

Electric Co-ops Know What Works



**MESSAGE
FROM
MANAGER
BARRY
MURCHISON**

There's no sugarcoating the power crisis we face as Americans. Over the past five years, electric bills have shot up 30 percent on average, largely because of rising costs for coal, natural gas and basic construction materials such as steel, concrete and copper.

At the same time, electricity consumption continues to increase. In some regions—the West in particular—demand will soon outstrip supply, according to the North American Electric Reliability Corporation, which oversees reliability of the U.S. power grid.

Electric cooperatives, growing much faster than other sectors of the electric utility industry, face a double-whammy in all of this. A report by the U.S. Department of Agriculture finds we will need to double existing generation capacity by 2020 to keep the lights on. This means adding power plants that will be the most expensive in history—thanks to escalating prices, inflation, international competition for raw resources, labor and expertise, as well as impending federal climate change mandates.

By taking steps such as promoting energy efficiency, Lamar Electric Cooperative is working to minimize the effects of cost increases that we are all enduring.

But if we expect electricity to continue being a safe, affordable and reliable resource, not a luxury for the well-to-do, we must convince policymakers to work for energy solutions that are economically, technically and politically sustainable over the long term.

Electric cooperatives have been bringing electricity to the farthest reaches of our country for more than 70 years—we know what works. What we need now is strong leadership on the part of our elected officials, who will listen to our needs and address the tough questions we've been asking for close to a year:

- What is your plan to make sure we have the electricity we'll need in the future?
- What are you doing to speed the development of new technology, which will allow me to have the electric power I need while meeting national climate policy goals?
- What will you do to keep my electric bill affordable?

The answers aren't simple, but they're out there. For one, energy efficiency must become a national priority. Federal assistance must be made available to the poorest 20 percent of households, allowing them to make their homes as efficient as possible. Adequate insulation, upgraded doors and windows, Energy Star appliances and efficient HVAC systems all trim electric demand, and, more impor-

tantly, lower painfully high monthly bills and curb growing demand.

New transmission facilities must be fast-tracked, connecting rural regions—where sources of renewable energy like wind exist—to the population centers where power is needed. Renewable generation can provide an excellent supplement to conventional fuels such as natural gas and coal, but not without adequate transmission lines.

Technology remains the true key to solving our energy crisis, and it must be treated as such. Over the next decade, \$2 billion a year must be devoted to research and development of technologies, such as carbon capture and storage, that will significantly reduce power plant emissions of gases, like carbon dioxide, blamed for contributing to climate change.

Electric cooperatives across the country are currently engaged in a grassroots campaign called "Our Energy, Our Future: A Dialogue With America" to ensure that these important policy considerations are made a priority. Please visit WWW.ourenergy.coop to join this crucial conversation. It's time to make our voices heard.



The solution to our energy problems isn't easy to map out, but a good way to start is to let policymakers know our concerns. Find out how to voice your concerns at www.ourenergy.coop.

LAMAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Win A Free Trip to Washington, D.C., this June

Lamar Electric Cooperative is again sponsoring two students from the Lamar Electric service area for an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., on June 11-19, 2009.

For more than 40 years, electric cooperatives have sponsored high school students from across America to visit the nation's capital and meet their members of Congress. You could be a part of this tremendous opportunity to learn about the political process and how your federal government works. More than 40,000 students from rural areas and small towns across America have participated in this unique program.



Last year's Youth Tour winners Shannon Strotheide and Jacy Coston got to see the sights of our nation's capital courtesy of Lamar Electric Cooperative.

Lamar Electric winners will join approximately 100 students from across Texas, winners of similar contests, on this trip of a lifetime. Sponsorship includes airfare, transportation in Washington, hotel rooms, meals and entrance into many of the sites and Youth Tour T-shirts.

While in Washington, tour participants from Texas will visit their congressman, tour the House and Senate chambers, the Supreme Court and the Library of Congress, and will have photo sessions on Capitol Hill and in front of the White House. The group will also see the wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknowns; see John F. Kennedy's gravesite; tour Arlington National Cemetery; the Lincoln, Vietnam, World War II and Korean War memorials; Mount Vernon; the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial; Old Town Alexandria; Ford's Theatre and the Petersen House; the Smithsonian Museums of American Art, National History, American History and the National Museum of American Indians; the Air & Space Museum; and Union Station and the Old Post Office Pavilion. In addition, the students will visit the Washington Zoo and Pentagon City Mall, and see the Sunset Parade at the Iwo Jima Memorial. On the last night in Washington, Youth Tour groups from all states will come together for a dinner and dance.

To enter this year's contest, you must be between 15 and 19 years of age and have completed your sophomore year of high school before June 1, 2009. In addition, your parents or legal guardians must be residing members of Lamar Electric Cooperative. Applications are available from your school counselor, at the Lamar Electric Cooperative office or online at www.lamarelectric.coop.

Mail your application to Lamar Electric Cooperative, Attn: Laura Williams, P.O. Box 580, Paris, TX 75461, or deliver to 1485 N. Main St. in Paris by 5 p.m. on Friday, January 30, 2009. For more information, contact Williams at Lamar Electric Cooperative at (903) 784-4303.



**LAMAR
ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE**

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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
- Free bank draft service
- Visa, Discover and MasterCard accepted

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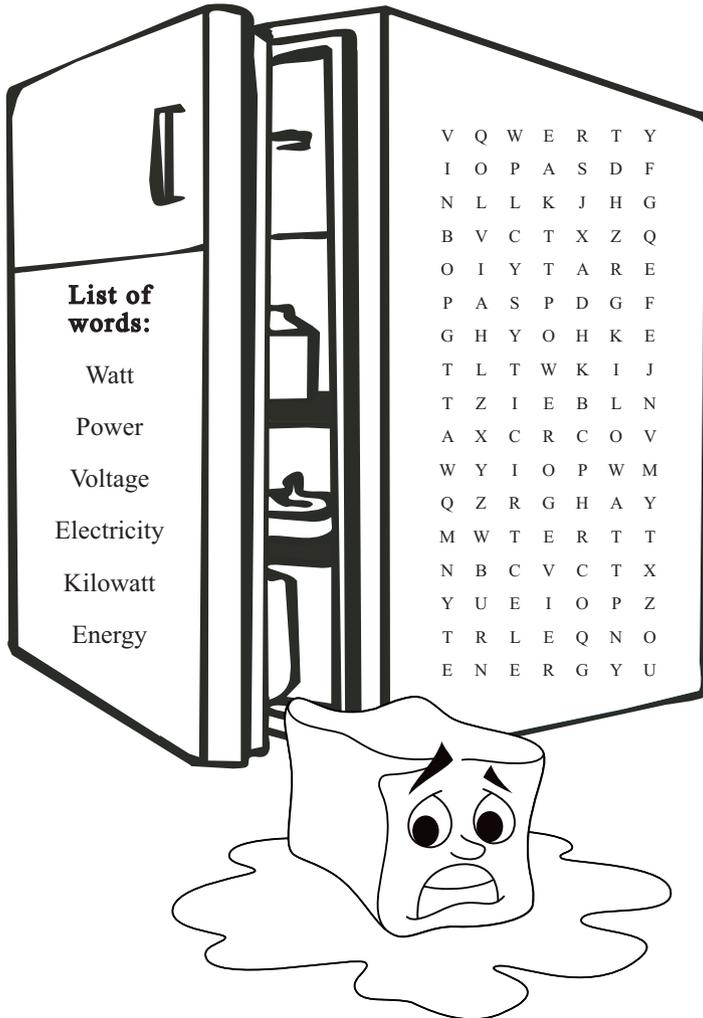
Save Energy With CFL Charlie!



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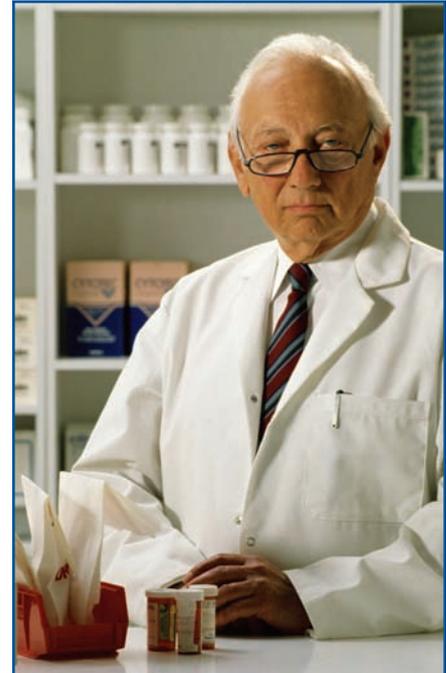
Energy is what keeps your food cold in the refrigerator. When you stand with the door open, you're letting out all the cold air. Keep the door closed and you will use less energy!

CAN YOU FIND MORE ENERGY WORDS?



Lamar Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



My customers love the savings they get with the Co-op Connections Card

The Co-op Connections® Card helps you save money on goods and services of all kinds, including prescriptions (up to 60 percent!). Just take it with you wherever you go. Pull it out anywhere you see a Co-op Connections sticker. And say hello to the savings.

The card is yours. The savings are yours. All because you're a member of a Touchstone Energy cooperative. And we're always looking out for you.



To learn more, visit

www.lamarelectric.coop.

Pharmacy discounts are not insurance and are not intended as a substitute for insurance.

LAMAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Co-op Connections®

1st Choice Pest Control

OFFERING \$10 OFF INITIAL GENERAL PEST CONTROL SERVICE

- Ricky Williams, state-certified licensed applicator. Call (903) 785-5679 to schedule an appointment.

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OFFERING \$10 OFF TAXIDERMY SERVICES

- Benzy and Debbie Jo Hostetler, Owners. Call (903) 737-8604.

Checks to Cash

15 PERCENT DISCOUNT ON CHECK-CASHING FEES

- 3185 Lamar Ave. in Paris. Call (903) 785-6666.

Gillie Insulation

10 PERCENT OFF WITH YOUR CO-OP CONNECTIONS CARD

- Lowell Gillie, Owner. Call (903) 982-6399.

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25 PERCENT OFF TAX PREPARATION FEES ONLY. DISCOUNT MUST BE DISCLOSED WHEN ASKED DURING INTERVIEW PROCESS.

- 3185 Lamar Ave. in Paris. Call (903) 737-0811.

Papa Murphy's Pizza

OFFERING \$3 OFF FAMILY-SIZE PIZZA (LIMIT 3 PER ORDER)

- 2705 Lamar Ave. in Paris. Call (903) 785-0036.

Quality Craft Picture Frames

OFFERING 20 PERCENT OFF CUSTOM FRAMING INCLUDING FRAME, MAT AND GLASS

- 2030 Clarksville St. in Paris. Call (903) 785-2760.

\$7,763.61 Saved

On prescriptions by members using their Co-op Connections® Card

In October, 210 prescriptions were filled and members saved \$2,181.20, averaging 27 percent off the retail price.

This valuable member benefit is absolutely free!

Want to do some price checking on your prescriptions? Visit www.rxpricequotes.com to see the discounted price from our local pharmacies.



Even if you have medical coverage, compare your coverage to the discounts. Sometimes the Co-op Connections discount is better than your medical insurance!

The pharmacy will need the group and member numbers on the back of the card to process the discount.

LAMAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Winterize for Savings and Safety

The coats have been cleaned, the mittens and scarves found and the sweaters have been pulled out of the attic. Old Man Winter has settled across Texas. Your wardrobe is ready, but what about your house—is it ready for winter? A small investment of time to review your home for safety and efficiency weak spots can pay big dividends toward making your home safer, more energy efficient and, ultimately, reduce electric bills this winter.

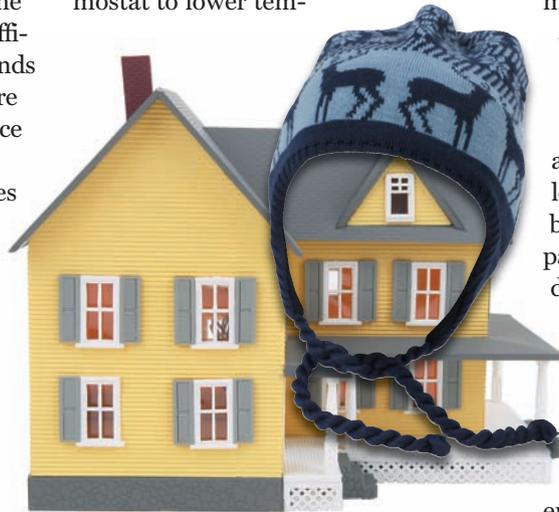
“Energy dollars pour out of homes through drafty doors, windows, attics, walls and floors without even being noticed,” says Laura Williams of Lamar Electric Cooperative. “Taking time to winterize and check heating equipment now can be a worthy investment, saving you money on your monthly bill and ensuring your home is safe as well.”

It’s important to have a professional inspect and service your furnace to make sure it is in good working order before turning the heat on this winter. An efficient heating system means greater comfort at a lower cost.

Regularly clean or replace furnace filters monthly during winter use, and check ducts, flues and chimneys. Ensure the chimney is clean, clear of bird and animal nests, and that there is no blockage in high efficiency furnaces that vent through the wall. Keeping heating equipment clean and

in good repair will ensure peak efficiency and safety.

Consider installing a programmable thermostat to automatically raise and lower home temperatures for energy savings day and night. Set your thermostat to lower tem-



peratures while you’re asleep or away from home.

Make sure attics and flooring, especially above unheated spaces such as crawl spaces and garages, are properly insulated. A quick rule of thumb is to check the attic—if you can see the ceiling joists, you don’t have enough insulation. Ceiling joists are usually at most 10 to 11 inches, and insulation should be a minimum of 12 inches. Find air leaks in homes by moistening fingertips and running them around doors or window frames to feel a draft.

Check around outlets and look for gaps near the dryer vent, chimneys and faucet pipes. Seal them all with caulking or weatherstripping.

“Weatherstripping and caulking are inexpensive and among the simplest, most effective ways to boost efficiency and cut energy costs year-round,” says Williams.

Another way to save energy is by replacing screens with storm windows and doors. Double-pane windows with low-e coating can reduce heating bills by 34 percent in cold climates compared to uncoated, single-pane windows. If you have older or leaky windows that you cannot replace, consider temporary fixes, such as plastic film kits that create the effect of an interior storm window.

Consider replacing regular incandescent lightbulbs with energy-efficient compact fluorescent lightbulbs. CFLs use one-fourth of the energy consumed by a regular bulb and can last 10 times as long or longer. “During cold weather, don’t overlook simple energy-saving steps such as opening curtains to let sunshine warm your home and reversing your ceiling fans to a clockwise rotation to recirculate and force the warm air downward,” Williams says. “Also, make sure fire-place dampers are closed when not in use. These are effective energy-saving tips that cost you nothing.”

Source: www.SafeElectricity.org

As you take steps to winterize your home, use the opportunity to check for electrical hazards. The dry winter air is a perfect environment for electric shock and fire. Use this electrical safety checklist to eliminate hazards:

- Check outlets and make sure they are not overloaded or warm to the touch.
- Examine electrical cords for cracks, frays and damaged plugs.
- Check that lightbulbs are the proper wattage and securely screwed in light fix-

tures so bulbs don’t overheat and ignite curtains or nearby furniture.

- Outlets related to frequent circuit breaker trips or blown fuses should be inspected by a professional. Dimming lights and shrinking pictures on TVs and computer monitors are also electrical warning signs that merit an inspection.
- Make sure bathroom, laundry room, kitchen and outdoor outlets have ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs), and test and reset them monthly. If these outlets do

not have GFCIs, have them installed.

- Test your smoke detector batteries and replace them every six months.
- If an electric space heater is used, make sure the wiring is adequate. Don’t place a portable heater in high-traffic areas and never use extension cords with electric heaters.

“Taking these simple steps helps reduce the risk of fire, shock, injury or death,” Williams said. “We want everyone to stay safe and warm this winter.”

LAMAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Electric Safety and You

Why should you be concerned about electric safety? Unfortunately, when electricity is misused serious injury or even death can be the result. Even a small nightlight with a 6-watt bulb draws enough current to be fatal under certain circumstances.

Following is information to help you better understand how electricity works and why you should always exercise caution around it.

- Electrical current will not flow unless it has a complete path (circuit) that returns to its source (battery, transformer).

- Current flows through you and other conductors, such as metals, earth and concrete.

- Current can harm you when it flows through your body (electric shock).

- Insulators resist the flow of electricity. Insulating materials are used to coat copper conducting wires and are used to make electrical work gloves. Insulators help protect humans from coming into contact with electricity

flowing through conductors.

- Just as there is pressure in a water pipe even with no water flowing, there is voltage at a receptacle even if current is not flowing. The electric current is essentially waiting for an opportunity to flow—to power an appliance or turn on the TV. But given the chance, it will just as quickly pass through you.

If current passes through your body, three types of injury are likely to occur:

1. Burns.

2. Physical injuries (broken bones, falls and muscle damage). When electrocution occurs, muscles often clamp on to whatever the person is holding.

3. Nervous system effects (stop breathing, heart twitching or stop-ping).

The heart is often damaged because it is in the path of the most common routes electricity takes through the body:

- Hand to hand.

- Hand to foot.

Your electric co-op encourages you to stay safe around electricity.

New Year's Resolution: Save \$75

The New Year often brings a resolve to save more and spend less, and that could be especially true during these difficult economic times. It's a resolution you can keep.

How? Replace one major home appliance with an Energy Star appliance, and you can save \$75 this year on your energy bills.

You may have heard that home appliances carry two price tags.

The first is the price you pay to buy the appliance. The second is the amount you will pay every year over the life of the appliance for the energy and water needed to operate it.

Energy Star appliances are designed to use 10 to 50 percent less energy and water than other models. The Energy Star

label is part of the U.S. government's effort to encourage energy conservation.

Though Energy Star appliances may cost a little more to buy than other models, you will reap the savings in operating costs over the life of the appliance.

The most energy-efficient clothes

washers, dishwashers, refrigerators, air conditioners and water heaters have earned

the Energy Star label.

Another label to look for when you shop for a new appliance: the yellow Energy Guide. This label tells you how much energy the appliance uses every year and compares that number to similar models. The lower the operating cost, the more you'll save on your monthly energy bill.



SAVE ENERGY NOW. IT'S SIMPLE

Want to start saving energy at home today? Do this:

1. **FILL UP YOUR REFRIGERATOR AND FREEZER.** Your refrigerator operates more efficiently when it's full because it can recover more quickly from the cold lost when the door is opened. Fill in empty spaces with water bottles or bags of ice, but leave enough room between items for the air to circulate freely.

2. **TURN DOWN THE HEAT** on your water heater. Many water heaters are set to 140 degrees, which is hotter than necessary for showers and clothes washing. Water that hot also poses a scalding hazard for children. Reduce the temperature by 10 degrees, and you'll save up to 5 percent on your energy costs.

3. **SET YOUR THERMOSTAT BACK** when you leave for work. For every degree you turn down the heat for at least eight hours, you can save as much as 1 percent a year on your heating bills.

4. **SHUT DOWN YOUR COMPUTER** if it won't be in use for more than two hours. Keeping it on is like leaving lights on in an empty room.

5. **VACUUM YOUR REFRIGERATOR COILS** twice a year. If the coils are exposed (look on the back of the unit), they can get dirty or dusty and force your fridge to work inefficiently. If you have a newer model, remove the kick plate or grill to access the coils.

