested in obtaining any of this material, please call Monica Speight at 252-641-9502.

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Payments after office hours and on holidays can be made at the kiosk under the drive thru canopy, by calling our automated telephone service at

1-855-356-6358, placed in the night deposit box or you may choose to utilize the convenience of online bill-pay by logging on to ememc.com