

# Watts Working

## Keeping you Safe from Summer Storms

By Laura Cook, with information from the Electrical Safety Foundation International

No one knows electrical safety better than those professionals who practice it every single day. Randolph EMC encourages you to practice safety with these reminders during and after a summer storm:

- ▶ **Avoid wires and water:** When lightning strikes a home, the electrical charge can surge through pipes and utility wires. That means you can receive a shock if you are touching water or any plugged-in device, whether a landline phone or a toaster.
- ▶ **Skip the makeshift shelter:** When bad weather erupts, you may be tempted to take cover under a picnic gazebo or golf cart. However, these open-sided structures provide no conductors to channel strikes. That means a lightning bolt's path of least resistance to the ground could be through you. These structures raise your risk of a lightning strike because of their height. Don't stop here. Keep moving toward suitable shelter.
- ▶ **Portable generators:** Take special care with portable generators. They can provide a good source of power, but if improperly installed or operated, they can become deadly. Do not connect generators directly to household wiring. Power from generators can backfeed



along power lines and electrocute anyone coming in contact with them, including co-op line workers making repairs. Use a qualified, licensed electrician to install your generator and ensure that it meets local electrical codes.

- ▶ **Flooded areas:** Stay away from downed power lines and avoid walking through flooded areas. You may not be able to see submerged power lines still flowing with electricity. Report any downed lines you see to Randolph EMC by calling 1-877-736-2633 (1-877-REMC-OFF) immediately.
- ▶ **Electrical equipment:** Never use electrical equipment that is wet—especially outdoor electrical equipment, a potential danger after a summer storm. Water can damage electrical equipment and parts and pose a shock or fire hazard.

**B** Students Learn About Electrical Careers

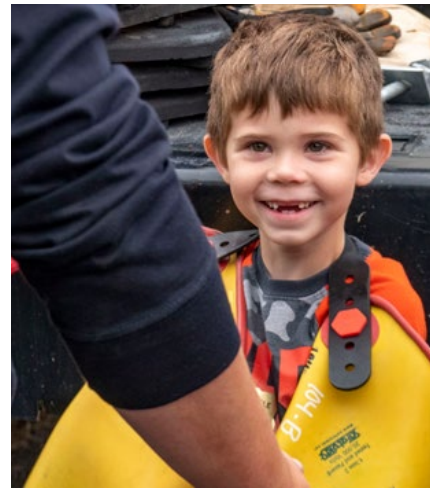
**C** Five Tips for Better Indoor Air Quality

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## Randolph EMC Teaches Students about Electrical Careers, Safety

On the morning of May 13, Randolph EMC lineworkers visited Tabernacle Elementary in Asheboro for the school's career day. Linemen Rodney Haitcock and Ryan Kivett, and Apprentice Linemen Dakota Smith and Tanner Perdue explained the responsibilities of an electrical utility worker and the tasks they perform on any given day.

The students in Julie Perdue's first grade class enjoyed learning about the functions of the bucket truck and trying on the flame-resistant gloves that lineworkers wear on the job. Randolph EMC employees encouraged the students to think about their future—especially the stable and rewarding job of keeping the lights on for rural North Carolina. Randolph EMC has a long history of supporting educators and students in our five-county region.

If your school is planning a career event in the coming school year, please contact Nicole Arnold, Communications and Public Affairs Manager, at [Nicole.Arnold@RandolphEMC.com](mailto:Nicole.Arnold@RandolphEMC.com) for more information or call her at 336-625-5177.



**Happy Independence Day!**

**REMC offices will be closed  
Monday, July 4, for the holiday.**



# Five Tips for Better Indoor Air Quality

By Abby Berry



We spend a lot of time indoors. In fact, the Environmental Protection Agency estimates the average person spends 90% of his or her life indoors. Additionally, our homes are becoming more energy efficient and better insulated. This is good news for our energy bills. However, as our homes become more tightly sealed, a lack of proper ventilation may decrease our air quality.

The thought of breathing in pollutants can be scary, but the truth is, indoor air pollution is common and simply unavoidable. The good news is there are ways you can easily improve the air quality of your home.

Here are five tips to help you breathe a little easier.

**1 Change your air filter often.** Clogged, dirty filters reduce the amount of airflow and the HVAC system's efficiency. When a filter becomes too clogged, the excess dirt and dust flow through your air ducts, adding unnecessary allergens and other unwanted particles into your living space. During the cooling season (summer months), the Department of Energy recommends replacing your air filter every month or two. This is one of the easiest ways to promote better indoor air quality and energy efficiency.

**2 Regularly vacuum carpet and rugs—** especially if you have furry friends. Vacuuming carpet and area rugs once a week can greatly reduce the accumulation of pet dander and dust inside your home. Frequently clean other areas that collect dust, like drapes, bedding and cluttered areas.

**3 Use vents to remove cooking fumes.** Those exhaust fans can do more than hide the smell of burned bacon. Fans help remove fumes emitted while cooking and eliminate unwanted moisture and odors. They may be a bit noisy, but these handy tools can help you improve indoor air quality while you prepare a culinary masterpiece (or even a grilled cheese sandwich!).

**4 Get a handle on humidity.** Summer months typically bring more humidity, especially if you live in a high-humidity climate zone. Moisture in the air can carry bacteria and other unwanted particles that you eventually breathe in. Dehumidifiers work to remove that moisture from the air, reducing the amount of bacteria, mold and other allergens in your home.

**5 Incorporate air-purifying plants into your living space.** There are several varieties of indoor plants that can help detoxify your home from dust and germs found in a variety of home products, furniture and other materials. A few low-maintenance, air-purifying plants to consider are snake plants, aloe vera plants and pothos plants (also known as Devil's Ivy). These vibrant, lush plants are eye-catching and beneficial for any home. Remember to review care conditions and think about placement for any new plants you add to your home.

*Taking simple steps to purify indoor air can improve health and overall quality of life. With a little effort, you can improve the indoor air quality of your home and breathe a bit easier.*

# Spotlight on a Bright Idea:

## Local Students Aid Dwindling Butterfly Populations

For the past 28 years, Randolph EMC has demonstrated our commitment to education by sponsoring the Bright Ideas education grants in K–12 classrooms of public, charter and private school teachers. During this time, Randolph Electric has invested more than \$300,000 in innovative projects that have benefited students in our five-county area.



Monarch butterflies are known by their striking orange, black and white wing designs.

In the 2021 grant cycle, Jessica Hoffmire, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) teacher at Uwharrie Charter Academy won a Bright Ideas grant for her project called Winged Warriors. Hoffmire taught children how to grow host plants hospitable to butterflies. The project demonstrated how human efforts can support an ecosystem especially when a species is in decline.

Through the grant, Randolph EMC provided materials including seeds, topsoil, plant tags and compost. These supplies became the building blocks for hands-on learning experiences at the school.

Students in kindergarten through third grade participated in the Bright Ideas project. Hoffmire first explained the life cycle of a butterfly, with a special focus on the Eastern Black Swallowtail and the Monarch.

Next, kindergartners and first graders made biodegradable flowerpots to hold milkweed plants. At the same time, second and third graders planted milkweed seeds in small starter trays. On the second week in April, Hoffmire and her students transplanted the milkweed sprouts to their biodegradable pots, for eventual planting in a garden.

On a school day in March, students

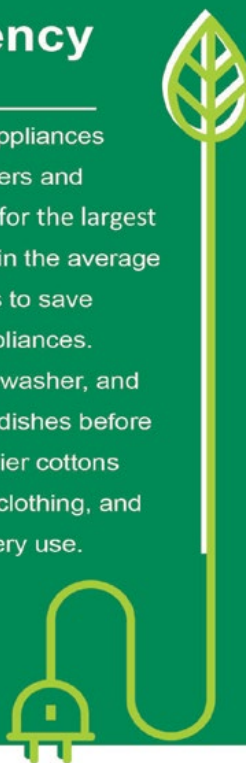
gathered in the school's atrium to learn more about the cultivation of their milkweed plants and how the plants would support butterflies in the natural world. Hoffmire created an atmosphere similar to a greenhouse for the plants to ensure ideal growing conditions.

Removing a clear cover from the seedling trays, Hoffmire asked the class to observe the tender, green sprouts. When the children pointed out the condensation on the plants, Hoffmire described how cold air outside the container caused the warm, moist air inside to condense. Some children ran their fingers through the water droplets on the inside of the seedling tray covers.

### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

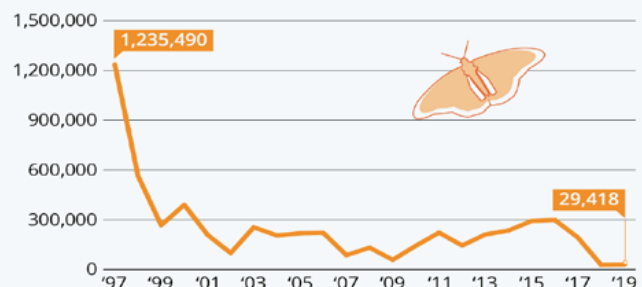
The combined use of large appliances like dishwashers, clothes dryers and washing machines accounts for the largest percentage of electricity use in the average U.S. home. Take small steps to save energy when using these appliances. Only run full loads in the dishwasher, and thoroughly scrape food from dishes before loading. Dry towels and heavier cottons separate from lighter-weight clothing, and clean the lint screen after every use. Wash clothing in cold water to save energy used to heat water.

Source: EIA and DOE



### Western Monarchs Rapidly Declining

Population of the Western Monarch butterfly between 1997-2019



Data collected during Xerces Society's annual Western Monarch Thanksgiving Count  
Source: Xerces Society



statista

This chart shows the population of the Western Monarch butterfly between 1997-2019, recorded annually by the Xerces Society.



Uwharrie Charter Elementary students learn about host plant and butterfly life cycles.



“We have to water them every week,” said third-grader Olivia, referring to the seedlings.

Each week, Hoffmire re-positioned the trays on shelves in the atrium to adjust the milkweed’s growing schedule.

“The top tray gets the most light,” said Gabriel.

This spring, the students continued to observe the progress of the milkweed plants and were able to transplant them.

“Working on this project to support butterflies in their environment connects the children to the natural world,” said Hoffmire of the project. “Monarch butterflies in particular are endangered. We continue to see their populations plummet. One of the goals of Winged Warriors is to promote awareness of the needs of butterflies to exist.”

### Call for Applications

If you know of an educator whose classroom would benefit from an innovative learning opportunity, please tell him or her to apply for a Bright Ideas education grant of up to \$2,000.

Applications and more information about the program can be found at [NCBrightIdeas.com](http://NCBrightIdeas.com).

Bright Ideas grant applications will be accepted through September 15, but teachers are encouraged to apply early. Those who submit their application by August 15 will be entered to win one of five \$100 Visa gift cards.

Supported by all 26 electric cooperatives in North Carolina, Bright Ideas grants have contributed \$14.3 million to N.C. classrooms, funding a total of 13,536 projects that have benefited well over 2.8 million students statewide since 1994.



Third-grade students observe their milkweed seedlings.



Support for youth and education is part of our continued commitment to building a brighter future for the communities we serve. To learn more, visit [RandolphEMC.com](http://RandolphEMC.com).

# A Word About Randolph Electric

From CEO Dale Lambert

## GETTING RELIABLE, DEPENDABLE POWER TO YOU

Dear Members,

Providing safe, reliable and affordable energy to power your homes and business is a foundational objective within our planning and operations. For the next few AWARE columns, I would like to provide perspective on some steps we are taking to raise the bar in our energy delivery to you.

Let's start with reliability. We know the dependence you have on us to keep the power flowing. Most of the time, we—and I include myself here—give no thought to what it takes to deliver reliable power. When we flip on that light switch, adjust the thermostat, open the frig, charge electronic devices, recharge electric vehicles, or perform the hundreds of other activities that require electricity, we simply expect the power to flow immediately and without interruption.

Annually, as we develop our strategic plan and budget for the coming year, your Randolph EMC Board of Directors commits attention and resources to reducing outages and improving restoration times.

This is a challenge for the 4,400 miles of line that Randolph EMC maintains through all the lightning, wind, trees, ice, animals (everything from squirrels to

snakes to cows rubbing guy wires that slap the primary and neutral lines together), vehicle accidents and intense heat and cold.

For the year 2021, on average, the power flowed to Randolph EMC members 99.982 percent of the time. To put that into an annual perspective, that's the equivalent of getting into your car today and driving for 364 days, 22 hours and 27 minutes without stopping. In other words, taking into account there are 8,760 hours in a year, you would stop for only 1 hour, 33 minutes to rest during that time. This is the lowest outage time for members for at least the last decade, and in my estimation, a record. Certainly, major storm events factor into this number and we were very blessed in 2021 that no major storms hit the system.

### Factors Involved

There are several different factors that are critical to delivering reliable power. A structured and timely right-of-way maintenance program is essential. For 2022, we expect to spend over \$3.8 million to control tree growth along the rights-of-way on the system. There is a direct relationship between an aggressive right-of-way program, reduced outages and a more efficient storm response, because trees are the major culprit for outages, especially during storms.

Another factor that contributes to providing reliable power is replacing and upgrading aging infrastructure, conductors, poles and hardware. For 2022, Randolph EMC expects to spend over \$5.3 million in system improvement projects. These projects will result in fewer outages, improved outage restoration times and increased capacity for future growth.

As our employees perform their duties each day, they look for potential problems that may cause an outage. Some of these issues are the following: vines growing up on poles or guy wires, dead trees, broken strands in the wire, cracked and broken insulators and other equipment that needs replacing. We are also on the lookout for heavy equipment working in the vicinity of a power line. This proximity could cause an outage and create a safety hazard by coming into contact with a power line.

Technology plays a major role in reducing outage time. We continually upgrade technology in our storm center to improve communications and data flow between substations and devices throughout the distribution system. This allows for more accurate information to flow into the storm center during power



outages which improves efficiency in restoring power.

The addition of "self-healing grid" technology also improves reliability for members.

This technology essentially ties together sections of line from two different sources. If a fault occurs in a section of line within the feed, the reclosers can isolate the area affected and back-feed the unaffected portions from another source. This "healed" portion of the grid brings the lights back on for some members who would otherwise be out of power until repairs are made.

The impressive thing is all this happens automatically within about a minute and can significantly reduce the number of members affected by an outage. Because we serve mainly rural areas, we are limited by geographic and operational considerations. But we plan to install as many of these self-healing operations on the system as physically and economically possible.

### How to Stay Informed

Staying informed when an outage occurs is very important for our members. That is why we have significantly increased communications with you during storm events and power outages through SPOTT (Status of Power Outages Through Text) Alerts and direct emails. SPOTT Alerts is an outage texting program that allows vital information to flow between you and the co-op during power outages. To take advantage of these communications avenues, we need your email and mobile number on your account so we can keep you informed.

### How to sign up for Text Alerts:

1. Make sure your cell phone number is listed on your REMC account
2. Text the code TEXTREMC to 1-877-736-2633
3. Verify your location address
4. Receive a confirmation message that you are enrolled, along with a list of keywords you can use
5. You now can report power outages, request status updates and receive notifications



If you do lose power, the first thing to do is to check your breakers. Many times, we receive a call concerning an outage and when we arrive, we find a breaker tripped at the member's home. If the problem is not a breaker, please report your outage by calling Randolph EMC's outage system at 1-877-REMC-OFF (1-877-736-2633), or if we have your mobile number on file, simply text the word OUT to the same number. Members can also contact us through our regular phone numbers anytime, day or night, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Our goal is to provide you with the most dependable electric service possible. As I noted earlier, it can be quite a challenge. Your employees take great pride in doing all they can to keep the power from going out and restoring electric service as safely and quickly as possible when it does. And we will continue to do so in the future.

Cooperatively Yours,

Dale F. Lambert  
Chief Executive Officer



Randolph Electric Membership Corporation provides safe and reliable power with exceptional value to more than 33,000 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 am – 5 pm, M-F

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# 5 EASY WAYS TO PREPARE YOUR HOME FOR *Vacation*

1. Set or **program your thermostat** to 85 degrees while you are away.
2. **Unplug** small appliances and electronic devices including gaming systems so that they don't draw power.
3. **Adjust your hot water heater.** For a natural gas water heater, turn it to low. For an electric version turn it off at the circuit breaker.
4. **Shut all your curtains and blinds.**
5. Make sure your **sump pump is working.**

 **Safe  
Electricity.org**

