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Mitchell EMC



The news
you need to
know in
5 minutes!

CAMILLA, GEORGIA
www.mitchellemc.com

Mitchell EMC wishes
you and your family a very

Merry
Christmas



Look out for scams

By **MEGHAAN EVANS**

Unfortunately, in today's world, scams are inevitable. Scammers can threaten you with everything from legal action involving the IRS to turning off power to your home.

Utility scams often involve an individual or group posing as an employee of your electric cooperative. The scammer may use threatening language in order to frighten you into offering your credit card or bank account information. Don't fall victim to these types of scams. Understand the threats posed and your best course of action:

- If someone calls your home or cell phone demanding you pay your electric bill immediately, gather as much information as you can from that individual, hang-up the phone and contact the local authorities. Scammers often use threats and urgency to pressure you into giving them your bank account number or loading a pre-paid credit or debit card (such as a Green Dot card).

Mitchell EMC will never ask you to offer up personal finance information over the phone. If you have any doubts about your utility bill, contact our member payment center either in person, or over the phone at 229-336-5221 or 800-479-6034.

- If someone comes to your home claiming to be an employee of Mitchell EMC that needs to collect money or inspect parts of your property, call us to verify they are, in fact, an employee. If they are not, call local authorities for assistance and do not let the individual into your home.

There are other types of scams consumers should watch out for:

- Government agencies like the IRS will never call to inform you that you have unpaid taxes or other liens against you. You will always receive this type of information in the mail. If someone calls claiming to be the IRS, hang-up immediately.

- If you receive an email from an unknown sender; an email

riddled with spelling errors and typos; or an email threatening action unless a sum of money is paid, do not click any links provided within the email, and do not respond to the email. Simply delete the email, or send it to your spam folder.

- If someone calls your home claiming to have discovered a virus on your computer, hang-up. This caller's intent is to access personal information you may be keeping on your computer.

Mitchell EMC wants to make sure you avoid any and all types of scams that could put you or your financial information in jeopardy. If you have any questions or would like more information about how you can protect yourself from scammers, call us, or visit our website www.mitchellemc.com.

Meghaan Evans writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Purchasing electronic gifts this holiday season? Remember to purchase ENERGY STAR®-certified electronics and give the gift of energy efficiency. Visit **www.energystar.gov/productfinder** for a full list of efficient products.

Source: energystar.gov





MERRY, BRIGHT AND EFFICIENT HOLIDAY LIGHTING

Decking the halls doesn't have to take a toll on your energy bill! Keep your holiday lighting merry, bright and energy efficient with LED light strands.

- Consider replacing older light strands with new ENERGY STAR LED® lights. LED strands are 70 percent more efficient and last 10 times longer than the age-old standard bulbs.
- You can get the look of cozy lighting with LEDs. Just look for "warm white" on the label.
- Unlike older light strands, LED lights give off virtually no heat, making them safer for kids and pets (and reindeer).
- Save energy by setting a timer for outdoor lighting and decorations. Program the timer so the lights turn on in the evening and turn off later at night when you typically go to sleep.

Source: Dept. of Energy

HOLIDAY LIGHTING TIPS

By TOM TATE

This year is rapidly drawing to a close and that means the holiday lighting season is back. If your home space is in need of a decorative refresh, here are some tips to take your artistic stylings to the next level. There are two areas to cover, so let's get started.

Safety is up first. If your lights are ground mounted or can be installed standing on the floor or ground, you can skip ahead. However, since most decorations involve some installation at height, you need to do the following:

- **Have a ground crew** (one or two people) to steady your ladder and pass up the decorations...an invaluable part of safety and for keeping you supplied with untangled light strings, fasteners and encouragement.
- **Remember to keep a safe distance** from your overhead electric service.
- **Don't overreach.** If you cannot get to a point with your body completely centered between the sides of the ladder, get down and relocate it.
- **Don't overextend the ladder.** If your ladder is too short, rent or borrow a longer one. A ladder extended beyond its working limits is dangerous as is standing on rungs too close to the top.
- **Do not overload circuits** by stringing more light sets together than the manufacturer recommends. Check the packaging for details.
- **Check your wires** for breaks and cracks in the insulation that can lead to shorts.

Most of these tips apply equally to inside and outside decorating activities.

Light selection is next. If at all possible, invest in LED lights this season. Unlike the first versions to hit the market

that were characterized by rather harsh and unattractive colors, the newest generation's colors are reminiscent of the incandescent lights of yore.

Why go the LED route? Longevity and cost of operation are the two key reasons. Unlike incandescent lights, whether the large or mini bulb, LEDs will last for many, many years. LEDs have no filaments to burn out. Aside from physically destroying the bulb, the LED is amazingly robust. Given the modest number of hours of operation, you can expect LEDs to last seven or more years.

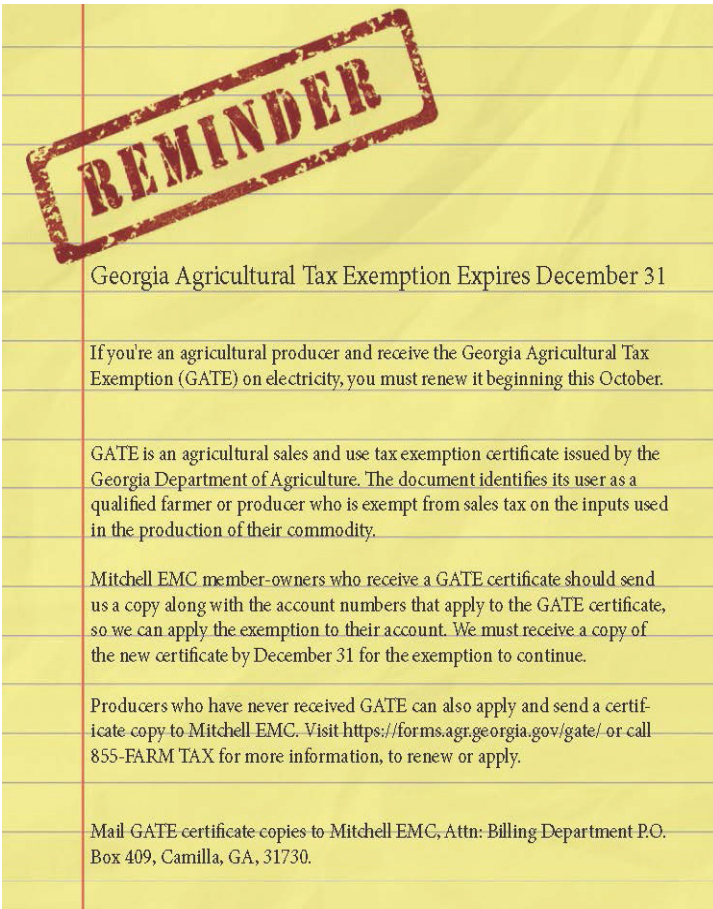
Then there is the cost of operation benefit from LEDs. These gems of technological advancement truly sip electricity. A reasonable estimate of power consumption is 7 watts per 100 lights. How does that compare to the old incandescent? Each of those bulbs used 12 watts so a string of 100 devoured 1200 watts.

Truly want to manage the cost of operating holiday lights? Invest in timers to turn the lights on and off automatically. Really into gadgets? Invest in a smart plug for your lights you can program and control from your smart phone.

Once you have your design finalized and installed, it is my recommendation to leave as much of the outside portion of lights in place. No, don't be that person who leaves the holiday lights on all year. Simply disconnect them after the holidays, protecting the plugs and sockets from dirt and debris. Think of the reduced stress and risk if you set and forget your design. With the longevity of the LEDs, you can enjoy this freedom and practically eliminate the risks associated with high-wire seasonal gymnastics.

Tom Tate writes on cooperative issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

Serving in 14 Southwest Georgia Counties...



REMINDER

Georgia Agricultural Tax Exemption Expires December 31

If you're an agricultural producer and receive the Georgia Agricultural Tax Exemption (GATE) on electricity, you must renew it beginning this October.

GATE is an agricultural sales and use tax exemption certificate issued by the Georgia Department of Agriculture. The document identifies its user as a qualified farmer or producer who is exempt from sales tax on the inputs used in the production of their commodity.

Mitchell EMC member-owners who receive a GATE certificate should send us a copy along with the account numbers that apply to the GATE certificate, so we can apply the exemption to their account. We must receive a copy of the new certificate by December 31 for the exemption to continue.

Producers who have never received GATE can also apply and send a certificate copy to Mitchell EMC. Visit <https://forms.agr.georgia.gov/gate/> or call 855-FARM TAX for more information, to renew or apply.

Mail GATE certificate copies to Mitchell EMC, Attn: Billing Department P.O. Box 409, Camilla, GA, 31730.



JOIN US IN A COVER UP!

Mitchell EMC will be collecting winter coats, good used and new, for the needy. If you can contribute, please bring your coats to any MEMC office or contact any MEMC employee. The coats will be distributed the first of December.

**Mitchell EMC offices
will be closed on
Dec. 25th & 26th
in observance
of Christmas
and Jan. 1st
for New Years.**



Mitchell EMC Facilities Charge Adjustment

Currently, some of the fixed costs of servicing your account are recovered through what you pay for electricity. We are moving to more accurately allocate these costs, both fixed and energy, to their true sources. Effective with member billings that begin on January 1, Mitchell EMC's Facilities Charge will increase by \$3.00 per month.

The Facilities Charge partially covers the fixed costs of delivering your electric service. These fixed costs include reading your meter; maintaining the electric distribution system used in keeping your power flowing; maintaining rights of way; and performing other tasks necessary to ensure a reliable electric distribution system. The Facili-

ties Charge **does not** include the cost of the actual electricity you use. The monthly Facilities Charge is changing because the costs of servicing your account are rising. Every member benefits from these services, so the monthly Facilities Charge helps Mitchell EMC ensure that the cost are spread fairly among our membership.

We continue to offer free in home energy audits to help Members with options to make their homes more energy efficient. Our energy efficiency program includes rebates whether you are building a home, or just upgrading your present home. To find out more about these rebates visit <https://mitchellemc.com/customer-service/consumer-rebates>.

Note: *If you move or no longer have electric service with Mitchell EMC, it is important that members keep their address current, so that future disbursements can be properly mailed. Capital credits are reserved for members even if they move out of the Mitchell EMC service area. Mitchell EMC will make a diligent effort to send a check by mail.*

Statement of Equal Employment Opportunity

All applicants for employment shall be considered and hired on the basis of merit, without regard to race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), age, national origin, disability, genetic information, or past or present military status. The employment practices shall ensure equal treatment of all employees, without discrimination as to promotion, discharge, rates of pay, fringe benefits, job training, classification, referral, and other aspects of employment, on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, disability, age, genetic information, or past or present military status. M/F/V/DV/D

WATT'S COOKING



Chocolate Oatmeal Cookies

Ingredients:

2 cups sugar
1 stick butter
1/2 cup milk
3 to 4 tablespoons cocoa
3 cups quick cooking oats
1/2 cup crunchy peanut butter
2 teaspoons vanilla
Optional-chopped toasted pecans

Boil butter, sugar, milk and cocoa for 1 to 2 minutes (let the mixture boil 2 minutes-cookies are better). Remove from heat and add oats, pecans, peanut butter and vanilla. Mix well and drop on wax paper when firm. Let cool and enjoy.

Thanks!

to

Marie Green Murphy,

Worth County, GA, for sharing this recipe.

Share & Win!

Send us your favorite quick and easy dinner recipes. If your recipe is chosen for print, you can win a

\$25 credit

on your next Mitchell EMC bill.

Send recipes to

Heather Greene, P.O. Box 409, Camilla,

GA 31730 or email to

heather.greene@mitchellemc.com.