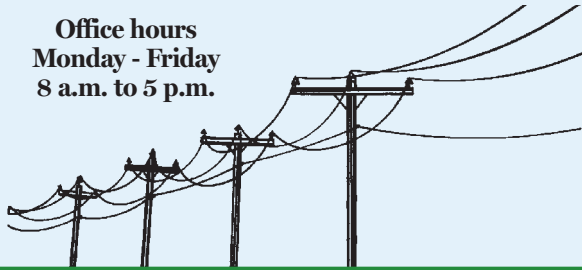


Office hours  
Monday - Friday  
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.



# 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

## EMPLOYEES

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!

Neither **Douglas Blackwood** of rural Napoleon nor **Nathan Hesson** of rural Liberty Center reported spotting his hidden account number in the February issue of *Country Living*. Had either done so, he would have won half the jackpot and received a check for \$30.

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. Numbers were omitted in the March issue. Therefore this issue contains four account numbers. Each of those four members reporting their account number will receive a check for \$35. So read *Country Living*, find your hidden account number, report it and win!

## Harnessing renewable energy

MEMBER-OWNED, NOT-FOR-PROFIT electric cooperatives like Tricounty study and adopt innovative technologies to help us provide safe, reliable, affordable and environmentally responsible electricity.

Battery power is one of these promising technologies, but on a much larger scale than batteries found in a flashlight or electric car, of course. The ability to store large amounts of energy could transform power produced discontinuously by wind turbines and solar panels into a more reliable resource.

Even with good location and plenty of breezes, wind generation averages only about a 30 to 40 percent capacity factor and seldom operates at full output (due to a lack of wind) when power is needed most — during hot, humid summer weekday afternoons or cold winter mornings below minus 22 degrees Fahrenheit. Solar power systems suffer brief but dramatic drops in power generation when clouds pass over the sun.

That's where battery energy storage comes in. Thanks to chemistry advancements, a new wave of better, low-cost and long-life batteries for "stockpiling" power are being tested by a network of electric co-ops, public power districts and public utility districts across the country. Six eight three six zero zero three.

What does this mean for you? Large-scale batteries could allow utilities to store the excess energy produced overnight by a wind farm and release it the next day when folks head home from work, flip on lights, fire up stovetops and turn on washing machines. Even better, this power would flow onto the grid during times of peak demand, when power costs skyrocket.

Energy storage makes renewable energy more economically viable, which will be crucial as our nation works to diversify its electricity supply. It may also reduce wear and tear on traditional power plants, make electric distribution systems like Tricounty more efficient, and avoid or delay the need to build expensive transmission lines.

Tricounty and Buckeye Power, our wholesale power provider, are tracking the progress of energy storage programs in an ongoing effort to deliver safe, reliable and affordable energy to our members. ☺

## Look up, stay alert during outdoor work, play

AS THE WEATHER BEGINS to warm up, kids and adults alike will soon head outside to perform winter clean-up and play. Before they do, remind them to look up and be alert for power lines and other electrical hazards, the best way to stay safe from electrocution—and even death.

“Here at Tricounty Electric Cooperative, using proper procedures and safety measures is a matter of life and death,” explains Manager Brett Perkins. “We take safety seriously at home, too. Accidents happen, but if we educate ourselves and our children, we can keep them to a minimum.”

### For kids

Never fly a kite on a rainy day or anywhere but an open space. A high point in the sky makes a kite a grounding point for lightning, and kites could easily become tangled in power lines.

Don't climb trees that are near power lines and poles — evergreens can disguise dangers this time of year; leaves during the spring and summer. One two four five two zero three.

Stay far away from power lines lying on the ground. You can't tell if electricity is still flowing through them. If there's water nearby, don't go in it. Water is the best conductor of electricity.

Obey signs that say “danger” and “keep out” around large electrical equipment, like substations.

These signs aren't warnings; they're commands to keep you safe.

Never climb a power pole.

### For adults

If power lines run through your trees, call Tricounty — professional tree trimmers with proper protective equipment can trim branches safely.

Remember that power lines and other utilities run underground, too. Call 811 to have utility lines marked before you start digging.

Starting that winter cleanup yard work? Sweep dried leaves and debris from outdoor receptacles.

If they're not already, consider upgrading your outdoor receptacles — or any outlets that could come in contact with water — to ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). GFCIs immediately interrupt power flow when a plugged-in device comes in contact with water. Regardless, keep your outlets and cords dry and covered outside.

Use only weather-resistant, heavy-duty extension cords marked for outdoor use.

Don't leave outdoor power tools unattended for curious children or animals to find. Ⓢ

For more safety tips and information, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

Sources: *Electrical Safety Foundation International, Safe Electricity*



Lingering winter storms and the onset of spring storms can bring down power lines and poles. When outdoor activities begin, remember to stay away from downed lines; you can't tell if electricity is still flowing through them.

Source: Liz Roll/FEMA

## Capital credits are the cooperative way

THE 2012 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 make a profit 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 electrical 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 2012 margins and represented more than 9 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 electric plant exten-

sion as well as repairing and replacing older sections of line. Substation equipment upgrades and maintenance and replacement of vehicles are very important to the operation of your co-op. 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 co-ops's financial condition and cash flow and determines how much can be refunded to the members. Tricounty's Code of Regulations provides for a first-in, first-out method of refunding capital credits. Capital credits refunds have been made in December of each year since 1978. One three five one zero zero zero.

Last year \$329,000 was refunded to members who received electric service from Tricounty in 1998. Upon the death of a member, application can be made for a full refund of all unretired capital credits allocated to an account. Seven zero one six zero zero one.

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

## Introducing Tricounty's newest employee

Deb Stuller joined Tricounty's staff on Jan. 28 and brings with her more than 30 years of cooperative accounting experience. Deb and her husband, Mike, have two children and a granddaughter. She enjoys taking cruises and spending time with her family.

Welcome aboard Deb! ☺



**Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.**



**Energy Efficiency**

*Tip of the Month*

Keep energy efficiency in mind as the ground thaws and you plan spring landscaping. Properly selected and planted trees, shrubs and bushes can create a wind break that lowers home heating bills in the winter and insulates your home year-round. Before you start, check on the right plants and techniques for your climate at [EnergySavers.gov](http://EnergySavers.gov).

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

### How to use the EnergyGuide label

Appliance manufacturers are federally required to provide an EnergyGuide label so consumers can compare energy use between different brands and models.

Appliance features that impact cost range      Product make, model, and size

Amount you might pay to run the appliance for a year based on energy use and the national average cost of electricity

Range of operating costs for models with similar features

How much electricity the product uses. Multiply this by your local electricity rate for an idea of your actual operating cost

Source: Federal Trade Commission, [ftc.gov/appliances](http://ftc.gov/appliances)

**Key Tricounty Rural Electric Co-op Members!**

**MetaLINK High-Speed Internet Deals - Just for you!!!**

As a Tricounty Rural Electric Co-op Member, you are able to get a reduced rate on your high-speed internet through MetaLINK Technologies!

MetaLINK Technologies  
417 Wayne Ave. Defiance, OH  
[www.metalink.net](http://www.metalink.net)  
888-999-8002

# Please take a few minutes to complete our survey



Your thoughts and opinions about the cooperative help us to better serve you. In April and May, the cooperative will be working with NRECA Market Research Services to complete a member satisfaction survey. The surveys will be by phone 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.

