

# Shining Light on Our Revised Meter Tampering Policy



## MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER DARRYL SCHRIVER

**SAFETY IS IMPORTANT AT TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC Cooperative.** Over the past year, we have developed and implemented a culture that focuses on safety through a campaign called Tri-County EC Safety Strong. The campaign is designed to ensure all our employees, from lineworkers to office workers, work safely to make sure they return home to loved ones at the end of each day.

As we implement and promote our Safety Strong campaign, we are evaluating our practices and policies to ensure our communities, members and employees are safe, too.

One area we reviewed is our meter tampering and theft of power policy. Previously, we would charge a member \$100 for meter tampering plus the cost of repairs or replacement of damaged equipment. That approach did not seem to reduce the amount of meter tampering on our system.

When consumers steal electricity, they are putting themselves and their families at risk. Those who tamper with an electric meter or electric equipment risk electric shock, flashes or sparks, power surges, and fire from exposed voltage and equipment. 800792701

To ensure the safety of our members, the Tri-County EC Board of Directors passed a new meter tampering and theft of power policy. Under the revised policy, unauthorized individuals who are found to be tampering with, or have gained unauthorized access into, metering equipment or electrical devices supplying power to metering equipment—including but not limited to meters, service wires, transformers, fused cutovers and primary wires—shall be prosecuted to the highest extent permissible by law.

Beginning October 1, 2019, Tri-County EC will fully enforce this policy to encourage our members' safety. When tampering or trespassing on Tri-County EC equipment is found, we will immediately disconnect service, investigate and press charges.

Since Tri-County EC is a member-owned electric provider, when your neighbors steal from us, they are ultimately stealing from you. If you know of someone or see tampering on our equipment, please do not hesitate to call our offices at (817) 444-3201.

Meter tampering and power theft continue to be an issue across the country—and engaging in these illegal activities is extremely dangerous. Is stealing power worth going to jail—or losing your life?

To view TCEC's new meter tampering and theft of power policy, visit [tcectexas.com/fees-charges](http://tcectexas.com/fees-charges).

### TEXAS PENAL CODE § 28.03 CRIMINAL MISCHIEF

The offense under this section is a:

- ▶ **Class C misdemeanor** if the amount of pecuniary loss is less than \$100.
- ▶ **Class B misdemeanor** if the loss is \$100 or more but less than \$750.
- ▶ **Class A misdemeanor** if the loss is \$750 or more but less than \$2,500.
- ▶ **State jail felony** if the loss is \$2,500 or more but less than \$30,000.



# Back to School

*Continually learning to improve service for members*

**IT'S A NEW SCHOOL YEAR, AND KIDS OF ALL AGES ARE STARTING A FRESH YEAR OF** learning. From kindergarten through college, students attend school to gain knowledge to prepare them for the future. In a similar vein, Tri-County Electric Cooperative is continually learning to incorporate new technologies that improve electric service, reliability and safety—enhancing quality of life for the members we serve.

Innovations in technology and energy sources are fueling demand for more options. On the consumer front, people are looking for more ways to manage their energy use with smart technologies. Consumers expect more convenient payment methods—whether it's bills that are automatically deducted or paid online.

## Technology Improves Efficiency

Automated meter reading collects energy consumption data and transfers it from the electric meter to the co-op. Collecting information remotely greatly enhances

our system's efficiency, helps control costs and improves work processes.

Advanced metering infrastructure is similar to AMR but more advanced. This system includes integrated smart meters, communications networks and data management systems that enable two-way communication between co-ops and members. In the event of an outage, this system provides a means to verify where power is out and that it has been restored.

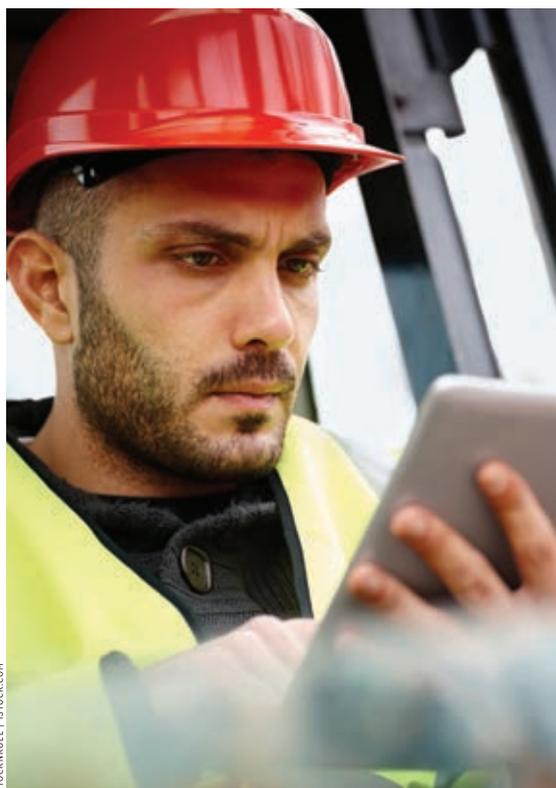
One of the biggest benefits of AMI is pinpointing outage locations, which helps reduce risk for crews out in the field during severe weather events.

## Energy for the Future

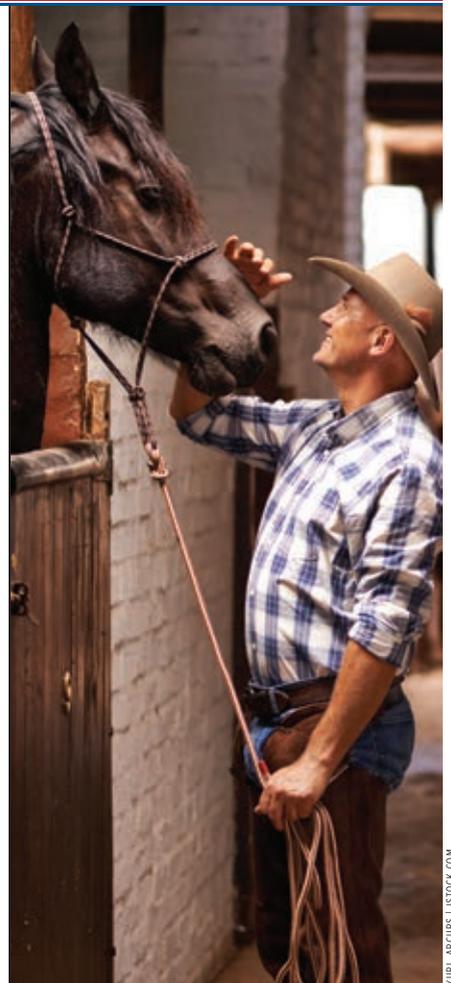
Consumer interest in

green energy sources and renewables is at an all-time high. In Texas, increasingly efficient methods for capturing solar and wind energy are paving the way for new methods of generating and using electricity. That's why we continue to research how best to adjust our energy mix. 800849442

Whether it's examining green energy options or exploring how emerging technologies can better serve our members, for Tri-County EC, our schooling never ends. We continue to learn from our members about their priorities, and we will continue to research issues so that we can better serve you, now and in the future.



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## Top 5 Ways To Boost Outdoor Efficiency

**COULD YOUR GARAGE, SHED, BARN OR** other outdoor building use an energy efficiency boost?

Try these tips to save energy and money:

- 1. The same rules apply for outdoor buildings as houses:** Add insulation, install energy-efficient windows and seal ductwork.
- 2. Unplug power tools and battery chargers** at the end of the season.
- 3. Install an insulated door and seal the sides and bottom** to reduce air leaks.
- 4. Install motion sensors on outdoor lights.**
- 5. Look into LED retrofit kits for outdoor security lights.** They cost more upfront, but payback takes five to 10 years, and LEDs can last up to 20 years.

# Nominees for Board of Directors



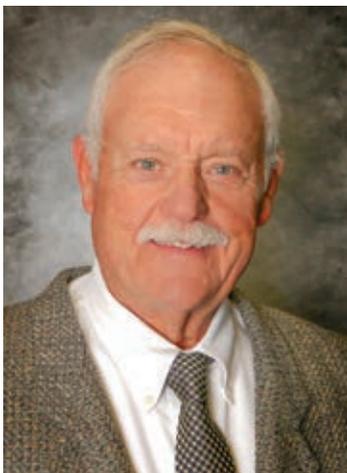
**Steve Harris, District 5**

Harris represents the member-owners of District 5 and has served on the Tri-County Electric Cooperative Board of Directors since February 1998. Harris, a lifelong resident of the Agnes community, is active in his community and church. He owns a construction business, operates a hay and cattle operation, and serves as general manager of Walnut Creek Water District.



**Max Waddell, District 9**

Waddell represents the member-owners of District 9 and has served on the Tri-County EC Board of Directors since June 2010. He completed training requirements for his Credentialed Cooperative Director certificate in November 2011, obtained his Board Leadership certificate and completes yearly training to maintain his Director Gold credential. Waddell has run a private practice chiropractic clinic in Keller since October 1994 and is an active member of his church and community. He has served on multiple boards, including those of the Society of Chiropractic Orthospinology and Keller Chamber of Commerce. Waddell has served the Keller Rotary Club as a board member and president.



**Larry Miller, District 10**

Miller represents the member-owners of District 10 and has served on the Tri-County Electric Cooperative Board of Directors since August 2005. He completed training requirements for his Credentialed Cooperative Director certificate, obtained his Board Leadership certificate and completes yearly training to maintain his Director Gold credential. Miller is a graduate of Texas Tech University and an active farmer and rancher in the Seymour area. He retired from the Soil Conservation Service after 30 years of service and has served on the boards of Farmers Cooperative, First AG Credit FCS and Wichita Falls Production Credit Association.

2019 ANNUAL MEETING

# Shift Safety Into High Gear

## **NATIONAL FARM SAFETY AND HEALTH**

Week is recognized annually in mid-September. This year, the safety week's theme is "Shift Safety Into High Gear."

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data show the agricultural sector is a perilous one, with 258 fatal work injuries among farmworkers in 2017. To promote safe and healthy practices as farmers enter harvest season, the National Education Center for Agricultural Safety has designated daily themes for this year's event.

### **Monday, September 16** **Tractor and Rural Roadway Safety**

Of the 258 deaths cited above, 103 involved tractors, which present risks if operators aren't properly trained in their use. 800854669

Equip tractors with a fire extinguisher and first-aid kit. Inspect the tractor before each use and ensure that all controls, gauges and lights are working. Wear snug-fitting clothes, sturdy work gloves and boots, and be sure to tie back long hair and remove any loose jewelry. Drive slowly, watch for uneven terrain and look out for people, animals and power lines. Don't attempt to climb on or off a moving tractor, and never allow someone to hang onto the tractor for a "ride."

### **Tuesday, September 17** **Farmer Health and Opioid/Suicide Prevention**

One in 5 American adults experience mental illness in a given year, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness. Farmers and ranchers are not immune. Lack of control (typically due to weather), financial strains and personal losses, such as divorce or the death of a loved one, can create tremendous stress.

Unfortunately, stigma and privacy concerns can be barriers to accessing mental health services. To combat these barriers, AgriSafe offers tools at [agrisafe.org](http://agrisafe.org), including an anonymous health risk assessment with personalized suggestions to promote occupational safety and mental health (though it's not a replacement for visits with a health care provider).

### **Wednesday, September 18** **Safety and Health for Youth in Agriculture**

Keep your children and those visiting you healthy by providing and encouraging the use of sunscreen, wide-brimmed hats and hearing protection. Supervise children and be particularly vigi-



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lant with young visitors who may not understand safe practices around farm animals, chemicals and equipment.

Teach children what to do in the event of a fire, severe weather or other emergency. Never allow children to play in grain bins. Be sure to train older children in the proper use of farm equipment before assigning them any task. And always supervise children especially closely when they are new to a task. 800796641

### **Thursday, September 19** **Confined Spaces in Agriculture**

Secure silos and grain bins to prevent unauthorized access. Inspect and maintain augers and other machinery to ensure they work properly.

Never allow people to be in or around a silo or grain bin during its filling or emptying. When trying to clear a jam, stay above the level of the materials while dislodging them. If you become trapped in a silo or grain bin, stay near the perimeter and keep moving to try to "swim" to the top of the material. Internal ladders can serve as a lifesaving means to exit the silo or bin.

### **Friday, September 20** **Safety and Health for Women in Agriculture**

Educate yourself on the risks that women face around the farm, including chemicals that can be harmful to pregnant or nursing women. [agrisafe.org](http://agrisafe.org) offers a fact sheet that highlights the unique risk factors women working in agriculture face along with practical solutions.



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## Power Tip

Insulating your hot water pipes can reduce heat loss, allow you to lower the water heater temperature setting and save 3%–4% per year on water heating costs.

# Capital Credits Update

**TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE IS A NONPROFIT ENTITY. THAT'S WHY, EACH YEAR,** the co-op's board of directors allocates and retires margins to the membership.

**Allocation:** Each year, the board of directors will allocate net margins, which are any funds remaining after all expenses are paid for the year, to the membership. Allocations are based on pro rata sales to each active member-owner during the calendar year over the total sales for the same period.

**Retirement:** Each year, the board of directors will evaluate the financial health of the cooperative and retire capital to the membership. Patronage is returned either by bill credit or check. 20499001

Your cooperative retires capital credits on a first-in, first-out basis. This means patronage from earlier years is retired back to the membership first.

Tri-County EC has returned patronage in the form of capital credits to active and former member-owners who received service during the years 1939–1999. To date, Tri-County EC has returned more than \$50 million to member-owners.



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## Happy Labor Day

Tri-County EC will be closed Monday, September 2, in observance of the holiday.

BRANDON ALMS | ISTOCK.COM

### 2019 CAPITAL CREDITS RETIREMENT

This year, the Tri-County EC Board of Directors authorized the retirement of \$2.659 million to member-owners who received electric service in 2000 and 2001. Members will receive retirements this month. Check the mail or your billing statement for your capital credits.

### RETIRING PATRONAGE

#### Bylaws: Article VII, Section 2

For active members receiving capital credits of \$150 or less, the cooperative will credit the member's account. For active members receiving capital credits of \$150.01 or more, the cooperative will issue a check through the postal service. For former members, the cooperative will issue a check through the postal service, deliverable to the last known address.

# Fighting To Keep the Lights On

**DO YOU KNOW WHAT SQUIRRELS, LIGHTNING AND TREES HAVE IN COMMON? EACH CAN knock out your electricity.**

Tri-County Electric Cooperative works hard to keep your lights on, but unfortunately, Mother Nature always seems to find ways to cause power outages.

An electric co-op's job of keeping the power flowing 24/7 calls for maintaining a complex network of poles and wires. But it also means battling the unpredictable. The top three troublemakers for electric reliability are trees falling on power lines and other interferences from vegetation, lightning strikes, and animals going about their daily routines—especially squirrels chewing on electrical equipment and snakes getting into substations.



Humans contribute to power outages as well, with vandals deliberately damaging electrical equipment and drivers crashing into utility poles.

## Chasing Perfection

Numbers collected from electric utilities show that power in the U.S. is incredibly reliable. According to these figures, the average American has electricity at the flip of a switch 99.97% of the time.

But Tri-County EC always seeks to do better. Among the techniques employed to foil critter catastrophes are snake barriers around substa-

tions, buzzard shields on transmission towers and mesh coverings on wood poles that thwart woodpeckers. 3401900001

We also have extensive right-of-way programs that keep vegetation away from power lines—including clearing underbrush, publicity campaigns and asking people not to plant trees where they can fall onto power lines. These efforts are aided by software that forecasts tree growth and shows where to concentrate our efforts.

Storms and squirrels present continual battles for your co-op—that won't change—but decades spent building, maintaining and updating our grid means your power is as reliable as ever. We aim to make sure your power keeps arriving as it should.

## Making Technology Work for You

Improvements to our electric system allow Tri-County EC to keep tabs on it remotely, which means we know immediately when something goes wrong or if there's an outage. But whenever you increase reliability with technology, there's always a potential for vulnerabilities.

Tri-County EC has programs in place to help protect against a range of cybersecurity threats, a team of information technology pros and continual cybersecurity training for employees.

## Tri-County Electric Cooperative

600 NW Parkway, Azle 76020

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jorden Wood, President  
Dr. Jarrett Armstrong, Vice President  
Todd Smith, Secretary-Treasurer  
Jerry A. Walden  
Steve V. Harris  
John Killough  
Max Waddell  
Larry Miller

### GENERAL MANAGER/CEO

Darryl Schriver

## Contact Us

**CALL US**  
**(817) 444-3201**

**FIND US ON THE WEB**  
**tcectexas.com**

**EMAIL US**  
**pr@tcectexas.com**

### COOPERATIVE OFFICES

**Azle—Headquarters**  
600 NW Parkway, Azle, TX 76020  
(817) 444-3201

**Granbury Office**  
1623 Weatherford Highway, Granbury 76048  
(817) 279-7010

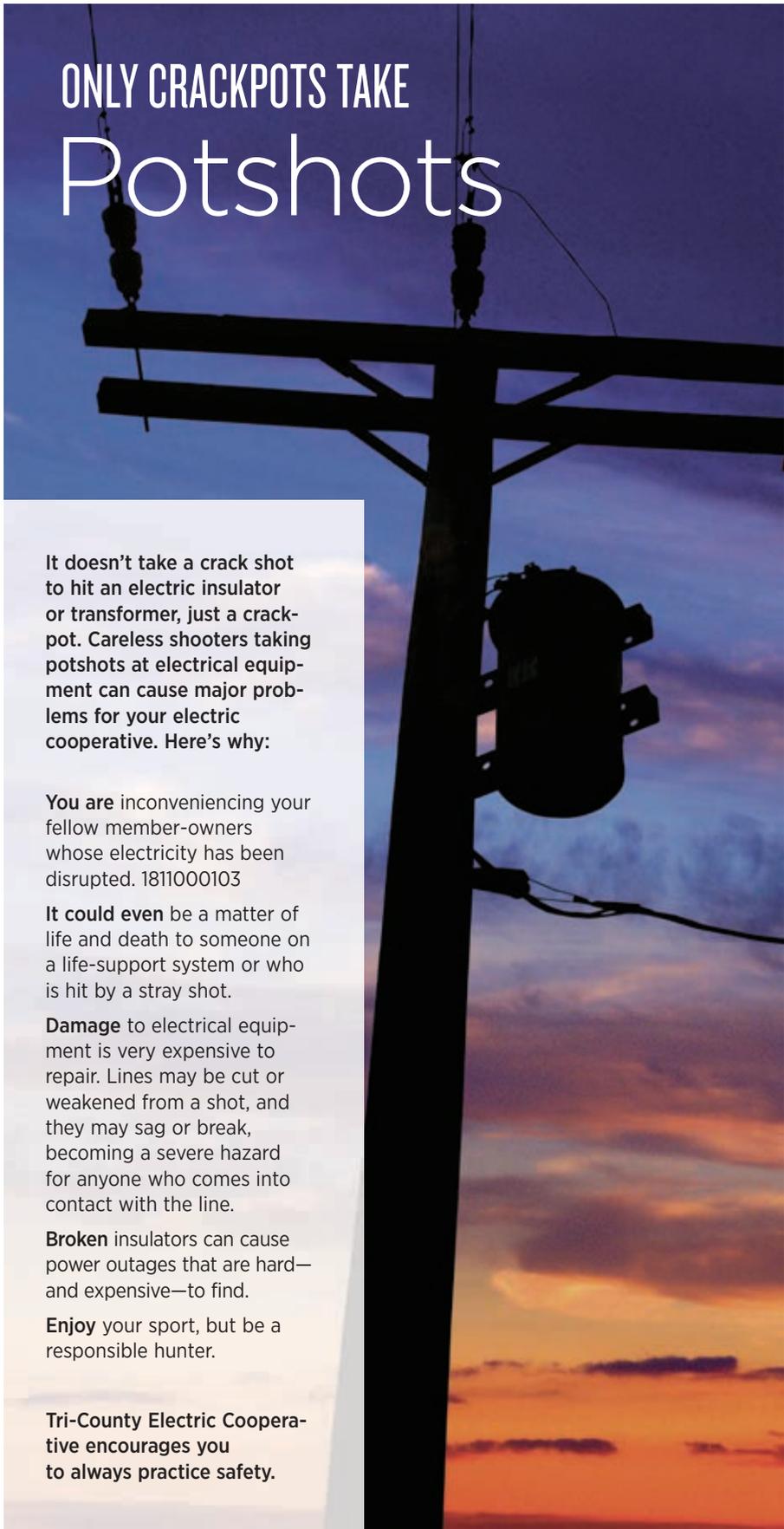
**Keller Office**  
4900 Keller Hicks Road, Fort Worth 76244  
(817) 431-1541

**Seymour Office**  
419 N. Main, Seymour 76380  
(940) 888-3441

### IT PAYS TO STAY INFORMED!

Find your account number in pages 18–25 of *Texas Co-op Power*, and you will receive a \$20 credit on your TCEC electric bill. Simply contact one of the offices listed above and make them aware of your discovery!

 Find us on  
**Facebook**



# ONLY CRACKPOTS TAKE Potshots

It doesn't take a crack shot to hit an electric insulator or transformer, just a crack-pot. Careless shooters taking potshots at electrical equipment can cause major problems for your electric cooperative. Here's why:

**You are** inconveniencing your fellow member-owners whose electricity has been disrupted. 1811000103

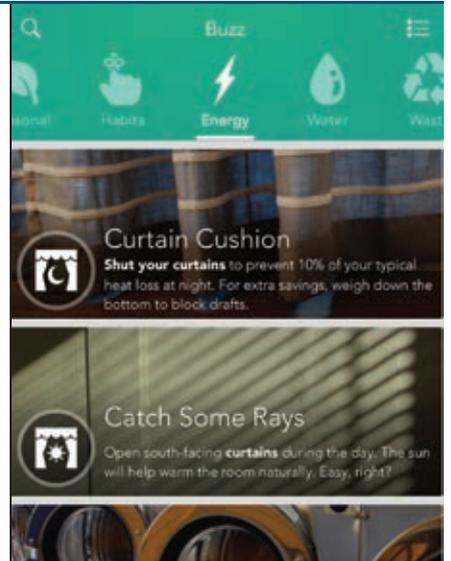
**It could even** be a matter of life and death to someone on a life-support system or who is hit by a stray shot.

**Damage** to electrical equipment is very expensive to repair. Lines may be cut or weakened from a shot, and they may sag or break, becoming a severe hazard for anyone who comes into contact with the line.

**Broken** insulators can cause power outages that are hard—and expensive—to find.

**Enjoy** your sport, but be a responsible hunter.

Tri-County Electric Cooperative encourages you to always practice safety.



## Get Smart With Energy-Saving Apps

**THERE ARE MANY ENERGY APPS AVAILABLE** today that educate consumers and help them manage their electricity usage. These two are free, easy to use and effective, and they're available for both Android and iOS devices.

**JouleBug is a fun app that helps you save electricity.** You collect points for each energy-efficient move you make inside your home, on your commute and in daily life. The app helps you make changes and build ongoing energy-saving habits. It's designed as a competition among friends and can help you and your family create an energy-efficient household together. The app also includes fun, educational videos and links to helpful articles.

**Apps like Energy Cost Calculator help you identify where you use energy most in your home.** They calculate the usage and cost of energy per day, week, month and year based on consumption per hour and hours of usage per day.

**At [tinyurl.com/energy-gov-tools](http://tinyurl.com/energy-gov-tools),** you'll find links to eight useful energy management tools, including appliance usage tools and tools for tax credits and electric cars.

**Togetherwesave.com features games, videos, energy analysis tools and tips** to help you make the most of your energy dollar.



# Amazing Banana Pudding

JO BRUMFIELD | PERRIN

8 ounces cream cheese, room temperature  
14 ounces sweetened condensed milk  
5 ounces instant vanilla pudding mix  
3 cups milk  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
8 ounces Cool Whip  
4 bananas  
½ box (6 ounces) vanilla wafers

1. In a large bowl, beat cream cheese until fluffy. Beat in condensed milk, pudding mix, milk and vanilla. Fold in Cool Whip.
2. Line bottom of a 9-by-13-inch pan with vanilla wafers. Top with sliced bananas. Spread pudding mix on top.
3. Refrigerate at least 1 hour. Enjoy! It is very addictive! 800798307

## Tri-County EC Member Recipe Submission Form

NAME

CITY

EMAIL or PHONE NUMBER

RECIPE NAME

**Please return to:**

**Email:** Please include the above information with your recipe and send to [pr@tcectexas.com](mailto:pr@tcectexas.com).

**Mail:** Please detach and submit this form with your recipe and mail to:

Tri-County Electric Cooperative  
Attn: Recipe Submission  
600 NW Parkway  
Azle, TX 76020

