

current lines

January 2016

A monthly publication for Tri-County EMC members

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Message from the Chairman

Brenda P. Green, Chairman

Tri-County EMC Board of Directors



With the new year comes new leadership, including new board officers and a new board member.

Through these changes, Tri-County's commitment to the cooperative principles it was founded on remains the same. We are here to reliably serve

our members at the lowest possible cost.

Every year comes with challenges and opportunities. While there is no guarantee that life or Mother Nature won't throw a few curve balls, we make every effort to plan ahead and be prepared for anything that comes our way.

Safety and security are top priorities at the co-op for both employees and members. As technology changes, we make every effort to keep our members, and our members' information, safe and secure. Cyber security is becoming a leading strategic issue for every company, including electric cooperatives. We will continue to invest in technology and monitoring to keep our cooperative's data safe.

We continue to monitor the EPA's Clean Power Plan and are making efforts to bring more options for carbon-free power to you. Construction is moving forward on Units 3 and

4 at Plant Vogtle, one of two nuclear power plants jointly owned by Georgia's utilities. The EMCs in Georgia will own 35% of the new nuclear units scheduled for completion in 2019 and 2020.

Through Green Power EMC, Tri-County and 26 other electric cooperatives now receive renewable generation from the 20 MW Hazelhurst Solar Power project, which began operating in December. In addition, Tri-County's Cooperative Solar project will begin producing energy this summer. This 1 MW facility, currently under construction in Eatonton, will allow members to reap the benefits of solar energy for their home without purchasing a solar panel. Both of these projects will allow for emission reduction credits (ERCs), which will be advantageous under the Clean Power Plan.

Tri-County EMC is owned by the members it serves. The directors you have elected to set policy and oversee the operations are members that take their responsibility seriously and are committed to serving you. Your EMC is well-positioned to meet the challenges of 2016 and beyond and the board of directors and employees look forward to another year of serving and will strive to exceed your expectations. (5924001)

Minimum Bill Change in January 2016

Starting January 2016, the minimum bill charge for residential and commercial accounts will increase by \$3 per month. The minimum bill charge is located in the Energy and Distribution line item on your bill, along with your kWh usage.

This minimum charge increase reflects the true cost it takes to get power to you, as it recovers much of the fixed costs of providing service. The base rate will rise from \$27 to \$30 for traditional accounts, and from \$37 to \$40 for prepay accounts. General service commercial accounts will see an increase in the base rate from \$29.50 to \$32.50.

While the change in the minimum charge is relatively small, it helps the cooperative by assuring that covering fixed costs is less reliant on weather driven sales. "The main goal of the cooperative is to deliver power to members at the lowest possible cost. This was the best way possible to cover costs but keeps the rate per kWh as low as possible," commented Bentley.

About Your Chairman

Brenda P. Green recently retired after 23 years of owning/managing an electrical construction contracting firm. Prior to owning her own business, Brenda worked with Oglethorpe Power Corporation and Pataula EMC. She is a Credentialed

Cooperative Director, certified by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). In addition to serving as chairman of Tri-County EMC, she has served on the boards of Central Georgia Technical College, Central

Georgia Christian Food Bank and Georgia EMC. Brenda and her husband, James, have three sons. The Greens are members of Lake Oconee Presbyterian Church and live in Eatonton. She has served on the Tri-County EMC board since 1993.

2016 Washington Youth Tour Applications Now Available

Tri-County EMC is accepting applications from area high school students for consideration in the prestigious Washington Youth Tour, a unique, **all-expenses-paid**, leadership opportunity available each year to students in Georgia. The two chosen students will join more than 100 youth from Georgia to represent the state during the 2016 Washington Youth Tour to be held June 9-16. (46872001)

The fast-paced, high-energy program is designed to give students a taste of democracy in action, expose them to the nation's rich history through visits to national monuments and museums, and encourage students to become active in their own communities.

The tour begins in Atlanta where students will get to know each other through teambuilding and leadership exercises. In addition, students will learn about the history of electric cooperatives and what makes them relevant today.

The group then travels to Washington, D.C. to connect with more than 1,500 students from across the country. While there, they will cruise down the Potomac River; lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns in Arlington Cemetery; and tour the U.S. Supreme Court, the Bureau of Printing and Engraving, Mount Vernon, the National Cathedral and Ford's Theater. Students will also visit memorials honoring Presidents Franklin Roosevelt, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Washington; World War II; the Vietnam and Korean Wars; and watch the U.S. Marine Drum and Bugle Corps and the Silent Drill Platoon perform at the Iwo Jima Memorial. Students will also visit the Smithsonian Institute, Newseum and Holocaust Museums.

Visit www.tri-countyemc.com/washingtonyouthtour.cms to download an application or pick up an application at the Tri-County EMC Gray or Eatonton offices. Applicants must be age 16 and live in a home served by Tri-County EMC. Applications must be sent to Kim Bonner at P.O. Box 487, Gray, GA 31032 by **February 15, 2016**.

Each delegate on the trip brought something different to the table. The diversity really helped make the trip even more enjoyable.

- Noah Turner, 2014



"Seeing the Arlington National Cemetery and the special changing of the guards ceremony for the 240th Birthday of the US Army is something I will never forget."

-Hunter Kimball, 2015



"I enjoyed not only seeing the great sites but also being surrounded by people that had such a different outlook on life and wanted to do such great things."

- Makayla Schafer, 2015



The level of inclusiveness that the delegates had was so impressive. It has really inspired me to reach out into my own community to make sure my peers feel included.

- Elizabeth Savage, 2014



- Thoughts about the Washington Youth Tour from past delegates



Tri-County EMC Foundation Grants \$11,407.77 in December



In December 2015, the Tri-County EMC Foundation Board approved 6 grant projects, totaling \$11,407.77 in Operation Roundup funds, to benefit organizations or individuals in local communities. The organizations that received funds this quarter are:

Action Ministries: \$2,000 to contribute to the transitional housing costs for three homeless families in the Tri-County service area

Lockerly Arboretum: \$1,000 to purchase greenhouse plants used for horticulture education programs

New Damascus Baptist Church: \$3,361 to help a Jones County family replace necessary items after a house fire

Northridge Christian Ramp Ministry: \$696.77 to construct a wheelchair ramp for a disabled individual in Baldwin County

Putnam Community Resources: \$2,000 to purchase food for a food bank in Putnam County

St. Paul AME Church: \$2,350 to purchase materials to repair the roof of a home of an individual with epilepsy in Jones County



Kim Bonner, Tri-County EMC (left), presents an Operation Roundup Grant to Debbie Foster and Katherine Cummings, Lockerly Arboretum. Funds will go to purchase plants for horticulture education programs.

About Operation Roundup

Operation Roundup is a program that allows Tri-County EMC members to round their electric bill to the next dollar. That small amount of change is used to fund projects within the co-op's service area. Since 2001, more than \$1,000,000 has been contributed to Operation Roundup for worthy service projects in the area. Contributions are tax deductible and 100% of funds collected goes back into the community to help members of our service area.

Any non-profit or civic group within the Tri-County EMC service area, including portions of Baldwin, Jones, Putnam, Twiggs, Wilkinson, Jasper, Morgan and Bibb Counties, can apply for funding.

Applications for an Operation Roundup grant can be downloaded at www.tri-countyemc.com/operation-round-up.cms or mailed to you upon request.

For more information, contact Kim Bonner at 478.986.8126 or kimb@tri-countyemc.com.

Annual Meeting Survey

Tri-County EMC's annual meeting is one of the most important ways to exercise your membership in the cooperative. To make sure the annual meeting is convenient and accessible to you, we are conducting a survey to better understand your annual meeting preferences.

Complete the survey by February 29 for a chance to win a \$100 bill credit. To complete the survey, visit www.tri-countyemc.com/survey.cms. Surveys are also available at either office location or by mail upon request.

To request a survey be mailed to you, please contact our Customer Service Department at 1.866.254.8100.

Win a \$100 Bill Credit

Complete the Annual Meeting Survey by February 29 for a chance to win a \$100 bill credit!

**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.

Walter Harrison Scholarship

Applications Due February 10



The Walter Harrison Scholarship is open to all undergraduate college students whose primary household is served by an EMC. A panel of judges from Tri-County EMC will select one undergraduate semi-finalist to compete for a \$1,000 scholarship at the state level. A combination of need and academic ability will be used to determine winners. The scholarship must be used in Georgia. (36900001)

Tri-County EMC must receive applications by February 10. The award honors the late Walter Harrison, a pioneer in the rural electrification movement. Visit www.tri-countyemc.com/walterharrison.cms for more information and to download the application.

Did you know?

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

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

Baked Oatmeal

Thanks to Mary Beth Cook for submitting this recipe! **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:

- 1/2 cup melted butter
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 cup milk
- 3 cups quick oatmeal
- 1/2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 1/2 cup chopped nuts
- 1 cup chopped apple or Craisins

Directions:

Mix the egg with the milk and add it to the remaining ingredients. Spread into a well-greased 8 inch square pan. Sprinkle cinnamon over the top. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. Serve hot with warm milk, brown sugar, butter or maple syrup.



Tri-County
EMC

Owned By Those We Serve

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Tri-County EMC Members
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