



Tri-County  
EMC

# CURRENT LINES

FEBRUARY 2021

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## COLD WEATHER BRINGS HIGHER ENERGY USAGE

Cold days and nights in December and January brought true winter temperatures to the Tri-County service area. After a warm November, many members noticed a jump in their electric bill.

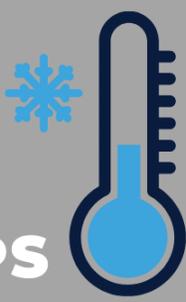
“Cold temperatures really drive up energy usage, particularly for heat pumps when the low temps drop below 30 degrees,” said Greg Mullis, VP of Corporate Services. “On these colder days, electric heat pumps automatically use back-up auxiliary heat - also known as emergency or strip heat - to bring up the temperature. While effective, this auxiliary heat uses much more energy.”

Homes that use resistance electric furnaces and space heaters can see an even more dramatic increase in usage on cold days. “Space heaters are not an efficient way to heat the entire home. They are great for taking the chill out of a small room if used just a few minutes at a time, but they are not energy efficient, and are much more costly than heat pumps.”

To learn more about your energy usage, we encourage you to complete a Virtual Energy Assessment on our [tri-countyemc.com](http://tri-countyemc.com). In addition to the assessment, you'll see resources to calculate how much energy you are using with your appliances and some simple tips to help you conserve energy. To avoid any unexpected surprises on your bill, sign up for daily feedback about your energy usage using the myTCEMC app. More information on these tools is on [page 2](#).

As always, if you think you are experiencing extreme usage, contact us at 1.866.254.8100. (59416002)

	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
 Average Temp.	57 Degrees	44 Degrees
 Average Daily kWh Usage	67 kWhs	101 kWhs



# WINTER ENERGY TIPS

## TURN DOWN THE HEAT

The simplest way to save in winter is to bundle up and turn down your heat. For optimal savings, we recommend keeping your heat at or below 68 degrees.



## AVOID SPACE HEATERS

Space heaters cost more to operate than your heat pump. While they may be effective to temper a cold bathroom, they cannot replace the efficiency of a properly functioning HVAC Unit.



## CLOSE DAMPERS

After extinguishing the fire in your fireplace, be sure to close the damper. Leaving the damper open creates a path for warm air to escape from your home.



## STOP AIR FROM ESCAPING

Add weather-stripping on doors and windows, and caulk the cracks to keep conditioned air inside and outdoor air from leaking into your home



## MAINTAIN YOUR HVAC

Well-maintained equipment runs more efficiently, so replace or clean filters as needed. Units that are overcharged or have low coolant levels will cost you more in the long run. Be sure to have your HVAC unit serviced every 1-2 years.



MORE ENERGY SAVING TIPS AT  
[WWW.TRI-COUNTYEMC.COM](http://WWW.TRI-COUNTYEMC.COM)

# MANAGE YOUR ENERGY USAGE

Getting the most for your energy dollar is important. You want a comfortable home with good indoor air quality and reasonable energy bills. By using information and guidelines from our online Energy Efficiency Center, you can do simple things to cut down your energy usage. Visit [www.tri-countyemc.com/energy-calculator.cms](http://www.tri-countyemc.com/energy-calculator.cms) to learn more.

## BILLING INSIGHTS ENERGY AUDIT

This calculator breaks down your energy usage using your bills and allows you to perform energy saving scenarios to pinpoint your opportunities for savings. To get the most out of this tool, it's helpful to have been a Tri-County member for at least 12 months to properly analyze billing data.

## ENERGY CALCULATORS

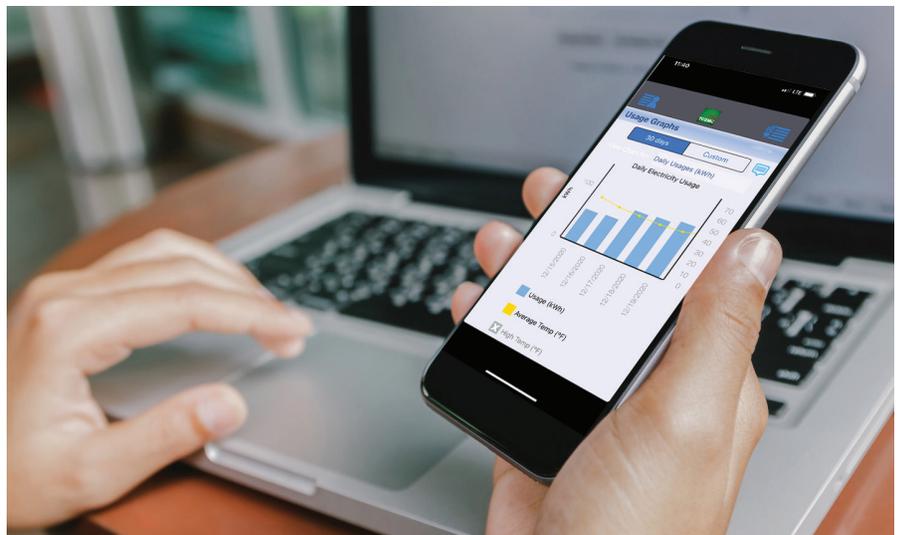
Using our space heater, appliance, television and lighting calculators, learn which areas of your home are using the most energy and where you can conserve.

## ACCOUNT NOTIFICATIONS

Take the surprise out of your monthly energy bill by setting up notifications and mobile alerts through the myTCEMC app or member portal. Whether you want daily energy usage notifications, or if you just want to know when you reached a certain threshold, there are options available for you.

## MONITOR YOUR USAGE

Keep a close eye on your usage with Usage Graphs on the myTCEMC app or the online Member Portal. See how weather impacts your use by overlaying daily temperatures with kWh consumption.



## EV365- Electric Vehicle Incentive

New Year, New Car?! If you are in the market for a new car, consider purchasing an electric vehicle! If you purchase a new car in 2021, you will receive a \$30 bill credit each month for a year. And if you install a Level 2 charger in your home, you'll receive a \$250 credit. Visit [www.tri-countyemc.com/electricvehicles.cms](http://www.tri-countyemc.com/electricvehicles.cms).



# EMCS THANK THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In December, the Georgia Public Service Commission unanimously approved a cost-based formula for setting rates for attachments, such as phone or cable television, to cooperative power poles. Initially pressed to use a nationally set “FCC” rate, the Georgia Legislature asked the PSC to vote on this issue because of their expertise and resources. The PSC embraced the responsibility and ultimately spent five months learning about the complex issue.

“We applaud the PSC Commissioners and staff for the hard work. Creating a new process for setting attachment rates gives us a fair and equitable way to collect the actual costs for other utilities using our member’s power poles,” commented Ray Grinberg, Tri-County EMC’s CEO. “Ultimately, being able to collect the actual costs over the FCC rate saved Tri-County EMC members more than \$300,000 per year.”

Tri-County EMC maintains about 40,000 poles across over sixteen hundred miles of line. On a statewide basis, the decision allowed more than 4 million EMC member-owners to avoid a potential energy rate increase.



# BRIGHT IDEAS GRANTS AWARDED TO LOCAL TEACHERS

In January, Tri-County EMC surprised 24 teachers in Baldwin, Jasper, Jones and Putnam Counties with educational grants totaling \$30,000. Since 2008, Tri-County Electric Membership Cooperative has provided more than \$300,000 in grants to local schools. Funded by unclaimed capital credits, the grants help teachers improve education in their classrooms through innovative projects that would otherwise not be funded. Georgia certified public or private school teachers in grades Pre-K through 12 in Baldwin, Jones, Putnam, Twiggs, Jasper and Wilkinson counties qualify to apply. To see photos of all 2020 Bright Ideas Grant winners, visit [tri-countyemc.com/bright-ideas.cms](http://tri-countyemc.com/bright-ideas.cms). Applications for the 2021-2022 school year will be due in October.



## ACCOUNTNUMBER

Did you find your Tri-County EMC account number? Three random account numbers are hidden in each issue of Current Lines. Find your complete account number inside parentheses in this issue of Current Lines for a \$50 bill credit. Call us at 478.986.8126 to claim your credit.

# RECIPE BOX

## HASSELBACK POTATO GRATIN

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups heavy cream
- 1/2 cup half-and-half
- 8 ounces finely grated Swiss cheese, divided
- 2 ounces finely grated fresh Parmesan cheese, divided
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 7 to 8 medium Russet potatoes, peeled

### DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. In a large bowl, combine cream, half-and-half, half of the Swiss cheese, half of the Parmesan cheese, Dijon mustard, Worcestershire sauce, thyme and salt and pepper. Slice potatoes into 1/4-inch slices. Toss potato slices in cream mixture until all slices are coated. Carefully make stacks of potatoes then arrange them vertically in a baking dish so that the thin edges of potatoes face up. Pour remaining cream mixture over the potatoes. Cover baking dish with foil and bake 45 minutes. Remove foil and bake an additional 15 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Sprinkle with remaining Swiss and Parmesan cheeses and bake 10 minutes or until cheese is golden. Serves 8-10.



*This recipe is courtesy of Georgia Grown. Did you know your recipe is worth \$20 if chosen? Send your best recipes to [kimb@tri-countyemc.com](mailto:kimb@tri-countyemc.com) or mail to P.O. Box 487, Gray, GA 31032.*

# OPERATION ROUNDUP GRANT APPLICATIONS DUE

*Deadline March 1*

Do you know of a nonprofit 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](http://www.tri-countyemc.com/operation-round-up.cms) or call 478.986.8126. (85403001)

### 2021 Operation Roundup Grant Application Deadlines:

March 1 | June 1 | September 1 | December 1

# SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINES

Tri-County EMC will award \$10,000 in scholarships to students with a primary residence in our service area this year. To learn more or to apply, visit us at online at [tri-countyemc.com/scholarships-overview.cms](http://tri-countyemc.com/scholarships-overview.cms). (33262001)

- **Operation Roundup Scholarship:** Applications Due April 15
- **Cooperative Scholarship:** Applications Due April 15



**Tri-County EMC**

**Owned By Those We Serve**

P.O. Box 487  
Gray, GA 31032  
478.986.8100

[www.tri-countyemc.com](http://www.tri-countyemc.com)

*\*Tri-County EMC is an equal opportunity provider and employer\**

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Monthly Publication for  
Tri-County EMC Members