



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

# Hi-Lites

## WE HAVE A NEW PAYMENT PHONE NUMBER



**1-844-968-1991**

We have updated our Pay-By-Phone number to better streamline our communication channels and enhance our service efficiency. This change is part of our commitment to continually improve and adapt to meet your needs. You can still expect the same level of responsiveness, support, and assistance that you have come to rely on.

### DOWNLOAD OUR SMARTHUB MOBILE APP

- Report an outage
- View the outage map
- Check your balance
- View your bill
- Make a payment
- Connect with TCEC
- View bill history
- View daily use
- Sign up for Auto Pay
- Go paperless



*The SmartHub app is available for free in iTunes and the Google Play Store. For more information, visit: [www.tricountycoop.com](http://www.tricountycoop.com)*

### MISSION STATEMENT

To safely provide our member-owners with reliable electric service, superior customer service, and practical energy solutions, all at reasonable prices.

3906 Broadway  
Mt. Vernon, IL 62864

618-244-5151  
Toll-Free: 800-244-5151  
Fax: 618-244-1496  
Pay-by-phone:  
844-968-1991

#### Mt. Vernon

##### Office Hours

Monday - Friday  
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

#### Salem

##### Office Hours

Tuesday - Thursday  
7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
(Closed 12 p.m. - 1 p.m.)

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### President

Sam Phillips - Salem

#### Vice-President

Doug Knolhoff - Hoyleton

#### Secretary/Treasurer

Kathy Withers - Mt. Vernon

Michelle Barbee - Salem  
Tom Beyers - Odin  
Jordan Brink - Richview  
Phil Carson - Oakdale  
Donnie Laird - Waltonville  
Larry Manning - Belle Rive

## Rates Effective March 2024

After careful consideration, beginning with March 2024 usage, the service availability charge for Rates 1 and 7 will increase \$3.00 per month. This will be accompanied by an increase in the price of the first 1,000 kWh from 10.8 cents to 11.24 cents.

Members on Rate 1 using over 1,000 kWh will see an increase from 9.24 cents to 10.24 cents for kilowatts used after the first 1,000 kWh.

Members on Rate 7 using over 1,000 kWh will see an increase from 8.24 to 9.24 for kilowatts used after the first 1,000 kWh in the winter, and an increase from 10.24 to 11.24 in the summer.

The new rates are designed to help us offset rising costs in energy, materials, and supplies. We understand that any increase in costs can be challenging, and we want to assure you that we have worked hard to keep this adjustment as reasonable as possible.

## Cooperative Calendar

**March 7th, 2024**

Farmers & First Responders Safety Luncheon

**March 20th, 2024**

Youth to Springfield (Deadline to apply: Feb. 2nd)

**March 29th, 2024**

TCEC Offices Closed - Good Friday

**April 12, 2024**

Petitions must be filed in person along with an affidavit stating that the person filing the petition meets the qualifications to become or remain a board member. Petitions must be filed at our Mt. Vernon office no later than close of business day.

**June 14th - 21st, 2024**

Youth to Washington

**July 13th, 2024**

Annual Meeting - Mt. Vernon

## Make-Ahead Jar Seasoning Mixes

*Crafting your own seasoning allows you to customize the spice level and ingredients to suit your taste preferences. You can also skip the preservatives and additives found in store-bought versions, creating a healthier and more wholesome option!*

### Taco Seasoning Mix

1/2 cup chili powder

1/4 cup onion powder

1/8 cup ground cumin

1 Tablespoon garlic powder

1 Tablespoon paprika

1 Tablespoon sea salt

Mix all ingredients in a jar, then give the jar a good shake. Shake the jar to mix the ingredients well before each use. Use 2 Tablespoons per pound of meat in replacement of 1 packet of taco seasoning. Store this in a dry, cool place.

### Dry Onion Soup Mix

2/3 cup dried, minced onion

3 teaspoons parsley flakes

2 teaspoons onion powder

2 teaspoons tumeric

1 teaspoon celery salt

1 teaspoon sea salt

1 teaspoon sugar

1/2 teaspoon ground pepper

Mix all ingredients in a jar, then give the jar a good shake. Shake the jar to mix the ingredients well before each use. Use 4 Tablespoons in a recipe in place of 1 packet of onion soup mix. Store this in a dry, cool place.



### Ranch Seasoning Mix

5 Tablespoons dried, minced onions

7 teaspoons parsley flakes

4 teaspoons salt

1 teaspoon garlic powder

Mix together and store in an air tight container. For dressing: Mix 2 Tablespoons dry mix with 1 cup mayonnaise and 1 cup buttermilk or sour cream.

For dip: Mix 2 Tablespoons dry mix with 2 cups sour cream or greek yogurt. Mix up a few hours before serving, so the flavors all blend.

## New! Apply Your Capital Credit Check to Your Monthly Bill

As a member of Tri-County Electric, you earn capital credits! When you signed up to receive electric service from Tri-County Electric Cooperative, you became a member of an electric utility. While investor-owned utilities return a portion of any profits back to their shareholders, electric cooperatives operate on an at-cost basis. So instead of returning leftover funds, known as margins, to folks who might not live in the same region or even the same state as you do, Tri-County Electric Cooperative allocates and retires capital credits (also called patronage dividends, patronage refunds, patronage capital, or equity capital) based on how much electricity you purchased during a year.

As circumstances allow, Tri-County Electric writes a check to members who were on our lines for the specific year we are retiring. During 2023, we paid back a portion of the year 2000, so members who were on our lines in the year 2000 received a check. ***New this year, we are offering our members an option of applying their capital credit check directly to their bill.***

This allows members the convenience of receiving their capital credits without having to worry about going to the bank to cash a check or even the possibility of losing the check in the mail.

If you are an active member with Tri-County Electric and would like your future capital credit checks to be applied straight to your bill, please contact the Tri-County Electric Billing Department at 618-244-5151, option 6.



## WHAT IS backfeed?

**Avoid deadly backfeed and help keep lineworkers safe.**

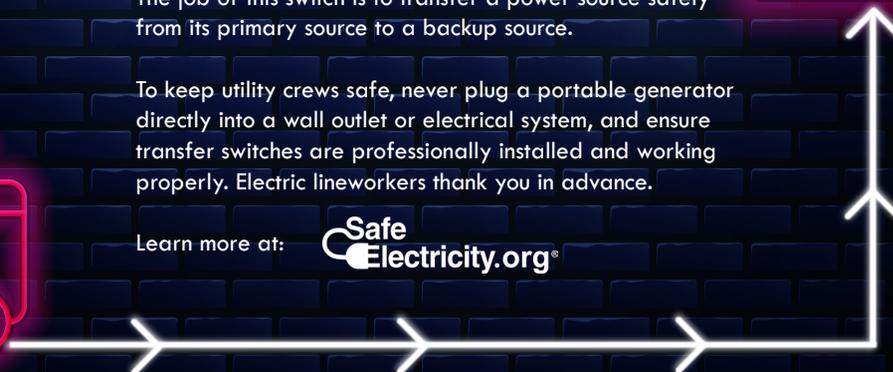
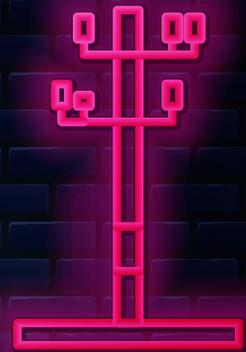
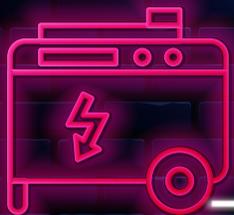
Backfeed happens when a person connects their portable generator to a wall outlet, which allows power to flow in reverse – that is, the alternate power source feeds energy back through their home's electrical system, their meter and back into the power lines.

Potentially deadly backfeed can also happen with permanently installed generators that are not used or installed correctly. They should be wired into your home by a qualified electrician, who will install either an automatic or manual transfer switch, depending on the generator. The job of this switch is to transfer a power source safely from its primary source to a backup source.

To keep utility crews safe, never plug a portable generator directly into a wall outlet or electrical system, and ensure transfer switches are professionally installed and working properly. Electric lineworkers thank you in advance.

Learn more at:

Safe Electricity.org®



# DON'T GET OUT

If your machinery, vehicle or other equipment **makes contact with a power line, guy wire or electrical box**, DO NOT get out of your cab. Stray power could energize your equipment and the ground.

**To avoid becoming electrocuted:**

- **Call 9-1-1 and wait** for us to arrive to cut the power.
- Wait to exit your cab until the **power is de-energized**.

In rare cases you may need to exit your cab due to smoke or fire. If you must get out, make a solid jump out without touching any part of the tractor or vehicle, and hop away as far as you can, keeping both feet together as you hop.

For more information visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).