



Light Up the Holidays—Safely and Efficiently

Holiday fires are 70% more deadly than average fires—but they're also highly preventable. The holiday season is a wonderful time of year—filled with lights, decorations, cooking, and cozy gatherings, but all that extra energy use can also create safety risks if we're not careful. At Jones Onslow EMC, we want to help you enjoy the holidays safely while keeping your home powered efficiently.

TIPS FOR A SAFE AND BRIGHT HOLIDAY SEASON

1. Inspect Lights and Decorations

Before plugging in holiday lights, check for frayed wires, broken bulbs, or loose connections. Replace any damaged strands—it's worth the small effort to prevent shocks or fire hazards. If you're replacing old lights, consider switching to LED bulbs, which are safer, cooler, and more energy-efficient than traditional incandescent lights.

2. Avoid Overloaded Outlets

Don't plug multiple extension cords or power strips into a single outlet. Spread out decorations across different circuits, and use cords rated for the devices they're powering.

3. Keep Heat Sources Away

Whether it's candles, space heaters, or the fireplace, keep them away from curtains, trees, and other flammable decorations. Never leave candles or space heaters unattended.

4. Outdoor Safety

Make sure outdoor lights and decorations are rated for exterior use. Keep cords away from walkways and driveways to prevent tripping and avoid placing lights near water.

5. Unplug When Not in Use

Unplug decorations, chargers, and other electronics when you leave the house or go to bed to reduce fire risk and save energy. Automatic timers make this easy—set them once and your holiday lights will turn off automatically at bedtime or when you're away.

By following these simple tips, you can enjoy the warmth and sparkle of the season safely. Remember, electricity is a powerful tool—with a little care, you can make your holidays bright and worry-free.



Understanding the Cost of Electricity



Electricity powers our everyday lives in ways we often take for granted—from keeping our homes warm or cool, to lighting rooms, running appliances, charging devices, and supporting the technology that connects us to work, school, and family. During the busy holiday season, it's easy to focus on the lights, decorations, and cooking, but it's also a good time to pause and think about the energy that makes all of this possible.

As a distribution cooperative, JOEMC works with our statewide organization to purchase electricity from a variety of sources. While we don't generate electricity ourselves, we ensure it reaches your home safely, reliably, and efficiently. The dollars you pay for electricity cover more than just the power itself—*they also support:*

— ENERGY COSTS

The price we pay to purchase electricity through our statewide cooperative, which can vary based on market conditions and demand.

— DISTRIBUTION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The poles, wires, transformers, and substations that deliver electricity to your home. Maintaining and upgrading this infrastructure ensures that power flows safely and reliably.

— OPERATIONAL AND SERVICE COSTS

The staff, technology, and resources needed to operate the cooperative, respond quickly during outages, and provide customer support.

Every dollar you pay helps keep your lights on, your home comfortable, and your appliances running smoothly. It also supports the cooperative's ongoing efforts to improve reliability, safety, and service for the entire community.

This holiday season, as you enjoy the warmth, lights, and comfort that electricity brings, we hope you'll also recognize the value behind the service. Electricity is more than just a utility—it's the foundation of modern life and a vital part of keeping our community connected and thriving.



TO SAVE ENERGY

To maximize your fireplace's efficiency, always keep the damper closed when the fireplace is not in use. An open damper is like an open window, allowing warm indoor air to escape and cold air to enter. Consider installing a fireplace insert, which improves heat output by circulating warm air into the room rather than letting it escape up the chimney. Also, burn only seasoned hardwood to ensure a hotter, cleaner burn. Regularly clean and inspect your chimney to maintain safe and efficient operation.

Source: energy.gov



Picture a neighbor coming home worried about their electric bill. With Power Bucks, you can help ease that worry.

It's simple to make a difference: call **910-353-1940**, choose an amount starting at \$25, and we'll credit to a member in need. Want to give anonymously? We'll make sure they feel the warmth of their community without knowing who it came from.

Power Bucks is more than a gift—it's a way to show compassion and a reminder that we're all in this together. Every Power Buck you give brings a little more light into someone's life.

Save Energy, Save Money with JOEMC Rebates and Programs

At Jones Onslow EMC, we know that every kilowatt counts — especially when it comes to managing your electric bill. That's why we offer a variety of rebates and programs designed to help members save energy, reduce costs, and make smart choices for their homes.

Smart Choices for a Smaller Bill

Small changes in how you use electricity can make a big difference. Our programs encourage members to:

- Upgrade to energy-efficient lighting and appliances.
- Replace old HVAC systems with high-efficiency models.
- Make energy-conscious improvements that reduce overall consumption.

Want to see how much energy your home uses? Members can use **energy use calculators** or complete a **home energy audit online** through the JOEMC **Energywise** page. These tools help you understand your electricity use and identify areas where small changes can make a big impact.

Energy-Efficient Appliances with Rebates

Purchasing energy-efficient appliances isn't just good for the environment—it's good for your wallet. From high-efficiency HVAC systems to ENERGY STAR® appliances, your smart purchase can have a lasting impact on your home's energy use.



And the added bonus? Many of these purchases qualify for rebates through JOEMC, helping offset the upfront cost and making it easier to invest in energy efficiency.

Programs and Resources to Explore

1. **HVAC and Heat Pump Rebates:** Upgrade to high-efficiency systems and earn a rebate.
2. **Appliance Rebates:** Save on ENERGY STAR® washers, dryers, refrigerators, and more.
3. **Energywise Solutions:** Online calculators and home energy audits help you understand your energy use and discover ways to save.

By making smart energy choices and taking advantage of rebates, members can control their electricity use, reduce monthly bills, and enjoy the benefits of a more energy-efficient home.

For a full list of available rebates and programs, visit <https://joemc.com/energywise/products-rebates/>.





Ricky Maready, CEO

A Message from the CEO Wrapped in Value...

There isn't a more exciting time of year than the weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas. As a child, I remember that anticipation as we counted the days to December 25th.

While the holiday season is full of excitement, we sometimes miss the magic as we juggle hefty shopping lists, parties, and wrapping up work projects before the end of the year. These tasks can add stress, not joy, to the holiday season. However, as your electric cooperative, Jones-Onslow offers resources and conveniences you may not realize you already have as a member—benefits that can make this busy season a little easier.

As a member, you receive perks that can help you save money and time—especially when you need it most:

Expecting holiday guests? Every kilowatt-hour saved counts when the house is full. Check out our home energy calculators in the Energywise section of our website to see exactly how much it costs to heat and cool your home, run appliances, and compare water heaters and lighting options.

Life busier than ever? We've made paying your bill simple with options that fit your schedule—online through our member portal, automatic draft, by phone, at payment kiosks throughout the community, or with our mobile app. One less thing to worry about during the holiday rush.

But the best co-op value of all can be seen in the faces of your friends and neighbors who work at JOEMC. You can find us volunteering at local soup kitchens, toy drives, and shelters this time of year. Folks in the surrounding communities started our co-op over 80 years ago to power our community and empower members to improve their quality of life—that's our purpose. It warms my heart to see employees going the extra mile to power our community and make life better for everyone during the holidays.



As I wish you and yours a happy holiday season, remember to slow down. Watch the excitement in the eyes of your children and grandchildren as they count down the days. Enjoy every last piece of fudge.

And when the gifts are wrapped and the meals are served, take time to look into the faces of those around the room—they are your purpose. We're honored to handle the details so you can focus on what truly matters.



BOURBON PECAN PIE

Put your new baking savvy to the test with this homemade pecan pie. This one fits the bill for a holiday spread, especially when decked out with whipped cream and/or some sort of toffee-butter-pecan ice cream. (No judgement if you go for both!) If the DIY crust seems daunting, a frozen, premade crust works, too.

Serves: 8

Source: www.carolinacountry.com

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup plus 1 tablespoon flour
- Pinch of salt
- ½ stick butter
- 2 tablespoons vegetable shortening
- ¼ cup cold water
- 3 eggs
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup Karo syrup, light
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon bourbon
- 1 cup pecans, chopped
- 1 cup pecan halves

DIRECTIONS

1. For the pastry, add the shortening/butter to the flour/salt, and work the mixture with fingertips until it resembles cornflakes. Blend in water until all ingredients can be worked into a ball. Chill for at least 30 minutes. Roll out dough and fit into a 9-inch pie pan. Layer with parchment or a paper coffee filter and then add pie weights (or dried beans, rice, corn kernels...) until the pie is ⅔ full (to keep the sides from collapsing). Bake at 425 degrees for 5 minutes. Remove from oven and lower temperature to 350 degrees.
2. Mix all remaining ingredients except for the pecan halves for the filling and pour into the shell. Arrange the pecan halves on top. Bake for 45 to 60 minutes or until the pie is firm to the touch. After the first 15–20 minutes, you may want to cover the top of the pie with foil to ensure that the pecans on top do not burn.
3. Serve with freshly whipped cream or ice cream.