

Keep objects off electric cooperative poles

Sumter EMC's linemen are well-trained and very dedicated men, who take tremendous pride in serving you. You can help protect your linemen by not turning our utility poles into obstacle courses with tacks, nails and staples from posted signs, posters, notices, or mounted recreational equipment.

Tacks, nails, and staples driven into Sumter EMC's utility poles can puncture the linemen's rubber safety gloves and leave them vulnerable to electrocution. Linemen whose climbing hooks hit a nail instead of sinking securely into wood may fall from the pole and sustain serious injuries. Remember, when a lineman must unfasten his safety harness to climb above an obstacle on a utility pole, he's working without a net!

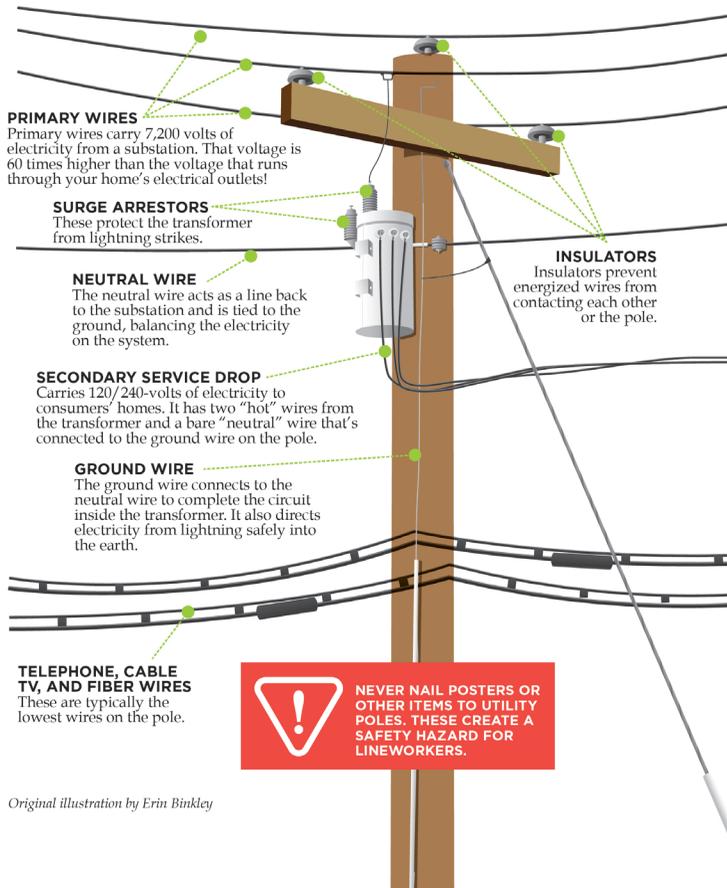
Also, when linemen have to remove objects from poles in order to climb them during an outage, it takes longer to restore your power.

Sumter EMC's linemen climb the poles in all weather conditions and at all hours of the day or night to maintain and repair the equipment that brings you safe, reliable electric power. These dedicated men face enough danger in their efforts to keep your electric power on -- please help eliminate additional hazards by not posting signs, posters, and notices or mounting recreational equipment on our utility poles.



WHAT'S ON THAT POLE?

This illustration shows the basic equipment found on electric utility poles. The equipment varies according to the location and the service they provide.



Original illustration by Erin Binkley



Give thanks for rural electric pioneers

In 1930 most rural Americans had no electric power because it cost more to construct power lines in rural areas than investor-owned electric companies were willing to pay. Long after city dwellers enjoyed the freedom from drudgery made possible by electricity, farm families still toiled long hours doing chores by hand. And then a little known federal government program, the Rural Electrification Administration (REA), paved the way for rural Americans to build their own electric utility companies.

In Sumter County, visionary county agent J. K. Luck, assisted by extension clerk Virginia Wise, held organizational meetings and urged area farmers to form a non-profit electric power cooperative. After many organizational meetings, five Sumter County farmers were elected as the first directors of the organization: G. E. Daniel, G. L. Mathews, L. C. Hodges, J. C. Wise, Jr., and Rufus Chappell. The newly appointed directors traveled from farm to farm asking their neighbors, whose homes had no wiring or elec-

tric appliances, to pay a \$5.00 membership fee and grant free easements across their land to a cooperative not yet formed.

The months seemed to drag along, but finally poles were set and wire was strung across the countryside. On August 5, 1938 at 10:30 a.m., Sumter EMC energized 72 miles of power lines connecting 161 rural homes and farms, forever changing the lives of rural families in southwest Georgia.

The legacy of these men and women who petitioned, paid for and built the electric cooperative that serves you today still lives on every time you turn on the lights, watch television or charge your cell phone.

This holiday season, give thanks for the pioneers who helped bring electricity to our rural communities and farms.

Sumter EMC is thankful for these dedicated members and proudly serves more than 15,000 members extended over 3,770 miles of line in the 11-county service area today.



Happy Thanksgiving
from your Sumter EMC Board of Directors and employees!

Sumter EMC offices will be closed on November 28 and 29, 2019.
For emergencies, call (800) 342-6978. A dispatcher is on duty 24 hours/day.

Georgia Cooperative Council Couples Conference

LAUGHTER, LEARNING AND LIFELONG FRIENDS

BY: MARY CATHERINE GASTON

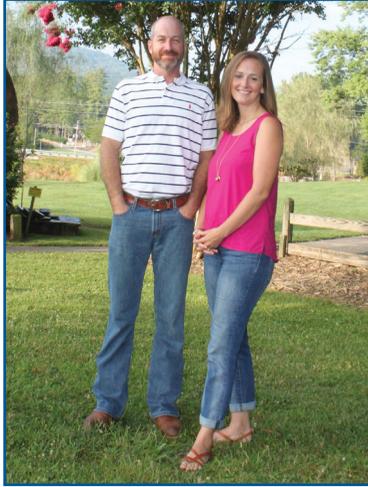
When my husband Wes and I found out we had been selected to represent Sumter EMC at Georgia Cooperative Council's annual couples' retreat in August, we were more than pleasantly surprised.

Let's be honest: A two-night, child-free getaway on Lake Chatuge in the north Georgia mountains is the stuff an exhausted farmer and a work-from-home mama of two little ones dream about. Excited by the prospect of a little peaceful rest, we headed into our weekend away with no agenda, no expectations and absolutely no idea of how the event would bless us both.

Before I go any further, a little background on the Georgia Cooperative Council. Made up of 50 or so cooperatives from across the Peach State, the council's mission is to aid the growth of cooperatives and to educate Georgians about the vital role cooperatives play in our nation's economy. The council's member cooperatives range from utility providers to financial services, and each different type of cooperative was represented during educational sessions throughout the conference.

To say that Wes and I learned a great deal about cooperatives would be an understatement. Not only did speakers from Pineland Telephone, AgSouth Farm Credit, AgGeorgia Farm Credit and Georgia EMC teach us how cooperatives work, they left us wondering why in the world there aren't more cooperatives operating today and how we can support more member-owned cooperatives as we go about our daily lives.

Beginning with supper Friday night, the speakers did a fantastic job of helping



Member-owners Wes and Mary Catherine Gaston of the Concord community in Sumter County represented Sumter EMC at the 2019 Georgia Cooperative Council's Couples Conference.

us understand how cooperatives function. Even better, we got to know each of them personally as the weekend progressed. Chipper Jones, a Georgia Cooperative Council board member and Member Services Specialist with Middle Georgia EMC, served as emcee for the event and kept us in stitches as he led the group from one activity to another. Byron McCombs of Blue Ridge EMC brought down the proverbial house as he explained how an electric cooperative works and conducted a tour of that organization's headquarters in Young Harris Saturday morning. Before the conference, I can

tell you with certainty, I never would have imagined that learning about cooperatives could be so entertaining!

We made other new friends from across the state and enjoyed getting to know them better during free time Saturday afternoon and supper that night. Neither of us can adequately put into words how uplifting it was to fellowship with other couples from backgrounds like ours who are also experiencing similar stages in their own families and careers. These are now friends we know we will keep up with—and do business with in some cases—for years to come.

Our fellow member-owners of Sumter EMC made all of this possible for us by sponsoring our participation, and we are truly grateful. Before the conference ended, Wes and I were selected to return to the event in 2020 as host couple, and we are looking forward to serving the council and representing our co-op there next summer. This weekend spent laughing, learning and making lifelong friends showed me that our co-op not only strives to provide us with reliable, safe and affordable electricity, but also to enrich our lives with learning experiences as they truly do care about their members.



Fifteen couples from across the state represented cooperatives like Sumter EMC at the 2019 Georgia Cooperative Council's Couples Conference.

FALL SAFETY TIPS FOR KIDS!

Fall is finally here! The leaves are changing, the weather is cooler and the holidays are just around the corner. But Fall also brings a higher risk of home fires and electrical safety hazards.

Read the safety tips below and fill in the blank with the correct term from the word bank.



1. Candles and _____ should only be used by adults.
2. An adult should always stay in the kitchen when something is _____.
3. Smoke alarms should be tested every _____ to ensure they are working. Batteries should be replaced at least once every _____ or right away if they start to “beep.”
4. Make sure all _____ are blown out before leaving a room.
5. Keep any items that can burn away from the stove, toaster and other cooking _____.



WORD BANK

APPLIANCES

COOKING

YEAR

MATCHES

CANDLES

MONTH

Answer Key: 1. matches 2. cooking 3. month/year 4. candles 5. appliances

2020 Walter Harrison Scholarships

Sumter EMC is currently accepting applications for the prestigious Walter Harrison Scholarship. Created in 1985 by the board of directors of Georgia EMC, the scholarship pays tribute to the late Walter Harrison, a pioneer in the rural electricity movement and a leader at local, state and national levels in the electric cooperative program.

In 2020, Walter Harrison Scholarships will be awarded to 12 students. The scholarship is merit based and is available to any college level student. A scholarship committee comprised of directors and managers of Georgia’s EMCs will evaluate students on a number of criteria such as grade point average, SAT scores, academic standing, scholastic honors, community involvement and financial need.

The application process is underway, and students applying for the scholarship must be ac-



cepted or enrolled in an accredited two- or four-year university or technical institute. They must also complete a two-page application and submit an autobiographical sketch which includes a preview of his or her future plans. Finally, to be eligible for the scholarship, students and their families must be members of Sumter EMC and reside within the co-op’s service area.

“We’re proud to offer financial assistance where possible and the Walter Harrison Scholarship can help families offset the rising cost of college,” says Andrea Walker, Vice President of Marketing and Administration.

Since 1985, Georgia’s electric cooperatives have awarded 223 scholarships totaling more than \$212,000 to deserving students through this scholarship program.

Scholarship applications are available online at www.sumteremc.com or by calling Whitney Johnson at (229) 924-8041 or (800) 342-6978. Scholarship applications must be submitted to Sumter EMC no later than January 17, 2020.