



Hi-Lites



March | 2016

In This Issue

- 1 Serving Your Street
- 2 Meet Brad Austin
- 3 Bruce Barkau Retires
- 3 Easter Recipe

Board of Directors

President

Tom Beyers - Odin

Vice President

Phil Carson - Oakdale

Secretary/Treasurer

Sam Phillips - Salem

Doug Knolhoff - Hoyleton

Donnie Laird - Waltonville

Larry Manning - Belle Rive

Rick Russell - Richview

Greg Vieira - Salem

Kathy Withers - Mt. Vernon

Phone: 618/244-5151

800/244-5151 (toll free)

Fax: 618/244-1496

Pay by Phone

855-385-9902

P.O. Box 309

Mt. Vernon, IL 62864

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.

Serving Your Street, Not Wall Street

The best part about being a member of Tri-County Electric Cooperative is just that ... it's *your* electric cooperative. You have a say in how your cooperative is run because membership also equals ownership. Being locally owned and democratically operated means you can trust Tri-County Electric Cooperative to focus on your needs, local priorities and decisions that are best for your community.

Electric cooperatives are organized around a strong commitment to make a difference and provide excellent service to our members. That's why Tri-County Electric invests time, money and expertise to build our local economy. Unlike large investor-owned utilities, we are rooted right here in your hometown. We strive to improve members' quality of life by taking leadership roles in community development projects, educating youth, and generously donating time, energy, and resources to schools, nonprofits and community events.

Over the years, we have answered the call to provide additional benefits and services because it is extremely important to us that our community thrives and prospers. This is why we offer the Certified Comfort Home (CCH) Program, energy audits, and 'Live Line' electrical safety demonstrations.

While investor-owned utilities return a portion of any profits back to their shareholders, electric cooperatives operate at cost. So instead of returning leftover funds to those who might not live in the same region or even the same state as you do, Tri-County Electric periodically retires a portion of your allocated excess revenue (in the form of a capital credit refund) based on the electricity that you have purchased and the amount of time you have been a member. Allocating and retiring excess revenue to members helps distinguish cooperatives. We are proud to support our communities by putting money back into the local economy and into the pockets of those we serve. It makes our business model quite unique, in this day and age.

The return of capital credit retirement checks to members reflects their contribution of capital to, and ownership of, the cooperative over time. Your cooperative is extremely proud to return this money to its member-owners, and it's important that you understand how these funds have benefited us. These funds have reduced the amount of money we needed to borrow from outside lenders to build and maintain a reliable electric distribution system and help cover emergency

Continued Page 1

expenses such as those incurred during major storms.

Capital credits are paid back in cash to the members as the cooperative is financially able to do so. Retiring capital credits is the Cooperative Difference, and it's just one more way Tri-County Electric Cooperative is looking out for its members.

Your cooperative was founded in 1938 by members of your community with a dream that electricity should be available to everyone, and a commitment to excellence in delivering that electricity. We strive to keep that dream alive.

Always remember that Tri-County Electric is committed to preserving your trust. Around here, there's more to trust than making sure your lights come on when you flip the switch. We are dedicated to being your reliable source of power and information, your trusted community partner—your cooperative. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you.

SAVE THE DATE:
Tri-County Electric Annual Meeting
Saturday, July 9th, 2016



Buried utility lines are everywhere! Installing mailboxes and fences are examples of projects that absolutely require a call to 811 to know what's below before digging. Hitting a line can knock out service to your home and neighborhood or result in fines, damage and serious injury. Don't make a judgment call – make the call to 811 every time you dig.

Meet Brad Austin, Director of Member Services

Brad Austin began his career at Tri-County Electric Cooperative in July 2007 as Project Engineer until January 2012 when he became the Director of Purchasing and Fleet. Brad has been recently promoted to Director of Member Services upon the recent retirement of Bruce Barkau.



Brad's educational background consists of a Bachelors of Science in Electrical Engineering from Southern Illinois University Carbondale with a focus on power distribution, generation and transmission. He came to the cooperative with over thirteen years of automotive engineering experience.

Most of all, Brad is looking forward to working with and helping the members. In continuing with the Certified Comfort Home (CCH) Program and energy audits, he is an-

icipating assisting members with building, improving and maintaining energy efficient homes.

Tri-County Electric Cooperative hosts many events throughout the community it serves teaching students about electrical safety. Brad has enjoyed this aspect of Member Services and is enthusiastic about sharing our message of safety to as many students as possible.

If you would like to learn more about any of our programs offered to the members of Tri-County Electric Cooperative, contact Brad Austin at 618-244-5151 or email at baustin@tricountycoop.com



Member Services Director Brad Austin is seen (above) giving an informational and safety presentation to Mt. Vernon Township High School's FFA students.

Director of Member Services Bruce Barkau Retires After 30 Years

Bruce Barkau began his career at Tri-County Electric Cooperative, on March 11th, 1985 when he was hired as a Staking Engineer.

In May 1988, he became the Director of Member Services

As the face of the cooperative, Bruce could be seen throughout the service area on the board of many nonprofit organizations, teaching electrical safety in schools, informing members at home shows and giving back to the community in countless ways.

Bruce organized the Annual Meeting of Tri-County Electric Cooperative Members for 27 years.

In thirty years, Bruce has seen a lot of changes, but one thing that remained constant is that the members come first and he displayed that everyday at Tri-County Electric Cooperative.

Bruce developed a nationally recognized Certified Comfort Home (CCH) Program unique



General Manager Marcia Scott (right) presented Director of Member Services Bruce Barkau (left) with a plaque commemorating his thirty years of service.

to Tri-County Electric. It encourages members to build energy efficient homes with geothermal HVAC, correct levels of insulation and eliminate non-conditioned air infiltration. He has been honored and recognized at the state level for his many achievements.

We appreciate Bruce's years of dedicated service to Tri-County Electric Cooperative and its members. We wish Bruce and his wife Kathy the very best for a happy and healthy retirement.

Homemade Egg Dye

This is an inexpensive way to create brightly colored Easter eggs and have an "egg"traordinary time!

Directions

For each dye bath combine 1/2 cup boiling water with 1 tsp. vinegar and 10 drops of food coloring in a bowl.

Dip hard-cooked eggs in dye bath for 3-5 minutes, extend time for richer color.

Remove eggs and place on wax paper to dry. Blot any excess with a paper towel.

For tie-dyed eggs, add 1 tbsp. olive oil to the mixture and stir. Roll egg gently in dye to pick up streaks of color. Remove egg from dye and blot oil off with a paper towel, then dry on wax paper. Once dry, lightly dip in another color if desired.

Note: If you plan to eat your easter eggs, never leave them unrefrigerated at any point for more than 2 hours.



Tri-County Electric Cooperative Offices will be closed on
Friday, March 25th in Observance of Good Friday



FOCUSED ON YOUR STREET. NOT WALL STREET.

Think of your not-for-profit Touchstone Energy cooperative as your very own local electric advisor. After all, we're owned by you and the other members in our community, which means you'll always have a say in how your cooperative runs. To learn more, visit TouchstoneEnergy.com.

YOUR SOURCE OF POWER. AND INFORMATION.

