


# Tri-County Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

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Monday through Friday  
7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

GUEST COLUMN

## Interactive web page helps you see 'green' in every room



by Bryan Berguson  
Director of Member Services

**"THE GREENEST** dollar is the one you don't spend on energy." This is a quote from Jim Bausell, chief operating officer of Touchstone Energy, in a speech he gave at your co-op's 2008 annual meeting. But what does it mean?

When most people talk about green dollars, they are referring to money spent on alternative energy products such as solar or wind power.

Unfortunately, we live in an area of the country where we have neither abundant sunshine or wind, so dollars spent on those projects aren't all that green, so to speak.

Ultimately, we need to reduce the amount of energy we use if we want to have true "green dollars." It's the dollar you don't spend that really makes the difference — by reducing the nation's demand for energy.

To help members keep more green dollars in their wallets by conserving energy, Tri-County recently added a new area to our website called HomeEnergySuite.

The suite is loaded with helpful energy conservation and efficiency tips, definitions and energy-use calculators designed specifically for the area we live in and using our local energy rates for electricity, natural gas, fuel oil and other energy sources. Using this suite of energy calculators, you should be able find ways to make your house as green as possible. Let's take a look and see how it works.

Open your favorite web browser and go to www.tri-countyrec.com. Now click on the "HomeEnergySuite" link. The first tab, labeled "Interactive House," will show you a cutaway of a house and the typical rooms found in most homes. Clicking on any of the rooms leads you to a page with energy-related information specific to that room. You'll find tips on lighting, energy-saving suggestions and even the most efficient types of appliances. Spend a little


time on this and be sure to check out all of the rooms. The Interactive House is filled with great energy-saving tips for every area of your home.

Let's move on to some of the suite's calculators by clicking on the Calculator tab. Here is where we can get into the real meat and potatoes of energy savings. There are five calculators on this page: Home Energy, Appliance, Lighting, TV and Space Heater.

The Home Energy Calculator has fields in which you enter information to describe your house. Once you've completed all the fields, you should see a fairly accurate cost estimate based on your current energy needs. After your initial calculation, you can make changes to your inputs to determine the potential for savings. Your original costs will be displayed along with the new costs, so you can easily see the differences. This can be done over and over, allowing you to test any number of scenarios to see what makes the most sense for you. There are also detailed reports on this page to show you exactly where the savings occur.

The other calculators are directed toward individual energy users such as stoves, refrigerators, hair dryers (not that I have much use for one of those), lights, TVs and space heaters. These pages will show you average monthly and annual costs to operate those appliances and electronic devices, allowing you to quickly pinpoint some of those not-so-obvious energy users.

The opportunity for saving energy is all around us, sometimes right under our noses. Hopefully, we can help you find some of these opportunities with the programs we have in place.

Spend some time exploring our new HomeEnergySuite, and we think you'll find some ways to save money. If you don't have a home computer or access to the internet, give our member services department a call and we'll be happy to do some calculations for you to see if you have any "green" dollars hiding in your house. 

# Thunder Ridge targets hunting, shooting enthusiasts

BY JEFF FETZER

WITH JANUARY'S departure, many Pennsylvania upland bird hunters resign themselves to the notion that they will have to wait until next fall to resume their preferred outdoor endeavor.

But if you enjoy busting brush behind a bird dog with shotgun in hand, Tri-County members Bill and Irene Appel offer an appealing off-season solution at Thunder Ridge Sporting Clays and Game Farm, the couple's hunting and shooting preserve in northern Tioga County.



**TOP GUN:** Master-class shooter and Level III sporting clays instructor Bill Appel of Middlebury Center, left, offers private shooting instruction to Jack Wilcox of Andover, N.J., on the sporting clays course at Thunder Ridge.

The regulated preserve offers pheasant and chukar hunting opportunities on the Appel farm near Middlebury Center from Sept. 1 through the last Saturday in April. The hunting options include unguided hunts, guided hunts with bird dogs, guided horseback hunts with bird dogs, and continental-driven pheasant shoots.

For upland bird hunts, a hunting party purchases pheasants or chukars that have been raised at the game farm. The birds are released on the grounds prior to the hunt, which must be scheduled in advance. The hunting party, which usually consists of two to four guns, can schedule either a morning hunt or an afternoon hunt.

"The cover at Thunder Ridge is well

above standard for a hunting preserve," Bill Appel notes. "We have planted a lot of switch grass, which grows to a height of six to eight feet. When it snows, the switch grass folds over, creating pockets for the birds to hide in, and making for much better hunting conditions than you would typically find in Pennsylvania during the winter months."

In addition to swaths of switch grass, the preserve grounds contain a mix of food plots, corn fields, fencerows and woodlots.

While hunting is limited to pheasant and chukar this time of year, Thunder Ridge offers guided wild turkey hunts in the spring and fall, as well as deer and bear hunting opportunities during the statewide hunting seasons for those game animals.

But hunting isn't the only attraction at Thunder Ridge. The shooting preserve houses a fully automated 16-field sporting clays course for shooting sports enthusiasts. Sporting clays, which the Appels liken to "golf with a shotgun," is a game in which participants use a shotgun in an attempt to break clay targets that simulate flying gamebirds or running rabbits in a field setting.

Thunder Ridge features 48 shooting positions along its 1.5-mile course designed by Raymond Foreman, owner of Clay Sport International in Alberta, Canada.

"Ray has designed some of the best sporting clays facilities in the world that you will never see, because they are mostly private, corporate deals," Bill Appel says. "He designed our course for the public and



**RIGHT AT HOME:** Tri-County members Irene and Bill Appel relax inside the lodge at Thunder Ridge Sporting Clays and Game Farm. The shooting and hunting preserve opened on the Appels' 250-acre Middlebury Center property in the fall of 2005.

designed it in a way that would be efficient to move people quickly and safely. It's built in a loop and features a lot of terrain."

Shooters usually travel the course via all-terrain vehicles or golf carts. A round of sporting clays typically consists of 100 clay targets. For a group of four or five shooters, it takes about 2.5 to 3 hours to shoot the course. Cost for a round of clays is \$25 for club members and \$35 for non-members.

The Appels note there are three types of sporting clays shooters: competitive tournament shooters, recreational shooters, and hunters seeking to sharpen their shooting skills prior to hunting season.

"It's a fun business to be in," reports Bill



**FAMILY TIME:** Dr. Michael Ferchaw of Addison, N.Y., and his daughter, Victoria, display pheasants harvested during a winter hunt at the Tioga County preserve. Because it is a regulated preserve, Thunder Ridge is able to offer upland bird hunting opportunities for pheasants and chukars from Sept. 1 through April 25. The birds released for hunting are raised on site.

Appel, an avid deer hunter and master-class sporting clays shooter. “You meet a lot of great people from all over. They all like to hunt or shoot, so how bad can it be?”

Bill Appel’s association with sporting clays dates back to the early 1990s, shortly after the game burst onto the American shooting-sports scene. Originally an avid trap shooter, Appel was an early convert to sporting clays, which originated in the United Kingdom more than 60 years ago but wasn’t introduced in the United States until the 1980s.

He enjoyed the challenges presented by the variety of shot angles and target sizes offered on sporting clays courses, as well as the fact that each course is designed differently. Since there was a very limited number of sporting clays facilities in the region, Appel decided to open his own course.

In 1992, the Appels dispersed their dairy herd, and Bill began pursuing a career in the sporting clays industry. In 1994, he hired a course designer and opened his own facility, the original Thunder Ridge, on leased property near Lawrenceville. After a year of successful operation, however, Appel lost his lease and was forced to close the course.

He then took a job with a sporting clays club in Quakertown, followed by a seven-year stint as manager and operator of Rock Mountain Sporting Clays in

Susquehanna County.

After tiring of the 99-mile commute from Middlebury to Rock Mountain, Appel decided it was time to work closer to home. He converted his 250-acre property into a combination game farm, hunting preserve and sporting clays facility. In September 2005, the second incarnation of Thunder Ridge opened for business.

“From our experience at Rock

Mountain, we knew we had to diversify if we wanted to have a successful year-round business,” Irene says. “In the summertime, sporting clays is the dominant business, but once hunting season starts, sporting clays participation drops and the focus shifts to the hunting portion of the business.”

The sporting clays course at Thunder Ridge is open to the public year-round, and the facility offers recreational shooting, registered tournaments, charity tournaments and summer and winter leagues.

League and recreational shooters tend to hail from Pennsylvania and New York, but Thunder Ridge’s registered tournaments draw shooters from throughout the Northeast.

“Because of our association with Rock Mountain, we had already established a reputation at being very good at hosting registered tournaments,” says Irene. “Participants have come to expect a certain high standard at one of our shoots. If there is food being served, the food is always good. The target presentations are excellent. The grounds are well-kept, registration is timely and organized, and everybody is friendly.”

Irene pointed out that because of its reputation for quality tournaments, Thunder Ridge was asked to host the Pennsylvania Eastern Zone shoot in May

2009, and was elected as the site of the Pennsylvania State Sporting Clays Championship, which draws about 250 to 300 shooters, in 2010.

In addition to sporting clays and hunts, Thunder Ridge provides shotgun shooting instruction. Bill Appel is a National Sporting Clays Association Level III instructor, the highest certification level possible, and a former competitive shooter. He offers individual shooting lessons at his facility and also travels around the country to provide training clinics for those interested in becoming shooting instructors.

The Appels recently obtained a federal firearms license and plan to begin selling Beretta and Perzzi firearms from a gun room that will be incorporated into the Thunder Ridge lodge this year. The lodge, formerly the Appels’ dairy barn, features a 40-by-50-foot main room attractively remodeled in knotty pine and decorated with numerous game mounts and wildlife art.

Additional information about Thunder Ridge Sporting Clays and Game Farm, located at 619 Leon Brown Road in Middlebury Center, can be found online at [www.thunderridgesporting.com](http://www.thunderridgesporting.com) or by calling 570/376-2414. ☀



**SERIOUS FUN:** Terry Knittle of Williamsport records score while Jack Macko, also of Williamsport, fires away at clay targets during the Kids & Clays Charity Shoot held at Thunder Ridge last summer. The event, which raised nearly \$5,000 for the Ronald McDonald House program, will return on July 11. It is one of four charity events the shooting preserve plans to host this year.

# Let PAiD program pay your electric bill automatically

**IF YOU ARE LOOKING** for ways to simplify your life, Tri-County's Payment Automatically Deducted (PAiD) program may be for you.

PAiD is Tri-County's automated bill-payment program. By participating, you can avoid the hassle of searching for stamps, licking envelopes and worrying about whether your payment arrives on time.

When you participate in the PAiD program, the payment for your electric bill is automatically drafted from your checking or savings account each month. Even if you are out of town, your bill will be paid on time. You'll never have to worry about paying a late fee again.

Signing up is easy. Simply complete the form that appears below and return it to Tri-County. Make sure to check with your bank for its federal reserve routing number.

Here's what happens after you sign up:

- ▶ The first automated payment will be made the second billing period after we receive your completed form. The first month will be a trial run to verify account numbers. No money will be moved.
- ▶ You will continue to receive a monthly bill statement.
- ▶ Your bill statement will alert you to the date that your payment will be automatically withdrawn.

With Tri-County's PAiD program, paying your electric bill is simple. There are no sign-up charges or transaction fees.

To become a PAiD participant, just complete and return the coupon below — we'll do the rest. For additional information about PAiD, call us at 800/343-2559.

I authorize Tri-County Rural Electric Cooperative to instruct my financial institution to make electric payments from the account listed below. I will notify Tri-County REC if I decide to discontinue this payment service or change banks or account numbers.

Customer Name (as it appears on your bill)

Address

City State Zip Code

Tri-County Account Number

Name of Financial Institution

Address of Financial Institution

Bank Account Number:

Checking or Savings

Bank's Federal Reserve Routing Number

Account Holder's Signature Date

## Energy-saving dryer tips

### DON'T OVERDRY CLOTHES

Removing clothes from your dryer while still slightly damp not only reduces drying time, but also reduces the need for ironing, which will also lower your energy use. Other reasons for not overdrying clothes include reducing static electricity and shrinkage, plus adding longer fabric life.

It helps to separate your clothes into light- and heavy-weight fabrics, as the lighter weight ones dry quicker, while heavier weight ones take longer. Separating before drying lets you dry the first load and then take advantage of the already heated drum for the next load.

### DRY FULL LOADS

Accumulate laundry when possible so you can wash and dry full loads. In many cases, you may have a matched washer and dryer so a full washer load will also be a full dryer load. At the same time, take care you do not overfill either the washer or the dryer. Washing and drying small loads wastes energy, and overloading causes other problems.

### CHECK DRYER VENTS

The dryer exhaust vent must be periodically cleaned of accumulated lint. The hood flapper valve should also be checked to make sure it opens and closes freely. Otherwise cold outside air will enter the house through the dryer vent, increasing your heating costs.

### CLEAN DRYER FILTER

Follow the manufacturer's instructions and clean the dryer lint filter before each load. Restricted air flow from a clogged filter can be a fire hazard and reduce a dryer's performance.

### DRY FOR FREE

When weather permits, hang your clothes outdoors and use free solar and wind energy to dry your laundry.

These tips and many more like them can be found in the Home Energy Library of Tri-County's online HomeEnergySuite. To access the suite, visit [www.tri-countyrec.com](http://www.tri-countyrec.com).