



## Tips & Tools

In this new column, one of BEMC's Energy Insiders will answer your questions about how to save money and energy, and help guide you through the various tools and programs offered by BEMC. This month, Nicky Nance walks us through how to insulate a water heater.

Why consider insulating your water heater? During the winter, a water heater works harder to keep the water at the correct temperature, especially if it is located in a garage or colder room in your home. This DIY insulation project can help reduce standby heat loss up to 45 percent, which translates to potential savings of 7 to 16 percent on your water-heating costs each year.

To determine if your water heater needs to be insulated, touch the tank. If it is warm to the touch, then insulating the tank will be beneficial. Once you decide to tackle this project, visit your local hardware store to pick up the supplies; you will need a water heater insulating blanket, electrical or duct tape, and a sharp utility knife.

### Step-by-step instructions

- Turn off the water heater
- Measure the height of the water heater and cut the blanket to fit as needed
- Wrap the blanket around the water heater and temporarily tape it in place
- Using a marker, mark the areas where the controls are so you can cut space for them
- Install the blanket, carefully lining up the cut out areas, and tape it permanently in place
- Turn the water heater back on

The ideal temperature for your water heater to work efficiently is 120 degrees, but you should never set it above 130 degrees once you have installed the blanket; doing so may cause the wiring to overheat. Watch Nicky's video tutorial that shows just how easy it is to insulate your water heater at [bemc.org](http://bemc.org).

Do you have a question for one of our Energy Insiders? Email your question to [newsletter@bemc.org](mailto:newsletter@bemc.org) and you may see it answered in a future issue of Member Matters. Learn more about our Energy Insiders at [bemc.org](http://bemc.org).

### Stay Warm for Less

When it comes to saving money on your bill in the winter, every little bit of usage counts. Here are a few tips to help you navigate the coldest months of the year.

- Insulate. Hot water lines, walls, attics and floors may need additional insulation to reduce heat loss.
- Seal leaky windows, doors and electrical outlets. Use caulk and weatherstripping on doors and windows, and install foam gaskets behind outlets and switch plates on walls.
- Cover single-pane windows with storm windows. Or, in a pinch, stretch sheets of plastic or bubble wrap across your windows on the inside of window frames to create a barrier to keep warm air in.
- If you must use your oven, leave the door open after you turn it off. This way the heat doesn't go to waste as the oven cools off. Never leave an oven open while turned on as this poses a safety risk.
- Use your slow cooker whenever possible. Not only will your dinner be ready when you get home, but a slow cooker uses less energy than your oven.



# Manager's Message

## Brunswick Electric stays in front of changes in the utility industry by planning for the future

Brunswick Electric continually plans for rapid growth in a quickly changing industry environment. We're constantly keeping on top of new technologies and striking a balance for operational efficiency while planning for future needs. Relying on our experience and steady hand, our management team and Board of Directors adopt new technologies and safety procedures only after carefully considering the short- and long-term implications for our members.

Our four-year Construction Work Plan includes necessary improvements to accommodate load growth. Some of those projects include transmission upgrades north and south of the new Bolivia delivery point and a new transmission line in southeastern Columbus County. We are using new technologies to do many things. Two of them are to maximize system efficiency to make our power grid more resilient, and to analyze available system data to quantify system losses and prioritize projects and keep them on budget.

Striking a balance also means maintaining financial goals that focus on the responsible use of member assets. These goals consist of maintaining key financial ratios, responsible use of member equity, and maintaining rates that fairly recover costs from the membership. BEMC also safeguards the security of member data, by employing tough cybersecurity measures to proactively detect and prevent potential attacks on our data systems.

As we strive to make every part of the cooperative more resilient, the "smart grid" is at the top of the list. We are focused on finding ways to make a more flexible grid, a grid that can accommodate members who want to work with the co-op and install solar panels or other distributed resources. A grid that can help members save money by working with options like programmable thermostats to trim electricity use during times when demand for electricity is high and more expensive.

We operate in an industry that is changing rapidly, as we strive to find

new and innovative ways to take our service to the next level. Every day we are establishing more efficient, more cost-effective and reliable ways to keep power flowing to you. The good news is the future is here, and we're already doing these things, from programmable hot water heaters and battery storage to electric vehicle charging stations. You can count on us to be your trusted energy resource, as we continue to do our best for our membership every day.



*Don Hughes*

Don Hughes,  
CEO/General Manager



### Now Accepting Applications for BEMC Community Grants

Non-profits and community groups that provide services to benefit our community in the areas of family services, civic and community programs, cultural and arts programs, emergency services, or economic development are encouraged to apply for a BEMC Community Grant up to \$2,500. These grants are funded from the proceeds from our Annual Meeting Auction. The deadline to apply is February 15, 2019. All applications must be submitted online and can be found under the Community Programs tab at [bemc.org](http://bemc.org).



### BEMC Scholarship Highway program Now Accepting Applications

Attention parents of high school seniors! BEMC is now accepting applications for our college scholarship program. BEMC will award two \$5,000 scholarships in 2019; one in Brunswick County and one in the Columbus County area. See your student's guidance counselor for an application packet or download one at [bemc.org](http://bemc.org). The deadline to apply is March 14, 2019.



*Behind the scenes of the making of BEMC's basketball camp scholarship video, shot by videographer Brent Gallant.*

## BEMC and Touchstone Energy Team Up to Provide Sports Scholarships

If you are a boy or girl in middle school and you like basketball, this is the program for you. Brunswick Electric is now accepting applications for **2019 Touchstone Energy Sports Camp Scholarships** for rising sixth, seventh and eighth graders. Scholarship winners (one boy and one girl) will attend overnight basketball camps at UNC-Chapel Hill and NC State University for free this summer! Roy Williams Carolina Basketball Camp is June 22–26 in Chapel Hill. The NC State Wolfpack Women's Basketball Camp is June 9–12 in Raleigh. Deadline for applications is March 31.

BEMC scholarship alumni Hailey, Emma and Morgan took time out of

their busy schedules to show off what they learned and talk about their camp experiences in BEMC's new video. See it at [bemc.org](http://bemc.org) or follow BEMC on Facebook.

### 2018 Camp Scholarship Recipients

Meet last year's BEMC basketball camp scholarship recipients, Brunswick County eighth graders Emma Pruitt and Joseph Stalvey, who were awarded positions at the Wolfpack Women's Camp in Raleigh and the Roy Williams Carolina Basketball Camp in Chapel Hill, respectively, last summer.

Back in June the two shot hoops and ran drills with other student athletes from around the state, as well as current and former college players. Wes Moore, coach of the Wolfpack women's basketball team, and Roy Williams, coach of the 2009 and 2017 national champion Carolina Tar Heel men's basketball team directed the camps with the help of their staff.

Emma and Joseph earned the all-expense-paid scholarships by completing an application that included

### Apply for 2019 Scholarships Now

- Campers must be a rising sixth, seventh or eighth grader
- Attend a school in the BEMC service area
- Live in a residence that receives service from BEMC
- Provide their own transportation to and from camp

Applications are scored on academics, extracurricular activities and an essay that must accompany the online application. Applications must be received no later than March 31. To learn more or to download the application, go to [ncelectriccooperatives.com/sports-camps](http://ncelectriccooperatives.com/sports-camps) or call BEMC at (800) 842-5871.



academics, community involvement and enthusiasm for sports. Applications are currently available through Touchstone Energy Sports Camp Scholarships from North Carolina's electric cooperatives. Now in its 16th year, the program provides an opportunity for young athletes to visit our state's largest universities and work directly with notable coaches and student athletes.

"These scholarships are an excellent way for young athletes to experience life on a college campus and learn from mentors at their favorite NCAA athletic programs," said Don Hughes, CEO/General Manager at BEMC. "This year we're proud to continue BEMC's tradition of providing outstanding local students with this opportunity to develop fundamental skills that will help them excel on the court and in the classroom."



*2018 BEMC sports camper Joseph Stalvey poses with Tar Heel men's basketball coach Roy Williams.*

*2018 BEMC sports camper Emma Pruitt poses with Wolfpack women's basketball coach Wes Moore.*

## Put Safety First During Winter Weather

Keep these tips in mind to protect you and your family when winter weather comes your way:



- Place space heaters on solid surfaces at least three feet away from flammable items. Always turn off space heaters before exiting a room or going to sleep.
- If using Sterno or charcoal to cook food, always do so outside in a well-ventilated area. Cooking indoors with Sterno or charcoal will produce deadly carbon-monoxide fumes, which are colorless and odorless.
- Stay away from downed or sagging power lines and don't attempt to remove tree limbs from lines. Never drive over power lines and always assume they are electrified and dangerous. Alert your electric cooperative of any damaged lines immediately.
- Don't leave a fireplace unattended unless embers are extinguished. Use a fire screen to catch rolling logs or sparks.
- Generators should only be used in open and ventilated areas and should never be operated inside a home, including in a basement or garage, due to the risk of carbon monoxide fumes. Never connect generators directly to household wiring without first having a qualified electrician install a transfer switch to prevent backfeeding, which poses a serious threat to line workers.
- Connecting a generator to the main electrical supply for your house requires the services of a qualified, licensed electrician. Installing the connection and switch can cost \$600 to \$1,000.

### Did you know?

When the temperature drops below 35 degrees, your heat pump will use heat strips to supplement the compressor. This is an inefficient source of heat that can drive up your heating costs in the winter.



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