



Line Items

The Official
Newsletter
Of Excelsior EMC

December 2025 • Vol. 46, No. 10

WHY SOUTHERN HOMES USE MORE ENERGY IN WINTER — AND WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT

Many Excelsior EMC members are surprised that their highest electric bills often arrive in winter—not summer. While our cold season is short, the way Southern homes are built and heated leads to higher energy use during those freezing nights.

WHY HEATING COSTS MORE IN THE SOUTH

Electric Heat Strips = High Energy Use

Most Southern homes rely on heat pumps equipped with electric heat strips, sometimes called an electric furnace. These strips work like large toaster elements and can use three to five times more electricity than your heat pump alone.

Heat Pumps Struggle in Freezing Weather

When outdoor temps drop near or below freezing, your heat pump can't pull enough heat from the air. It automatically activates auxiliary heat, which is your heat strips—this is when energy use spikes.

Homes Not Designed for Long Winters

Many local homes have:

- Less insulation
- More air leaks
- Ductwork in unconditioned attics

All of these make winter heating less efficient.

TIPS TO REDUCE WINTER ENERGY USE

1. Keep Your Thermostat Steady

Set it around 68–70°F and avoid big adjustments. Raising the thermostat more than 2–3 degrees at once triggers heat strips.

2. Program Smartly

Use programmable or smart thermostats with gradual temperature changes to prevent your system from entering “recovery mode,” which activates auxiliary heat.

3. Seal and Insulate

Check for drafts around windows and doors, and consider adding attic insulation to keep more warmth in your home.

4. Replace Air Filters Regularly

A clogged filter restricts airflow and makes your system work harder.

5. Use Ceiling Fans on Reverse (Low)

Fans can gently push warm air down without adding much cost.

6. Fireplace Check

If not using your fireplace, make sure the damper is closed so warm air isn't escaping up the chimney.

7. Space Heaters: Use with Caution

While they can warm a small area, they use a significant amount of electricity and can quickly raise your bill if used for long periods. Never use them to heat your whole home.

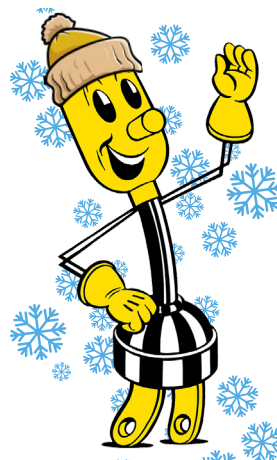
DURING A COLD SNAP

When temperatures dip below freezing:

- Your heat pump will run longer—this is normal.
- Avoid cranking up the thermostat, which forces heat strips on.
- Set your thermostat and leave it alone. Small changes = lower usage.
- Prepare ahead of time: check weatherstripping, insulation, and thermostat settings.

WE'RE HERE TO HELP

Cold snaps are part of winter in Southeast Georgia, but understanding your heating system can help manage both comfort and cost. If you have questions about your winter usage or want tips specific to your home, contact Excelsior EMC—we're always happy to assist our members.



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Joseph Jones
Editor

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When your power goes off, don't stay in the dark longer than you have to. To restore your power as quickly as possible, we need your correct phone number. Your phone number is the quickest way for us to locate your home or business when you call to report an outage.

LINE ITEMS (ISSN 1089-9987) is published monthly for \$1.00 per year by Excelsior EMC, 2574 Northside Dr West, Statesboro, GA 30458. Periodicals postage paid at Statesboro, Georgia. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to LINE ITEMS, P.O. Box 297, Metter, Georgia 30439

Between the Lines

by
Greg Proctor
President/CEO

Looking Back, Moving Forward

As 2025 comes to a close, it is natural to pause and reflect on all that we have faced and accomplished together this year. For Excelsior EMC, 2025 has been a year of progress, stability, and meaningful investment in the members and communities we proudly serve.

One of the most significant milestones of the year—and one we are especially proud to highlight—is the return of capital credits to our members. As a not-for-profit electric cooperative, any margins we earn are allocated to our members and returned when financial conditions allow. Being able to issue capital credit retirements this year demonstrates the strength and stability of your cooperative. More importantly, it underscores the fundamental difference between Excelsior EMC and investor-owned utilities: our members are not just customers but owners, and they directly benefit from the cooperative's success.

This year also brought a relatively mild storm season. While we always prepare for the unexpected, we are grateful to have been spared from major storm events in 2025. This allowed our crews and staff to focus more fully on proactive improvements across our system—strengthening reliability and enhancing service without interruption.

Among our key achievements was a significant series of system upgrades designed to improve the resilience of our electric grid. Several distribution lines were converted from 7,200 volts to 14,400 volts, boosting capacity to accommodate continued growth. Another major milestone was the addition of the Pine Inn Substation, which now supports homes and businesses in that portion of Bulloch County, including one of our newest large loads, Ecoplastic America. These enhancements ensure our infrastructure remains strong, flexible, and ready for future demand.

We also celebrated a major step forward with the announcement and construction of our new office and headquarters. This modern facility will serve as a centralized hub for our employees and operations—improving efficiency, supporting a growing workforce, and enabling us to deliver an even higher level of service to our members. It stands as a symbol of Excelsior EMC's continued investment in innovation and long-term planning.

Looking ahead to 2026, we're excited to build on the momentum of this year's accomplishments. Challenges will always arise—whether from shifting weather patterns, growing energy demands, or unexpected events—but we are confident in the strength of our system and the dedication of our team. Thanks to the cooperative spirit we share and the improvements we've made, we are well prepared for whatever comes our way. Our mission remains clear: to deliver reliable and affordable electricity while continuing to strengthen the connection between Excelsior EMC and the communities we serve.

I want to close with a note of sincere gratitude. None of the progress we have made in 2025 would be possible without you, our members. Your trust, patience, and support allow us to carry out our mission each day.

As your locally owned cooperative, we are proud to serve you—not only with electricity, but with integrity, accountability, and care. As we look back on 2025, we do so with pride and thankfulness. As we move forward into 2026, we do so with hope, determination, and excitement for the opportunities ahead.

At Excelsior EMC, we are proud to stand with you—looking back with appreciation and moving forward with confidence.









Every Member Counts

Home Lighting Guide



The following information outlines recommendations for home lighting, however, additional options for bulbs, fixtures and spaces in your home may be available. Sources: Home Depot, Alcon Lighting

Room/Area	Recommended Lumens	Fixture Types	Smart Tips
 Living Room	15-30 per sq. ft. 150 sq. ft. room 2,250 - 4,500 lumens	Ceiling fixtures, can lighting, lamps/ accent lighting	Use smart bulbs to adjust color temp and control remotely.
 Kitchen	30-40 per sq. ft. 100 sq. ft. room 3,000 - 4,000 lumens	Recessed ceiling lights or flush mounts	Smart switches can be used to control zones (dining vs. prep); undercabinet motion lights offer late-night illumination.
 Dining Room	10-20 per sq. ft. 100 sq. ft. room 1,000 - 2,000 lumens	Pendant or chandelier fixture	Smart, dimmable bulbs allow various levels of brightness for ambiance.
 Bedroom	10-20 per sq. ft. 120 sq. ft. room 1,200 - 2,400 lumens	Ceiling fixtures or recessed lighting	Motion sensors are great options for nighttime use.
 Bathroom	50-80 per sq. ft. 60 sq. ft. room 3,000 - 4,000 lumens	Over-vanity fixtures and/or recessed lighting	Cool LED bulbs provide brighter light for shaving, applying makeup, etc.
 Porch/ Home Entry	100-200 per sq. ft. 100 sq. ft. entry 10,000 - 20,800 lumens	Wall lanterns, ceiling mount and/or floodlights	Motion-activated flood lights and/or smart outdoor bulbs are energy efficient and boost home security.



*Our offices will be closed
on December 24 and 25 to
celebrate the holiday.*

*We hope you all have a
wonderful Christmas
season with those you love.*

Georgia Agricultural Tax Exemption (GATE) is an agricultural sales and use tax exemption certificate issued by the Georgia Department of Agriculture. The document identifies its user as a qualified farmer or producer who is exempt from sales tax on the inputs used in the production of their commodity. Qualified producers must apply/re-apply with the Georgia Department of Agriculture at their cards expiration to receive the exemption. Excelsior EMC members that qualify must provide Excelsior EMC with a copy of their renewed GATE card. We must receive a copy of the new card by December 31 for the exemption to continue. Producers that have never received GATE can also apply. First-time applicants to Excelsior EMC will need to provide a copy of their GATE card as well as an Excelsior EMC GATE form that can be picked up at either our Metter office or Statesboro office. Additionally, we can email or fax the form by simply calling our customer service department at (912) 685-2115 or (912) 764-2123. For more information or to renew visit www.agr.georgia.gov or call 1-855-FARM-TAX.

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Your GATE Card Expires Dec. 31!

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