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Mission Statement

Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation is committed to meeting the needs of our membership by delivering safe, affordable and reliable services the cooperative way.

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Between the Lines

News from your community

Giving back to our community

Over the years, you've probably heard or read about Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation's concern for our community. This is one of the core principles that set cooperatives apart from other types of utilities and businesses. We've always taken this mission and responsibility to heart. It's who we are as a co-op.

Like so many of you, we've risen over the past few months to meet new challenges and strengthen the safety net for our community, particularly for those who are most vulnerable. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we've made numerous adjustments to programs and operations to maintain business continuity while staying focused on the bigger mission of helping our members during this turbulent time.

Now, with the holidays fast approaching, these recent events have made me pause and think about the role CEMC plays in our community. While our purpose is to provide safe and reliable energy to you, the members we serve, we have a greater mission: to be a catalyst for good.

You're probably aware of our Project Help program, where we take donations from generous members like you who have added a dollar or more to the amount due on their electric bills to help our most vulnerable neighbors pay their bills. Or maybe you've seen one of our articles or social media posts providing energy-saving advice to help lower your monthly bill.



By Chris A. Davis
General Manager,
Cumberland Electric
Membership
Corporation

We also have a strong commitment to safety — not just for our employees but for our community as well. We visit schools to teach children of all ages how to stay safe around electricity, and we hold safety demonstrations at community meetings and other gatherings.

CEMC invests in the economic development of the community through an active role in our local chambers of commerce.

You'll also see our employees serving on local boards, coaching youth sports and volunteering at charitable events because when you work at a co-op, you understand how important a strong community is. After all, without our members, the co-op wouldn't exist.

Though we know that our core job is to keep the lights on, our passion is our community because we live and work here, too, and we want to make it a better place for everyone.

Concern for community is the heart and soul of who we are. And no matter what the future brings, you can count on your electric co-op to care about you.

Project Help: Neighbors helping neighbors

Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation, in cooperation with local energy assistance agencies, offers a program in which members who choose to participate can donate \$1 or more each month to help provide some relief to individuals who are struggling to pay their utility bills.

The program, Project Help, allows members to contribute an additional \$1 on their electric bills each month to help pay the utility bills of the elderly, disabled and/or those who are not economically self-sufficient. Project Help is a voluntary program. All money collected from Project Help goes to energy

assistance agencies in our communities, which determine how these special funds are distributed.



If you would like to contribute to Project Help, you can do so by marking the box on your bill stub and completing the Project Help section on the back of your bill. Or contact CEMC Customer Service by phone at 1-800-987-2362 or via the Live Chat link on our website at cemc.org.

By donating to Project Help, you can help provide some relief to individuals who are struggling to pay their utility bills. A dollar a month can truly make a difference.



Add energy efficiency to your Thanksgiving menu

It takes a lot of energy to cook all day and host a house full of company for Thanksgiving. So while you're making your grocery list this holiday season, start a list of ways you and your family can cut down on energy use.

Some ideas:

- **Lower the thermostat.** If you're cooking all day, your kitchen will get really hot. Some of that heat will spill into the house. So there's no need to keep the thermostat at its usual setting.
- **Don't turn on your oven until it's full.** Cook several dishes at once. If their recommended

cooking temps are within 25 degrees of each other in either direction, everything will cook as it should.

- **Identify dishes that you can cook in the microwave,** which heats food faster than the oven and uses about a third of the electricity.
- **Run your dishwasher only if it's full.** Using the dishwasher saves more energy and water than washing dishes by hand.
- **Cool leftovers on the counter before putting them into the refrigerator.** That will keep the fridge from having to work so hard to cool off hot food.

Staying safe in your kitchen

The kitchen is often the heart of the home, where we cook for ourselves, our families and our friends. Lots of wonderful childhood memories are tied to the kitchen and the tastes and scents of favorite dishes. But kitchens are also full of potential hazards, electrical and otherwise. Like bathrooms, there is the possibility in a kitchen for water and electricity to meet with deadly consequences. Danger from fire, sharp objects such as knives, and hazardous chemicals also require preventive measures.

Electrical safety

- Make sure the outlets in your kitchen are outfitted with GFCIs (ground-fault circuit interrupters), which are designed to trip a fast-acting circuit breaker if there is a short or potential for a person to become a path to the ground, resulting in electric shock.
- Keep appliance cords away from hot surfaces, and make sure there is plenty of space around electrical outlets.
- Unplug toasters, toaster ovens, mixers, coffeemakers and other countertop appliances when not in use.
- If you experience even a slight shock from an appliance, immediately turn off the circuit breaker to that appliance, then unplug it and don't use it again until it has been checked by a certified electrician.
- Keep appliances well away from the sink. The last thing you want is for something to get wet or get knocked into a sink full of water.

Fire safety

- Keep your oven, stovetop, toaster, coffeemaker and other appliances clean to prevent grease and other types of fires.
- Keep combustibles — including napkins, paper towels, takeout containers, pizza boxes, potholders and similar items — away from your stovetop, toaster and other appliances that heat up.
- Keep an up-to-date fire extinguisher in the kitchen and know how to use it. Never use water to try to put out an electrical fire.
- Make sure there is enough room behind your refrigerator (and deep freezer, if you have one) for air to circulate, and vacuum the coils every three months to prevent dust buildup that can lead to overheating and possible fire.

Other safety tips

- Keep knives and other sharp objects in blocks or drawers.
- If you have children or pets, make sure knives are not accessible to little hands or paws. Secure household cleaners, and keep the number for poison control posted on your refrigerator just in case it's needed.

Adhering to these safety tips will help keep your kitchen a place of happy memories and not tragic reminders.

Four ways to save energy in the kitchen

By Abby Berry

Ah, the kitchen. It's undeniably one of the most-loved rooms in our homes. It's where we gather with family and friends for our favorite meals and memories. But like most of us, you probably aren't thinking about saving energy when you're planning that perfect dish. Here are four ways you can save energy in the kitchen with minimal effort:

When possible, cook with smaller appliances. Using smaller kitchen appliances like slow cookers, toaster ovens and convection ovens is more energy efficient than using your large stove or oven. According to the Department of Energy, a toaster or convection oven uses one-third to one-half as much energy as a full-sized oven.

Unplug appliances that draw phantom energy load. Halloween may be over, but it's possible you have energy vampires — appliances like coffeemakers, microwaves and toaster ovens that draw energy even when they're not in use — in your kitchen. The Department of Energy has estimated that a home's energy vampires left plugged in year-round can add up to \$100-\$200 in wasted energy costs. Unplug them when they're not in use, or, better yet, use a power strip for convenient control.

Help large appliances work less. There are small ways you can help your larger kitchen appliances run more efficiently. For example, keep range-top burners clean from spills and fallen foods so they'll reflect heat better. When it's time to put leftovers in the refrigerator, make



When it's time to do the dishes, remember to run full loads. You can also save energy by allowing your dishes to air dry. Photo source: Scott Van Osdol

sure the food is covered. And allow it to cool down first so the fridge doesn't have to work harder to cool warm food.

Use your dishwasher efficiently. Only run full loads, and avoid using the "rinse hold" function on your machine for just a few dirty dishes; it uses 3 to 7 gallons of hot water with each use. You can also save energy by letting your dishes air dry. If your dishwasher doesn't have an automatic air-dry switch, simply turn the dishwasher off after the final rinse and prop the door open so the dishes will dry faster.

Bonus tip: The best way to save energy is to not use it. Try a tasty, no-bake dessert recipe. Your sweet tooth (and energy bill!) will thank you.

By slightly adjusting a few of your habits in the kitchen, you'll be well on your way to energy savings. Contact us to learn about additional ways you can save energy and money at home.

Abby Berry 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.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Keep cold air out to save energy. Seal air leaks around pipes and any gaps around chimneys and unfinished spaces behind cupboards and closets.

Source: www.energy.gov



Shop locally to support your neighbors

Among the biggest casualties of the pandemic are locally owned small businesses. Do your part this holiday season to help them stay open. Here's how:

Stop ordering everything from Amazon. Check on Main Street for businesses that sell the same items you buy online. Even if they're not open yet, they're probably taking online and telephone orders. Buy the bulk of your holiday gifts, decorations and food from locals.

Go to farmer's markets. Many of them stayed open during the pandemic, and now is the time to repay the favor. Some are allowing customers to preorder. How great would a fresh turkey from a local farm taste during your Thanksgiving feasts? What could be better than fresh, locally grown vegetables as side dishes and pies made by someone with a business right down the street from your home?

Shop for the holidays and beyond. As long as you're shopping, think about the birthday and anniversary gifts you'll need over the next year — and buy them now. That way, you'll give some local businesses a boost when they

need it the most. Plus, you'll be prepared when it's time to wrap those gifts later.

Invest in gift cards. Buying gift cards now to spend once the economy improves infuses your favorite small business with cash at a time when it might be cash-strapped. You would spend the money anyway; why not do it in advance if you can afford it now?

Order carry-out. Start buying your morning coffee from a local café instead of from a national chain. Find a favorite restaurant with outdoor dining and go there with your family whenever you're feeling like a socially distanced evening on the town. Pick up carry-out from a locally owned diner a little more often than you ordinarily would.

Write a review. Get on Yelp and on the website of your favorite businesses and talk it up. Online reviews go a long way toward attracting customers. It will take you just a minute to post a rave review that might just save someone who lives in your community from shuttering a neighborhood institution.



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Learn more at
CumberlandConnect.org

Questions? Call (800) 987-2362



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Considering solar? We're here to help

Today's consumers want and expect options, including the type of energy powering their homes. Many homeowners are looking for a less-expensive form of energy with ongoing savings. Some are looking for a green energy source. These two motives are why many homeowners are exploring rooftop or ground-mounted solar panels.

The interest in alternative energy sources is also being fueled by decreasing costs for solar, the availability of financial incentives and the proliferation of companies offering solar panel installation.

However, as attractive and popular as rooftop or ground-mounted solar may appear, it is important for consumers to fully understand its true costs, the operational reality of this form of energy and actual energy savings. To determine whether solar is right for their particular situation, homeowners must undertake their due diligence.

We're here to help

As your trusted energy advisor, Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation can offer a candid assessment of your specific situation. After all, CEMC has a different "bottom line" that is not directly tied to the sale of a product or service. We constantly strive to find new ways to help you use energy more efficiently.

CEMC is seeking to keep pace with the changing energy environment and evolving technology. We are exploring more options that will help you manage your energy use such as energy audits and our eScore Program. We take a more holistic, objective view of how to achieve energy savings.

Is solar right for you?

Unlike a solar company that has one objective — to sell its products and services — we will look at the total energy picture and help you determine the best options for your home. While solar certainly works for many people, it's not the answer for all.

When helping co-op members determine whether solar is right for them, a co-op energy advisor will discuss the many financial considerations:



- Is there a large, up-front payment required, or are fees spread out over time?
- Will the homeowner own the panels, or will they be leased?
- Are there any hidden costs — i.e., does the roof need to be replaced before installing the panels?
- Are there ongoing maintenance fees?
- Are there rebates or other financial incentives available?
- Is the estimated energy savings worth the investment?
- Is it more cost-effective to invest in other energy-saving measures?

Most importantly, an energy advisor will provide perspective on the total energy puzzle. Taking into account current energy consumption, the home "envelope," age and efficiency of the HVAC system and home site, an energy advisor can help co-op members determine whether solar is the best choice given the homeowners' objectives.

Assessment of solar options is an excellent time to examine other potential energy-efficiency improvements for your home. For example, it may make sense to insulate the attic at the same time as installing solar.

CEMC recognizes that consumer interest in green energy sources and renewables is at an all-time high, and we stand ready to help our members determine their best options.

ENERGY SAVINGS PLAN FOR THE FAMILY



There are several easy ways you and your family can save energy at home! Print this page, assign each energy-saving task, then place it on your fridge so your family can work together to save energy — and money.

WAY TO SAVE ENERGY	ASSIGNED TO:
Turn off lights in empty rooms.	
Replace any incandescent and/or CFL bulbs with LED bulbs.	
Turn off electronics that aren't in use (TVs, gaming consoles, etc.).	
Unplug phone chargers that aren't in use.	
Turn off ceiling fans in empty rooms.	
Adjust the thermostat when you leave the house. (Set it higher in the summer and lower in the winter.)	
Once a week, make a meal that doesn't require cooking in the kitchen. (Make PB&Js or cook outside.)	
Make sure all doors and windows are closed when the air conditioner or heater is running.	

