



# SEMCO NEWS

Official Member Newsletter

February 2021

## Committed to a co-op culture for all

Over the years, you've heard us expound on why and how Sumter EMC is different—because we're a cooperative. Our business model sets us apart from other utilities because we adhere to seven guiding cooperative

principles that reflect core values of honesty, transparency, equity, inclusiveness and service to the greater good of the community.

Electric cooperatives, including Sumter EMC, have a unique and storied place in our country's

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history. We democratized the American dream by bringing electricity to rural areas when for-profit electric companies considered the effort to be too costly. Back then, cities were electrified and rural areas were not, creating the original rural-urban divide. Newly established electric lines helped power



economic opportunity in rural areas. Today, that spirit of equity and inclusion is a vital part of our co-op DNA.

While our top priority is providing safe, reliable and affordable energy, we also want to be a catalyst for good in our community. Because Sumter EMC is your *local* electric cooperative, co-op revenues stay right here in our community. In turn, we invest in our diverse community base through scholarship programs, charitable giving, educational programs and more. We

strive to make long-term decisions that improve and enrich the communities we serve.

While today's world is radically different than when Sumter EMC was founded, our Cooperative has withstood the test of time and remains just as relevant today. We recognize that today's co-op members expect more, and our pledge to you—the members we proudly serve—is to promote a cooperative culture of inclusion, diversity and equity for all.

### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Use wool or rubber dryer balls in the clothes dryer to reduce drying time and static. Wool dryer balls can also absorb extra moisture. These are an efficient alternative to dryer sheets, which can create buildup on the dryer's filter and reduce air circulation. If you prefer dryer sheets, scrub the filter once a month to remove buildup.

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



# Know what's below; dial 811 before you dig

**S**pring is not far off, and it's an optimal time of year to dream up and achieve your landscaping masterpiece. If any of your spring projects require digging—such as planting trees or shrubs, or setting posts—remember to dial 811 first. Underground utilities, such as buried gas, water and electric lines, can be a shovel thrust away from turning a spring project into a disaster.

Play it safe by dialing 811 to find out where utility lines run on your property. Your call will be routed to a local “one-call” center. Tell the operator where you’re planning to dig and what type of work you will be doing, and affected local utilities will be notified.

In a few days, a locator will arrive to designate the approximate location of any underground lines, pipes and cables. These areas will be marked with flags or paint so you’ll know what’s below. Then the safe digging can begin.

Although many homeowners tackling do-it-yourself digging projects are aware of “Call Before You Dig” services, the majority doesn’t take advantage of the service. A national survey showed that only 50 percent of homeowners called to have their lines marked before starting digging projects, according to the Common Ground Alliance (CGA), a federally mandated group of underground utility and damage prevention industry professionals. CGA data also shows that



**ALWAYS  
CALL  
BEFORE YOU  
DIG**



**One free, easy call gets your utility lines marked AND helps protect you from injury and expense.**

**Safe Digging Is No Accident:  
Always Call 811 Before You Dig**

**Know what's below. Always call 811 before you dig.  
Visit [call811.com](http://call811.com) for more information.**



an underground utility line is damaged every six minutes in the U.S. because someone decided to dig without first dialing 811.

Even simple tasks like installing a new mailbox post can damage utility lines,

which can disrupt service to an entire neighborhood, harm diggers and potentially result in fines and repair costs.

Never assume the location or depth of underground utility lines. There's no need: The 811

service is free, prevents the inconvenience of having utilities interrupted and can help you avoid serious injury.

For more information about local services, visit [www.call811.com](http://www.call811.com).

# Five ways to stay cozy this winter

**B**aby, it's cold outside! When you're feeling chilly at home, there are several budget-friendly ways you can keep comfortable without turning up the thermostat.

Here are five easy ways to stay cozy this winter:



**1.** Whether you're experiencing extremely cold winter temps or you simply "run cold," **an electric blanket can deliver quick warmth** like a regular throw or blanket cannot. Electric blankets can include a variety of features, like timers and dual temperature settings (if your cuddle buddy prefers less heat). This winter, consider an electric blanket instead of turning up the heat, and your energy bill will thank you.



**2.** Another way to make your home cozier is to **use a humidifier**. Cold air doesn't hold water vapor like warm air, so by adding humidity inside your home, you can feel a little warmer. A favorable level of humidity inside your home can also help clear sinuses, soften skin and improve sleep.



**3.** On winter days when the sun is shining, take advantage and **harness natural warmth from sunlight**. Open all curtains, drapes and blinds in your home to let the sunshine in—you'll be able to feel the difference.



**4.** One of the easiest ways to stay cozy at home is to **keep your feet warm**. Our feet play a critical role in regulating body temperature, so when your feet are warm, your body automatically feels warmer. Try a pair of comfortable wool socks or house slippers to stay toasty.

**5.** Beyond adding visual appeal to your home, **area rugs can also provide extra insulation and a warm surface for your feet** on cold winter days. Use large area rugs in rooms where you spend the most time. You'll enjoy the new colors and textures of the rug, and the additional warmth will help keep your home comfortable.

These are just a few ways you can stay cozy this winter *without* turning up the thermostat. Don't forget the hot chocolate!

# WINTER ENERGY-SAVINGS WORD SEARCH



This winter, you can pitch in at home to help save energy!

Read the energy-saving tips below, then find and circle the bolded words in the puzzle.

M	U	S	F	A	K	S	E	R	U	A	Z	T	H	H
B	E	T	M	I	V	L	R	J	C	K	M	T	J	L
B	M	H	F	R	R	H	Q	E	Q	M	S	K	V	W
T	D	G	G	F	W	E	D	G	G	U	N	M	J	L
K	V	I	K	I	B	L	P	X	N	R	V	L	T	Z
V	Y	L	X	L	W	K	S	L	H	Y	A	S	L	P
S	P	N	P	T	K	Q	I	F	A	E	Z	H	H	K
N	J	C	I	E	T	G	V	O	S	C	P	S	C	W
Z	K	M	C	R	H	A	N	U	O	V	E	R	Y	O
G	N	I	H	T	O	L	C	R	U	S	D	M	A	F
G	I	Z	C	I	F	J	B	P	I	N	L	G	F	P
H	M	J	W	O	V	D	B	L	Y	V	I	E	J	V
B	C	Q	K	I	N	W	L	I	N	E	N	B	N	T
H	N	E	W	X	V	R	I	D	V	C	B	B	T	G
C	U	J	M	Q	S	C	Y	M	P	Q	D	Q	K	T

## WORD BANK:

- Open curtains and blinds during the day to allow **sunlight** in to warm your home.
- Instead of turning up the thermostat, add more layers of **clothing** to keep your body warm.
- If you have a **fireplace**, ask an adult to close the flue when a fire is not burning.
- Unplug **chargers** when they're not in use. They consume energy even when they're not charging phones and other devices.
- Ask an adult to check the **air filter** for your home's heating and cooling system. Filters should be replaced regularly to help the system run more efficiently.
- Always turn off **lights** when you leave a room.

