

You Can Speak Out on Energy Policy



**MESSAGE
FROM
MANAGER
BILLY
KULWICKI**

If you have your most recent electric bill handy, take a look at the bottom line. Now multiply that number by four. That's what consumers might be looking at in the not-too-distant future if the challenges of increasing electricity demand coupled with flat growth in supply and climate-change legislation are not met with solutions that keep ratepayers in mind.

Building new generation plants has always been a difficult task, and now concerns about greenhouse gases have made that job even harder. With an uncertain regulatory climate, banks are looking twice at power projects. Their concern is that if a coal-fired plant were hit with increased regulatory costs associated with carbon emissions, the loans would be riskier. That could make the financing of needed base-load generation difficult. And even though Texas' supply of carbon-free energy, such as wind, is growing, base-load generation powered by coal and natural gas will remain a necessity for the foreseeable future because renewables just are not able—as yet—to keep up with demand.

We at Lamar Electric Co-op are concerned about our energy future. We know that demand for electricity is rising—up about 2 percent each year. We also see that the electricity supply is not keeping up with that increasing demand. Anyone with a basic understanding of economics knows what happens when supply does not keep up with demand: Prices rise.

Throw into that mix potential federal or state regulation of carbon output, and the outlook for the electricity

picture becomes uncertain.

We at Lamar Electric are also concerned with the environment. We know that steps will be taken to address global warming issues. But we want to make sure those steps don't send rural Texans or the U.S. economy over a cliff. There must be a balance we can strike between reasonable costs and ample supplies that is environmentally responsible.

Electric cooperatives, as we always have, stand firmly in our members' corner, and we are already working to address these concerns. By adding the weight of your collective voices to the discussion, you remind the politicians and policymakers in Austin and in Washington to look for solutions that keep you—and your pocketbook—in mind.

If you don't want to be left literally in the dark, you might consider contacting your elected officials and starting a dialogue regarding the energy future of the United States. The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national organization of electric cooperatives, has made this process easy and convenient with the

“Our Energy, Our Future” campaign. At the website www.ourenergy.coop, co-op members will find step-by-step instructions for getting their questions and concerns heard by our national leaders.

Here are three questions you can use to start the discussions:

1. *Experts say that our nation's growing electricity needs will soon go well beyond what renewables, conservation and efficiency can provide. What is your plan to make sure we have the electricity we'll need in the future?*

2. *What are you doing to fully fund the research required to make emissions-free electric plants an affordable reality?*

3. *Balancing electricity needs and environmental goals will be difficult. How much is all this going to increase my electric bill, and what will you do to make it affordable?*

We urge you to get involved and to let our elected officials know that they must take you and your family into consideration when crafting our energy future. After all, you ultimately will bear the cost of whatever solution is mandated.



You don't need a megaphone to tell our national leaders your concerns about our energy future. Just go to www.ourenergy.coop.



Shannon Strotheide



Jacy Coston

2008 Youth Tour Participants Selected

SHANNON STROT HEIDE and **JACY COSTON** have been selected as winners of the 2008 Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C., sponsored by Lamar Electric Cooperative.

Shannon is the daughter of LEC member Millette Shelton of Powderly and is a sophomore at North Lamar High School. Jacy is the daughter of LEC members Joe and Renae Coston of Paris and is a junior at Chisum High School.

The 2008 Youth Tour to Washington is set for June 12-20 and will mark the 43rd year that Texas electric cooperatives have participated in this "trip of a lifetime" for high school students. The two winners representing Lamar Electric Cooperative will join approximately 100 other Texas youths and chaperones in activities including meeting their respective congressional leaders, touring the Smithsonian Institution and participating in a wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery. Other highlights include visits to the Library of Congress, the Supreme Court, Union Station, the U.S. Capitol, the Kennedy

Center, Mount Vernon and the Iwo Jima memorial. An estimated 1,500 youths from cooperatives across the U.S. are expected to participate in this year's tour.

Also included on the tour will be places like Washington National Cathedral, Ford's Theatre and Petersen House, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, the Washington Monument, the National Geographic Society, Kennedy's grave, and the FDR, Jefferson, Korean War, Lincoln and Vietnam Veterans memorials. Youth Tour participants will have an opportunity to win other trips while they are in Washington.

The Youth Tour is coordinated by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and Texas Electric Cooperatives, the statewide association of rural electric systems in Texas, and by the sponsoring electric cooperatives.

Lamar Electric Cooperative sponsors two area students on this trip each year. Lamar Electric is a Touchstone Energy® cooperative providing electric service to members in Lamar, Red River, Delta and Fannin counties.



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Operating in Lamar, Red River, Delta and Fannin counties

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YOUR "LOCAL PAGES"

This section of *Texas Co-op Power* magazine is produced by LEC each month to provide you with information about current events, safety, special programs and other activities of the cooperative. If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact the local office.

MEMBER BENEFITS:

- Level billing
- Automated meter reading
- Free bank draft service
- Visa, Discover and MasterCard accepted

Stay Cool This Season with the Right Fan



If the warm spring weather tempts you to turn on your air conditioning too early, don't do it.

Reach for your ceiling fan instead.

Ceiling fans can make a room feel cooler, but they use 90 percent less energy than an air conditioner.

If you're looking into getting a new ceiling fan, answer these five questions:

1. HOW BIG IS YOUR ROOM? The bigger the room, the longer the blades should be. A rule of thumb: For a room smaller than 100 square feet, like a bathroom or laundry room, buy a fan with 32- to 36-inch blades. For a medium-sized bedroom, office or kitchen—up to about 225 square feet—you'll need a fan with blades measuring 42 to 48 inches. Large master bedrooms and dining rooms up to 485 square feet: 50- to 56-inch

blades. Large rooms like the great room—up to around 600 square feet: 60 inches or more.

2. WHAT STYLE AND COLOR DO YOU LIKE? Fan blades come in painted colors, metallic and wood finishes, so you can match them to your furniture, floor or even cabinet hardware. Some manufacturers make two-sided blades so you can flip them when you're in the mood for a new look.

3. HOW HIGH IS THE CEILING? For the most comfortable results, install the fan 7 to 8 feet from the floor. If your room has high ceilings, buy an extension "downrod" to lower the fan to the ideal location. Some manufacturers have special "close mount" fans for rooms with extra-low ceilings.

4. DO YOU WANT TO COMBINE THE FAN WITH A LIGHT? Most manufacturers will double them up for you. Fixtures with "downlighting" will create a traditional "chandelier" effect, while those with "uplighting" will bounce the light off the ceiling to diffuse the light and make it softer.

5. HOW DO YOU WANT TO OPERATE THE FAN? You can pull a cord, flip a light switch or tap a remote control.

WHY IS MY ELECTRIC BILL MORE THAN MY NEIGHBOR'S?

You have a television, DVD player, microwave oven, electric range and cooktop, refrigerator/freezer, stereo, heat pump and personal computer. So does your next-door neighbor. So why is your electric bill almost twice as high every month?

Consider this: How well are your walls insulated compared to your neighbor's? Do you take longer, hotter showers? Are you cooking gourmet meals or baking from scratch while your neighbor subsists on quick-heating TV dinners? Does the TV keep you company even when you're not watching it?

Just as no two families live alike, no two electric bills are the same. Comparing your monthly statement to anyone else's would be like comparing your weekly grocery tabs. Two families of four most likely will not spend exactly the same amount on food because their tastes and habits are different.

Think about the conveniences you might be willing to pay for, even though your neighbor isn't. Are you more comfortable sleeping in an extra-cool house on hot summer nights? Maybe your neighbor's thermostat setting ekes the temperature up a few degrees at bedtime.

Do members of your family entertain themselves in separate rooms after dinner—turning a light on in each—while the folks next door gather all together in a family room to watch baseball games on TV?

The way to lower your electric costs is to use energy more efficiently before the bill comes. If your neighbor's bill is lower than yours, ask for some tips about how to save money by conserving energy around the house or contact your electric cooperative for energy-saving ideas.

RE M I N D E R !



LAMAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE'S ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

SATURDAY, MAY 3

Love Civic Center in Paris

Business Meeting: 10 a.m.

Barbecue Lunch: 11 a.m.



Grace went to an annual meeting of her fellow electric co-op owners.
Which meant the whole county was there.

Only your electric co-op makes every customer an owner of the business.
Unlike other electric utilities, your co-op exists to make sure your needs are always met,
not to make a profit. And since every electric co-op is locally owned and operated,
your co-op is always there with you, reinvesting in your community.
That's why in an electric co-op, the people have the power.



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Cooperative**

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