

HOW HOME APPLIANCES AFFECT YOUR BILL—PAGE 5

South Carolina LIVING

AIKEN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



CEO MESSAGE

**It's our privilege
to serve**

SC RECIPE

**Crowd-pleasing
meals**



**Aiken Electric
Cooperative, Inc.**

aikenco-op.org

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The mission of Aiken Electric Cooperative, Inc. is to empower communities by providing reliable, competitively priced energy and other services desired by our membership.

CO-OP NEWS EDITOR

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AEC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



It's our privilege to serve

AT AIKEN ELECTRIC, we pride ourselves on being more than just your power provider. We strive to be your trusted partner, offering programs, services and opportunities that empower our members and strengthen our community. Everyone who works at Aiken Electric is local—they are your neighbors, friends, church members and fellow parents in the PTA. Everything we do is guided by our members, and with an exciting year ahead, we encourage you to stay connected and engaged with your cooperative.

One of our key events each year is the Annual Meeting. Our 2026 Annual Meeting is scheduled for Friday, May 15, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Saturday, May 16, from 7 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., at 2790 Wagener Road in Aiken. The Annual Meeting will once again be held in a convenient drive-thru format. Additional details will be shared in upcoming issues of *South Carolina Living*.

In January, applications opened for our scholarship opportunities, Washington Youth Tour and Cooperative Youth Summit. The deadline for applying is Feb. 16. To learn more and for students to apply, please visit aikenco-op.org/youth-programs.



First Class Lineperson Jaime Figueroa, Substation Technician Bobby Chavis and Aiken Electric CEO Gary Stooksbury took part in last year's Co-op Day at the Statehouse. Each year, our board members and employees join representatives from other South Carolina electric cooperatives to advocate for the hundreds of thousands of co-op members across the state with policy makers.

"Our employees' character, commitment and care for our members are what make the work we do truly extraordinary."

Many members may not realize that we also offer a variety of energy and money saving programs and incentives. During the winter months, heating systems often work overtime to keep our homes warm and comfortable—sometimes resulting in higher energy costs. On page 5, you'll find practical tips to help you make the most efficient use of your larger appliances and save money over time.

In addition to serving our members directly, Aiken Electric works alongside elected officials to advocate for responsible energy policy, fairness, reliability and long-term solutions that benefit both our members and the communities we serve. On Thursday, Feb. 19, we will join electric cooperatives from across South Carolina for Co-op Day at the Statehouse. We are grateful for our elected leaders and for the relationships that help ensure our members' voices are heard.

After more than 30 years as CEO, I remain confident in the strength of the cooperative model and the future it supports. I have the utmost respect for the men and women of Aiken Electric and sincerely consider myself fortunate to work alongside such dedicated individuals. Their character, commitment and care for our members are what make the work we do truly extraordinary.

It is—and always will be—our privilege to serve you.

GARY L. STOOKSBURY
Chief Executive Officer

How home appliances affect your bill

Small adjustments can help you save energy and money

WHILE YOU CAN'T CONTROL the cost of electricity, you can still take meaningful steps at home toward lowering your Aiken Electric power bill. Being mindful of how much electricity you consume—and when you use it—is the most effective way to take control of your monthly energy costs.

It's true that every little bit counts. But you might be surprised to learn that some steps are more meaningful than others.

Turning off the lights when you leave a room is a good start, for example, but it ultimately has a minimal impact on your energy bill. Light bulbs are far from the biggest energy users in your home, especially as most modern lighting has transitioned to efficient and long-lasting LED bulbs.

Your heating and cooling system, on the other hand, is the real big kahuna of

energy users in your home, accounting for about half of your household energy use on average.

Your HVAC system runs as often as necessary to ensure the indoor temperature matches the number you set on your thermostat, regardless of the weather outside. The more extreme the outdoor temperature, the harder your system will work and the more electricity it will consume to keep the indoor temperature at your desired level. HVAC systems have to work even harder to heat and cool leaky and poorly insulated homes.

Some of the other biggest energy users in your home include your water heater, refrigerator and clothes dryer. While lights and the fridge themselves don't require a lot of electricity to run, the sheer

amount of time they draw power can have an impact.

A little adjustment of your habits can make a difference on your power bill. For instance, setting your thermostat back 7-10 degrees for eight hours a day can save you up to 10% annually on heating and cooling costs, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

You can also use smart-home tools, such as a water heater timer or smart thermostat, to automatically limit your home's energy consumption even while keeping you comfortable. These steps help you save energy and money. At Aiken Electric, we have programs for water heaters and smart thermostats. Give us a call at (803) 649-6245 to learn more.

Every household is unique, making it impossible to estimate exactly how much you could save by taking these easy steps. But understanding how your largest appliances use electricity can help you better manage your energy costs.

What's really driving your bill?

49%
Air conditioning & space heating

22%
Water heating

11%
Refrigerators & standalone freezers

6%
Clothes washer & dryer

5%
TVs & related appliances

5%
Lighting

2%
Electric oven & stove

Estimates are based on the federal Energy Information Administration's Residential Energy Consumption Survey for 2020, the most recent data available.