



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Hi-Lites

There's a Lot of Life Left Here



Marcia Scott,
General Manager

Your Board of Directors, following more than a year of thoughtful deliberations, made a decision to remodel our headquarters facility.

We have been at our 3906 Broadway location in Mount Vernon for many years and have taken good care of our facility.

Our building was originally constructed in 1953 and consisted of the front office and a small garage. Then, in 1975,

the 'new' addition was built on the east side of the building consisting of administrative, engineering, operations, and large garage/warehouse areas. The large garage/warehouse is where our annual meeting is held. The mechanic's area was built in 1986 and an additional garage/storage area was added in 1994.

Over the years, we have added a pitched roof to the building and updated

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1953 Tri-County Electric Cooperative Headquarters - Mt. Vernon, IL

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 ST
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

Greg Vieira - Salem

Vice-President

Donnie Laird - Waltonville

Secretary/Treasurer

Sam Phillips - Salem

Tom Beyers - Odin
Phil Carson - Oakdale
Doug Knolhoff - Hoyleton
Larry Manning - Belle Rive
Rick Russell - Richview
Kathy Withers - Mt. Vernon

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our windows to smaller, more energy efficient ones. We completed a remodel of our lobby area in 2015, updating the area and adding features to provide a secure environment for employees and members.

The Board has discussed the condition of our current facility for quite some time. They toured other cooperative facilities – both new construction and remodeled. A study was completed by Cooperative Building Solutions that included an inspection of our current building, a needs assessment, and cost estimates for a new facility and a remodel of the current facility. Following further deliberation by the Board, it was decided a remodel was the prudent decision.

We are proud of the fact that we have taken good care of our facility since the building was originally constructed in 1953. The Board of Directors wanted to continue this practice to make our current facility last as long as practical. We feel that a remodel will extend its life by fifteen to twenty years.

The remodel will include work in our pole yard area to add more areas with concrete and to allow our trucks to enter and exit on the east side of the building, nearer the traffic lights. This will minimize trucks driving in front of the building where our members are entering and exiting. We plan to reconfigure the space inside our facility – focusing on the older part of the building that was constructed in 1953 – in order to utilize our space more efficiently. We will add areas off our lobby so members signing up for new service or needing to discuss their electric usage can do so privately and securely.

We are in the very early stages of a big project, but it is important we keep the membership informed. We will provide newsletter articles and Facebook posts to show you the progress and the end result of our remodel project. We will work hard to minimize any inconvenience to our members as we undertake this project.



More Convenient Payment Options Coming Soon!

Your life is busy - we are here to help! Members can pay their Tri-County Electric Cooperative bills through automatic bank withdrawal, by mailing a check, visiting us in the office, on our SmartHub app, and over the phone. Coming soon, members will also have the option to make cash payments at select local merchant locations throughout our service territory (for a small convenience fee)!

To make a payment at one of your local utility payment locations, have your ID and Tri-County Electric Cooperative account number available. It may even be helpful to bring your bill with you. We plan to have additional details on this exciting and new, convenient bill pay option in an upcoming issue of the Hi-Lites.

NEW Salem Office Hours

Effective May 4, 2020

Tuesday - Thursday
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
(Closed 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.)
Closed Mondays and Fridays

May is Electrical Safety Month

Electricity plays many roles in our lives, from powering baby monitors, cell phones and lighting, to running HVAC systems and appliances. No wonder we get so comfortable with its instant availability that when we flip a switch, we expect most systems or devices to do the job.

May is National Electrical Safety Month, and here at Tri-County Electric Cooperative, we think it's a great time to look around your home and check for potential safety hazards.

Remember, every electrical device has a purpose and a service lifespan. While we can extend their operations with maintenance and care, none of them are designed to last or work forever. When electricity is involved, failures can present electrical hazards that might be avoided with periodic inspections.

Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters

Outdoor outlets or those in potentially damp locations in a kitchen, bathroom or laundry room often include GFCI features. They are designed to sense abnormal current flows, breaking the circuit to prevent potential electric shocks from devices plugged into the outlets. The average GFCI outlet is designed to last about 10 years, but in areas prone to electrical storms or power surges, they can wear out in five years or less. Check them frequently by pressing the red test button. Make sure you hit the black reset button when you are done. Contact a licensed electrician to replace any failing GFCI outlets.



Loose or Damaged Outlets or Switches

Unstable electrical outlets or wall switches with signs of heat damage or discolor-

ation can offer early warnings of potential shock or electrical fire hazards. Loose connections can allow electrical current arcing. If you see these warning signs, it may be time to contact an electrician.

Surge Protectors

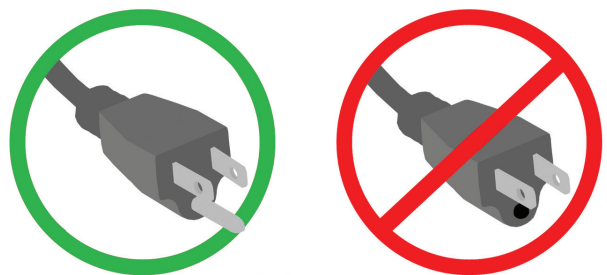
Power strips with surge protectors can help safeguard expensive equipment like televisions, home entertainment systems and computer components from power spikes. Voltage spikes are measured in joules, and surge protectors are rated for the number of joules they can effectively absorb. That means if your surge protector is rated at 1,000 joules, it should be replaced when it hits or passes that limit. When the limit is reached, protection stops, and you're left with a basic power strip.

Some surge protectors include indicator lights that flicker to warn you when they've stopped working as designed, but many do not. If your electrical system takes a major hit, or if you don't remember when you bought your surge protector, replacement may be the best option.

Extension Cords

If you use extension cords regularly to connect devices and equipment to your wall outlets, you may live in an underwired home. With a growing number of electrical devices, having enough outlets in just the right spots can be challenging. Remember, extension cords are designed for temporary, occasional or periodic use. If an extension cord gets noticeably warm when in use, it could be undersized for

never remove the third prong



Safe
Electricity.org

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the intended use. If it shows any signs of frayed, cracked or heat-damaged insulation, it should be replaced. If the grounding prong is missing, crimped or loose, a grounded cord will not provide the protection designed into its performance. And always make sure that extension cords used in outdoor or potentially damp locations are rated for exterior use.

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, approximately 51,000 electrical fires are reported each year in the United States, causing more than \$1.3 billion in annual property damage.

Electricity is an essential necessity for modern living, and Tri-County Electric Cooperative is committed to providing safe, reliable and affordable power to all of our members. We hope you'll keep these electrical safety tips in mind so that you can note any potential hazards before damage occurs.

Address Update

Please be aware that the mailing address for Tri-County Electric Cooperative has changed from our post office box to our street address. All correspondence to the cooperative should be addressed to 3906 Broadway ST, Mt. Vernon, IL 62864. All payment remit stubs have the new address. If you have your bank send a check to the cooperative, please update the address with your bank.



Cooperative offices will be closed on Monday, May 25th in observance of Memorial Day.

Ritz Cracker Pudding

Crust

Ingredients

- 68 Ritz Crackers (2 sleeves)
- 1 stick melted butter
- 4 Tablespoons sugar

Directions

1. Crush crackers
2. Mix with melted butter and sugar
3. Press mixture into bottom of 9 x13 pan.

Filling

Ingredients

- 2 cups milk
- 2 boxes instant french vanilla pudding
- 1 quart softened french vanilla or vanilla bean ice cream

Directions

1. Mix milk and pudding together.
2. Add softened ice cream.
3. Beat 3 minutes.
4. Pour over crust.

Topping

Top with 8 oz. Cool Whip

Refrigerate (no need to freeze)

This month's recipe was submitted by your friendly Cooperative Accountant, Christine Harris.

