



# The LAMPLIGHTER

Official Member Newsletter of Washington EMC

May 2026

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

## Understanding Georgia 811

**S**pring is marching on and summer is right around the corner. By now, many of us have ventured outside to enjoy Mother Nature in some form or another. Whether fishing, gardening or visiting with family and friends, the pleasant weather allows us to be more active. With that in mind, many Washington EMC members are taking on home improvement projects and working more around their home and property. If any of these projects include digging, such as adding a deck, building a shed or outbuilding, installing a fence or planting landscaping, special care must be taken to avoid underground utilities.

As an electric utility, we constantly

stress the safety measures needed to live and work around the power we provide. We highlight the hazards our overhead lines pose whether it involves downed lines from an automobile accident or broken poles and lines after a storm passes. Just as important as being safe around the overhead power lines, we want our members to be properly informed about the dangers involved with buried lines and infrastructure underground. This is where Georgia 811 comes into focus.

Georgia 811 is a nonprofit dedicated to preventing damage to Georgia's underground utilities and promoting public safety. They function as a communication system, connecting member utility companies with profes-

sional excavators and homeowners who are planning mechanized digging activities like excavation, tunneling, grading, boring and demolition.

Although it is not required by Georgia law to notify Georgia 811 if a smaller, nonmechanized digging project is planned, residents are encouraged to do so to help ensure their personal safety and the safety of those around them.

Whether digging with shovels



Wendy Sellers  
President/CEO

or mechanized equipment, Georgia 811's service is free of charge. These projects can include installing a mailbox, putting up a fence, planting a tree and other do-it-yourself projects that involve digging. In addition to being the safest way to start a project, the process of notifying Georgia 811 of any digging plans is super easy.

For years, the branded phrase encouraging the public to notify Georgia 811 before starting a dig project was "Call 811." Now, as a homeowner, you have the added option of submitting a ticket through the Georgia 811 website at [www.Georgia811.com](http://www.Georgia811.com) as an eRequest. This system is quite easy to understand and follow, but for reference, we are listing the Georgia 811 process below with the hope of encouraging more safety.

**1. Submit a dig ticket online or dial 811 to submit a ticket at least three business days before digging.**

After submitting a ticket, Georgia 811

*Continued on page 18B*

**"I dig here all the time."**

**You might not know the area as well as you think!**  
Even if you've excavated an area previously, erosion, settling ground and other factors can change the depth and location of utilities over time. ALWAYS contact 811 before putting your shovel to the ground!

**Contact 811 before you dig.**



An electric membership corporation

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## Mango Berry Rotini Salad

### Vinaigrette

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil  
2 tablespoons raspberry vinegar  
1 teaspoon sugar  
1 teaspoon poppy seeds  
1/4 teaspoon salt

### Salad

1 cup whole-wheat rotini pasta,  
uncooked  
1 ripe mango  
1 cup raspberries  
1 cup blueberries  
2 cups fresh baby spinach  
1/2 cup reduced-fat feta cheese

In a small bowl, whisk vinaigrette  
ingredients and set aside.



Boil water and cook rotini accord-  
ing to package instructions. Drain  
cooked rotini and rinse in cool water.

While rotini is cooking, cut mango  
into chunks, removing peel and pit.

Place all salad ingredients in a large  
bowl; drizzle with vinaigrette. Toss gen-  
tly. *Serves 4.*

## Understanding Georgia 811, *Continued from page 18A*

notifies the appropriate utility  
companies of your digging plans. Pro-  
fessional locators are then sent by the  
utility companies to the requested dig  
site to mark the approximate locations  
of underground utility lines with spray  
paint or flagging. Information you will  
need in order to submit your ticket  
includes contact info, where on the  
property digging is planned, specific  
directions to your property, the closest  
intersecting street to your property  
address, the type of work being done,  
when you plan to begin and how long  
your digging project is planned to take.

### 2. Wait for the lines to be marked.

Utility members in your area have at  
least two full business days after the  
day you submit your locate ticket to  
mark their utility lines at your dig site.  
The specific number of days that util-  
ity members have to respond to your  
ticket depends on the date you selected  
for when excavation will begin. When  
they mark, they will use colors that cor-  
respond to their specific utility type.

### 3. View utility company responses to your ticket online in

**the Positive Response Information  
System (PRIS).** Once the utility  
companies have marked their lines  
or determined that none are present  
at your dig site, they will respond to  
your ticket in the computer system.  
Always check the utility responses  
online before you begin digging.

### 4. If all utilities have responded with a marked or clear code, and there are no visible and obvious signs of an unmarked utility, you may begin digging.

If you have any issues with the  
responses or are missing responses,  
call 811 again so they can re-notify  
the utility companies.

Whether you are starting a home  
improvement project or any activity  
that involves digging, please keep this  
info in mind when it comes to the  
hazards associated with underground  
power lines.

Washington EMC wants you to  
be aware, stay vigilant and know  
what to do before you start any proj-  
ect that includes digging. Have a safe  
summer!

# Attic energy savings

By Miranda Boutelle

**O**ne common hiding spot for energy savings is the attic. It is also a common location for storing holiday decorations and infrequently used sentimental items.

Yet, using your attic for storage can be problematic when trying to maximize your home's energy efficiency. Let's explore how you can improve insulation levels and properly store items in your attic.

Attic insulation is one of the best low-cost ways to make your home efficient. People often associate insulation with keeping a home warmer in the winter, but it also provides benefits in the summer. Insulation reduces heat transfer from the attic to the house, which lowers energy bills for air conditioning and makes your home more comfortable.

Attic insulation is measured in R-value, which is a measurement of how well a material resists the flow of heat. For attic insulation, thicker is better. The recommended R-value is typically between R-38 and R-60, depending on your climate. Hawaii and the southernmost tips of Florida and Texas recommend R-30. Measured in inches, that ranges from about 10-20 inches, depending on the type of insulation you have. In most homes, the ceiling joists are buried in insulation to achieve



MARK GILLILAND, PIONEER UTILITY RESOURCES

*While using your attic for storage, build an attic storage platform to maintain insulation levels and lock in savings and comfort.*

the recommended R-value.

The problem with attic storage is it typically doesn't offer enough space for the recommended R-value. Often, plywood or boards are placed directly on top of the ceiling joists, which isn't enough space for the insulation. Insulation can get compacted by people moving items in or out, reducing the effective R-value.

Ideally, the attic would not be used for storage so it can be properly insulated, but that's not feasible for everyone. However, here are some strategies for maintaining attic storage and recommended insulation levels.

The best location for attic storage is over an unconditioned area of your home, such as the garage. You don't need insulation in attic spaces over a garage or unconditioned area because you are not heating or cooling the space below. This makes it the perfect spot to tuck away items for storage.

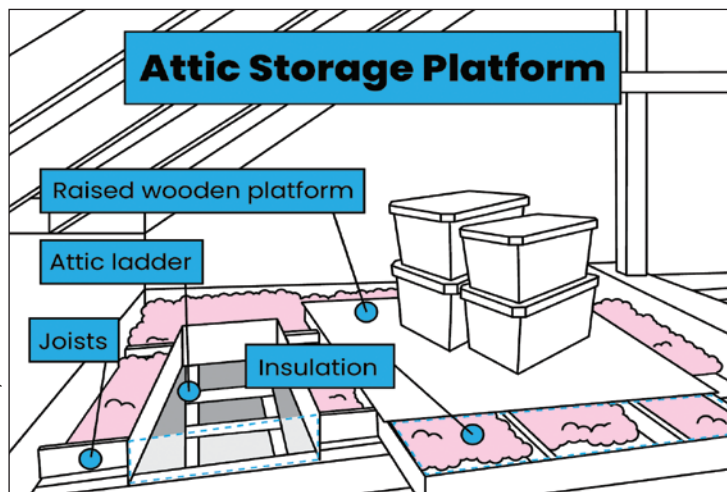
If that isn't an option, consider minimizing the number of stored items or the storage area's footprint. A great way to do this is by building an attic storage platform. A raised platform allows the space underneath it to be fully insulated. These platforms are available in ready-to-install kits, or you can buy materials and build them yourself.

Allow enough space underneath the platform to achieve the proper R-value. Use lumber to build a frame perpendicular to the existing joists and cover it with plywood or oriented strand board. Once your storage area is set up, add insulation inside the platform to bring the R-value up to the proper level.

Your attic might also have trusses that allow you to build shelves and maximize space by storing items vertically.

Always wear a dust mask or respirator when working in the attic. Don't forget to weatherstrip the attic hatch to ensure a tight seal. Take a look around your attic to see if you can find any hidden opportunities for energy savings.

*Miranda Boutelle writes about energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing nearly 900 electric co-ops.*



SARAH DECKER, PIONEER UTILITY RESOURCES

*Building an attic storage platform offers extra storage space and helps maintain the energy efficiency of the attic with insulation underneath it.*



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## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

As temperatures start to rise, many homeowners focus on staying cool. Don't forget about the small gaps around windows and doors. While air sealing is often associated with keeping cold air out during winter, it's just as important during summer. Tiny cracks and worn weatherstripping allow cool, conditioned air to escape and hot, humid air to seep indoors. This forces your air conditioner to work harder than necessary and increases energy costs. Take a few minutes to check for drafts, replace weatherstripping and seal leaks. A tighter home keeps you more comfortable and helps manage energy use.

Source: *energy.gov*



## Happy Memorial Day

In observance of Memorial Day, Washington EMC's  
offices will be closed Monday, May 25.