

Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation

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Mission Statement

Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation is committed to providing dependable, affordable electric service through the expertise and dedication of competent leadership and a well-trained and responsive workforce.

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Between the Lines

News from your local leadership

A paycheck and purpose

In a few short weeks, hundreds of young people from our service area will be walking across a stage, collecting their diplomas and entering the next phase of their lives. It's a time of important decisions and big opportunities. Some of these young people will continue their education at a college or trade school. We are fortunate to have several higher education institutions nearby.

These local schools provide graduates with a solid education and the foundation to build a great career.

Others will enter the workforce, securing a job at a local factory, beginning an apprenticeship program

or taking a position with a family business.

A career in the trades can provide abundant opportunities and serious job security.

Earning potential is certainly an important consideration, but I challenge this year's graduates to consider something as equally important: find a career with purpose.

Each day, our team at Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation works to keep the lights on for more than 100,000 people — all our friends and neighbors right here in northern middle Tennessee. It is not always easy work, but at the end of the day, our team goes home knowing they have helped make the communities we serve better places to live.

In the modern economy, everything depends on a reliable supply of energy — healthcare to education and

manufacturing to commerce. If we don't do our jobs, hospitals can't perform surgeries, cell phones stop working and factories screech to a halt. The responsibility is big, but that's one of the many reasons our

employees take such pride in their work.

We have a mighty purpose — to provide an essential service to our communities. The rewards of our work go beyond paychecks and vacation time.

My message to this year's graduates is this: Whether you continue your education or enter the

workforce, pursue a career with purpose. Find your own, unique way to make a difference for the people around you, and you will never look back with regret.

At the risk of getting ahead of ourselves — we know how that last semester of your senior year can be — the team at CEMC extends our congratulations to the class of 2020. We are excited for the opportunities that lie ahead for you. Who knows? Maybe one day you'll be a part of our team here at the co-op.



By Chris A. Davis
General Manager,
Cumberland Electric
Membership
Corporation

"It is not always easy work, but at the end of the day, our team goes home knowing that they have helped make the communities we serve better places to live."

Electric co-ops advocate for lineworker safety during visits with Nashville lawmakers

More than 200 electric co-op leaders from across Tennessee, including directors and staff from Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation, were in Nashville on Tuesday, Feb. 4, asking for commonsense rules to protect the state's electric lineworkers.

Over 100 individual meetings with legislators were scheduled during the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association's 2020 Legislative Conference. Attending

install a switch that would allow lineworkers and first responders to disconnect the generation source in an emergency. Tennessee is one of only three states that does not have similar requirements in place.

"The interest of safety demands that any interconnected generation be properly installed," says CEMC General Manager Chris Davis. "This legislation is a simple and practical effort that will go a long way to protect lineworkers, first responders and the general public."

In addition to the lineworker safety legislation, co-ops also discussed other important topics.

Lawmakers were asked to support legislation that would allow certain utility-owned vehicles to display the Powering Tennessee specialty license plate that was introduced by the state in 2019. Proceeds from the plates support the Tennessee Lineworker Lifeline Fund, a nonprofit organization established to support lineworkers and their families.

Co-op representatives also shared information on broadband projects and encouraged lawmakers to support additional funding for rural broadband expansion.

"Every day, legislators make decisions that can impact the important work we do," said David Callis, executive vice president and general manager of the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association. "Visits like these provide us with valuable opportunities to educate lawmakers about co-ops and our communities. We appreciate co-op consumer-members and employees who take time away from family and work to meet with their elected officials. They help us tell the co-op story."

CEMC officials visit with Rep. Terri Lynn Weaver to discuss legislation concerning safety and other issues important to the cooperative's consumer-members.



From left, CEMC Operations Manager David Abernathy, General Manager Chris Davis and Board Assistant Secretary-Treasurer K. Jean Beauchamp meet Rep. Curtis Johnson during the 2020 Legislative Conference in Nashville.

this year's event from CEMC were directors Tommy Whittaker, president, and Dr. K. Jean Beauchamp, assistant secretary-treasurer, along with General Manager Chris Davis and Operations Manager David Abernathy.

When not installed properly, generation sources such as solar panels, wind turbines and gas generators that feed power to the grid can pose a real threat to the safety of lineworkers, first responders and the general public. Co-ops asked lawmakers to support SB 1991 and HB 1923, legislation that would require property owners installing a generation source to notify their local utility, comply with basic electric safety codes and



Stay in the know

At Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation, we are constantly striving to improve our operational efficiency so we can provide the most reliable electric service possible for our members.

We rely on data for nearly every aspect of our operations, which is why we need your help. By making sure we have your most accurate and complete contact information, we can continue to provide the high level of service that you expect and deserve. Accurate information enables us to improve customer service and enhance communications for reporting and repairing outages. It also allows co-op members to receive information about other important programs, events and activities.

Up-to-date contact information can potentially speed up the power restoration process during an outage. For example, the phone number you provide is linked to your service address in our outage management system. This means when you call to report an outage, our system recognizes your phone number and matches it with your account location. Accurate information helps our outage management system predict the location and possible cause of an outage, making it easier for our crews to correct the problem.

While we always do our best to maintain service, we occasionally plan outages to update, repair or replace equipment. In these instances, we can provide advance notification to affected members through automated phone messages or email if we have your updated contact information and communication preferences.

Many of you have been members of the co-op for years, and it's likely that your account information hasn't been updated for some time. We recognize that many members now use cell phones as their primary phone service, and we might not have those numbers in our system.

You can rest assured that when you provide your contact information to the

co-op, we will never share this information with any third parties. It is only used by CEMC to send important information to you. Please take a moment to confirm or update your contact information by visiting us online at www.cemc.org/smarthub.html or by giving us a call at 1-800-987-2362. Account information can also be updated using the SmartHub mobile app. By ensuring we have your most up-to-date contact information, you will be helping us improve service and efficiency so we can better serve you and all members of the co-op.



Start warm-weather savings on first nice day

The weather outside can be as frightful in March as in January, but the early spring usually sneaks in a few warm-weather days here and there. Take advantage of them.

Early spring features plenty of days when you can turn off your furnace and treat your home — and its occupants — to a taste of the pleasant weather to come. Here's how to take advantage of early glimpses of spring and save some household energy while you're at it:

- **Open the windows.** If it's warm enough to let some fresh air in during this in-between season of no heaters and no air conditioners, do it. Leave the windows open overnight to air out the house and stave off the need for the A/C.

- **Let the sunshine in.** Open the drapes on sunny days, and let nature keep your home warm. As it starts getting hot, though, cover windows up so incoming sunrays won't compete with the air conditioner.
- **Cook outdoors.** Dust off the grill, and start cookout season early this year.
- **Switch the direction of the blades on your ceiling fan.** For warm weather, the blades should rotate counterclockwise.
- **Readjust your water heater's temperature to 120 degrees** if you cranked it up a few degrees for the winter.
- **Schedule your home's A/C maintenance now** before you need to turn on the air conditioning for the summer.

Sign up for bank draft for a chance to win an electric bill credit

All members of Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation who are enrolled in bank draft prior to **Tuesday, March 31**, will be entered into a drawing to win one of five \$50 electric bill credits. As an added bonus, members who sign up for bank draft in the month of March will be entered into a second drawing with a chance to win a \$250 electric bill credit.

Bank draft is a convenient way to make electric bill payments automatically. With bank draft, your bill is securely drafted from your checking or savings account each month on your due date, eliminating late fees. You

will continue to receive your electric bill each month — in your mailbox or email inbox — and we'll take care of the rest. All you have to do is adjust your checkbook.

To sign up for bank draft, give us a call at 1-800-987-2362 or stop by your local CEMC office. You will be required to sign an authorization form and provide a voided check.

Please note: This contest is open to members enrolled in bank draft payments only. It does not apply to members who are enrolled in Auto Pay recurring credit/debit card payments.

Remodeling? Keep energy efficiency in mind

Spring is prime season for remodeling, upgrading and repairing your home. If you're planning a remodeling project this season, make a point of adding energy-efficient features along the way.

Here's a Top 10 list:

1. Add insulation around recessed lights so no heated or air-conditioned air can leak out of them and the outdoor weather can't sneak in.

2. If you're replacing your water heater, consider a solar-powered or tankless model. Both can save energy and money on water heating bills.

3. Install programmable thermostats when you add rooms to the house. While you're at it, have the thermostats in the rest of the home upgraded to programmable models.

4. Your contractor will install more insulation in any new spaces you're adding than your builder did during the original construction of your home. Consider adding insulation to already-insulated areas like the basement or crawlspace and attic to match new energy efficiency standards.

5. A new kitchen means shiny new appliances. Select those rated as energy efficient by Energy Star, which guarantees that the appliance will use less energy than unrated models.

6. If your older home still has single-pane windows, put an upgrade at the top of your remodeling wish list. Double-pane windows are more energy efficient because they shield your home from the outdoor weather — and keep your conditioned air indoors.

7. Change the light fixtures in your most-used rooms to LED models. They last 10 years or longer,

save considerable energy when compared to traditional lightbulbs, and you never have to change bulbs.

8. Work with a contractor who understands how passive solar design can lower your energy bills. Some popular choices are rooftop solar panels that heat the home's water, sunroom additions that invite natural heat into the home through windows and the addition of skylights.

9. Add or upgrade ventilation fans in bathrooms. This can improve air quality throughout the home — not just in the bathrooms — by removing moisture from the air.

10. Consider having a home energy rating or an energy audit conducted on your home. A professional will evaluate your home for energy-wasters, suggest ways to fix them and recommend additions that will make your house more comfortable and cheaper to heat and cool.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Placing hot food in the refrigerator makes the appliance work harder than necessary, using more energy. Allow food to cool down before you place it in the fridge.



Three ways to electrify your lawn care

By Abby Berry

Spring is just around the corner, and you can practically smell the freshly cut grass. If you're in the market to upgrade your lawn care equipment, you may want to consider electric (or battery-powered) options.

Gas-powered lawnmowers and trimmers may be your go-to, but times, they are a-changin'. Electric lawn care equipment options are becoming more popular than ever, offering consumers faster charging times, longer battery life and quieter, greener products compared to their gas-powered counterparts. Here are three ways you can electrify your lawn care this spring:

Electric lawnmowers

Electric lawnmowers have come a long way over the last few years. Early models required corded connections, which were tricky to manage. But the cord has been cut. Newer cordless electric mowers are certainly more expensive than gas-powered mowers, but much of the upfront cost can be recovered since electricity is a less expensive fuel than gas and electric engines generally require less maintenance than gas engines. Cordless electric mowers typically range from \$200 to \$500.

Electric mowers are suitable for most lawn care needs. Batteries typically require about one to two hours to fully charge, and most batteries can run for a full hour. That said, if you have a large yard (half an acre or larger), a gas-powered option may be best to suit your needs.

Electric trimmers

Cordless electric string trimmers are a great option for most lawns. Like lawnmowers, string trimmers have typically been powered by gas. But new versions of electric trimmers are improving and are now considered worthy competitors of gas-powered models.

Cordless electric trimmers are much quieter and easier to use, but most batteries last about 30 to 45 minutes. So, if you have a lot of space to trim, you may want to consider a back-up battery or plan to work in short bursts. If you're interested in purchasing an electric trimmer, the main factors to consider are the battery's life, charge time and power. Costs can vary depending on your needs, but you can find a quality version for about \$100.



Cordless electric leaf blowers are lightweight and easy to maneuver. Photo source: Scott Van Osdol

Electric leaf blowers

After cutting and trimming your lawn, you'll need to clear off those walkways and patios for the finishing touch. If you don't want to deal with the maintenance of a gas-powered blower or the restraints of a corded option, a cordless electric version is a great option.

Cordless electric leaf blowers are lightweight and easy to maneuver, but they don't offer quite as much power as gas-powered and corded blowers. If your leaf blowing and clearing needs are minimal, a cordless electric leaf blower can get the job done. Costs for a cordless electric blower vary depending on power and battery quality, but you can purchase a dependable model for about \$150 and up.

If you're looking to electrify your lawn care equipment, be sure to do your homework. Search online for the latest reviews, and check trusted websites like ConsumerReports.org. With a little research, you'll be well on your way to Lawn of the Month – with less maintenance, hassle and noise (and your neighbors will thank you!).

Abby Berry writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56 percent of the nation's landscape.



CUMBERLAND CONNECT

powered by **CEMC**

By Kaitlyn Bonds, Creative Director

At this point, you've probably heard the phrase "all hands on deck" used in connection with Cumberland Connect's fiber to the home project. This phrase rings true now more than ever. After months of working with multiple departments, contractors and crews, I can honestly say there is a passion going into this project unlike anything I've ever seen. In part, the inspiration we receive daily from our members in the form of cheers of appreciation and heart-touching stories of excitement solidifies the purpose behind our fiber to the home project. The hard work of everyone involved, in my mind, can be equated to that of a climber scaling a mountain for the first time. This is a huge project, and the dedication of everyone involved is inspiring itself. We are so excited to be so close to launching our broadband services!

Speaking of broadband services, we know you've probably heard by now that Cumberland Connect is bringing high-speed services, including internet, video and phone to previously unserved, or underserved, rural areas. But what makes our services unique? One of the biggest ways is that, as the project is named, we are taking fiber all the way *to the home*. Unlike the delivery involving connection stopping at the pole or even farther from your home, our fiber speeds are brought all the way to your home and installed inside. This is key to maintaining our boasted high speeds and delivering uninterrupted service. Our service will include free, managed Wi-Fi coupled with top-notch equipment included; we will offer a proactive approach to support of our members' connections.

Our services will also include a video streaming service. The way we watch television is changing, and many

consumers are "cutting the cord" and moving to streaming video services. Why not have the best of both worlds? How about a video streaming service with which you can watch your local channels and record your favorites, you'll never miss the big game, and it's all delivered to you on a reliable, truly high-speed connection? Now that's something we can get behind — and we have. Our fiber network will bring our members the best service out there, and we're building it with the future in mind.

In addition to offering the best network and services available to our members, we are committed to keeping our members in the know about our project progress. Our members are our "why," and we want them to know that we value their interest and excitement in our project. In order to better our communication, members can now visit our website, www.cumberlandconnect.org, and click "Check Availability" to see when services are available in their area. This will also sign members up for project updates so they will be the first to know when we make announcements. When our services become available in a specific area, we will reach out to members within that area to let them know they can begin signing up for service. (Be sure you have signed up to receive updates on our website, www.cumberlandconnect.org, so we can make sure we are able to reach you!)

We've said it before, and we'll say it again: High-speed internet connections have become a utility in today's world. Why not have the very best? We are proud of the network being built for our members, and we want to thank you all for your continued support of our fiber to the home project. We can't think of a better group of people to serve.



Security tips for connected devices

By Abby Berry

Today's market offers a plethora of new gadgets and devices that claim to make our homes smarter, safer and more efficient. But as with any new smart technology, consumers should take extra precautions to ensure these devices are secure.

Internet-connected cameras have brought significant convenience to the way we monitor the security of our homes, children and even our furry family members! With the simple swipe of a smartphone, homeowners can instantly keep a watchful eye from afar. But in recent months, some consumers found themselves in scary situations when hackers were able to tap into Internet-connected security cameras in their homes. This enabled the hackers to view and speak to the people, including children, inside the homes.

As connected devices become increasingly popular, it's important that we know how to secure our digital lives. The U.S. Department of Commerce offers these tips for protecting smart devices:

- **Get creative with passwords.** Change your device's factory security settings from the default password. This is one of the most important steps to take in the protection of internet-connected devices. Consider creating the longest password or passphrase permissible, and use familiar phrases you'll remember like the lyrics to your favorite song.
- **Keep tabs on your apps.** Most connected devices are supported by smartphone applications. Your smartphone could be filled with apps running in the background or using default permissions you never realized you approved, gathering personal information without your knowledge while also putting your identity and privacy at risk. Check your app permissions and say "no" to privilege requests that don't make sense.
- **Secure your network.** Properly secure the wireless network you use for Internet-connected devices.



As connected devices like home monitoring and security cameras become increasingly popular, it's important that we know how to secure our digital lives.

Consider placing these devices on a separate and dedicated network.

- **Connect and protect.** Whether it's your computer, smartphone, game console, camera or other connected devices, the best defense is to stay on top of things by updating to the latest security software, web browser and operating system. If you have the option to enable automatic updates to defend against the latest risks, turn it on.

Convenient, connected devices are here to stay — and, unfortunately, so are the hackers. But by taking extra steps to safeguard your network and devices, you can keep your digital life as secure as possible.

Abby Berry writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56 percent of the nation's landscape.