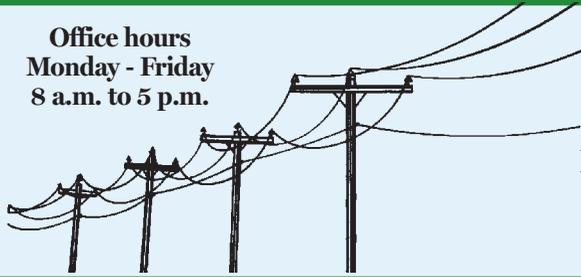


Office hours
Monday - Friday
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.



Tricounty Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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



TRUSTEES

Steve Hoffman	President
Lawrence Weirch	Vice President
Bradley Haupricht Sr.....	Secretary/Treasurer
Kenneth Brubaker	Johne Ritz
Dustin Sonnenberg	John Schuchert

EMPLOYEES

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

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 January issue of *Country Living* and won half the jackpot. She received a check for \$40. **Robbi Robinson** of rural Deshler would have won the same amount if she had reported finding her 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!

Unclaimed capital credits

ON DEC. 15, 2014, CAPITAL CREDITS refund checks were mailed to people who were patrons of the cooperative in the year 1999. Some of them were returned due to outdated addresses. Please review this list, and if you know the whereabouts of any of these people, have them or their heirs contact our office at 419-256-7900 so these unclaimed checks can be forwarded to the right person. Four Two Four Zero Zero Two

Marc J. Alexander	Terry N. Feasel	Jon A. Lee	Scott Rosegarten
Aurora Energy LTD	Richard C. Fuller	Allan P. Maag	Beth L. Russell
Thomas D. Badenhop	James A. Gibbons	Michael E. Mackey	Jeffrey J. Rutkowski
Laura A. Bechtol	Marcia Gordos	Sondra J. Majerowski	Danny E. Schetter
James L. Bennett	GTE Telephone	John M. Martinez	John Shearman
Todd Bischoff	Operations	Maumee Youth Center	Amy C. Siebert
Wayne Blanton	Stephena C. Gunter	Harold Mayle	Jose D. Sierra
Park Blubaugh	Gary A. Haney	MCI Worldcom	Mark C. Simon
James Boman	Rex A. Hazelton	McQuillin Moses LTD	Christopher L. Smith
Robert E. Braun	Jacob Harvey	Lois Meeks	Karen S. Smith
Brenden G. Brophy	Gary Heikkinen	Valerie L. Meyers	Lori Spitnale
Sue A. Bryan	Darwin E. Heldman	Richard W. Mock	Robert L. Stacy
Larry Busch	James Hickman	Gladys V. Morris	Karl D. Stetson
Lynn M. Busdiecker	Wes J. Hill	Benjamin J. Moss	Mark Stevens
Cablecomm Time	Martha Hollowell	Vikki S. Mumford	James Stull
Warner	David W. Hoops	Cathy M. Myers	Douglas J. Stumm
Scott A. Carpenter	Elizabeth Iliiff	Robert B. Myers	Chris J. Sutton
Forrest L. Clady	Marla K. Johnston	Judd S. Nearhood	Susan Thomas
Karen L. Clifford	William D. Joy	Bradley Nichpor	Tamara A. Tonjes
John C. Cobb	Bob M. Kelly	Joseph L. Ogan	Bryan Ward
Norris Coulson	Thomas W. Kemper III	Robert E. Paul II	Richard Watkins
Brenda K. Cowell	Deanna L. Kimball	Raymond M. Perkins	Sarah A. Westrick
Thomas E. Cox	Elizabeth Kimbler	Douglas Reese	Scott L. Weaver
Delta Steel Products	Joseph C. Kirkman Jr.	Ester Reese	John H. Winterfield
Andi J. Echler	Aaron C. Koder	Kurt A. Reinhart	Thomas P. Young
Della L. Eicher	Shawn M. Lance	Charles A. Robertson	
Dorothy M. Embree	Holly Lavoie	David W. Roseman	

What's a *load forecast*?

Planning for the future keeps energy costs stable

BY **ABBY BERRY**

WHEN WE HEAR THE WORD “forecast,” we typically think of the weather. But electric cooperatives are tasked with managing a different type of forecast.

A load forecast is exactly what it sounds like — an estimate or prediction of how much electricity will be needed in the future. We all depend on power to meet our daily needs, but the amount we use varies from season to season, day to day and even hour by hour. This is why Buckeye Power, Tricounty's power supplier, plans far in advance to make sure there is enough power available to meet electricity demands and to keep prices stable.

Believe it or not, growth of electricity demand has actually decreased each decade since the 1950s, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Rising demand for electric services is offset by efficiency gains from new appliance standards and investments in energy-efficient

equipment.

As demand fluctuates, Buckeye Power is prepared to maintain electrical loads and keep the system running efficiently. This means extensive planning, up to 20 years in advance. Buckeye Power collects data from the 24 electric co-ops serving Ohio and from these projects future demand. Planning ahead improves reliability, and projecting the amount of electricity that will be purchased ensures the best price for power. For example, because Buckeye Power plans so far into the future, the electricity purchased and provided during 2014's bitter polar vortex remained at a stable price for Ohio's electric cooperative members, when many other electric power providers had to purchase at a much higher price because there was so much demand for electricity.

Tricounty also works with Buckeye Power to evaluate areas of growth and predict demand patterns for our local communities.

For example, if a new subdivision or residential area is built in our service territory, it's Tricounty's responsibility to ensure that adequate power supply will be provided to the members of that community. This type of growth may mean running new poles and electrical lines to the site or even building a new substation.

As technology changes, we're becoming more efficient. We deployed AMR/AMI in 2000, which provides extremely accurate meter readings. In turn, this technology improves our ability to forecast future electrical loads.

At Tricounty, we can't predict the future, but we can be prepared for what it holds. We'll continue to provide safe, reliable electricity to power your life. ☺

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



we
want
to hear
from you!

Your thoughts and opinions about the cooperative help us to serve you better.

In March, April and May, Tricounty will be working with NRECA Market Research Services to complete a member satisfaction survey. The surveys will be both by phone and e-mail, but not everyone will be contacted. If you are contacted, we would greatly appreciate a few minutes of your time to share your opinions of the cooperative.

We strive to provide all members with safe, affordable and reliable electric service. By participating in the survey, you will help us make decisions that benefit you, your family and your neighbors.

Thank you!

All information is confidential.

clearing right-of-way for RELIABILITY

BY MEGHAAN EVANS

THERE ARE MANY WAYS that Tricounty provides you with safe, reliable electric service. One of the most common — and crucial — ways is referred to as right-of-way clearing or vegetation management.

A right-of-way (ROW) refers to a strip of land underneath or around power lines that your electric cooperative has the right and responsibility to maintain and clear. Trees must grow at a distance far enough from wires, where they will not cause harm to people or disruption to electrical service. Specifications vary, but a general guideline of maintaining a safe ROW is 15 feet of clearance on either side of the primary lines and 20 feet of overhead clearance above the highest wire on the pole.

Clearing the ROW is critical to keeping our members' lights on. An average of 15 percent of power interruptions occur when trees, shrubs or bushes grow too close to power lines.

If a tree encroaches on this safe distance, our vegetation-management team will trim back branches and brush using chainsaws, bucket trucks, tree climbers, brush chippers and mowers. Chemical control methods can also be used as a way to support the growth of low-growing

plant species that will out-compete the tall trees growing beneath power lines.

ROW clearing also keeps your family safe by ensuring that tree branches do not become energized because of close contact with a downed power line. Power lines can carry up to 34,500 volts, and an energized tree branch is incredibly dangerous — even deadly. Be mindful when around trees close to power lines, and make sure your children know that climbing trees near power lines is extremely dangerous.

ROW clearing is critical to ensuring that we provide members with affordable electricity as well. Staying ahead of the game keeps us from having to restore power outages caused by fallen trees.

Remember to contact Tricounty if you decide to trim or remove trees near any power service or line. And never trim a tree in the ROW zone on your own. ☞

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

HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORES AND JUNIORS:

Interested in a life-changing leadership experience ... in Washington, D.C.?

June 12-18



YOUTH TOUR 2015

What is Youth Tour?

The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour is an annual leadership program coordinated by Tricounty and its statewide service organization, Ohio Rural Electric Cooperatives, Inc. It's a weeklong, all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., that gives exceptional high school students the opportunity to meet with their congressional leaders at the U.S. Capitol, make new friends from across the country and see many of the famous Washington sights.

Electric cooperatives from 43 states will send about 1,600 students this year for the annual tour. **Will you be one of them?**

To apply for the Youth Tour ...

Successful applicants:

- must be a high school sophomore or junior.
- must be a son, daughter or legal ward of a Tricounty member living on the cooperative's lines and receiving electric service from the cooperative at the time of selection.

How will the finalist be chosen?

Tricounty will sponsor one student on the Youth Tour. Interested students should complete and return a test on rural electric cooperatives to Tricounty by **March 31**.

Yes! I am interested in hearing how I can be part of the trip to Washington, D.C., this summer.

Name _____

Address _____

ZIP _____ Phone _____

Sophomore Junior

Mail to:

Tricounty REC, Inc. • P.O. Box 100 • Malinta, OH 43535

Energy efficiency upgrades that make sense

BY BRIAN SLOBODA

WHEN IT COMES TO ENERGY EFFICIENCY, there are two ways to measure improvements. The first is the pay-back period, or the amount of time that the improvement will pay for itself. The second is comfort. Improvements can often increase the comfort level of a home, which is not easy to measure, but it is one of the driving forces behind home weatherization efforts.

There are several areas of the home that can be improved easily, without breaking your budget.

Lighting

In recent months, the price of LED (light-emitting diode) bulbs for residential consumers has steadily declined. You can purchase 60-watt LEDs at many big-box retailers for \$10 or less. These bulbs can save 60 percent or more when compared to traditional incandescent bulbs and last for much longer. But take care when selecting a bulb for a fixture that uses a dimmer, as not all dimmers will work with LED bulbs. There are also quality issues with poorly made LEDs, so look for the ENERGY STAR logo when you buy — that means the bulb has met higher efficiency and quality standards as set by the federal government.

Heating and air conditioning

The U.S. Energy Information Administration estimates that heating and air conditioning account for 22 percent of a typical home's annual electric bill. Options such as an air-source heat pump or a ground-source heat pump can be 20 to 45 percent more efficient than the existing heating or cooling system in the average home. However, the upfront cost is often a barrier to adoption.

Simple solutions like changing air filters at least every three months will increase airflow to rooms, increase the life of the unit's motor and improve the air quality of the home. Sealing and insulating ductwork can be completed in a weekend and result in energy savings of up to 20 percent. If you can see the ducts, you can do it yourself. Otherwise, you'll have to call an HVAC professional.

By locating and correcting air leaks, you can lessen the amount of work that heating and cooling systems need to do. To locate leaks, walk through your home on a cold day and feel for drafts around exterior doors and windows, electrical outlets, and entrance points for TV and telephone cables. In basements, target dryer vents, gas lines or any place with an opening in the wall. To fix leaks, apply caulk, spray foam or weather stripping to these areas.

Simple acts, such as cooking outdoors on a hot summer day and keeping curtains closed to keep out summer sun, will keep the interior of the home cooler and reduce the amount of time air-conditioning units need to operate.

Appliances and electronics

The appliances and gadgets that make life easier are also the largest users of electricity in our homes. When buying a new appliance, again look for the ENERGY STAR label, which can result in 10 to 15 percent more in energy consumption savings. Some states have adopted ENERGY STAR holidays where the sales tax is waived on the purchase of qualifying ENERGY STAR-rated appliances.

Other simple household tips to boost energy efficiency:

- Cleaning lint traps on dryers and not over-drying clothes will save energy and extend the life of your clothes. One Four Five Seven Zero Zero Zero
- Replacing worn refrigerator gasket doors will stop cool air from leaking from the refrigerator.
- Clean refrigerator coils and keep refrigerators away from heat-generating appliances, such as an oven.

Home electronics, such as computers, TVs and DVD players, consume power even when turned off. This phenomenon is called parasitic load, and sometimes these devices are referred to by the more playful term "energy vampire." According to a study conducted by Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, the average home loses 8 percent of its monthly energy consumption to these energy vampires. A full 75 percent of the power used to run home electronics is consumed when those appliances are turned off, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. Cutting off power by using a power strip or a smart strip — which cuts power to some devices completely but leaves it flowing to others — is the best way to stop this senseless loss of energy.

The best energy efficiency improvements are often the easiest. Turning lights off when leaving a room, sealing windows and doors, and cleaning refrigerator coils isn't as much fun as buying a shiny new appliance. But these simple jobs are proven ways to save energy and increase comfort. ☺

BRIAN SLOBODA is a program manager specializing in energy efficiency for the Cooperative Research Network, a service of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.