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**Mission Statement**

Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation is committed to meeting the needs of our membership by delivering safe, affordable and reliable services the cooperative way.

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## Between the Lines

*News from your community*

# Show your support

Per Tennessee statute, the state's standard license plate is redesigned every eight years, assuming that the General Assembly approves funds to do so in its annual budget. The last plate was launched in 2006 with modifications in 2011, 2016 and 2017.

Last year, Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee announced that the state would redesign the standard license plate to celebrate our 225th year of statehood. Residents were invited to vote on their favorite design, and more than 300,000 votes were cast. The winning design, which received 42 percent of the vote, was announced in October and made available last month. You may have seen some of the new plates on cars in your community.

While most motorists use the standard plates, it may surprise you to learn that there are more than 175 specialty plates also available in Tennessee. These plates allow you to show your pride in a school, sports team or career; honor one's military service; or support a cause that matters to you. It costs a little more to get a specialty plate, but the state returns a portion of that extra money to the cause, school or foundation responsible for the plate.

In 2019, Tennessee's electric cooperatives worked with state lawmakers to introduce a specialty license plate to honor the important work that electric lineworkers do



**By Chris A. Davis**  
General Manager,  
Cumberland Electric  
Membership Corporation

each day. These Powering Tennessee license plates have been available for just over two years, and 4,000 motorists have opted for the tags. Unlike some specialty plates, you don't have to be a lineworker — or even work at a utility — to get a

Powering Tennessee plate. Any Tennessee motorist can request one.

Money raised through the sale of the Powering Tennessee specialty plates goes to the Tennessee Lineworker Lifeline Fund, a nonprofit foundation established to support lineworkers and their families in the event

of a serious injury or fatality while on the job. More than \$100,000 has already been raised to support this important effort.

Tennessee motorists have lots of options when it comes to license plates: the newly redesigned standard plate or one of the specialty plates. The next time you renew your plate, I encourage you to consider supporting Tennessee's electric lineworkers with a Powering Tennessee license plate. You can learn more about the plate or how to order your own at [poweringtennessee.org](http://poweringtennessee.org).

*"Money raised through the sale of the Powering Tennessee specialty plates goes to the Tennessee Lineworker Lifeline Fund, a nonprofit foundation established to support lineworkers and their families in the event of a serious injury or fatality while on the job."*

# Feb. 21 is deadline for CEMC youth programs

Students interested in submitting short stories for the Washington Youth Tour Writing Contest, applying for the Senior Scholarship Program or entering the Calendar Art Contest: Mark your calendars for Monday, Feb. 21, which is the deadline for each of Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation's youth programs.

## Washington Youth Tour Writing Contest

The Washington Youth Tour Writing Contest is open to high school juniors within CEMC's service area. To enter, students are required to write short stories explaining how electric co-ops are "Building a Brighter Tennessee" through investments in energy, education, broadband, economic development and more. Each writer of the top 12 entries will win an expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., in June. Additional details about the 2022 Washington Youth Tour Writing Contest can be found at [youthtour.tnelectric.org](http://youthtour.tnelectric.org).

## Senior Scholarship Program

CEMC's Senior Scholarship Program will help graduating seniors pay for college by awarding 12 scholarships of \$1,000 each to qualifying students. Each interested student must submit a completed application, including two letters of reference and an original essay of at least 300 words describing what the student most looks forward to about attending college and how a scholarship, in terms of financial assistance, will help in completing his or her education. Applicants must have also attained a minimum 3.0 cumulative grade-point average, enroll or plan to enroll as a full-time student at an accredited Tennessee college (Murray State and Western Kentucky universities are included) and be a graduating senior whose parents or guardians are members of CEMC and receive electric service from CEMC at his or her primary residence. Applications are available online at [cemc.org](http://cemc.org).

## 2023 CEMC Calendar Art Contest

The 2023 Calendar Art Contest is open to students in grades kindergarten through 12 who live within CEMC's service area. Winning entries will receive cash prizes and be featured in CEMC's 2023 calendar.

Entries will be accepted through participating schools, and each grade has been assigned a calendar month to illustrate: January, kindergarten; February, first; March, second; April, third; May, fourth; June, fifth; July, sixth; August, seventh; September, eighth; October, ninth; November, 10th; and December, 11th. Seniors will design the cover.

For additional information about any of CEMC's youth programs, contact Susie Yonkers, community relations coordinator, at 800-987-2362, or by email at [syonkers@cemc.org](mailto:syonkers@cemc.org).



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# Project Help: neighbors helping neighbors

Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation, in cooperation with local energy assistance agencies, offers a program in which members who choose to participate can donate \$1 or more each month to help provide some relief to individuals who are struggling to pay their utility bills.

The program, Project Help, allows members to contribute an additional \$1 on their electric bills each month to help pay the utility bills of the elderly, disabled and/or those who are not economically self-sufficient. Project Help is a voluntary program. All money collected from Project Help goes to energy assistance agencies in our communities, which determine how these special funds are distributed.

If you would like to contribute to Project Help, you can do so by marking the box on your bill stub and completing the Project Help section on the back of your bill or by contacting CEMC at 1-800-987-2362.

By donating to Project Help, you can help provide some relief to individuals who are



struggling to pay their utility bills. A dollar a month can truly make a difference.

## CEMC's 'Trees of Giving' spread joy to children in foster care

This past December, the lobbies of Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation's business offices were decorated with special Christmas trees known as the "Trees of Giving." Each year, CEMC employees and members fill the trees with gifts for those in need. This year, CEMC partnered with YAIPak Outreach to collect items for YAIPak's Project Foster Hope. Project Foster Hope helps local children and foster families in emergency situations by providing Boxes of Joy, which include new clothing, toiletries, toys and other items meant to provide a bit of comfort to children facing trauma in our communities.



Springfield District employees pose with items donated to decorate their "Tree of Giving." All items collected in all of CEMC's districts were delivered to YAIPak Outreach to benefit the organization's Project Foster Hope program.

# Shine a light on home security

By Paul Wesslund

Lighting up your yard will keep the burglars away, right? That's mostly true, but like a lot of things in life, it's not that simple. A brightly lit yard could make it easier for the bad guys to see during a break-in.

From street lights to porch lights, studies show that better outdoor lighting reduces crime. But those same reports say that security lighting works best as part of a plan that takes into account what crooks look for.

The basic advice from law enforcement, insurance companies and home security system vendors is, don't just flip on the yard light before bed. In fact, you may want to turn it off before turning in.

The goal is to make it look like people are home. Turning lights on and off gives your home that lived-in look. And if you're not there, well, there's an app for that.

Here are six tips to electrify your outdoor lighting tech and increase the security of your home:

**1. Think like a burglar.** Intruders tend to enter a home through a door, and they'd rather you not be home, so they watch for signs that people are at work. That's why most burglaries happen in the day and why leaving your lights on all day and night or when you're on vacation can be an advertisement that no one's home. Do keep the yard lit while you're up and around to show normal activity — turning off the porch light at bedtime can be a sign to a potential intruder that someone is in the house. Pay attention to spots that could cover up a break-in — keep trees and bushes trimmed.



Electronic timers and lights that turn on when they sense motion can give the impression that someone's home. Photo credit: Ring



Many outdoor lights and fixtures like this Ring smart bulb can be linked to a smartphone so you can turn them on and off while you're out and about. Photo credit: Ring

**2. Light for the right reasons.** Are you trying to light a walkway for guests or keep intruders away from an entrance? Place lights so they achieve your objective. And safety isn't just about reducing crime. A well-lit outdoor space can also prevent trips, falls and other accidents.

**3. Enlist technology.** Electronic timers and lights that turn on when they sense motion can give the impression that someone's home and can light the sidewalk when you return from an outing without leaving the lights on all the time. Increasingly, lights and fixtures can be linked to a smartphone so you can turn them on and off while you're out and about.

**4. Weigh the pros and cons of a home security system.** Security cameras, alarm systems and protection services offer a wide range of conveniences, including fire protection or checking whether your pets hop onto the dining table when you leave. A security camera can also help identify someone stealing a package delivered to your doorstep. They can be expensive, so do your research carefully, and know what you're trying to achieve.

**5. Protect yourself from internet hackers.** Internet-connected devices can be hacked by digital-savvy troublemakers. Whether it's a security camera or a smart lightbulb, they offer cyber crooks a way into your personal information. The basic internet security advice is to have strong passwords

and change them regularly, especially on your home's central router. Keep software updated on your devices — those updates often add the newest cyber protections. Even though it's tempting, don't use social media to tell the world you're on vacation. Consider sharing your travel photos after you get back.

**6. Go old school.** Besides electricity and technology, use people to reduce crime. Invite a police officer to give a safety briefing at a neighborhood meeting. Police can describe the best steps for your area. And of all the crime-reducing tips, experts say the best one is to get to know your neighbors, who can recognize and report any out-of-the-ordinary activity.

Lighting the path to safety, it turns out, involves making a plan, wise use of technology and a little help from your friends.

Paul Wesslund writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56 percent of the nation's landscape.



From street lights to porch lights, studies show that better outdoor lighting reduces crime. Photo credit: Ring

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# Are portable space heaters efficient for my home?

By Abby Berry

Small space heaters are meant to do exactly as their name says: heat a small space. But, unfortunately, many people use portable space heaters to heat an entire home, which can really take a toll on energy bills. The truth is, whether you should use space heaters really depends on your home's efficiency and energy needs.

If you're using a space heater to compensate for problems like inadequate insulation, drafty windows and exterior doors, or an inefficient heating system, space heaters are not a practical solution. Your best bet is to improve the overall efficiency of your home. If you're on a tight budget, caulking and weather stripping around windows and exterior doors is a low-cost, easy way to save energy. Depending on the size of your home, adding insulation can be a great next step. Loose fill insulation typically costs \$1 to \$1.50 per square foot. Taking these proactive energy-saving measures rather than relying on space heaters for supplemental warmth can reduce your heating and cooling bills for years to come.

Perhaps your home is energy efficient but you're cold-natured and want a specific room to be cozier than the rest. In this case, a space heater could work for your needs. A good comparison is ceiling fans; we use ceiling fans in the summer to cool people, not rooms. A space heater can be used in a similar way during winter months. Only use a space heater in small

spaces that you're occupying and, if possible, try to shut off other rooms to contain the warmth provided by the space heater. If you decide to use a space heater to heat a small area in your home, make sure the heater is properly sized for the space; most heaters include a general sizing table.

A word about safety: The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that more than 25,000 residential fires are associated with the use of space heaters every year, resulting in more than 300 deaths. If you must use a space heater, purchase a newer model that includes the most current safety features and make sure it carries the Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) label. Choose a thermostatically controlled heater to avoid energy waste and overheating, and place the heater on a level surface away from foot traffic when in use. Always keep children and pets away from space heaters.

Consider alternative ways to stay warm like extra layers of clothing or UL-approved electric blankets. If you have hardwood or tile floors, lay down area rugs to provide additional insulation (and appeal!) and maintain warmth.

We know it's cold out there, but remember that in addition to safety concerns, space heaters can greatly increase your energy bills if used improperly.

If you're looking for alternative ways to save energy and increase comfort in your home, contact the energy professionals at Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation by phone at 800-987-2362, or visit us online at [cemc.org](http://cemc.org). We're here to help you manage your energy use.

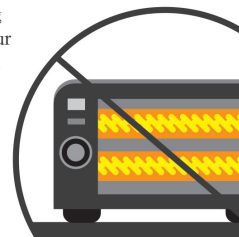
Abby Berry writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56 percent of the nation's landscape.



## TIPS TO DITCH THE SPACE HEATER

Space heaters are energy hogs, and older models can be extremely dangerous. This winter, ditch the space heater and try these alternative solutions for staying cozy.

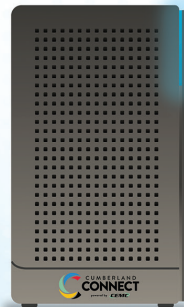
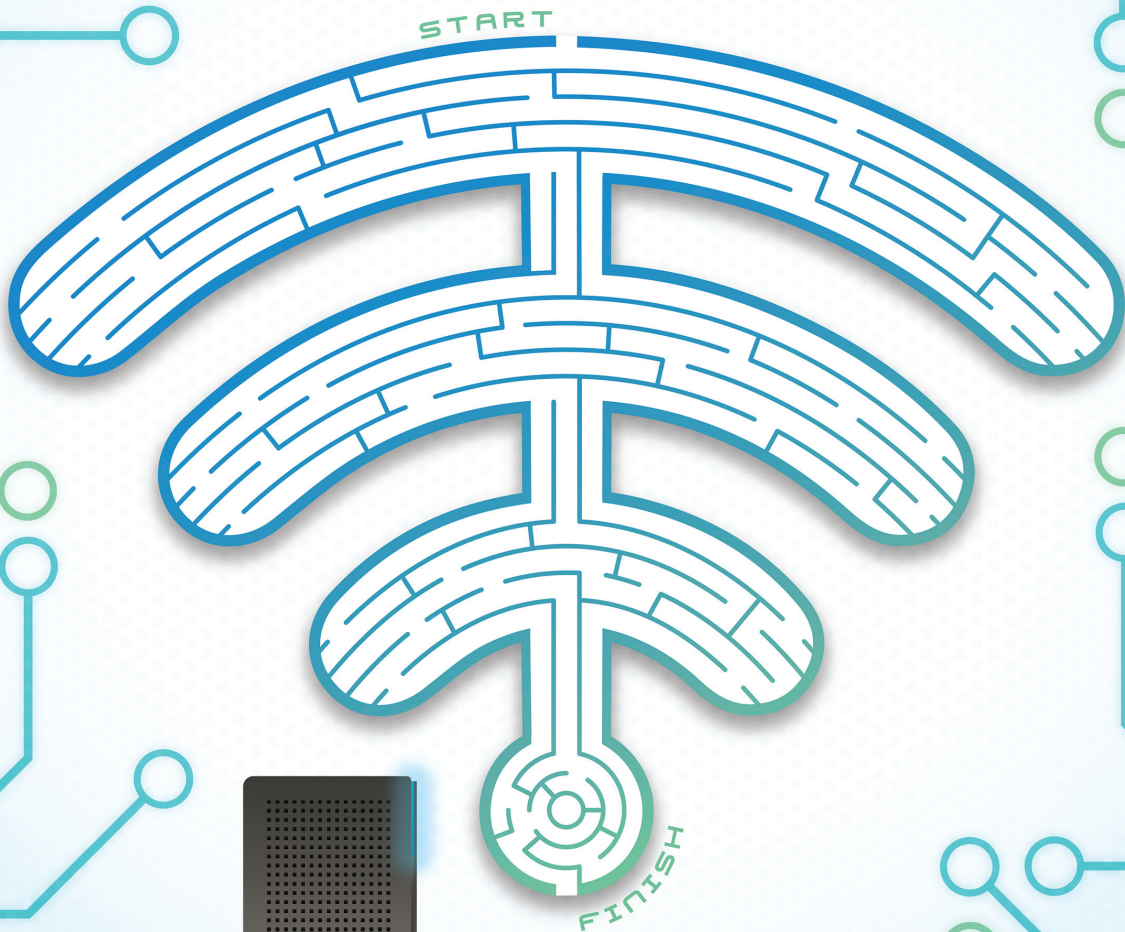
- Use an electric blanket to keep warm during the night.
- Caulk and weather strip around all windows and doors to prevent heat loss.
- Consider adding insulation to your attic and around ductwork.



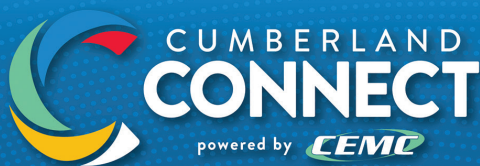
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