

HI-LITES

When Supply Shrinks and Demand Grows: The Real Power Behind Energy Prices

Many of you have likely seen headlines about Ameren's recent rate increases last year and the challenges they're facing due to a lack of generation capacity. Unfortunately, this issue isn't isolated to Ameren — it's a concern facing utilities across the region, including ours.

At Tri-County Electric Cooperative, we're not immune to these market pressures, but our situation looks very different. The reason our rates didn't skyrocket last year and we didn't have a rate increase in 2025 is that our exposure to the market is very limited. However, as energy market prices continue to rise, some upward pressure on costs is understandably unavoidable.

Why Generation Matters

The reality is simple: you can't shut down generation and increase the demand for it without expecting higher prices. Across the country, generation plants have retired faster than new sources have come online. When demand grows and available generation shrinks, market prices naturally rise.

That's why our power supplier, Southern Illinois Power Cooperative (SIPC), plays such an important role in helping us maintain stable, reliable, and affordable electricity. SIPC provides wholesale power to seven distribution cooperatives (including ours) and the City of McLeansboro, serving more than 84,000 across southern Illinois.

SIPC's generation portfolio is diverse and strategic, helping to reduce exposure to volatile market conditions.

Their resources include:

- 120 MW circulating fluidized bed boiler (coal-fired), *Marion, IL*
- Two 70 MW simple-cycle combustion turbines (natural gas or oil), *Marion, IL*

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Luke Johnson
General Manager



Mt. Vernon Office
3906 Broadway
Mt. Vernon, IL 62864
Monday - Friday
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Salem Office
1631 E Main St.
Salem, IL 62881
Tuesday - Thursday
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Closed: 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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When Supply Shrinks and Demand Grows (continued)

- 28 MW of hydro-power from the Southeastern Power Administration, *Tennessee Valley*
- 125 MW ownership in Prairie State Energy Campus (mine-mouth coal units), *Lively Grove, IL*
- 10 MW from Pioneer Trail Wind Farm, *Paxton, IL*
- 100 MW from Big River Solar, *White County, IL*

SIPC also owns and operates more than 1,100 miles of high-voltage transmission lines and multiple substations to ensure reliable delivery of power throughout the region.

How We Help Protect You from Market Swings

Our cooperative buys electricity from SIPC through Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs). A PPA is essentially a long-term contract to buy a set amount of power at an agreed-upon rate. These agreements help shield us from the volatility of daily market pricing. However, even these contracts have seen rising costs, as generation and fuel prices continue to climb across the industry.

We're also actively seeking grants and other funding opportunities to help offset costs and invest in efficiency — always with the goal of keeping your rates as stable as possible. Every year, as we develop our budgets, we carefully evaluate expenses and explore ways to manage costs without compromising safety, reliability, or service quality.

Our Commitment to You

While we can't control the broader energy market, we can control how we respond to it. By maintaining a balanced energy portfolio, planning responsibly, and pursuing outside funding, we're working hard to keep your electric rates affordable and predictable.

At the heart of every decision we make is our mission — to provide safe, reliable, and affordable electricity to our members. We'll continue doing everything we can to live up to that promise, even in challenging times.

Power Supply

Understanding Southern Illinois Power Cooperative's (SIPC) Energy Portfolio



MASCOT PECANS

16 oz. Mammoth Pecan Halves	\$11.25
16 oz. Medium Pecan Pieces	\$11.00
12 oz. Roasted Salted Jumbo Cashews	\$8.25
4 oz. Pecan Log	\$4.25
12 oz. Chocolate Covered Pecans	\$10.50
8 oz. Pecan Caramel Clusters	\$7.00

Available during regular business hours at both co-op office locations while supplies last.

Proceeds from the Employee Mascot Pecan Fundraiser support community organizations that serve the members of TCEC. Mascot Pecans: a gift that truly gives back!



Board of Director Elections: Important Dates & Information

One of the most valuable principles of the cooperative business model is democratic control. Boards of cooperatives are democratically elected by the membership to govern and direct the affairs of the cooperative.

Tri-County Electric Cooperative has a 9-member board with three directors from each of the primary counties served, Jefferson, Marion, and Washington. The membership elects one director for each district at the annual meeting each year, and the directors serve three-year rotating terms. This year's annual meeting will be held on Saturday, July 11, 2026.

Board candidates can be nominated by petition signed by at least 25 members, and signatures may come from the entire Cooperative membership.

Petitions can be picked up:

Wednesday, February 11th, 2026

Petitions must be filed in person by:

Monday, April 13th, 2026

Petitions may be picked up in person, sent to a member by e-mail, or mailed to a member, but must be filed in person. If you would like to receive an official petition along with the affidavit, please contact Lynn Hutchison, Director of Member Services, at 618-244-5151 or by e-mail at lhutchison@tricountycoop.com.

The Credentials and Elections (C&E) Committee will meet to review the qualifications of petitioning nominees and supervise nominations of board members.

If there are no nominations by petition for the district in which a director is to be elected, it is the duty of the C&E Committee to select a nominee(s) for that district. The C&E Committee is scheduled to meet on April 22, 2026, and the members of the committee are: Tiffany Kluck, Kasie Dlubala, Sherry Hargis, Ruth Harre, Tonya Lowery, and John Boeker. If you would like to review the qualifications to become or remain a board member, or the section regarding nominations, the bylaws of the Cooperative can be found on our website, or you can contact us at 618-244-5151, and we will mail a copy to you.

How will you MAKE YOUR MARK?



Experience the trip of a lifetime with Youth Tour!

- Explore Washington, D.C. through historic monuments, world-class museums, and visits with elected officials.
- Build leadership skills and discover how you can make your mark on the future.
- Connect with students from across the country and form friendships that last a lifetime, all sponsored by your local electric cooperative.

Scan QR to Apply Online

Who is eligible?

- Sophomores, Juniors, & Seniors
- Must live in a home served by TCEC.



learn more: www.tricountycoop.com/youth-tour





TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

YOUTH DAY: MARCH 25, 2026

YOUTH TOUR: JUNE 15-22, 2026

DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 13, 2026

YOUTH DAY & YOUTH TO WASHINGTON, D.C. CONTEST

APPLICATION

Name: _____

Parent(s) or Guardian(s) Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Cell Number: _____ Parent Cell Number: _____

Can we text you? Y N Can we text parents? Y N

Parent Email Address: _____

Email Address: _____

T-Shirt Size: _____

High School: _____ Grade: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Age: _____

How did you hear about the program? _____

Using additional paper, please provide the following information.

1. What organizations or activities are you part of—inside or outside of school?
2. Why are you applying for the Youth Tour Program?
3. If you win the Youth to Washington trip, you may be asked to help promote the program to fellow classmates next year. Describe one way you would promote the program. Be creative!

By completing and submitting this application, I verify my eligibility to attend Youth Day, March 25th, in Springfield. If chosen as a Youth Day participant, I commit to the trip to Springfield. I also understand that if I should be selected as one of the winners of this contest, I would take the all-expense-paid tour to Washington, D.C., June 15-22, 2026. I am a son or daughter of an electric cooperative member.

Student's Signature _____

Application deadline: February 13th, 2026 - Mail to: Tri-County Electric Cooperative, Inc.
ATTN: Lynn Hutchison, 3906 Broadway ST, Mt. Vernon, IL 62864 or lhutchison@tricountycoop.com



www.tricountycoop.com/youth-tour



Scan the QR code to apply online!

