

# NEWS



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## Manager's Message:

### Tree Trimming Improves Service for All

One of the things I love best about our community is the natural beauty that surrounds us. We are fortunate to have so many trees that offer beauty, shade and a habitat for all sorts of birds and other wildlife. We know that you appreciate our community for many of the same reasons.

At Tri-County EMC we strive to balance maintaining beautiful surroundings and ensuring a reliable power supply by keeping power lines clear in rights of way (ROW).

While we recognize and appreciate the beauty of trees, there are three main benefits to tree trimming in ROW areas.



However, before touching on the main reasons, let me explain what a "right of way" is and how it may impact you. A right of way is the land we use to construct, maintain, replace or repair underground and overhead power lines. Rights of way enable the co-op to provide clearance from trees and other obstructions that could hinder the power line installation, maintenance or operation. ROW areas are typically on public lands or located near a business or home. Regardless, Tri-County EMC must be able to maintain the power lines above and below the ROW. The overall goal of our vegetation management program is to provide reliable power to our members while maintaining the beauty of our community. Proactive vegetation management benefits co-op members in three tangible ways.

**J. Michael Davis**

General Manager



#### Safety

First and foremost, we care about our members and put their safety and that of our lineworkers above all else. Overgrown vegetation and trees pose a risk to power lines. For example, if trees are touching power lines in our members' yards, they can pose grave danger to families. If children can access those trees, they can potentially climb into a danger zone. Electricity can arc, or jump, from a power line to a nearby conductor like a tree. A proactive approach also diminishes the chances of fallen branches or trees during severe weather events that make it more complicated and dangerous for lineworkers to restore power.

#### Reliability

Of course, one of the biggest benefits of a smart vegetation management program is reliability. Strategic tree trimming reduces the frequency of downed lines causing power outages. Generally speaking, healthy trees don't fall on power lines, and clear lines don't cause problems. Proactive trimming and pruning keep lines clear to promote reliability.

We also use data and the technology to maximize the efficiency of our operation. This includes our vegetation management plan.

#### Affordability

As you know, Tri-County EMC is a not-for-profit cooperative, and that means we strive to keep our costs in check in order to keep our rates affordable. This extends to our approach to vegetation management. If trees grow too close to power lines, the potential for expensive repairs also increases. Effective tree trimming and other vegetation management efforts keep costs down for everyone.

Our community is a special place. We appreciate the beauty trees afford, but we also know our community depends on us to provide reliable energy. Through vegetation management, we are better able to keep the power lines clear, prepare for future weather events and secure the reliability of the grid.



# May is Electrical Safety Month

As your local energy partner, and in honor of National Electrical Safety Month in May, Tri-County EMC is encouraging members to take time this month to talk to your family about safe electricity practices. You can start by sharing these simple tips:

## Inside:

- Never put anything other than an electrical plug in an outlet. Use outlet covers to protect children.
- Examine electrical cords often for fraying or cracking, and throw away any worn cords.
- Extension cords are for temporary use. They are not intended for use as permanent home wiring.
- Don't run cords under carpets or rugs.
- Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) outlets should be used in any area where water and electricity could mix—including kitchens, bathrooms, garages and outdoors—and should be tested monthly.
- Never touch electrical appliances with wet hands or use them near sinks, tubs, toilets or showers.
- Don't use extension cords or multi-outlet converters for appliances. All major appliances should be plugged directly into a wall outlet.

## Outside:

- Never go near or drive over a power line. If you encounter a downed line, stay far away and notify Tri-County EMC at 919-735-2611 or 1-800-548-4869.
- Keep kites, model airplanes and metallic balloons away from powerlines.
- Watch for overhead lines with using a ladder, working on a roof or carrying a long tool.
- Call 811 before any digging project.
- If it is necessary to use a portable generator, always operate the generator outdoors in an open area. Use an extension cord to connect the generator directly to the appliance, and ensure the extension cord has three-prongs and is rated for the amount of power used by the appliance. Do not connect generators directly to household wiring unless the work is completed by a licensed electrician. This prevents backfeeding, which could electrocute utility workers.

For more safety tips and information, visit [tcemc.com](http://tcemc.com) and the Electrical Safety Foundation International at [ESFI.org](http://ESFI.org).

**Let's Stay Connected!**

Although our lobby is closed to protect the safety of our members and employees, we continue to serve our members by providing support whenever needed. As always, we are here for you.

Mail  
Phone  
Website  
E-mail  
Mobile  
Text  
Drive-Thru

**Tri-County Electric**  
Membership Corporation  
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

For more information on how to stay connected, visit [tcemc.com](http://tcemc.com) or call 919-735-2611



# Prepare Now for Hurricane Season

**M**ay 9-15 is Hurricane Preparedness Week in North Carolina. Tri-County EMC is joining the National Weather Service and state officials in encouraging all North Carolinians to prepare now for storms, in advance of the start of Atlantic Hurricane Season on June 1. Here are simple steps to get ready and stay safe this storm season:

- Outline a communication and evacuation plan for your family. If you have pets or any livestock, include them in your plan.
- Create an emergency kit that includes:
  - Important documents sealed in a watertight plastic bag
  - Cash
  - Enough non-perishable food, water and medication for at least three days
  - First-aid kit
  - Battery-powered radio
  - Flashlight
  - Extra batteries
  - Personal hygiene items
  - Extra clothes and blankets
  - Food and other supplies for pets

- Connect with us on Facebook at [tricountyemc](https://www.facebook.com/tricountyemc) and Twitter at [@TriCoEMC](https://twitter.com/TriCoEMC) to stay informed about outages and other storm information.
- Download our mobile app and keep our outage reporting number/email handy: 919-735-2611 or 1-800-548-4869/[customerservice@tcemc.com](mailto:customerservice@tcemc.com).
- Bookmark our live outage map at [tcemc.com](https://www.tcemc.com) to see a real-time look at power outages across our service territory.
- Sign up for local weather alerts. You can also visit [ReadyNC.org](https://www.ReadyNC.org) for tips on preparing for natural disasters, as well as real-time weather and traffic information.

This year, it is also important to stay tuned to the latest health and safety guidelines from the CDC and local officials, and to adjust your preparedness plans accordingly to protect yourself and others from COVID-19. Visit [tcemc.com](https://www.tcemc.com) for additional storm preparedness information and tips.

## REMINDER: Tri-County EMC's Design our Bag Challenge Ends May 10!

### CONTEST CRITERIA

- Open to students grades PreK-12.
- Students must live or attend a school in Tri-County EMC service area.
- Theme of design should be related to Tri-County EMC and must be your own original, unpublished work.
- Designs with the most likes at 12:00PM on May 21 will be chosen as the winner.
- Include your name, parent's name, age, grade, school, address and phone number with your submission.

### CONTEST TIMELINE

**April 19:** Contest opens for submissions.

**May 10:** Submission deadline.

After the closing date for submissions, on May 10 at 5 p.m., ten (10) finalists will be selected for the contest.

**May 17:** If your design is selected as a finalist, it will be posted on Tri-County EMC's Facebook page members/community will vote for the winning designs.

**May 21:** Deadline for voting on Facebook at 12 p.m.

**Mail Artwork to:** Tri-County EMC Design Bag Challenge, Tri-County EMC, PO BOX 130, Dudley, NC 28333

*If you have questions, you may contact Deidra Grantham, manager of Marketing and Communications, at 919-735-2611 ext. 621 or Deidra.Grantham@tcemc.com.*

# National Ag Day Photo Contest Winners Announced

National Ag Day, March 23, is dedicated to celebrating and recognizing the extraordinary efforts of farmers and associations as related to the agriculture industry. This year, Tri-County EMC hosted a photo contest where members submitted photos that highlighted agriculture. Top photos were published to Tri-County EMC's Facebook page where members voted to select four winners.

Congratulations to the following winners, first place: Christa Coates; second place: Lynn Grantham; third place: Mallory Herring; and fourth place: Ronda Stroud. Each winner received a cash prize.



1st place  
Christa Coates



2nd place

Lynn Grantham



3rd place

Mallory Herring



4th place

Ronda Stroud



Tri-County EMC Membership Corporation in Dudley, N.C., was chartered May 8, 1940.

**Mission Statement:**  
Tri-County Electric Membership Corporation is a member-driven cooperative committed to providing reliable electric power at a reasonable cost, to offering superior service, and to taking an active role in supporting the communities it serves.

**We are here to serve you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year.**

**For Outages or Emergencies:**  
919-735-2611 or 1-800-548-4869

[tcemc.com](http://tcemc.com)

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General Manager

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**Randy McCullen**

**Worth Overman**

**Brandy Rouse**

**Employee of the month**



**Deidra Grantham**

Deidra Grantham is one of 50 employees ready to serve you. She has worked with Tri-County EMC since January 1, 2016, as manager of Communications and Public Relations for the cooperative. Deidra resides in Mount Olive with her husband, Travis, and children.