



Tri-County
EMC

CURRENT LINES

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POWER RESTORATION IN A PANDEMIC

Social Distancing as a Lineman

On the night of Easter Sunday, a line of severe thunderstorms approached middle Georgia. These storms were no surprise. For several days, meteorologists had forecast storms that left fatalities and severe damage in Mississippi and Alabama. But for Tri-County's employees, particularly the linemen, there was added apprehension. For the past three weeks, these linemen had been quarantined at home, working out of their houses and their trucks, to avoid contact with each other and the rest of the world during the coronavirus pandemic. As the wee hours of April 13 arrived, so did the first test of social distancing for these linemen.

April has been designated "Linemen Appreciation Month" for many years, a month set aside in Georgia and nationally to honor one of the most dangerous positions in our workforce. In a world where computers and automation have changed the way many of us work, the life of a linemen is still largely about physical labor and going out into the elements when Mother Nature has brought destruction. Short of vehicle accidents, there are rarely power outages on calm, sunny afternoons.

In early March, much like the rest of Georgia, Tri-County EMC began planning for coronavirus. Deemed by Homeland Security as part of critical infrastructure, the cooperative employees are certainly considered essential. But having a designation and actually keeping them and the public safe are two different things.

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WALTER HARRISON SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

Tri-County EMC is proud to present Jessica Patino of Putnam County with a 2020 Walter Harrison Scholarship. Jessica is one of 12 winners selected from applicants across the state for one of this year's \$1,000 scholarships. This year, 76 applicants applied for one of these 12 scholarships.



The scholarship is merit-based, with applicants being evaluated on criteria such as GPA, SAT scores, academic standing, scholastic honors, community involvement and financial need. The scholarship is eligible to be used at any two-year or four-year accredited college or university in the state, including a vocational-technical institution. Applicants and their families must be members of Tri-County EMC and reside within the service area.

The scholarship is named in tribute to Mr. Walter Harrison, a pioneer in the rural electricity movement and leader at the local, state and national levels in the electric cooperative program.

Since 1985, the Walter Harrison Scholarship has awarded over \$224,000 to 235 Georgia students, helping to ensure that students across the state have the opportunity to further their education.

Congratulations Jessica! We wish you the best of luck at Georgia Tech!



JESSICA PATINO,
WALTER HARRISON SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

NEED SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION?

www.tri-countyemc.com/scholarships-overview.cms

POWER RESTORATION

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The co-op began implementing measures to allow and encourage social distancing when paying bills or interacting with cooperative employees. The lobby was closed. Since mid-March, the workforce was split into teams to further isolate from each other should an employee be exposed or test positive. The cooperative's linemen were split into smaller teams of two and sent home, dispatched remotely to daily jobs and outages.

"Teamwork is important as an electric lineman," said Mike Hulett, South District Supervisor. "You rely on your fellow crew members to help you get the job done and keep you safe. In two-man teams, our linemen are doing the same work that would typically be done with a three-man team. That means more trips up and down the pole, working on multiple tasks at once, and taking even more precautions with safety measures. Our two-man crews are able to get the work done, although it may take a little longer than normal."

At 3:00 am on April 13, as weather-alert phone calls began, Tri-County's linemen rolled out of bed and into the dark in a world that felt a bit different. One of twelve tornados to strike Georgia touched down in Putnam County. The fast-moving storm left about 1,800 accounts without power and hundreds of downed trees, many across roadways and right-of-ways, making it difficult to reach downed lines. Working in two-man crews, the Tri-County linemen were able to restore many of the largest outages before dawn. By late afternoon, every meter capable of receiving service had been restored.

Tri-County's service territory was spared much of the destruction that hit other places. For many of us, the outages were a disruption to a new routine that is anything but normal. We were blessed to have very understanding members who placed numerous kind remarks on social media. And we are grateful our linemen were able to restore almost all of outages in less than twelve hours. It's no longer April. But it our minds, it is always linemen appreciation month. (29959001)

ACCOUNT NUMBER

Did you find your account number? 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.

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. And never plug more than one heat-producing appliance into the same wall plug at the same time.

STAY AWAY FROM ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT

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

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 extensions 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. And when using cords outdoors, be sure to keep them away from water, and use a GFCI outlet.



BE AWARE WHEN WORKING OUTSIDE

When working outside, be aware that there may be power lines above you 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, be sure to stay at least 20 feet away from overhead power lines. Getting too close to a power line can be just as dangerous as touching a power line, as electricity can arc from the power line to a close object. (200565001)

CALL THE EXPERTS

Doing at-home projects yourself instead of calling a professional can sometimes save you money. But with electricity, we recommend you call the professional. Important safety measures must be taken when working with electricity and even the slightest mistake can end in damage to your home or electrical shock. While it might not be the most cost-effective option, it may be the safer way to complete your project.

COOPERATIVE CONFERENCE FOR COUPLES

Learn about cooperatives while developing leadership skills with your peers from across the state

Tri-County EMC is now accepting applications for the Cooperative Couples Conference. This conference, scheduled for August 21-23 at Reynolds Plantation in Greensboro, is designed for couples to network with leaders of cooperatives and learn the economic and service benefits of the cooperative business

model. To learn more about the conference or to download an application, visit us online at tri-countyemc.com/couplesconference.cms.

All applications are due to Tri-County EMC by June 15, 2020.

RECIPE BOX

MEXICAN FIESTA CASSEROLE

INGREDIENTS

- 1/4 cup butter
- 3 cups cooked diced chicken or turkey
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 (1-3/4-ounce) package chili seasoning mix
- 1 (8-ounce) can tomato sauce
- 2/3 cup water
- 1 (12-ounce) can golden whole kernel corn with sweet peppers, drained
- 1 (2-1/2-ounce) jar whole mushrooms, drained
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 1/2 cup canned pitted California ripe olives, sliced
- 3/4 cup crushed corn chips

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Melt butter in large saucepan. Add chicken (or turkey) and brown lightly, stirring frequently. Stir in onion, seasoning mix, tomato sauce and water. Bring to a boil; reduce heat. Cover and simmer for 15 minutes, stirring frequently. Remove from heat and stir in corn and mushrooms and half of the cheese and olives. Pour mixture into a 1-1/2 quart casserole. Top with remaining cheese and olives. Sprinkle with crushed corn chips. Bake for 30 minutes. Serves 4-6.

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

MANAGE YOUR ACCOUNT AWAY FROM THE TRI-COUNTY OFFICE

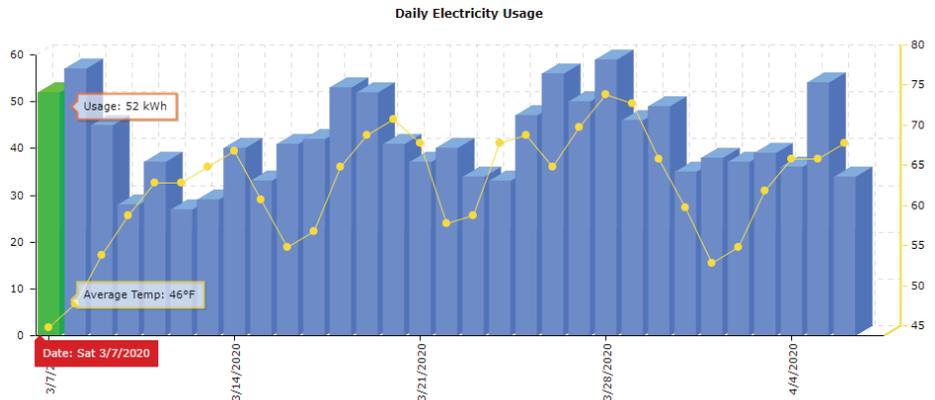
During the COVID-19 Pandemic, Tri-County members are encouraged to use the EMC's virtual resources

PAY YOUR BILL

- Online at www.tri-countyemc.com
- By the myTCEMC Mobile App
- By Mail to Tri-County EMC, PO Box 487, Gray, GA 31032
- By Phone at 1.866.254.8100 or 478.986.8100, by Check or Credit Card
- By Automatic Bank Draft, enroll at tri-countyemc.com/automatic_draft.cms
- By Payment Kiosk, Cash or Check Only, locations listed at tri-countyemc.com/contact_us.cms
- By Night-Drop Window at either office location, Check only

MONITOR YOUR USAGE

Take the surprise out of your monthly bill by keeping track of your energy usage. Using the myTCEMC app or tri-countyemc.com, you can get reports of your daily energy usage. The more you know about your energy use patterns, the easier it is to save money on your power bill. (80948001)



REPORT A POWER OUTAGE

- Online at tri-countyemc.com/report-an-outage.cms
- myTCEMC App
- By Phone: 1.833.myTCEMC (1.833.698.2362)
- By Text: Text "OUT" to phone number "85700"
(to text an outage, you must have an updated cell phone number on your Tri-County EMC account in formation 24 hours in advance)

OFFICES CLOSED

Tri-County EMC offices will be closed on Monday, May 25 in observation of Memorial Day.