



# Pitt and Greene

## Electric Membership Corporation

*“Where Customers Have A Choice”*

*Member Newsletter*

*July 2014*

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### Grain bins: harvesting safely

As rewarding as it may be, farming is an extremely difficult job and it ranks among the top 10 most dangerous professions in the United States. At Pitt & Greene EMC safety is top priority for all our employees and our members.

Our farmers work hard to get the job done, and sometimes it's easy to forget all the necessary steps to take when practicing safe operations. Grain bins are built for storing grain and fermented feed known as silage. These bins play an integral role in the efficiency and profitability of farm and ranch operations, and safety regulations should always be considered when working around these structures.

Whether you're purchasing new grain bins or remodeling areas that contain existing ones, proximity to overhead power lines must be a considered factor.

**Safe clearance.** The National Electrical Safety Code requires an 18-foot minimum vertical clearance from the highest point of the filling port of the grain bin to nearby high-voltage wires and a 55-foot minimum distance from the power line to the grain bin wall. Changes to landscaping and drainage work can affect clearance heights of power lines, so remember to check these measurements regularly.

**Filling grain bins.** High-voltage power lines are not insulated, so it's important to remember to maintain an adequate high-wire clearance when using a portable auger, conveyor or elevator to fill your grain bin.

**Moving equipment near grain bins.** When moving equipment, such as a hopper or a scaffold, be aware of nearby power lines. Remember to maintain a 10-foot clearance to ensure safety.

Accidents can happen in a split-second, which is why Pitt & Greene EMC reminds you to always use caution when working near power lines. If you are considering a plan for a new grain bin or reconstruction of an existing bin's site, please contact Pitt & Greene EMC at 252/753/3128 and let us assist you in maintaining a safe environment for you and your family.

Do you or a loved one rely on medical equipment that is supplied by electricity? If so, do you know what you will do if the lights are out for an extended length of time due to damage caused by a storm, tornado or hurricane?

Now is the time to put a backup plan in place in the event power is knocked out. We will restore power as soon as possible, but depending on the type of damage caused and where the damage may be, we cannot guarantee how long you may be affected by an outage.



## ***Manager's Message***

***By: Mark A. Suggs***

The Pitt and Greene EMC Board of Directors, in February, approved the reduction of electric rates by 3.22%. Currently, electric cooperatives pay a 3.22% franchise tax to the state of North Carolina. Because it is an ongoing cost of doing business the tax has always been a part of the rate. Last year, the General Assembly and Governor Pat McCrory enacted a change to North Carolinas tax structure through House Bill 998 (Session Law 2013-316). This change will affect taxes paid by families, individuals and businesses including your electric cooperative.

The new legislation eliminates the franchise tax on electric utilities, including cooperatives, and increases the sales tax on electricity to families, individuals and businesses effective July 1, 2014. What you will see on your bill after July 1, 2014 will be 7% sales tax instead of 3% sales tax. For homeowners with an average monthly bill of \$100.00, the net increase in their bill attributed to the tax law changes is expected to be less than \$1.00.

The new tax legislation also eliminated the "state tax holiday" on buying efficient Energy Star-labeled appliances, effective July 1, 2014. Existing exemptions for manufacturers, farming operations and data centers are still in place.

Further information is available on the North Carolina Department of Revenue's website at [www.dornrc.com](http://www.dornrc.com).

The tax reform legislation discussed above is just that, and has nothing to do with solar energy as you may have been lead to believe from other sources.

The electric industry is in a new era of transformation. Many changes will develop as a result of legislation. Other changes will come about as a result of discovery, such as the large deposits of natural gas. Base generation will have to continue and while solar will have a place in the landscape, it alone cannot replace coal generation. The most dependable energy source available to fill the job of replacing coal is natural gas.

The likelihood of solar expansion continuing beyond the tax subsidies is predicted to be unlikely.

## Small Measures, Real Savings

Following are low-cost solutions that could save money on your monthly electric bill.

First, ask yourself a simple question: Does my home feel drafty and cold in the winter, or stuffy and hot in the summer? If yes, then it probably experiences air leakage.

To track down where those spots are, start with the usual suspects, like damaged seals around doors and windows. If you see daylight or feel air, then apply caulk and weather stripping to keep outdoor air where it's supposed to be.

But don't forget spots you might not immediately think of, like recessed canister lights and electrical outlets. Outlet insulation kits can be purchased for as little as \$2, and you can fix up your canister lights with some caulk around the edges. Also look where walls meet the ceiling. Cobwebs mean you've got drafts.

Next, peek into the attic and inspect the crawl space or basement for sufficient insulation. Check out the insulation calculator from the Oak Ridge National Laboratory at [www.ornl.gov/~roofs/Zip/ZipHome.html](http://www.ornl.gov/~roofs/Zip/ZipHome.html). Keep in mind insulation won't do its job well if you don't have a proper air barrier working in tandem. That means all joints and cracks must be sealed between your living space and insulation.

Finally, look to your light fixtures. Compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs) are up to 75 percent more efficient than traditional incandescent bulbs, and they've come a long way in light quality, design, and affordability. You can purchase CFLs in a variety of shapes and hues. They cost more upfront, but you'll make your money back in less than nine months and, after that, they start saving money. Make sure to purchase a CFL that's rated by ENERGY STAR, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's program that denotes products meeting specific energy efficiency criteria. ENERGY STAR-rated CFLs will typically last 10 times longer than a traditional incandescent bulb producing the same amount of light.

LEDs, light-emitting diodes, are in the next wave of residential lighting. An ENERGY STAR-rated model is estimated to use only a quarter of the electricity consumed by traditional bulbs and can last for 25 years. As with many new technologies, the up-front cost for an LED bulb is still much more than even a CFL, but prices are expected to drop as new products are developed.

To learn more about ways to reduce your electric bill, visit [EnergySavers.gov](http://EnergySavers.gov) OR [TogetherWeSave.com](http://TogetherWeSave.com).

## Keep food cool as temperatures heat up

Summer months are great for grilling. And that means you don't have to use electricity to operate the oven or stove – or cool a hot kitchen. It's a great way to be energy efficient and save, but don't stop with energy efficient cooking methods. Use these simple tips to keep your food, and your bill, cool this summer:

- Fill the fridge. Full refrigerators and freezers don't have to work as hard to cool the warm air that enters when you open the door. If you are busy freezing fresh vegetables from the garden for winter use, this should be easy. If not, use jugs of water or ice bags in the freezer to keep your fridge full and cool.
- Do some maintenance. When was the last time you moved your refrigerator away from the wall? Last month? Last year? When the deliveryman put it there? Pull the unit away from the wall and spend a few minutes cleaning the coils. When the coils are clean, the refrigerator cycles on and off less, saving you money.

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## Important Sales and Use Tax Notice

*A purchaser (farmers, manufacturers and commercial laundries) that is eligible for a preferential tax rate on electricity should complete and furnish the seller/ electricity supplier Form E-595E, Streamlined Sales and Use Tax Agreement Certificate of Exemption, to take advantage of qualifying reductions.*

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- Wait to put the leftovers away. If those burgers are still hot from the grill, let them cool off a little before you put them in the fridge. Of course, health and safety come first, and you should never consume food that has been sitting out too long, but waiting just a few minutes to put hot food away will mean your fridge isn't working as hard to cool it down.
- Check your settings. You probably don't need to keep your refrigerator and freezer on the coldest settings. Your refrigerator can be set between 36 and 38 degrees, while your freezer can be set anywhere from 0 to five degrees.
- Shut the door. The more you open the door of your refrigerator and freezer, the more cold air escapes and warm air gets in. Of course you have to open the door to get food in and out, but an organized fridge means less time spent staring at containers of mystery and moving pizza boxes around to dig for that much-coveted piece of lemon icebox pie.
- Consider getting rid of that extra fridge or freezer in the garage. If you aren't really using it, that old fridge is costing you a few dollars every month to cool a few cans of soda. That adds up throughout the year. Is it worth it?
- If you do decide to get rid of the refrigerator in your garage, or if it's time to replace the one in your home, don't just leave it at the dump. There are recycling programs that help you get rid of your old refrigerator responsibly. Some retailers will take your old appliance and make sure the materials in it will be reused or properly disposed of, and many cities will pick up large appliances as well.
- Visit [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov) before making a purchase. Their refrigerator retirement savings calculator can be a big help, and their advice can help you determine the best, most efficient appliance for you.



### Energy Efficiency

### *Tip of the Month*

During summer months, our homes can be extremely hot, making living conditions uncomfortable. Before you fire up your air conditioner, try cooling off with a ceiling fan first. Using ceiling fans can actually raise your thermostat setting by 4 degrees and still feel just as comfortable.

*Source: Department of Energy*

De lunes a viernes de 8:00 a.m. a 5:00 p.m.

252-753-3128 ó 1-800-622-1362

Snow Hill

De lunes a viernes

De 8:00 a.m. a 12:30 p.m. y de 1:30 p.m. a 5:00 p.m.

252-747-7600

CORTES DE SUMINISTRO ELÉCTRICO Y EMERGENCIAS:

Durante fines de semana, días festivos y después del horario de oficina

252-753-8778

Co-op Office Hours

Farmville

Monday - Friday - 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

252-753-3128 or 1-800-622-1362

Snow Hill

Monday - Friday

8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m.-5:00 p.m.

252-747-7600

POWER OUTAGES & EMERGENCIES

During weekends, holidays and after office hours

252-753-8778