

NEWS



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Manager's Message:

We Love Our Community

With Valentine's Day approaching, we can't think of a better time to express how much we love this community and serving you, the members of the co-op.

We know when we helped to bring electricity to rural North Carolina many years ago, the quality of life improved for all. Through the years, other issues needed to be tackled, and we have been at the forefront of helping to address some of those issues. We want to help meet the long-term needs of our community to ensure it continues to thrive – because just like you, we live here too.

While our top priority is to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to you, equally important is our mission to enrich the lives of the consumer-members (that's you!) that we serve. This focus to benefit the larger community is central to the way we operate as a cooperative. Tri-County EMC knows that electricity is a critical need for modern-day life, but it takes more than poles and power lines to make a community.

Over time, our co-op has evolved to meet the changing needs of our community, thereby improving the quality of life for everyone. And that can mean many different things. It can

J. Michael Davis
General Manager



mean programs for our youth, such as education scholarships or the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, where we take our community's brightest young people to Washington, D.C. for a week-long immersion to experience democracy in action. It means raising money for local organizations in our community contributing more than \$2 million to Operation Round-Up, a program that helps local non-profit organizations and families in times of need.

We all benefit from these programs because of you and your neighbors. You empower Tri-County EMC through your membership and through your participation in and support of these programs.

As a local business, we are proud to power your life and bring good things to our community. We hope you will continue to guide our efforts by sharing your perspective as we plan for the future. The energy landscape is undergoing dramatic change fueled by evolving technology and consumer desires for more options. While the larger environment in which we operate is constantly changing, one thing remains the same. By working together, I'm certain that we can continue to do good things for our community.



Tri-County EMC Offers Payment Options for Members

The Easiest Way to Pay Your Bill—Automatic Draft

There are several ways to pay your electric bill at Tri-County EMC, but the easiest is Automatic Draft. The only thing you have to do is simply post the amount of your bill in your checkbook or make note that it was billed to one of your credit cards. We do all the work for you. Your bill is always paid on time and you never pay late fees, or worry about logging on to your computer, writing a check, calling the office or buying stamps. Sign up for Automatic Draft and let us do the work for you! Visit tcemc.com for more information or call the co-op office at 919-735-2611 or 800-548-4869.

Free Service to Our Members!

Why worry about paying your bill each month when you can take advantage of our FREE Bank Draft service and your monthly electric bill will be securely drafted from your bank or credit card account. You'll still receive a statement by mail or email each month, and the amount will be drafted on the payment due date. You can even opt to have us securely draft from your checking or savings account—or you can use a credit or debit card.



Sign up today! Everything's easy, because doing business with Tri-County EMC should be. Call the co-op office, 919-735-2611 or 800-548-4869, for specific details.

An Easier Way To Pay with PrePay

Would it be easier for you to make smaller daily or weekly payments rather than a single monthly payment?

If so, our PrePay program may be right for you! Growing in popularity, Pre-Pay was developed for members who needed an easier way to manage their bill. Others simply want the convenience to “pay as you go”—in any amount you choose, on whatever schedule you like. Pre-Pay members can save money because no deposit is required and there's never a late fee. Simply keep a balance of any amount in your account to keep power flowing. Tracking your balance is also easy: choose to receive a cellular phone text or email text. For more information on this payment method, contact Tri-County EMC at 919-735-2611 or 800-548-4869.



Scholarship for Non-Traditional Student Now Available!

Are you a non-traditional student? Adult learner? Tri-County EMC is proud to offer a scholarship to serve those deserving adult learners, also known as non-traditional students with their dream of returning to school to further their education. This scholarship is valued at \$400 and is available for a “non-traditional” student returning to school to pursue a college degree.

To qualify, you must be an active member of Tri-County EMC or spouse of member living on the system, 21 years of age or older and not a previous winner of Tri-County EMC scholarship. Applicants must be accepted into an accredited University or Community College or Technical School.

Applications may be obtained on our website at tcemc.com. Applications must be received on or before **March 31, 2020**.



Four Tips for Winter Safety

It's no surprise that winter months bring increased potential for fire risks and electrical safety hazards. This makes sense because during the coldest months, consumers are using additional electrical devices and appliances, like space heaters, electric blankets and portable generators.

The National Fire Protection Association estimates that 47,700 home fires occur each year in the U.S. due to electrical failure or malfunction. These fires result in 418 deaths, 1,570 injuries and \$1.4 billion in property damage annually. This winter, safeguard your loved ones and your home with these electrical safety tips from the Electrical Safety Foundation International.

- **Don't overload outlets.** Overloaded outlets are a major cause of residential fires. Avoid using extension cords or multi-outlet converters for appliance connections—they should be plugged directly into a wall outlet. If you're relying heavily on extension cords in general, you may need additional outlets to address your needs. Contact a qualified electrician to inspect your home and add new outlets.
- **Never leave space heaters unattended.** If you're using a space heater, turn it off before leaving the room. Make sure heaters are placed at least three feet away from flammable items. It should also be noted that space heaters take a toll on your energy bills. If you're using them throughout your home, it may be time to upgrade your home heating system.
- **Inspect heating pads and electric blankets.** These items cause nearly 500 fires every year. Electric blankets that are more than 10 years old create additional risks for a fire hazard. Inspect your electric blankets and heating pads—look for dark, charred or frayed spots, and make sure the electrical cord is not damaged. Do not place any items on top of a heating pad or electric blanket, and never fold them when in use.
- **Use portable generators safely.** Unfortunately, winter storms can cause prolonged power outages, which means many consumers will use portable generators to power their homes. Never connect a standby generator into your home's electrical system. For portable generators, plug appliances directly into the outlet provided on the generator. Start the generator first, before you plug in appliances. Run it in a well-ventilated area outside your home. The carbon monoxide it generates is deadly, so keep it away from your garage, doors, windows and vents.

Apply for a Scholarship to Attend Basketball Camp for Free this Summer!

Attention middle school basketball players! Tri-County EMC is now accepting applications for 2020 Touchstone Energy Sports Camp Scholarships from rising sixth, seventh and eighth graders. Scholarship winners will attend overnight basketball camps at UNC-Chapel Hill and N.C. State University for free this summer!

To learn more about the program or to download the application, go to ncelectriccooperatives.com/sports-camps.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month:

Are you using your fireplace efficiently? Remember to turn down the thermostat when burning a fire and close the damper when a fire is not burning.

TIPS FOR PURCHASING NEW APPLIANCES

When shopping for new appliances, there are two price tags you should consider:

1. Purchase price of the appliance (think of this as a down payment)

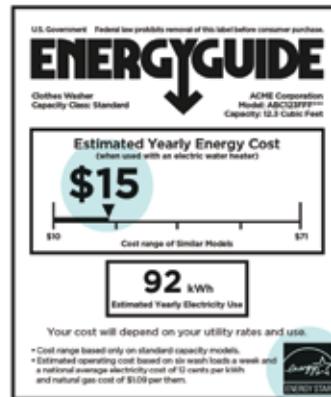


2. Cost to operate the appliance over its lifetime (how much energy the appliance uses)



That second price is important because you'll be paying for the appliance's energy use for the next 10 to 20 years.

- Look for the ENERGY STAR® label. ENERGY STAR-qualified products exceed the federal minimum standards for efficiency and quality.
- Carefully review the EnergyGuide label on the appliance. The label provides information about how much energy an appliance uses compared to similar models.
- Once you choose your make and model, compare prices. Keep in mind, many retailers will match a lower price offered by competitors.
- Recycle or sell your old appliance. Ask the retailer if they'll pick up your old appliance, or you can sell it yourself. Either option is better than the landfill!



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

tccmc.com

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Worth Overman

Brandy Rouse

Employee of the month



Ronald Outlaw

Ronald Outlaw is one of 47 employees ready to serve you. Ronald has worked with Tri-County EMC since July 9, 1990, and serves as an Equipment Operator for the cooperative. Ronald resides in Dudley with his family.