

Watts Working

Winter's Extreme Cold Leads to Higher Bills

January was wrought with extremely cold temperatures, with several days and nights in the low 20s, teens and even single digits.

While spending the day inside in the warmth of your home, thinking about your electricity use is not likely on your priority list. You cook dinner, bump up the thermostat, throw in a load of laundry, take a hot shower, charge your devices and run the dishwasher, confident in your power supplier. Not until the time of month when your electric bill arrives, do you ask, "Why is my electric bill so high?!"

At this time of year, it's not uncommon for our member service specialists to be inundated with calls concerning higher electric bills: "I don't cook"... "I wasn't even home"... "I never adjust my thermostat"... "I only wash clothes once a week."

Even when no one is home, your house is busy keeping things running. Refrigerators, freezers, water heaters and heating systems all continue to work even if you are not home. Keeping your home hot or cold, depending on the season, accounts for a big chunk of your annual budget.



In fact, according to the U.S. Department of Energy, 45 percent of the average U.S. homeowner's energy bill is spent on heating and cooling.

Instead of waiting until after a potentially high bill is in your mailbox, be proactive. There are things you can do now to help ensure you are managing your energy use and spending less.

Colder weather outside causes your heat to come on inside, and your increased use reflects that. Your use typically mirrors the outside temperatures. While your thermostat setting is the same, the colder temperatures outside require your heating system to run more often.

It is imperative to have your HVAC unit serviced at least once a year, or better yet, twice a year, to ensure it is performing at its optimal level

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during the heating season. Also, make sure to change your air filter once a month to keep air flowing freely throughout your home.

In addition to the colder weather, often the cause for higher usage could be using more hot water during a shower or bath. Next time you take a shower, remember—heating water accounts for up to 11 percent or more of your utility bill. Limit shower time and consider insulating your water heater to reduce standby heat loss.

Caulk or weather strip overlooked cracks, gaps, and openings around windows, doors, plumbing and wiring fixtures to keep cold air from entering and warm air from escaping your house.

Savings add up in a hurry when heating and cooling systems are adjusted for maximum efficiency. Many members don't take the advice to set their thermostat at 68 degrees while awake and lowering it a few degrees at night and when not at home. Want to save more? Turning the thermostat down 2-5 degrees can save up to 5-10 percent a year

on the heating bill, about one percent for each degree. Even those with the most efficient HVAC systems will see more use in extreme weather.

Consider FlexPay – Our Pay-As-You-Go Alternative to Traditional Billing

As an alternative to traditional billing, Randolph EMC offers FlexPay, a billing options that allows you to pay for your electricity as you use it. The beauty of FlexPay is that you can “fill up” your electric account just like you fill up your gas tank in your car—one gallon at a time or with a full tank.

With FlexPay, there are no due dates or late fees, and instead of a traditional monthly billing statement, your usage and balance are calculated daily. This program is a convenient way to pay for electricity in smaller amounts so that you're never left with a large bill to pay or past-due balance.

To learn more about the benefits of FlexPay, give us a call or visit RandolphEMC.com/FlexPay.



Tips for Cutting Your Home Heating Bill

In winter months, open your curtains during the day to naturally heat your home and close them at night to keep the heat inside.



Use a programmable thermostat to set your heater back while you are away or asleep.



Consider air sealing your home and adding insulation to your walls and attic to help retain your home's heat. Up to 25 percent of your home's heat is lost through small cracks and holes throughout your home.

Seal your air ducts, and make sure they are properly insulated when they are installed in an unheated area of the home, such as an attic or crawlspace.



Weatherstrip around your doors and windows to keep warm air from escaping.



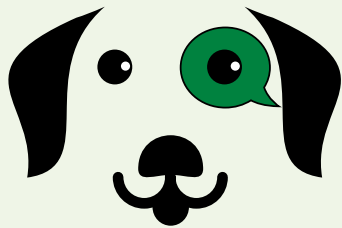
Set your ceiling fan to spin clockwise to blow the rising hot air down.



Make sure your chimney is clean.

Sources: Energy Saver (www.energy.gov/energysaver), Weatherization Assistance Program Technical Assistance Center (<http://waptac.org/>) and U.S. Energy Information Administration (www.eia.gov).

ENERGY.GOV



SPOTT ALERTS

Status of Power Outages Through Text

Stay connected during a power outage with Randolph EMC's new outage text alerts program, SPOTT Alerts!

Participating is easy—simply list your mobile number(s) on your Randolph Electric account, then text TEXTREMC to 1-877-736-2633. You'll also want to save this number to your contacts so you can quickly report your outage when necessary.

Use the following prompts to communicate via text:

1-877-736-2633: Number to text to communicate about REMC power outage

TEXTREMC	The initial text to send to opt-in to participate in the text program (<i>number must be on file in your REMC account to activate</i>)
OUT	Report an outage at service address associated with number
STATUS	Request the status of an outage (<i>may not available during widespread outage situations</i>)
QUIT	Cancels participation in outage text alerts
HELP	Provides information about REMC's text program & a number to call for additional support

Please note that only these keywords will work with the text program. Additionally, during widespread outage situations, status updates may not be available.

Powering Up

When electricity goes out, most of us expect power will be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm causes widespread damage, longer outages may result. Co-op line crews work long, hard hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of consumers in the shortest time possible. Here's what's going on if you find yourself in the dark.

1 High-Voltage Transmission Lines

Transmission towers and cables that supply power to transmission substations (and thousands of members) rarely fail. But when damaged, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.

2 Distribution Substation

Each substation serves hundreds or thousands of consumers. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to determine if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself, or if problems exist down the line.

3 Main Distribution Lines

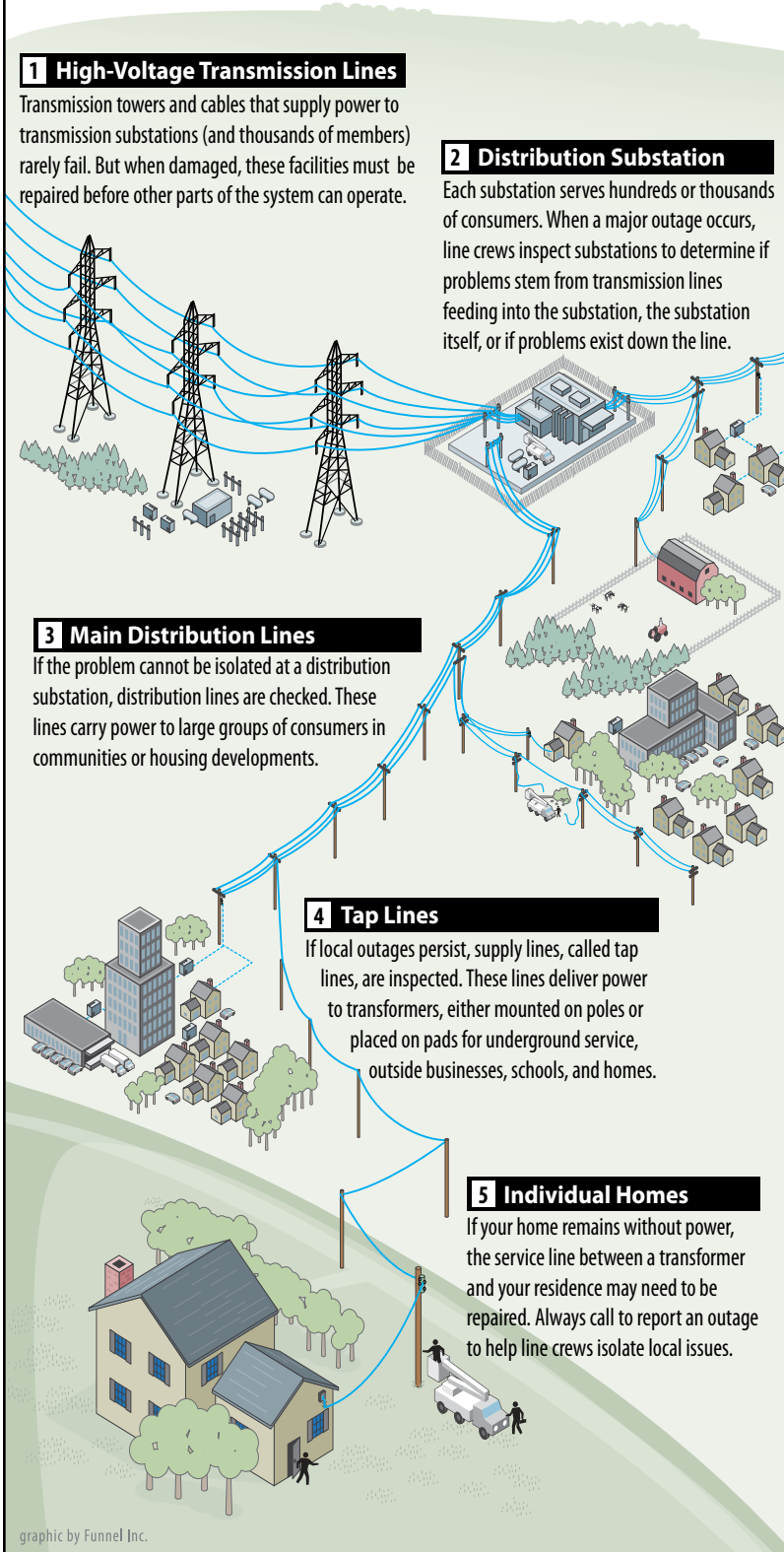
If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of consumers in communities or housing developments.

4 Tap Lines

If local outages persist, supply lines, called tap lines, are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service, outside businesses, schools, and homes.

5 Individual Homes

If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your residence may need to be repaired. Always call to report an outage to help line crews isolate local issues.



graphic by Funnel Inc.

3 Reasons to LOVE Community Solar

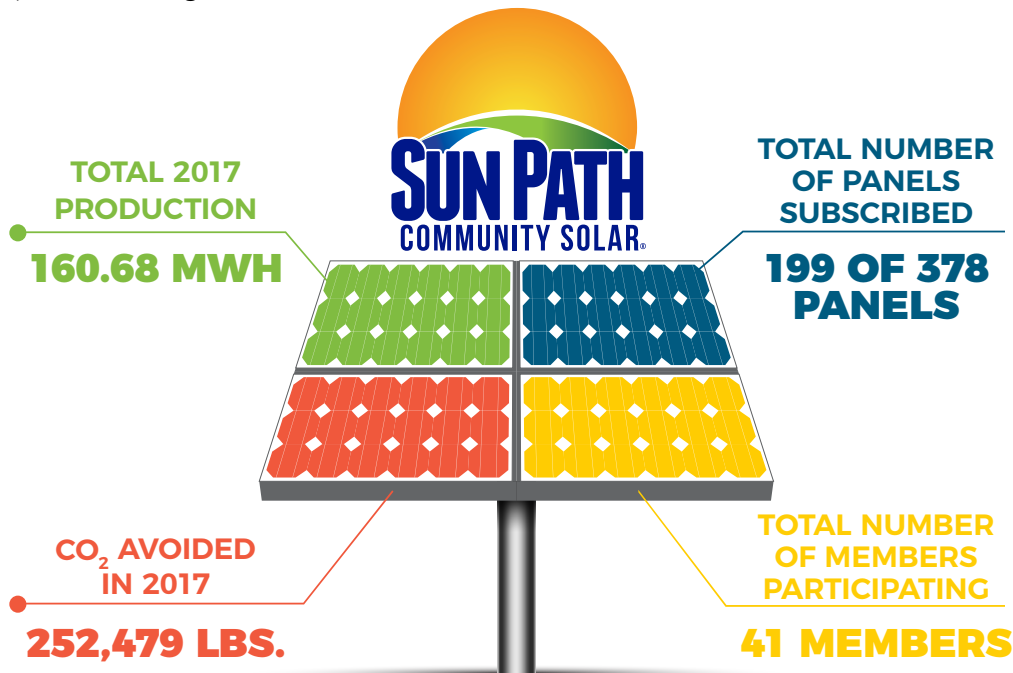


You've probably noticed solar panels on top of homes and seen a solar farm here or there. If you have considered solar as a part of your home's energy mix—but have been discouraged by high installation costs or maintenance requirements—REMC's SunPath Community Solar® program makes solar energy easily accessible for you!

The community solar model is easy to understand. At the end of 2015, Randolph EMC built a 100 kW solar array on a lot behind the Asheboro headquarters. These are available to members to purchase the energy produced by one or more solar panels. The energy is distributed to the power grid and SunPath participants receive credit on their electric bills for the number of panels in their subscription.

Here are three reasons you'll love community solar:

- 1** SunPath Community Solar costs less than installing a solar system at your home or business. Two subscription options are available for members:
 - **Full-Term:** One-time fee of \$491, production credit for 240 months
 - **Monthly:** \$2.85 per month, production credit each month, one-year commitment
- 2** If you are a homeowner, participating in community solar keeps you from having to worry about zoning restrictions or appealing to your homeowners' association. If you don't own your home, not to worry. Renters can participate, too!
- 3** Participating in a community solar program also eliminates maintenance costs and concerns that can be a hassle for those who own and maintain their own residential solar system. With community solar, Randolph EMC takes care of installation, maintenance and insurance fees, making it easy for members to participate.



To learn more about SunPath Community Solar, visit RandolphEMC.com/SunPath or call 1-800-672-8212.



NC State & UNC Basketball Camp Scholarship Applications Due March 31

Randolph EMC is accepting applications from middle-school students for all-expense paid scholarships to summer basketball camps at the University of North Carolina and NC State University. Young men can apply to attend the Roy Williams Carolina Basketball Camp in Chapel Hill, and young women can compete for a spot at the Wolfpack Women's Basketball Camp in Raleigh.

Randolph EMC will select one student for each camp in a competitive process based on academics, extra-curricular activities and a short essay. Rising sixth through eighth graders are eligible to apply, and the final application deadline is March 31.

For more information, please contact Kathleen Duckworth, Communication & Outreach Specialist, at 336-625-5177.

Swap Shop

For Sale

New Jazzy Power Chair, \$1800. New exercise chair, \$50. 336-460- 5250.

1986 Chevy, 3/4 ton, 6.2 diesel, crew cab, gooseneck & bumper hitches, toolbox, bedliner, well-maintained. 336-675-5011.

New Rollator walker, red, \$50. Propane grill with full tank of propane, never used, \$100. Free baby crib, natural maple wood with mattress. 336-409-5450.

Outside sign on wheels with letters, \$100 OBO. 336-381-3841.

New Honeywell TrueDRY DR65A3000 Whole House Dehumidifier, never unboxed. \$1,000. 336-629-5019.

Craftmatic Adjustable Queen Size bed, like new, used 6 months. Remote control with massage. \$1800. 910-571-0144.

1989 Ford Mustang 5.0 Convertible. \$2,500. 336-381-3445.

2017 Fescue Hay, 4x4 round bales, no rain, in barn. \$30 each. 336-629-6138 or 336-301-0843.

Mahindra 4550 tractor w/ over 2 years warranty still in force. Only 266 hours. Front bucket & hydraulic lines front & back. Does not require special additives in fuel. Like new, \$21,900 OBO. 910- 975-0231.

Air Compressor with Gauge & 12ft hose with Air Chuck, \$20. 336-301-2365 before 8 pm.

4x5 round bales of hay. 336-879-3489.

1999 Toyota Tacoma truck, extended cab, 119,000 miles, automatic, 2-wheel drive, \$9,000 neg. Three antique wash tubs, \$20 each. Power adjustor for RV hookup. New handmade F,Q&K quilts. 336-625-4548.

1986 GT Convertible Mustang, red with white top, one owner. \$17,000 neg. Heirloom Quilts made in the early 1940s. \$125 each OBO. 336-629-2560.

3,000 Red Sex Sal Link pullets, chickens at laying age 16 weeks plus, vaccinated and debeaked, \$6.90 and up. Liberty area. 336-708-2998 or 336-317-4105.

Cleaned deer corn, 50 lb. bags, \$6 each. Cleaned Feed Wheat, 50 lb. bags, \$8 each. Cleaned cracked corn, 50 lb. bags, \$7 each. 336-622-2480 or 336-736-0390.

Lots in the Holden Beach Area: 2 Shallotte Lots (Shell Point, 1 Supply Lot (Sandy Shoals). 336-944-7091.

Thirty-four acres on Picketts Mill Rd. 336-629-3342.

FOR RENT: Timeshare North Myrtle Beach at Peppertree Ocean Club. First week in June. Oceanfront Condo with one bedroom with King Size bed, pull out Queen sofa in living room, 1 bath, kitchen, 4th floor. 336-625-4548.

Members, email Swap Shop items to General@RandolphEMC.com

Congrats!

Congratulations to the following members who were winners in Randolph EMC's recent Autopay Giveaway promotion!

May: **Samantha Ellington**
 June: **Carlos Llamas**
 July: **Jerry T. Cole**
 August: **Molly Moore**
 September: **Paul Moscato**
 October: **Lloyd Hicks**
 November: **Jackie Beane**
 December: **Randy Hamilton**

\$500 Grand Prize Winner: William Norman (pictured above)

All winning accounts were chosen at random from the list of bills that were paid via one of our autopayment options.

A Word About Randolph Electric

From CEO Dale Lambert

SQUIRRELS AND COWS AND BEAVERS, OH MY!

Dear Members,

It's January 2nd as I write this article, and the only topic of conversation on everyone's mind is the extremely cold weather. Several months ago, my wife bought a digital thermometer that gives the outside and inside temperatures. At 6:30 this morning, the temperature was 4 degrees outside. When I got into the truck to head to work, it also read 4 degrees. I'm not 100 percent sure they are accurate, but at least they were in agreement. For our area, that's just plain out cold.

When temperatures dip into the single digits, additional strain is placed on an electrical transmission and distribution system. Your cooperative's transmission and distribution systems have performed exceptionally well, with only a few scattered load-related outages.

When designing the electrical delivery system for upgrades or new construction, we use high

standards for just these types of scenarios. If we were to design an electrical delivery system for a day in May when the high temperature is 70 degrees and the low is 50 degrees, we'd have utter chaos during times of extreme cold or hot weather.

Our engineering and operations teams work hard to keep the system operating safely and reliably. A prevented outage is much better on everyone than even the most efficient outage response. The outage that never occurs, because of preventive maintenance or our observant line personnel who identified a potential issue and made repairs, is what we focus on every day. Many times, having reliable power is never given a thought, until the lights go out.

Power outages are inevitable. Overhead electrical lines and trees, animals, lightning and freezing rain are at odds and do not play well together. Underground lines and equipment can

break down over time.

Trees are the biggest culprits of outages, however. To help reduce the number of tree-related outages, Randolph EMC has an aggressive right-of-way program that seeks to remove as many trees—dead or alive—that could come into contact with a power line as possible. With nearly 4,300 miles of line on the Randolph EMC system, and out of the hundreds of thousands of trees that stand along the rights-of-way, there's always a few that are determined to fall.

Animals also contribute to power outages quite a bit. Squirrels love to use our poles and transformers as their jungle gym, and have even used the animal guards placed on transformers as an acorn storage barn. I guess it's much easier to remember a stash of nuts in a brightly colored animal guard than a more random burial in the woods or your yard.

The list of outage causes is very long, and members sometimes



have a hard time believing what caused their power to go out. Yes, buzzards, raccoons, wasps, and even pine needles are on the list, but I can't go without mentioning ... a cow.

Now before you think I'm suggesting a cow can climb a pole, cows love to scratch their backs on guy wires. If there is a long span of wire or if the wire is slack, the cow can get into a rhythm and cause the primary and ground wires to slap together and either cause the line to blink or knock the power out. I visited a member a few years ago where we had this problem and I still don't think he believes me.

Well, as of December 12, 2017, I have a new one to add to our ever-growing list. At 9:55 that morning a large outage occurred, affecting 377 members in the Eastwood/Murdocksville area of Moore County. Our crews responded to the outage to find a tree on the three-phase line. This, in and of itself, is not unusual.

But the reason the tree fell was unusual. One of the expert tree fellers of the animal kingdom—a beaver—turned out to be the culprit. And this time, I've got proof (unlike the cow-related outage). His calling card is shown in the inset photo. Anyway, our crews responded quickly and power was restored in just 37 minutes.



I asked the line personnel why they didn't get a selfie with the beaver ... they said he was too shy.

Cooperatively Yours,

Dale F. Lambert
Chief Executive Officer



Randolph Electric Membership Corporation provides safe and reliable power with exceptional value to nearly 32,000 member accounts in Randolph, Moore, Montgomery, Chatham and Alamance counties.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Electric Service

Asheboro (336) 625-5177
..... (800) 672-8212
Robbins: (910) 948-3401
..... (800) 868-7014
Report Outage (877) REMC-OFF
..... (877) 736-2633
Account Info
& Bill Payments: (877) 534-2319
Business Hours: 8:00 am – 5:00 pm, M-F

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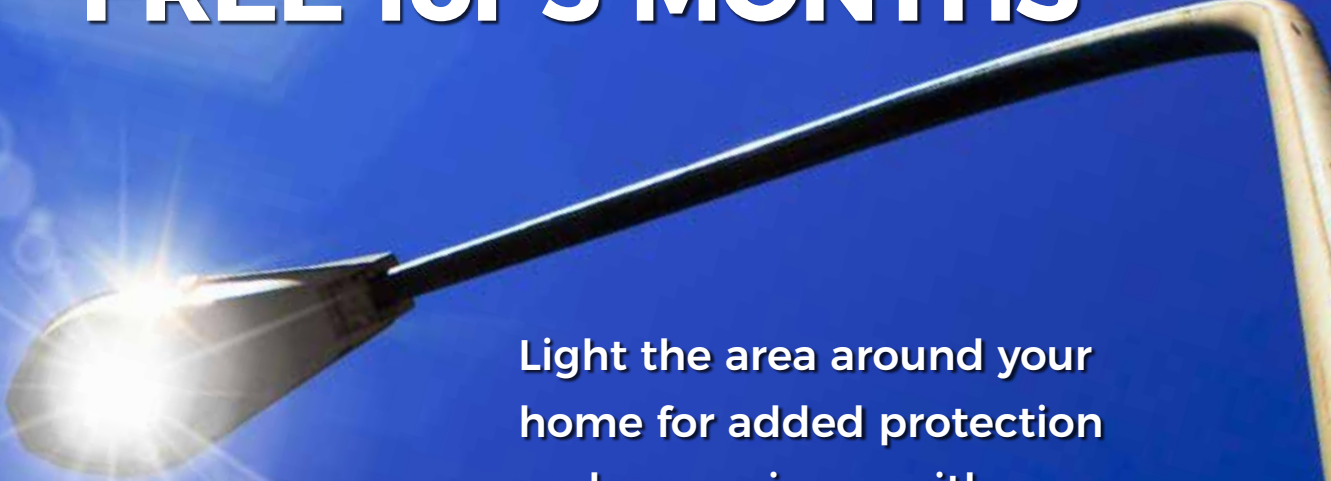
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RandolphEMC.com



Added Safety & Security FREE for 3 MONTHS



Light the area around your home for added protection and convenience with an affordable, maintenance-free outdoor security light from Randolph EMC.

Your first 3 months are free* when you add a security light to your account today!

- **Low cost** – You can protect your home and property for less than \$10 per month. No additional electrical usage – the monthly charge includes all electricity needed to operate the light.
- **Free bulb replacement and maintenance** – No need to wonder how to reach the bulb to change it. Randolph Electric personnel will replace bulbs and make all necessary repairs.
- **No light switch to remember** – The light comes on at dusk and goes off at dawn.
- **Safe and secure** – A security light gives you the peace of mind that comes with a bright, dependable light.

LED & Decorative Options Available



Randolph EMC
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

*Offer applies only to new security light connections.