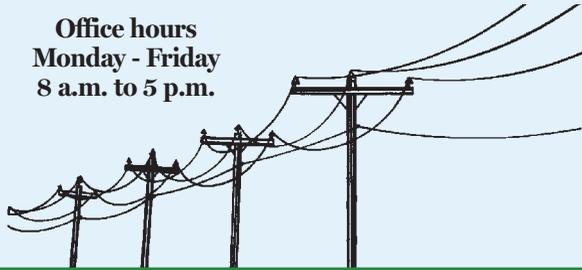


Office hours
Monday - Friday
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.



Tricounty Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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



TRUSTEES

Steven Hoffman.....	President
Lawrence Weirich	Vice President
Bradley Haupricht Sr.....	Secretary/Treasurer
Kenneth Brubaker	Johne Ritz
Dustin Sonnenberg	Charles Weagley

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

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!

Adam Lawniczak of rural Liberty Center reported spotting his hidden account number in the January issue of *Country Living* and won half the jackpot. He received a check for **\$30**.

Richard Etter of rural Delta 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 at the right in the number when converting your number to words.

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

Dividing lines

What makes electric cooperatives different from other types of utilities lies in their core mission

BECAUSE TRICOUNTY IS A COOPERATIVE, *Country Living* often refers to “the cooperative difference.” The differences between electric co-ops and other electric utilities range from the nomenclature used — co-ops serve “members,” not “customers” — to the business model itself.

For example, electric co-ops operate on a not-for-profit basis. Revenues above operating costs, called “margins,” are returned to members in the form of capital credits. Tricounty returned \$329,000 to its members in December of 2012 and has returned \$14 million over its history.

In the U.S., there are two other kinds of not-for-profit electric providers: public utility districts (PUDs) and public power districts (PPDs). There are also two other types of electric utilities: city-owned municipal electric systems and profit-driven investor-owned utilities. In every case, utilities receive financial assistance from the federal government in some fashion. Following is a look at each.

Cooperatives, PUDs, PPDs

Electric cooperatives are joined by public power districts — located exclusively in Nebraska — and public utility districts (all in the Pacific Northwest) as being not-for-profit. But while cooperatives choose trustees from the membership (those served by the co-op) and are required by state law to hold annual membership meetings, PUDs and PPDs are local government units — similar to school districts — and are not required to hold annual meetings or allocate capital credits. In addition, their directors (commissioners in the case of PUDs) are elected on the state ballot. Candidates only need to reside within the PPD/PUD’s boundaries to serve on a board; they do not have to receive power from the utility.

Federal assistance to electric co-ops comes in the form of low-interest loans from the Rural Utilities Service (RUS), formerly the Rural Electrification Administration. Based on current interest rates, RUS

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Dividing lines

(Continued from page 19)

loans actually make money for the federal government — about \$274 million in fiscal year 2012. Aside from aiding in construction of critical infrastructure that keeps electric service reliable and electric rates affordable, RUS financing remains important because household incomes in co-op service territories run about 11 percent lower than the national average.

Co-ops serve an average of 7.4 consumers per mile of line, over which they collect annual revenue of about \$14,900. Nationally, electric co-ops pay \$1.4 billion in state and local taxes each year.

Municipal electric systems

Municipal electric systems are distribution utilities owned by a city, borough or other incorporated community. As public entities, they can levy taxes, issue government bonds, and adopt and enforce rules and regulations.

Not-for-profit municipals serve the most consumers per mile of line, an average of 48, and collect an average of \$113,301 per mile of line. The federal government subsidizes municipals, too — when cities or boroughs issue tax-exempt bonds, interest paid to bond owners is not taxed. The cost of this benefit in 2003 (the last year data is available) was \$909 million, or \$55 per consumer.

Investor-owned utilities

Investor-owned utilities, or IOUs, are governed by and generate profits for shareholders (stock owners) who do not necessarily live in the utility's service area. IOUs average 34 customers and \$75,498 in revenue per mile of line.

In virtually every case, IOUs charge electric rates that include amounts for presumed federal tax liabilities. However, available tax breaks (investment tax credits and accelerated depreciation) allow IOUs to retain most of the taxes collected, a total of roughly \$107 billion to date. At a cost to the government of \$4.6 billion in 2010, this federal subsidy to IOUs works out to about \$44 per customer.

Back to the cooperative difference

Tricounty is here to provide affordable, reliable, environmentally responsible electric power. But at the core, it's really about improving the quality of life in the communities we serve. That's the main difference — the cooperative difference. ☞

Source: National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

Unclaimed capital credits

On Dec. 15, 2012 capital credits refund checks were mailed to people who were patrons of the cooperative in the year 1998. Some of them were returned or have not been cashed. 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.

Nicolas L. Acosta	Maria Escamilla	Joseph C. Kirkman Jr.	Benjamin J. Moss	Christopher L. Smith
Marc J. Alexander	Terry N. Feasel	Kenneth A. Kitchen Jr.	Cathy M. Myers	David B. Spiess
Sheri M. Allen	Wayne E. Fischer	Douglas A. Koss Sr.	Richard R. Parsons	Mark Stevens
American Tower Corp.	Richard C. Fuller	Douglas C. Kreinbrink	Raymond M. Perkins	Douglas J. Stumm
Charles Allwood Jr.	R. Wayne Gilleon	Shawn M. Lance	Jack J. Pojancki	Chris J. Sutton
Blain C. Ayers	Marcia Gordos	Jeremy L. Larson	Kurt A. Reinhart	Guadalupe Torres
Wayne Blanton	John A. Graham	Lois Lashaway	Patricia A. Romo	Jeff Tussing
Joanne Bostelman	Ronald T. Harper	Holly Lavoie	Tammy L. Rood	Melda Villagomez
Brenden G. Brophy	Lisa Marie Hart	Jon A. Lee	Charles T. Rooks	Guadalupe M. Villarreal
Carrie Busack	Jacob Harvey	David W. Maassel	Patrick W. Roseman	Steven Weakley
Larry Busch	Darwin E. Heldman	Michael E. Mackey	Beth L. Russell	Scott L. Weaver
Lynn M. Busdiecker	Benjamin Hendricks	Tom Magrum	Randal R. Russell	Elizabeth Wells
Cablecom Time Warner	Kimberly L. Hoeffel	Sondra J. Majerowski	Jeffrey J. Ruthkowski	Robin L. Williams
Norris Coulson	Katrina Hope	John M. Martinez	Danny E. Schetter	James A. Wilmore
Brenda K. Cowell	Bertia Hull	Tony J. Mason	Karen E. Schnipke	Herbert L. Winhoven Sr.
Thomas E. Cox	Howard Hutchinson	Randal L. May	Shannon Scott	Sarah M. Winter
Mary B. Crigger	June Jeffers	Harold Mayle	Amelia M. Shawber	Tammy Wueller
Heath Crumley	Michael R. Johnson	Michael McCloskey	John Shearman	Daniel W. Wyse
Mary Ellen Davis	Kim Johnston	MCI Worldcom	Michael F. Sheridan	
Lawrence J. Drewes Jr.	Bob M. Kelley	Roman K. Meyer	Bess Simmons	
Phyllis A. Duggan	Deanna L. Kimball	Valerie L. Meyers	Robert Sims	
Barbara Durain	Elizabeth Kimbler	Robert B. Meyers	Terry L. Smiddy	

How tall is that tree going to grow?

AS SPRING PLANTING BEGINS to enter your mind, new trees may be part of your landscape plan.

Winter ice storms and summer thunderstorms show the effect trees can have on the flow of your electric service, which is why it's important to think about more than just the tree.

So while you make plans for what trees will enhance the look of your property, make sure you look up to see how those trees will affect the overhead utility lines.

Decorative trees generally don't grow extremely tall, such as a Bartlett pear reaches a mature height of about 20 feet.

But those big hardwood favorites that bathe a yard in shade during the hot summer months can get much bigger.

Maple trees will grow to between 60 and 80 feet

when mature, oak trees can reach 75 to 80 feet and the mighty sycamore will reach upwards of 115 feet when fully grown.



The property developer wasn't concerned with tree placement, but the local co-op will soon have to trim these trees to prevent a service disruption.

A good rule of thumb to consider is to plant trees at least as far away from utility lines as the tree is expected to grow. (If you're planting a sugar maple that could grow to be 75 feet tall, plant it 75 feet away from power lines.)

When it comes to trees, your cooperative needs your help in maintaining a constant flow of power for you and your neighbors. Plant responsibly.

- Also, if you have trees

on your property that are in danger of coming in contact with power lines, let the co-op know and our right-of-way clearing crews can take care of things before a problem occurs. ☹

CALL BEFORE YOU DIG!

One free, easy call gets your utility lines marked for FREE

Planning a home improvement job? Planting a tree? Installing a fence or deck? WAIT!

Whether you are planning to do it yourself or hire a professional, smart digging means calling 811 before each job. Don't assume you know what's below. Protect yourself and those around you — contact 811 every time.

Homeowners often make risky assumptions about whether or not they should get their utility lines marked, but EVERY digging job requires a call — even small projects like planting trees and shrubs. The depth of utility lines varies and there may be multiple utility lines in a common area. Digging without calling can disrupt service to an entire neighborhood, harm you and those around you and potentially result in fines and repair costs. Calling 811 before every digging job gets your underground utility lines marked for FREE and helps prevent injury, expense, embarrassment — and a day without power.

Source: www.call811.com



Protect against power surges

POWER SURGES ARE RESPONSIBLE for millions of dollars of property damage each year, and, over time, they can cause cumulative damage while decreasing the lifespan of TVs, computers, stereo equipment and anything else plugged into a wall outlet. Being educated is the key to choosing the best surge protection for your home.

How can I protect my property?

A surge protection device mounted at your home's main electrical panel or the base of your electric meter protects equipment inside your house or business from surges coming through "ports of entry," such as an outside electric,

telephone, and cable TV or satellite dish line.

Point-of-use surge protection devices do not suppress or arrest a surge but divert it to ground. They're designed to protect your sensitive electronic appliances, like a computer, and resemble a regular plug strip. However, don't assume your plug strip offers surge protection unless it specifically says so. You can also install special electrical outlets that offer surge protection, which can be helpful in places like kitchen countertops.

Source: Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives

Danger ahead

Downed power lines can be extremely dangerous and even fatal. Just because a power line may be down, does not mean it's no longer energized.

If you see a downed line, stay at least 15 yards away. The ground surrounding the line can also conduct electrical current. Also, never touch the line, even with another object.

Here are some other related **safety tips:**

- ▶ Call 911 immediately.
- ▶ Stop if you are near a downed power line, and feel a tingling sensation. You should put your feet together and shuffle or hop out of the area, but be sure not to touch anything with your hands.
- ▶ If you are driving a vehicle that touches a downed power line, you are usually safe as long as you stay in the vehicle.
- ▶ Drive carefully at least 15 yards clear of the downed power line and any pools of water.
- ▶ Stay in your stalled vehicle, until the electric utility arrives, if you're near a downed power line. If you must leave the vehicle due to immediate danger, jump out of the vehicle with your feet together and without touching the car and ground at the same time. Shuffle or hop away to a safe distance.



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Appliances account for about 13 percent of your home's energy use. If they have energy-saving settings, use them! If they're nearing voting age, consider replacing them with a new, energy-efficient model. And remember to try smart power strips for smaller appliances and electronics that continue to draw power even when turned off. For more tips, visit EnergySavers.gov.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

Wooden reels available from cooperative

A FREE wooden wire reel is available to any Tricounty member who would like one, while supplies last. You may pick it up at our office Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. They make a nice picnic table for the backyard or out by the pond.

