



2026 WASHINGTON YOUTH TOUR: WHERE LEADERSHIP TAKES OFF

Tri-County EMC sponsors students each year on a week long all-expenses-paid leadership adventure in Washington, D.C. The cooperative will select three students, also known as delegates, to join more than 100 youth to represent the state of Georgia June 12-19 at the 2026 Washington Youth Tour.

The fast-paced, high-energy program is designed to give delegates a taste of democracy in action, expose them to the nation's rich history through visits to national monuments and museums, and encourage students to become active in their communities. After a send-off banquet in Atlanta the night before departure, the group will travel to the nation's capitol to connect with more than 1,500 students from across the country. Learn more and complete an application by February 15 at tri-countyemc.com/washingtonyouthtour.cms.



Potomac River Cruise



Arlington Cemetery



White House



Smithsonian Museums

WHAT'S NEXT AT TCEMC?

2/1

Walter Harrison
Scholarship Deadline

High school seniors & under grad
students can win \$1,000 for college.

2/15

Washington Youth
Tour Deadline

Three local high school students
will be picked to go to D.C. in June.

3/1

Operation Roundup
Applications Due

Service area non-profits can
apply for grants up to \$15,000.

4/10

Georgia Lineman
Appreciation Day

When you turn on the lights, don't
forget to #ThankALineman.

36 LOCAL TEACHERS AWARDED BRIGHT IDEAS EDUCATION GRANTS IN DECEMBER

Tri-County EMC recently awarded Bright Ideas Grants to 36 local educators, recognizing their creativity and commitment to enriching classroom learning across our service area. These grants are designed to support innovative projects that bring lessons to life, strengthen student engagement, and provide hands-on educational experiences that go beyond traditional instruction.

One of this year's grants will support a media project led by Mr. Nick Geeker at Oak Hill Middle School. His \$1,500 will be used to create a professional podcast studio, giving students access to industry-standard equipment and software. The media lab will allow students to gain real-world technical experience while learning how modern media content is produced from start to finish. Beyond technical training, the studio will strengthen essential communication skills, including public speaking, interviewing, script writing, and storytelling. Through this project, students will have the opportunity to build a portfolio of original work that reflects both creative ability and collaboration, helping prepare them for future academic paths and careers in media. (96040001)



Tri-County EMC is proud to invest in local educators who are shaping the next generation. The Bright Ideas Grant program continues to be one of the cooperative's most meaningful ways to support education, and we congratulate all winning teachers for their outstanding ideas and their ongoing impact on students throughout our communities.



WIN \$1,000 FOR YOUR COLLEGE EDUCATION

The Walter Harrison Scholarship is open to all undergraduate college students whose primary household is served by an EMC. A panel of judges from Tri-County EMC will select one undergraduate semi-finalist to compete for a \$1,000 scholarship at the state level. A combination of financial need and academic ability will determine winners. The scholarship must be used in Georgia.

Students residing within the Tri-County EMC service area may apply for the Walter Harrison Scholarship through Tri-County. Applications can be downloaded at tri-countyemc.com/walterharrison.cms. To receive an application by mail, contact Anna Smith at 478.986.8126. Applications must be received by February 1, 2026.



TRI-COUNTY EMC FOUNDATION AWARDS \$35,800 IN OPERATION ROUNDUP GRANTS

On December 11, the Tri-County EMC Foundation Board of Directors met to discuss applications for Operation Roundup Grants. Eleven organizations were awarded for a total of \$35,800 to fund a variety of community needs and projects. The Operation Roundup Program is made possible through the generosity of our members who elect to have their bills rounded up each month. The next deadline for grant applications is March 1. (83233001)

CENTENNIAL BAPTIST CHURCH

\$4,700 to replace the heating system in the home of an elderly woman living alone

CHARD WRAY FOOD PANTRY

\$3,000 to purchase food for the food pantry

BALDWIN COUNTY ELC

\$1,600 to purchase winter coats and clothing for 33 students

EATONTON VETERANS THRIFT STORE

\$7,500 to support a local family who lost their home, belongings, and pets in a house fire

JASPER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOOD BANK

\$3,000 to purchase food for the food pantry

OCMULGEE CASA, INC.

\$5,000 to buy personal items for children living in foster care

OVERVIEW, INC.

\$5,000 to purchase meals for senior citizens in Baldwin County

STONE CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

\$1,000 to continue the church's household essentials pantry

NEW DAMASCUS BAPTIST CHURCH

\$2,500 to build a safe home entrance for a Jones County man dealing with medical issues

BALDWIN COUNTY SPECIAL EDUCATION

\$1,000 to support the Baldwin High School Unified Sports Team

CIVIC WOMEN'S CLUB OF MILLEDGEVILLE

\$1,500 to purchase Christmas gifts for foster children

GEORGIA'S HOME ENERGY REBATES: A RESOURCE FOR TRI-COUNTY EMC MEMBERS

As your trusted energy advisor, Tri-County EMC wants to share information about Georgia's Home Energy Rebates, a statewide program administered by the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA). As colder winter temperatures approach, it's important for you, Tri-County EMC members, to be aware of resources that can improve home comfort, increase energy efficiency, and lower energy-related costs during the heating season.

How does it work?

The program is designed to help eligible Georgia residents reduce the cost of home energy efficiency improvements and electric appliance upgrades, such as insulation improvements, air sealing, heating and cooling efficiency upgrades, and certain electric appliance replacements that improve overall performance. Rebates do not appear as credits on Tri-County EMC electric bills; instead, the state provides incentives through participating service area contractors, who pass the savings on to the homeowner. More information can be found at energyrebates.georgia.gov or by calling Georgia's Home Energy Rebates Contact Center at 877.348.5237.





RECIPE Box

CARAMELIZED VIDALIA ONION BBQ DIP

Courtesy of Georgia Grown

- 4 cups diced onions
- 1 tbsp minced garlic
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp butter
- 2 tsp Kosher salt
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 2 8-oz cream cheese
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- ½ cup BBQ sauce
- 2 cups shredded cheese

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Heat a 10-inch cast-iron skillet over medium heat. Add the olive oil and the butter to the pan. Once the butter has melted, add diced onions to the skillet. Cook onions for 5 minutes, then add minced garlic, salt, and pepper. Stir well. Allow the onions to cook until they turn golden brown, stirring often. This should take about 20 minutes. Add cream cheese, mayonnaise, and BBQ sauce; mix well. Cook until the cream cheese is melted. Top the mixture with the shredded cheese and bake until melted. Serve with crackers or French bread.

DID YOU KNOW?

Your recipe is worth \$20 if chosen! Send your best recipes to annas@tri-countyemc.com or mail to P.O. Box 487, Gray, GA 31032.

Three account numbers are hidden in parentheses in this issue of Current Lines. If you find your FULL account number, call 478.986.8126 to claim a \$50 bill credit.

NEW YEARS RESOLUTION: PREPARE YOUR HOME FOR SEVERE WEATHER

In 2026, Tri-County EMC encourages members to consider a New Years resolution that strengthens safety and peace of mind: preparing their homes and families for severe weather. Advance preparation can significantly reduce stress, damage, and risk when conditions suddenly turn unpredictable.

Severe weather preparedness starts with the home itself. A well-organized approach helps families respond calmly and safely when severe weather strikes. Below are some simple, effective measures that can make a meaningful difference when severe weather strikes. (103102001)

Have **flashlights** with extra batteries on hand. While candles can be helpful as light sources, flashlights are the safer option.

Gather **heavy clothes and blankets**. If you have a working fireplace, now is the time to stock up on firewood. Make sure your chimney is clean and free of obstructions.

Stock up on **non-perishable food items** that do not require cooking. Have a manual can opener on hand.

For those with well service, have a case of **bottled water** on hand. Fill any bathtubs and extra pitchers with water as well.

Keep a **battery-powered radio** tuned to a local station for weather and outage updates.

Be sure to **charge all cell phones** before the storm hits. Sign up for alerts from your local Emergency Management Agency. Also, make sure you're enrolled in our outage texting program, TextTCEMC. Learn more at tri-countyemc.com/outage-texting.

Have a **first-aid kit** and several days' worth of prescriptions handy. Those who depend on electricity for medical devices may need to relocate until power is restored.