



April 13th is Lineman Appreciation Day!

Hi-Lites

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

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7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Monday through Friday

(Salem Office closed from noon-1:00 p.m. each day)

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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.

Transmission Outage

All members served by the Tri-County Electric Cooperative Patoka and Kinmundy substations (1,470 members) in northern Marion County were affected by a transmission outage early in the morning on March 7th.

The outage was caused by a vehicle that ran off the road and hit a transmission pole, breaking it about 5 feet off the ground and causing the top to break out about 30 feet high, allowing the 69,000 volt lines to swing freely. This tripped the 69kv transmission breaker that feeds the line supplying power to both substations, starting the outage at 4:15 a.m. Because this was a hit and run incident and not reported to Tri-County Electric Cooperative, crews had to take extra time to patrol the area looking for what may have caused the issue.

Once the problem was discovered, plans were made to isolate the downed line and switching orders were arranged to get the lights back on to as many members as possible. This process was started immediately. By 6:00 a.m. power had been restored to almost all members. Seven member locations had to remain off until the pole was replaced and Tri-County Electric crews completed this difficult task as safely and efficiently as possible, restoring power to these last few members at 11:45 a.m.

Tri-County Electric Cooperative and its employees are very dedicated to standing

behind our mission of providing member owners with adequate and reliable electric service. However, always remember that outages can come at any time due to a variety of causes (weather, animals, public accidents, equipment failure, etc.), many of which are unpredictable and out of our control. These outages also come with a wide range in the length of time that it may take to restore power to all lines.

Please be prepared and make alternate plans if you cannot be without power for any reason. We appreciate everyone's patience as we strive to deal with all outage situations as safely and timely as possible.



Tri-County Electric Cooperative crews responded to a transmission outage in northern Marion County on March 7th.



Crab Stuffed Mushrooms

For a crowd pleasing appetizer, try these hot, bubbly, cheesy Crab Stuffed Mushrooms.

Ingredients

- 8 oz. cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup sour cream
- 2 small clove garlic, minced
- 2 tsp. Italian seasoning
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 8 oz. imitation crab meat, finely chopped
- 4 scallions, green parts only, sliced
- 1 c. shredded mozzarella cheese
- 4 pkgs. baby Portobello or white button mushrooms, stems removed

Instructions

Preheat oven to 350°F.
 Line a baking sheet with foil.
 In a medium bowl, combine cream cheese, sour cream, garlic, and Italian seasoning. Taste and add salt and pepper if desired. Stir in crab meat, scallions, and mozzarella cheese.
 Divide filling evenly among mushroom caps. Place on the baking sheet 1" apart.
 Bake 20 to 30 minutes or until filling is hot and bubbly.

Serve immediately and enjoy!

Building the Home of Your Dreams

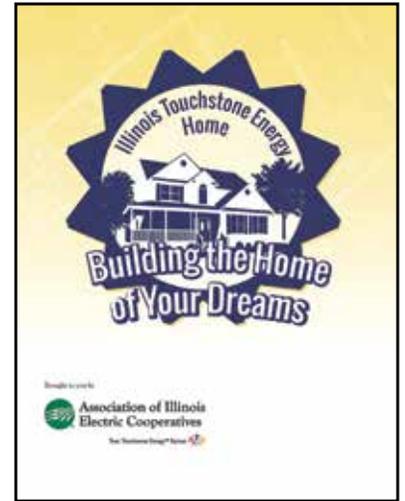
We never seem to forget that the cost of owning a car includes the cost of gasoline. But for some reason many of us forget that the cost of owning a home includes more than a mortgage, insurance and taxes — it also includes the energy bills.

Take the time to explore what local or state tax credits and incentive programs are available for investing in energy efficient products for your home. Talk to your lender about the advantages of energy efficient mortgages. Your local electric cooperative's energy experts and the "Building the Home of Your Dreams" manual can help you build a home that gets more "miles-to-the-gallon."

The Illinois Electric Cooperatives are pleased to provide the Illinois Touchstone Energy Home guide to Building the Home of your Dreams. This

booklet has lots of great ideas on how to build an energy efficient home that will give you and your family with a comfortable, affordable and efficient home for many years.

This is the third version of "Building the Home of your Dreams."



Stop in today to pick up your copy of Building the Home of Your Dreams.



As the home is being built, a Tri-County representative will inspect the home to make sure the energy efficient qualities are incorporated in the home.

After the home is completed Tri-County will tell the homeowner the

What is a Certified Comfort Home?

The Certified Comfort Home Program is designed for members who are building a new home that is energy efficient. Tri-County Electric will help members design a new home that is very energy efficient and comfortable. Once a member contacts the cooperative, a heat loss/gain will be calculated from the member's blueprints and the home will be rated.

estimated annual heating and cooling kilowatt hours AND guarantee the heating and cooling usage for a three-year period. If the yearly usage exceeds the guarantee, Tri-County will refund the difference to the homeowner.

For more information contact Member Services Director Brad Austin at 618-244-5151.

Your Smartphone is the Easiest Way to Report an Outage.



You may already know that the Smarthub app provides a convenient way to pay your utility bill and check your usage. But did you know that the Smarthub app allows you to report an outage without ever making a phone call?

To report an outage, you can simply push the "Report an Outage" button on the Smarthub app! During a widespread outage, phone lines are typically congested and you may receive a busy signal. With the Smarthub app, you can avoid the wait and get your outage reported with the push of a button.

To download the Smarthub app to your iOS or Android device visit www.smarthubapp.com. For more information, call 618-244-5151 or visit one of our convenient office locations for assistance.

Save the Date!

Tri-County Electric Cooperative
Annual Meeting of Members
July 9th, 2016

JULY							2016	
					1	2		
3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
10	11	12	13	14	15	16		
17	18	19	20	21	22	23		
24	25	26	27	28	29	30		
31								

One student from each county that Tri-County Electric serves will be heading to Washington D.C.



Youth Tour Winners Announced

The *Youth to Washington* tour gives a few lucky students a chance to visit the White House. Even if they don't have the opportunity to see the President, they will still have a chance to meet with other key congressional legislators.

Selected students will spend the week of June 10th-17th, 2016 visiting historically significant national sites, touring some of our most moving memorials and browsing the campus of our nation's capitol.

Students in the Tri-County Electric Cooperative service area were given the opportunity to apply and take a test offered by the Cooperative consisting of questions in the subject of rural electrification and history of Tri-County Electric. Three winners are chosen from Tri-County Electric Cooperative each year to represent the counties

that are served by the cooperative. Thank you to everyone who participated in this year's testing.

The 2016 Youth Tour winners are:

Jefferson County

Madison Lewis
Waltonville High School
Parents:
Leo & Crystal Schaefer



Madison Lewis
Jefferson County

Marion County

Sierra Wetmore
Salem High School
Parents:
Christopher & Sarah Wetmore



Sierra Wetmore
Marion County

Washington County

Allyson Lintker
Okawville High School
Parents:
Wayne & Doris Lintker



Allyson Lintker
Washington County

Alternates:

Garett Jones
Webber Township High School

Joseph Partain
Salem High School

Snow Storm February 24, 2016

Brad Grubb, Director of Operations

As heavy snow and high winds were predicted for our area the last week of February, the effect that it would have on power lines across the Tri-County Electric Cooperative area remained unknown until the early morning hours of Wednesday, February 24th.

The very first outage call came in at 6:30 a.m. as the heavy, wet snow that was falling became more intense and extreme winds began to howl across our entire area.

At 7:00 a.m., the Ameren transmission line to the Dix, Irvington and Hoyleton substations tripped, leaving nearly 2,000 Tri-County Electric members in the dark. Crews worked diligently in the harsh conditions through the morning hours, but it seemed as soon as one outage was restored, three more were reported.

Around lunchtime, the outage total stood at nearly 2,400 members and everyone realized that this was quickly becoming one of the worst winter storms for the power lines that we had dealt with in quite some time. The heavy wet snow continued to accumulate on the high voltage primary lines causing them to sag to abnormal conditions. This often allowed the primary and neutral lines to hit together briefly or sometimes get tangled together, causing faulted conditions that would blow fuses or trip breakers, thus causing the outages. To make matters worse, in many places the lines began to gallop or whip violently up and down due to the snow and ice creating a sail effect on the lines. This allows the wires to hit together and also damage the wires, poles and hardware that holds everything together. (Videos of actual Tri-County Electric lines galloping can be

seen on our website). These conditions continued to create even more problems and issues that would have to be addressed before outages could be restored.

Early in the afternoon, the snow subsided and most of the snow and ice started falling off of the power lines. New outage calls began to slow somewhat and we were now able to better assess the extent of the damage to the high voltage system. Two additional line contractor crews were called in to assist Tri-County Electric crews, along with a crew from Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative and SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative.

During the entire outage, Tri-County Electric crews continued to systematically piece the system back together, repairing broken lines along with many other issues and restoring outages one by one. Tri-County Electric crews and the other crews assisting worked through the night and the early morning hours, continuously chipping away at the tremendous task that we had been challenged with – victory over ‘mother nature’ and getting power restored to all members.

By 6:00 a.m. only a handful of outages remained, affecting less than 100 members and the end was finally in sight! Power was restored to the last outage and 12 members around 11:00 a.m. February 25th.

To give everyone an idea of the extent of this major storm, 7,368 of our 16,222 members were affected by an outage at some point during this storm! Crews responded throughout the storm to 211 different outages that affected these members, or better explained as 211

different lines scattered across our three county area that were off and had to be visited and repaired to get power restored – a truly monumental task! Hats off to our crews and the other crews assisting that worked safely and continuously through these extreme conditions without sleep and with minimal breaks to achieve our goal as quickly as possible. Of the 7,368 members that experienced outages, 5,584 of the outages were less than 4 hours in duration and 834 members were out for an extended time of between 8 and 25 hours. We appreciate everyone’s patience during this major winter storm and outage. As always, Tri-County Electric and its employees take every outage seriously and will continue to work diligently any time that members are without power.



This is a close up photo taken by our crews that shows how snow has the potential to accumulate and weigh down the lines.



When snow packs on a utility line, it weighs the line down. Notice how the “top” line is sagging below the ground line, causing them to cross.