



Tri-County
EMC

CURRENT LINES

SEPTEMBER 2025

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Smart Technology, [page 1-2](#)

Bright Ideas Grants, [page 2](#)

Directors' Election, [page 3](#)

Scholarship Opportunity, [page 4](#)

SAVE ENERGY WITH SMART TECHNOLOGY

Smart technologies make our homes more comfortable, convenient, and energy efficient. When connected to your home Wi-Fi network, smart devices can automate everyday tasks such as lighting, heating, cooling, and home security. They can even communicate with other smart devices in the home. While not all smart home products are specifically designed with energy savings in mind, there are several smart technologies that can help you lower home energy use.

SMART THERMOSTATS

Smart or not, your thermostat is the most effective tool for controlling energy use. Heating and cooling typically account for the largest portion of energy bills. Smart thermostats allow you to adjust the indoor temperature through an app, giving you full control from anywhere. Many smart thermostats include learning capabilities and will adjust based on previous behavior and patterns. According to the Department of Energy, smart thermostats can **reduce heating and cooling bills by more than 8% annually**. With models as low as \$65, they typically pay for themselves in one year.

SMART LIGHTING

Smart LED bulbs use less electricity than traditional bulbs and can be scheduled or turned off (or on) remotely through a smart phone app. Smart bulbs are available in a range of shapes, brightness levels, colors, and more, so shop for the products that work best for your home lighting needs.

Many smart bulbs include motion sensors that turn on or off based on room activity, further optimizing home energy use. If you're new to smart lighting, try a home starter kit. Prices for kits range from \$70 to \$300+, depending on how many bulbs you need.

Continued on Page 2

SAVE ENERGY WITH SMART TECHNOLOGY

Continued from Page 1

SMART PLUGS

Smart plugs are inexpensive gadgets that can help you save energy. Many electronic devices consume power even when they are turned off (known as “phantom load”), which can take a toll on your energy bills. Smart plugs are simply plugged into an electrical outlet and connected to your Wi-Fi network. When set up, the smart plug can cut power (or return power) to non-smart devices, like coffee makers, phone chargers, and other items that draw phantom load.

Many smart plugs, like the one shown on the right, can be paired with popular smart hubs, like Alexa or Google Nest, or controlled through the plug’s associated app. Smart plugs are simple to use, and a set of four can be purchased for as little as \$25.

If you’re looking for new ways to save energy, try these budget-friendly, convenient smart home technologies. (75392001)



TEACHERS: WIN UP TO \$1,500 FOR YOUR CLASSROOM



Tri-County EMC will award \$45,000 in grants to teachers at schools within the service area to execute innovative projects in their classrooms.

MISSION

The Bright Ideas program provides grants for local teachers to improve education in classrooms through innovative projects that would not otherwise be funded.

ELIGIBILITY

Georgia certified public or private school teachers in grades Pre-K through 12th grade in Baldwin, Jones, Putnam, Jasper, Twiggs, and Wilkinson Counties are eligible to apply.

CRITERIA

Projects will be judged by a panel of retired educators based on innovation, goals, learning objectives, student involvement, and budget.

LIMIT & TERM

Individual projects can be funded up to \$1,500. Grants will be awarded annually based on merit and must be used within 18 months. Follow-up reports may be requested by Tri-County EMC.

Applications must be completed online at tri-countyemc.com/bright-ideas.cms by midnight on October 15.

DIRECTORS' ELECTION IN PROGRESS

Cast your vote for a chance to win up to a \$500 bill credit!

Tri-County EMC's Annual Meeting will take place next month on Thursday, October 16 at 2 PM at Tri-County's office in Gray. An important part of the meeting is the election of the board of directors. All members can participate in the election without attending the meeting. On September 16, every Tri-County EMC member will be sent a ballot by mail or email. All members who cast a vote will have a chance to win a \$500 bill credit or one of ten \$50 bill credits. Below are the biographies of the three incumbent directors running unopposed for re-election. (51401002)



Cecil Patterson
DISTRICT 1, POST 3

Cecil Patterson earned a bachelor's degree from Mercer, a master's degree in educational administration from Georgia College & State University, and a specialist's degree from Clarke-Atlanta University. He retired from the Jones County School System in 2013 after a long career, having served as a high school coach, Principal at Gray Elementary School, and Executive Director of Jones County Schools. His honors include Citizen of the Year, All-American Baseball Player at Mercer, Hall of Fame Inductee at Mercer, and Coach of the Year for 9 years. He and his wife reside in Haddock.



Mike Rainey
DISTRICT 2, POST 3

Mike Rainey is a lifelong resident of Putnam County and the owner of Briarpatch Farm. He graduated from the Georgia Institute of Technology. Mike has been part of the farming community for 45 years – dairy farming for the first 30 years and currently raising dairy cattle for other dairy farmers. He also maintains a herd of Angus cattle. He served on the steering committee for the Georgia National Fairgrounds and as a director for Georgia Milk Producers. He has also been involved with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and the Christian Learning Center in Putnam County. Mike and his wife, Kathy, host numerous charitable fundraisers on their farm. They are members of LakePoint Community Church and have 7 children and 11 grandchildren.



Marion Nelson
DISTRICT 3, POST 3

Marion Nelson earned his associate's degree in criminal justice from Georgia Military College and has a bachelor's degree in biology from Georgia College & State University. He retired after serving as a ranger for the Georgia Department of Natural Resources for 34 years and Environmental Enforcement Officer with Baldwin County for 10 years. Marion is a volunteer with the Baldwin County Fire and Rescue Squad. He and his wife, Harriett, have a daughter and a son, and attend the First Baptist Church in Milledgeville.

IS YOUR ACCOUNT LISTED AS A BUSINESS, CHURCH, CLUB, OR OTHER ORGANIZATION?

Any Tri-County EMC member whose account is listed as a business, church, club, or other organization must use a Letter of Authorization Form to designate a voting representative. The form must be completed and notarized and returned with your ballot. The Letter of Authorization Form can be found at www.tri-countyemc.com/election.cms.



RECIPE BOX

CHOCOLATE BOURBON PECAN PIE BAR

Courtesy of Georgia Grown

INGREDIENTS:

CRUST

- 8 oz unsalted butter
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 2 cups all-purpose flour

TOPPING

- 3/4 cup sorghum syrup
- 3/4 cup light brown sugar
- 2 farm eggs
- 2 tbsp butter, melted
- 1 tbsp vanilla extract
- 1 oz rye bourbon
- 2 1/2 cups pecan pieces
- 4 oz chocolate chips

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 350. Line a 9x13 inch baking dish with parchment paper and spray with cooking spray. Brown butter in a pan, about 5-8 minutes over medium high heat. Allow to cool for 5 minutes. In a large bowl, combine browned butter, sugar, vanilla, and salt. Mix together. Gradually stir in flour until mixture is crumbly and begins to stick together. Press into the bottom of prepared pan and bake for 15 minutes.

Whisk sorghum syrup, brown sugar, eggs, melted butter, vanilla, and bourbon together in a medium bowl. Remove crust from oven and sprinkle chocolate chips and pecan pieces evenly over the crust. Pour sugar mixture over pecans and chocolate and spread evenly and gently with a spatula over the crust. Return to oven and bake for 30 minutes. Remove from oven and cover with foil, then return to oven and bake 10 minutes longer. Remove from oven and allow to cool. Chill in refrigerator for 2 hours, then cut into bars and serve. Makes 9 dessert sized bars or 18 snacking bars.

WIN \$1,000 FOR YOUR COLLEGE EDUCATION

Applications due by midnight on October 15



A recent survey of 1,000 adults by Champlain College revealed that **75%** of respondents agreed that student loan debt was the main barrier to going back to school. As a strong supporter of education, Tri-County EMC believes that financial roadblocks shouldn't stand in the way of someone's goals. The cooperative's foundation is proud to offer the \$1,000 Operation Roundup Scholarship to help service area students of all walks of life take that next step toward a brighter future. Whether you're a recent high school graduate or a non-traditional student working part-time and returning to school, this support can help lighten the financial load so you can focus on learning.

Education is one of the most worthwhile investments an individual can make, and Tri-County EMC is committed to helping its members succeed. This fall, two Operation Roundup Scholarships will be awarded based on academic standing, financial need, and community contributions. To apply, the student's primary residence must be served by Tri-County EMC and be enrolled in any U.S. accredited college, university, or technical college and have maintained at least a 2.0 average. (99771001)

Applications can be completed online at the link below:

www.tri-countyemc.com/roundupscholarship.cms

ACCOUNT NUMBER

Three account numbers are hidden in parentheses in this issue of Current Lines. Find your **FULL** account number and call 478.986.8126 to claim a \$50 bill credit.

DID YOU KNOW?

Your recipe is worth \$20 if chosen! Send your best recipes to annas@tri-countyemc.com or mail to P.O. Box 487, Gray, GA 31032.



Tri-County EMC

Owned By Those We Serve

P.O. Box 487
Gray, GA 31032
478.986.8100

www.tri-countyemc.com

Tri-County EMC is an equal opportunity provider and employer

Ray Grinberg, CEO

Board of Directors

Brenda P. Green, Chairman
Sammy Hall, Vice-Chairman
Dan Greene, Secretary/Treasurer
George "Buck" Comer, Chap Nelson,
Marion Nelson, Cecil Patterson,
Mike Rainey, Ed Walker

CURRENT LINES

Monthly Publication for Tri-County EMC Members