



Serving members in Baldwin, Emanuel, Glascock, Hancock, Jefferson, Johnson, Laurens, Warren, Washington and Wilkinson counties

## Reflecting on progress, planning for the future

**A**s we close another year, I want to pause and express gratitude—for you, the members of Washington EMC—for your continued trust and support. Our cooperative was built on the promise of people coming together to improve the quality of life in their communities and that promise still guides everything we do today.

Each decision, whether it's about upgrading software, delivering reliable electricity or advocating for a speedier, post-storm reimbursement process, comes back to one simple question: How will this benefit the members we serve?

This past year has been marked by meaningful progress. With our largest software upgrade and conversion implemented through the initial stages in November, Washington EMC is excited to employ the much-improved operational, accounting and member billing/payment software.

Though many of the upgrades

support our employees in delivering the power to your meter more efficiently, many more will help our members access and pay their bills anytime, from anywhere, receive alerts and notifications via email and text messages, and closely monitor your energy use to help reduce your bill—all from your smartphone or computer, via the new SmartHub web app. While the conversion is still in the early stages of fulfillment, we are already realizing the benefits and wish to thank you for your patience as we progressed through the training and implementation stages.

Over the past year, electric cooperatives across the country also came together for advocacy efforts on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Power Plant Rule. As originally written, the rule would have forced a rapid shift away from always available power generation resources, threatening the accessibility of a diverse fuel supply that keeps electricity reliable.



**Wendy Sellers**  
*President/CEO*

Renewable energy sources are an essential and growing part of our energy future, but we also know that the demand for electricity is rapidly rising, and natural gas, coal and nuclear remain essential for ensuring power is available around the clock. As we collaborated and engaged with policy-makers, we pressed for a more balanced approach to generating power—one that supports clean energy innovation while still recognizing the role of traditional resources. Our efforts are helping to shape a more workable path forward that better protects reliability and keeps costs in check for Washington EMC members.

Another area of ongoing progress came through advocacy work on federal permitting reform. For too long, outdated rules and lengthy delays have stood in the way of building critical infrastructure, including new transmission lines and generation projects. Modernizing this process is essential

*Continued on page 20B*





An electric membership corporation

258 N. Harris St. • P.O. Box 598  
Sandersville, GA 31082

Email: [wemc@washingtonemc.com](mailto:wemc@washingtonemc.com)  
Website: [www.washingtonemc.com](http://www.washingtonemc.com)  
Wendy Sellers, President/CEO

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Mike McDonald,**  
*Chair, District 1*

**Mike Beckworth,**  
*Vice Chair, District 6*

**Brenda English,**  
*Secretary/Treasurer, District 3*

**Mildred W. Jackson,** *District 5*

**Jeff Lacksen,** *District 2*

**Becky Prince,** *District 4*

**Ken Vickers,** *District 7*

#### SANDERSVILLE OFFICE HOURS

8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Monday through Friday

#### PHONES

Local (478) 552-2577  
Long distance (800) 552-2577

#### 24-HOUR CALL CENTER

To report a power outage or  
pay by phone, please call:  
Local (478) 552-2577  
Long distance (800) 552-2577

#### BRANCH LOCATIONS

12860 Broad St.  
Sparta, GA 31087  
*Closed on Thursday*

100 W. College St.  
Wrightsville, GA 31096  
*Closed on Wednesday*

#### Convenient bill pay options include:

##### DRIVE-THRU WINDOW

319 N. Smith St., Sandersville, GA 31082  
Monday through Friday,  
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

##### PAY ONLINE

Visit [www.washingtonemc.com](http://www.washingtonemc.com)  
and click the "Pay Now" button  
to pay your bill online.

##### SMARTHUB APP

Download, sign up and use the free  
SmartHub app and web portal online at  
[www.washingtonemc.com/smarthub](http://www.washingtonemc.com/smarthub).

## Reflecting on progress, *Continued from page 20A*

if we are going to strengthen the electric grid and keep pace with growing demand. This year, electric co-ops helped move the needle on permitting reform, advocating for policies that make the process faster, more predictable and more efficient. Investments we make in infrastructure will reach communities sooner, improving reliability and preparing us for the future.

We're also seeing progress with bipartisan support of the Fixing Emergency Management for Americans (FEMA) Act of 2025, which would speed up the disaster recovery process for electric cooperatives and the communities they serve. Severe storms are a fact of life, and their impact on the electric system can be devastating.

We all remember how challenging the days, weeks and months were after Hurricane Helene hit our 10-county territory in the early morning hours of September 27, 2024. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is a crucial partner for electric co-ops in efforts to restore power after disaster strikes, but currently, the federal reimbursement process after a major storm is slow and full of red tape. If passed, the bill would make FEMA

a stronger, more responsive agency to help strengthen rural resilience, protect taxpayer dollars and ensure essential services are restored as quickly as possible after a natural disaster.

Hurricane Helene was the worst natural disaster to hit Washington EMC. Our dedicated team worked 16 days straight to restore power to every member, but the work still continues as we navigate through the complicated process to receive reimbursement of those costs from FEMA.

Achievements like these are not just wins in Washington, D.C. They are wins for Washington EMC members like you!

As we look ahead to a new year, I see challenges and opportunities on the horizon. The energy industry is undergoing significant change driven by the rising need for more electricity, new tools and technologies, and federal energy policies.

The path forward requires innovative thinking and member-focused solutions. I'm confident that with the dedication of Washington EMC employees and the continued support of our members, we are well positioned to adapt and meet challenges head on. Through it all, our promise to you remains steadfast: safe, reliable power for today—and tomorrow.



# Community news



- **Toy drive:** Every year, Washington EMC participates in toy drives in our service area. Toys can be dropped off at one of our locations before December 8. This is a great way to give back to people in our community and help put a smile on a child's face.

- **2026 Washington Youth Tour:** Washington EMC is accepting applications for the 2026 Washington Youth Tour. To be eligible, students must attend school within the Washington EMC service area, be a high school junior, be at least 16 years old by June 13, 2026, and have parent or guardian permission to enter and participate.



More information and applications can be obtained from your school counselor or by contacting Washington EMC Youth Tour Coordinator Denise Wombles at (800) 552-2577 or online at [www.washingtonemc.com](http://www.washingtonemc.com). The deadline to apply is January 16, 2026.

- **2026 Walter Harrison Scholarship:** Washington EMC is accepting applications for the Walter Harrison Scholarship. High school seniors who live in the household of a Washington EMC member can apply for the Walter Harrison Scholarship until January 16, 2026. The \$1,000 scholarship may be used at any Georgia accredited college, university or technical school.



Nineteen winners will be selected statewide. Applications can be obtained from your school counselor or by contacting Washington EMC Walter Harrison Scholarship Coordinator Denise Wombles at (800) 552-2577 or online at [www.washingtonemc.com](http://www.washingtonemc.com).

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

To maximize your fire-place's efficiency, always keep the damper closed when the fireplace is not in use. An open damper is like an open window, allowing warm indoor air to escape and cold air to enter. Consider installing a fireplace insert, which improves heat output by circulating warm air into the room rather than letting it escape up the chimney. Also, burn only seasoned hardwood to ensure a hotter, cleaner burn. Regularly clean and inspect your chimney to maintain safe and efficient operation.

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



## Holiday office closure

Washington EMC offices will close on Wednesday, December 24, and Thursday, December 25, for Christmas holidays, as well as Thursday, January 1, 2026, for New Year's Day.

For emergency services or to report a power outage, call (478)552-2577 or (800)552-2577.





LIMITED TIME ONLY

Sign up today at  
[ConexonConnect.com/Save](https://ConexonConnect.com/Save)  
or call (844) 542-6663.



Use code: GIG25

Restrictions apply. See terms at  
[ConexonConnect.com/Save](https://ConexonConnect.com/Save).  
Offer ends 12/31/25.

**\$150 OFF**  
**Gig Speed Internet**  
for first 6 months of service

## GATE cards are due December 31, 2025

**G**eorgia Agricultural Tax Exemption (GATE) cards are due to Washington EMC by December 31, 2025. If GATE cards are not received by this date, accounts will be removed from tax-exempt status.

### How does it work?

Qualified agricultural producers must submit their new tax exemption certificate to Washington EMC in order to receive a sales-tax exemption on agriculture equipment and production inputs.

### How do I apply?

Applications may be completed electronically online at [www.agr.georgia.gov](http://www.agr.georgia.gov) or submitted by mail. We anticipate applications being available at your county Farm Bureau office. More information can also be found at [www.agr.georgia.gov](http://www.agr.georgia.gov).

Questions? Call (855) FARM TAX or (855) 327-6829. If you would like to receive text messages with updates on the tax exemption program, simply text "GATE" to 72727.

**GATE**

Georgia Agricultural Tax Exemption  
GEORGIA DEPT of AGRICULTURE