

Tri-County Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

Tri-County REC
22 North Main Street • P.O. Box 526
Mansfield, PA 16933
Mansfield — 570/662-2175
Coudersport — 814/274-8740
Website:
www.tri-countyrec.com
Email:
trico@tri-countyrec.com
For emergencies call:
1-800-343-2559

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- James R. Davis**
Chairman
- Gerald A. Kite**
Vice Chairman
- Alston A. Teeter**
Secretary/Treasurer
- Donald H. Blackwell**
- Alfred G. Calkins**
- Lowell W. Geiser**
- Ferd W. Irish**
- Nicholas Reitter**
- Barbara J. Seeley**

Craig Echer
President & CEO

STAFF

- Annette Bender, Executive Assistant**
- John Lykens, Director, Engineering & Operations**
- Barbara Johnson, Director, Financial Services**
- Bryan Berguson, Director, Member Services**

OFFICE HOURS

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

GUEST COLUMN

Members can avoid billing fluctuations caused by estimated readings



by **Barbara Johnson**
Director of Financial Services

ONE OF the most common calls we receive in the billing department comes from members who experience an unexpected change in their electric bill.

We attempt to narrow down the possibilities by comparing the member's electric consumption for the most recent two-month period with the same period one year prior.

While there are a variety of factors that can cause a member's bill to jump or drop significantly from one month to the next, the fluctuation can often be attributed to an estimated meter reading.

In an effort to keep our costs down, we estimate residential members' electric use one month and perform an actual read the next. When we estimate electric use, we add up a member's kilowatt-hours of use for the previous year, and divide by 12 to get a true average. But because of changes in a member's electric use caused by weather, time of year and other factors, a bill based on estimated use can be noticeably higher or lower than that of the preceding month.

An automated solution

We know it's not the ideal way to calculate bills, and we are phasing out estimated meter readings. Tri-County is in the process of converting to an automatic meter reading (AMR) system. Since 2001, we have installed more than 7,000 automatic meters system wide. Those members no longer receive an estimated bill, since the new equipment automatically reports meter readings directly to our office.

Over the next five years, we plan to install automatic meters on the remaining 11,000 meters on our distribution system. Switching to a fully automated meter reading system will free up manpower from meter-reading duties, assist us in detecting power outages and give us the capability of providing members with a detailed history

of their electric use on a daily basis.

If you are among those accounts that have not yet been converted to AMR but wish to avoid the month-to-month fluctuations that can occur with estimated meter reads, you do have several options.

One option is to sign up for our budget billing program. Participants in budget billing pay the same amount each month for 11 months of the year. The budget amount is based on the average of your electric bills for the previous year. In the 12th month of your budget billing cycle, we perform a true-up, comparing your budgeted amount with your actual cost for the year. Your bill total in the settlement month will reflect the difference between the actual and budget amounts.

The other way you can avoid fluctuations from estimated meter readings is by reporting your own meter readings for your estimated months. You can report your meter readings by calling the office, or by visiting our website, www.tri-countyrec.com and clicking on the "report meter readings" option on the left side of our home page. Meter readings should be reported 30 days after your last actual meter reading, the date of which appears on your monthly bill. If you have questions, please call us at 1-800-343-2559.

Payment options

Since we are talking about electric bills, I'd like to remind members of the variety of payment options.

The most efficient and cost-effective means to pay is by participating in the Payment Automatically Drafted (PAiD) program. Members allow us to automatically draft their payments from their checking or savings accounts, or have payments directed to a credit card account. Members can also pay over the phone by credit card, or pay online through our E-Bill program.

For information about these payment options, please give us a call or visit our Mansfield or Coudersport offices. 

Director elections slated for Districts 3, 5 and 9

DEMOCRACY WILL take center stage at Tri-County's 2008 annual meeting, with director elections highlighting the agenda.

Board seats are up for election this year in Districts 3, 5 and 9. Only members with accounts in those three districts may vote in this year's election.

In accordance with Tri-County's bylaws, director elections take place on a rotating basis, with three of the cooperative's nine districts electing directors each year.

If your account is located in one of this year's voting districts, you will be receiving a mail-in ballot a few days after you receive the annual meeting notification that Tri-County mails to members in June.

Election results will be announced at Tri-County's 2008 annual meeting on Saturday, July 12, at Williamson High School, Tioga.

Elected candidates serve three-year terms. Tri-County directors are responsible for representing the needs and concerns of members in their districts. They also establish co-op policies and oversee business operations.

All three candidates running for election this year are incumbents, and all are running unopposed. A profile of each candidate follows:

District 3

District 3 serves members in Harrison, Bingham, Genesee, Oswayo, Sharon and Ceres townships in Potter County; Westfield and Brookfield townships in Tioga County.



Nick Reitter

Nick Reitter

Nick Reitter is a retired professor from Alfred State College, where he taught electrical engineering technology. He also has work experience as a technical assistant and was project engineer for Steam

Power Control Systems. A Tri-County member for 31 years, Nick and his wife, Marjorie Ann, reside in Genesee and have

seven grown children.

Reitter serves as church treasurer, and as secretary of the Wellsville Area Small Plane Society. He is a member of the Masonic Lodge No. 556 in Ulysses, past member of the Genesee Library board of directors, former assistant Scoutmaster, former chairman of the board for Wonder Works, and former member of the Potter County 4-H board of directors.

His hobbies and interests include home remodeling, gardening, fishing, model trains, reading, genealogy, flying radio-control airplanes, building balsa wood airplanes, photography, astronomy and computers.

Reitter says he is qualified to be a Tri-County director because of his technical background and the desire to work for all members to have reliable electric power.

"The previous three years have provided me the opportunity to take courses in finance and technical issues related to the electric utilities, enhancing my ability to be a contributing member of the board," he added.

District 5

District 5 encompasses Jackson, Lawrence, Richmond, Rutland and Tioga townships in Tioga County; Wells Township in Bradford County.



Barbara J. Seeley

Barbara J. Seeley

Barbara J. Seeley is seeking re-election as director from District 5. A Roseville resident, she has been a Tri-County member for 50 years. She is a former tester at Westinghouse, and manages the finances of the family dairy operation.

Seeley is seeking her fifth term as director. She is active in the community and the Roseville United Methodist Church and Sunday school. She is a member of the Tioga County Sports Hall of Fame, serves as judge of elections for Rutland Township, and is vice president of

the United Women's Fellowship.

She and her husband, the late Robert Seeley, were married 52 years and had four children.

Seeley's hobbies include reading, and involvement with her grandchildren's activities.

Seeley says she is qualified to be a Tri-County director as a result of her experience as a dairy farm owner and operator.

"I know how important it is to make good decisions," she said. "My aim is to continue to strive to have reliable electric service at the lowest possible cost. The demand for electricity continues to grow. It will be a challenge for us to make the most efficient use of this source of energy."

District 9

District 9 serves members in Abbott, Stewardson and West Branch townships in Potter County; Elk Township in Tioga County; East Keating and Leidy townships in Potter County.



Lowell Geiser


Lowell Geiser

Lowell Geiser of Germania is seeking his first term as director for District 9. He was appointed to the board in September 2007 to fill the unexpired term of long-time director Jay Halde-

man of Galeton,

who had passed away. Geiser is a lifelong resident of Germania. He served as Abbott Township supervisor. He is a partner in Forest View Evergreen Tree Farm, a family business started by his grandfather in 1928.

Geiser enjoys spending time with his son, Nathan. He also is very active in the First Baptist Church of Galeton. In his spare time, he enjoys motorcycle riding.

A Tri-County member for 22 years, Geiser said he would work together with his fellow board members "to keep Tri-County strong, reliable and cost-effective during these trying economic times." 

Humorist, efficiency expert to speak at annual meeting

Tri-County Rural Electric's 2008 annual meeting returns to Williamson High School, located north of Tioga along Route 287, on Saturday, July 12.

Gary Claxton, a comedian/humorist and motivational speaker known as the "Mouth of the South," will share his G-rated brand of hillbilly humor during the meeting.

A native of south Georgia, Claxton has performed live at the Grand Ole Opry, Six Flags, Dollywood and Las Vegas, hosts a radio show and has appeared on a variety of television programs.

He has shared the stage with entertainers including Ray Stevens, Lee Greenwood, Kenny Rogers, Soggy Bottom Boys and Roy Clark.

Featured speaker for the annual meeting will be Jim Bausell, chief operating officer of Touchstone Energy, a national alliance made up of more than 640 electric cooperatives in 46 states. Bausell will be speaking on energy efficiency.

Co-op members will receive notices inviting them to attend the annual meeting in mid-June.

As in years past, the meeting will feature live music by Enchanted Mountain Green, children's activities, bucket truck rides, electrical safety demonstrations, door prizes and vendor displays.

In a change from past annual meetings, lunch this year will feature a barbecued chicken half that will be available for take out. Those wishing to enjoy their meals in the school cafeteria will be seated and served at their tables. Please be sure to return the postage-paid registration card included with your invitation to reserve your dinners.

A mini-health fair is also planned for the event, as well as displays featuring Cutler Hammer generators, Marathon water heaters, geothermal heat pumps and compact fluorescent lights. Patterson Maple Products of Sabinville will be a first-time vendor at this year's event.

Mark your calendars for this great opportunity to meet your Tri-County representatives, view the displays and enjoy the fellowship of your co-op neighbors. ☀



HAPPY TRAILS: Tri-County Rural Electric Cooperative President & Chief Executive Officer Craig Eccher, right, presents long-time co-op employee Charles "Spood" Tubbs of Ulysses with a statue of a lineman during the cooperative's annual employee recognition banquet in April. Tubbs, a former lineman with the cooperative's Westfield district, retired at the end of 2007 after 36 years of service.

Unwelcome signs of the season

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 political candidates, yard sales and parties that are nailed, stapled, tacked or screwed into utility poles create a potential danger to our workers.

The safety of our linemen 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 clothes or protective gear.

Please don't endanger co-op linemen by cluttering power poles with signs. There are many better ways to get your message out. ☀



Let Tri-County help get you into hot water

Next to your home heating system, your water heater is probably the largest energy user in your home, accounting for about 13 to 20 percent of residential energy consumption. That's why it's important your water heater is properly maintained and that you carefully weigh the selection of a new heater when you need one.

If your water heater is more than 10 years old, you may soon want to consider buying a new one. Don't wait until it leaks. If you do wait and you're lucky, the leaks will start out small. If you're unlucky, a major leak will damage your home.

There are several things to remember when selecting a water heater:

► Electric water heaters cost about the same as comparable gas heaters, and both are typically less than oil water heaters. Electric water heaters are quiet, clean and need very little maintenance to keep at peak efficiency.

You can purchase water heaters directly from Tri-County. Or you can take advantage of our convenient lease program, which offers low monthly pay-

ments on a new, quality water heater, a \$150 installation credit, and free maintenance of the unit for the duration of the lease.

► The energy factor — measuring the overall efficiency of a water heater based on the model's recovery efficiency, standby losses and energy input — is another important consideration. Most fossil fuel water heaters (propane, oil and natural gas) have energy factors of approximately 50 percent. Most electric water heaters have energy factors of at least 85 percent. The higher the energy factor, the more efficient the water heater. What little electric water heater inefficiency there is can be attributed to "skin" loss — the heat that escapes from the tank.

► You can save yourself and your co-op money by allowing a load management switch to be installed on your water heater. With load management in place, a timer shuts off power to your water heater during times of peak energy demand. This helps the cooperative avoid purchasing costly "peak" generation.

Tri-County offers a \$25 rebate to members who are new participants in our load management program. In addition, load management participants receive a \$5 monthly credit on their electric bills. Members must use at least 100 kilowatt hours of electricity per month to be eligible for the monthly credit.

► Be sure your new water heater is large enough to suit your family's needs. Moving from a 50-gallon heater to an 80-gallon heater doesn't cost that much, and the increased skin losses are negligible. A larger water heater is certainly worth the small extra expense when it keeps you from running out of hot water.

Tri-County leases and sells two brands of water heaters — American and Marathon — in a variety of sizes and styles. If you would like additional information about purchasing or leasing a water heater from your electric cooperative, please visit our website at www.tri-countyrec.com or call our member services department at 1-800-343-2559.

A hot water tank you can count on from the People You Can Count On

Marathon
WATER HEATERS



Tri-County Rural Electric Cooperative is an authorized distributor of Marathon water heaters. A Marathon water heater is guaranteed not to leak...for a lifetime!

Marathon water heaters feature:

- **Plastic tanks**
Won't rust or corrode
Stronger than steel
- **Lifetime Warranty**
A warranty not to leak "for as long as you own your home"
- **Envirofoam Insulation**
The most energy efficient and environmentally friendly insulation on the market
- **Reliability**
Six years parts and labor

If your water heater is more than 10 years old, consider replacing it with a Marathon water heater from Tri-County. You can buy or lease a Marathon water heater from your electric cooperative. For additional details about our water heater leasing program, special rebates and pricing information, visit our website at www.tri-countyrec.com or call our member services department at 1-800-343-2559.