With the midterm elections in the rearview mirror, Tri-County Electric is looking ahead at the impact and opportunities for rural America and electric cooperatives.

Electric cooperatives across the nation played an active role in the midterm election and worked to get to know each candidate running for federal office. This was particularly important since more than 60 members of Congress decided to retire or run for other office.

As we continue getting to know our new elected officials, Tri-County will continue advocating for policies that protect local business interests and advance the quality of life for our members. January to May of 2019 will be crucial in terms of legislation - and we want to your help. Check out our list to the right on the key 2019 legislative session dates of interest. Additionally, check out which initiative petitions passed and what that will mean this coming year.

There are several opportunities for our elected leaders to find common ground and advance legislation to benefit our community.

Improving our nation’s aging infrastructure is a great place to start. Congress and the White House should explore an infrastructure package that benefits all Americans, especially those at risk of being left behind in rural America. And this investment in critical infrastructure needs to go beyond roads and bridges. Congress should leverage an infrastructure package to help maintain and modernize the electric grid and connect rural communities to the modern economy.

The new Congress also presents an opportunity to expand access to high-speed internet service in rural communities that currently lack it. Despite not being a pressing issue facing Tri-County Electric, the FCC reports that 23 million rural Americans lack access to broadband internet—most of them are members from electric cooperatives. Roughly 100 electric cooperatives are working to close the digital divide by bringing broadband to their communities.

In lieu of this progress, an expanded combination of grants and loans is necessary to continue providing rural communities with the wherewithal for education, telemedicine and a 21st century economy. Everyone—the Trump administration and both Democrats and Republicans in Congress—agrees on the need to bolster rural broadband.

A third area of possible bipartisan agreement lies in the need to produce a new farm bill. The farm bill, which authorizes numerous rural economic development programs, traditionally has enjoyed bipartisan support in Congress. Although the House and Senate have passed very different versions of a farm bill this year, we’re hopeful that lawmakers can come to an agreement on a compromise bill that promotes rural economic development and protects Rural Utilities Service electric loan funding on which electric co-ops depend.

Electric cooperatives like Tri-County are engines of economic development in rural Adair, Schuyler and Scotland counties. And we are proud to continue working towards a brighter and more prosperous rural America.

### 2019 Session Dates of Interest

**January 9, 2019**

First day of the 2019 Legislative Session

**March 1, 2019**

Last day to file legislation in both the House and Senate.

**May 10, 2019**

6:00 PM Constitutional deadline for passage of the State Operating Budget.

**May 17, 2019**

Last day of 2019 Legislative Session.

*Note: Pre-filing of legislation began on Dec. 1st 2018.

### Initiative Petitions Passed

**Amendment 1 - “Clean Missouri” - Passed 62%**

“Clean Missouri” changes the process for redrawing state legislating districts and gives control to the state auditor who will choose a state demographer to redraw districts. Currently, bipartisan house and senate commissions redraw boundaries and those maps are adopted if 70% of the commissioners approve the maps. The proposal also includes reforms for campaign contributions limits, transparency and lobbyist gifts.

**Amendment 2 - Medical Marijuana #1 – PASSED 65%**

A constitutional medical marijuana proposal. This proposal legalizes marijuana to be distributed to patients and institutes a 4% tax on the retail sale of marijuana to fund health and care services for military veterans by the Missouri Veterans Commission.

**Amendment 4 - BINGO Regulations - PASSED 52%**

Amends the Missouri Constitution to remove language limiting BINGO game advertising and loosens restrictions on who can run BINGO games.

**Proposition B - Minimum Wage – PASSED 62%**

This proposal will increase the state minimum wage to $8.60 per hour and will increase by 85 cents per year until 2023 when the state minimum wage will be $12 per hour.
Common Health Myths

Health and nutrition are young sciences, and better information is constantly emerging from new studies. It’s easy to miss new information, and our brains naturally cling to the first versions of what we hear. Let’s take a look at a few common, stubborn health myths.

Antiperspirant causes breast cancer.
According to the American Cancer Society, researchers found no link between antiperspirant or deodorant use and breast cancer risk based on a study comparing 813 women with breast cancer and 793 women without breast cancer.

Being cold will give you a cold.
A cold is a virus, and catching a cold means you’ve become infected by a virus (or many viruses—there are thousands). Cold air is not a virus. However, there are a few reasons we’re more likely to catch a cold during winter months: we’re more likely to be in closer quarters indoors (and thus sharing more air and germs), drier indoor air leads to drier nasal cavities (mucus membranes are better at protecting us when moist) and rhinovirus germs replicate faster at lower temperatures, among other reasons.

Cracking joints will cause arthritis.
The cracks and pops you hear when you crack your joints is air being released from the liquid that lubricates your joints. It doesn’t cause arthritis, but that doesn’t mean it’s good for you. Harvard University Medical School says people who crack their knuckles tend to have lower grip strength and increased inflammation in their hands.

Organic food is more nutritious and pesticide-free.
A 2010 study by British researchers compared 162 scholarly, peer-reviewed, published articles that compared organic and traditionally grown produce. All told, their review found no difference in 15 noted nutrients, including vitamin C, beta-carotene and calcium. They also analyzed results for organic and traditionally raised meat, dairy and eggs and found that organic livestock products actually had higher levels of fats. In regard to chemicals, both traditionally grown and organic farms use pesticides, herbicides and fungicides; according to Scientific American, over 20 chemicals are approved for use by the U.S. Organic Standards and the amount of chemicals used on organic crops is not limited. Even though organic pesticides, herbicides and fungicides are created from natural sources, that doesn’t necessarily mean they are safer.

Vaccines cause autism.
In 1998, a British gastroenterologist named Andrew Wakefield published a falsified paper in which he linked the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine to autism. His findings were not replicable, the conclusions he drew were not supported by data and he had financial conflicts of interest. He and his autism study have been discredited; he is no longer allowed to practice medicine in the U.K. According to Autism Speaks, the risk factors for autism include parental age, pregnancy and birth complications, closely spaced pregnancies and environmental risk factors.

You need to cleanse your body of toxins (also known as “detoxing”).
Your body is a self-cleaning machine. You expel toxins (i.e., carbon dioxide) on your breath thanks to your lungs. Your kidneys and liver clean your blood. Your colon removes waste. You sweat releases excess salts from your skin. The best way to “detox” is to treat your body right by drinking enough water and moderating unhealthy foods, alcohol and drug use—and that includes quitting tobacco. There’s no need to fast or deprive yourself. In fact, eating an abundance of fresh or frozen vegetables and fruit, drinking more water, and getting more sleep are the best ways to help your body perform optimally.

Why should MY BUSINESS participate?

The Co-op Connections® Card program is an easy and cost-effective way for businesses to reach customers in the local area and throughout the state. But why should my business sign-up?

• There is no out-of-pocket advertising expense with our program.
• You’ll receive FREE listings in all our member communications about the program, including listings in our magazine, bill inserts, website - www.connections.coop, and more. The cooperative also provides window clings and cash register stickers so customers will be able to recognize participating businesses!
• There is NO catch! Simply commit to a discount offer (customizable by you) and agree to accept customers who present the Co-op Connections Card at check-out. Whether you’re the owner of a local business or you run a newly opened retail store, the Co-op Connections Card program can be individually catered to you.

Cash Back Shopping

Earn up to 20% cash back when you shop at over 2,000 online retailers.

Visit Connections.coop today!

We need your help! #SpreadTheWord to your local commerce today!
**SAFETY COLUMN: Preparing for Winter’s Worst**

When winter temperatures drop and storms hit, it can be challenging to stay safe and warm. Winter storm severity varies depending on where you live, but nearly all Americans are affected by extreme winter storms at some point. Tri-County cares about your safety, and we want you to be prepared.

Heavy snow and ice can lead to downed power lines, leaving co-op members without power. During extremely low temperatures, this can be dangerous. During a power outage, our crews will continue to work as quickly and safely as possible to restore power, but there are a few things you can do to prepare yourself.

- **Stay warm** – Plan to use a safe alternate heating source, such as a fireplace or wood-burning stove during a power outage. These are great options to keep you and your loved ones warm, but exercise caution when using, and never leave the heating source unattended. If you are using gasoline-, propane- or natural gas-burning devices to stay warm, never use them indoors. Remember that fuel- and wood-burning sources of heat should always be properly ventilated. Always read the manufacturer’s directions before using.

  • Stay fed – The CDC recommends having several days’ supply of food that does not need to be cooked handy. Crackers, cereal, canned goods and bread are good options. Five gallons of water per person should also be available in the event of an extended power outage.

  • Stay safe – When an outage occurs, it usually means power lines are down. It is best not to travel during winter storms, but if you must, bring a survival kit along, and do not travel alone. If you encounter downed lines, always assume they are live. Stay as far away from the downed lines as possible, and report the situation to our dispatchers by calling 660-457-3733 or toll-free at 888-457-3734 if possible.

Winter weather can be unpredictable and dangerous, and planning ahead can often be the difference between life and death. Tri-County is ready for what Mother Nature has in store, and we want you to be ready, too. For more winter safety tips, visit tricountyelectric.org OR www.ready.gov/winter-weather.

**10 Ways to Reduce Your Bill This Month**

1. Seal air leaks and insulate well to prevent heat from escaping and cold air from entering your home.
2. Reduce waste heat by installing a programmable thermostat.
3. Turn off lights when not in use.
4. Lower your water heater temperature. The Dept. of Energy recommends using the warm setting (120 degrees) during fall and winter months.
5. Unplug electronics like kitchen appliances and TVs when you’re away.
6. Open blinds and curtains during the day to allow sunlight in to warm your home.
7. Close blinds and curtains at night to keep cold, drafty air out.
8. Use power strips for multiple appliances, and turn off the main switch when you’re away from home.
9. Wash clothes in cold water, and use cold-water detergent whenever possible.
10. Replace incandescent light bulbs with LEDs, which use at least 75% less energy.

**Where’s the November Board Report?**

In order to meet our printer’s deadline, and to account for any possible rescheduling of board meetings - due to inclement weather - the November Board Report will be featured next month, February 2019, with the November Comparative Operating Report. Thank you for your patience this month.

**October 2018 Comparative Operating Report**

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TRICOUNTYELECTRIC.ORG | JANUARY 2019
Manager’s Message: See you at our 80th Annual Meeting!

Most of us lead busy lives. We find ourselves multitasking, constantly checking phones and email to keep up with the demands of modern life. Thanks to technology, we can accomplish many tasks electronically and remotely to be more efficient. And with so many pressing obligations, we like to protect our “spare” time.

Invitations to attend in-person meetings and gatherings are weighed carefully as we decide whether or not our time and effort to attend is beneficial. The answer to the question, “what’s in it for me?” must be compelling. You may think attending Tri-County Electric’s annual meeting would be easy to lump into the “no benefit to me” category. However, I’d ask you to think again.

Tri-County exists to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to its consumer-members (that’s you!). Equally important is our mission to enrich the lives of all members and to serve the long-term interests of our local communities. This is where you can help.

As a member of the community, you have a perspective that is valuable—and we invite you to share it with the co-op. At the annual meeting, co-op leaders will discuss priorities and challenges, and discuss the financial health and priorities for the coming years. Items under consideration include: Operation Round-Up, information on our updated metering system, cybersecurity efforts and new billing options that are not currently available to us. Additionally, visit booths for Co-op Connections and other economic development partnerships! Annual meeting is also the time to vote for new board members who will represent you—the members of the co-op. Board members are local consumers, just like you.

Tri-County Electric is one of the few local organizations that is uniquely positioned to bring together all members of the community. It is worth noting that the health of the co-op and the well-being of the community are closely intertwined.

Perhaps you may feel that you have nothing to add to the discussion, so there is no need to attend the annual meeting. However, every energy bill you pay to the co-op helps ensure better service and reliability for the whole community. Your dollars are reinvested locally into improvements that impact the reliability and affordability of your energy, and we want to hear from you to better inform our decisions as we plan for the future.

While Tri-County provides convenient electronic options for bill-paying and communication, there are times when there is no substitute for in-person engagement. When members of our community come together for a common purpose, we improve the quality of life for all in our corner of the world.

If you’ve never attended our annual meeting, or if it’s been awhile, please stop by. Our co-op family looks forward to visiting with you! We’ll have food, fun and door prizes, so mark your calendar for the annual meeting on June 27th, 2019 at 4:30 p.m., Scotland County R-1 High School.

CEO & General Manager
Jane Bahler-Hurt

TCEC

Board of Directors:

PRESIDENT
Mark Van Dolah

VICE PRESIDENT
Kenny McNamar

SECRETARY
Kelley Church

ASSISTANT SECRETARY
Dave Koch

TREASURER
Bill Triplett

ASSISTANT TREASURER
Joe Sebolt

DIRECTORS’ AT LARGE
Rusty Anders, Karen Farnsworth, Harley Harrelson

CEO
Jane Bahler-Hurt

EDITOR
Allie Shetler

TRICOUNTYELECTRIC.ORG | JANUARY 2019

Tri-County Fee Schedule

Late Payment Fee $10.00
Meter Test Fee $50.00
Returned Check Fee $30.00
Collection Trip Fee $50.00

Trip Fee for Member’s Side Outage

Office Hours $60.00
After Hours $225.00

Reconnect Fee

Office Hours $120.00
w/in 12 months $185.00
After Hours $225.00

We offer levelized billing. If interested, please call the office at (660) 457-3733

Bill Payment Options

The Office

• You’re always welcome to pay in person at our office. See office information for address.

Drop Box

• Located at our office available 24/7.

Online Bill Pay

• Available 24/7 at www.tricountyelectric.org

By Mailing To

• Tri-County Electric Cooperative, 16894 US Hwy 63, PO Box 159, Lancaster, MO 6348

Auto Pay

• From your checking or savings account or with your debit/credit card. Set yourself up online or give us a call

By Phone

• Using your debit/credit card by calling us locally (8 A.M. - 4:30 P.M. M-F) 660-457-3733 or Toll-Free (24/7) at 888-457-3734.