

Guest
COLUMN:
**A committee
you can
count on**



By Eleanor Conrad
Manager of Member Accounts

The “chad fiasco” in Florida following the presidential election in 2000 demonstrated clearly how the technical process of voting can make or break an election.

Since Tri-County’s board of directors is elected by you, the members, I will share with you the safeguards in place to ensure a fair election process and a valid outcome.

In its quest for election fairness, the cooperative constantly reviews and refines its voting procedures. The co-op’s election and credentials committee, made up of cooperative members, oversees your interests in the election process.

The committee was formed when Tri-County initiated return mailing of ballots in 1991. Its main functions include reviewing candidate petitions, counting votes and verifying results.

Each of the cooperative’s nine directors appoints one member from his or

her district to serve on the committee. The members of the committee select a chairperson, who serves as spokesperson for the group.

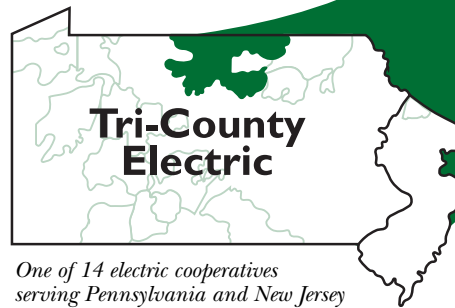
In early June, the co-op mails notices of Tri-County’s annual meeting to all of its members. Ballots for the election of directors are also sent to members of the three districts in which director seats are up for election.

Members send their completed ballots to a Mansfield post office box. Representatives of the election and credentials committee pick up the ballots the day before the co-op’s annual meeting in July.

Once the ballots have been collected, the committee has the authority to validate or reject votes and is also responsible for the safekeeping and confidentiality of the ballots until the election results are announced the next day at the annual member meeting.

The committee also accepts ballots on the day of the meeting.

Should a dispute arise concerning the voting procedure or results, the committee renders final decisions. The committee may also be convened



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

to oversee other ballot votes that involve cooperative members.

The election and credentials committee is made up of your fellow members. Each member has helped establish and implement procedures to benefit you and to ensure a fair election takes place.

As the cooperative’s employee liaison to the election and credentials committee for 12 years, I can assure you that present and past committees have served you conscientiously and effectively.

The election and credentials committee supports an essential element of Tri-County’s cooperative standing — the board of director elections. When you return your election ballots, you can trust they are in capable hands.



Members of the election and credentials committee include Tri-County members (seated, from left) Margaret Wright, Robert Arronson, Albert Haynes, (standing) Thomas Socha, Sandra Stewart, Raymond Butters, William Howell, Robert Lane, Donald Lane and advisor Eleanor Conrad.

**Tri-County
Rural Electric Cooperative**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Summer Hours

7 a.m. - 4 p.m. (Mon.-Fri.)

Dry hydrants making a splash

by Jeff Fetzer

Ice skaters and anglers may love frozen farm ponds, but they have few fans among firefighters.

An iced-over body of water presents an obvious obstacle for rural fire companies attempting to quickly locate and tap an adequate water source during a fire.

Response time is crucial for fire companies covering large rural areas, and chopping holes through the ice in order to draw water from a pond or other body of water wastes precious minutes that could be spent knocking back a blaze.

To combat the problem, Tri-County Rural Electric Cooperative has been pumping time and effort into a “dry hydrant” program that provides local fire companies with easy access to water supplies year round.

“In the winter time, it’s hard to get to a water source in rural areas, be it a creek or pond, if it’s got ice on it,” explains Alex Hartley, director of member services for Tri-County. “A dry hydrant is much faster, and may lower fire insurances for nearby structures in some instances.”

Since Tri-County first became involved in this rural fire protection initiative in 1995, the co-op has played an integral part in the installation of about a dozen dry hydrants in five counties.

A dry hydrant is a non-pressurized pipe system permanently installed in a lake, pond or stream. Rural fire companies can quickly attach a hose to the hydrant head and pump large quantities of water through it to fill tank trucks or battle a blaze directly.

Tri-County supplies dry hydrant kits – consisting of a hydrant head, a strainer

and an identifying sign — to fire companies that wish to install them. The kits cost about \$250 each, and the co-op will award up to four kits to fire companies in its service territory each year.

Hartley, who spearheaded the co-op’s involvement with dry hydrants eight years ago, notes the fire protection initiative relies on extensive cooperation among a variety of governmental and volunteer groups. The program is carried out in conjunction with the local Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D), which sites the dry hydrants.

The physical installation of a dry hydrant is also a cooperative effort. Usually, the fire department provides the manpower and the local municipality donates a backhoe and operator for the excavation work, which is normally completed in a day.

“Generally, a fire company will select a body of water where they would like to install a dry hydrant,” Hartley relates. “We contact the RC&D for the proposed site. They will then determine exactly where the hydrant should be located within that body of water with regard to an access point. They also secure any permits that may be required.”

Eagle project takes wing

Not all dry hydrant projects come about that way, however.

Last year, a dry hydrant was installed in Potter County as part of an Eagle Scout project coordinated by Scott Filer of Shinglehouse, Pa. The Oswayo Valley High School junior had been seeking a worthy community project when he noticed a dry hydrant informational exhibit at Tri-County’s annual meeting last summer.

A dry hydrant informational display at Tri-County’s annual meeting last July sparked an idea for an Eagle Scout project for Scott Filer, a junior at Oswayo Valley High School. Left, Filer (middle) and fellow Scouts Garrett Fosmer (left) and Greg James watch as the Shinglehouse Fire Department tests the hydrant, which was installed in a private pond in Clara Township, Potter County, in October.

A lone dry hydrant stands sentinel over a pond in Bradford County. Fire companies can quickly connect to the non-pressurized hydrants and pump large quantities of water from them for extended periods of time.



“I thought this would be an excellent project for me,” remembers Filer, whose father, Mike, is a member services technical representative for the cooperative.

Filer’s scoutmaster, Vic Fosmer, a Clara Township supervisor, liked the idea too.

“He said the township was already talking about putting in a dry hydrant anyway, so why not have it benefit the community and the Boy Scouts,” Filer notes.

Filer then pitched the project to Shinglehouse Fire Department officials.

“They loved the idea,” he recalls. “It can save them a lot of work chopping ice and risking their lives in the winter, and it cuts down on the time needed to rescue a burning house any time of the year.”

The fire company selected a pond to house the dry hydrant — the first one in the township — and Filer and fellow Boy Scouts from Troop 558 in Millport assisted in its installation. The township provided a backhoe and operator for the necessary excavation work at the site.

“This was something that we needed in our community,” indicates the 17-year-old. “It didn’t seem to be real expensive or time-consuming, but at the same time it was a very valuable project for our area.”

Hartley encourages youths who are interested in coordinating dry hydrant projects, as well as pond owners interested in having a dry hydrant installed on their properties, to contact their local fire company or municipality.

“It really makes you feel great to be able to offer a program like this,” Hartley states. “Fire protection has always been a challenge for rural areas, and our participation in the dry hydrant program enables us to give something back to the rural communities we serve. Ultimately, our goal is to play a part in protecting members’ lives and property from catastrophic fires.”



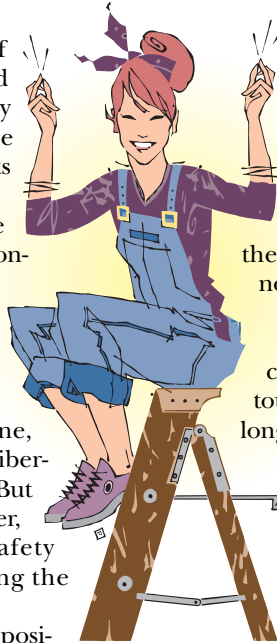
The danger that lurks above

With the return of warmer weather and longer days, many Tri-County members will be tending to outdoor projects around the home.

If those projects involve use of a ladder, especially one constructed of metal, it is important to be extremely cautious when working in the vicinity of overhead electric lines.

Ideally, if you are going to be working near a power line, you should use a wood or fiberglass ladder if at all possible. But if you must use a metal ladder, the Consumer Product Safety Commission advises keeping the following in mind:

- Ladders sometimes shift position. Wind, uneven ground or reaching to the side while working from the ladder can cause it — and the person on it — to contact an overhead wire.
- Never use metal ladders when handling an improperly grounded power tool or contacting an electrical source, such as a light socket.
- Metal stepladders and extension ladders meeting Underwriters Laboratories and American National Standards Institute voluntary standards have labels warning about the hazard associated with metal ladders. The labels typically state: “Danger! Metal conducts electricity! Keep ladder away from power lines and live electrical wires.”
- Carefully check the location of all overhead wires before using or extending a ladder. It is especially important to be extra careful using a ladder in the area where an electric line connects to a house. Any power line (including the line running from a roadway to your house) can permit electricity to flow into a piece of metal or other object,

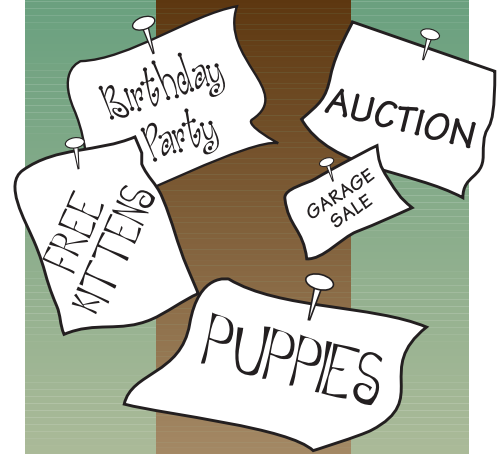


such as a wet tree branch, that touches it.

- Powerlines and phone lines often appear similar. Assume that all overhead wires carry electricity. Some overhead lines are coated to extend the life of the line. The coating is not intended to protect against electrocution.
- Always lower the ladder when carrying or moving it to avoid touching an overhead wire. Since long ladders can be unwieldy, have someone help carry and set up the ladder.
- Never work on a windy day when a gust could cause the ladder to shift and touch an overhead wire.
- Avoid placing a ladder

where it could slide into an overhead line. Make sure the distance to the nearest overhead line is at least twice the length of the ladder.

- Place the ladder’s feet on solid, level ground before climbing it. When the ground is not level or is soft, put a flat piece of wood under one or both feet of the ladder to provide a solid, level base. If possible, tie the ladder to a stationary object to prevent it from moving.
- If the ladder should start to fall into an overhead line, let it go. Never try to move it. Do not leave the ladder unattended. Have someone call Tri-County and report the problem, and make sure the electricity to the line is off before you touch the ladder.
- If someone is holding the ladder when it contacts the overhead line, never try to pull them away with your hands. Use something that does not conduct electricity, such as a long piece of dry wood or rope, to push or pull them loose.



Those hazardous signs of spring

Spring signals the return of many splendid things — warm weather, blossoming flowers, baseball and fishing season to name a few — but one unwelcome sign of the season is the return of handbills and fliers on utility poles.

Attaching signs to utility poles is not only unsightly, it creates safety concerns for our line workers — and it’s illegal.

Our line crews are required to climb up and down utility poles in all kinds of weather, day and night. Signs advertising yard sales, parties or political candidates that are nailed, stapled, tacked or screwed into utility poles create a potential danger to our workers.

The safety of our line workers depends upon their ability to dig into poles with their climbing hooks. Nails and other metal fasteners can cause workers to slip while climbing, and climbers or boots may get caught on the fasteners, causing falls.

In addition, protruding nails, screws and staples can cause cuts and other injuries to workers as well as damage clothing or protective gear.

Please don’t break the law and endanger co-op line workers by cluttering power poles with signs. There are many better ways to get your message to the public.



Notice...

All Tri-County offices will be closed Monday, May 26, in observance of Memorial Day.

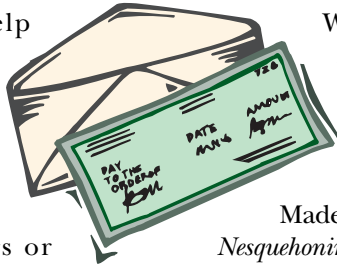


Help us return \$\$\$ to these former members

Tri-County needs help returning money to several former co-op members with credit balances on their accounts.

If you know any of the following individuals and their current phone numbers or addresses, please contact the co-op to report this information. Not only would we appreciate being able to close out these accounts, we're sure the former co-op members will appreciate getting a check from us.

If you can help us out, please call our Mansfield office at 800/343-2559.



Wanna M. Miller or
Anna E. Aimsley —
Normalville

Joy M. Davis —
Austin

Lila Vanin (Finally
Made It Camp) —

Nesquehoning

Clayton M. Dingman — *Williamsport*

Charlotte Kane — *Kernersville*

William M. Squires III — *Lowman, N.Y.*

Jeff Finke (Mountain View Camp) —
Knoxville, Tenn.



Mark your calendars! Annual meeting set for July 12

Tri-County Rural Electric invites members to join us at the Williamson High School Saturday, July 12, for the cooperative's 2003 annual meeting.

We will provide a catered lunch, door prizes and a variety of displays. There's fun and games in store for the kids, too.

Don't miss out on this great opportunity to meet your co-op representatives, vote for directors and enjoy the fellowship of your neighbors.

Co-op offers electrical safety demonstrations

While May is officially designated as National Electrical Safety Month, Tri-County works year-round to promote electrical safety throughout its service territory.

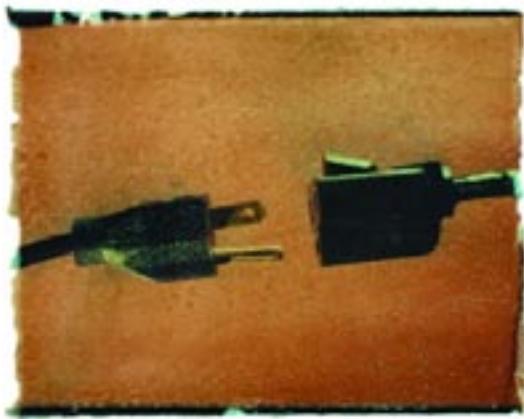
The cooperative's member services

department provides safety talks and demonstrations free of charge to dozens of scout troops, schools, fire companies, civic organizations and businesses each year.

"It's a public service that benefits everyone," notes Alex Hartley, director of member services. "It's another way we can reach out to the communities we serve."

The co-op can tailor safety demonstrations to meet the needs of its intended audience.

If you are interested in scheduling an electrical safety demonstration for your group, school or business, contact Tri-County's member services department at 800/343-2559.



Correction

In an article in the March issue of *Penn Lines* titled "Tri-County tackles worse storm in 40 years," an error was made in calculating the percentage change to our distribution charge. We incorrectly reported that the distribution charge of a residential member's bill would be going up by 5.5 percent. We should have stated that the distribution rate would be increasing by .55 cents, which is equal to about one-half cent per kilowatt-hour. This represents an increase of approximately 5 percent to an average residential consumer's overall electric bill.

We apologize for any confusion this may have created for our members.

