

Oh, Those Sweet Georgia Blues!

Blueberries are ripe and ready at area farms

It's the height of blueberry season here in northeast Georgia, and local pick-your-own farms are doing a brisk business.

"There aren't many things more rewarding than picking a perfectly ripe blueberry and enjoying the exceptional flavor that you only get from fresh, local produce," proclaims the website for DGD Farms owned by Walton EMC members John and Jennifer Hadden.

The Haddens are relative newcomers to the blueberry business. They planted 2,600 bushes in 2016 and began welcoming pickers to their farm at 1112 Cliff Dawson Road in 2019.

"We never imagined that we'd buy a farm and make this big of a deal out of blueberries," said John.

This year, the well-manicured farm's three acres of blueberry bushes are yielding plenty for pickers. But blueberries aren't the only draw.

"We've added a full retail store that I think our visitors will enjoy," John said. "And we've got blueberry ice cream this year!"

The Haddens host special events to further add to the blueberry-picking fun.

"We want families to come hang out with us and have a good time, so we take it up a notch on Saturdays," John explained. Pickers can enjoy food trucks, local vendor booths, music and outdoor activities.

Several Walton EMC members are offering places to pick your own blueberries this year. In addition to DGD Farms, the berries are ripe and ready at:

Whippoorwill Blueberries, 1571 Whippoorwill Road, Watkinsville. Owners Steve and Kay Smith offer only early-season blueberries, so their picking season ends in mid July.

Miller's Blueberry Farm, 1371 Union Church Road, Watkinsville. Ron Putman manages the farm offering seven varieties of you-pick blueberries as well as blackberries.

Washington Farms, 5691 Hog Mountain Road, Bogart. Visit the Washington Family for both pick-your-own and pre-picked blueberries and blackberries.

Tuckaway Blueberry Farm, 3560 Claude Brewer Road, Loganville. Ren and Cathie Knight offer more than 500 bushes of rabbiteye variety blueberries at their farm.

Hours and days of operation for all blueberry farms are subject to change due to weather and crop availability. Before making plans to visit any farm, be sure to check its website or social media for updates.



Walton EMC
Customer-Owned Electric Power

realite

Expand living space with a DUCTLESS HVAC SYSTEM

Ready to relocate your "office" from the kitchen table to a permanent home office? If a lack of climate control is limiting your space options, a ductless HVAC system may be the solution.

Ductless split-system air conditioners and heat pumps, commonly called mini splits, do not use ductwork for air distribution. These small units provide an energy-efficient way to cool and heat individual rooms. Rigs Santos, a Walton EMC energy advisor, provides the lowdown on these systems.

When is a mini split a good solution?

It's ideal in situations where extending or installing air distribution ductwork is not feasible, such as a room addition. It may also be a good option for areas outside the primary living space, such as a workshop, garage apartment, guest house or pool house.

Are ductless systems energy efficient?

A ductless system that has earned the Energy Star label can save up to 30 percent in energy costs over central systems. Because they have no ducts, mini splits avoid energy losses associated with ductwork.

Is a mini split system expensive?

It will typically cost several times more than a comparable window air conditioner or space heater. You'll get lower energy bills in return, but the payback period may be long term. Ask your HVAC contractor to calculate the return on investment on any system you are considering.

Do these systems require a lot of maintenance?

Monthly (more often if you smoke or have pets) filter cleanings are necessary to allow free-flowing air circulation for operation efficiency.

Are there air quality concerns with ductless systems?

Manufacturers claim ductless mini split systems actually provide better air quality and remove more allergens than traditional systems.

How many years of service can I expect from a mini split?

With proper maintenance and routine servicing, ductless heat pumps have the same life cycle as traditional HVAC systems.

Can I install this myself?

It's not recommended. Hiring a professional installer will ensure proper system sizing and installation, both critical to getting the benefits from a ductless system. Seek out a local heating and cooling contractor who has experience in installing and servicing mini splits.

How long does it take to install a mini split system?

An installation can be accomplished in a few hours in the average home.

LEARN MORE about ductless mini split systems at waltonemc.com/blog

JULY '21

- > alarm shutdown
- > operation round up
- > georgia blueberries
- > unclaimed refunds

Walton EMC
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quick guide

IF YOUR POWER IS OUT

770.267.2505
waltonemc.com > Report an Outage

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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Our subsidiaries supply natural gas and security services.

WHERE ARE YOU?

Unclaimed refunds

Take a look at these Walton EMC customer-owners who discontinued service. We mailed refunds of deposits and/or membership fees, but the Post Office returned them.

If you know someone on this list, please have them contact us at 770-266-2507.

Adams, Zinda; Aderhold, Tanner; Alexander, Barbara; Alexander, Oliver; Amazon, Carolina; Arnold Enterprise, LLC; Bansfield, Gregory; Bargas, Misaël; Barnett, Penni C.; Barthel, Terrance R.; Beck, Angelia; Bittings, Ronald; Blair, Kimberly J.; Boyd, Ellen A.; Brindle Homes; Buxh, Frederick L.; Cardiel, Oscar M.; Carter, Jr., Preston; Cassidy, Michael D.; Clark, James; Diaz, Adolfo; Dew, Bryan; Dickerson, Greg D.; Dossani, Inayat; Douglas, Jordan; Downey, Haley; Duckett, Anthony; Dynemac Inc.; Ferguson, Keon A.; Ganesh Lilburn, LLC; Garcia, Jose G.; Garmon, Penny; Gibson, Katy; Glass, Justin; Gordon, Michael; Hamlin, Shelly D.; Hills Homes Atlanta, LLC; Hoang, Anh T.; Hood, Stevenson B.; Hot Topic; HPA Borrower 2018-1 LLC; Jumpeter, Julie; Jundi, Riyad A.; Jung, Gye H.; Kim, Eunha; Kirby, Bertina D.; Kladviko, Dave; Knkulu, Nkasa; Levell, Nicole J.; Long, Jr., William A.; Magoon, John; Matthews, Lorelei; Mayo, John W.; Med-Acoustics, Inc.; Meriweather Capital, LLC; Mr. MacX Quick Mart; NRT Property Management; Parrish, Jo Ann; Perez, Catalina L.; Pinto, Sussy; Ramirez, Brenda; Rayetparvar, Spenor D.; Richardson, Ashley; Richardson, Winston; Rivermoore Partners, LLC; Rosenborough, Danielle R.; Ryland Homes; Schoppman Company, Inc.; Singh, Saranprett; SK Operations, LLC; Skelton, Madison; Smith, Natasha M.; Snackman Enterprises, LLC; Spencer, Arthur T.; Spencer, Diane W.; Star Financial LLC; Stillman, Rochelle; Sylvan Homes LLC; Tait, Maegan; Telnet Marketing Solutions; Terry, Jason; Thompson, Carl; Thurmond, Samuel; Ventress, Tamara; Vintage Communities, Bldr.; VSP Atlanta; Wade Journey Homes; Walsh, Peter; Warner, Chad; Washington, Chase; Welcoming Education; Wenjing, Zhu; Westside Baseball LLC; Willis, Nancy; Wright, Courtney A.; Wright, Paul G.

Courtesy
Mitsubishi Electric
Trane HVAC US



Need heating and cooling but don't have room for ductwork? An unobtrusive mini split heat pump system might be the answer.



Don't Fall for the Alarm Shakedown!

If you have a security system that is connected to the cellular phone network for monitoring, listen up!

The cellular communicator on all those alarm systems will undergo an upgrade to 5G technology in the near future. Some consumers are being required by their alarm company to either pay hundreds of dollars or sign a new long-term contract for this upgrade.

Don't do it!

EMC Security customers are covered at no cost for this upgrade – you don't have any worries. If your alarm company wants you to pay or sign, call EMC Security first.

Besides saving you money on the 5G upgrade, EMC Security will also help you avoid signing another long-term contract.

Not only that, you'll get award-winning service and a monitoring rate that hasn't gone up in 20 years.

Call today at 770-963-0305 or visit emcsecurity.com.



OPERATION ROUND UP

\$135,870 donated by customer-owners benefits community neighbors

Stand Up for Kids – \$10,000 for their mentoring program that serves homeless youth. *Gwinnett*

Camp Twin Lakes – \$10,000 for scholarships to their camps that serve children with serious illnesses and disabilities. *Entire territory*

Chosen for Life Ministries – \$5,000 for their program to support families that care for children in Georgia's welfare system. *Barrow, Clarke, Morgan, Newton, Walton, Oconee, Rockdale*

Healing for the Soul Ministries – \$750 to provide nutritious food for the needy. *DeKalb, Gwinnett, Rockdale, Walton*

Heirborn Servants, Inc. – \$2,000 to provide transportation services to single mothers who are survivors of trauma, domestic violence, human trafficking and homelessness. *Barrow, Clarke, DeKalb, Walton, Gwinnett*

Kilgore's Kids, Inc. – \$5,000 to build and provide free adaptive equipment to special needs and disabled children. *Clarke, Oconee, Walton*

Mosaic Georgia – \$10,000 for advocacy for children who have experienced sexual abuse or assault. *Entire territory*

Palm House Recovery Center, Inc. – \$6,100 to provide financial assistance for substance abuse disorder recovery. *Barrow, Clarke, DeKalb, Greene, Gwinnett, Oconee, Walton*

StreetWise Georgia – \$10,000 to expand their food distribution to the needy. *Entire territory*

YMCA of Athens – \$10,000 for Camp Kelly Plus, a summer day camp program for children with special session to improve literacy and STEM skills. *Clarke, Greene, Oconee, Walton*

YMCA of Metro Atlanta – \$5,000 for their early learning readiness program. *Entire territory*

Faith in Serving Humanity, Shepherd's Staff Ministries, Step by Step Recovery – \$45,000 to these organizations that provide emergency food, shelter and medical needs.

Four families – \$17,020 for emergency assistance.

CONTINUES TO

CHANGE LIVES

LET THEM EAT!

ORU grant recipient battles hunger in Gwinnett County

Ask "Chef Hank" Reid what inspired Lettum Eat!, the nonprofit he leads to battle food insecurity in Gwinnett County, and his answer is a short one: God tapped him on the shoulder.

Reid was working as the resident chef at Walton EMC customer-owner First Baptist Church Snellville when divine inspiration struck.

"The church had a kitchen. I'm a chef. Let's do something with it," he explained about the "aha moment" that led to the free meal program. Lettum Eat! recently received a \$10,000 financial grant from Walton EMC's Operation Round Up (ORU). ORU is funded completely by the co-op's customer-owners.

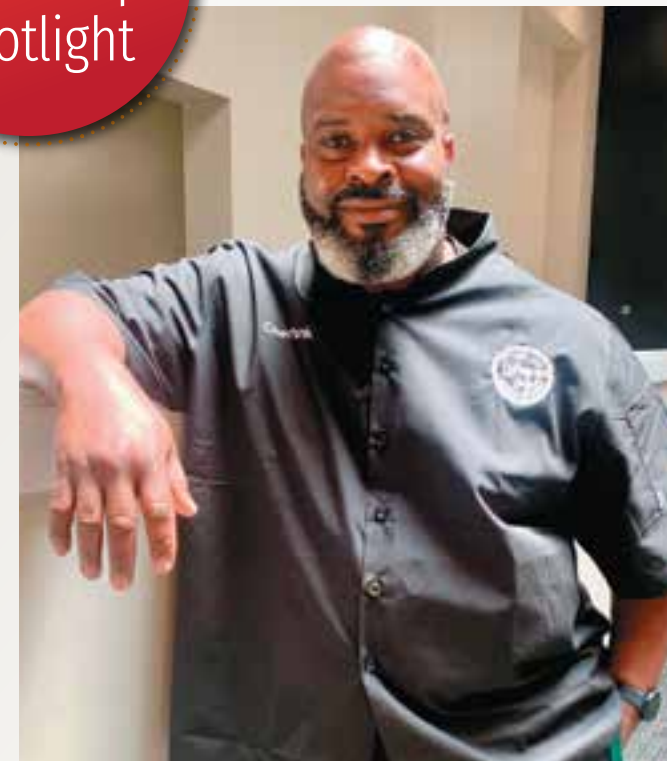
Reid envisioned Lettum Eat! – named for a phrase often used in restaurant kitchen to signify an order is ready – as a ministry outreach that would provide free meals to the food insecure in local communities. When the program served its first meals in January 2020, more than 81,000 Gwinnett County residents were going hungry each day, according to the Map the Meal Gap study conducted annually by Feeding America.

"Little did we know the world was about to fall apart," Reid said. Last year's pandemic shutdowns pushed the number of food insecure households in Gwinnett County to unprecedented numbers.

Chef Hank Reid says "God tapped him on the shoulder," and inspired him to establish an organization to help feed the hungry in Gwinnett.



Operation Round Up Spotlight



"God led me to develop the organization because he knew more people were gonna need this service," Hank said. The nonprofit served nearly 80,000 meals in 2020.

Local food insecurity continues to be a serious challenge, so Lettum Eat! remains busy. Free meals, prepared at the nonprofit's main kitchen now located at Annistown Road Church in southwestern Snellville, are distributed at multiple locations Tuesday through Friday. A portion of the ORU grant purchased ingredients that are combined with donated food items to create each day's meals.

The remainder of the ORU grant was used to purchase a truck that will be used for more efficient meal distribution. The nonprofit's service area is expanding to serve more communities throughout the county.

The Lettum Eat! team is currently serving about 3,200 meals weekly. With the help of Operation Round Up participants and other partners, they're on track to more than double the number of free meals distributed in 2020.

WANT TO HELP?

Go to the "Community" tab at waltonemc.com and click on the Operation Round Up link. Every customer-owner's donation helps those in need. Walton EMC covers all administrative costs of the program.