
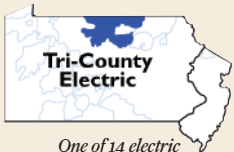


**Tri-County
Rural Electric
Cooperative, Inc.**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Tri-County
Electric
*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

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- Nicholas Reitter**
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- Alfred G. Calkins**
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- 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

**Co-ops pool together to
increase purchasing power**



by **Rick Tavares**
Manager of purchasing
and facilities

TRI-COUNTY may be a fairly small cooperative in terms of the number of consumers we serve, but world markets, domestic trends and national disasters all have a direct impact on our operations and costs.

It's my job to maintain proper inventory levels, negotiate contracts, and bid and maintain our fleet vehicles. During my three years here, I have seen tremendous

changes in the price and availability of materials.

After Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast in 2005, utility poles became nearly impossible to purchase from our supplier. As a result, cooperatives were forced to seek alternative suppliers.

We learned a valuable lesson: When it comes to critical materials, don't put all of your eggs in one basket. Today, we use multiple suppliers, which helps ensure that we will be able to purchase equipment and supplies during times of high demand and reduced supply.

We were fortunate to find many vendors with reasonable pricing and exceptional service. Our success in securing quality vendors stems from the fact that Tri-County belongs to a group-purchasing cooperative called VOAM. This organization is made up of representatives of the 13 cooperatives in Pennsylvania, as well as a couple of co-ops in New Jersey and New York.

Cooperative purchasing personnel pool many of our material quantities together. We then seek bids from vendors willing to supply the requested materials to all of the cooperatives in the group for the same price for up to two years.

The program enables participating rural electric cooperatives to save significantly when buying poles, meters, wire, transformers and other utility hardware. It also provides leverage with vendors

regarding the level of service we receive.


Meeting on a regular basis with co-op purchasing personnel from around the state also helps us keep up with the manufacturing sector. Occasionally manufacturers buy up their competitors, then close plants, which reduces production, restricts supply and drives up prices. It's important for those of us making purchasing decisions to be aware of these types of changes.

It's also important to keep abreast of what's happening around the world in order to develop strategies to maintain an inventory that will meet our needs.

International market demands can severely affect commodity prices, as well as the availability of raw materials. Last year, we saw prices for various metals skyrocket. In one quarter, the cost of transformers increased 47 percent due to high steel and copper prices. Aluminum prices rose nearly 35 percent in the same quarter.

Ever-changing government regulations also require close attention. Tougher emissions standards for diesel trucks have impacted new truck prices. The Highway Diesel Rule of 2007 mandated the use of ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel, as well as specific engines oils. This regulation has added \$5,000 to \$7,000 to the cost of a new co-op bucket truck, and increased truck maintenance costs. In 2010, the next step for cleaner emissions will be implemented, adding an additional \$5,000 to \$9,000 to the purchase price of a bucket truck.

To help offset rising costs, we are always looking for new ways to save the cooperative money. For instance, Tri-County recently discovered that, as an electric utility, we qualify for a program that gives us a 40 percent discount on our tire purchases.

Members can rest assured Tri-County will continue to monitor our vendors for pricing and service, keep up with international news and government regulations that impact our industry, and seek out purchasing programs that can save money for the cooperative. 

Introducing the Co-op Connections card

BY THE END of this month, all Tri-County members should have received their Co-op Connections discount cards.

The cards allow members to receive discounts at participating businesses.

“We have 26 local businesses participating in the program, and we expect to add many more,” said member services director Bryan Berguson. “In addition to the discounts being offered by local restaurants, retail stores and service providers, there are more than 8,000 businesses nationwide, including many national chains, that have agreed to make special offers available to card-carrying electric cooperative members.”

The Connections cards, which are issued to members as a free service, also allow members to receive discounts on

prescription medications at over 56,000 national and regional pharmacy chains, including CVS, Walgreens and Wal-Mart.

“The Co-op Connections program is not only a great benefit for our members,” said Berguson, “it’s also a terrific way for local businesses to bring in new customers and ring up additional sales.”

It doesn’t cost businesses to participate in the program other than the discount they agree to provide. Business owners who are interested in learning more about the Co-op Connections program are invited to contact Tri-County’s member services department by calling 1-800-343-2559.

Tri-County lists the names of all participating businesses on the Co-op Connections

card website, which is searchable by zip code. That means participating local businesses can be found by Co-op Connections card holders from anywhere in the country, since this member-benefit program is offered at Touchstone Energy cooperatives nationwide. A link to the Connections Card website, www.connections.coop, is included on Tri-County’s homepage, www.tri-countyrec.com.

Following are the names of local businesses participating in the program, as well as the discounts they are offering. Also included is a listing of the national businesses participating in the Connections program. Members can review the discounts being offered by the national chains by visiting the cooperative’s website or calling the Tri-County office. ☀

Local Business Participants

AUTOMOTIVE

- Battery Warehouse.....814/274-4277
Coudersport
10% off any battery purchase
- E&G Auto Parts.....814/274-4277
Coudersport
10% off entire bill, excluding oil changes and other promo items
- Street Machines Auto Care.....814/274-8093
Coudersport
10% off parts, excludes tires, autobody parts (Ford, GM, Toyota, Chrysler or any major auto builder) and labor

HOME IMPROVEMENT/REMODELING

- The Carpenter’s Shop.....814/848-7448
Ulysses
5% discount on all flooring

INSURANCE

- Karschner Insurance.....814/274-7281
Coudersport
Desk diary

LODGING

- At the Woods.....814/376-3711
Middlebury Center
10% off overnight stays of three or more nights
- Kettle Creek Adventures.....570/923-0778
Cross Fork
12% off three-day stay, and 12% off all rental items (excludes special event weeks)
- Oz Bed & Breakfast.....814/697-7218
Coudersport
20% off, no other discounts apply

- Potter County Cabin Rentals.....814/647-8777
Austin
10% off cabin or RV rentals, except on non-holiday or special event weekend
- Westgate Inn.....814/274-0400
Coudersport
10% off any stay of three days or longer

LOG HOME CARE

- Snowy Winters Woodworks.....814/771-3102
Coudersport
5% discount on supplies

OUTDOOR RECREATION

- Austin Campground.....814/647-8777
Austin
50% off campsite, except on holiday or special event weekends
- Free Fall Oz Skydiving.....814/697-7218
Shinglehouse
20% off, no other discounts apply

PLUMBING & WATER TREATMENT

- Havens Well Drilling.....570/297-2397
Troy
15% off list price on all .5 -through 1-hp Goulds submersible pumps
- Home & Farm Solutions, LLC.....877/872-1012
Delanson, N.Y.
15% discount for online order, and 10 percent discount on phone orders

PRINTING AND PROMOTIONAL ITEMS

- Lagrew Printing Co.....814/274-7163
Coudersport
10% off any online purchase from website: www.lagrew.com

Local Business Participants

RESTAURANTS

- The Crittenden.....814/274-8320
 Coudersport
 10% off food purchases, not to be combined with other offers, buffets or discounts
- Fox's Pizza.....814/274-8160
 Coudersport
 10% discount
- Gold General Store.....814/848-9773
 Genesee
 Save \$1.00 on large pepperoni pizza
- The Maple Tree on Main.....814/274-0704
 Coudersport
 10% off food purchases, not to be combined with other offers, buffets or discounts

RETAIL STORES

- Howard's Home Furnishings.....814/697-6241
 Shinglehouse
 10% off regular price on home furnishings and carpet
- Mansfield Embroidery.....570/662-3101
 Mansfield
 5% discount. Schools, clubs, churches and organizations for fund-raisers excluded from this offer
- Potter County Outfitters.....814/274-0772
 Coudersport
 \$30 off retail price on any in-stock boot purchase

TECHNOLOGY, INTERNET

- Compu-Tech Computers, Inc.....814/274-4357
 Coudersport
 10% off all service work
- Zwisp.Net.....814/274-4357
 Coudersport
 Third month-free internet access for dial-up/DSL or wireless

National Discount Providers

- Alamo Rent A Car
 AMattressHero.com
 AmeriHost Inn
 Anna's Gourmet Goodies
 AnySunglasses.com
 AutoAnything
 Barnes & Noble.com
 Baymont Inn & Suites
 Best Western Hotels (BBW)
 BowlingShirt.com
 Cherry Moon Farms
 College Parents of America
 Computrain Solutions
 Conscious Cup Coffee
 Cooperative Healthy Savings
 Costco Wholesale
 Cruises Inc.
 Days Inn
 DiscoveryStore.com
 EliminateID Theft
 Energy Federation Incorporated
 Everything But Water
 Evolve Showerheads
 FansEdge
 FreeBackgroundSearch.com
 Gemologica Fine Jewelry Store
 Hawthorn Suites
 Hertz
 Home and Farm Solutions, LLC
 Howard Johnson
 Husky Liners
 iPlayMusic
 Jenny Craig
 Kentucky State Parks
- Knights Inn
 La Quinta Inns & Suites
 Liz Claiborne
 Lobster Gram
 Magazines.com
 Meineke Car Care Centers, Inc.
 Microtel Inns & Suites
 Motel 6/Accor Hospitality
 MREfoods.com
 National Car Rental
 No Haggles
 Omaha Steaks
 Original Rug Company
 ProFlowers
 Ramada
 Red Roof Inn
 RedEnvelope
 Sam Ash Music Stores
 Samsonite
 Sears Commercial
 Sheplers
 Sherwin-Williams
 Sierra Trading Post
 Six Flags Theme Parks
 Solar Direct
 Sprint
 Stone Mountain Park
 Super 8
 Thousand Trails
 Tilden
 Travelodge
 Vacations Direct
 Vehicle Advantage
 Wingate
 Wyndham Hotels
 XM Radio



HE'S GOT CONNECTIONS: Tri-County's director of member services, Bryan Berguson, displays the Co-op Connections discount card being distributed to all cooperative members as a free service.

Office Closing
 Tri-County Rural
 Electric Cooperative
 will be closed
 Monday, Sept. 7,
 2009, in
 observance of
 Labor Day.

Help Tri-County Beat the Peak

With summer in full swing, Tri-County members can continue to help the cooperative control its power costs by taking part in Beat the Peak, our new energy-conservation program.

The goal of the Beat the Peak program is to encourage members to voluntarily conserve their electric use for several hours on the hottest weekdays of the summer.

By limiting electric use during times of peak energy demand, when generation prices are at their highest, members can help their cooperative save money on power purchases.

Peak demand periods occur in the afternoon and early evening hours of the hottest weekdays of the summer. Tri-County will alert members about an upcoming peak through radio spots that will be broadcast on stations throughout our service territory.

The radio spots will ask members to help the cooperative "Beat the Peak" by limiting energy use between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. on those hottest days of the year.

But members don't have to wait to hear an announcement on the radio: If



it's a summer scorcher, you can bet it's a Beat the Peak day.

Some easy ways to help us Beat the Peak include:

- ▶ turn off all unnecessary lights,
- ▶ increase the thermostat setting on air-conditioners by 3 degrees,
- ▶ delay the use of major appliances such as dishwashers, washing machines, clothes dryers and dehumidifiers,
- ▶ consider grilling outdoors instead of using your electric range.

For more information about ways you can help Beat the Peak, contact the member services department at 1-800-343-2559. ☀

Keep electricity from going down the drain

Water use and electricity go hand in hand. Heating water can account for 14 percent to 25 percent of the total energy consumed in a typical home. If your home receives water from a well or spring, the pump also draws power. So when we use water, hot or cold, we're also using energy.

You can significantly reduce hot water consumption in your home by simply repairing leaks in faucets, shower heads or pipes. A leak of one drip per second can cost \$1 per month.

You can also reduce water-heating costs by lowering the thermostat setting on your water heater. For each 10-degree reduction in temperature, you can save between 3 and 5 percent in energy costs. Reducing the setting also slows mineral buildup and corrosion in your water heater and pipes.

Although some manufacturers set water heater thermostats at 140 degrees, most households usually only require them set at 120 degrees. However, if you have a dishwasher without a booster heater, it may require water temperature within a range of 130 to 140 degrees for optimum cleaning.

Adding insulation to your water heater, if needed, can save around 4 to 9 percent in costs. To determine if you need to insulate your water heater, touch it. A tank that's warm to the touch needs additional insulation.

Insulating your water heater tank is fairly simple and inexpensive, and will pay for itself in about a year. You can find pre-cut jackets or blankets for about \$10 to \$20. Choose one with an insulating value of at least R-8. In addition, don't set the thermostat above 130 degrees on an electric water heater with an insulating jacket or blanket; the wiring may overheat.

Installing insulation on gas- and oil-fired water heaters is more difficult. For these appliances, it's best to have a qualified plumbing and heating contractor perform the work.



ON TOUR: Tri-County's Rural Electric Youth Tour delegates enjoy Washington, D.C., landmarks during their weeklong visit to the nation's capital in June. Tri-County sponsored six high school students from its service territory on this year's tour. They are, (standing, from left) James Freeborn of Harrison Valley, Elizabeth Vollman of Trout Run, Emily Smith of Gaines, Jessica Miller of Austin, Clarice Tice of Millerton and (seated) Andrea Fulmer of Westfied. Organized annually by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association since 1964, the 2009 Youth Tour drew more than 1,500 students from across the country to Washington, D.C., the week of June 14-19.