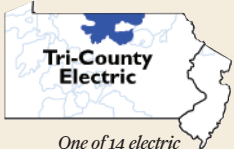


Tri-County Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Tri-County Electric
One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

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OFFICE HOURS

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

FROM THE PRESIDENT/CEO

The co-op commitment to affordable power



by Craig Eccher

EACH MONTH you budget for your phone, electricity, house and car payments. Generally you know how much each bill will cost and plan your spending accordingly. But what if you couldn't control your energy costs? What if, each month, they climbed beyond your reach?

At Tri-County Rural Electric, we deliver affordable power to you every day. It's why electric cooperatives were created, and it's a commitment we plan to keep. But national energy legislation could force prices higher than many consumers can afford, effectively taking us back to the dawn of the 20th century.

In the 1920s and early 1930s, central station electric service was a luxury that only 10 percent of rural residents nationwide enjoyed — and those who had power paid dearly for it. When Franklin D. Roosevelt visited Warm Springs, Ga., in 1924, he was dismayed to find electricity for his small cottage cost four times what it did at his estate in New York. After being elected president, he created the federal Rural Electrification Administration by executive order to make power affordable for all Americans. As a result, electric co-ops were born.

Innovations in line building pioneered by co-op engineers and the competitive pressure co-ops placed on investor-owned utilities to serve rural areas slashed the cost of providing electric service in the countryside by 50 percent or more. In the decades since, co-ops have established a proven track record of offering exceptional service and stable, affordable electric rates for the rural areas they serve.

But the struggle for affordable power that farmers and their neighbors fought


three-quarters of a century ago has flared up again. When adjusted for inflation, the U.S. Energy Information Administration predicts the price of electricity for residential consumers will climb 14.6 percent by 2030 — and federal energy and climate change policy will likely impact energy prices further.

In fact, PJM Interconnection, our regional electric transmission grid operator, recently conducted a study to determine the potential impact climate change policies could have on the PJM energy market. The study estimated that clean air legislation could increase consumers' electric bills by as much as 4.5 cents per kilowatt-hour. That would equate to a monthly increase of about \$34 for the typical Tri-County residential member.

Electric cooperatives are needed once again to make sure affordable power will be available in 2030 and beyond. Our job, on your behalf, is to work closely with Congress to find the best solutions for addressing climate change while keeping the price of electricity within your means.

Tri-County remains committed to providing you with safe, reliable and affordable power. But we need your help. Through the "Our Energy, Our Future" grassroots awareness campaign, co-op members across the nation are speaking out about the importance of keeping electric bills affordable.

New energy and climate change policies being debated in Congress could turn your monthly budget upside-down. Now is the time to ask our elected officials: Will you please work with electric cooperatives to be sure public policy meets my need for affordable electricity?

I encourage members to visit www.ourenergy.coop today and send an email to your elected representatives sharing your concern. 



INTO THE FIRE: Edward Hammond applies colored glass to a blown-glass vase. The finished vase appears at right.

Fanning the flames

"I walked in and saw the glass pieces he had made, and I was hooked," recalls Hammond. "As soon as I saw Aaron taking a piece of glass tubing and blowing out a Christmas bulb, I thought it was so amazing. I wanted to try it."

That first visit to the master glassworker's shop was in October 1975. The following month, Wilbur invited Hammond to attend an international art show with him in Boston.

"There were glass artists and crafters from all over the country there," Hammond says. "I was so impressed by it all that he had asked me if I was interested in learning."

Hammond jumped at the opportunity. Within weeks after returning from Boston, Hammond sold his rig, returned to work driving for a previous employer and began devoting his spare time to learning the art of blowing glass and flameworking from Wilbur.

"I've always liked working with my hands," says Hammond. "I picked it up very quickly, and did my first glass show within six months."

For the next six years — until the motorcycle accident forced his hand — glassworking was a sideline and hobby for Hammond. He became adept at creating glass pieces using a combination of spun-glass, solid-glass and blown-glass techniques. All three forms of glassworking involve using powerful propane torches to heat glass rods or tubes to extremely high temperatures. As the heated glass softens, a glassworker, or gaffer, can transform it into shapes by pushing and pulling on the rod, by using special glassworking tools or, in the case of blown glass, by blowing gently into a glass tube.

Hammond initially sold many of his glass creations at arts and crafts shows and at seasonal mall exhibits. He also created a lot of custom pieces, particularly spun-glass wedding cake tops.

"If I didn't have it, I would make it," says Hammond. "I can make pretty much anything with glass."

His custom glass blowing gift shop, Hammond Crystal by E.M. Hammond



All fired up over glassworking

BY JEFF FETZER

WHEN A motorcycle accident put the brakes to Edward M. Hammond's truck-driving job in 1982, his new career path quickly crystallized.

The accident left Hammond with a broken left foot, fractured hip and an inability to operate the clutch on his rig. Rather than sidelining Hammond, the bad break on the motorbike propelled him to parlay a passion for glassworking into a full-time profession.

A native of LeRoy in Bradford County, Hammond spent much of his early adult life exploring a variety of job opportunities. After graduating from Canton High School in 1967, he worked for a creamery in Grover, a manufacturing plant in Elmira, N.Y., a lumber mill in Troy, a machine shop in Canton, a tree-cutting operation near LeRoy and a strip mining company in Lycoming County. At the mine he learned

to operate heavy equipment and drive tractor-trailer trucks at age 21.

"My stepdad was a truck driver, and that's what I had always wanted to do," says Hammond, who left the mining company after about a year and a half so he could drive full time.

After driving trucks for others for several years, Hammond bought a rig in 1974 and went into business for himself.

The Tri-County member relates that within a year of his decision to become an independent operator hauling steel, the freight work began drying up. During this slow period, he learned that his then-wife's uncle, Aaron Wilbur, was interested in teaching the art of glassworking to someone in the family. A master glassworker, Wilbur invited Hammond to his visit shop in Middlebury Center, Tioga County.

Design, located in East Troy, bears that out. The shop glistens with glass art pieces including colorful hummingbirds and dragons, decorative ornaments, vases, floral arrangements, wine goblets, marbles, jewelry, ships, apples, cake tops, and even an outdoor scene featuring a glass-sculpted hunter taking aim at a fleeing buck. And all of this from a man who admits he didn't have much interest in art until tutored by Aaron Wilbur.

"Glasswork is a pretty good combination of art and craftsmanship," he says. "Aaron brought out the artist in me."

Hammond initially set up shop at his home in Tioga, but soon moved his fledgling venture to York, Pa. From there, he relocated again, this time to the Maine coastal tourist town of Kennebunkport, where former President George H.W. Bush owns an estate. Bush "41" was vice president at the time, and Hammond made a glass bell in the shape of an elephant and had it delivered to the future president's estate on Walker's Point. A framed thank-you note with a hand-written message from the elder Bush hangs in Hammond's gift shop.

But George H.W. Bush's election as president in 1988 drove up storefront rental prices in Kennebunkport and prompted yet another move for Hammond, this time to York, Maine. In 1994, Hammond brought his business back to Bradford County and soon reconnected with his mentor, Aaron Wilbur.

Wilbur, who had been creating glass pieces for the Corning Museum of Glass gift shop in Corning, N.Y., at the time, introduced his former student to his contacts at the museum.

Business blooms

"I started making glass products for



RAW MATERIAL: Glassworkers use a variety of colored rods to create glass art. The glass used in flamework and glassblowing ranges in price from about \$4 per pound for clear glass to \$40 to \$80 a pound for colored glass.



DELICATE DETAIL: Master glassworker Edward Hammond pulls the wings of a spun-glass hummingbird into shape. The inset shows the finished piece before it was placed in an annealing oven to cool.

their gift shop — flowers, animals, and solid-sculptured apples and eggs," he says.

As his association with Corning grew, Hammond, by now a master glassworker himself, participated in fewer glass and art shows in order to be able to meet the product needs of the gift shop, as well as his orders for custom work, which accounts for about 20 to 25 percent of his business.

Until August 2008, when the economy began reeling, Hammond says it was not unusual for the Corning gift shop to submit an order for more than 1,000 pieces a month. When demand was high, he says working 90 hours a week was typical.

Simple items, like a glass icicle ornament, can be created in less than a minute, he says. Making a multicolored blown-glass vase or a sculpted hummingbird takes about 20 minutes of flame work before going into the annealing oven. More complex pieces can take days to complete.

His glass works range in cost from \$5 for simple animals sculptures to \$400 for larger, more complex animals. Cake tops and floral arrangements can run from \$40 to more than \$1,000. His largest project, a 27-inch by 20-inch spun-glass ship, took days to complete and sold for \$4,000.

Hammond says he most enjoys creating blown-glass objects, such as Christmas ornaments, goblets and vases.

"Blown glass takes a lot of skill," he says. "It can push you to your limits, so it never gets boring. The most fun is when you are experimenting, creating new things or one-of-a-kind items. I've got hundreds of items I'd like to make in my mind, but find-

ing the time to do them can be a challenge."

With the economic downturn, Hammond says his orders from the Corning Museum of Glass have slowed considerably. He expects to begin exhibiting in more shows this year and is planning to start offering glassworking classes and individual lessons from his studio.

"There has been a big glass movement that started around the mid 1990s," he says. "Years ago, glassworking was passed down within families, but now colleges and individuals are teaching it. It certainly creates a lot more variety out there for people to choose from."

He says creating glass jewelry and beadwork has become one of the biggest trends in recent years, and his gift shop contains a display case full of beads, necklaces, bracelets and other pieces of jewelry he has created.

"My goal is to continue to create new and innovative products that people enjoy," says the 59-year-old gaffer, who has no intention of retiring any time soon. "I enjoy making the pieces, but I really enjoy having people say, 'Wow! How did you do that?'"



Tri-County member Edward M. Hammond displays some of the glass pieces he created at his Hammond Crystal studio and gift shop in East Troy. The master glassworker has been making blown-glass, sculptured-glass and spun-glass pieces for more than three decades.

The flameworker invites groups interested in seeing a glass-making demonstration to visit his Hammond Crystal studio and gift shop, located at 301 Leona Road in East Troy. While the gift shop is open any time Hammond is working in the studio, he advises visitors to call first. The telephone number is 570/297-1080. ☀

Tri-County offers new tool to help members reduce energy costs

If you are looking for ways to save on your energy bills, be sure to explore the Tri-County HomeEnergySuite on our website, www.tri-countyrec.com.

The HomeEnergySuite contains a wealth of energy conservation and efficiency tips, but its centerpiece is an interactive online energy audit that evaluates your home's energy use



based on inputs you provide and recommends ways to reduce your energy expenditures. Unlike most web-based home energy audits, the HomeEnergy Suite's Home Energy Calculator is simple to use and can be completed in less than two minutes.

The calculator will determine your home energy consumption and costs based on your local weather, as well as local utility and fuel rates. This new intuitive interface allows you to view charts that break down energy use system by system throughout your home, and also provides you with an idea of how much you could save on energy costs by implementing a variety of conservation and efficiency measures.

In addition to the Home Energy Calculator, the HomeEnergySuite also features:

Interactive House. Click on the various components of the Interactive House to gain a better understanding of where and how energy is used within your home, as well as suggestions and tips for using energy wisely.

Energy Library. Contains information about just about every component of your home as it relates to energy use and provides hundreds of tips and strategies aimed at helping you save on your energy bills through conservation and efficiency measures.

Appliance Calculator. Determines costs for operating appliances, lighting and other electronic devices in your home based on Tri-County's current rates.


Lighting Calculator. Calculates savings that you can achieve by replacing the incandescent lightbulbs in your home with compact fluorescent lights.

TV Calculator. Provides the annual cost to run your television set based on size and type of the set and the number of hours it is used each day.

Space Heater Calculator. Calculates cost for operating space heaters in your home based on wattage, hours of use and current rates.

Fundamentals of Electricity. Learn about the fundamentals of electricity, as well as how electricity is generated and distributed to your home and how rates are calculated. It also contains a wealth of electrical safety information.

Kid's Corner. Children can learn fun facts about electricity and electrical safety through games, quizzes and animated features.

To access the Tri-County HomeEnergy Suite, visit www.tri-countyrec.com and click on the HomeEnergy Suite icon on the home page. 

ENERGYmatters

Indoor lighting tips

Lighting accounts for 6 to 7 percent of the total energy use in the average home in the United States and costs between \$50 and \$150 per year in electricity. Although that is not much money compared to the cost of operating heating and cooling equipment, it is enough to justify making some efficiency modifications.

And because it is such a visible energy user, it's a good place to start teaching kids to be mindful of wasting energy.

While lighting is a relatively small part of a home's energy budget, there are several simple things you can do to keep lighting costs to a minimum:

- ▶ Avoid wasting lighting energy by turning off lights when they aren't needed.
- ▶ Fluorescent lighting is much more economical than incandescent lighting. It produces about four times more light with the same amount of energy, and fluorescent lamps last 10 to 15 times longer.
- ▶ Compact fluorescent lightbulbs allow you to use fluorescent lighting in places you never could before. Begin replacing your incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescents when practical.
- ▶ With incandescents, higher-wattage bulbs are generally more efficient and produce more light per watt-hour than smaller-wattage bulbs. For example, you may be able to replace two 60-watt lamps with one 100-watt bulb, giving you the same light, and saving 20 watts.
- ▶ Install occupancy sensors so lights go off automatically in unoccupied rooms.

These tips can be found in the Home Energy Library of Tri-County's online HomeEnergySuite. To access the suite, visit www.tri-countyrec.com and click on the HomeEnergySuite icon on the home page.

Co-op offers scholarship to MU students

Applications are being accepted for a \$1,000 scholarship that is available for the 2009-2010 academic year to a Mansfield University student who is a Tri-County member or dependent.

To be eligible for consideration, students must:

- ▶ be enrolled full time at Mansfield University
- ▶ demonstrate financial need
- ▶ be a member or dependent of a member of Tri-County Rural Electric Cooperative

- ▶ demonstrate the highest traits of leadership, citizenship and character.

Applications may be obtained by contacting Bryan Berguson, Tri-County director of member services, at 800/343-2559. Applications are also available online at tri-countyrec.com.

Tri-County endowed the scholarship fund at Mansfield University in 2000 with a goal of providing financial assistance to any member or dependent of a member pursuing a degree at the university.

A member of the State System of Higher Education, Mansfield University attracts many students from throughout the cooperative's service territory.