




Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

# Hi-Lites

## Apply Your Capital Credit Check to Your Monthly Bill

As a member of Tri-County Electric, you earn capital credits! When you signed up to receive electric service from Tri-County Electric Cooperative, you became a member of an electric utility. While investor-owned utilities return a portion of any profits back to their shareholders, electric cooperatives operate on an at-cost basis. So instead of returning leftover funds, known as margins, to folks who might not live in the same region or even the same state as you do, Tri-County Electric Cooperative allocates and retires capital credits (also called patronage dividends, patronage refunds, patronage capital, or equity capital) based on how much electricity you purchased during a year.

As circumstances allow, Tri-County Electric writes a check to

members who were on our lines for the specific year we are retiring. During 2024, members who received service in 2000 and 2001 received checks.

**We now offer our members an option of applying their capital credit check directly to their bill.** This allows members the convenience of receiving their capital credits without having to worry about going to the bank to cash a check or even the possibility of losing the check in the mail.

If you are an active member with Tri-County Electric and would like your future capital credit checks to be applied straight to your bill, please contact the Tri-County Electric Billing Department at 618-244-5151, option 6.

### MISSION STATEMENT

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

3906 Broadway  
Mt. Vernon, IL 62864

618-244-5151  
Toll-Free: 800-244-5151  
Fax: 618-244-1496  
Pay by phone:  
1-844-968-1991

**Mt. Vernon  
Office Hours**  
Monday - Friday  
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**Salem  
Office Hours**  
Tuesday - Thursday  
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
(Closed 12 p.m. - 1 p.m.)

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President  
Sam Phillips - Salem

Vice-President  
Doug Knolhoff - Hoyleton

Secretary/Treasurer  
Kathy Withers - Mt. Vernon

Michelle Barbee - Salem  
Tom Beyers - Odin  
Jordan Brink - Richview  
Phil Carson - Oakdale  
Christopher Johnson - Belle Rive  
Donnie Laird - Waltonville

## CAPITAL CREDITS

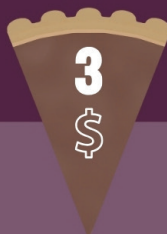
*Your slice of the cooperative pie!*



We keep track of how much electricity you purchased throughout the year.



At the end of the year, we complete a financial analysis and determine operating margins.



Excess revenues are allocated to members (based on electricity use) as capital credits.



When financial conditions permit, our board elects to pay (retire) the capital credits.

# Cooperative Calendar

**February 17, 2025**

TCEC offices closed - President's Day

**April 11, 2025**

Director petitions must be filed before the end of the business day

**April 18, 2025**

TCEC offices closed - Good Friday

**July 12, 2025**

Tri-County Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting



Are you interested in installing solar? Requesting three bids from qualified contractors before hiring for any project can potentially save you a lot of money and hardship down the road. You may be surprised at how different the prices for each contractor can be! We know that the cheapest option isn't necessarily the best option - "You get what you pay for".

However, we have seen instances where members were taken advantage of. We want you to be informed before making a large investment. It takes a little more homework to get three bids, but it's time well spent.

In addition to getting bids, make sure you review any contracts and service agreements thoroughly. Solar units are a major purchase, so discretion and careful review is necessary. Once you have done your due diligence, you can rest easy in your choice, knowing that you made an informed decision.

Want to learn more? On our website, you can find Tri-County Electric Cooperative's solar policies and interconnection agreements. You can also find informational resources, including:

- Solar Energy Brochure for TCEC Members
- Steps to Solar Commissioning
- Questions to ask a Solar Contractor
- Links to State and Federal Solar Resources

*For more information, visit:  
[www.tricountycoop.com/solar-energy](http://www.tricountycoop.com/solar-energy)*



## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

During winter months, ensure your home is well sealed to reduce the need for excessive heating. Seal air leaks around your home and add insulation where needed to save up to 10% on annual energy bills.

Install weather stripping on exterior doors and apply caulk around windows. Check attic insulation levels and hire a qualified contractor if additional insulation is required.

Source: [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov)

# Plant Trees Safely

Before you dig, call 811 to locate buried utility lines.

## LOW TREE ZONE

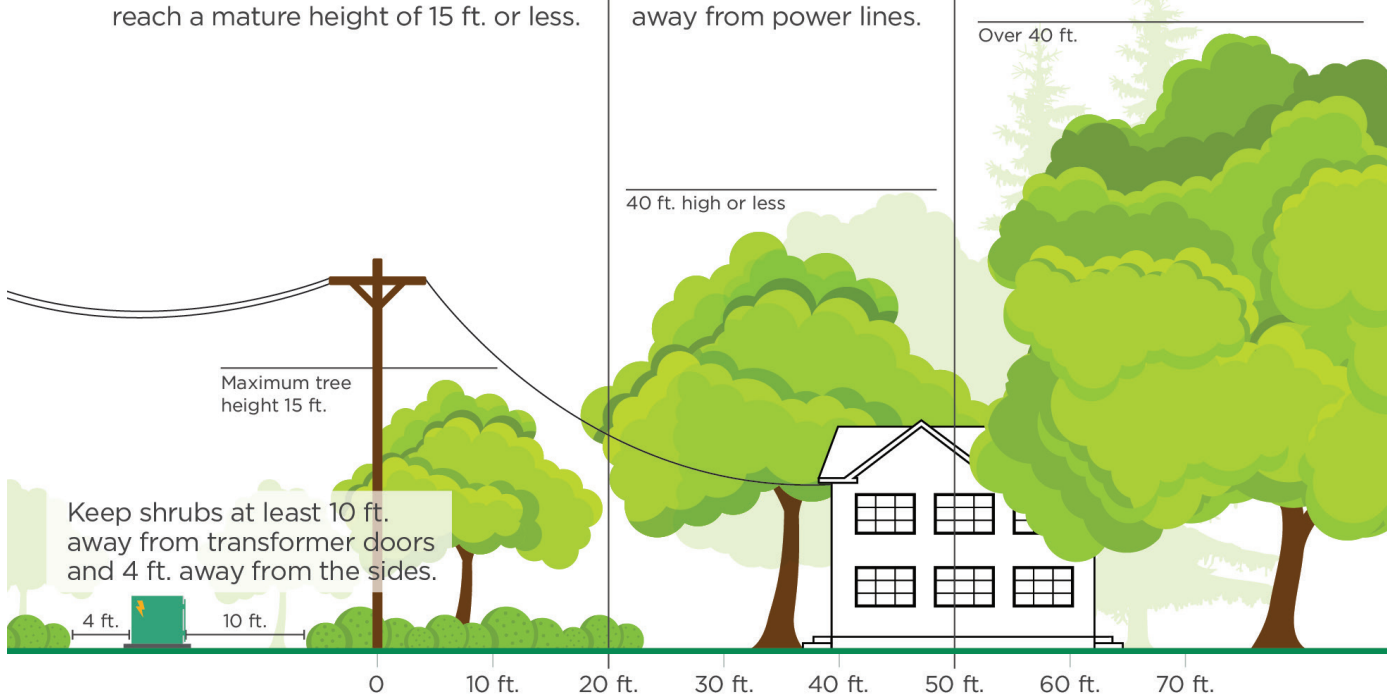
Avoid planting within 20 ft. of power lines. If planting is unavoidable, only plant shrubs and small trees that reach a mature height of 15 ft. or less.

## MEDIUM TREE ZONE

Plant medium trees (under 40 ft. when mature) at least 25 ft. away from power lines.

## LARGE TREE ZONE

Plant large trees (over 40 ft. when mature) at least 50 ft. away from power lines.



## Bacon Cheeseburger Crockpot Tater Tot Casserole

### Ingredients

2 lb. lean ground beef  
10 strips bacon, diced  
1 small onion, diced  
4 cloves garlic, minced  
1/3 c. all purpose flour  
3 cups milk  
1 Tablespoon Worcestershire Sauce  
Dash of hot sauce, optional  
3 cups cheddar cheese, plus extra for topping  
12-16 oz bag frozen mixed vegetables  
1/4 cup sour cream  
salt and pepper to taste  
32 oz bag frozen tater tots

### Directions

1. In a large skillet brown ground beef, bacon, onion and garlic over medium heat until beef is thoroughly cooked.
2. Sprinkle flour over the beef mixture and stir well. Stir in the milk, Worcestershire sauce and hot sauce.
3. Cook for 3 minutes or until thickened.
4. Remove from heat and stir in the cheddar, frozen vegetables and sour cream
5. Spray the crockpot with non-stick spray. Place some tater tots in the bottom of the crock pot.
6. Pour beef mixture over tater tots.
7. Cover and cook on low for 3 hours. In the last 10 minutes of cooking, sprinkle with extra cheddar if desired.

# **LADDERS** are involved in more **ELECTROCUTIONS** than any other product

- CPSC report



**Safe Electricity offers the following tips to use when working with ladders:**

- Keep equipment and yourself at least 10 feet from power lines.
- Work only when weather permits. Rain is a good conductor of electricity, and wind could blow a ladder out of control and into a power line.
- Never trim near power lines. Call professional tree trimmers to do the job.
- Never use water or blower extensions to clean gutters near electric lines. Contact a professional maintenance contractor.
- Follow safety guidelines whether you use an aluminum, wooden, or fiberglass ladder. Although some materials are better conductors than others, all ladders require the same precautions.

**For more information on protecting yourself from outdoor electrical hazards, visit:**

**Safe**  
**Electricity.org**<sup>®</sup>

