

Mitchell EMC



The news
you need to
know in
5 minutes!

CAMILLA, GEORGIA
www.mitchellemc.com

Mitchell EMC Scholarship Opportunities Available

Mitchell EMC is proud to offer two (2) scholarship opportunities for the youth of our area. We are currently accepting applications for the Walter Harrison Scholarship and our Operation Round Up Scholarships. Application forms and criteria can be found on our web site, www.mitchellemc.com.

Walter Harrison Scholarships:

- Mr. Walter Harrison was a pioneer in the electric industry in Georgia, and this scholarship is named in his honor and memory.
- It is a statewide \$1,000 scholarship.
- Scholarships are awarded based on academic achievement and financial need.
- Application deadline is **February 1, 2017**.



Operation Round Up Scholarships:

- Funds for these scholarships are provided by consumer participation in the Operation Round Up program at Mitchell EMC.
- A maximum of twelve (12) \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded to high school seniors and/or college/technical school students.
- Scholarships are awarded based on "*All Around Student Performance*" including academic performance, volunteerism, and participation in school, church and community activities. Financial need is also considered.
- Application deadline is **March 1, 2017**.

Please note that the scholarships have different deadlines and should be mailed to different addresses listed on the scholarship form. We encourage students to apply for both scholarships. Applications will be judged by an independent scholarship committee, and winners will be notified by May 1.



A Community Partner Since 1937



Mitchell EMC would like to thank everyone that participated in the Santa Photos this year. With your help, we were able to raise \$905.00 for the Alzheimer's Association.

Top 5 Energy Users In Your Home...a starting point for savings

By Anne Prince

While most homeowners would like to be more energy efficient and save money, often it feels overwhelming because many people don't know where to start. How can the average family use less energy, lower their utility bill and still meet their daily energy needs? To help jumpstart your effort, it is useful to know what the top energy users are in your home. With this knowledge, you can choose a path that works best for your family.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Agency, the top five energy users in U.S. homes are:

- Space cooling
- Space heating
- Water heating
- Lighting
- Refrigeration

Adjust the temperature.

Together, home heating and cooling use the most energy and take the biggest bite out of your energy budget. On the bright side, there are ways you can achieve at least 10 percent savings by taking a few simple low-cost or no-cost steps.

- During cold weather, set your thermostat to 68 degrees Fahrenheit.
- During warm weather, the recommended indoor temperature is 78 degrees Fahrenheit.

- Cleaning the filters of your HVAC system can cut costs from five to 15 percent.
- Clean the coils around your electric baseboard heater to maintain maximum efficiency.
- Caulk and weather-strip around windows and doors to prevent heat from escaping to the outdoors.

No matter what the climate or time of year, proper use of a programmable thermostat can save you 10 percent on your monthly utility bill.

Shine the light on savings.

Take a fresh look at the lighting in your home. If you still use incandescent lighting, your light bulbs are operating at only 25 percent energy efficiency. Replacing your home's five most frequently used bulbs with Energy Star-certified LEDs can save you \$75 per year. Another easy way to save is to always turn lights off in rooms that are not being used.

Water heating efficiency

Just as it is energy-wise to insulate your roof, wall or floor, it also pays to wrap your hot water heater with an insulating blanket. This is all the more critical if you have an older unit. Make sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions. For additional efficiency and savings, insulate exposed hot water lines and drain one to two gallons of water from

the bottom of your tank annually to prevent sediment build-up.

Put cold hard cash back in your wallet.

If your refrigerator was purchased before 2001, chances are it uses 40 percent more energy than a new Energy Star model. If you are considering an appliance update, a new Energy Star refrigerator uses at least 15 percent less energy than non-qualified models and 20 percent less energy than required by current federal standards. Regardless of the age of your fridge, there are additional steps you can take to save energy and money. For example, don't keep your refrigerator too cold. The Department of Energy recommends temperatures of 35 – 38 degrees Fahrenheit for the fresh food compartment and 0 degrees Fahrenheit for separate freezers (used for long-term storage).

By understanding how your home uses energy, you can determine the best ways to modify energy use and keep more money in your wallet. For more ways to save, contact Mitchell EMC's energy experts at 229-336-5221.

Anne Prince 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.

Utilities are raising awareness about scams

By Tracy Warren

When a scammer called Florida pet clinic operator Cindy Evers last year and demanded immediate payment on an overdue electric bill, it sounded real.

“They knew my account number and gave me a figure that I owed that’s close to what I usually pay on my electric bill,” Evers said. She paid, even though, in the back of her mind, she knew her payment wasn’t late.

“I have pets under sedation, and I’m taking care of animals. I think I just panicked, thinking they were going to shut my electricity off. I did what they told me to do.”

Evers lost \$900 because the call was a scam.

The scam that duped Evers has been plaguing utility consumers across North America for several years, robbing them of millions.

Now, utilities are fighting back.

Recently, more than 80 utilities and energy industry organizations from across the U.S. and Canada joined forces to recognize the first-ever North American Utilities United Against Scams Day on November 16, 2016.

Electric co-ops have increased their communication efforts, sending information directly to members and encouraging local TV stations and newspapers to warn citizens about the scam, how it works and what people should do and not do, if they are ever targeted.

Even the wariest consumers can be duped, however. The scammers are developing new tactics every day.

The “past due” scam, similar to the one Florida customer Evers experienced, goes something like this: A customer gets a call from an 800-number that looks like a valid utility company phone number. Widely available spoofing software allows crooks to display what appears to be an official number on caller IDs. The caller threatens to cut off power if the customer doesn’t pay.

But here’s the giveaway: The crook will demand payment via a prepaid debit card or money order. And he’ll ask for it within a specified time frame—often an hour or less.

The scammer may even quote an amount that sounds like your typical monthly bill. That way, the threat has even more credibility.

Scammers might direct the customer to a spe-

cific store nearby that sells the prepaid cards and instruct the customer to put money on the card and provide the card number to the scammer.

Some scammers have even been bold enough to contact potential victims in person, coming to the member’s house.

Here are some tips on how to protect yourself:

- Do not assume the name and number on your caller ID are legitimate. Caller IDs can be spoofed.
- Never share your personal information, including date of birth, Social Security number or banking account information.
- Never wire money to someone you don’t know.
- Do not click links or call numbers in unexpected emails or texts – especially those asking for your account information.
- Most utilities will NOT require their customers to purchase prepaid debit cards or money orders to avoid an immediate disconnection.
- If you receive a call that sounds like it may be a scam, or if you believe the call is a scam, hang up, call the police and report the incident to your local utility.

How you can help

You can alert your family members and friends. Share the scammers’ tactics described in this article or those you have heard about. You can also help raise awareness and warn others by reposting scam awareness information on social media; use the hashtag #stopscams.

Tracy Warren 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.



Serving in 14 Southwest Georgia Counties...



Mitchell EMC would like to thank Westwood Schools for helping us with the Coat Cover-up Drive. They donated many good used children's coats for needy kids in the area.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



A crackling fire in the hearth warms the house, but don't let it heat up your electric bill! Caulk around the fireplace hearth and keep the damper closed when a fire is not burning.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy

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



Pineapple Sunshine Cake

Ingredients:

1 box yellow cake mix
4 eggs
½ cup vegetable oil
1 8 ounce can crushed pineapple
with juice

Frosting

1 8 ounce can crushed pineapple
with juice
1 small box of instant vanilla pudding
1 8 ounce cool whip

Pre-heat oven to 350°. Combine cake mix, eggs, oil and 1 can of pineapple. Mix until well blended. Spray 9X13 pan and pour cake batter into pan. Cook 25-30 minutes. While cake is baking fold cool whip, instant pudding and crushed pineapple. Allow cake to cool fully then cover with frosting and enjoy.

Thanks!

to **Kelly Bearrentine**,
Mitchell 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.