



MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

# Struggles with outage communications

**W**e are now in the middle of winter and as we have already seen in late fall/early winter, the weather has a mind of its own. When bad weather hits, we at the cooperative know that will mean power interruptions for you, our members. Guernsey-Muskingum crews have proven they will respond all hours of the day and night to help get the power back on for their neighbors. One of our many challenges during a large outage is being able to handle the number of phone calls that come in to report outages and provide helpful information to our crews, which will assist them in having all the resources needed to restore your power.



Having enough resources in house to handle all the phone calls is almost impossible to do. Several years ago, Guernsey-Muskingum started using an after-hours answering service, Cooperative Response Center (CRC). This company has three locations across the country to ensure that if bad weather hits, not all the call centers would be affected and thus be able to still provide good service to you, our members. If we are fully staffed in the office, there are eleven lines available but not always enough bodies to answer those calls. The CRC system allows for many more lines and operators to log those

calls. We also have the ability for you to log your calls by an automated version, but you must know the phone number that is associated with your account.

We realize how frustrating it is to get a busy signal or to have an automated answering machine take your call. I will admit that CRC has struggled during widespread outages across our country in the last year or so. It is not a perfect system, and they, too, are struggling to find employees to work and cover much-needed shifts. Guernsey-

Muskingum is looking to find other ways to communicate with you about outages and estimated restoral times. Here is how you can help. Make sure Guernsey-Muskingum has all your current contact information.

One new thing coming will be our automated meter reading system. Once the supply chain loosens and the meters arrive, we will start deploying these new meters. Once they are installed and tied into our network, these meters will report your outage directly to our outage management system here at the office. This will automatically notify our dispatch center to send crews to address the outage issue. This system should alleviate the need for as many phone calls, which can overwhelm the call center during large outages.

In the meantime, please know the phone number that is associated with your account when you call in an outage and follow us on Facebook for updates along the way. If you give us your cell number and an email address, we can get information out to more of our members via texting or emailing updates. This is an area we are going to experiment with as we move forward into the new metering system with better technology and hopefully better outage communication to you, our members. Please know that our goal is to get the power back on as quickly and safely as possible.

Be safe this winter and look after your neighbors, especially the homebound, during these rough winter days.



Brian Hill  
GENERAL MANAGER/CEO



# What is Operation Helping Others?

There are over 6,000 GMEC members signed up to participate in Operation Helping Others (OHO). If you are one of those members, thank you! If you are not familiar with OHO, here is an overview of the program.

OHO is a voluntary program that rounds up your electric bill to the next dollar and uses the change as a donation. OHO is not a program to pay Guernsey-Muskingum electric bills. Funding comes entirely from members who voluntarily participate. The small change donated by members makes a big difference in our communities. .

WILLIE WIREDHAND'S ELECTRIC BILL           \$73.44  
WILLIE ROUNDS UP HIS BILL AND PAYS       \$74.00  
DONATION   \$0.56

For example, the OHO committee would put Willie Wiredhand's 56 cents in with all of the spare change donated by other members and decide how best to use those funds in our communities. Every penny raised by your donations to OHO goes toward funding needs in our community. The OHO committee consists of one appointed volunteer from each district.

In 2021, your OHO committee granted \$28,287.49 to be distributed to needy causes in our community. Below is a list of OHO recipients for the 2021 year.



OHO grant amount	OHO meeting date	Location of recipient	Need of recipient
\$2,500	2/22/21	Center Township, Guernsey County	Home repairs
\$1,100	2/22/21	Cambridge Township, Guernsey County	Renovations
\$2,500	2/22/21	Spencer Township, Guernsey County	Medical expenses
\$500	2/22/21	Guernsey County, Ohio	Donation
\$2,500	5/24/21	Madison Township, Guernsey County	Medical expenses
\$1,500	5/24/21	Bristol Township, Morgan County	Medical expenses
\$2,000	5/24/21	Millwood Township, Guernsey County	Home improvements
\$1,000	5/24/21	Muskingum County, Ohio	Building renovations
\$687.49	8/23/21	Perry Township, Tuscarawas County	Medical expenses
\$1,000	11/30/21	Tuscarawas County, Ohio	Christmas donation
\$1,000	11/30/21	Guernsey County, Ohio	Christmas donation
\$1,000	11/30/21	Guernsey County, Ohio	Christmas donation
\$1,000	11/30/21	Zanesville, Ohio	Christmas donation
\$1,000	11/30/21	Guernsey County, Ohio	Christmas donation
\$1,000	11/30/21	Guernsey/Muskingum counties, Ohio	Christmas donation
\$1,000	11/30/21	Noble County, Ohio	Christmas donation
\$1,000	11/30/21	Zanesville, Ohio	Christmas donation
\$1,000	11/30/21	Muskingum County, Ohio	Christmas donation
\$1,000	11/30/21	Guernsey/Muskingum counties, Ohio	Christmas donation
\$1,000	11/30/21	Guernsey County, Ohio	Christmas donation
\$3,000	11/30/21	Guernsey/Muskingum/Morgan counties , Ohio	Christmas donation

# High school sophomores and juniors!

Interested in a life-changing  
leadership experience in  
Washington, D.C.?



## June 18–24, 2022

### What is Youth Tour?

The Ohio's Electric Cooperatives Youth Tour is an annual leadership program sponsored by Guernsey-Muskingum Electric Cooperative. It's a weeklong, all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., that gives exceptional high school students the opportunity to meet with their congressional leaders at the U.S. Capitol, make new friends from across the state and country, and see many of the famous Washington, D.C., sights.

### Successful applicants:

- Applicants must be a high school sophomore or junior.
- Applicants must be the child or legal ward of a Guernsey-Muskingum Electric Cooperative member at the time of selection.
- Applications must be turned in to the cooperative office by 4 p.m. on Friday, March 4.
- All applicants will be interviewed and given a cooperative knowledge test on Wednesday, March 16.
- Two winners will be selected and sent on the **all-expenses-paid** trip and will receive a \$100 Visa card for spending money.

For a complete list of rules and the application, visit [www.gmenergy.com/youth-tour](http://www.gmenergy.com/youth-tour).

**For more information and to apply,  
visit [www.gmenergy.com](http://www.gmenergy.com)  
or call Guernsey-Muskingum  
Electric Cooperative at 740-826-7661.**

### Please note:

Youth Tour 2022 is subject to change due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Ohio's Electric Cooperatives and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association are continually monitoring state and federal guidance and will adjust plans accordingly if needed. This year's program is being coordinated with the healthy and safety of delegates, chaperones, and their families foremost in mind.



## OHIO'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives



# Save the date

Annual meeting of members

Saturday, April 9, 2022\*

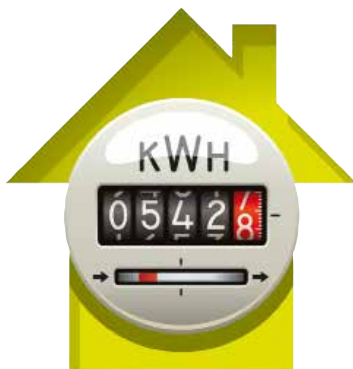
Registration: 9:30 a.m.

Business meeting begins promptly at noon

Larry W. Miller Intermediate School, New Concord

\*GMEC will continually monitor local guidelines regarding COVID-19 pandemic and will change plans accordingly if needed.

## Rate revisions



No one likes rate revisions. Your board realizes the financial pressure those of us in southeastern Ohio experience but also realizes our obligation to provide you with reliable electric service.

The service availability charge, which currently is \$24 per month, will not change. Service availability affects what the cooperative does locally — billing, tree-trimming, setting poles, and more. Wholesale power costs and high voltage transmission costs are recovered separately through the generation and transmission component (GTC).

The GTC, which recovers the costs of generating and transmitting power to a substation to be used by cooperative members will increase by 5 mils or \$5 per 1,000 kWh. This revision will be effective with the Feb. 10 billing. If the forecast of costs from our power provider is correct, we should be able to reduce this by 1 mil each

quarter to where we end the year with only a \$2 per 1,000 kWh increase over 2021 rates.

Our goal is to hold the line on rates as long as possible. Although the cooperative has passed on increases in the past, we have been fortunate to be able to handle most of the rising cost by selling more kilowatt-hours. In today's world, we all have become more energy efficient, which is a good thing, but that means overall energy consumption has not grown with inflation. Costs are higher for all of us in all aspects of our lives, but that does not mean that we at Guernsey-Muskingum are not trying to be as efficient as possible. We are all in this together and will do our part to control what is controllable.

GMEC is committed to delivering electricity to you at the lowest possible cost and minimizing the impact of any rate increases. We regret the need to increase rates at this time; however, it is necessary to allow us to continue to maintain reliable electric service to our membership.

# Improve safety with smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detector upgrades

If that old smoke detector — discolored, stained with paint or years of household grime — could send you a message, it might say “please replace me.” Those lifesaving warning devices designed to alert us to smoke and fire were never meant to last forever.

The National Fire Protection Association and Underwriters Laboratories suggests replacing smoke detectors every 10 years. The organization cites sensor degradation rates of 3% per year for their replacement recommendations. After 10 years, there would be a potential of a 30% failure rate.

Additionally, look for smoke alarms certified by Underwriters Laboratories and designated by the symbol “UL” or the Electrical Testing Laboratories, marked with the “ETL” logo.

Once they start to reach their end of life, consumers may notice alarm signals — typically a chirping sound that is either a low battery or an indication of the device’s end of life, meaning that it’s time the unit was replaced.

The NFPA not only recommends that batteries be replaced once a year, but also urges you to test the unit once a month as an added precaution against failure. Chirping, prompted by a drained battery will typically stop within seven days and when that happens, the unit stops functioning.

According to the CPSC, smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors represent good investments in your family’s safety. Consumers who have working smoke alarms in their homes die in fires at about half the rate of those who do not have alarms. Install working carbon monoxide detectors on every level of the home and outside of sleeping areas. CO detectors are designed to sound the alert before carbon monoxide reaches life-threatening levels.

Design improvements are another great reason to consider replacement of older units. Ionization smoke alarms made their debut in the consumer market in 1970. Photoelectric smoke detectors were first patented in 1972, and the first 10-year lithium battery-powered smoke alarms hit the market in 1995. Since then, units using the best features of all three technologies have become popular.

Many states have upgraded building codes to require hardwired smoke alarms with battery backup power and carbon monoxide detectors in all new residential construction.

As fire codes have evolved to require smoke alarms in close proximity to cooking appliances, manufacturers

have improved the technology. They can distinguish between an actual fire event in the home and cooking fumes, reducing the incidence of nuisance alarms.

Features for residential alarms and detectors are also available to enhance the safety of the hearing impaired, including bed shakers and strobe lights, offering another level of alert to fire or carbon monoxide danger.





# GUERNSEY-MUSKINGUM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CURRENTLY SPEAKING

## CO-OP NEWS

### Geothermal

We have a \$300 energy credit to help pay for the most efficient underground heating, cooling, and hot water system available today. To be eligible, the geothermal unit must be ENERGY STAR-rated and have a radio-controlled switch installed on the unit and on the electric water heater of at least 40-gallon capacity. Over 280 of our members are using geothermal.

### Dual Fuel

If you install a new add-on electric heat pump with a fossil-fuel backup and have an electric water heater of at least 40-gallon capacity, you are eligible for a \$300 energy credit. Radio-controlled switches must be installed on both the heat pump and water heater. Please call your cooperative for details. Over 890 members are using Dual Fuel.



### Cool Returns

Are you having a new electric heat pump with electric resistant heat backup installed? Allow your cooperative to install a radio-controlled switch and receive a \$100 energy credit. Over 170 members are using Cool Returns.

### ENERGY STAR

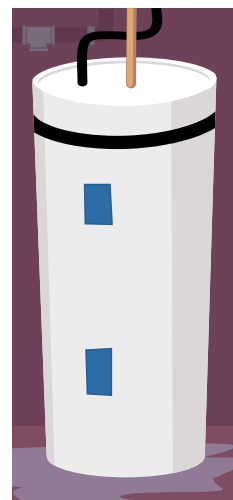
Did you buy a new ENERGY STAR refrigerator, freezer, or central air conditioner? We may have a \$100 energy credit for you. Call member services for details.

### Electric vehicle chargers

Level 2 electric vehicle charges may be eligible to receive a \$250 energy credit. Call us for more information.

### Water heaters

Need a new water heater? We offer a 50-gallon Vaughn tank or an 85-gallon Marathon tank at rebated prices with free delivery. We also have \$75 or \$125 energy credits for you if you purchase a tank somewhere else. Give us a call for details.



### Radio-controlled switch

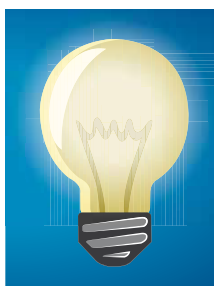
What a deal! If you don't already have a radio-controlled switch (RCS) for your electric water heater of at least 40-gallon capacity, please call, and we will install one at no charge. Over 5,600 GMEC members have an RCS on their water heaters. The switch entitles you to a discount and free maintenance (except cleaning), including parts and labor, on your electric water heater. Some exclusions apply; call us for details.

### GenerLink

We want you to use your portable generator safely. Call the member services department at GMEC and ask about GenerLink. GenerLink eliminates the use of extension cords and other connections that can be dangerous to members and linemen. Over 200 members currently have a GenerLink installed at their homes.

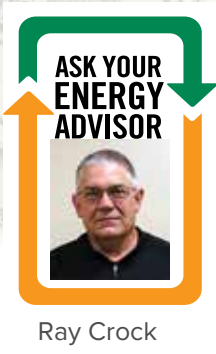
### Meter reading

You can enter your meter readings online at our website, [www.gmenergy.com](http://www.gmenergy.com). You can also mail your readings or call us 24 hours a day with meter readings.



### Bill pay

You can pay your bill online through SmartHub or by clicking the "Pay Bill Now" button on our website, [www.gmenergy.com](http://www.gmenergy.com). You may also pay by phone by calling 844-206-7873.



Ray Crock

# Energy-saving, budget-friendly tips

We all want to afford being comfortable in our homes. If you're having trouble paying your energy bills, you are not alone. The U.S. Energy Information Administration reports one in three

households face challenges meeting their energy needs.

Decreasing monthly bills and being more efficient at home is something we all should practice. Here are some budget-friendly energy efficiency tips targeting one of the biggest energy users in the home: the heating system. Heating and cooling account for nearly half of a U.S. home's energy consumption.

## Add coziness to your home

One way you can feel warmer in your home without turning up the thermostat is by making your home cozy.

The way our bodies perceive the temperature of a room is based more on the surfaces in the room than the air temperature. In general, harder surfaces feel colder. For example, your tile floor will feel cooler than your fabric sofa. Cold floors in a room make us feel colder. Adding an area rug to a hard-surface floor can make us feel warmer, even with the same setting on the thermostat. The same goes for windows. Windows are typically the least-insulated surface in a room and can feel cold in winter months. Adding or closing curtains can help the room feel warmer.

## Check your windows

Make sure your windows are closed and locked. Locking windows pulls the sashes tighter together, reducing gaps that allow air to flow through and cause drafts. If your sash locks don't form a tight fit, adjust them or add weatherstripping.

There's a variety of window weatherstripping products available for less than \$20. Most are simple to install and only require tools you most likely already have around the house, such as scissors and a tape measure. Temporary solutions such as caulk strips, putty, pull-and-peel caulking, or window insulation films can be used if you rent your home and can't make permanent changes.

## Seal your doors

Weatherstripping doors is an easy do-it-yourself project. Make sure your doors seal tightly and don't allow drafts to

pass through around the edges or under the door. Make sure any doors leading to an unheated space — outside or into a garage — are sealed tightly. If you can see light around the edges or underneath the door or feel air movement when the door is closed, you know you are losing energy.

Because doors need to open and close easily, expect to do a bit of adjusting after installing weatherstripping. If weatherstripping isn't installed correctly, it can make the door hard to close. Making it too loose defeats the purpose.

## Close the damper

If you have a fireplace, make sure the damper is completely closed when not using it. Leaving the damper open is like leaving a window open — it's just harder to see. The air you just paid to heat your home will go right out the chimney.

The only exception is some gas fireplaces that need to remain open for gas fumes to exit the home. If you have a gas fireplace, check the owner's manual for more information on the damper position.

## Layer up

Dressing for the season prevents going overboard on your energy use. It can be tempting to adjust the thermostat to increase your comfort. Putting on a sweater or comfy sweatshirt can have the same comfort impact without increasing your energy use. Slippers can be a big help, too, especially when your feet touch a cold floor.

The next time you consider turning up the thermostat a few degrees, try some of these tips first to stay warm and leave increased energy bills out in the cold.





# GUERNSEY-MUSKINGUM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CURRENTLY SPEAKING

**Smart Metering System**

Smart Meter, Network, Report, Electric Company

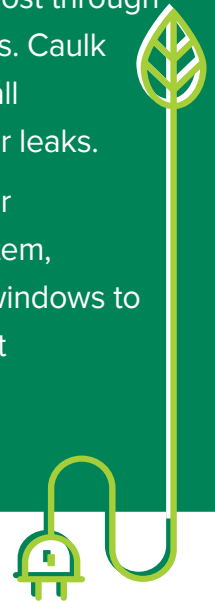
During our annual meeting in July, we announced that we will be installing advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) at Guernsey-Muskingum. Our plans have not changed, but our timeline has. COVID-19 has impacted the delivery of smart meters and may cause a delay in training our employees on the new system. We are hoping that we will have full deployment by the end of 2022. So, for now, continue to read your meters monthly and keep up to date with us on Facebook and by reading your *Ohio Cooperative Living* magazine.

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

About 30% of a home's heating energy is lost through inefficient windows. Caulk and weatherstrip all windows to seal air leaks.

When running your home heating system, lock all operable windows to ensure the tightest seal possible.

Source: [www.energy.gov](http://www.energy.gov)



## Is your name and account number here?

If it is, call the cooperative's office and receive a FREE home change-out to LED lightbulbs (limit six bulbs). Thanks for reading the local pages of *Ohio Cooperative Living* magazine.

#11-0047-79-08.....Bradley Southall  
#12-0065-27-01.....James B Swingle  
#21-0438-01-03 .....Jared A Besser  
#52-0093-79-08.....Denzil Alley

#42-0095-70-07 ....Vincent Keith II  
#60-0578-21-00.....Daniel R Durben



### GUERNSEY-MUSKINGUM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

#### CONTACT

800-521-9879 | [www.gmenergy.com](http://www.gmenergy.com)

#### OFFICE

17 S. Liberty St.  
New Concord, OH 43762

#### OFFICE HOURS

Monday–Friday, 7:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

#### ELECTRIC RATES

Farm and Home Service rate schedule R-1\*  
Service Availability Charge — \$24/mo.  
First 500 kWh/month — 13.169¢/kWh  
Over 500 kWh/month — 11.845¢/kWh

Net Billing Residential R-1 NB\* and  
Net Metering Residential R-1 NM\*  
Service Availability Charge — \$42/mo.  
First 2,000 kWh/mo. — 11.645¢/kWh  
Over 2,000 kWh/mo. — 11.845¢/kWh

Seasonal Residential Service  
rate schedule S-1\*

Service Availability Charge — \$384/yr.  
First 800 kWh/yr. — 20.769¢/kWh  
800 to 6,000 kWh/yr. — 11.645¢/kWh  
Over 6,000 kWh/yr. — 11.845¢/kWh  
(Minimum annual charge — \$384/yr.  
for service between March 1, 2021,  
and Feb. 28, 2022)

Commercial Service rate schedule C-1\*  
Service Availability Charge — \$26/mo.  
First 1,500 kWh/mo. — 13.569¢/kWh  
Over 1,500 kWh/mo. — 11.845¢/kWh

\*Rider T — Kilowatt-Hour Tax applies to all rate schedules and must be added to the rates shown.

First 2,000 kWh/mo. — 0.465¢/kWh  
Next 13,000 kWh/mo. — 0.419¢/kWh  
Over 15,000 kWh/mo. — 0.363¢/kWh

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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