



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Hi-Lites



Manager's Notes

Luke Johnson
General Manager

In last month's newsletter, I briefly discussed the challenges facing the electric utility industry today. We are now seeing the effects those challenges have placed on the cost of energy.

Our power costs have increased from 2022 by approximately \$3 million dollars as a result of the increase in coal costs, along with other commodities and inflationary increases to material costs both at Tri-County Electric Cooperative (TCEC) and Southern Illinois Power Cooperative (SIPC).

We are not able to absorb these cost increases like we had hoped, and therefore we are in need of a rate increase to be able to continue with infrastructure upgrades, regular maintenance, and to meet our debt requirements.

As a cooperative that is owned by the membership, we only pass through the costs we need to make our debt requirements. Since a cooperative is a not-for-profit, we are not in the business of making excess margins or lining the pockets of investors.

Our core mission is to safely provide you with reliable electric service, superior customer service, and practical energy solutions, all at reasonable prices.

To account for rising costs in energy, beginning with March 2023 usage, our 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 10.7 cents to 10.8 cents or 1/10ths of a cent increase.

Members on Rate 1 using over 1,000 kWh will see an increase from 8.64 cents to 9.24 cents for kilowatts used after the first 1,000 kWh.

Members on Rate 7 using over 1,000 kWh will see an increase from 7.64 to 8.24 for kilowatts used after the first 1,000 kWh in the winter, and an increase from 9.64 to 10.24 in the summer.

TCEC understands that even a slight increase in rates affects our members. Your power needs and reliability are our priority in any decision regarding rate increases. On page 2, you will find monthly examples of how much you can expect your bill to change.

Your cooperative employees and board of directors are committed to our mission and serving you. We continue to adapt to evolving circumstances and will continue to keep you informed along the way. Any margins at the end of the year will be allocated back to the membership and in future years, be paid back in patronage dividends.

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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:
855-385-9902

**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

Donnie Laird - Waltonville

Vice-President

Doug Knolhoff - Hoyleton

Secretary/Treasurer

Sam Phillips - Salem

Michelle Barbee - Salem

Tom Beyers - Odin

Jordan Brink - Richview

Phil Carson - Oakdale

Larry Manning - Belle Rive

Kathy Withers - Mt. Vernon

Monthly example as follows:

Zero usage	\$3.00	increase
500 kWh usage	\$3.50	increase
700 kWh usage	\$3.70	increase
1,000 kWh usage	\$4.00	increase
2,000 kWh usage	\$10.00	increase
3,000 kWh usage	\$16.00	increase
5,000 kWh usage	\$28.00	increase
7,000 kWh usage	\$40.00	increase
10,000 kWh usage	\$58.00	increase

Cajun Vegetable Soup

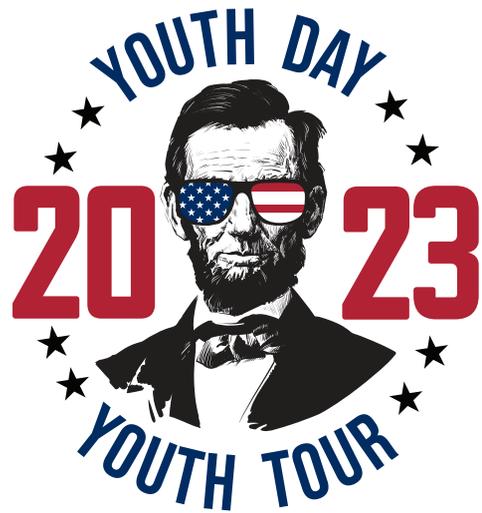
Ingredients:

- 1 ½ Tbsp. unflavored coconut oil
- 4 cups chicken broth
- 1 Tbsp. minced garlic
- 2 Tbsp. Smoked Paprika
- 1 tsp. black pepper
- 1 ½ tsp. creole seasoning
- 2 lb. chicken sausage links (sliced)
- 1 onion (chopped)
- 1 (12 oz.) bag cut frozen okra
- 1 (12 oz.) bag frozen riced cauliflower
- 1 bag of angel hair coleslaw
- 2 celery stalks (chopped)
- 1 ½ bell peppers (any color; chopped)
- 1 (14.5 oz.) can diced tomatoes
- 1 (10 oz.) can Rotel-style tomatoes with chiles

Directions:

1. Put coconut oil and the sliced chicken sausage links in the bottom of a large soup pot until the edges are crisp. Add the onion, celery, and bell pepper to the same pot and cook through.
2. Add remaining ingredients to the same pot and cook on medium heat for 30 minutes. Stir every 5-10 minutes. Reduce heat to low and let simmer for another 15-30 minutes.

Optional: You may also add peeled shrimp or crawfish for a heartier soup. This is great served over rice!



Students will create lasting memories while visiting the Civil War Battlefield at Gettysburg, the National Cathedral, Smithsonian Museums, George Washington's home, Supreme Court, Kennedy Center, Arlington National Cemetery, and the Holocaust Museum, among many other sites. This well-chaperoned, educational program is sponsored by electric cooperatives throughout the nation and focuses on leadership and character-building skills.

Tri-County Electric Cooperative (TCEC) will sponsor two students from each county in our service area (Jefferson, Marion, and Washington) on an all-expense paid bus trip to Springfield on March 29, 2023. During the day, you and students from other Illinois high schools will meet your elected senators and representatives at the Capitol and learn first-hand about the workings of state government.

TCEC will also sponsor three of these students on a weeklong trip to Washington D.C. on June 16-23, 2023. During the week in the nation's capital, the Illinois student contingent will hopefully meet with Senators Terri Bryant and Jason Plummer. The U.S. Representatives will meet with students for a luncheon while on Capitol Hill.

Who should apply? High School Sophmores, Juniors, and Seniors that reside in a home served by Tri-County. Home school students may participate as well! This program is intended for student-leaders with opporunities for leadership building. *Application on page 4*

For more information, contact Lynn Hutchison, Director of Member Services at 618-244-5151 or lhutchison@tricitycoop.com. You may also visit www.tricitycoop.com/youthtour.

St. Mary TechKnights Robotics Club Partner with Tri-County Electric Cooperative for Invention Competition

On Saturday, December 3rd, eight members of the St. Mary TechKnights Robotics Club (grades 6-8) attended a Qualifying Competition for First Lego League at Fulton Junior High in O'Fallon, IL. Mrs. Carla Chesnek and Mr. Blake Jones mentored the team throughout their "Super Powered" season.

The team worked with Tri-County Electric Cooperative using data pertaining to power outages due to animals damaging substations. The team "invented" an Avian Eliminator which would use a sensor and detect when a bird would fly into a substation to nest. The sensor would trigger a predator sound and scare the bird away in a humane manner.

Tri-County Electric Cooperative Engineering, Operations, and Member Services departments attended meetings with the robotics team to answer questions and provide information on the challenges facing cooperatives today. The robotics club returned with a final presentation for the cooperative before their competition.

The team also designed and programmed a Lego robot to complete missions on the "Super-Powered" mat. The TechKnights placed 6th out

of 25 teams earning a spot at the state competition in Champaign in January. For their "Avian Eliminator" invention, the team placed second.

Lynn Hutchison, Director of Member Services, stated, "It was an honor to work with such a bright and professional group of individuals. They had challenging questions and innovative solutions. I look forward to seeing all they will accomplish." Congratulations, St. Mary TechKnights Robotics Club!



St. Mary TechKnights Robotics Club team members (left to right) Maliya Jones, Ella Johnson, Jacob Kula, Alyssa Ortgiesen, Brady Anderson, Mia Thompson, Eva Lemay, Maggie Federici (Facilitators: Mrs. Carla Chesnek and Mr. Blake Jones)

Cooperative Calendar

February 8, 2023

Director petitions available for pickup at the TCEC Mt. Vernon Office

February 20, 2023

TCEC offices closed - President's Day

February 21, 2023

Youth Tour Application Due - See back of newsletter for application!

March 29, 2023

Youth to Springfield - See back of newsletter to apply for Youth Tour!

April 7, 2022

TCEC offices closed - Good Friday

April 10, 2023

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

May 19, 2023

American Red Cross Blood Drive at TCEC

July 8, 2023

Tri-County Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting



TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

YOUTH DAY: MARCH 29, 2023

YOUTH TOUR: JUNE 16-23, 2023

DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 21, 2023

YOUTH DAY & YOUTH TO WASHINGTON, D.C. CONTEST

APPLICATION

Name: _____

Parent(s) or Guardian(s) Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Cell Number: _____ Parent Cell Number: _____

Can we text you? Y N Can we text parents? Y N

Parent Email Address: _____

Email Address: _____

T-Shirt Size: _____

High School: _____ Grade: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Age: _____

How did you hear about the program? _____

Using additional paper, please provide the following information:

1. Personal Achievement (Include both School & Non-School Activities)
2. What are your plans after high school?
3. If you could change anything about your state, what would it be and why?
4. What is the difference between an investor-owned utility and an electric cooperative? Explain the benefit(s) of being a cooperative member.
5. If you win the Youth to Washington program, you may be asked to help promote the program to fellow classmates next year. Describe one way you would promote the program. Be creative!
6. Why are you applying for the Youth Tour Program?

By completing and submitting this application, I verify my eligibility to attend Youth Day, March 29, in Springfield. If chosen as a Youth Day participant, I commit to the trip to Springfield. I also understand that if I should be selected as one of the winners of this contest, I would take the all-expense-paid tour to Washington, D.C., June 16-23, 2023.

Student's Signature _____

I hereby give my consent for _____ to participate in the "Youth to Washington" contest and to take the all-expense-paid tour to Washington, D.C. if selected as a winner.

Parent or Guardian's Signature _____

Application deadline: February 21st, 2023 - Mail to: Tri-County Electric Cooperative, Inc.

ATTN: Lynn Hutchison, 3906 Broadway ST, Mt. Vernon, IL 62864 or lhutchison@tricitycoop.com