

SEMCO NEWS

Official Member Newsletter

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 
The power of human connections®

April 2023

Lineworkers power our world

While it takes each employee across all departments to keep operations running smoothly at Sumter EMC, one of the more visible jobs is that of a lineworker. You may see one of ours working 35 feet (or more) overhead or maintaining lines at ground level. Lineworkers have an especially important job, and we rely on their expertise to power our world.

These utility workers are on call 24/7 in case severe storms or other circumstances cause the power to go out. On any given day or night, and in all kinds of weather conditions, these specialized crews install and maintain overhead and underground electrical systems. Components of these systems include power lines, transformers, fuses, insulators, and other related equipment.

Safety comes first

Lineworkers must commit to safety more than anything else. They spend numerous hours in safety trainings each year and must understand and apply crucial safety regulations.

Electrical lineworkers are specially trained to:

- Climb poles to service power lines in areas inaccessible by trucks.

- Stand in an elevated bucket to assess and repair overhead lines.
- Install poles, overhead lines, and other equipment.
- Work on energized and deenergized lines.
- Install and service underground lines.

When a problem is reported, lineworkers must identify the cause and fix it. This usually involves diagnostic testing using specialized equipment and repair work. To work on poles, they usually use bucket trucks to raise themselves to the top of the structure, although all lineworkers must be adept at climbing poles and towers when necessary. Workers use specialized safety equipment to keep them from falling when climbing utility poles and towers. Protective clothing is also required to shield lineworkers, since they work around high voltages. Collectively, gear components can weigh up to 45 pounds.

Storms and other natural disasters can cause extensive damage to power lines. When power is lost, line repairers must work safely and efficiently to restore service. We salute our lineworkers who work around-the-clock to keep the power on. Their safety, as well as yours, is our top priority.

CELEBRATE
the power behind your power.
Lineworker Appreciation Day | April 10, 2023





By Mike Teegarden

If you have thought about adding solar as a home energy source, you have likely had an array of questions, and as your local electric cooperative, Sumter EMC has answers.

When considering a rooftop solar system, it is important to know the facts regarding efficiency and energy savings—and whether solar will meet your needs, goals, and financial objectives.

Typically, homeowners who install solar do so out of concern for the environment, to save money, or both. It is important to know how rooftop solar at your home will impact these goals.

“If you are considering solar for any reason, it’s important to contact Sumter EMC during the decision-making process,” says Rene Smith, President/CEO of Sumter EMC. “Sumter EMC is a trusted energy adviser and can answer questions about costs, possible savings, and what kind of investment will best fit your electric needs.”

While each home is different in terms of how much energy solar will provide, there are a few key factors to consider.

Energy consumption

A solar system’s size is based on a home’s energy needs. Before installing solar, make sure your home is as energy-efficient as possible in terms of lighting, heating and cooling systems, and insulation. An energy-efficient home will require a smaller solar system, which will save money and help reduce environmental impact.

Associated costs and maintenance

The age and orientation of your roof will affect your costs. The best orientation for solar panels is facing south to receive direct sunlight; a shaded roof does not produce as much solar energy. Because it costs more to replace a roof on a home with solar panels, the age of your roof should also be considered. Will your roof need to be replaced before solar

panels need to be replaced? Just as a shingled roof does not last forever, neither does a solar panel system, which has an average life span of 25 to 30 years. Also, as a solar system ages, it produces less energy and may require maintenance and repairs.

Your access to reliable electricity

Solar panels only produce power when the sun is shining. To have power at your home at night or on cloudy days, you will need to remain connected to a primary power source, such as Sumter EMC.

Signing a solar contract

Before you hire a solar contractor, contact Sumter EMC to learn about our solar offerings, rate structures, and inter-connection agreements. As with any major home-improvement project, get bids from three contractors to compare equipment and pricing when considering solar.

“Sumter EMC is always available to help in the process of obtaining the solar array that’s right for you,” says Brad Ward, Vice President of Engineering at Sumter EMC. “Be sure to visit our website at sumteremc.com/cooperative-solar to review helpful resources to assist you in evaluating solar options.”

Cooperative Solar

If your main concern is reducing your environmental impact, Sumter EMC, like several others in Georgia, offers a Cooperative Solar program that allows you to purchase blocks of solar power generated by Sumter EMC solar installations.

“This program makes the benefits of clean, green solar power more widely available to Sumter EMC Members at an affordable price compared with purchasing your own solar system,” Smith says. “This gives you an option to enjoy the benefits of solar without the responsibilities of ownership and maintenance.”

Spring cleaning equals energy savings



Many of your once-a-year spring cleaning chores can help save energy all year round. Some examples may include:

- Cleaning windows inside and out. The cleaner the window-panes, the clearer, which means more sunlight can shine through them, making it less necessary to turn on lights and run space heaters in the spring.
- Replacing air filters in your HVAC system. If they are full of dust, dirt, and pet hair, air will have a tough time passing through them. Poor airflow makes your A/C work harder to do its job.
- Clearing branches, leaves, and other debris that might have fallen on the outdoor unit of your air-conditioning system over the winter. For the unit to work properly, air needs to circulate around it.
- Dusting ceiling fan blades. When the fan starts running, it can knock accumulated dust into your room, which is bad for air quality and can wind up in your A/C vents or filters.
- Snaking your dryer vent or hiring a pro to do it for you.
- Pulling your refrigerator slightly out from the wall and vacuuming behind it. If your fridge has exposed coils, vacuum those, too.



Strawberry Cornmeal Shortcakes

Recipe courtesy of **Georgia Grown**

- 1/2 cup self-rising cornmeal
- 1-1/2 cups self-rising flour
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1/4 cup shortening
- 1/4 cup sour cream or yogurt
- 1/2 cup buttermilk
- Zest and juice from 1 lemon



GEORGIA GROWN

Shortcakes

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Whisk cornmeal, flour, and sugar in a large bowl. Make a well in the center of the bowl and place butter, shortening, and sour cream (or yogurt) in the middle. Using your fingers, blend the butter, shortening, and sour cream into a paste. Add buttermilk, lemon juice, and zest, and combine with butter mixture. Work flour mixture gradually into the liquid mixture that is in the well until a sticky dough is formed. Turn it out onto a floured surface, sprinkle a little flour on top of the dough, and knead a few times until the dough is smooth and no longer sticky. With a rolling pin or your hands, press or roll dough out to 1-inch thick. Using a 2- or 3-inch biscuit cutter, cut out 8-12 shortcakes, gathering up and rerolling excess dough, as necessary. Bake for 10-14 minutes on an ungreased baking sheet, or until golden brown.

Whipped cream

- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/4 cup sugar

Whip cream on highest setting until it holds soft peaks. Add vanilla and sugar. Continue to whip until stiff peaks are formed. Refrigerate until ready to use.

Assembly

Cut each shortcake in half, and top each with strawberries and whipped cream. Top with the other halves of shortcakes. *Serves 8-12.*

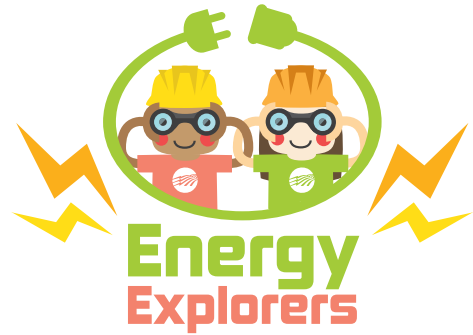
For recipes from farms and producers across our state, visit www.georgiagrown.com.

SPRING EFFICIENCY WORD SCRAMBLE

Did you know there are several ways you can save energy during spring months?

Read the efficiency tips below and unscramble the bolded letters to reveal how you and your family can save energy during springtime.

Don't forget to check your work in the answer key below!



- Sealing air leaks around doors and **diwwson** saves energy and keeps your home comfortable.

- LED **hlgist** typically use 75% less energy than traditional incandescent lightbulbs.

- Unplug devices and electronics that consume energy even when they're not in use, like phone **scragher**.

- Planting shade **esrte** around your home can block unwanted heat from the sun.

- Ceiling fans cool people, not rooms. Turn them off when you leave the room to save **yengre**.



Answer key: 1) windows 2) lights 3) chargers 4) trees 5) energy

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