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CAMILLA, GEORGIA  
[www.mitchellemc.com](http://www.mitchellemc.com)

## We're Thankful for our Sister Cooperatives

By Anne Prince

When you think about Mitchell EMC, you probably associate us with the local community. And you would be right. Our leadership team, board of directors and employees all live and work right here in the community we serve. But you may not realize that Mitchell EMC is actually part of a much larger cooperative network that brings additional value, tools and knowledge that benefit you, the members of the co-op.



### Cooperation Among Cooperatives

When a severe weather event is predicted for our region, we call on our sister co-ops in areas unaffected by the approaching storm. Through this system of mutual aid, we coordinate with other co-ops to bring additional trucks, equipment and manpower to our area. We work together and share resources in order to restore power to our community. And Mitchell EMC reciprocates by assisting other electric co-ops when they request help.

A defining characteristic of a cooperative is “cooperation among cooperatives.” This is a way that co-ops work together to meet bigger challenges such as power restoration after a severe weather event.

Another area in which Mitchell EMC benefits from cooperation among cooperatives is cybersecurity. Through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) “Rural Cooperative Cybersecurity Capabilities Program” (RC3), we are able to access training, resources and tools to strengthen our efforts to combat cyber threats.

Mitchell EMC's ability to tap into the larger electric cooperative network and access tools, products, resources and leading practices from across the nation ultimately makes our co-op and our community stronger.

### Bright spot

The Solar Utility Network Deployment Acceleration (SUNDA) project is another example of an area where Mitchell EMC has benefitted from collaboration with other electric co-ops.

Through the SUNDA project, electric co-ops were able to collect data and case studies that provide insight into challenges and solutions related to solar energy technologies. Now, electric cooperatives across the country, including Mitchell EMC, have access to a set of knowledge and resources to more efficiently tailor our renewable energy mix to meet the needs of our local communities.

### Global impact

Lastly, communities across the globe have benefitted from the lessons learned and experience of co-ops in electrification of rural areas in the U.S.

NRECA International has provided access to reliable and affordable electricity to 120 million people in 43 countries. This effort is made possible through the support of electric co-ops in this state and across the country.

Hundreds of lineworkers, engineers and other co-op employees have served as volunteers to bring first-time access to electricity and train local partners to help utilities be sustainable in their own communities.

November is a time of year for reflection and giving thanks. I am grateful for our sister co-ops who enable us to better serve you and our broader community. When electric co-ops collaborate, we strengthen each other and the communities we serve – and that is something in which to be truly thankful. Happy Thanksgiving, everyone.

*Anne Prince writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56 percent of the nation's landscape.*

# A Threat to Co-ops' Tax-Exempt Status

By Dan Riedinger

Due to an unintended consequence of current federal tax law, many electric co-ops are finding themselves in a precarious position.

Imagine working hard to secure funding for an important local project only to turn around and give a large chunk of that money back in taxes.



That's the situation many cooperatives including Mitchell EMC may face because of recent tax law changes. And it could jeopardize the not-for-profit tax status of cooperatives that receive federal or state government funding of any kind, including disaster relief aid, energy efficiency grants, economic development support and rural broadband development grants.

In order to maintain tax-exempt status, an electric cooperative must receive at least 85 percent of all revenue from its members. However, an unintended consequence of a 2017 change to federal tax law modified the calculation for some contributions by a government entity or civic group.

Now, grants and other contributions may be considered non-member revenue and could threaten a co-op's tax-exempt status. This would have a profound impact on co-ops and their members. Here are two examples:

- Otsego Electric Cooperative received a \$10 million broadband grant from the state of New York, which will put the co-op well over the 15% limit for non-member revenue in 2019. Otsego will lose its tax-exempt status if the RURAL Act is not passed this year, CEO Tim Johnson said in April. Twenty-one percent of the grant money will have to be used to pay taxes.

- West Florida Electric Cooperative Association has received \$24 million in expedited reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) this year for storm recovery work in the wake of Hurricane Michael in 2018. That's about 40% of the co-op's projected annual revenue. Gulf Coast Electric Cooperative to the south is in the same tax position, and three other Florida co-ops could surpass the 15% threshold by year's end. It's unfair to classify the FEMA reimbursement as revenue—it was for expenses that West Florida incurred to restore service to a large swath of its members after the category 5 hurricane pounded the Florida panhandle.

Encouraging Congress to fix the tax code to exempt government grants from being defined as member revenue is one of the highest priorities of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the service organization representing America's electric co-ops. Legislation called the Rural Act has been introduced in both the House and the Senate, attracting large groups of bipartisan cosponsors. However, getting it enacted into law will be a heavy lift, given the political sensitivity of tax issues on Capitol Hill.

Congress must act now to correct this unintended consequence and protect the tax status of electric co-ops. In doing so, Congress would preserve the full value of government grants that deliver societal benefits to our communities.

You can play an important role in encouraging Congress to act. Voice your support for the Rural Act by visiting [www.action.coop/ruralact](http://www.action.coop/ruralact).

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## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Trim your holiday energy costs by choosing energy efficient LED lights! LED holiday lights use less energy and can last up to 40 seasons. They're also easier to install - you can connect up to 25 LED strings without overloading a wall socket!

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



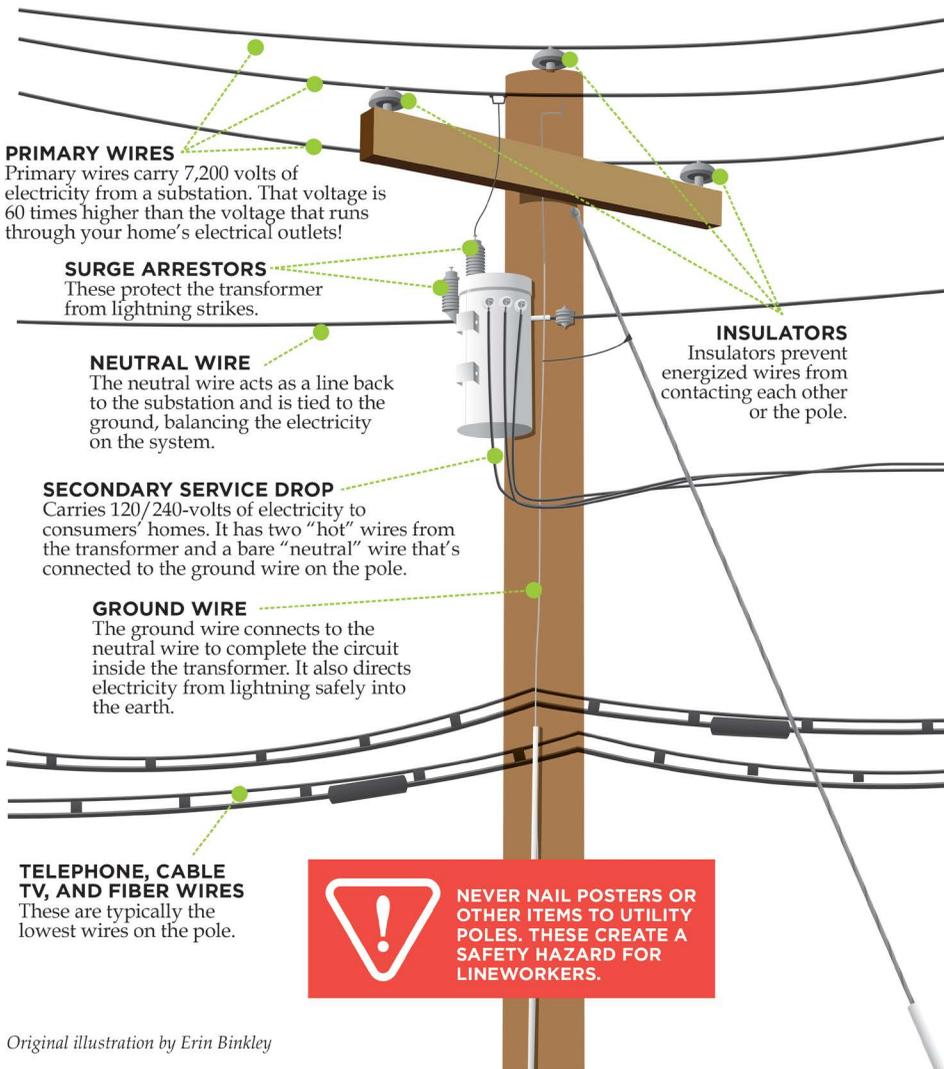
## Join us in a Cover-Up!

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.



## WHAT'S ON THAT POLE?

This illustration shows the basic equipment found on electric utility poles. The equipment varies according to the location and the service they provide.



## Employee SPOTLIGHT



**TiJauna Hamilton** is Mitchell EMC's November Employee Spotlight. TiJauna is a CSR II in the Sylvester District Office and has been employed with MEMC for 19 years.

When she is not on the job, TiJauna enjoys spending time with her family, reading, relaxing and shopping. She loves to sing and is athletic. TiJauna was healed by God of terminal cancer and is now a 20 year survivor. Three words that can be used to describe her are caring, compassionate and trustworthy.

Her favorite part about working for Mitchell EMC is "serving our members and interacting with them as well as her fellow co-workers."

## 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.***



**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



## Wild Game Chili

### Ingredients:

- 1 lb. of your favorite ground meat (deer, elk, moose, beef, whatever you prefer)
- ¼ yellow onion chopped
- 1 tbsp minced garlic
- 1 can diced tomatoes
- 1 can tomato sauce
- 1 package chili seasoning
- 1 can of mushrooms
- 1 can French style green beans
- 1 can chili beans
- 2 tbsp brown sugar

### Directions:

Brown meat. Drain grease, if any, and set aside. Sauté onions and garlic. Add meat, onions, garlic, and the rest of the ingredients to pot on the stove or crock pot. If cooking on the stove, just warm it up on med-high heat, stirring until hot! Everything is already cooked, so you basically just need to get all the canned ingredients warm. If cooking in the crock-pot, put on low for an hour or 2, then turn to keep warm setting. It doesn't take much to warm it up!

*Thanks!*

to

**Whitney H. Bridges,**  
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.