The LAMPLIGHTER
Official Member Newsletter of Washington EMC
October 2026
Serving members in Baldwin, Emanuel, Glascock, Hancock, Jefferson, Johnson, Laurens, Warren, Washington and Wilkinson counties

This fall, refresh your cybersecurity habits

As the leaves begin to change and we settle into the routines of fall, it's a good time to take stock of a few things around the house, preparing for cooler weather, checking our heating systems and getting ready for the months ahead. It's also a good time to refresh our cybersecurity habits.

October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month, but protecting your personal information is something that deserves attention all year long.

At Washington EMC, cybersecurity is a critical part of providing safe, reliable electric service. While much of our focus is on protecting the physical systems that operate the electric grid, we also work to protect the systems and information that help us serve you, including online accounts, payment systems, member portals and outage communications.

Unfortunately, scammers are becoming more sophisticated, too. Artificial intelligence (AI) is making it easier for cybercriminals to create convincing emails, text messages, websites and even voice messages that can look and sound legitimate. The Federal Bureau of Investigation has warned that generative AI can make fraudulent schemes more believable by eliminating many of the errors that once helped us identify a scam.

That matters when it comes to utility scams.

A scammer may impersonate someone from Washington EMC and claim your account is past due, your service is about to be disconnected or you need to make an immediate payment. The message might even include our logo, use professional-looking language or direct you to a website that appears legitimate. With AI helping scammers create more convincing communications, simply looking for spelling mistakes or other obvious warning signs may no longer be enough. These scams are not a small problem.



Wendy Sellers
President/CEO



According to the Federal Trade Commission, consumers reported losing $3.5 billion to imposter scams in 2025, making these types of scams the most commonly reported type of fraud. Nearly one in three fraud reports involved an imposter scam.

So, what should you do if you receive an unexpected message claiming to be from Washington EMC?

If a message creates a sense of

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WashingtonEMC
A Member-owned Electric Cooperative

An electric membership corporation

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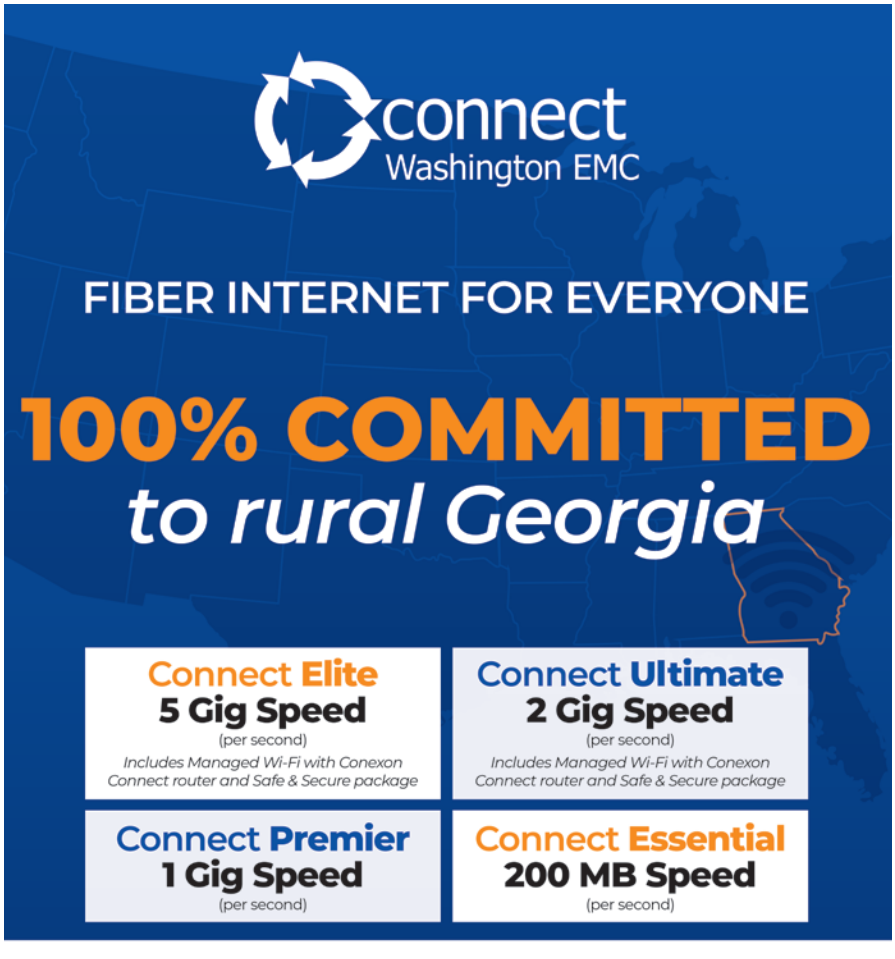
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Community news

The Washington Electric Foundation board met July 27 and approved funding for the following organizations: Boys & Girls Club of Greater Augusta/Waco, Georgia Transplant Foundation, Molly's Promise Inc., Ronald McDonald House of Central Georgia, Johnson County Softball Boosters–Middle School, Miriam Ministries, Broken Shackle Ranch, Sacred Heart Catholic Church Helping Hands Society, Christian Life Center and Baldwin County 4-H.

Since the creation of the foundation in 2006, more than $2.2 million has been given back to the communities we serve. We are so proud to be able to give back to the ones making a difference in those communities. The next board meeting will be October 26, and the deadline for applications is September 30. For more information, visit *www.washingtonemc.com/community/operation-round-up-application-info*.



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Safety tips for riding electric devices

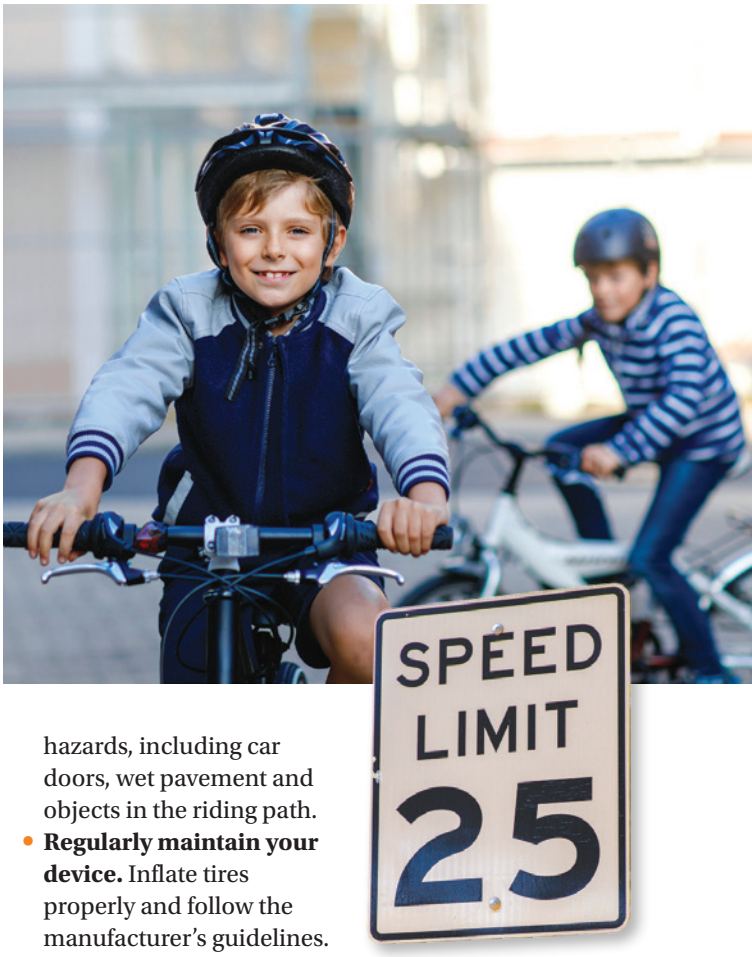
Electric riding devices, including bikes and scooters, are changing the way people travel, offering a convenient and eco-friendly option for short trips. They have also become increasingly popular among kids.



But as electric devices become more common in communities, riders and parents should understand the unique safety risks that come with higher speeds and mixed traffic uses.

Here are safety tips for electric device users:

- **Wear a helmet.** Helmets are good for cyclists of all ages. In Georgia, riders 15 and younger are legally required to wear a properly fitted, securely fastened helmet.
- **Stay visible.** Wear brightly colored clothing for daytime riding. At night, use reflective materials and lights, including a white front light and red rear light on electric bikes.
- **Use a bell or horn.** A warning device alerts drivers, pedestrians and other cyclists to your presence.
- **Ride on the right side of the road** and in a straight, single line if you're riding with multiple people. Obey traffic signs and signals.
- **Look, signal and look again** before changing lanes or turning. Be sure to establish eye contact with drivers.
- **Don't wear headphones or earbuds.** Keeping your ears clear is safer.
- **Avoid distractions.** Never use a cellphone while operating an electric device.
- **Ride predictably and defensively.** Do not weave in and out of traffic, and slow down in questionable riding situations.
- **Watch out for pedestrians** or other path users and road hazards, including car doors, wet pavement and objects in the riding path.
- **Regularly maintain your device.** Inflate tires properly and follow the manufacturer's guidelines.
- **Learn local laws,** including where electric devices are allowed and have speed limits or regulations.
- **Always ride lawfully and responsibly.**



Electric device safety features

- **Speed controls that limit risk:** Many devices allow parents to restrict how fast a device can go by using a companion app or adjusting the physical settings on the device. Start at the lowest speed setting and increase after your child demonstrates consistent control and judgment.
- **Simple, predictable controls:** Choose devices with straightforward throttle or pedal-assist systems. Complex or jump controls increase the risk of panic responses.
- **Strong, reliable braking:** Look for responsive brakes that stop the device quickly and smoothly. If it takes too long to stop at walking speed, it will take longer to stop at higher speeds.
- **Safe, tested battery and electrical system:** Choose products that meet recognized safety standards and always follow the manufacturer's instructions. Store devices in dry conditions and keep them away from water, as wet batteries can pose a serious fire risk.
- **Proper fit and manageable weight:** The device should match the user's height, strength and condition. If a child struggles to control the device while stopped, they will struggle even more when it's moving.

Sources: AAA E-Ride Ready campaign and ***TrafficSafetyTeam.org***

Refresh your cybersecurity habits,

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urgency or threatens immediate disconnection, take a moment to verify it. Don't click the link or call the phone number provided in the message. Instead, contact Washington EMC directly using our trusted methods. You can reach us by phone at 800-552-2577 or by email at *wemc@washingtonemc.com*.

You can also take steps to protect your online accounts before a scam occurs. Start with your password. Longer is generally better than simply adding more special characters. Choose a long, unique passphrase that is difficult for others to guess, and don't reuse the same password across multiple accounts. If the accounts you access online offer multifactor authentication (MFA), consider using it. MFA adds an extra layer of protection by requiring an additional way to verify your identity, such as a code sent to your phone or an authentication app.

In addition to password strength and the use of authentication codes and apps, keeping us informed when your contact information changes helps protect members and the co-op. The use of prepaid wireless cellphones has contributed to some member info being outdated, while family members loaning cellphones to each other also leads to incorrect information. With this in mind, please call us at 800-552-2577 and give us your most up-to-date information.

Washington EMC is committed to protecting the systems that help us deliver your electricity and serve our members. You can help by protecting your own account, slowing down when something seems urgent and contacting us directly when you're unsure.

For questions about your account or payment options, contact Washington EMC at 800-552-2577 or by email at *wemc@washingtonemc.com*.

