

FEBRUARY 2023

Coweta-Fayette **EMC**

# POWERLINES

## VisionEMC Completes Community Project at Hope Revisited

Coweta-Fayette EMC (CFEMC) completed a community project for Hope Revisited as a part of our employee professional development program, VisionEMC.

VisionEMC participants constructed an outdoor meeting space at Hope Revisited, a local organization that aims to assist families in reconnecting in a safe and stable environment.



**"For our class project, we built an outdoor space to help Hope Revisited reunite local families," said Tamara Harmon, CFEMC employee and 2022 VisionEMC graduate. "The outdoor space is equipped with a swing set for both the children and adults, a pavilion with picnic tables, and a play area with a chalkboard and several other activities for them to play with outside."**

15 CFEMC employees, who made up the 2022 VisionEMC class, spent months developing the idea, raising funds to support the construction and maintenance costs, and building and implementing the project, which is now complete and open for use by the organization.

According to **Jennifer Nolder, Hope Revisited's President**, everything at Hope Revisited was set up to mimic a home environment.

*"This really gives some normalcy to those families as they're reconnecting because what they learn here, they can take home so they can thrive and stabilize and remain as a family unit once they're reconnected."*

A NEWSLETTER FROM  
COWETA-FAYETTE EMC



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The outdoor space will allow families whose children are in foster care or other domestic situations to have an additional space to use when conducting a family visitation other than a park or a fast-food restaurant.

**"Before the project started, visits were limited to the inside of the building," said Nolder. "Having the outdoor area allows our families to have a total experience. So, if it's pretty outside, they can start with homework and then when they're done, they can make their dinner and take it outside or before they start homework, they can go swing and have a little decompression time."**

Each year, VisionEMC participants develop and implement a community project as a part of completing the internal program, which allows participants to strengthen their sense of community and accountability. As a cooperative, one of CFEMC's guiding principles is concern for the community.

*"I'm proud of the VisionEMC class and the efforts they put into this project to make it a success. It's really rewarding to see how they learned to work together as a team and came together to give back to the community," said Chris Stephens, CFEMC's President and CEO.*



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# Five Ways to Fight the Winter Chill and Save Energy

We all have our favorite season. Some people love crisp, cool weather and bundling up under a favorite blanket, while others prefer the warm temperatures summer brings and all the fun outdoor activities that go with it. But there's one thing we can all agree on: high winter bills are never fun. Coweta-Fayette EMC is here to help you find ways to manage your home energy use and keep winter bills in check.



Here are five tips to help increase your home's energy efficiency this winter:

**Mind the thermostat.** This is one of the easiest ways to manage your home energy use. We recommend setting your thermostat to 68 degrees (or lower) when you're home. When you're sleeping or away for an extended period of time, try setting it between 58 and 62 degrees; there's no need to heat your home when you're away or sleeping and less active.

**Button up your home.** The Department of Energy estimates that air leaks account for 24% to 40% of the energy used for heating and cooling a home. Caulking and weather stripping around windows and doors is another simple, cost-effective way to increase comfort and save energy. If you can feel drafts while standing near a window or door, it likely needs to be sealed.

**Use window coverings wisely.** Open blinds, drapes or other window coverings during the day to allow natural sunlight in to warm your home. Close them at night to keep the cold, drafty air out. If you feel cold air around windows, consider hanging curtains or drapes in a thicker material: heavier window coverings can make a significant difference in blocking cold outdoor air.

**Consider your approach to appliance use.** When combined, appliances and electronics account for a significant chunk of our home energy use, so assess how efficiently you're using them. For example, if you're running the dishwasher or clothes washer, only wash full loads. Look for electronic devices that consume energy even when they're not in use, like phone chargers or game consoles. Every little bit helps, so unplug them to save energy.

**Think outside the box.** If you're still feeling chilly at home, think of other ways to warm up--beyond dialing up the thermostat. Add layers of clothing, wear thick socks and bundle up under blankets. You can even add layers to your home! If you have hard-surface flooring, consider purchasing an area rug to block cold air that leaks in through the floor.

If you're taking steps to save energy but continue to see major increases in your bills, give us a call at 770-502-0226 or take advantage of our free home energy audits. CFEMC's energy experts can help identify areas and other factors impacting your home energy use and recommend next steps for savings.

Winter months often bring some of the highest energy bills of the year. By being proactive about saving energy, you can increase the comfort of your home and reduce monthly bills. Visit our website at [www.utility.org](http://www.utility.org) for additional energy-saving tips.

## The President's Message



**Chris Stephens, CEO**

I know you're all aware that the cost of consumer goods has steadily increased over the past few months, and it doesn't look like we'll see an end to this trend anytime soon. It's impacting everything from groceries to gasoline. The items you use in your daily lives cost significantly more than they did just a year ago.

CFEMC is also seeing an impact and it is affecting almost every aspect of our business. First, the materials used in construction have increased. That includes items such as wire, transformers, insulators, cross arms, switches and even the fasteners we use to connect items to a pole. The cost of equipment and vehicles like bucket trucks, service trucks and trailers have also increased significantly. And while we have experienced some decrease in the cost of gas from its all-time high, it's still more than it was a year ago. In addition, the cost to operate and maintain the system such as rights-of-way and equipment has jumped as well.

Not only are we dealing with cost increases but also longer delivery times and shortages of items available in the market to purchase. Transformers now have a lead time of over a year, and we're looking at a delivery date five years out on bucket trucks needed to replace an aging fleet.

Each month, your board of directors and our staff review the cost of purchased power and expenses to make sure we are being fiscally responsible to you, our members. We work hard to keep costs as low as possible while maintaining the integrity and reliability of the system.

In 2022, CFEMC members set two new all-time system peak loads, one for summer and one for winter. Historically, the winter peak is typically much less than our summer peak. However, during the past Christmas holidays, our system reached 97% of our all-time system peak set this past summer. That means more people are relying on electricity to keep their homes warm during cold weather events. While we had a few areas where members experienced outages, these areas are in our work plan to be upgraded. The good news is we have the necessary generation, and the system is designed to meet your needs. Thanks to the use of technology, a dedicated team of lineworkers, and a solid engineering plan, we will continue to work hard to build and maintain a system that is growing with the membership.

Another way we manage reliability is through our fuel mix. That's the fuel we use to generate power. Our biggest generation source remains natural gas. Over the last year, the price of gas has fluctuated greatly, and you've seen that cost reflected in the fuel adjustment on your monthly bill. Currently, those costs are stabilizing, and we hope that is a trend that remains throughout the year. We have consistently been adding renewables to our mix over the last 20 years as technology made it more cost-effective. In addition, this year, we'll be bringing in more nuclear energy with the addition of Unit 3 at Plant Vogtle. While nuclear has higher construction costs, the dependable carbon-free energy produced will be much lower and stable in cost. By the end of 2024, nearly 60% of our electricity will be from carbon-free resources.

At CFEMC, our focus remains clear. We are a member-owned electric cooperative, and we start each day proud to power our community and bring you reliable electricity at the lowest possible price.

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