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Between the Lines

News from your community

A taste of the holidays

As we enter the holiday season this year, it's after having gone through some of the most difficult months in recent memory. A worldwide pandemic and divisive election cycle have led to mental and physical fatigue and a myriad of concerns about our families, our communities, our country and ourselves.

Even if you are foregoing travel to see relatives this year, the holidays can still lift our spirits and provide opportunities for laughter and happiness that are sorely needed right now. We may just need to get more creative this year such as using video calling to visit with relatives or giving gifts that are more practical in nature to help those who may have been without work for a period of time or lost their jobs altogether.

In the midst of the division we see all around us, we can all agree that food brings us together — whether in a physical sense as we gather with family or through the use of a favorite family recipe handed down through the generations, perhaps one that is written on an index card in the handwriting of a loved one no longer with you. Many of our most cherished holiday memories are tied to food — the taste of a grandmother's from-scratch banana pudding, watching your father carve the turkey or listening to Christmas carols with your mom while making cookies.

The kitchen is the center of the home, especially during the holidays. Tri-State



By Stacy Chastain
*General Manager,
Tri-State Electric
Membership
Corporation*

Electric Membership Corporation is proud to power your holiday cooking, but we also recognize that all that extra cooking can add to your energy bill.

Here are a few suggestions to save energy in the kitchen this season: Peek through the window in your oven to check on the progress of foods that are baking instead of opening the door. Bake multiple dishes at once, using the right size pot or pan on the right size burner. Use the microwave or toaster oven for heating smaller servings. Run the dishwasher only when you have a full load. Keep your refrigerator temperature set between 35 and 38 degrees. You can find more tips to save energy this season on page 22.

Perhaps you want to experiment with some new recipes this year, starting your own family food traditions. Be sure to check out the recipes offered in this month's food feature on page 32. Everyone here at Tri-State EMC wishes you a happy, healthy and safe holiday season, one filled with tasty treats that form treasured memories for you and your family in the years to come.

This institution is an equal-opportunity provider and employer.

Operation Round UP cents turn into dollars

Headed by a seven-member volunteer board, the Operation Round UP Foundation distributes funds raised through Tri-State EMC's philanthropic program in which members round up their power bill to the next dollar.

The foundation has awarded a total of more than \$630,000 to local nonprofits, charities and the local school systems.

For more information on grants, visit www.tsemc.net and click on the Operation Round UP tab.

Recent Recipients

Blue Ridge Elementary School
Copper Basin Crisis Center
Copper Basin Elementary School
Copper Basin High School

East Fannin Elementary School
Fannin County Brain Injury Support Group
Fannin County Family Connection Inc.
Fannin County High School
Fannin County Middle School
Fannin County School System Children's Fund
Feed Fannin
First United Methodist Church/Pastor's Discretionary Fund
Hiwassee Dam Schools
Mineral Springs Advocates Inc.
Morganton Baptist Church Food & Clothing Ministry
Mountain Education Charter School
Polk County Friends of the Library
Snack in a Backpack Inc.
West Fannin Elementary School

**Tri-State EMC wishes everyone a Merry Christmas
and a Happy and Prosperous New Year!**

**Tri-State EMC will be closed
on the following holidays:**

Thursday, Dec. 24, 2020

Friday, Dec. 25, 2020

Friday, Jan. 1, 2021

**If you experience a power outage
or require emergency service
at any time, please call 706-492-3251.**



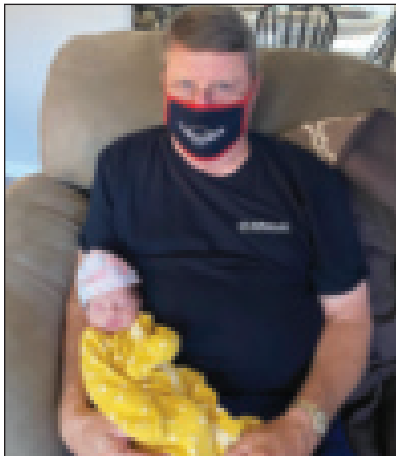
Buck Reece Retires after 34 years

Line Crew Leader Buck Reece has retired from Tri-State EMC after 34 years of service. Buck began his career at Tri-State EMC on Aug. 12, 1985, when he was 28 years old, working in the Right-of-Way Department.

Over his career, he was a groundman, apprentice lineman, lineman and foreman, the position he held at retirement.

Buck has been married to his wife, Donna, for 39 years. They have three children — Chad, Cristy and Aaron — and are blessed to have six grandchildren: CJ, Cayden, Carley, Cam, Grayson and Georgia.

In retirement, Buck says he plans to catch up on things he didn't have time for while he was working. He says he was thankful to find the job at Tri-State EMC and be able to work close to home



Give gifts that keep everyone safe

How awful would you feel if the thoughtfully selected holiday gift you gave a child or other loved one wound up injuring the recipient?

Beware of potential safety hazards when you're choosing toys and other presents this year. Some tips:

- Just because a toy's label says it's safe doesn't mean a child will use it safely. Choose toys that are age-appropriate.
- Toys with small parts are choking hazards for children younger than 3.
- If a toy has to be plugged into the wall, it's not a good choice for a child younger than 10.
- The smaller a toy's battery, the greater the risk that it will wind up in a child's mouth. Batteries can choke or even poison a child who swallows them.
- If you give a bike, skates or other toys that make a child mobile, spring for safety gear like helmets, too.
- Learn if the toy you've selected has been recalled for safety reasons by checking the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission website, [cpsc.gov](https://www.cpsc.gov).

Preschoolers learn about electricity

Tri-State personnel recently visited Fannin County Preschool to explain the basics of electricity and the importance of being safe around it. They also taught the curious preschoolers some smart energy habits. Students learned about some of the

equipment used by linemen and were able to see a bucket truck, which is always a favorite for the kids.

Tri-State EMC is proud to be able to help educate these youngsters about some of the important aspects of electricity.



Four ways Santa saves energy in his workshop

The holiday season is finally upon us, and Santa and his elves have been especially busy as they gear up for their biggest night of the year.

It's no secret that Santa is known for running an efficient workshop — how else could he make all those toys in time for Christmas Eve? Rumor has it that one way Santa ensures an efficient workspace is through energy-saving measures.

Here are four ways Santa saves energy in his workshop:

1. Unlike the rest of us, Santa leaves his decorations up year-round. By using LED holiday light strands, he's able to save on his monthly energy bills. LED holiday strands can last up to 40 seasons, making them a great option for any festive home.

2. Santa requires power tools to make a year's worth of new toys. That's why he insists on using cordless power tools with the Energy Star rating. According to energystar.gov, if all power tools in the U.S. used Energy

Star-rated battery chargers, 2 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity could be saved — that's equivalent to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 1.7 million tons!

3. Mrs. Claus loves to keep warm by the fire in the evenings, and Santa knows one of the best tricks to ensure fireplace efficiency. While a fireplace can keep a small area of your home cozy and warm, it can also pull heated air from the room through the chimney. That's why Santa always closes the fireplace flue when a fire isn't burning.

4. Santa also saves energy by using power strips. They're ideal for workshops, craft nooks, game rooms and other spaces in your home. With one simple switch, you can conveniently control several devices and electronics that are plugged into the power strip.

This holiday season, let's take a page from Santa's book and remember to save energy when possible. With these four tips, you'll be well on your way to savings (and, hopefully, Santa's "nice" list!).

Tri-State expresses thanks

On Thursday, Oct. 29, Tri-State EMC began to experience outages beginning around 5 a.m. Outages continued to mount as the winds increased in the area. At the peak of the storm, TSEMC had just

over 15,000 customers without power. Restoration efforts began immediately Thursday morning and continued until Wednesday afternoon. Crews worked 16-hour days until restoration efforts were complete.

Thank you to these businesses ...

TSEMC thanks businesses that made arrangements for workers to come by all during the day and into the night for food:

- Ingles
- Papa's Pizza
- Hi-5
- Tin Loong
- Circle J Steakhouse
- Taste of Amish
- Copper Pantry
- Pete's Place

There were also numerous individuals who donated funds for food and dropped off food at the office. This was greatly appreciated.

Special thanks to outside crews who came in to help with power restoration:

- Fort Loudoun Electric Cooperative
- Blue Ridge Mountain EMC
- Volunteer Energy Cooperative
- MPS
- Sequachee Valley Electric Cooperative
- Real Tree Service



Huge thanks

Tri-State EMC extends a huge thanks for the community support we experienced during this time — the thumbs up, waves, honking horns — and thanks to those customers who called in to check on the status of the restoration and extended their gratitude for the hard work and long hours the crews worked.

Tri-State EMC and TVA partner to deliver more \$10,000 grants to help fight COVID-19

Tri-State EMC is proud to announce that it has partnered with the Tennessee Valley Authority to award \$10,000 to Fannin County Family Connections, Copper Basin Crisis Center and Hiwassee Dam Schools through TVA's Community Care Fund program to help the community during the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

The partnership initiative gives local power companies the opportunity to identify organizations or local initiatives for which they can seek matching funds from TVA.

and reinforce the strength of public power in the Tennessee Valley.

Fannin County Family Connection

Sherry Morris with Fannin County Family Connection said the relief funds they received were spent on direct assistance to families in need due to job losses or other situations brought on by COVID-19. She added that recipients appreciated all of the assistance and that Fannin County Family Connection received thank-you telephone calls and cards in the mail.

Copper Basin Crisis Center

Copper Basin Crisis Center was also appreciative of the funds. The center granted clients food vouchers to help provide extra food during the difficult time.

Hiwassee Dam Schools

Hiwassee Dam Schools were able to restore and add new life to the outdoor classroom facility. Officials purchased tools and equipment to make the Nature Trail accessible and to clean and restore damaged areas of the pavilion. Teachers are now able to lead discussions while students interact using the outdoor classroom. Daniel McNabb, principal of Hiwassee Dam High School, said, "It has given us an environment safe from COVID-19 to provide students with an opportunity to converse freely and to improve their social emotional well-being."

TVA launched the Community Care Fund in April to help address hardships created by the COVID-19 pandemic. In the initiative's first six months, it has provided a total of \$4.9 million to support 344 nonprofits and community programs across the TVA service territory. In addition to Tri-State EMC, 136 other power companies have participated in the program, resulting in TVA announcing it will double its total commitment to \$4 million in matching funds.

"As part of our mission of service, TVA is an active partner with local power companies to help address the challenges families and businesses are facing today," said Jeannette Mills, TVA executive vice president and chief external relations officer. "The Community Care Fund is a great demonstration of how public power benefits the people of the Tennessee Valley."

The Community Care Fund is part of a broader effort by TVA and local power companies to support communities with resources, programs and assistance



Above and top left, staff, students and volunteers make repairs to Hiwassee Dam Schools' outdoor classroom and nature trail.

Plug into presents that pay off with year-round safety

By Derrill Holly

During the holiday season, many of us turn our attention to gift giving, and while the shiny, trendy and pricey may make a big splash when the unwrapping's done, practical gifts can leave lasting impressions. What's more, they can really make a difference by enhancing safety and improving security.

This month, we're offering a few practical gift ideas that can make a real difference in helping reduce safety risks year-round.

Smoke detectors: Most of us have at least one in our homes, but experts say that's not enough. The National Fire Protection Association recommends that a working smoke detector be installed in every bedroom, on every level of a home and in hallways outside sleeping areas. And, if smoke detectors are more than 10 years old, they should be replaced.

Carbon monoxide alarms: Carbon monoxide, or CO, is a colorless, odorless gas created by incomplete consumption of fuels like gasoline, wood, natural gas, propane, oil, coal or methane. The gas is highly toxic, so having CO detectors outside sleeping areas and on every level of a home improves overall safety. Local fire departments in the United States respond to about 80,000 nonfire CO incidents each year. The National Fire Protection Association also recommends that fuel-burning heating equipment and cooking appliances be professionally inspected once a year to reduce the risks of malfunction and detect structural problems early.

Extension cords: They are not all created equal, are subject to wear, have specific use guidelines and are never recommended for permanent use. Brittle and cracked plastic can indicate heat damage, and exposed wires or frayed connections increase risks of shocks, shorts or fires. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, an extension cord that's warm or hot to the touch is a good indication that it's not designed to safely do the job. Consider giving an assortment of extension cords designed for indoor or outdoor use, and before you buy, look for the label of a nationally recognized testing laboratory like Underwriters Laboratories (UL), CSA-International (CSA) or Intertek (ETL).

Arc fault circuit interrupters: Arcing and sparking are among indications that a home's electrical wiring needs service. Arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) can help address electrical fire hazards before they occur. Properly installed by a licensed electrician, AFCIs can often replace circuit breakers in an existing electrical panel box. The Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends that the work be completed by a qualified electrician because the installation involves working



The National Fire Protection Association recommends that a working smoke detector be installed in every bedroom, on every level of a home and in hallways outside sleeping areas. Photo source: Scott Van Osdol

inside the electrical panel box, which carries current even when main circuit breakers are turned off.

Ground fault circuit interrupters: While AFCIs are designed to help prevent electrical fire hazards, ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) are designed to help prevent shocks. Older homes may have just one, typically in an area where electric outlets are relatively close to a water source. But over the years, the National Electric Code has been amended to require their use for outdoor outlets; in attics and crawl spaces, bathrooms, garages, kitchens, crawl spaces; near laundry or utility sinks; and around wet bars. GFCI outlets should be tested regularly, and that means as often as once a month. Although they can last 15 to 25 years, some will malfunction in five years or less. While they can continue to carry current, once they lose their ability to mitigate shocks by immediately closing off current, they should be replaced. A licensed electrician can do the job quickly and professionally.

Any of these gift ideas will offer peace of mind for the giver and the receiver, and they'll reduce risks throughout the holidays and improve safety for years to come.

Derrill Holly writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56 percent of the nation's landscape.