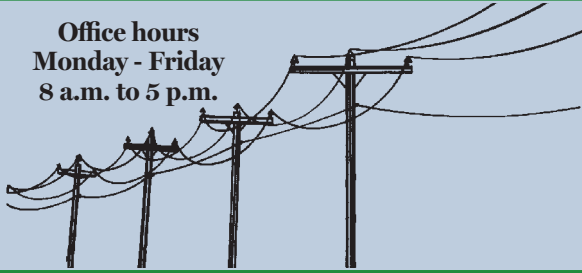


Office hours
Monday - Friday
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.



Tricounty Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

P.O. Box 100 Malinta, OH 43535
Office Calls: 419-256-7900
www.tricountyelectriccoop.coop



TRUSTEES

Bradley Haupricht Sr	President
Lawrence Weirich	Vice President
Kenneth Brubaker.....	Secretary/Treasurer
Johney Ritz	Dustin Sonnenberg
John Schuchert	Marvin Green

EMPLOYEES

Brett Perkins, Manager	Craig Wilson
Doug Hall	Jason Warnimont
Sue Bockelman	Jeremy Warnimont
Chris Okuley	Tom Jones
Sandy Corey	Deb Stuller
Brian Bick	Weston Schwab

To report a power outage: 888-256-9858

Your call will be answered by the Cooperative Response Center. Give them the name on your account, service address and a telephone number where you can be reached.

They will dispatch a line crew to restore service.

Be sure to check your fuse or breaker system before reporting a power outage.

Jackpot news!

Kristi Limpach of rural Liberty Center reported spotting her hidden account number in the October issue of *Country Living*. She won half the jackpot and received a check for \$35. **Barry McDaniels** of rural Malinta would have won the same amount if he had reported finding his account number.

Your account number is on your bill statement. Disregard the zeros at the left in the number, but consider any zeros to the right when converting your number to words.

The hidden account numbers always are in Tricounty's local pages of the magazine. The jackpot now stands at \$60. So read *Country Living*, find your hidden account number, report it and win!

What would life be like without electric co-ops?

Tricounty is in the quality-of-life business

IN THE HOLIDAY MOVIE CLASSIC *It's a Wonderful Life*, George Bailey wishes he had never been born. Through the help of an angel, he sees how many people would have been negatively affected if he didn't exist. George comes to realize that, even with his problems, he has a wonderful life with great friends and family.

So what do you think life would be like if community leaders had not founded Tricounty 79 years ago?

Living in the U.S. in 2015, it is nearly impossible to imagine life without electricity. So many of our modern conveniences that improve the quality of our lives are dependent on electricity to make them work. Just think — there would be no smartphones if there were no electricity.

Businesses of all kinds rely on electricity to produce and sell the products we need. So it is no wonder that many electric co-ops feel that, while our primary product is electricity, we are really in the quality-of-life business. One five nine nine zero zero nine.

As we celebrate the season that reminds us to be thankful for all that we have, it is important to remember the 1.3 billion people in the world who still live without reliable electric service — that's about four times the U.S. population.

Many of the things we take for granted in the U.S. are much harder and more time consuming for people in developing countries around the world. We are proud members of the National Rural Electric Cooperative

(Continued on page 22)

The office will be closed **Dec. 24-25** for Christmas and **Jan. 1** for New Year's Day.

We wish you a safe and happy holiday season!

Emergency service is available 24 hours at 888-256-9858.



High School **Seniors**



**Are your parents members of
Tricounty Rural Electric Cooperative?**

**You could win a college, vocational or
technical school scholarship up to**

\$4,250

- Available in both boys' and girls' divisions
- First-place Tricounty scholarship: \$850
- First-place Ohio's Electric Cooperatives statewide scholarship: \$3,400
- Runners-up in each competition also will receive scholarships of \$550
- Applications due **Feb. 8** to Tricounty's office

See details below!

Tricounty to award \$2,800 in four scholarships

Tricounty will sponsor two \$850 scholarships and two \$550 scholarships for high school seniors this year. Winners of the \$850 scholarships may have an opportunity to participate in the statewide judging mentioned above.

To enter Tricounty's scholarship competition, a high school senior must:

1. Live within Tricounty Rural Electric Cooperative's service area and have parents who receive service from Tricounty.
2. Have a 3.50 or higher grade-point average through the first semester of his/her senior year.
3. Download an application online at Tricounty's website, www.tricountyelectriccoop.coop, or contact Tricounty's office to request one via mail.
4. Submit the completed application to Tricounty's office by Feb. 8.

Any applicant who has received a full-tuition scholarship, including room, board and books, to the school of his/her choice is not eligible for a Tricounty scholarship.

\$420,000 returned to Tricounty members in December

December 2015 marked the 38th consecutive year Tricounty has made a general retirement of capital credits to current and former members. With this year's \$420,000 refund and payments to the estates of deceased members, more than \$16 million has been returned to our member-consumers since the first estate payment in 1950.

Members of not-for-profit electric cooperatives have a unique relationship with their utility. They are also the owners of the cooperative and share in the cost of expanding and maintaining the electric distribution system through the rates they pay for electricity. Cooperative member-consumers also share in the profits, or margins, that are left at the end of the year after all the expenses are paid.

Because Tricounty, your cooperative, is a not-for-profit organization, these margins are allocated to each member-consumer of the cooperative in the form of capital credits, based on the member's total kilowatt-hours purchased for the year, with each member having his or her own capital credits account. The margins, or patronage capital, are retained by the cooperative for a period of time and invested in the poles, wires, transformers, trucks and all the equip-

ment necessary to provide reliable electric service to all cooperative members. Five five zero four zero zero six.

One measure of the value of membership in your cooperative and a guiding principle of a true cooperative is the allocation and refunding of the margins or capital credits to members. Each year, Tricounty's board of trustees reviews the financial condition of the cooperative to determine if a refund can be made and still maintain the cooperative as a financially sound business.

The board of trustees has approved refunding 50 percent of the unretired 2000 allocation, in the amount of nearly \$420,000. Current members who are due a refund will receive a credit on the electric bill they receive in December. Former Tricounty members who are due a refund will be mailed a check. Issuing a credit on the electric bill is a savings to Tricounty of both time and money. Fewer checks are printed and mailed, with a reduced number of checks reported as misplaced or lost, and less time is required to process the payments.

Refunding capital credits is unique to the cooperative program and one of the numerous advantages of co-op membership.

Last call to claim capital credits

In December 2011, we mailed capital credits refund checks to current and former members for 70 percent of the 1998 allocation. Of these, about 120 checks totaling \$20,823 still are unclaimed. If you know the whereabouts of any of these people, have them contact our office. These former members or their heirs must claim their checks by Feb. 28, 2016.

Nicolas I. Acosta	Terry N. Feasel	Deanna L. Kimball	Donald D. Meyer	Danny E. Schetter
Sheri A. Allen	Wayne E. Fischer	Elizabeth Kimbler	Roman K. Meyer	Karen E. Schnipke
Marc J. Alexander	Tim Ford II	Joseph C. Kirkman, Jr	Robert B. Meyers	Roger Schnipke
Gregory C. Baker	Frontiervision Partners	Jerry W. Kmotorka	Benjamin J. Moss	Shannon Scott
Stephen R. Bare	James A. Gibbons	Douglas A. Koss Sr.	Robert G. Mugg	Susan A. Shank
Brenden G. Brophy	R. Wayne Gilleon	Joshua Krok	Gladys Nash	Jose D. Sierra
Suzanne C. Brown	Marcia Gordos	Shawn M. Lance	Michal E. Nihoul	Robert Sims
Sue A. Bryan	Thomas P. Gowing	Patrick J. Lasich	Alvin K. Oberhaus	Christopher L. Smith
Ronald C. Buchhop	John A. Graham	Holly Lavoie	Richard R. Parsons	Mark R. Smithers
Larry Busch	Gary A. Haney	Jon A. Lee	Robert V. Patchin Sr.	Mark Stevens
Lynn M. Busdiecker	Lisa M. Hart	George W. Lemerise	John Pauley	Douglas J. Stumm
Cablecom Time Warner	Jacob Harvey	Ronald L. Long	Raymond M. Perkins	Chris J. Sutton
Scott A. Carpenter	Rex Hazelton	Michael E. Mackey	Jack J. Pojancki	Susan Thomas
Thomas F. Clark Sr.	Kimberly L. Hoeffel	Sondra J. Majerowski	Kurt A. Reinhart	Jeff Tussing
Norris Coulson	Joseph F. Hojnacki Jr.	John C. Mannin	Margaret L. Rieger	Melda Villagomez
Brenda K. Cowell	Kelly Hollinger	John M. Martinez	Mildred Roehl	Steven J. Weakley
Thomas E. Cox	Katrina Hope	Tony J. Mason	Jennifer A. Rogers-Hyott	Scott L. Weaver
Heath Crumley	Mary B. Howard	Rod Mathison	Tammy L. Rood	John D. Welch
Mary Ellen Davis	Bertia Hull	Harold Mayle	Charles T. Rooks	Elizabeth Wells
Jeffrey J. Dawley	Howard S. Hutchinson	Michael McCloskey	David W. Roseman	Howard J. Williams
Dener Farms	Kim Johnson	Greg McCloud	Herman L. Rowe	Jackie Williams
James H. Downs	Michael R. Johnson	Dale R. McDowell	Beth L. Russell	Robin L. Williams
Phyllis A. Duggan	Jamey E. Joy	MCI Worldcom	Jeffrey J. Rutkowski	James A. Wilmore
Andi J. Echler	Bob M. Kelly	Scott G. Meeks	Terry L. Sager	
Timothy Elkington	Lynette Kennedy	Marie Meister	Tomas P. Salinas	

Tips for a *safe* and *happy* holiday season

BY JUSTIN LABERGE

The holidays usually mean celebrations with friends and family, travel, decorations, cooking and shopping. Tricounty wants you to stay safe during the holidays, so here are a few tips to consider as you gear up for the season.

Inspect your seasonal items. Many of us have treasured holiday mementos that we bring out of storage and display every year. The holidays are also a time when we dust off specialized cooking gadgets for our favorite seasonal treats. Take a few moments to carefully inspect all your holiday items to ensure everything is in safe, working order. A few things to look out for include:

- brittle insulation on wires
- rodent damage to wires
- chafed or frayed wires, especially at stress points
- worn switches with the potential to short circuit
- corroded metal parts
- broken legs, unstable bases and other tip-over hazards

Extension cords are designed for temporary use and should never be used as a permanent or long-term solution.

Never tamper with safety devices. There are reasons why some devices have fuses, some plugs have three prongs instead of two, and one prong is wider than the other on two-prong outlets. When those safety features get in the way of your grand holiday décor plans, you might be tempted to tamper with or defeat those features. Don't do it! If your plugs won't

fit together, that means they're not designed to work together. Rather than tampering with a safety feature, find a safe solution.

Look up and live. When working outside with a ladder, be mindful of overhead power lines. Always carry the ladder so it is parallel to the ground. Before placing the ladder upright, look around to ensure you are a safe distance from power lines.

Beware of power lines running through trees. Over time, tree branches can grow around power lines running along the street and to your home. If those branches come in contact with power lines, they can become energized, too. If your holiday plans call for stringing lights through trees, this can create a safety hazard. If you notice tree limbs that are too close to electric lines, contact Tricounty.

Stay away from your home's service connection. The overhead wire bringing power from the utility pole to your house is dangerous. You should treat this line the same way you'd treat any other power line. Maintain a safe distance, even if that means a small gap in the perfect gingerbread house outline of lights.

Read the fine print. If you take a few minutes to read and understand the specifications and limitations of your lights and other holiday decorations, you can save yourself a great deal of work and frustration in the long run. For example, the tag at the end of an extension cord will tell you if it's rated for outdoor use, whether it will remain flexible in cold temperatures and how much energy it can safely handle. Similarly, holiday lights will tell you how many strings can be safely linked together.

Don't forget about the kids and pets. If you have small children, you've probably spent a great deal of time making sure every square inch of your home is childproof. But sometimes the joy of celebrating the holidays with our little ones makes us less vigilant about electrical safety. Make sure your holiday décor receives the same level of safety scrutiny you apply to all of the permanent items in your home. Curious and mischievous pets can present similar challenges. Make sure Fluffy isn't nibbling on all those extra wires or using your tree as her personal back scratcher or jungle gym. ☹

JUSTIN LABERGE writes for the *National Rural Electric Cooperative Association*, the service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

What would life be like without electric co-ops? (-continued from page 19)

Association (NRECA), which works through an affiliate, NRECA International, and the NRECA International Foundation to help bring power to people in developing countries like Haiti, Liberia and Guatemala. (Learn more about NRECA International at <http://www.nreca.coop/it-starts-with-power>.)

We are thankful that our community ancestors right here in northwest Ohio had the vision and foresight to do for ourselves what needed to be done, by gathering our friends and neighbors to form our electric co-op. As the electric business of the 21st century continues to evolve, you can count on Tricounty to meet all of your electric energy needs. More importantly, we are here to help improve the quality of your wonderful life. ☹