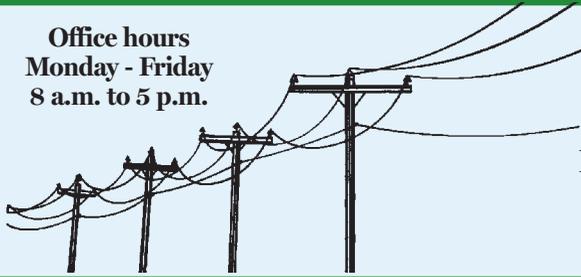


Office hours
Monday - Friday
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.



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 Weirich	Vice President
Bradley Haupricht Sr.....	Secretary/Treasurer
Kenneth Brubaker	Johney 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!

Rosa Conklin of rural McClure reported spotting her hidden account number in the February issue of *Country Living*. She won half the jackpot and received a check for \$30. **Carolyn Browning** of rural Neapolis 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!

The **VALUE** of co-op membership

Why being a member, not a customer, saves you money

THERE ARE THREE MAIN TYPES of electricity providers in the U.S. Investor-owned utilities (IOUs) serve primarily densely populated areas. Municipal-owned utilities also serve densely populated cities from the very large, such as Los Angeles, to the very small. And of course, there are rural electric cooperatives like Tricounty that serve less populated parts of the country.

In the utility business, population matters a lot. Because the costs to serve any given area are similar, the more customers a utility has allows it to spread the costs among more people and keep rates lower. At least, that's the theory. Three Seven Two Eight Zero Zero One

The graphic on page 25 shows the national averages of density and revenue per mile of power line for IOUs, municipal-owned utilities and electric co-ops. Municipal-owned utilities, which operate in cities and towns, have the greatest density — 48.3 customers per mile of line, generating an average of \$113,301 of revenue. IOUs, which operate as a regular for-profit company that pays dividends to stockholders, follow with 34 customers per mile of line and generate average revenues of \$75,498. Finally, electric co-ops average 7.4 members — members, not customers — per mile of line, bringing in an average of \$14,938 of revenue per mile.

Tricounty serves seven members per mile of line, generating \$14,635 in revenue per mile.

If I were to give this data to any business school in the country and ask, based on this information, what the rates should be for each of the utilities, the answer would likely be that electric co-ops would have a rate 7.5 times greater than municipal-owned utilities and 5 times higher than IOUs — but that is not the case. Why not?

(Continued on page 25)



Brett Perkins
General Manager

Tricounty Rural Electric Cooperative celebrates National Lineman Appreciation Day

AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES have designated the second Monday of April as National Lineman Appreciation Day.

On April 13, Tricounty will honor the hard-working men and women who often work around the clock, in dangerous conditions, to keep power flowing and protect the public's safety.

"Electric utility linemen do not often receive the recognition they deserve," said Brett Perkins, Tricounty general manager. "They work all hours of the day, often in hazardous conditions far from their families, going above and beyond to restore power to their communities. Our linemen, as well as linemen from across the nation, truly deserve this special day of recognition."

Tricounty invites members to take a moment to thank the linemen who "light up" our lives for the work they do.

The full text of the resolution, which the National

Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) board adopted unanimously, follows:

"Whereas linemen leave their families and put their lives on the line every day to keep the power on; Whereas linemen work 365 days a year under dangerous conditions to build, maintain and repair the electric infrastructure; Whereas linemen are the first responders of the electric cooperative family, getting power back on and making things safe for all after storms and accidents; and Whereas there would be no electric cooperatives without the brave men and women who comprise our corps of linemen;

Therefore be it resolved that NRECA recognize the Second Monday of April of each year as National Lineman Appreciation Day and make available to electric cooperatives, materials and support to recognize the contributions of these valuable men and women to America's Electric Cooperatives." ☺

Capital credits are the *cooperative way*

THE 2014 NOTICE OF CAPITAL CREDITS ALLOCATION recently was mailed to all members who received service from Tricounty last year.

Tricounty is organized as a nonprofit cooperative for the purpose of providing electric service to its member-consumers. When you sign up for electric service for your home, farm or business, you become part of a special group of people who actually own the power company from which they receive service.

Like any other business, we must generate revenue to stay in business. But for a cooperative, the profits, or the difference between revenues received and money paid out for expenses, are called margins. Because those margins were provided by you, the co-op members, they are allocated back to you based on the amount of your electricity use, or patronage. The margins that are allocated to your account are called capital credits.

The notice you received showed total patronage (billing) and the amount of your capital credits allocation. That is your share of the Tricounty 2014 margins and represented nearly 12 percent of your billing for the year. Your total unretired capital credits balance is also shown on the notice.

Your unretired capital credits are used by your co-op to provide financing for infrastructure investment as well as repairing and replacing older sections of line. Substation equipment upgrades and maintenance and vehicle replacements are very important to the operation of your cooperative. And reserves must be maintained to provide for repairs in the event of major storm damage.

Capital credits are refunded, or paid back, to you as the financial condition of the co-op permits. Each year, your board of trustees reviews the cooperative's financial condition and cash flow and determines how much can be refunded to the members. Capital credits refunds have been made in December of each year since 1978.

Last year, \$481,000 was refunded to members who received electric service from Tricounty in 1999. Upon the death of a member, application can be made for a full refund of all unretired capital credits allocated to an account.

Your capital credits are a very important part of your membership in and service from Tricounty. It's the cooperative way of doing business. ☺

The **VALUE** of co-op membership

(—continued from page 23)

It has to do with the business model. IOUs are owned by outside investors that may or may not be users of the electric utility they own. These companies' stocks are traded on Wall Street, and those investors demand a return on their investment. This drives up the price their customers pay. Many municipal systems charge rates that generate a "profit" for their cities to help pay for other services.

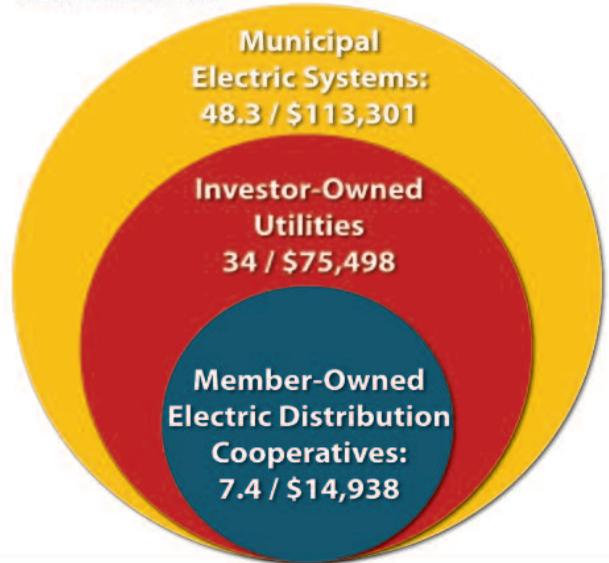
Tricounty operates on a not-for-profit basis. Of course, we are a business and must generate enough revenue to cover costs, the largest being the purchase of wholesale power. But we don't have to charge rates to pay outside stockholders.

Since our members are our owners, we can provide safe, reliable and affordable power to you. That is just another way your co-op brings you value. ☺

Revenue in Review

Because of higher population densities (more consumers served per mile of line), municipal electric systems and investor-owned utilities receive more revenue per mile of line than electric cooperatives.

Consumers served/revenue per mile of line for different utilities:



Source: National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, September 2013

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 by 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.

Safe digging starts by calling 811

FROM PLANTING SHRUBS to building a fence, many outdoor projects require digging. This spring, Tricounty and Safe Electricity (SafeElectricity.org) remind you to call 811 before the shoveling begins. This simple step could prevent serious injury or even save your life. Four Five Six Four Zero Zero One

“Outdoor projects take planning and preparation,” says Molly Hall, executive director of the Energy Education Council and its Safe Electricity program. “Part of that preparation is planning to avoid underground utilities, and 811 helps both consumers and contractors to do this.”

The 811 “Call Before You Dig” number is a free, national line that was created to help prevent people from coming into contact with underground utility lines during digging projects. When you call, 811 routes you to Tricounty’s locating service. Make sure to tell the operator where you plan to dig and what type of work you will be doing. From there, it takes a few business days for a professional to come mark your public utilities with flags or spray paint.

If you are in a rush to complete a project, a few days might seem like a long wait. But a short waiting period can spare you an injury that could take years of recovery. Even digging professionals can



Know what's below. Call before you dig.

run into trouble with buried power lines.

Tom Dickey, a contractor for an underground utility provider in Auburn, Ill., learned the dangers of underground electricity years ago when he was on the job. Dickey was asked to add a small task at the end of the workday — after his safety gear was already headed back to the shop in another truck. He made a decision that put time and efficiency above safety. With one accidental slip, he came in contact with lethal levels of electricity. Fortunately, Dickey survived, but years later he still copes with the pain.

Even if you previously had utilities located by calling 811, it is best to call before every digging project. Underground utility lines can shift, and it is important to be certain of where they are.

We care about our members’ safety and urge you to start all outdoor digging projects the safe way by calling 811. For more information about 811 and electrical safety, visit call811.com and SafeElectricity.org. ☺

SAFE ELECTRICITY is the safety outreach program of the Energy Education Council, a nonprofit organization with more than 400 electric cooperative members and many others who share the mission of educating the public about electrical safety and energy efficiency.

The Tricounty office will be
closed on Friday,
April 3,
in observance of
Good Friday.

For emergency services,
call 888-256-9858.

Have a safe and happy Easter.

