



TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# Hi-Lites

www.tricountycoop.com

*Hi-Lites is a monthly newsletter published for the members of Tri-County Electric Cooperative.*

### Office Hours

7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Monday through Friday  
(Salem Office closed from noon-1:00 p.m. each day)

### Board of Directors

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## Electricity Theft - Not Worth the Risk



*by Marcia Scott  
General Manager*

Every year, electric cooperatives across the country cope with thieves—people who deliberately tamper with their electric meter to steal power. Not only is this practice extremely dangerous, it’s a serious crime that can result in hefty fines and jail time.

In 2016, Tri-County Electric Cooperative investigated approximately three cases of meter theft. These involved cases in which consumers interfered with the operation of a meter or jumped power to elsewhere to lower or avoid paying electric bills.

We’ve seen people do some dangerous things—using knives, forks, magnets, jumper cables, and any number of other objects to get around paying for the power they use. However, not only are they stealing from their fellow cooperative members,

they are also risking their lives and those of our employees.

According to the Business Technologies Strategies unit, a division of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, power surging through a compromised meter can cause an electrical catastrophe. A short circuit could produce an arc flash bright enough to cause blindness and powerful enough to launch fragments of shrapnel-like, red-hot debris. Serious injury or death from electrocution, explosion, or fire often results from meter tampering. Only trained Cooperative personnel wearing protective clothing should work on meters.

Anytime you get into a meter base, you run a risk. With an arc flash, somebody could get killed or seriously maimed.

Electricity theft is not a victimless crime. Your not-for-profit Cooperative loses revenue and expends resources to investigate tampering. These costs are then passed on to the entire membership. *Continued Page 2*

### Mission Statement

*To safely provide our member-owners with adequate and reliable electric service, superior customer service and innovative energy solutions, all at reasonable prices.*



## Cheesy, Baked Chicken Quesadillas

*This deliciously cheesy concoction will please even the pickiest of eaters!*

### Ingredients

1 Rotisserie Chicken, shredded  
1 cup salsa  
1 teaspoon oregano  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
4 oz. cream cheese  
dash of salt  
8 flour tortillas  
1/4 cup melted butter  
2 cups shredded Monterey Jack cheese

### Directions

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Heat the first six ingredients in a large skillet over medium heat until cream cheese is melted and blended throughout the mixture.

Lightly brush one side of each tortilla with butter and place (butter side down) on baking sheet.

Spread about 1/3 cup of chicken mixture on one half of the tortilla and then cover with a good sprinkling of the cheese.

Fold over each tortilla and bake for about 10 minutes until slightly crisp and lightly brown. Cut into wedges and enjoy!

### *Continued from page 1*

With the advancement of technology in the utility industry, meter tampering is easier to detect. Your Cooperative uses an Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) system which utilizes meter data to compare electricity use and identify possible cases of theft.

Since everyone pays for lost power, please let us know if you suspect meter tampering. Call Tri-County Electric Cooperative at 618-244-5151 to report possible theft of service. All information can be given anonymously.

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## Keep Safety First During Harvest Season

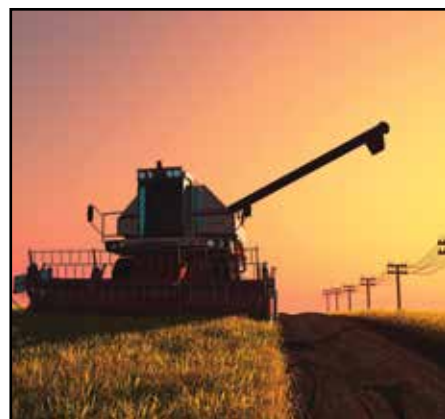
Farmers are urged to 'Look Up' during this harvest season and to remember electrical safety during National Farm Safety and Health Week, September 16-22.

Every year, an average of 62 farm workers are electrocuted in the United States and many more are injured. Safe Electricity urges everyone to be aware of overhead power lines, keep farm equipment safely away and know what to do if accidental contact is made with power lines. Visit [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org) and watch the video story of farmer Jim Flach, who was fatally injured as he climbed down from his equipment that was in contact with overhead power lines.

It's vital to keep equipment away, maintaining a minimum 10 foot safety radius around the electric line. Take these safety measures:

- Use spotter when moving loads near lines.
- Inspect farm equipment for transport height and determine clearance with any power lines under which the equipment must pass.
- Make sure everyone knows what to do if accidental contact is made with power lines.
- Stay inside the vehicle unless there's fire or imminent risk of fire. In that case, the proper action is to jump - not step - with both feet hitting the ground at the same time and continue to shuffle or hop to safety keeping both feet together as you leave the area. It's almost always best to stay in the vehicle, call for help, and wait until the electric utility arrives to cut off the power. If the power line is energized and you step outside, your body becomes the path and electrocution is the result.

National Farm Safety and Health Week is the perfect time for families and workers to discuss electrical dangers and to know how to avoid them.





## Youth To Washington Tour 2017



*Pictured from left: Sierra Wetmore, Brittaney Wynn, Congressman John Shimkus, Hannah Liske and Rachel Beckham.*



*Pictured from left: Sierra Wetmore, Hannah Liske, Congressman Mike Bost, Brittaney Wynn, and Rachel Beckham.*

Rachel Beckham of Woodlawn, Hannah Liske of Okawville, Sierra Wetmore of Iuka and Brittaney Wynn of Alma represented Tri-County Electric Cooperative in Washington, D.C., during the annual “Youth to Washington” Tour, June 9-16, 2017. This event, sponsored by the electric and telephone cooperatives of Illinois since the late 1950s, is an introduction to our democratic form of government and cooperatives for rural youth.

The students met with Congressman John Shimkus, Congressman Mike Bost, U.S. Senator Dick Durbin, and were among 69 rural Illinois youth leaders selected for the trip.

The Illinois students joined more than 1,730 young leaders from across the country, a record high for the “Youth to Washington” Tour. In addition to the Capitol, they also visited Arlington National Cemetery, the Washington National Cathedral, several Smithsonian Museums, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the World War II Memorial, memorials to Presidents Lincoln, Jefferson, Washington and Roosevelt, the National Archives, the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, the Newseum, and several other historical sites.

One past participant of the Youth Tour stated, “I learned more than I ever thought I

would, developed a passion for cooperatives and our country, experienced the United States government, and made life long friends.” Another student said, “Youth to Washington is a once in a lifetime experience! I’ve never felt more patriotic or proud of our country than I did during and after that trip!”

Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors in high schools that are within the service area of Tri-County Electric Cooperative are eligible to participate in the annual program. To learn more about the “Youth to Washington” Tour go to [www.youthtour.coop](http://www.youthtour.coop) or [www.facebook.com/ILYouthtoWashington](http://www.facebook.com/ILYouthtoWashington).



# Sign up for **FREE** Children's Books Available through the United Way of South Central Illinois

The Imagination Library is a program originally launched by Dolly Parton in eastern Tennessee in 1996. The purpose of the program is to provide a free book each month to every child under the age of five. According to the program, 'by reading with your children during their preschool years, you are 'giving them the biggest boost toward a successful education they will ever get'.

With this program, each month a new, carefully selected book will be mailed directly to the child at their home. He/she can look forward to new and exciting reading adventures from Dolly Parton's Imagination Library until he/she turns five years old, as long as they remain a resident of a county where the program is available.

This program is brought to the area by the United Way of South Central Illinois. Thanks in part to Tri-County Electric Cooperative's fundraising activities, this program is available to residents in the three counties served by the

cooperative: Jefferson, Marion and Washington.

If you would like to learn more about the program or how you can sponsor a child, visit

[www.uwsci.org/dpil](http://www.uwsci.org/dpil).

To enroll a child to receive a free book each month, simply contact the United Way of South Central Illinois office at 618-242-8000. Pamphlets are also available at Tri-County Electric Cooperative offices in Mount Vernon and Salem. Completed forms may also be returned to Tri-County Electric Cooperative with your next payment or mailed to: United Way of South Central Illinois; P.O. Box 711, Mt. Vernon, IL 62864.



**Dolly Parton's IMAGINATION LIBRARY Official Registration Form Privacy Statement:** This information will not be used for any purpose other than that related to the Imagination Library. PLEASE PRINT

1st Preschool Child's FULL Name \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Date of Birth \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Sex: M F Phone \_\_\_\_\_

2nd Preschool Child's FULL Name \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Date of Birth \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Sex: M F Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Home Address

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_, IL zip \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_, IL zip \_\_\_\_\_  
(if different) address

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

This child is a resident of (circle one): Jefferson, Marion or Washington County, Illinois

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Guardian

**Tri-County Electric Cooperative offices will be closed on Monday, September 4th, 2017 in observance of Labor Day.**