

Tri-County Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



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

Ice storms strike twice



by Craig Eccher

AFTER ENJOYING several years without any major storm-related outages, Tri-County's luck ran out in late winter.

Back-to-back ice storms struck our service territory in March, leaving thousands of members without electricity, some for several days.

Ice storms are an electric company's greatest fear,

since they tend to cause considerable damage to an electrical system, and they can create difficult and hazardous working conditions for work crews. As a result, restoring power following an ice storm can be a time-consuming process, and that means members may be without electricity for an extended period during a time of cold weather.

The first storm hit us in late afternoon March 4, when freezing rain coated electric lines and trees in the higher elevations with up to one-half inch of ice. The weight of the ice brought down trees, limbs, power lines and even a few of our utility poles. In all, more than 4,200 members lost electric service during the course of the storm.

The damages from Storm No. 1 occurred mainly within our Westfield and Coudersport service districts, which allowed us to bring in line crews from the cooperative's Liberty and Mainesburg districts to help restore power. We also brought in outside tree-cutting crews for assistance. All members were restored by Thursday morning, March 6.

It was *deja vu* just two days later, when freezing rain from Storm No. 2 brought an even heavier accumulation of ice — a glaze of up to three-quarters of an inch in some areas. While outages from the second storm were more widespread, the greatest damage to our system was again in the Westfield and Coudersport districts.

Because this storm was larger in

scope, we called in outside assistance from our affiliated utilities, Citizens' Electric Co. and Claverack Rural Electric Cooperative. We also recruited crews from Asplundh Tree Experts and Lewis Tree Service to clear trees and limbs from our rights-of-way, as well as to remove downed trees from some of the more remote township roads along which our electric lines are strung.


At the height of this storm, more than 4,500 members were without electricity. At one point, our transmission provider's 115-kilovolt transmission line failed, knocking out power to three Tri-County substations that distribute power to more than 3,000 members.

Restoration work was completed Tuesday morning, March 11. However, crews continued clean-up efforts in the affected areas through the end of the week.

As you can imagine, storms like these have a significant financial cost due to overtime hours, equipment needs, fuel, lodging for outside crews, etc. Fortunately, following the 2003 New Year's ice storm your cooperative established a storm reserve fund, which will be tapped to soften the financial impact of the March storms.

We were also fortunate to make it through both storms without experiencing any work-related injuries. We did, however, have an ice-laden tree topple onto the cab of one of our service trucks during the first storm. We are thankful no one was in the truck at the time.

I would like to extend my appreciation to our crews for logging long hours in adverse weather conditions during the two storms, and for working safely and quickly to restore power to members.

I also wish to add a warm thank you to the many members who helped in one way or another during the storm, as well as those who sent letters and called the office to express their gratitude to the crews for getting their lights back on. 

Tri-County selects Youth Tour participants

SEVEN LUCKY high school juniors from Tri-County's service territory have been selected to join thousands of students from all over the United States in June for the National Rural Electric Youth Tour, a weeklong tour of our nation's capital.

The students will visit historical sites including the Vietnam and Korean War Memorials, the Smithsonian museums, National Cathedral, National Zoo, and the World War II Memorial.

Selected on the basis of an application, essay and extracurricular activities, the following students will represent Tri-County on the 2008 Youth Tour June 15-20: Nathaniel Kosa and Kristen Haymen, both students at Northern Potter High School; Levi Torrey, Hebron Center Christian School; Brayden Sickler, Cowanesque Valley High School; Deprise Faivre, Liberty High School; Aric Root, Wellsboro High School; and Trevor Sickler, Coudersport High School.



Nathaniel Kosa is the son of Kurt and Laurel Kosa of Ulysses.

Nathaniel serves as his school's junior class president, is a member of the Potter County Teen Council, and is involved with his school's yearbook committee. He traveled to Australia as a People to People Student Ambassador. He has earned varsity letters in track and field and soccer. Nathaniel also has served as 4-H president, Yellow Ribbon vice president and 4-H camp counselor. As a 4-H National Congress Scholarship winner, Nathaniel was given the opportunity to attend a conference and workshops in Atlanta. Following high school, Nathaniel hopes to pursue a career as a social worker.



Kristen Haymen, the son of Barry Hayman and Deborah Rutkowski of Genesee, is a junior at Northern Potter High School. He serves as junior class treasurer,

is chaplain of the Headwaters FFA, and works on the school year book. Kristen participated on his school's track team, as well as the scholastic scrimmage team. He is a member of the Silver Bits 4-H Horse and Pony Club and the New Idea 4-H Livestock Club. In addition to showing horses and swine, Kristen enjoys riding four-wheelers, video games, snowboarding and ceramics. He plans to pursue a career in veterinary medicine.



Levi Torrey is the son of Karl and Gay Torrey of Coudersport. He plays basketball, is a member of ski club and is a 4-H Club president. The Hebron Center

Christian School junior enjoys playing trumpet and has competed in international competition. Active in his church youth group, Levi enjoys playing basketball, skiing, snowmobiling, hunting and fishing, and showing cattle and pigs. Following high school, he hopes to pursue a career as an engineer or mechanic in an agriculture-related field.



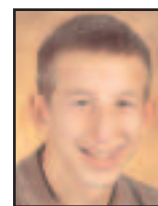
Brayden Sickler is the daughter of Jamie-Jo and Scott Sickler of Westfield. A junior at Cowanesque Valley High School, Brayden serves on student

council, is vice president of Spanish Club, participates in band, chorus, and track, is a member of the cheerleading squad and has served as a class officer. She is a graduate of the Tioga County Youth Leadership Program. As a People to People Student Ambassador, Brayden attended a 12-day conference at Columbia University in New York City. Outside of school, Brayden enjoys gymnastics, dance and takes voice lessons. She has performed with the Hamilton-Gibson Choir and sings with a student cappella group that performs at area churches. She aspires to become a forensic scientist.

Deprise Faivre, the daughter of Jeff and Trudy Faivre of Liberty, is a junior



at Liberty High School. A member of the National Honor Society, Deprise serves as junior class vice president. She has participated in jazz band, Key Club, band, chorus, wind ensemble, student council, Future Business Leaders of America, Battle of the Books, and track and field. She has also performed in several school musicals. Outside of school, Deprise is active in 4-H, Youth Fellowship, church choir and has served as a youth leader at Three Springs Ministry's "Grow Zone." She enjoys playing saxophone, reading, walking, and spending time with friends. Deprise's career goal is to become an elementary school teacher.



Aric Root is the son of Todd and Penny Root of Wellsboro. The Wellsboro High School junior plays on his school's varsity baseball and basketball

teams. He participates in chorus and has been accepted into the men's ensemble. Aric is a graduate of the Tioga County Youth Leadership program and has served as a school crossing guard. He enjoys reading non-fiction books, writing, traveling, hiking, camping and playing table tennis. Following high school, Aric plans to study physics with the goal of becoming a college professor.



Trevor Sickler, the son of Randy and Cheryl Sickler of Coudersport, is a junior at Coudersport High School. He plays in the school's marching

band and concert band and has participated in regional band and performed in school musicals. His hobbies include collecting model trains. Trevor hopes to pursue a career as a computer programmer following high school. ☀



Safety video electrifies YouTube audience

BY JEFF FETZER

Video may have killed the radio star*, but a YouTube clip starring a Tri-County employee is all about saving lives.

A seven-minute video clip featuring a demonstration of Tri-County's high voltage safety trailer has received nearly 7,000 hits on YouTube since it was uploaded to the site in January. YouTube is a popular video sharing service through which users can upload, view and share video clips.

The safety video was filmed last summer by the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association (PREA), the service organization for the 13 rural electric cooperatives in Pennsylvania. The video has since been distributed to the state's electric cooperatives and has also been made available to emergency responders and other groups seeking an electrical safety presentation.

The safety video is narrated by Tri-County's director of engineering and operations, John Lykens, and features

linemen with Claverack REC, our partner cooperative, demonstrating a variety of potentially hazardous scenarios involving electrical contact.

To view the safety clip, visit Tri-County's website, www.tri-countyrec.com, and click on the link on our home page.

Comments posted on YouTube about the video have largely been positive. Here are a few:

"This must be learned in school....Thank you for this video."

"Very informative! Show this to your kids!"

"Very good video. Thanks for posting; lots of good visual info."

The Long Island (N.Y.) Fire Department recently contacted Tri-County to request a copy of the video for training purposes.

The high-voltage safety trailer is jointly owned by Tri-County and Claverack REC. It replicates an electrical distribution system from the substation to a member's home. The high-voltage safety demonstrations are intended to educate

HOT SHOTS: Videographer Todd Herrman directs Claverack lineman Jim Griffiths while filming a safety video for the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association last summer using the new high-voltage safety trailer jointly owned by Tri-County and Claverack. The video has been distributed to the state's electric cooperatives and made available to first responders and other groups seeking an electrical safety presentation. Looking on is John Lykens, Tri-County director of engineering and operations, who narrates the video.

the public about the dangers of electricity.

In the year since it was constructed, demonstrations using the safety trailer have been presented at county fairs, cooperative annual meetings and to various school groups, employers and civic organizations.

Presentations to groups of 50 individuals or more are considered by request. If your organization is interested in a demonstration, please call the cooperative's operations department at 1-800-343-2559. The demonstrations can be tailored to any age group. ☀

* "Video Killed the Radio Star," by English new wave group the Buggles, was the first music video to air on MTV when the channel launched on Aug. 1, 1981.

Please verify your contact information

Please be sure to verify that the telephone number and address that appear on your electric bill are correct.

If either is incorrect, please write the correct number and address on your payment stub and return with payment or call the office at 1-800-343-2559.

Tri-County uses your phone number when dispatching outages and to notify you about planned outages, so it is important for us to have your correct number on file.



Office Closing

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



Call 8-1-1 before digging into spring projects

With the arrival of spring, many members are gearing up for outdoor construction projects. If you are planning excavation work, get your project off to a safe start by calling 8-1-1 before you dig.

8-1-1 is the abbreviated national telephone number homeowners and professional excavators can call to contact their state's One Call center. Homeowners and contractors



can still call the long-standing Pennsylvania One Call number, 1-800-242-1776, if they wish.

State law requires that anyone doing excavation work moving earth with power equipment is required to notify the Pennsylvania One Call System three days before digging begins.

The purpose of the PA One Call System is to prevent damage to underground facilities such as electric, cable, telephone, gas, water and sewer lines during excavation projects.

Digging by an uninformed homeowner or contractor not only has the potential to damage utility lines, it can also be extremely dangerous when underground electric or gas lines are involved.

By calling 8-1-1 at least three working days before you plan to begin your project, you or your contractor will know exactly what lies beneath the surface – safeguarding everyone involved.

State law requires that the person performing the excavation be responsible for notifying the PA One Call System. There is no charge involved when a homeowner is doing work on his or her own residential property.

If you are a homeowner who has hired a contractor to work on your property, the contractor is required by law to make the call to the system to have underground lines located.

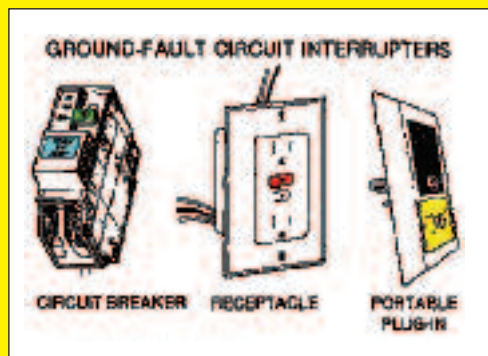
Additional information about the PA One Call System is available on the web by visiting www.pa1call.org.

SAFETYzone

Ground fault interrupters

One of the most important safety features in your home is a simple electrical device called a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI).

A GFCI is a special type of electrical outlet designed to trip before a deadly electrical shock can occur. GFCIs are usually installed in areas of the home where electrical products are mostly like to come in contact with water, such as bathrooms, kitchens, basements, garages and outdoor areas.



The National Electrical Code requires GFCIs to be installed in all newly constructed homes. However, this life-saving technology has never been added to many older homes.

The Electrical Safety Foundation International encourages owners of aging homes to make sure their homes are protected by these devices. If not, homeowners should consult

a licensed electrician about installing ground fault circuit interrupters.

The foundation also recommends that all of the GFCIs within a home be tested monthly, as well as following every major lightning storm.