



Andrea Walker promoted to Vice President, Marketing & Administration

Sumter EMC President/CEO Ted McMillan announced the promotion of Andrea Short Walker from Manager of Staff Services to Vice President, Marketing and Administration, effective January 7, 2019.

Walker is a native of Sumter County, and her roots are firmly established in southwest Georgia. She is the daughter of Rufus and Debra Short, and the great granddaughter of Rufus Chappell, a founding member of Sumter EMC. Andrea represents the fourth generation of the family to live and farm the land currently known as Short Farms. She is married to Adam Walker, who is the farmer in the family, and they have two children, William and Emma Jane. The family attends Central Baptist

Church where Andrea and Adam teach the second grade children's Sunday School class and volunteer for the Awana program.

Following graduation from Southland Academy, Walker earned a bachelor's degree from Georgia Southern University in business, with a major in finance and a minor in hotel and restaurant management. She was hired by Sumter EMC in 2013 to work in the Marketing and Administration department where her primary focus was on human resources and member services. Additionally, Walker has served as Secretary for the Sumter EMC Foundation and will assume the chairmanship of the Foundation board in 2019.

Walker said, "I am so grateful to Greg Crowder for his leadership

and guidance through my job progression, deeply honored to have the opportunity to serve our members and employees in my new role and committed to continuing Sumter EMC's distinguished tradition of service."

In announcing the promotion, McMillan stated, "Walker's strong work ethic and her commitment to serving our members have demonstrated the leadership skills needed to keep Sumter EMC moving forward, and we are very proud to have her on our management team."



Andrea Short Walker
Vice President
Marketing & Administration

Electric heat pumps reduce energy costs all year

Investing in an electric heat pump is one of the smartest energy decisions you can make, and Southwest Georgia is the perfect place to make your investment pay off. The electric heat pump will heat your home in the winter and cool your home in the summer. It's that simple.

The electric heat pump received its name from its method of operation. In actuality it doesn't "pump" heat; it extracts it from the air and transfers it to another space. Only the heat from the air is transferred, not the actual air. Many comparisons are made to solar heat, because the electric heat pump does not generate heat - it transfers heat

generated by the sun. Since we have abundant sunshine in Georgia, the electric heat pump is right at home here!

In winter, the heat pump moves heat from the outside air to the inside, warming your home. In summer, the process reverses. The heat pump draws heat from your home to the outdoors, cooling your home economically even during the hottest months of summer.

Because the electric heat pump transfers more energy than it consumes, it generates a phenomenal 200 to 300 percent efficiency.

To learn more about electric heat pumps, call Sumter EMC today at 800-342-6978.



Rebates
are available on a first-come, first-served basis to replace a central system electric or gas furnace with an electric heat pump. Call Sumter EMC to see if you qualify!

Utility notification requirements for contractors, farmers, well drillers and landowners

Contractors and landowners have substantial compliance responsibility when working near an electric utility's underground and overhead distribution power lines. Georgia Law and Sumter EMC regulations require contractors and landowners to contact Georgia 811 or, in some cases, Sumter EMC before working near power lines.

Sumter EMC hopes to avoid personal injuries, unnecessary power outages and line damage associated with accidents involving its electric distribution facilities. Contractors can avoid substantial equipment damage and repair costs, as well as personal injuries to their employees, if they abide by these requirements.

These regulations apply to contractors, well drillers, farmers, landowners, and others who may have a personal business interest in work performed near power lines. While the following rules address overhead power lines, Georgia law requires that anyone digging in Georgia must contact Georgia 811 at least three days before construction begins, so utility companies can be contacted to mark underground facilities.

High Voltage Safety Act

The High Voltage Safety Act became law in Georgia on July 1, 1992. This act requires individuals performing work within 10 feet of overhead high-voltage electric power lines to notify Georgia 811 during its regular business hours at least 72 hours prior to beginning the work (excluding weekends and holidays).

Georgia 811 will then contact the owner of the power lines to take appropriate safety measures to prevent injuries, property damage and interruptions of utility

service resulting from accidental or inadvertent contact with high-voltage electric lines. Failure to call Georgia 811 constitutes a violation of the law and can result in fines and penalties, in addition to liability for repair of damages.

Contractors are encouraged to become fully familiar with the details of the High Voltage Safety Act. Information is available directly from Georgia 811. Use the same telephone number for notifications or contact them at their website.

Georgia 811
Statewide: 811
Nationwide: 811
www.gaupc.com

Special Notice to Farmers

Modern farm equipment can be raised or lowered to allow for harvesting greater amounts with fewer delays. Use of this equipment requires that you check fields and roads where your equipment may come within 10 feet of overhead power lines.

The power lines were installed to comply with the National Electric Safety Code clearance guidelines at the time of construction. If any part of your equipment will be within 10 feet of overhead power lines, you must notify Georgia 811 at least 72 hours before you work under the power lines.

Wells and Pumps

Both the well driller and the landowner bear responsibility to notify Georgia 811 when any equipment or materials will be within 10 feet of overhead high-voltage electric power lines. For safety reasons, installation of wells and well pumps at distances closer than 30 feet from any overhead

power line should generally be avoided, but in locations where the options for well placement are limited, Sumter EMC will help determine the minimum clearance requirements, as specified in the National Electrical Safety Code.

Minimum clearance requirements for the location of wells and well pumps vary according to the line voltage and certain site-specific attributes, and Sumter EMC should be consulted to determine the appropriate minimum recommended distance. Clearance requirements vary with the voltage of the power line, whether or not the line is insulated, the height of the line above ground, the distance to poles that support the line and other local factors that determine where a drilling rig will be stationed for installation and future maintenance or pump replacement activities.

A Sumter EMC representative will meet with the well driller and/or landowner to determine the minimum acceptable distance if the desired pump location is closer than 30 feet from an overhead line.

Easements

Sumter EMC's Service Rules and Regulations require the contractor to notify Sumter EMC directly if proposed work and/or construction will be performed inside the utility's easement. In most cases, the easement extends 20 feet on each side of the power line. Sumter EMC will provide the necessary protection to avoid hazards. Again, consideration should be given to providing plenty of time to respond.

Call Sumter EMC's Engineering Department at (229) 924-8041 or (800) 342-6978 and ask to speak with a representative.

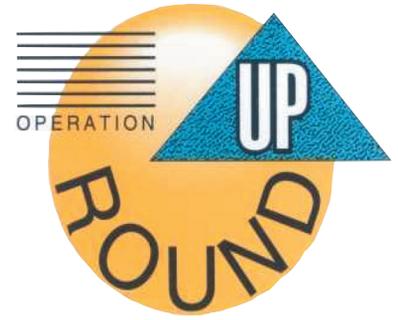
Foundation awards exceed \$986,692 to local communities since 2003

Since 2003 when Sumter EMC implemented the Operation Round Up® (ORU) program, Foundation trustees have awarded more than \$986,692 in grants to local civic/charitable organizations. The ORU program is used to fund the Sumter EMC Foundation.

Each month, Sumter EMC “rounds up” the electric bill of participating members to the next dollar and deposits the change in a separate checking account. Each participating member averages donating just pennies per month. But, collectively, their change adds up to thousands of dollars per year.

The Sumter EMC Foundation Board of Trustees, which allocates the funds, is composed of Sumter EMC members who serve on a strictly voluntary basis. Sumter EMC uses existing resources to administer the program, so all funds collected are allocated to local agencies and organizations that provide support for education, health and safety, cultural purposes, emergency needs, charities and economic development.

Individuals cannot apply for ORU funds, and ORU funds are not used to pay electric bills of Sumter EMC members.



The Foundation’s board of trustees meets three times a year to review applications.

A list of meeting dates, as well as a complete list of recipients is available on the Foundation pages located under the community tab on the cooperative’s web site, sumteremc.com.

Sumter EMC offers a variety of billing programs

Prepay Electric Service

Sumter EMC’s innovative Prepay Electric Service program for qualifying residential accounts allows you to pay for your electricity before you use it! Never pay a late fee, additional deposit or reconnect fee again! You control the payment schedule, and credit card and e-check payment options are available to you all day, every day.

Go Mobile! Download our FREE mobile App

With our free mobile App, you can manage your account instantly whether you’re at home or on the go! With fast, secure access you can make payments, report an outage, view your bill and account balance, schedule alerts and reminders and receive push notifications. Just search for Sumter EMC in the Apple App Store and Google Play.

Online Payment

View and pay your electric bill online at the co-op’s web site, www.sumteremc.com. Our online bill viewing/payment services enable you to: view your latest bill as well as your usage history, previous balances, and more; submit changes of address, telephone, etc.; contact us with comments, problems, suggestions, and more; use your credit/debit card to pay your bill or write an “electronic check”; and post your payment immediately to avoid late charges.

Bank Draft

Sign up for automatic payment by bank draft and never write another check for electric service. We will mail an advance copy of your bill showing the exact amount that will be automatically deducted from your bank account on the 3rd of the month following your billing. As a timely reminder not to mail us a check, the words “Paid by Bank Draft” will appear on your copy of the monthly bill.

Levelized Billing

Levelized billing allows members who qualify to budget approximately the same amount each month for their residential power bill. Your actual power usage for the current month is averaged with your past 11 months’ bills, so the amount you pay for electric service doesn’t change much throughout the year. Fixed payments for outdoor lights or contracts, along with state and local taxes, are added to your levelized electric bill.

Custom Billing Service for Senior/Disabled/Retired Citizens

This custom billing service makes paying electric bills more convenient for members drawing social security, retirement or disability income. Those who qualify are placed on a special billing cycle with a payment due date that coincides with the arrival of their monthly check.

Six low-cost energy tips for renters

It's great to read about all the ways energy efficiency improvements to the home can save money, but what about folks who rent or don't have a lot of money to spend? Not everyone can replace his or her furnace with an air-source heat pump.

Here are six low-cost efficiency tips that can help you reduce your energy bills.

1. Mind the thermostat. You might be able to trim your energy bill by carefully managing the temperature in your home, apartment or mobile home. The Department of Energy suggests setting your thermostat to 68 degrees on winter days. If that's too cool, try layering with an extra sweater. You can save more energy by turning down the thermostat even lower at night or when no one is home. The same principle works in reverse during summer months; set the thermostat higher to reduce your energy use for air conditioning.



ISTOCK.COM / OLIVIER LE MOAL

2. Go programmable. If you don't always remember to adjust your thermostat manually, you could benefit from a programmable model. In the right situation, programmable thermostats can save \$150 a year. Some can be managed from your smartphone or other devices. Before you purchase one, make sure your landlord approves.

3. Try zone heating. If you don't mind less-used rooms being colder, you might be able to save energy (and money!) by zone heating. Electric baseboards make it easy because they typically have thermostat settings on the units or in each room. Portable electric space heaters can also be good for zone heating, if used safely and wisely in the area where you spend the most time. Used incorrectly, space heaters can be dangerous and increase energy costs.

Remember that if you're using space heaters, you should reduce the heat supply to the rest of the home.

4. Stop air leaks. Small gaps around windows, doors, wiring and plumbing penetrations can be major sources of energy loss. This problem can be alleviated with a little weather stripping and caulk, but check with your landlord before you get started. Better yet, persuade the landlord to do the work! A \$10 door draft stopper (also known as a "door snake") is a simple way to block gaps under exterior doors. Sealing air leaks around your home could shave off up to one-fifth of your heating and cooling bills.



ISTOCK.COM / TARNRIT

5. Manage your windows and window coverings. Your windows may be letting heat out during the winter and in during the summer. Window coverings, such as medium or heavyweight curtains and thermal blinds, can help. On cold winter days, window coverings can keep warmth inside and improve comfort. Opening them up when you're receiving direct sunlight can help cut your heating costs. You can also cover windows with clear plastic to reduce heat loss and air leaks. During the summer, keep window coverings closed to block the sun from heating the cooler indoor air.

6. Look for energy-wasters. There are also small steps you can take every day to reduce your energy use. Water heaters should be kept at the warm setting (120 degrees). Wash dishes and clothes on the most economical settings that will do the job, and always wash full loads. Use the microwave instead of the oven when possible.



SCOTT AKERMAN

A home energy audit is the best way to identify areas for energy efficiency improvements. Contact your electric cooperative to see if it offers energy audits or can recommend someone local. An audit would be a great way to start a conversation with your landlord about potential improvements.

For more information on low-cost energy-saving tips, please visit collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips.

Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen write for Collaborative Efficiency, which works with rural electric cooperatives to develop energy efficiency programs that benefit them and the communities they serve.