

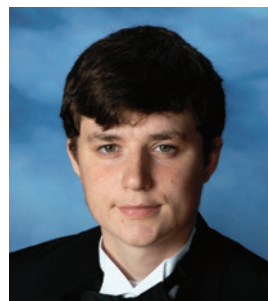
Tri-State EMC Operation Round Up Awards Scholarships to Deserving Students



Bethany Placher



John Deal



Jeremiah Dockery

Tri-State EMC (TSEMC) recently awarded \$500 scholarships to students at three local high schools. The money comes from TSEMC members who round up their bill to the next dollar through a program called Operation Round Up (ORU).

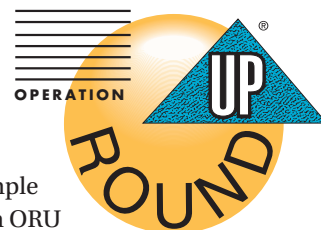
Money collected through ORU goes to nonprofit groups, charities and school systems in the TSEMC service area. Once a month, the Tri-State EMC Foundation board considers grant requests and allocates the money.

In 2013, the Operation Round Up board decided to grant annually a \$500 scholarship to one vocational student each from Fannin County High School, Copper Basin High School, Hiwassee Dam High School and Mountain Education



Charter School. The board elected to allow each school's scholarship committee to choose the recipient of the scholarship.

This scholarship is a fine example of where and how the money from ORU is used. Thank you to all of the Tri-State EMC members who participate in Operation Round Up and made this scholarship possible.



The 2021 scholarship recipients announced thus far are:

- **Copper Basin High School:** Bethany Placher
- **Fannin County High School:** John Deal
- **Hiwassee Dam High School:** Jeremiah Dockery

Energy Efficiency *Tip of the Month*

During summer months, run large appliances that emit heat (like clothes dryers and dishwashers) during the evening when it's cooler. This will minimize indoor heat during the day, when outdoor temperatures are highest.



This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

High School Students Learn Co-op Safety Measures

Fannin County High School students Bradley Holloway, Logan Hughes, Kaleb Green and Jake Sands attended TSEMC Pole Top Rescue Day recently. These students were able to learn more about the co-op and its employees as well as some of the safety measures crews take while performing their jobs.

They viewed pole top rescue exercises and participated in various activities and learned valuable information from Arch Slater, instructor with Tennessee Job Training and Safety.



Stay Safe over Fourth of July

With the COVID-19 pandemic winding down in many areas, cooped-up social distancers are likely to be out in droves to celebrate the Fourth of July. Keep your family safe this holiday by following some common-sense rules for celebrating with and near electricity.

- 1. Keep fireworks far from overhead power lines.** If fireworks are legal in your community and you set them off yourself, keep them at least 10 feet from power lines and 35 feet from high-voltage wires.
- 2. Keep an eye on your grill.** Whether it's electric, gas or charcoal, do not leave a hot grill unattended, even for a few minutes. The intense heat can easily harm children or pets. Plus, if flames are involved, you need to be there if they get out of control. Cooking accidents are the leading cause of house fires.
- 3. If you need an extension cord to plug in your grill or another cooking appliance, do not use that cord**



on more than one device at a time. And do not plug extension cords into each other; they're not designed for that. They can over-heat and cause a fire.

- 4. Keep the grill, blender, TV and other appliances away from the pool and all water sources.** Even if you're a safe distance from the water, unplug the appliance as soon as you're finished using it.
- 5. Have a working fire extinguisher on hand.**



5 STEPS FOR SAFE DIGGING

Working on an outdoor project? Always call 8-1-1 first, because you never know what's below.

Here are five easy steps for safe digging:

Source: call811.com

1. NOTIFY

Call 8-1-1 or make a request online two to three days before you start.



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

2. WAIT

Wait two to three days for a response to your request. Affected utilities will send a locator to mark any underground utility lines.



3. CONFIRM

Confirm that all affected utilities have responded by comparing the markers to the list of utilities the 8-1-1 call center notified.



4. RESPECT

Respect the markers provided by the affected utilities. They are your guide for the duration of your project.



5. DIG CAREFULLY

If you can't avoid digging near the markers (within 18-24 inches on all sides, depending on state laws), consider moving your project.



Is Your Ductwork Delivering?

BY PAT KEEGAN AND AMY WHEELLESS

Homes with central forced-air heating and cooling systems—like furnaces, central air conditioners and heat pumps—use air ducts to deliver the conditioned (heated or cooled) air through the home. Ducts are often concealed in walls or in areas of your home you don't see often, like a crawl space, so many people do not immediately think of them as an area to save energy.

You may have received flyers in the mail with offers for air-duct cleaning and claims that doing so will improve the air quality in and efficiency of your home. However, duct cleaning may not always be necessary for air quality, and there is no indication that just cleaning your air ducts will improve your system's efficiency.

Duct cleaning may be necessary if:

- There is visible mold in your duct system or there was a recent flood that caused mold or mildew in your home.
- There is something in the ductwork impeding airflow, like debris. Major renovations or new construction can put construction debris into the duct system, so consider duct cleaning after the project is done.
- Your heating registers are releasing dust into the air.
- Home residents have allergies or asthma problems that have not been alleviated by other changes.

While duct cleaning may not always be necessary, regularly changing your air filters can help your heating and cooling system work more efficiently. How often you change them depends on how much your system runs, whether you have pets and whether you periodically vacuum your air filters. For the average home, air filters should be changed four to six times a year.

Though duct cleaning may not do much for the efficiency of your systems, duct sealing is important for saving energy and lowering utility costs, particularly if your ducts are in unconditioned spaces like a crawl space or an uninsulated attic. In a typical home, 20 percent to 30 percent of heated or cooled air escapes through unsealed gaps and holes in the duct system, which can cost you money and make your home less comfortable.



A duct blaster test can show you how leaky your ductwork is.



Mastic can be used to seal small gaps and leaks in your ductwork.

WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

How often you change your air filters depends on how much your system runs, whether you have pets and whether you periodically vacuum your air filters.

You wouldn't put up with a leaking water pipe, so why should you put up with a leaking air duct?

The best way to assess the condition of your home's ductwork is to have a professional home-energy auditor conduct a duct blaster test. If you can easily access your ducts, you might get by with a visual inspection, which will identify the larger holes and disconnections. Where ducts meet or where they connect to a heating register are common places to find leaks. A professional trained in ductwork can help you identify and fix the gaps and leaks you may not be able to see. Talk to your electric co-op to find the right person for the job.

Once gaps and leaks have been identified, you can work to seal your ducts. Small duct leaks can be sealed with mastic, a type of caulk. Larger duct leaks and disconnections may require additional lengths of duct, mechanical fasteners or special heat-resistant tape. Do not use duct tape; ironically, it is not designed to adhere well to ducts.

If you have ducts in unconditioned areas, like an attic or crawl space, your ducts could be wasting energy by heating or cooling the surrounding air, even if there are no leaks in the ductwork. Insulation around the ducts can help reduce this energy loss. Consider adding insulation to the unconditioned space, such as the attic or basement, which can further increase the efficiency and comfort of your home.

For more information on how to test and seal your ductwork, please visit collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips.

Pat Keegan and Amy Wheelless write for Collaborative Efficiency, which works with rural electric cooperatives to develop energy-efficiency programs that benefit them and the communities they serve.