



Last year, the Early Learning Center received a grant that purchased a coat and pair of gloves for every child enrolled.



Tri-County
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CURRENT LINES

MAY 2025

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SMALL CHANGE CHANGING LIVES

In March, the Tri-County EMC Foundation awarded 13 organizations Operation Roundup grants totaling over \$35,000. Operation Roundup is a program funded by the voluntary contributions of members to the Tri-County EMC Foundation. Charitable and government institutions, civic organizations, or other non-profit organizations can apply for grant money for community projects and needs within the cooperative's eight-county service area.

One of the awarded organizations this quarter was the Baldwin County Early Learning Center, a Pre-K school in Milledgeville. Since 2019, the ELC has received over \$15,000 in funding from the Operation Roundup Program. Funded projects include purchasing warm clothes for students enrolled at the ELC, home essential items for their families, and most recently, installing sensory equipment for non-verbal students at one of the playgrounds. (62591004)

Having worked for the ELC for 20 years, Family Services Manager Carrie Brown understands each student's diverse backgrounds and needs. "The grant we received to purchase car seats was one that made a definite impact," said Brown. "As a Child Passenger Safety Technician, I am able to provide education to ELC families on car seat safety, teach them the right way to install the seat, but most importantly, provide them with the correct seat."

Operation Roundup would not be possible without the generosity of Tri-County EMC members rounding up their monthly electric bills. "The number of people impacted from just a few cents each month is really remarkable," said Communications Specialist Anna Smith. "We want to thank our Roundup participants for contributing to the positive change happening in our communities, and I encourage every Tri-County EMC member to enroll in the program."

HOW TO LOWER HOME ENERGY USAGE THIS SUMMER

Outside factors, such as fuel and equipment costs and extreme weather, can impact electricity prices. However, you can control your home energy consumption by taking proactive steps to reduce energy use.



Thermostat Management

The thermostat is one of the best places to lower energy use because heating and cooling account for a significant portion of home energy consumption. To reduce energy use during the summer months, adjust your thermostat to the highest possible setting, 78 degrees or higher.



Utilize Off-Peak Energy Times

Plan energy-intensive chores, such as running the dishwasher or washing clothing, during off-peak energy hours. Scheduling these tasks during off-peak times, usually early in the morning or late evening, takes the strain off your HVAC system and requires less energy to keep your home cool.



Seal Your Home

About 20 percent of heated or cooled air that moves through a home is lost due to a lack of proper insulation and air leaks. Ensure your home has sufficient insulation levels by sealing air leaks around windows and doors with caulk and weather-stripping. This is a simple, effective way to lower energy use and improve indoor comfort.



Maintain Equipment

The health of your heating and cooling system is essential for comfort and can greatly impact energy bills. Maintain your system by regularly replacing dirty filters and scheduling annual inspections for maintenance and necessary repairs.

FACTORS THAT IMPACT YOUR BILL

The hottest weather of the year is upon us, and our home cooling systems will soon work overtime to keep the heat at bay. Extreme temperatures typically result in higher bills, and different factors can affect electricity prices.

With Tri-County EMC's mobile app, myTCEMC, you can view a summary of how much electricity you used during the billing cycle. You can even see how electricity use may have spiked on days when you used more electricity, such as a particularly hot day or when relatives were staying with you. But you might be surprised to learn that beyond your monthly energy consumption, there are external factors that can impact the cost of electricity.

Tri-County EMC purchases electricity from its power generation partners and delivers it to the cooperative's local communities. Purchasing that power accounts for a large portion of the cost of providing electric service to homes and businesses. Fuel costs, such as natural gas and coal, fluctuate based on supply and demand. Tri-County EMC works closely with its wholesale provider to plan ahead and help stabilize electricity prices for members.

Federal energy policies can have a profound impact on electricity costs. Because of stricter regulations for traditional energy generation, natural gas and coal plants require costly upgrades and technologies. These additional costs are ultimately passed on to consumers. U.S. power consumption is expected to double by 2050. Across the country, electric cooperatives are working with members of Congress to advocate for smart energy policies that reliably power our local communities. (34865001)

"While many of these external factors that impact electricity costs are out of our control, we all have the power to manage our energy use at home," says Energy Services Representative Jonathan Stewart. "As your local energy partner, Tri-County EMC is here to help." Members are encouraged to visit the online Energy Resource Center to learn about efficiency programs designed to maximize savings. As always, your EMC will continue working diligently to provide its members with reliable power at an affordable cost.

**STAY COOL.
STAY EFFICIENT.**



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MAY IS ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH

Play it safe around electricity.

Prevent Electrical Overloads

Overloaded electrical circuits are a major cause of residential fires. Warning signs of overloaded circuits include flickering, brightening or dimming lights, warm or discolored wall plates, frequently tripped circuit breakers, or a mild shock from appliances, receptacles, or switches. To prevent this, never use extension cords or multi-outlet converters for appliances. All major appliances should be plugged directly into a wall outlet. Never plug more than one heat-producing appliance into the same wall plug simultaneously.

Stay Away From Electrical Equipment

Stay away from underground transformers, substation fences, and other electrical equipment. If a pet, ball, toy, or anything else ends up inside a substation, do not attempt to climb the fence to retrieve it. For assistance, contact the owner of the substation using the information listed on the gate.

Kids And Electricity

Keep children away from electrical outlets. Plastic outlet protectors are a great way to protect smaller children from outlets, but installing electrical outlets designed to remain closed until a plug is inserted is a safer bet. Keep loose cords out of children's reach and out of the walking path. Cords within the child's reach pose a choking hazard, while cords on the ground could cause a child to trip and fall.

Extension Cord Safety

When not used correctly, extension cords can overheat and cause fires. Be sure to thoroughly inspect the extension cord for any damage before using it. If your cord is not quite long enough for your project, do not attempt to plug extension cords into one another to add length. Buying a longer cord is the safer option. Running cords through walls, doorways, floors, and under rugs will block heat from escaping the cord, posing a fire risk. We recommend relocating outlets when necessary rather than using extension cords. When using cords outdoors, keep them away from water and use a GFCI outlet.

Be Aware When Working Outside

When working outside, be aware that power lines may exist above and beneath you. If you are planning a project that requires digging, call 811 to get utility lines marked on your

property so you know what areas to avoid. If you are working on your roof or trimming trees, stay at least 20 feet away from overhead power lines. Getting too close to a power line can be just as dangerous as touching one, as electricity can arc from the power line to a close object.

Call The Experts

Doing at-home projects instead of calling a professional can save you money. But with electricity, we recommend you call a professional. Safety measures must be taken when working with electricity; even the slightest mistake can damage your home or cause an electrical shock. While it might not be the most cost-effective option, it may be the safer way to complete your project. (45983001)

Remember, always play it safe around electricity!



RECIPE BOX

SUMMER WATERMELON FETA SALAD WITH HIBISCUS VINAIGRETTE

Courtesy of Georgia Grown

INGREDIENTS:

- 6 cups arugula (one 7-oz bag)
- 1 cup diced watermelon
- ¼ cup crumbled feta
- 2 tbsp pumpkin seeds

DRESSING

- 2 tbsp Pride Road Hibiscus Jelly
- 2 tbsp red wine vinegar
- 2 tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 2 tbsp pumpkin seed oil or olive oil
- ¼ cup thinly sliced Vidalia onions
- Salt and pepper

DIRECTIONS:

In a small bowl, whisk together hibiscus jelly, vinegar, and lemon juice. Gradually whisk in the oil. Add the onions, toss to coat with the dressing, and let them soften for 10 minutes. Fish out the onions with a fork, and set aside. Season dressing with salt and pepper.

To serve: Toss arugula with some of the dressing in a large bowl. Transfer to a serving bowl and top with watermelon, feta, pumpkin seeds, and marinated onions.



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.

REPORT YOUR OUTAGE WITH TextTCEMC

There are multiple ways to report a power outage in your area. However, the most efficient method is through Tri-County's outage texting program, TextTCEMC. Designed to give you an easy way to notify the cooperative when your power goes out, this free service allows members to report outages via text. That information goes directly into its outage management system so that crews can quickly be dispatched to restore power. There are no phone calls or waiting on hold.

Start Participating

To participate in the outage texting program, your cell phone number must be up-to-date in the system at least 24 hours in advance. You can do this by calling 1.866.254.8100, selecting 2 for Tri-County EMC, and then selecting 5 to update your phone number. You will need to have your account number available. You can also update your phone number using the online customer portal or myTCEMC mobile app.

Next, send **TextTCEMC** to 85700. You must use the same cell phone number listed on your account to enroll, as this number will be used to identify your location when you report an outage. Next, you will verify the account using the address you intend to report outages. If the cell phone number is not found on your account, you will be prompted to update it.

Commands and Responses

The one-word messages below are options available to communicate with the TextTCEMC system. Simply text the message to 85700 and wait for a response.

Use **OUT** to let us know that your power is out. You will be prompted to verify the location of the outage. You will receive a text when your power is restored. If you receive this text and your power did not come back on, please text OUT again.

Send **STATUS** after you report an outage to get updated information, such as whether a crew has been assigned or is on-site working on the outage.

Entering **HELP** will generate an auto reply with available options, including how to contact our help line.



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