

Knowledge is POWER

THE GARDENER'S FIRST TOOL

THERE'S ONE TOOL THAT YOU SHOULD ALWAYS USE FIRST FOR ANY GARDENING TASK: CALLING 811.

811 is your tool to avoid expensive and possibly dangerous utility cuts.

Even if you're installing a simple flower bed or planting a small bush, calling 811 first is a smart move. That's because many utility lines are only a matter of inches below the ground's surface.

It's even more important if you're digging post holes, installing a mailbox or planting a large tree.

"Although Walton EMC's underground power lines are usually at least three feet below the surface, situations beyond our control might have changed that," says Brad Adcock, loss control director. "A contractor might have graded after our lines were installed or erosion could have washed away the soil. Always call 811 first to make sure you dig safely."

Calling 811 is free. There is no cost to you to have utility lines located and marked.

HOW 811 WORKS

1. You **decide where you want to dig** and mark the area with white flags or paint.
2. Call 811 and **provide basic information** on your location and digging plans.
3. **811 contacts the utilities** that serve the area.
4. The utilities come out and **mark the location of their lines** with flags and/or paint. They have three business days to complete the job.
5. You **avoid digging near the markings** and have a safe and successful gardening project.



MORE INFORMATION
waltonemc.com/residential/locate-underground-cable



- WHITE:** Proposed Evacuation
- PINK:** Temporary Survey Markings
- RED:** Electric Power Lines, Cables, Conduit and Lighting Cables
- YELLOW:** Gas, Oil, Steam, Petroleum or Gaseous Materials
- ORANGE:** Communication, Alarm or Signal Lines, Cables or Conduit
- BLUE:** Potable Water
- PURPLE:** Reclaimed Water, Irrigation and Slurry Lines
- GREEN:** Sewer and Drain Lines

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RATED #1 BY CUSTOMERS FOR BRAND APPEAL AMONG RESIDENTIAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

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SHARPEST tools in the shed

GARDENING KNOWLEDGE AND ADVICE FROM THE UGA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

Wonder why your tomatoes are rotting? Need to combat a bug that's dining on the roses? Or what about those brown spots dotting the yard?

Answers to these and other gardening questions are only a visit, email, phone call or webpage away at your county's Cooperative Extension Service (CES).

"A hundred years ago, there was a disconnect between research from agriculture universities and farmers who could actually use it," says Eric Marlowe, ag and natural resources agent at University of Georgia Extension Gwinnett County. "The extension service and agriculture agents were birthed out of a need to bridge that gap."

"Although what I do in Gwinnett looks a lot different than a rural county, the heart and soul of it is still here," continues Marlowe. "We try to get unbiased, science-based information to the populous on anything agricultural- or horticultural- related. In a suburban county, I work with more landscapers and homeowners than farmers."

A CORNUCOPIA OF INFORMATION

The CES provides these ways for consumers to get expert garden and lawn advice:

Publications | extension.uga.edu/publications – "We love publications," says Marlowe. The CES produces and distributes hundreds of publications covering everything from controlling aphids on flowering ornamental plants to fertilizing blueberries to ridding weeds from home lawns. Many are available as paper documents by visiting or requesting them from your local CES office.

Personalized advice – "You can contact us – we're like a hotline," says Marlowe. "If you call us directly or email us with a question and photos about a problem, we're going to help you troubleshoot that."



Community outreach – With Gwinnett County's population approaching a million people, Marlowe uses an army of volunteers to help educate consumers on gardening and related subjects through the Master Gardener program.

More than 200 volunteers who have undergone rigorous training give community presentations, tend demonstration gardens and extend the reach of the CES.

Web Resources | extension.uga.edu – Besides finding the CES's publications online, the agency also produces YouTube videos and website content.

"Urban agriculture and consumer horticulture – basically growing stuff outside – is way more accessible than a lot of us realize," says Marlowe. "Not only is it important; it's really fun, it's good for you. It's what we're made to do – playing with the dirt, growing stuff and taking care of animals."

ABOVE PHOTO: Gwinnett Master Gardener Extension Volunteers Tim Mullen and Lynda Pollock promote the Great Southeast Pollinator Census at a Lawrenceville pollinator garden they manage. The census helps scientists spot trends of, and measure weather effects on, pollinator populations.

SCAN FOR THE REALITE ONLINE



- Step 1**
Point your phone camera at the QR code.
- Step 2**
Tap the screen to access Walton EMC news online.

Walton EMC

waltonemc.com

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quick guide

IF YOUR POWER IS OUT
 770.267.2505
waltonemc.com > Report an Outage

WHEN WE'RE AVAILABLE
Power Outages and Emergencies > 24/7
Contact Center > M-F, 7A-7P
Business Offices > M-F, 8A-5P

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©2025 Walton EMC is a customer-owned power company. That means our cooperative focuses on service, not profit. We serve more than 135,000 accounts in Athens-Clarke, Barrow, DeKalb, Greene, Gwinnett, Morgan, Newton, Oconee, Rockdale and Walton Counties.

Our subsidiaries supply natural gas and security services.

Sign up for sun power

Still on the fence about participating in Walton EMC's Cooperative Solar? Here are five reasons to sign up:

- HASSLE-FREE.** Walton EMC operates and maintains Cooperative Solar, meaning you skip installation and maintenance inconveniences common with private solar systems.
- LOW COST.** A block of solar power production is \$25 a month. The energy output of your portion is credited to your monthly power bill.
- NO LONG-TERM COMMITMENT.** Discontinue your solar energy commitment at any time.
- ANYONE CAN PARTICIPATE.** Obstacles like improper roof orientation, excessive roof shading, or restrictive subdivision covenants are frequent barriers to private solar installations. However, any customer-owner with a residence connected to Walton EMC's electric grid can participate in Cooperative Solar.
- GO GREEN.** Solar energy from our Cooperative Solar project offsets energy produced from traditional fuels. Since becoming operational in August 2015, the co-op's energy output has equaled taking almost 15,000 cars off the road.



Apply for Cooperative Solar online at waltonemc.com/solar-power-center or by calling 770-267-2505.



Co-Op vs. Cora

WALTON EMC TEAMS QUICKLY RESTORE POWER AFTER JANUARY STORM'S WINDS AND FREEZING RAIN DOWN LINES AND BREAK POLES

System operations dispatchers in Walton EMC's Monroe headquarters worked 24 hours a day to process outage reports and deploy repair teams.



Winter Storm Cora blew through Walton EMC's 10-county service area on Jan. 10 and 11. High winds and damaging freezing rain accumulation combined to pull down power lines and break utility poles, causing widespread outages.



A comprehensive storm response plan, which includes monitoring weather reports and preparing teams, equipment and supplies, had Walton EMC service vehicles and personnel ready to roll when the first Cora-related outages were reported on the afternoon of Jan. 10.



Over 18 hours, the co-op's line crews, engineers and dispatch personnel coordinated response to more than 13,000 power disruptions occurring along the co-op's 7,395 miles of distribution lines. Above, lineman Matthew Boone prepares to reenergize a section of the grid damaged by a fallen tree.

View more comments

Alison Mercker Lyman
We are watching the stellar crew get us back on the grid at this moment. These poor guys have got to be exhausted and so cold. We are very much looking forward to thawing out and these guys are too. Hat is off. Y'all have knocked it out today.

2w Like Reply

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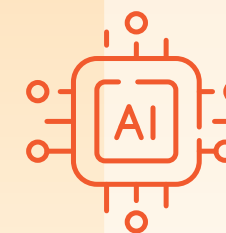
Walton EMC customer-owners like Alison Mercker Lyman used social media to thank line crews who worked late into the night to restore power.



Numerous co-op employees like lineman Austin Schexnayder worked tirelessly in frigid temperatures and challenging conditions to restore lights and heat to co-op customer-owners' homes and businesses. As the storm came through on the evening of Jan. 10, the co-op team restored power to over 8,000 members in only three hours.

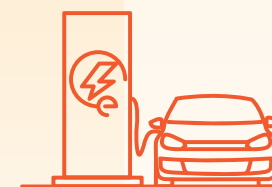
What's driving the rise in electricity demand?

The United States is in the midst of a boom in power use — and Georgia is at the epicenter of the increases, according to information compiled by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. What's driving the growth:



DATA CENTERS

Driven by artificial intelligence, cryptocurrency and cloud computing, total U.S. data center load is projected to **increase by 65% by 2050.**



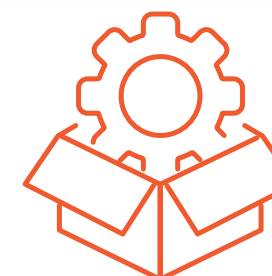
ELECTRIFICATION

Electric vehicle adoption, electrification of home heating and industrial electrification are expected to **increase overall U.S. energy consumption by 1% per year through 2026.**



RESIDENTIAL POWER CONSUMPTION

Increases in population and steady economic growth are expected to **increase residential power consumption by 14% to 22% through 2050.**



MANUFACTURING GROWTH

New and expanding manufacturing capacity driven by federal incentives is expected to **increase industrial demand by 13,000 GWh per year.** Key products: EVs, batteries, semiconductors, solar power components.



TOTAL DEMAND

U.S. power consumption nationwide is **expected to grow 3% annually in the next five years** — a five-fold increase in load growth forecasts over the past two years. The increases amount to 128 gigawatts of electricity, enough to power every home in Georgia for about three years.

Sources: Grid Strategies, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, U.S. EIA, International Energy Agency

Charity Golf Tournament

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