

The Realities of Renewable Power



**MESSAGE
FROM
MANAGER
BILLY
KULWICKI**

There's certainly a buzz in rural circles these days about renewable power. Wind farms, for example, are generally built on wide-open spaces or ridgetops; methane gas from livestock waste can be burned to produce power; trees, grass and crop stalks can be shoveled into boilers or converted to other forms of fuel.

We are doing everything we can to make renewable power a viable part of our energy mix, but there are very real hurdles to overcome.

For one, construction costs for electricity generation are going up across the board, and renewable sources are no exception. Three years ago it was estimated that a wind farm would cost about \$1,000 per kilowatt (kW) of capacity—today that price tag has doubled. Costs for installation and operation of solar panels can run five times higher than those for a traditional coal plant of comparable size.

Another hurdle involves getting renewable power to where it can be used. True, most renewable resources are abundant in rural areas, but that also means they're far from the concentrated power needs of big cities. New transmission lines must go in to address this problem, and related costs can add up in a hurry.

A third drawback can cause major headaches for control-room operators charged with matching available power to demand. Most renewable sources are intermittent: The sun doesn't always shine, and the wind doesn't always blow. A fossil fuel-fired power plant, on the other hand, will produce "baseload" power as long as

fuel remains available. In the case of a renewable resource like solar energy, though, an overcast afternoon can leave a gap in available power that needs to be filled.

Although some policymakers will try to speed up the process of getting renewable power on line, all of us need to have an informed, thoughtful approach. Let's be realistic about the value of renewable energy, its associated costs and benefits.

Support for renewable power must be consistent with providing safe, reliable and affordable service to you, our members. Co-ops will develop the renewable resources that make the most sense for us, geographically and economically. And we will work to ensure that those paying the freight for such technologies also reap the benefits.

As a not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric co-op, Lamar Electric Cooperative will encourage elected officials to make sure that public policy doesn't get ahead of available technology and doesn't impose a hardship on consumers. We will seek real-world results that benefit the environment, our rural communities and you.



Building transmission lines to move renewable power from the rural areas where it's commonly generated is an expense that drives up the cost of renewables.



YOU CAN BUY THESE TRUCKS

Lamar Electric Cooperative is taking bids on two vehicles being retired from our fleet. A 1997 GMC pickup with 209,849 miles and a 1999 Ford 1-ton flatbed truck with 176,480 miles are for sale.

Sealed bids may be mailed to Lamar Electric Cooperative, attention: Gretta Ashford, P.O. Box 580, Paris, TX 75461 or delivered to 1485 N. Main in Paris.

Closing date for bids is June 30. Please note that there is a minimum bid for each truck.



CADIE KNIGHT



STEPHANIE BROWN

LAMAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE AWARDS SCHOLARSHIPS

Cadie Knight and Stephanie Brown are the winners of this year's scholarships. Lamar Electric Cooperative awards two \$1,000 scholarships each year to high school seniors whose parents or legal guardians are active co-op members.

Cadie is the daughter of LEC members Wade and Casie Knight and is a senior at Chisum High School. Stephanie is the daughter of LEC members Dan and Tammy Brown. She is a senior at North Lamar High School.

The money that funds the co-op's scholarship program comes from unclaimed capital credits that are returned by the state of Texas each year. HB 3203, enacted in 1999, allows nonprofit electric cooperatives to put unclaimed funds previously collected by the Texas comptroller's office for the State General Fund to use for student scholarships. The law states that scholarship recipients should be rural students and that they must attend college, technical school or other post-secondary educational institutions.

COPPER THEFT CAN BE DEADLY

Stealing copper from an electric cooperative or other utility is dangerous and is a crime. It also can carry very dangerous consequences, including serious injury, death, explosions, fires and electric outages.

Warning signs are posted around electric substations because of the high voltages that can cause immediate harm, including death, to untrained personnel. This is one reason entry to substations is restricted. Unauthorized entry into a substation is a crime—as is stealing materials from the substation. Never enter a substation, and do not touch any electrical equipment, power lines or anything that may be touching a power line.

If you spot suspicious activities near a substation or power lines, please contact your electric cooperative or local law enforcement agency immediately.



**LAMAR
ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE**

1485 North Main Street
P.O. Box 580 • Paris, TX 75461
Phone (903) 784-4303

For general information and outages after hours, call (903) 784-4303 local, or 1-800-782-9010 toll-free

Operating in Lamar, Red River, Delta and Fannin counties

Find us on the web at www.lamarelectric.coop

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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
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Scott Sansom (in hard hat) and Ricky Crump (blue shirt) give a safety demonstration during the recent Kid's Safe Saturday.



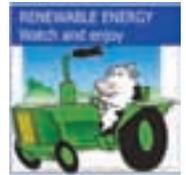
Billy Kulwicki (burgundy shirt) and Crump hand out safety materials.

Kid's Safe Saturday

Lamar Electric Cooperative participated in the recent Kid's Safe Saturday held in Paris. The event was an opportunity for us to share important electric safety information with the community.

- Scott Sansom and Ricky Crump, using the PowerTown® safety model, demonstrated what could happen if you come into contact with power lines.
- Employees distributed more than 1,400 yellow hard hats with the LEC and Touchstone Energy logos.
- And, we handed out Louie the Lightning Bug® activity books, pencils and stickers to help spread the word on electric safety.

Hey, Kids!



For games, coloring pages and lots of fun, check out



Go to

www.lamarelectric.coop
and click on the **Touchstone Energy Kids Zone** icon.



This free, easy-to-use home energy savings tool is designed to help you identify the best ways to save energy in your home.

Go to

www.lamarelectric.coop
and click on the **Touchstone Energy Savers** icon.



We have an energy challenge, America.

When it comes to finding solutions, we must meet climate-change goals while keeping costs down and electricity available. America needs a plan. Immediately. Because we all know that our energy needs keep on growing—every day.

Now is the time to have a candid conversation with your elected officials. Together, we can find answers and take action.

Start the conversation today at www.ourenergy.coop.



**Lamar Electric
Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Our Energy, Our Future
A Dialogue With America

NEW CO-OP CONNECTIONS PROGRAM OFFERS VALUE TO MEMBERS

Lamar Electric Cooperative has launched a program that offers further proof that being a member of an electric cooperative has its advantages. The Co-op Connections program, a new card-based member benefit program for Touchstone Energy® cooperatives, is designed to deliver added value to cooperative members. Lamar Electric Cooperative is implementing this program in conjunction with the other Touchstone Energy co-ops serving 17 million members nationwide.

A free offering for co-op members and participating businesses, the program benefits cooperative members by offering valuable discounts at participating local and national businesses. At the same time, those businesses benefit from increased customer visits by co-op members participating in the program. LEC is currently recruiting local businesses to participate in the program.

The Co-op Connections program also benefits cooperative members by offering 10 to 60 percent savings on most prescriptions at more than 48,000 independent pharmacies and national chains including CVS, Wal-

greens, Wal-Mart and Target.

Lamar Electric Cooperative is implementing this program in conjunction with many other Touchstone Energy cooperatives in an effort to better serve our member-owners nationwide. With soaring prescription prices, this discount pharmacy program will work for you and your family.

Members will receive their new Co-op Connections card with the discount pharmacy information in the mail this summer. Once the member has signed the back of the card, it may be used at participating pharmacies and businesses locally and nationwide. To find out which pharmacies are participating, and to look up the discount prescription price, co-op members may visit www.rxpricequotes.com.

This is just one more way you win by being a cooperative member. Simply present your Co-op Connections card at a participating pharmacy with your prescription and receive a discount at the time of purchase. Whenever Co-op Connections cardholders—whether from LEC or any of the other participating Touchstone Energy cooperatives

across the country—show their card, they will receive a 10 to 60 percent discount on most prescriptions.

“The Co-op Connections card creates an even greater sense of membership and reinforces Lamar Electric Co-op’s long-standing commitment to the community,” Member Services Manager Laura Williams said. “It will add value and increase customer loyalty at participating businesses. Simply put, the Co-op Connections program is another way our members benefit from being a part of their electric cooperative.” The card also has other national and local discounts for members.

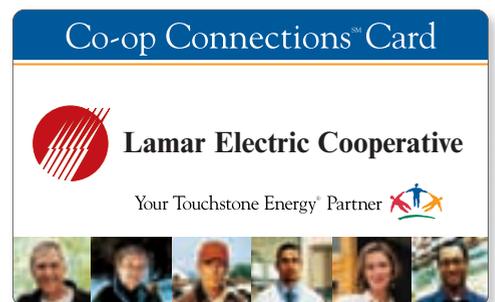
Touchstone Energy is a national alliance of local, consumer-owned electric cooperatives providing high standards of service to customers large and small. More than 640 Touchstone Energy cooperatives in 46 states are delivering energy and energy solutions to approximately 22 million customers every day. Touchstone Energy cooperatives serve their members with integrity, accountability, innovation and a long-standing commitment to communities.

Discover the Value of **CO-OP MEMBERSHIP!**

Lamar Electric Cooperative, a Touchstone Energy® cooperative, is pleased to introduce **Co-op Connections®**, a new program that helps members obtain discounts on products and services from participating local and national businesses, including car rental and hotel discounts.

We are in the beginning stages of developing this program. The first step is to recruit participating businesses. This program gives local businesses the opportunity to offer our cooperative members valuable discounts. In exchange for your participation, we promote your business and discount offers to our members at no cost to you. The program is designed to benefit your business and our members.

If your business is interested in participating, please call Laura Williams at (903) 784-4303 for more information.



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