

# HI-LITES

## Touchstone Energy Classroom Empowerment Grant Winners



- **Sarah Maschhoff** - Okawville Grade School
- **Linda Klingenberg** - Nashville Grade School
- **Ellen Radtke** - Odin Attendance Center
- **Amber Metcalf** - Odin Public School
- **Mitch Martin** - Selmaville School
- **Ashlee Ort** - McClellan Grade School
- **Sarah Morgan** - Woodlawn High School
- **Melissa Hefner** - Woodlawn Grade School



Tri-County Electric Cooperative is proud to announce the recipients of our 2025-2026 Classroom Empowerment Grants. These K-12 educators were selected for their innovative project ideas that will enhance learning opportunities for students in our communities.

This year, we had a record breaking amount of applications. We wish we could fund them all because they were all great.

At Tri-County Electric Cooperative, Concern for Community is one of our core principles. We know many teachers personally invest in their classrooms and often fund

creative, hands-on learning experiences out of their own pockets. Our Classroom Empowerment Grants are designed to support these meaningful projects, remove financial barriers, and ensure educators have the tools they need to inspire the next generation.

Thank you to every teacher and administrator who applied this year. Your dedication to your students and your schools does not go unnoticed.

*Photos of all grant winners can be found on page 2.*

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### Mt. Vernon Office

3906 Broadway

Mt. Vernon, IL 62864

Monday - Friday

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

### Salem Office

1631 E Main St.

Salem, IL 62881

Tuesday - Thursday

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

Closed: 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### President

Sam Phillips, Salem

#### Vice President

Tom Beyers, Odin

#### Secretary/Treasurer

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Michelle Barbee, Salem

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Phone: (618) 244-5151

Toll-Free: (800) 244-5151

Pay-by-Phone: (844) 968-1991

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## Cooperative Calendar

**February 16, 2026**  
TCEC offices closed - President's Day

**April 3, 2026**  
TCEC offices closed - Good Friday

**April 11, 2026**  
Director petitions must be filed before the end of the business day

**July 11, 2026**  
Tri-County Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting



# How will you MAKE YOUR MARK?

Experience the trip of a lifetime with Youth Tour!

- Explore Washington, D.C. through historic monuments, world-class museums, and visits with elected officials.
- Build leadership skills and discover how you can make your mark on the future.
- Connect with students from across the country and form friendships that last a lifetime, all sponsored by your local electric cooperative.

## Who is eligible?

- Sophomores, Juniors, & Seniors
- Must live in a home served by TCEC.

Learn more: [www.tricountycoop.com/youth-tour](http://www.tricountycoop.com/youth-tour)



Scan QR to Apply Online

## 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



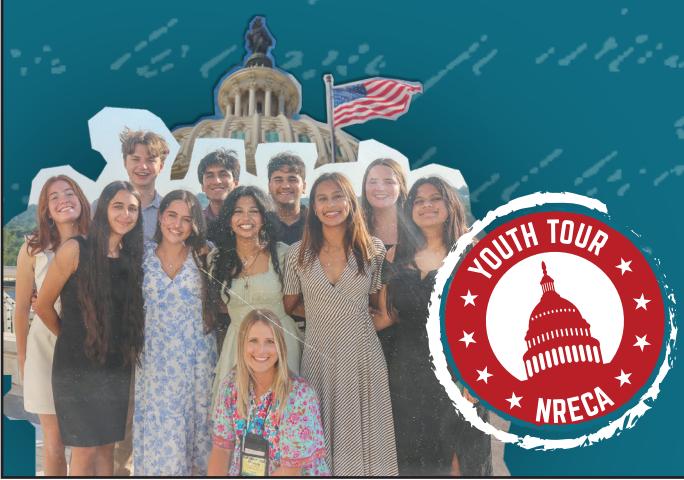
## Rates Effective March 2026

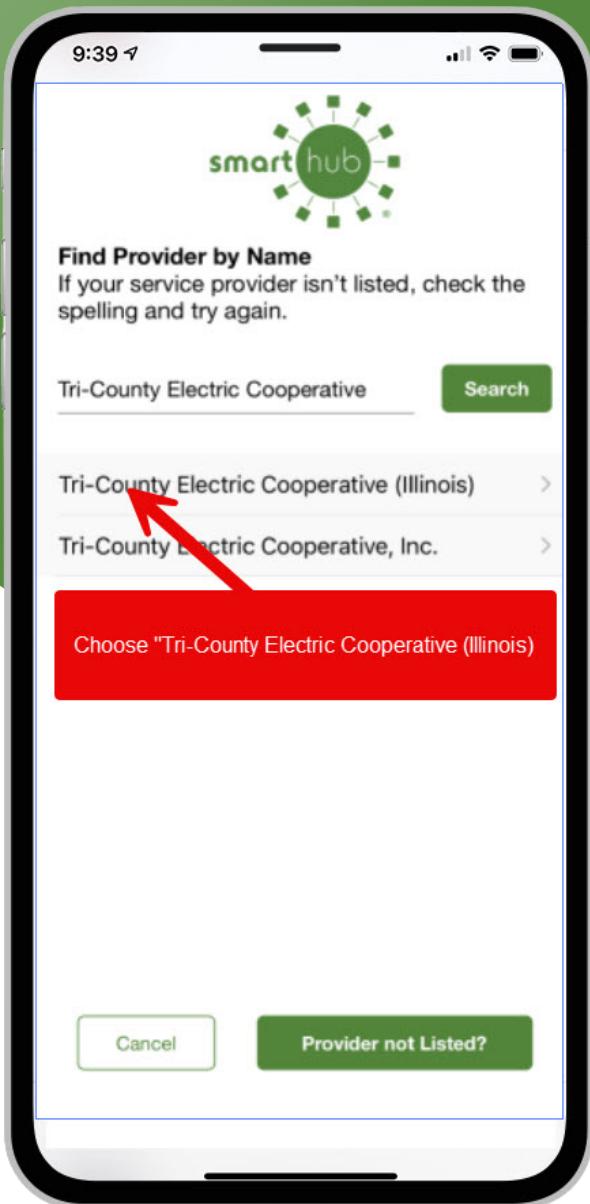
After careful consideration, beginning with March 2026 usage, the service availability charge for Rates 1 and 7 will increase \$3.00 per month. This will be accompanied by an increase in the price of the first 1,000 kWh from 11.24 cents to 12.3 cents.

Members on Rate 1 using over 1,000 kWh will see an increase from 10.24 cents to 11.3 cents for kilowatts used after the first 1,000 kWh.

Members on Rate 7 using over 1,000 kWh will see an increase from 9.24 to 10.3 for kilowatts used after the first 1,000 kWh in the winter, and an increase from 11.24 to 12.3 in the summer.

The new rates are designed to help us offset rising costs in energy, materials, and supplies. We understand that any increase in costs can be challenging, and we want to assure you that we have worked hard to keep this adjustment as reasonable as possible.





**Scan the qr code below to learn more and download the SmartHub App!**



# POWER IN YOUR HANDS.

Your cooperative,  
now more convenient.



**TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.**



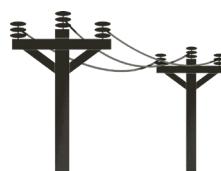
## **PAY YOUR BILL**

Make payments quickly and securely through the SmartHub app. Set up automatic payments, store your preferred method, and manage your account with ease.



## **CHECK YOUR ENERGY USAGE**

View detailed, real-time energy use to better understand your habits, avoid surprises on your bill, and make informed decisions to save energy and money.



## **REPORT POWER OUTAGES**

Let us know about an outage with just a tap!