

current lines

February 2019

A monthly publication for Tri-County EMC members

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Tri-County EMC Board Elects to Refund \$1 Million in Capital Credits.....

In December 2018, Tri-County EMC's board of directors elected to retire \$1 million in capital credits to the cooperative's existing and former members who received electric service from 1976 to 1993. These capital credit refunds will appear as credits on the bills of current members. The line item on the bill will be labeled, "Capital Credits - 1976 to 1993". Former members, no longer receiving service from Tri-County EMC, will be mailed a check if their refund is at least \$10. The amount of each refund is determined by the amount of the bill during the years retired.

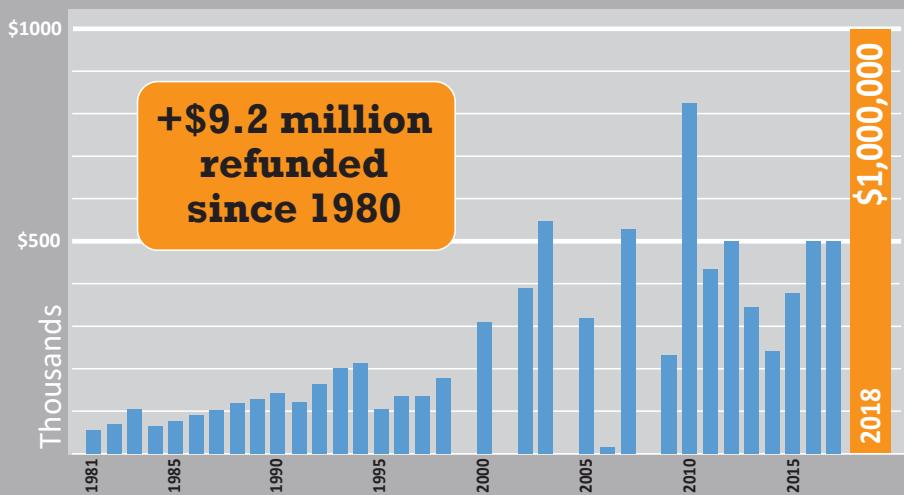
As a not-for-profit "cooperative" organization, our member-owners take part in the cooperative's business. Our members elect a board of directors and vote on important issues such as bylaw changes. And they also participate financially. While most businesses seek to make "profits", cooperatives are different, required by lenders to maintain only a small "margin" above the cost to provide service. Tri-County EMC members, existing or former, have an account that tracks their margins.

Co-ops are capital intensive businesses requiring large amounts of materials and equipment to grow and maintain reliable service. As an alternative to borrowing from banks or other lenders, that small margin is reinvested in the utility for a period of time, a practice that has been followed since the formation of electric cooperatives in the 1930s. Periodically, the board of directors elects to retire these margins, called "capital credits", back to the member's accounts where it originated.

"Returning capital credits to the member-owners is the cooperative way of doing business. It's one of the things that makes us unique." said Brenda P. Green, chairman of the EMC's board of directors. "Tri-County is in a strong, healthy financial position, therefore the board of directors is pleased to be able to approve the single largest refund in co-op history to our members."

At the end of each year, the board of directors carefully assesses the financial condition of the cooperative and decides what amount, if any, of capital credits to retire. Since 1980, Tri-County EMC has retired \$9.2 million in capital credits. The \$1 million dollar refund for 2018 is the highest in the history of the cooperative.

Capital Credits Returned Annually 1981-2018



It is often difficult to locate former members who have moved away from the Tri-County's service area. Should you move, we highly recommend that you provide a forwarding address and keep us updated of further address changes. Unclaimed credits are held by the cooperative for five years as we attempt to locate former members. A list of unclaimed capital credits is provided on the cooperative's website each year.

Do I Need an Energy Audit

Understanding What The Energy Audit Provides

In 2018, a home served by Tri-County EMC averaged using about 13,000 kWh over the entire year, roughly \$1,600 in energy. As the saying goes, "Your mileage may vary." Whether or not that is a good deal is almost totally dependent on your home's size, efficiency and occupants. The "right" level for your home could be dramatically different. Unlike your itemized grocery bill, which allows you to see the cost per item and compare quantities, understanding what systems or appliances impact your energy bill is much more difficult to decipher.

Comfort is also directly related to efficiency. Drafty homes with poorly performing heating or cooling systems likely feel less comfortable. "Why pay top sirloin prices for heating if you're getting ground beef results," commented Greg Mullis, vice president of corporate services for Tri-County EMC. "If you feel like you're always cold, even though the heat seems to run a lot, you certainly may have some issues. Scheduling an energy audit is a free and easy way to itemize and take control of your energy bill." (74335001)

What is an energy audit?

Simply stated, an energy audit is a comprehensive analysis of your bills and your home. Since about half of Georgian's energy bills go towards heating or cooling, those system(s) get the most attention. In addition to the heating or cooling units and duct systems, the "thermal envelope", the structure that keeps conditioned air in and hot or cold air and humidity out, gets thoroughly examined. Insulation levels, attic ventilation, moisture sealing, plumbing and electrical penetrations, windows and doors are all examined. Water heating and other appliances and home lighting are also considered.

Also examined in any energy audit are the occupants. "Let's face it, how you control the thermostat or whether or not you choose to put that old refrigerator in the unconditioned garage for some extra space for cold beverages affects your bill as much as anything else," said Mullis. "Our energy auditors also examine you, with an effort to help you understand immediate things you can do to lower your bills without doing any renovations." (6523001)

Tri-County EMC's energy auditors are Building Performance Institute (BPI) certified and have years of experience in helping our members with energy efficiency and comfort issues. They will also use state of the art tools such as thermal imaging cameras to analyze your home. And following the audit, you will receive a detailed report with suggested improvement measures.



Who would benefit from an energy audit?

Almost anyone can get valuable information from an energy audit, even if you think your bills are reasonable. But if you fall into one of the following categories, you are a prime candidate:

- Homes that are more than fifteen years old
- Homes with consistently higher than expected bills
- Homes where some rooms considerably warmer or cooler than the rest of the house.

To schedule an audit, simply call 1.866.254.8100, Ext. 8119 or 478.986.8119. Audits can be scheduled Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. The onsite portion of the audit will take about one hour.

► Keep up with the latest news and updates from Tri-County EMC on social media. We'll give energy tips, information on our scholarship and grant programs, updates on power outages and more.

Follow Us:

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Scholarships Available

As part of Tri-County EMC's commitment to our local community, each year we offer a number of leadership and scholarship opportunities to area youth. Applications for the following scholarships are due on **April 15, 2019**. For more information on the scholarships below, visit www.tri-countyemc.com/scholarships-overview.cms or contact Kim Broun at 478.986.8126 or kimb@tri-countyemc.com.

Operation Roundup Scholarship

In addition to funding community grants, the Tri-County EMC Foundation offers scholarships to undergraduate and graduate students (with preference given to non-traditional students), to help pay their college costs. Through Operation Roundup, a total of \$4,000 is awarded annually to students residing in the homes of Tri-County EMC members. The applicant must be enrolled in any U.S. accredited college or university and have maintained at least a 2.0 average.

Applications are available by mail upon request or may be downloaded at www.tri-countyemc.com/roundupscholarship.cms. Applications are due April 15 and October 15 of each year.



Cooperative Scholarship

Each spring, Tri-County EMC awards three \$2,000 Cooperative scholarships to students residing within the cooperative's service area. One scholarship is awarded in each of the three Tri-County board districts. Applications are judged by an outside panel of education professionals based equally on academics, financial need and community involvement. High school seniors and nontraditional undergraduate students are eligible to apply. Students must have a permanent address in the Tri-County EMC service area to apply. (1896001)

Applications are available by mail upon request or may be downloaded on the cooperative's website at www.tricountyemc.com/cooperativescholarship.cms.

Operation Roundup Grant Applications Due

Deadline: March 1

Do you know of a non-profit or civic group looking for funding for projects in our service area? An Operation Roundup Grant may be the right fit.

Operation Roundup is a community development program funded by the voluntary contributions of Tri-County EMC's members to the Tri-County EMC Foundation. Contributions are made to the foundation when participants elect to have their monthly electric bill rounded up to the next dollar.

Each quarter, the Tri-County EMC Foundation accepts applications for grant projects that meet needs in the eight-county Tri-County EMC service area. The Tri-County EMC Foundation Board evaluates each application and awards grants based on the worthiness of the application and available funds.

Non-profit and civic groups can apply for a project they are executing or on behalf of individuals residing within the eight county area (Baldwin, Putnam, Jones, Bibb, Jasper, Morgan, Twiggs and Wilkinson). One hundred percent of funds collected are returned to the community through donations from the foundation.

Learn more at www.tri-countyemc.com/operation-round-up.cms or call 478.986.8126. (5828001)

Operation Roundup Grants

2019 Application Deadlines

March 1

June 1

September 1

December 1



Power Outage Texting

Enroll Today For Easy Outage Reporting...

Our outage texting program gives you a quick and easy way to notify Tri-County EMC when your power goes out. Just set up your account using the steps below and text OUT to 85700 if your power goes out.

Step 1: Make sure your cellphone number is listed on your account. This system uses your cellphone to identify the location of the outage. You can use the member portal on www.tri-countyemc.com to update your contact information or call us at 1.866.254.8100.

Step 2: Send textTCEMC to 85700. Sending "textTCEMC" to phone number 85700 will enroll your account in the outage texting service. Allow 24 hours between Step 1 and Step 2.

Step 3: Save 85700 in your phone as "Tri-County EMC Outage". During the next power outage, text OUT to 85700 to report your outage.

Text 85700

These one word messages are options available to communicate with Tri-County via text.

OUT: Text OUT to 85700 to let us know your power is out. You will be asked to verify the location of the outage.

STATUS: Send STATUS to 85700 after you have reported an outage to get updated information on outage restoration.

HELP: Sending HELP to 85700 will generate an auto-reply with information on technical assistance using the texting system.

STOP: To discontinue messages from the textTCEMC system, simply send STOP to 85700.

Did you find your account number?

Find your complete account number inside parentheses in this issue of *Current Lines* and win a \$50 bill credit. Call 478.986.8126 to claim your bill credit.

Recipe Box

Almond Joy Cookies

This month's winning recipe is courtesy of Mrs. Jimmie Sears. Did you know that your recipe is worth \$20 if chosen? Send your favorite recipes to kimb@tri-countyemc.com or mail to P.O. Box 487, Gray, GA 31032.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup butter
- 1 1/2 cups white sugar
- 1 1/2 cups brown sugar
- 4 eggs
- 4 1/2 cups flour
- 3 tsp baking soda
- 3 tbs vanilla
- 5 cups chopped almonds
- 5 cups chocolate chips
- 2 cups coconut

Directions:

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Grease baking sheet. Cream butter and sugars. Beat in eggs one at a time. Stir in combined dry ingredients well. Stir in chocolate chips, almonds, coconut, and vanalla flavoring. Drop by round tablespoon onto baking sheet. Bake 8-10 minutes. Cool on baking sheet 5 minutes and then transfer to wire rack.



Tri-County
EMC

Owned By Those We Serve

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Monthly Publication for
Tri-County EMC Members
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