

When Lightning Strikes

PROTECT YOUR APPLIANCES AND ELECTRONICS

Surge and lightning damage to household appliances and electronics is a frequent occurrence here in Georgia. That's particularly true in the summer months when the high-pressure area out in the Atlantic around Bermuda pumps in warm, humid air, creating those all-too-familiar afternoon and evening thunderstorms.

Lightning-related power surges can cause severe damage to appliances, electronics, computers and equipment, phone systems, electrical fixtures and the electrical foundation of a home.

According to the Insurance Information Institute, Georgia homeowners ranked first (both in number and dollar value) in lightning-related property claims from 2012-2014.

More than 50 percent of the nation's 110,000 lightning-related insurance claims made in 2016 resulted from electrical surge damaging components or wiring. The cost to repair or replace appliances and electronics susceptible to lightning and surge-related damages is 40 percent higher now than a decade ago.

Georgia homeowners ranked first in lightning-related insurance claims from 2012-2014.

SAFEGUARD YOUR APPLIANCES AND ELECTRONICS

If you have sophisticated electronics and appliances – and who doesn't these days – you can't afford not to protect them, reminds Jeff Paul, a residential energy advisor for Walton EMC.

He recommends Walton EMC's Real Protection surge suppressors, which are designed to keep lightning from ever reaching your major appliances or electronic devices such as a computer or TV. If power surges do get through our suppressors, your electronics or appliance motors are replaced or repaired free (limits apply).

LARGE APPLIANCES – For just \$6.50 a month added to your electric bill, Walton EMC can protect the motors of large appliances such as a washer, dryer, range, refrigerator or water heater. Our technician installs a Real Protection large appliance motor protector on your meter. Then, the cooperative maintains the unit. Should lightning ever get through the suppressor, Walton EMC will pay to have your appliance motor repaired or replaced.

CONSUMER ELECTRONICS – If lightning travels into the home through the wiring or through communication cables (such as those used for internet, cable TV or phone), it can cause serious damage to sensitive electronics. Computers, televisions, gaming systems and other electronic devices use integrated circuits, which are extremely susceptible to damage from a voltage overload caused by a surge. Fortunately, if these types of electronics are properly connected to a quality, point-of-use surge protector, they can be safeguarded. Walton EMC sells Tripp-Lite surge suppressor models (starting at \$20 each) to fit almost any need, including laptops, small appliances and more.

TO PURCHASE: Drop by any Walton EMC office to see our recommended suppressors and to learn which is best for your electronics.

Walton EMC
Customer-Owned Electric Power

Realite

THE *Rundown*

inside: annual meeting notes, new director elected
on the back: when lightning strikes

The news
you need to
know in
5 minutes!

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QUICK GUIDE



IF YOUR POWER IS OUT

770.267.2505

waltonemc.com > Report an Outage

FIND US

Phone 770.267.2505

In person Monroe – 842 US Hwy. 78



Snellville – 3645 Lenora Church Rd.

Watkinsville – 2061-D Hog Mountain Rd.

Web waltonemc.com



Facebook facebook.com/waltonemc

YouTube youtube.com/emctv

WHEN WE'RE AVAILABLE

Power Outages and Emergencies > 24/7

Contact Center > M-F, 7A-7P

Business Offices > M-F, 8A-5P



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BE AWARE OF OVERHEAD POWER LINES

Call Before You Reach

We all know to call 811 before digging. But you should also call 811 before working around overhead power lines.

The same 811 number protects you from inadvertent contact with both underground and overhead electrical hazards.

The Georgia High Voltage Safety Act requires the person responsible for work within 10 feet of overhead power lines to:

- Notify the Utilities Protection Center (UPC) by calling 811.
- Give the UPC at least 72 hours notice (excluding weekends and holidays).
- Include these items in the notification: location, person in charge of work along with address and phone number, type of work and completion date.
- Assure that no work is started until the utility takes safety precautions against accidental contact.
- Give new notice if the work is delayed.

Besides the possibility of injury or death, not following the law has serious consequences. The first offense carries a \$1,000 fine. Second and subsequent offenses are a \$3,000 fine. The responsible person is also liable for any injury or damage that occurs.



HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN TO CALL 811?
USE THIS SIMPLE RULE: IF YOU'RE EVER IN DOUBT, CALL.

DEFINITIONS

High Voltage Electric Lines An electric line or lines installed above ground of at least 750 volts. (Most Walton EMC lines are 14,400 volts.)

Work Any physical act of performing or preparing to perform any activity under, over, by or near high voltage lines including, but not limited to, the operation, erection, handling, storage or transportation of any tools, machinery, ladders, antennas, equipment, supplies, materials or apparatus or other structure.



©2018. Walton EMC is a customer-owned power company. That means our cooperative focuses on service, not profit. We serve more than 125,000 accounts in Athens-Clarke, Barrow, DeKalb, Greene, Gwinnett, Morgan, Newton, Oconee, Rockdale and Walton Counties. Our subsidiaries supply natural gas and security services.

82ND ANNUAL MEMBERS' MEETING

Walton EMC Continues Operating in 'Best Interest' of Customer-Owners

Walton EMC customer-owners and families attending the cooperative's 82nd annual meeting on June 16 received an important commitment from CEO Ronnie Lee.

"No matter how power costs are affected by Vogtle, your not-for-profit electric co-op will always look out for your best interest," said Lee. "That's the main thing you need to know."

The remarks came during Lee's annual address to customer-owners where he presented an update on Plant Vogtle, a nuclear plant going through expansion near Augusta.

"Last year...there was some uncertainty about what would happen with the project. Since that time, the Georgia Public Service Commission unanimously decided to allow construction to continue and the new contractor is performing much better, so the outlook on Vogtle has improved," said Lee.

Lee also highlighted Walton EMC's tremendously successful cooperative solar program. The experience gained from the program led to securing one of the most substantial electrical loads in Georgia – Facebook's new Newton Data Center.

"Under Georgia law, Facebook could have chosen any Georgia utility to provide electricity for the new data center, but they selected Walton EMC. Our cooperative solar program...is one of the reasons. Facebook recognized Walton EMC's leadership in renewable energy, and a partnership was formed," said Lee.

An innovative agreement provides Facebook with the power supply arrangement they wanted, Lee said. The Newton Data Center will operate on 100 percent renewable power.

"It means Walton EMC will be working with developers to install hundreds of acres of solar panels on Georgia's electric grid to meet the new data center's energy demand," said Lee.

In his remarks, Board Chair Sam Simonton reminded fellow co-op members why the annual meeting is essential.

"You share in the control of your co-op. That's why we hold this annual meeting – to elect members from among ourselves to serve on the co-op's board," he said.

Simonton added that the customer-owned electric cooperative is both financially and operationally sound.

"Walton EMC returned another \$6 million [in capital credits] to customer-owners again last December," he said. "Our operations are also in good shape with reliability continuing to approach 99.9 percent."



Rutledge-Bostwick-Apalachee District Director Warren Few delivers retiring remarks after serving 19 years on the cooperative's board.

In other business, customer-owners elected Jason Sidwell of Rutledge as the new director for the Rutledge-Bostwick-Apalachee District. Director Warren Few retired following 19 years of service and did not seek re-election.

The 1,730 registered attendees and those with them enjoyed the traditional mainstays of the annual meeting: prizes, entertainment, children's activities, Cokes and ice cream, exhibits, a health fair and the ubiquitous white bucket filled with LED bulbs and other items.

To answer the most-asked question after the annual meeting, Beverly Johnson of Loganville won the grand prize – a recycled pickup truck.



Bo Blanford of Scout Troop 705 leads the annual meeting in the pledge to the American Flag.



Beverly Johnson of Loganville won the grand prize recycled pickup. She receives the keys from CEO Ronnie Lee.

An overflow crowd at the Walton County Ag Ed Center takes part in the 82nd Annual Meeting on June 16.

New Director Elected



Walton EMC customer-owners elected Jason Sidwell of Rutledge as the new director for the Rutledge-Bostwick-Apalachee district at the cooperative's recent annual meeting.

Sidwell replaces retiring Director Warren Few who served 19 years on the board. Directors serve three-year terms. The Rutledge-Bostwick-Apalachee District covers the areas of Morgan County that lie within Walton EMC's service area.

A Morgan County native, Sidwell grew up on a dairy farm and attended Morgan County High School. After graduating from the University of Georgia with a poultry science degree, he worked in sales for Purina Feeds. While attending UGA, Sidwell was a member of the Alpha Gamma Rho agricultural fraternity.

After five years at Purina, Sidwell returned to the family farm where he worked for the next 15 years in partnership with his parents. "I've been involved in co-ops, like the Dairy Farmers of America, and I know the value of a well-run organization that benefits its members," said Sidwell. "Walton EMC does about as good as any I know of."

Sidwell now farms 1,000 acres and 250 head of commercial beef cattle, and he works in sales and service for Bug House Pest Control. He is married with two children.

Besides serving on the Farm Service Agency and cattleman's association boards, Sidwell has been active in the Morgan County Farm Bureau, participated in the young farmer program of Dairy Farmers of America, and is a 2015 graduate of the Georgia Agrileaders Program. He also serves on the finance committee at Apalachee Baptist Church.

"I want to keep Walton EMC proactive," says Sidwell. "We need to be ready for growth and industry and be ahead of the curve when it comes to supplying traditional and non-traditional energy, like solar."

