

# NEWS



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2018 Annual Meeting 22



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## Manager's Message: Co-ops are Community

**D**ramatic changes are transforming all aspects of the energy industry. Interest in renewable energy is at an all-time high, and ultimately consumers want greater control over their energy use and payment methods. The prevalence of smart-phone apps and "smart" technology for the home is increasing, and consumers and businesses are showing greater interest in electric vehicles.

There's no denying it: electric utilities will have to make changes to the way they provide energy to accommodate these trends. Luckily, Tri-County EMC is uniquely positioned to meet these changing energy needs because we are a cooperative.

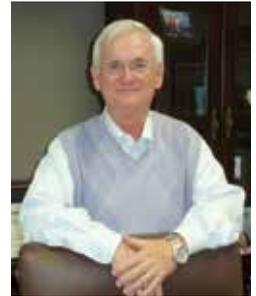
### Co-ops are community-led

October is National Co-op Month, which is the perfect time to highlight the many ways electric cooperatives are unique.

Cooperatives are locally governed, looking out for the long-term needs of their consumer-members.

Electric cooperatives belong to the communities they serve. This heightened community focus allows us to quickly adapt to evolving consumer expectations. Our closeness to the community ensures a better response to these needs because we are led by the people that we serve. We are involved in our communities; from raising money for local charities, sponsoring and coaching local sports teams, assisting with Ronald McDonald House and Kitty Askins fundraising to providing energy efficiency presentations to area schools and civic organizations.

**J. Michael Davis**  
General Manager



### Co-ops are a promoter for good

Electric co-ops, like Tri-County EMC, are a catalyst for good in their communities. Co-ops engage their consumer-members to do things that might otherwise be impossible or difficult, like more than 75 years ago when electric co-ops brought power to areas where other utilities did not find it economically feasible. Today, it means offering programs like Pre-Pay and our Home Energy Advisor to help members better control their energy use.

Cooperatives exist to meet a need that was previously unmet in the community, and they are ever striving to anticipate and plan for the future needs of their consumer-members.

Electric cooperatives often partner with local groups to bring economic opportunity to their local community. It is this facilitation role that is often the most valuable strength of the co-op. Right here in our seven-county service territory, we have helped secure funding for local universities, fire departments and business growth in our area.

The co-op business model is unique. It is practical, mission-oriented and puts people first. Co-ops strive to be a trusted voice in their communities. Co-ops have earned that trust because, while not perfect, they always have their members' best interest at heart and are determined to enrich the lives of those living and working in the communities they serve--now and in the future.



### Don't Be Spooked by Scams!

This Halloween, and year round, remember the following tips to help avoid the costly effects of being duped by scammers posing to be Tri-County EMC:

- ➔ Your co-op will never demand payment over the phone.
- ➔ Don't open suspicious emails. Instead, call Tri-County EMC to report questionable activity.
- ➔ If you receive a call, do not give out personal information such as your credit card number, account number or Social Security number. Hang up and call Tri-County EMC to verify your account status.
- ➔ Don't be rushed or pressured by a threatening caller. Hang up and take time to contact Tri-County EMC and verify information.

# Join Fellow Co-op Members at the 2018 Annual Meeting

It's that time of year again. Tri-County EMC is gearing up for the 2018 Annual Meeting, to be held on Saturday, November 10, 2018, at Kornegay Arena on the University of Mount Olive campus. Voter registration will begin at 12:30 p.m., with the official business meeting scheduled to begin at 1:30 p.m.

The annual meeting is a special time for co-op members to gather, share experiences, hear from co-op leadership and, perhaps most importantly, vote to elect three members to the cooperative's board of directors.

Tri-County EMC employees work hard to host this fun event, and we encourage you to attend and exercise some of the many rights you have as a member of an electric cooperative. We know the food and prizes are the best parts of the meeting, but there is so much more to the event.

Did you know the annual meeting is an occasion to discuss and learn more about the issues affecting our community and the cooperative? An opportunity to learn more about the topics that impact you and talk about what we as a community can do to address our most pressing challenges and take advantage of available opportunities.

Your annual meeting is also the occasion to exercise one of the greatest benefits of being an electric co-op member: voting for the upcoming year's board of directors.

Your electric cooperative is not owned by far-away investors, and it is not run by an appointed board of directors. Your electric cooperative is run by a democratically elected board that is given the privilege to serve because of your vote.



So, at this year's annual meeting, not only will you have a blast (and maybe win a prize!), but you will feel good knowing that you had a voice in a very important decision that impacts one of our most vital resources, electricity.

We are your neighbors, and we look forward to seeing you at your annual meeting in November.

## Tri-County EMC Approves \$2.5 Million Refund

Tri-County EMC will retire \$2,503,552.99 in capital credits in November, announced General Manager Mike Davis. The refunds recently approved by the Board of Directors will include 100% of the capital credits for the year 1998, and 20% of the capital credits from the year 2017. Capital credits represent cooperative members' equity in Tri-County EMC.

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

how much electricity you purchased during a year.

Current and former members who received electric service from the cooperative during 1998 and 2017 will be eligible for refunds. Checks will be mailed reflecting the member's contribution of capital to, and ownership of, the cooperative during that year.

### Keep a Current Address on File

Even if you no longer receive electric service with Tri-County EMC, you may still be entitled to receive checks from your capital credit allocation account. Please keep us updated with your current mailing address so we can mail your capital credit retirement check if you are no longer an active member. Should a member pass away, the capital credit account is payable to settle the estate.

# Bylaws Relevant to the Qualifications, Nominations and Elections of Members to your EMC's Board of Directors

## Board Nominees for 2018

With the forthcoming Annual Meeting, the Nominating Committee met in September and made nominations for three-year terms as follows:

### District 1—Duplin County (Vote for one)

→ Jennings Outlaw

### District 2—Wayne County (Vote for two)

→ Jeff Henderson

→ David Vinson

**SECTION 4.02. QUALIFICATIONS.** No person shall be eligible to become or remain a director of the cooperative who: (a) while serving on the board or during the five (5) years preceding his nomination thereto shall have been finally adjudged to be guilty of a felony; or (b) becomes, or at any time during the five (5) years preceding his nomination shall have been employed by (or be a close relative of a person who becomes, or at any time within the preceding five (5) years shall have been employed by) a labor union which represents or has represented, or has endeavored to represent any employees of the cooperative; or (c) is and if elected and seated as a director will continue to be, a close relative of an incumbent director or of an employee of the Cooperative; (d) has not continuously been, for at least one (1) year prior to his nomination, or who ceases after his election to be, a member on good standing of the Cooperative, receiving service there from at his primary residential abode in the Directorate District from which he is elected., (except as provided hereinafter in the first proviso in this Section, in which instance the entity which qualifies a person's eligibility to be elected a director must be and remain in good standing).

No person shall be eligible to become or remain a director of, or to hold any other position of trust in, the Cooperative who is not at least eighteen (18) years old or is in any way employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise or a business selling electric energy or supplies to the Cooperative.

Notwithstanding the restrictive provisions of this Section based upon close relative relationships, no incumbent director shall lose eligibility to remain a director or to be reelected a director if, during his incumbency, he becomes a close relative or another incumbent director or of a Cooperative employee because of a marriage or an adoption to which he was not a party.

Upon establishment of the fact that a person nominated for director by the Nominating Committee lacks eligibility under this section or as may be provided elsewhere in these Bylaws, it shall be the duty of the Board to disqualify him. Upon the establishment of the fact that any person being considered for or already holding, a directorship or other position of trust in the Cooperative lacks eligibility under this Section, it shall be the duty of the Board to withhold such position from such person, or to cause him to be removed therefrom, as the case may be, except that, in the case of a nominee for director from the floor, this duty shall be that of the chairman of the meeting and, in the case of an existing employee other than the general manager, this duty shall be that of the general manager. Also, the office of a director shall automatically become vacant if he misses as many as three (3) regular meetings of the Board during any twelve (12) consecutive such meetings, unless the remaining directors unanimously resolve that (1) there was good cause for such absences and (2) such cause will not likely result in such absences during the next ensuring twelve (12) consecutive regular Board meetings. Nothing contained in this Section shall, or shall be construed to, affect in any manner whatsoever the validity of any action taken at any meeting of the Board, unless such action is taken with respect to a matter in which one or more of the directors have a personal interest in conflict with that of the Cooperative.

**SECTION 4.03. ELECTION.** At each annual meeting of the members, Directors shall be elected by secret written ballot or secret electronic voting by the members, and, except as provided in the first provision of Section 4.02 of these Bylaws, from among natural persons who are members; PROVIDED, when the number of nominees does not exceed the number of directors to be elected for a particular Directorate balloting shall be dispensed within respect of that District and voting may be

conducted in any other proper manner. Whenever there are two or more candidates for the same directorship, the one receiving the highest number of votes shall win. Drawing by lot shall resolve, where necessary, any tie votes.

**SECTION 4.06. NOMINATIONS.** It shall be the duty of the Board to appoint, not less than forty (40) nor more than ninety (90) days prior to the date of a meeting of the members at which directors are to be elected, a Nominating Committee, consisting of an uneven number of cooperative members, not less than five (5) nor more than eleven (11), who are not existing Cooperative employees, agents, officers, directors or known candidates for directors, who are not close relatives or members of the same household of any such person; and who are so selected that each of the Cooperative's Directorate Districts shall have representative(s) thereon in proportion to the minimum number of directors to which such District is entitled to have representation on the Board. The Committee shall prepare and post at the principal office of the Cooperative, at least twenty-five (25) days before the meeting, a list of nominations for directors to be elected, listing separately the nominee(s) for each Directorate District for which one or two directors must, pursuant to this Article, be elected at the meeting. The Committee shall nominate one or more candidates for each directorate office to be filled, but it shall not make a nomination until it shall have first determined that the nominee is qualified to serve in accordance with the provisions of section 4.02 and, if elected, will serve. A number of members of the Cooperative, equal to one-half of 1 percent (1/2%) of the membership of the Cooperative as of January 1st of the year in which the election is to be held, acting together, may make additional nominations in writing over their signatures, listing their nominee(s) in like manner and filing the same with the cooperative not less than twenty (20) days prior to the meeting. The Secretary shall post such nominations at the same place where the list of nominations made by the Committee is posted. The Secretary shall mail to the members with the notice of the meeting, or separately, but at least seven (7) days prior to the date of the meeting, a statement of the names and addresses of all nominee(s) for each Directorate District for which a director must be elected, distinguishing clearly those nominated by the Committee and those nominated by petition, if any.

## Co-op Member's Entrepreneur Spirit Drives Success of Signature Neuse Company

As an entrepreneur, life isn't always easy, and everyone does it a little differently. Some open online stores, some work out of the trunk of their vehicles and their garage, while others open storefronts. Some invest their lives into a new venture, while others start a new business as a hobby, but a hobby with passion. Regardless of the type, entrepreneurs help drive the local economy and that's just what 23-year-old Dusk Stroud of Kinston has done.

Stroud, owner of Signature Neuse Company, began his business in 2014 as a local clothing brand that highlights life in North Carolina. "I wanted to create a T-shirt that was different, yet affordable. Something that spoke the language of Eastern North Carolina," said Stroud. Signature Neuse has retail locations in Lenoir, Greene, Duplin, Wayne and Johnston counties.

The T-shirt designs are a tribute to Stroud's family lineage. "You Gotta Top it Before You



Crop It" was a saying used endlessly by his grandmother, and "Dawn to Dusk" is in honor of Dusk Stroud and his mother, Dawn.

When asked is this a family venture, Stroud quickly responded YES! "My siblings help deliver, while mom helps perfectly fold an order of 500 shirts; and dad, well he's our quality control specialist."

The success of Signature Neuse also comes from its customers and the value of treating them like family. The business uses local Kinston screen printer Magic Mile Screen-Printing Co. and other businesses to make products. Every design tells a story, which adds extra meaning in the effort it takes to produce the shirts. The newest design, "Fly South," was based on the love of duck decoys by Stroud's grandfather, Joe, as well as the shared interest in retrieving and hunting by his family.

Signature Neuse Company has retail locations in Lenoir, Greene, Duplin, Wayne and Johnston counties. Signature Neuse Co. can be found on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter @signatureneuseco.



### Tri-County EMC Employees:

#### Ready To Serve

Brad Thigpen is one of 47 employees ready to serve you. Brad has worked with Tri-County EMC since October 6, 2003, as a tree trimmer. Brad resides in Mount Olive with his family.



## Tri-County Electric Membership Corporation

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Tri-County EMC Membership Corporation in Dudley, N.C., was chartered May 8, 1940.

**We are here to serve you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year.**

**For Outages or Emergencies:**  
919-735-2611 or  
1-800-548-4869

[tcemc.com](http://tcemc.com)

### Mission Statement:

Tri-County Electric Membership Corporation is a member-driven cooperative committed to providing reliable electric power at a reasonable cost, to offering superior service, and to taking an active role in supporting the communities it serves.

J. Michael Davis  
*General Manager*

**Management Staff**  
Kenneth E. Davis, Jr.  
*Manager of Finance & Accounting*

Robert B. Kornegay  
*Manager of Marketing & Member Services*

Deidra Locklear,  
*Editor*  
*Manager of Communications & Public Relations*

Tony Grantham, P. E.  
*Manager of Engineering*

Michael Wood  
*Manager of Operations*

Tamah Hughes  
*Manager of Information Technology*

**Board of Directors**  
Carl W. Kornegay, Jr.  
*President*

Jennings Outlaw  
*Vice President*

William H. Farmer, Jr.  
*Secretary*

David Vinson  
*Treasurer*

Keith Beavers  
Dallace Grady  
Jeff Henderson  
Patrick Lynch  
Randy McCullen  
Worth Overman  
Brandy Rouse