

Member Matters

MANAGER'S MESSAGE

One of the things that makes us different from Investor-Owned Utilities (IOUs) is that from the beginning we've had only one overriding mission and purpose, and that is to deliver at-cost power to our members as reliably and safely as possible. We were formed because it wasn't cost effective for IOUs to run power lines to rural areas. There were too few customers per miles of line to spread the cost out effectively. That's why we got together and with assistance from the Rural Electrification Act, did it ourselves. Now even today, in a growing area like ours, Brunswick Electric has about 13 meters per mile of line, while most IOUs have more than double that number. So how have we, with fewer meters to spread out the cost of operations, been able to keep our rates equivalent to publicly traded utilities, with no increase in nearly 10 years? Through careful management that always puts you first.

Every year we publish an annual report and distribute a copy to each of you in the September issue of Carolina Country. We have extra copies available at our offices all year round. This report details the key activities we've been doing on your behalf over the year, and includes financial statements. It features our bond and insurance ratings, which are always superior and help keep costs down. Also included are some of the capital projects we are working on to make sure we can accommodate growth and maintain 99.92% reliability. We think it's important that you know what we're doing, and why.

Another way we're different is our personalized approach to serving you. Last year we answered well over 300,000 member phone calls personally. And whenever possible, we work one-on-one with you to help solve any challenges you may have. Even though we're growing at a fast pace, and now have over 70,000 member households spread out over 1,500 square miles of service area, we're still committed to providing the same neighborly service that we dedicated ourselves to from the beginning. You're a member, not a customer, and what matters to you, matters to us.

We do our best for you every day not just because it's our job, not just because it's the right thing to do, and not just because you are our family, friends and neighbors. We do it because it makes us proud. Providing you with something as essential as affordable electricity means we've done a good day's work. That's something we know our members can relate to. ***Thanks for being a member, and we'll keep the lights on for you.***



Don Hughes

Don Hughes,
CEO/General Manager

Restoring power during an outage

Winter storms, especially the ones that leave behind icy roads and frozen power lines, often lead to extensive power outages that can affect hundreds of members at one time. When this happens, Brunswick Electric works systematically to restore your power as quickly and safely as possible, and here's how we do it.

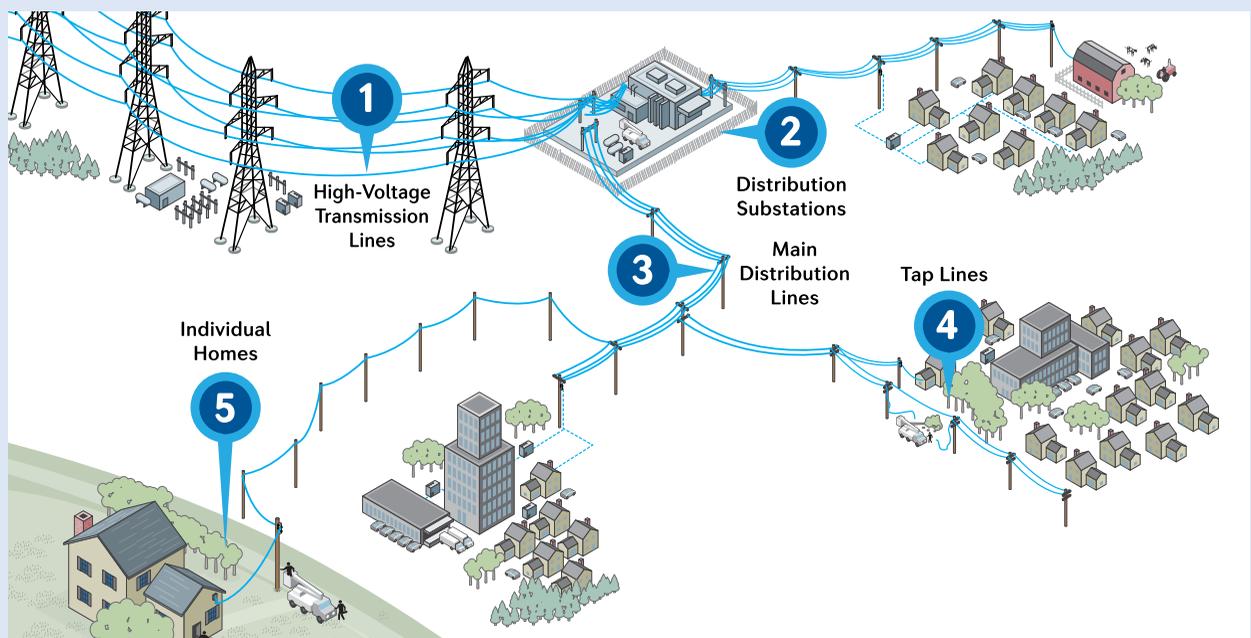
First, line crews work to pinpoint problems. They start with high-voltage transmission lines. Transmission towers and cables that supply power to thousands of consumers rarely fail. But when damage occurs, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.

Next, crews check distribution substations. Each substation serves hundreds or thousands of members. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to discover if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself, or if problems exist down the line.

If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of members in communities or housing developments.

If local outages persist, supply lines are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service, outside businesses, schools and homes. And finally, if your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your home may need to be repaired.

Remember, always call 800-682-5309 to report an outage.



FAQ about outages

Q: My neighbor has power but I do not. How is this possible? A: It is common for homes in the same community to receive power from different lines or to be on different circuits, which means your power is unlikely to be restored at the same time. Or, you could have a problem inside your home such as a tripped breaker causing your power to be off longer than your neighbor.

Q: What is a supplier outage? A: Occasionally, situations arise that cause BEMC to lose service from the supplier of our electricity, which leads to outages for our members. This type of outage is not a direct result of damage to our power lines and while we cannot control when this type of outage is restored, we work closely with the power supplier to ensure power is restored as quickly as possible and that our members are updated about progress for restoration.

Q: How should I prepare for an outage? A: Just like during hurricane season, BEMC encourages members to be prepared in the event of a long-term outage due to a winter storm. There are many basic steps you can take to prepare, including keep a well-stocked emergency preparedness kit with a flashlight, batteries, cash and first aid supplies, and ensure battery powered devices are fully charged. If you have a medical issue that is dependent on electricity, develop a back-up plan so you know where to go and what to do in the event of an extended outage. Find these tips and more at [Ready.gov](#).

Have you updated your contact information recently?

When it comes to restoring your power during an outage BEMC knows and understands that time is of the essence. One simple step you can take to help us serve you more quickly and efficiently is to update your contact information on your membership account any time it changes. When you call to report an outage, the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system will identify your account by the phone number we have on file – if you're calling from that phone then it simplifies the process, which saves you time and lets us get started on restoring your power more quickly.

But phone number isn't the only important contact information we need. As a member you are entitled to certain benefits, including the return of capital credits. When it is time to issue those credits we will mail you a letter with instructions for claiming your credits. To ensure you receive those letters you should always keep your mailing address up-to-date in our system.

Finally, an updated email address is also very helpful, particularly if you prefer to email BEMC with questions or concerns. By keeping your email address updated we can locate your account more quickly and attempt to resolve the issue before we respond to you, again saving you time and hopefully frustration.

Update your contact information by calling our office at 800-842-5871, emailing info@bemc.org, or through the SmarHub app.

Heat your home for less this winter

As the temperature drops lower with the onset of winter, there are simple steps you can take to increase energy efficiency while heating your home. First, tape or affix heavy, clear plastic to the inside of your window frames to create an additional barrier against cold air. Ensure that the plastic is tightly sealed to the frame to help reduce infiltration. Next, use a programmable thermostat such as the Ecobee to set the temperature as low as is comfortable when you are home (ideally around 68°). When you are asleep or away, turn the temperature down 10-15° for eight hours. According to the Department of Energy, this small adjustment can help you save approximately 10 percent a year on heating and cooling costs.

3 Quick Tips to Avoid High Winter Bills

Looking for easy ways to lower your energy bills this winter? Here are a few tips from the Department of Energy:



Open blinds and curtains during the day to allow sunlight in to warm your home. Close them at night to keep cold, drafty air out.

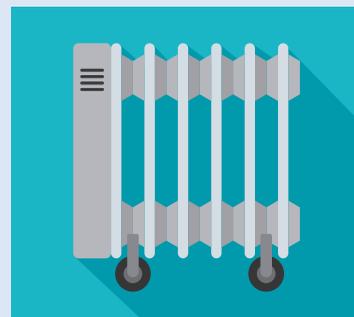


Wash clothes in cold water, and use cold-water detergent whenever possible.



Replace incandescent light bulbs with LEDs, which use at least 75 percent less energy.

Space heater safety



Space heaters are a great way to warm specific rooms in your home without cranking up the thermostat but they come with many safety risks. Here are some tips to help you keep your home safe this winter:

- **Do** plug your space heater directly into the wall outlet
- **Do** place your space heater in low-moisture rooms
- **Do** keep your space heater at least 3 feet away from kids, pets and flammable items
- **Do** buy a unit with an automatic shutoff in case the unit tips over, or you forget to shut it off
- **Do** always follow the directions and take a broken space heater to a qualified appliance service center
- **Don't** leave your space heater unattended; always unplug it before you leave the house or go to bed
- **Don't** use an extension cord to plug in your space heater – it can cause the heater to overheat and can be a tripping hazard
- **Don't** place your space heater near curtains, clothing, furniture or bedding
- **Don't** try to repair a broken space heater yourself
- **Don't** put your space heater in your bathroom – the moisture can damage the unit which could lead to malfunction.

Watts For Sale

Lowrey organ, used very little, no tubes, \$400 OBO; 653-4819

2015 Chevy Malibu, 15,700 miles, like new, \$15,000; 575-4163

Gold's Gym Stride Trainer 410, \$50 cash, firm; 842-3670

Furniture, Benchcraft double recliner, loveseat opens to a bed, tan, \$600 for both; 575-6209

Jugs Small Ball Pitching Machine, bucket & small balls included, like new, \$150 OBO; 399-5861

Solid oak upright bar, 24"x70"x15," 4 doors, 1 drawer, glass shelving, smoked glass back, light, \$175; 616-4545

12-15 dozen golf balls & tote, \$75 for all; 232-3501

Bravia 48" TV, brand new, \$175; 252-717-4873

U-Haul hand truck, heavy duty, \$40; 553-4095

Residential lot in Walden Creek, Southport; 233-9625

Lenox snowman collectibles, large teapot, \$40; small teapot w/cup, \$40; 12" bowl, \$40; sugar & creamer, \$35; 11 years of Christmas ornaments, \$150 OBO; 854-0568

Stickley home entertainment cabinet, w/matching stereo cabinet, \$500; corner home office armoire, oak, exc. cond., \$300; 579-0436

Whirlpool washing machine, top loading, model WTW4800XQ1, 5 years old, purchased new \$369, asking \$150; 579-8218

Singer sewing machine, in cabinet, bench seat, good condition, \$150; 846-7408

Leather recliner, brown, great condition, \$125; farmhouse sink, SS, 18 gauge, new in box, \$225; 287-4824



All BEMC offices will be closed
New Year's Day
 Monday, January 1, 2018, and
MLK Day
 Monday, January 15, 2018

Don't miss these application deadlines:



Community Grants - Feb. 15, 2018



Scholarship Hwy - Mar. 15, 2018

BEMC Basketball Camp applications due March 31



Sports Camp Scholarships

Each year, BEMC provides two full scholarships to area students to attend an overnight basketball camp in the summer. This year, young men can apply to attend the Roy Williams Basketball Camp June 16-20 at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, and young women can apply to attend the Wolfpack Women's Basketball Camp June 10-13 at NC State University in Raleigh.

This program is open to rising sixth, seventh and eighth graders. Applicants will be judged on their academics, extracurricular activities and an essay.

Download the application at ncelectriccooperatives.com/community.

HOW TO SUBMIT AN AD: Ads must be received via email or fax no later than the first of each month. Ads will then appear in the following month's publication due to the printing schedule. Example: If ad is received by January 1, it will appear in the February issue of Carolina Country magazine. This is a free service for BEMC members to advertise non-commercial items for sale. Ads run ONE TIME, are limited to three lines, and only one phone number. We reserve the right to edit or refuse ads due to content, length or AVAILABLE SPACE. Please no email addresses, names or repeat ads. All numbers are 910 area code unless otherwise listed. Some mobile providers require 10-digit dialing. BEMC does not endorse items advertised and is not responsible for reliability of items.

E-MAIL: watts4sale@bemc.org **MAIL:** BEMC, Attn: Watts For Sale, PO Box 826, Shallotte, NC 28459. **FAX:** (910) 755-4299



CUSTOMER SERVICE (800)842-5871 | OUTAGE REPORTING (800)682-5309

Shallotte (910)754-4391 | Southport / Oak Island (910)457-9808 | Whiteville (910)642-5011

P.O. Box 826, Shallotte, NC 28459

www.bemc.org | email: newsletter@bemc.org | Auto bill payment 24/7 (866)934-6830



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