

current lines

February 2017

A monthly publication for Tri-County EMC members

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January Weather Brings Abnormal Energy Usage

Cold winter air brought low temperatures to our service area during the first weekend of January. Wrapped around that cold weather were several weeks of warmer than normal temperatures. These temperature extremes can lead to inconsistent energy usage. Using tools available to track your daily usage and understanding the appliances that consume the most energy can help you better manage your electric bill.

The chart below shows how the average January usage compares with the energy usage during January of this year. You can access similar graphs of your energy usage by using the myTCEMC mobile app. Through this app, you can see your daily energy usage and set up text alerts to let you know when you have exceeded a set energy use for the day. (78418001)

Another way to keep your energy bills consistent is to participate in Tri-County's levelized billing program, which averages the current month's bill with the last 11 months. This takes the guesswork out of your bill by spreading your yearly billing total over 12 months. More information on Levelized Billing can be found on page 2.

Outside of those tools, employing simple energy conservation tips can add up to big savings in your home. Cutting heating costs during times of extreme cold can

be difficult, but there are a few simple adjustments you can make around the house to save energy. Tri-County EMC recommends setting your thermostat to 68 degrees in winter when the home is occupied. If you have a programmable thermostat, consider lowering your temperature 6-8 degrees while you are away.

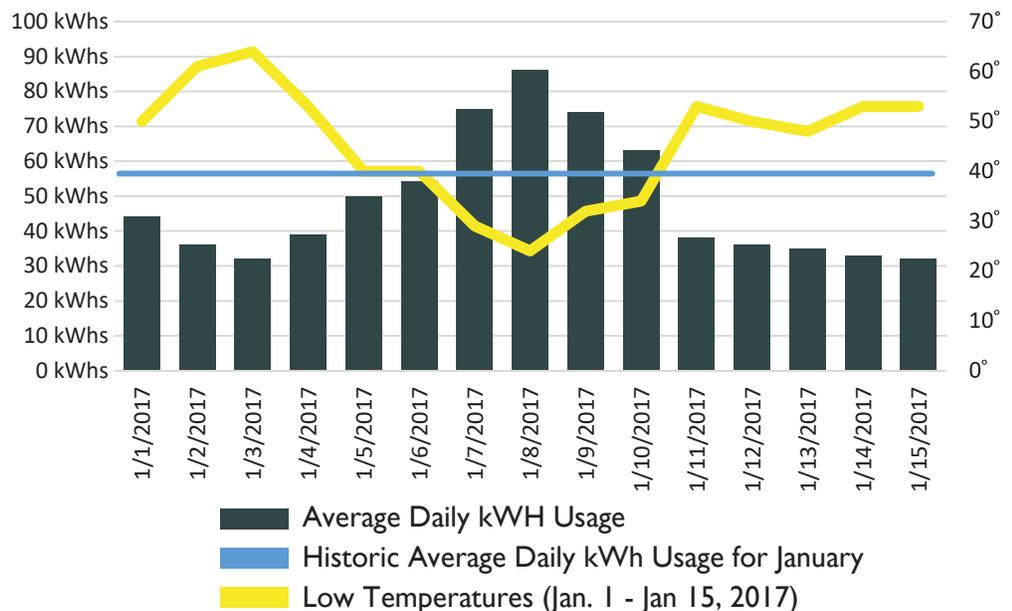
During cold days, do your best to avoid heating your home with space heaters. Using space heaters to temper the air in a bathroom for a short period of time may be a good option, but using them to heat the entire house will cost you more than using a heat pump. The amount of energy you would use to run two space heaters

could power a central heat pump large enough to heat an 1,800 sq. ft. home.

If you build a fire in your fireplace, be sure to close the damper after it is extinguished. Leaving the damper open creates a path for warm air to escape from your home.

To find out more about energy use for all of your home's appliances and other ways to save energy in your home, visit www.tri-countyemc.com/energy-saving-tips.cms. If you would like more information, contact our Energy Services Department to schedule a free in-home energy audit at 1.866.254.8100 ext. 8119.

The chart below shows the effect the inconsistent January weather had on energy usage compared to the average daily energy usage for January.



Love Your Home, Kill the Energy Vampire.....

The digital age. We have gadgets galore, and electricity use has continued to increase as more and more of these digital devices enter into our homes. Instead of one home phone, each family member has a smart phone. Instead of one TV in the living room, many homes have three to four.

Many of these devices come with their own power adapters. Smartphones, are an example. Many people keep their smart phone chargers plugged in at all times (usually near a bedside table) to make charging easier. The problem with this is that even if a phone isn't plugged into the charger, the power adapter itself is still using energy.

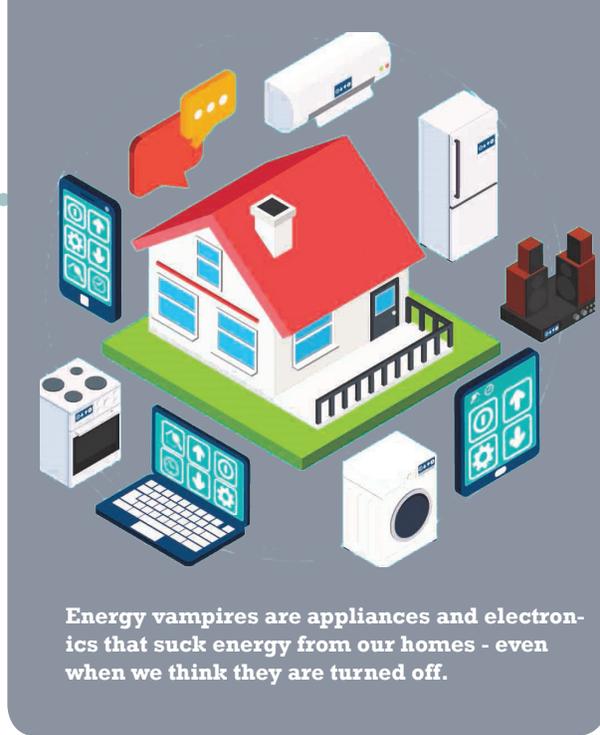
This invisible energy consumption, often called "Vampire Load", can account for 5%-10% of your household's energy usage.

This is also true with TVs, DVD players, gaming consoles and many electronics that have a lit display. To save the most energy, it's best to completely unplug these electronics from the outlet when they are not in use.



Another way to "kill the vampire," if you aren't interested in adding unplugging to your daily routine, is to invest in smart power strips. In comparison to traditional power strips that simply increase the number of electrical outlets in your home, smart power strips work to reduce your power usage by shutting down power to products that go into stand-by mode.

Being aware of your biggest energy users and removing vampire load can add up to big energy savings. If you'd like to test some electronics in your home to see how much electricity they use, contact our Energy Services Department at 1.866.254.8100 ext. 8119 to borrow a Kill-A-Watt Energy Usage monitor for 30 days at no charge. (6137001)



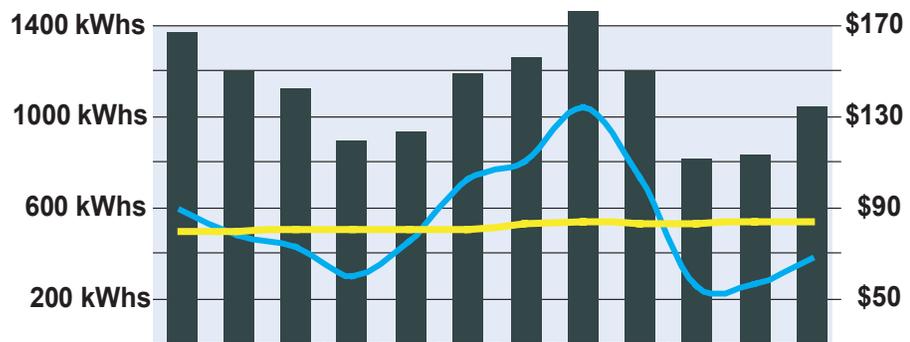
Energy vampires are appliances and electronics that suck energy from our homes - even when we think they are turned off.

Levelized Billing.....

Take the surprise out of your electric bills with Smart Pay Levelized Billing. Each month, you will pay an average of the past eleven months' bills plus the current month. Your bill will fluctuate a few dollars each month, but there is no periodic "true up" adjustment.

To qualify, accounts must have a good credit history and must be active for at least 1 year. This service is available for owned residences. Commercial accounts and residential renters do not qualify. Any balances are due upon exiting the program. Accounts exiting the program must wait twelve months before reenrolling in the program.

To sign up for Levelized Billing, you can download a signup form [here](#), contact a Tri-County EMC representative by calling 1.866.254.8100, or complete the form at www.tri-countyemc.com/levelized-billing.cms to request more information.



- Monthly kWh Usage
- Actual Bill Amount
- Levelized Bill Amount

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, 2017. 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.

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. (65816002)

Operation Roundup Grants

2017 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 in this issue of *Current Lines* and win a \$50 bill credit. Call 478.986.8126 to claim your bill credit.

Recipe Box

Southern Pimento Cheese

This recipe is courtesy of Georgia Grown. **Did you know that 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.**

Ingredients:

- 2 cups freshly grated sharp cheddar cheese
- 1/2 cup pimentos, drained
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- Dash of cayenne pepper, to taste
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- Dash of hot sauce, to taste

Directions:

In a large bowl, stir together cheddar cheese, pimentos, mayonnaise, cayenne pepper, Worcestershire sauce and hot sauce. Cover and refrigerate mixture for 2 hours. Note: This can be used as a spread on sandwiches, as a topping for hamburgers or as an appetizer served with crackers. Yields about 3 cups.

Visit Georgia Grown's website, www.georgiagrown.com, for information on farms and producers across our state.



Photo Credit: istock.com/warren_price



Tri-County
EMC

Owned By Those We Serve

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