

Guest
COLUMN:

Fitting the bill



by **Barbara Johnson**
Director of Financial Services

If you enjoy paying bills, read no further.

Still with me? Then maybe you should consider enrolling in Tri-County's Payment Automatically Deducted program, better known as PAiD.

Through the PAiD program, members' electric bill payments are electronically drafted from their checking or savings account each month.

For conscientious bill payers — those who pay their bills on time every month — an automatic payment program makes a lot of sense. First, you don't have to spend time writing out a check each month. And because the payment is automatically deducted on the due date, you never have to worry about late fees and misplaced or forgotten bills.

If you're away for an extended period, you can rest easy knowing that

your bill will be paid on time. You still receive a monthly statement; so all you will need to do is remember to record the payment amount in your checking or savings account register.

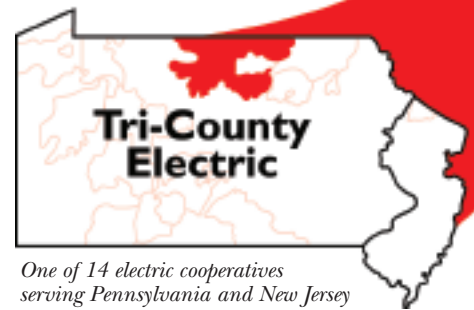
You also save on postage when you participate in the PAiD program. Sure, it's only 39 cents a month, but it can add up when you enroll in the automatic bill payment programs offered by your other utilities and financial institutions.

If you're like me and most others I know who have tried automated bill payment, once you discover how convenient and easy it is, you'll have as many of your bills electronically drafted as possible. I have five monthly bills that are either automatically drafted from my bank account or paid electronically. In just one year, I'm saving over \$23 in postage and eliminating the need to write 60 checks.

There's another benefit to Tri-County's PAiD program. By participating, you are saving your cooperative time and money. Your participation frees up employees in our financial services department so they may spend more time on other member-accounting issues and services.

We have 1,750 members who participate in PAiD. That's 1,750 envelopes our employees no longer have to open each month, and 1,750 checks they no longer have to process. It's easy to see how increased member participation in the PAiD program can translate into significant savings in manhours for your cooperative.

The PAiD program has a great track record. It has run smoothly for more than a decade. I encourage members to save themselves and their cooperative time and money by making the switch to automatic payment. If you enroll in the program and find it



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

doesn't fit your needs, you may opt out at any time.

While I'm on the subject of utility bills — and with the home heating season just around the corner — it's a good time to remind you about Tri-County's budget billing program.

Budget billing makes it easier for you to plan your utility expenses by eliminating seasonal spikes in your electric bill, as well as billing fluctuations due to estimated meter readings and changes in your electric use.

Participants in budget billing pay the same amount each month for 11 months. 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.

After the true-up, Tri-County reviews and adjusts your budgeted amount for the next year based on your electric use from the previous 12 months, taking into account any rate adjustments that may have been implemented.

If you are interested in participating in Tri-County's PAiD program or enrolling in budget billing, please call our Financial Services Department at 1-800-343-2559.

Tri-County Rural Electric Cooperative

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Youth Tour: Building friendships and memories

by Kristy Warren

New friendships, exciting experiences, and memories to last a lifetime awaited local high school juniors as they congregated in Washington, D.C., this summer for the Rural Electric Youth Tour.

Seven students representing Tri-County Rural Electric Cooperative joined approximately 1,500 students from all over the country for a tour of the capital the week of June 11. The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), the service arm for the nation's 1,000 electric cooperatives, organizes the annual tour. Ninety-one student delegates represented the 14 cooperatives in Pennsylvania and New Jersey this year.

Students sponsored by Tri-County were: Jessica Rose Barrett, daughter of Marvin Edward and Rose Anne Barrett of Middlebury Center, a student at Wellsboro Area High School; Danielle Fulmer, daughter of Daniel and Vicki Fulmer of Westfield, Cowanesque Valley High School; Nicole Lee Karschner, daughter of Dennis L. and Laura Karschner of Ulysses, Galeton Area High School; Zachary Kreger, son of James and Nancy Kreger of Morris, Liberty High School; Sarah Satterlee, daughter of Roland and Annetta Satterlee of Knoxville, Cow-

anesque Valley High School; Alison Spanner, daughter of Patricia Spanner of Morris, Liberty High School; and Danek Torrey, son of Karl and Gay Torrey of Couderport, Hebron Central Christian School.

Early Sunday morning,



CAPITOL CONNECTIONS: Youth Tour would not be complete without a trip to Capitol Hill to meet with members of the U.S. House and Senate. Tri-County delegates, from left, Jessica Barrett, Danielle Fulmer, Alison Spanner, Sarah Satterlee, Nicole Karschner, Danek Torrey, and Zachary Kreger, pose near the Capitol following a visit with U.S. Sen. Rick Santorum.



FALLS AND ANGELS: Some of the Pennsylvania Youth Tour delegates strike a pose from the TV series "Charlie's Angels" during a visit to the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial.

June 11, the Tri-County delegates boarded a motor coach to travel to Gettysburg, where they met up with the other Youth Tour participants from Pennsylvania and New Jersey. From there, they headed for the Hyatt Regency Crystal City Hotel in Crystal City, Va., where they stayed for the next five nights.

The 2006 Youth Tour kicked off with National Youth Day, highlighted by visits with U.S.

Rep. Don Sherwood and U.S. Sen. Rick Santorum. While meeting with Sherwood on the steps of the Capitol Building, the students even caught a glimpse of U.S. Sen. Hillary Clinton as she walked by.

The exciting day was capped off with an evening All-State dinner-dance, where delegates could mingle with students from all over the country. The dance was a site of many new friendships and memories, according to Tri-County delegate Alison Spanner.

When asked about her favorite Youth Tour moment, she replied, "We were sitting at a table, three of us Pennsylvania girls, and a guy from Texas comes up to our table with about 15 other Texans behind him. I couldn't believe how friendly they

were; they ended up staying at our table the rest of the night. They even taught us how to do the two-step!”

Students also visited several historical sites during their trip including: the World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War memorials, Jefferson and Washington monuments, Lin-

Tri-County has been a supporter of the Youth Tour program for many years. Each year, the cooperative seeks high school juniors from its service area who have an interest in learning more about the nation’s capital and the rural electric cooperative movement.

Applicants must be high school juniors whose parents or legal guardians are members of the co-op. Students must complete an application form and brief essay for consideration. Application information is generally available in February at local schools, as well as in Penn Lines or through Tri-County’s Web site.

Youth Tour, an idea sparked by a speech by then U.S. Sen. Lyndon Johnson at the 1957 National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Annual meeting, has been held every year starting in 1964, beginning a tradition of providing knowledge, opening doors to bring people together, promoting positive, enthusiastic attitudes, forging new friendships, and creating lifelong memories.



HEADS UP: Tri-County’s Youth Tour delegates pose on the head of *The Awakening*, a popular metal sculpture at Hains Point along the Potomac River. The students are, seated, from left, Danek Torrey, Sarah Satterlee, Alison Spanner, and Danielle Fulmer. Standing are Jessica Barrett, Zachary Keger, and Nicole Karschner.



ALISON SPANNER, JESSICA BARRETT, SARAH SATTERLEE, AND DANEK TORREY relax after taking in the sights at Arlington National Cemetery.

coln and Franklin Delano Roosevelt memorials, the National Mall, Smithsonian museums, the National Zoo, the National Republican Club of Capitol Hill, and the International Spy Museum, where students had the chance to assume a spy identity.

Youth Tour participants also observed the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and watched the Sunset Parade at the Iwo Jima Memorial. Other trip highlights included a cruise on the Potomac, a visit to Mount Vernon, a trip to Arlington National Cemetery, a tour of the jaw-dropping National Cathedral, and an excursion to the Kennedy Center to see the musical comedy “Mame.”

“It was so much fun, and it made me more aware of rural electric. I’d recommend it to anyone and everyone,” Spanner said.



CRUISING: The Tri-County contingent relaxes during a boat cruise on the Potomac River. The cruise brings together hundreds of Youth Tour delegates from several states for an evening of dancing and socializing.



Tri-County — more than just an electric provider

For nearly 70 years, Tri-County Rural Electric Cooperative's goal has been to provide dependable, affordable electricity to its member-owners.

But over the years, your cooperative has developed into more than just an energy provider.

"Cooperatives offer much more than reliable, affordable electricity for our members," says Bryan Berguson, director of member services. "We provide a variety of extra services and products designed to save our members time and money."

Following are some of those products and services Tri-County offers to its members:

- **Water Heaters** — Members can lease or purchase high-quality, energy-efficient electric water heaters through Tri-County Rural Electric. With our lease program, members receive free water heater maintenance for the term of the lease.
- **PAiD** — Members never have to worry about late payments when they participate in our Payment Automatically Deducted (PAiD) program. We'll automatically deduct your electric bill payment from your checking or savings account each month.
- **Family-in-Need Fund** — Members have the opportunity to round up the payment amount on their electric bills to the nearest dollar, with the extra change going to a fund that helps struggling members pay their bills.
- **Energy Audit** — Tri-County's trained professionals will visit your home, business, or farm and perform an energy-use audit to help determine your electrical consumption. From the audit, they may be able to offer suggestions that would help reduce your electric use and save you money.
- **Load Management** — Members receive a \$5 monthly credit to their electric bill when they install a load management switch

to their water heaters.

- **SurgeTamer** — Protect your expensive home electronic equipment and appliances by purchasing SurgeTamer protection units. Tri-County carries a wide variety of these surge-protection devices, which are available to members at discounted prices.
- **Gift Certificates** — Looking for a practical gift that can be used throughout the year? Tri-County has gift certificates that can be purchased for any member.
- **Budget Billing** — Tri-County sets up a billing plan that lets you make uniform payments each month.
- **Pole Lighting** — Tri-County will install a pole light on your property that automatically turns on at dusk and switches off at dawn. Installation, including the lighting fixture, wire and pole, is free as long as the pole light is located within 125 feet of an existing cooperative facility.
- **Stray Voltage Inspections** — If you believe you are experiencing a stray voltage problem at your dairy or hog farm, we can send a representative to help you check for any stray voltage on your premises. We will investigate causes and help with solutions to severe problems.
- **Penn Lines** — Each month, members receive a full-color magazine, *Penn Lines*. Each issue brings you information about your electric cooperative and the energy industry as a whole. The magazine also provides suggestions regarding the safe, efficient use of electric energy, feature stories, recipes, and readers' photographs.

Tri-County believes in providing quality electricity to members. However, just as important is providing quality programs and services aimed at enhancing members' lives.

For more information on any of these products or services, please call the Tri-County office at 1-800-343-2559.



A friendly reminder to dog owners...

Your cooperative has a small favor to ask: If you own a dog, please make sure your pet is properly restrained.

Our service and line technicians report numerous close encounters with loose canines throughout the year. Incidents such as these not only endanger our workers, they also reduce their efficiency and, as a result, become costly.

We ask you to keep your dogs inside the home or, if outside, secured in a pen or leashed. Also, please be sure to move dog houses away from utility poles and meter bases.

Be aware that under Pennsylvania law, all dogs must be under control and may not run at large. Dogs are considered personal property and owners are responsible for damages caused by their pets.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.



Tri-County Rural Electric Cooperative will be closed Monday, Sept. 4, 2006, in observance of Labor Day.

