



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

# What affects your utility bill?

No one likes to get a bill, right? It really doesn't really matter what the bill is for: water, electricity, medical, credit cards, mortgage—the list goes on and on. Everyone has them, and no one likes them, including me! And it seems they all are going up these days. But when it comes to your electricity bill, maybe I can help explain what impacts it.

The electricity that Washington EMC purchases to provide to our member-consumers comes from a variety of sources, including nuclear, coal, natural gas, hydroelectric (waterway dams and pumping), solar and a little more from landfill gas and biomass (wood). Over the decades, some sources of energy production have diminished, while others have grown. In 2004, for example, 65% of the energy we purchased came from coal resources. By 2014, coal had dropped to 41% of our purchases. By 2024, only 19% will come from coal resources, and that will continue to dwindle due to environmental, social and political pressure aimed at closing down coal plants. Meanwhile, natural gas-fired generation has jumped from 2% in 2004 to 37% by 2024.

How does this affect you? Let me explain.

Power generation from coal and

nuclear are what we refer to as “base load” resources. That means they can run 24 hours a day, seven days a week nonstop, regardless of whether it is day or night, hot or cold. They run very efficiently and produce a lot of power. The more you run them, the better the overall cost per kwh.

But today, many of those resources, primarily coal, are being shut down by political and environmental pressure to reduce carbon emissions and focus on renewable resources. There is no utility that doesn't want to help keep our environment safe and clean.

In fact, lots of investment has been made into existing coal generation to install carbon-reducing equipment to keep them running and producing needed

power, all while reducing impacts to the environment. And from a pricing perspective, when coal is running, it is doing so at the same price regardless of the time of day. That is not the same for other types of resources like those running off natural gas.

Natural gas is a good fuel source for producing electricity, but it is a very volatile resource from a pricing perspective. As a nation, when we continue to close down stable generation resources like coal and become more dependent on natural gas, it is going to have an



**Wendy Sellers**  
*President/CEO*

impact on the price of energy to you, the end consumer. In addition, the United States is exporting more of our nation's gas supply overseas and delaying the construction of natural gas pipelines needed to bring more of the resource to areas that need it most. This makes the demand for natural gas in our country higher; therefore, pushing prices up even more.

Did you notice an increase in your power bill this past summer? I know you did, and I didn't like it either! In June 2020, the cost of natural gas dropped as low as \$1.63/MMbtu, and as a result, we enjoyed some historically low power costs. This past summer, however, in June 2022, the cost of natural gas was \$7.70/MMbtu, and it spiked as high as \$8.81/MMbtu by August.<sup>1</sup> That's a 440% increase in the price of natural gas in the summer months in just two years!

The increases you saw on your bill are a result of these unexpected spikes

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Footnote (1): U.S. Energy Information Administration, Henry Hub Natural Gas Monthly Spot Price



**WashingtonEMC**

A Member-owned Electric Cooperative

**An electric membership corporation**

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Wendy Sellers, President/CEO

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**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 interruption  
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 payment window**

319 N. Smith St., Sandersville, GA 31082

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

**Pay your bill online**

[www.washingtonemc.com](http://www.washingtonemc.com)

**Use the free Washington EMC mobile app**

Look for WEMC in the

App Store or Android Market.

**Pay by phone**

(478) 552-2577 or (800) 552-2577

# Electricity bill, *Continued from page 22A*

in energy cost that cannot be covered by our base rates for electricity. The price we have to pay to buy the power has a corresponding effect on what we have to charge on your bill for the energy used. If the price we pay is more than what our rates can recover, we have to pass that cost on to your bill through the Power Cost Adjustment Factor to bring in enough revenue to pay for power and be in compliance with our regulatory entities.

But the good news is that when those prices come down, so does your power bill. The increases are not permanently set in the rates. In fact, in 2019 and 2020, there were several months when this factor was negative, and we passed along the savings we were seeing from very low natural gas prices and lower than expected cost of power.

So what can we do to lessen the blow of sudden cost increases in energy prices? At Washington EMC, we main-

tain a natural gas hedging strategy aimed at protecting us from these price spikes. It doesn't prevent price hikes 100%, but it certainly helps. We also continue to utilize as much diversity in our energy mix as possible to help keep our dependency on natural gas more manageable.

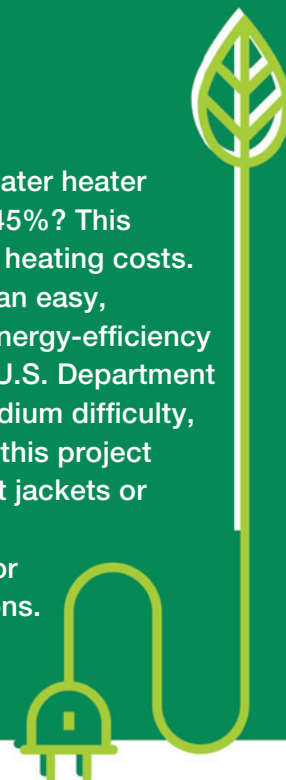
What can you do? Managing energy consumption is the best way to help manage the cost of your power bill. Visit our Energy Resource Center on our website or [www.energy.gov/energysaver](http://www.energy.gov/energysaver) for more energy-saving tips.

The world of managing energy generation, distribution and consumption continues to get more complicated each day. But if we stay focused on a balanced energy portfolio, encourage our nation's leaders to make wise energy policy decisions, protect ourselves from price spikes the best we can and manage our consumption, then I think our energy future can be bright. Together, we can make a difference!

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Did you know insulating your electric water heater could reduce standby heat loss by 25-45%? This could save you 7-16% on annual water heating costs. Insulating your electric water heater is an easy, inexpensive project that can improve energy-efficiency and save you money each month. The U.S. Department of Energy rates this project level as medium difficulty, meaning most homeowners can tackle this project on their own. You can purchase pre-cut jackets or blankets for about \$20 at most home improvement stores. Visit [energy.gov](http://energy.gov) for project tips and additional considerations.

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



## Kick off the New Year with Fiber-Fast Internet!

Leave slow internet in 2022! Join the future  
with Connect, powered by Washington EMC.



**Your internet should  
check all the boxes!**

- ☒ Reliable
- ☒ Affordable
- ☒ Fiber-fast speeds
- ☒ In partnership with your local co-op

Check availability at  
[ConexonConnect.com](http://ConexonConnect.com),  
call 1-844-542-6663,  
or scan our QR code!



## Walter Harrison Scholarship

**W**ashington EMC is now accepting applications for the Walter Harrison Scholarship. High school seniors who reside in the household of a Washington EMC member can apply for the Walter Harrison Scholarship until January 13.

The \$1,000 scholarship may be used at any Georgia accredited college, university or technical school. Fifteen 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).



## Holiday office closing

Washington EMC offices will be closed  
Monday, January 16, in observance of  
Martin Luther King Jr. Day.





# Washington Youth Tour returns to nation's capital

**T**he Washington Youth Tour (WYT) celebrated its 57<sup>th</sup> year in Georgia by returning to an in-person experience in Washington, D.C., June 16-23, 2022. Seventy high school delegates sponsored by 26 electric membership cooperatives (EMCs) throughout Georgia and by Georgia EMC made the trip, in addition to seven chaperones and three staff members from Tucker-based Georgia EMC.

"The trip was a triumphant return of Georgia's EMCs to Washington, D.C.," says Beth McMillan, WYT coordinator and senior communications specialist at Georgia EMC. "On the heels of the COVID-19 pandemic and with all the logistical challenges that presented in the planning stages, I'm proud of the program we put together and the experiences we provided to the delegates."

McMillan, who represented Marietta-based Cobb EMC as a delegate in 2004, says there's something special about a large group of strangers who meet and become close friends in just one week.

"Late high school is such a pivotal time for developing character, and the high caliber of the students our EMCs send on this tour each year creates a perfect environment for young people to discover themselves as individuals, as well as learn how many others there are across the state with their same passion, drive and enthusiasm for making a difference," she says.

A few of the group's standard stops were not on the program in 2022 because some buildings had not been reopened to the public or large groups since the onset of the pandemic, but McMillan says they managed to include a majority of their traditional tour stops.

"Travel disruptions were certainly our biggest setback, but in many ways, this offered delegates opportunities to see and demonstrate leadership in action," McMillan adds. "Resilience, positive attitude, problem-solving and teamwork were all on display in reacting to sudden changes in our plans, and these are all areas in which we encourage growth during a normal tour. Student evaluations were extremely positive, with many describing the tour as a life-changing experience."

KATHRYN GREEN, SOUTHERN RIVERS ENERGY



*Georgia's 2022 Youth Tour delegation tours Roosevelt's Little White House in Warm Springs June 17, 2022.*



*Washington EMC WYT delegates Meya Adams (left) and Carson Carter.*

LOUIS TONSMERE

The eight-day Youth Tour kicked off with a visit to Roosevelt's Little White House State Historic Site in Warm Springs.

The hope was to introduce former U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt as the creator of the Rural Electrification Administration (REA)/rural electrification movement and the Little White House as its birthplace, thus giving delegates a better understanding of the history and purpose of their local electric co-op and the statewide network of EMCs that provided this leadership experience for them.

The group viewed an introductory video upon arrival, then enjoyed a self-guided tour of the museum, house and grounds.

"That visit helped tie together nicely the sponsoring EMCs with our nation's capital, which we were about to visit," McMillan says. "And it helped demonstrate the power local folks have to effect change, better their own communities and better the nation as a whole."

## 2023 Washington Youth Tour

Washington EMC is accepting applications for the Washington Youth Tour. To be eligible, students must attend school within the Washington EMC area, be a high school junior, be at least 16 years old by June 15, 2023, 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 13.