

True to Ourselves



**MESSAGE
FROM
MANAGER
JERRY D.
WILLIAMS**

Many of us have a mother or grandmother who cautioned us “Be yourself” or “Don’t be putting on any airs” or some other saying designed to impart what William Shakespeare wrote most eloquently: “To thine own self be true.”

That’s something we at Lamar Electric Cooperative have always tried to do: Be true to our not-for-profit way of doing business by serving our customers who are also our owners. This is a time of great challenge and great change, but we don’t see any need to change the core principles

that have served us so well for over 70 years.

In this time of great flux, we have a head start on many companies that shift identities depending on which way the wind is blowing. We know who we are, and we know our core values.

We don’t have to run TV ads to “position” ourselves as local or caring. We are local and caring. We don’t have to put a temporary shoeshine on our budget by laying off essential workers or cutting back on necessary maintenance to make ourselves look profitable in the short term. There are no distant stockholders breathing down on us to show we did better this month than last. Your co-op won’t jump out of the electricity game to put its assets in a more lucrative business.

We keep our eye on the bottom line at all times and think long term about our core mission to offer reliable electric power at the best possible price and provide the most responsive customer service we possibly can.

Sure, there are high energy costs, climate-change and governmental challenges coming down the pike, but no one can represent your interests better than your cooperative. We know who we are. We just have to be the best we can be. But we know whom we’re working for—you.

In unity with 42 million other electric co-op consumers around the country, we encourage you to ask your U.S. representatives and senators to work with electric cooperatives to keep electric bills affordable. Get involved in this effort by participating in the “Our Energy, Our Future” grassroots campaign at WWW.ourenergy.COOP. You can help us help you by letting your elected officials know you are opposed to any government program that increases the cost of electricity.



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\$1,500

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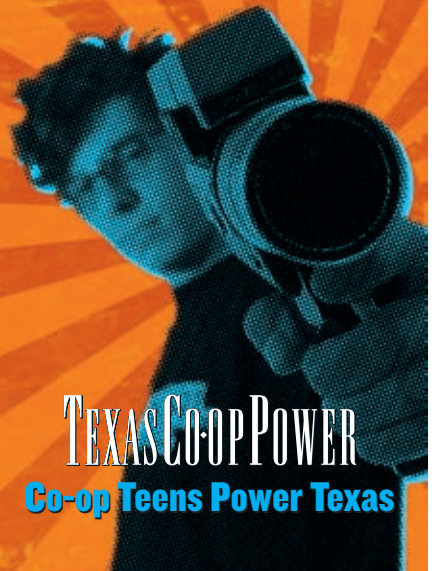
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Substations Play Key Role in Safe, Reliable Power

You may think, “Why would I want to know about substations?” Substations are an important part of the system that brings you safe and reliable electricity each time you flip a light switch or turn on an appliance.

Substations are key components of your electric co-op, serving as points of delivery from the transmission system. Substation equipment steps down voltage for distribution to



homes and has regulators that maintain the voltage at a constant level.

This constant level of voltage is particularly important—to travel long distances over wires, electric power voltage must be much higher than the level at which it is actually produced by a power plant. For example, electricity leaves a power plant at about 22,000 volts, then is increased to as much as 765,000 volts. The higher the voltage, the lower the line loss and voltage drop—thus, the greater the system’s efficiency. As the power gets closer to its destination, voltage is gradually decreased to a level safe for consumers.

Transmission substations give the power its first step-down, and distribution substations step it down even further so that it may be sent on to the consumer. The lines leaving a distribution substation are owned and maintained by the local co-op. These lines carry the power to homes, businesses and schools.

There is a multitude of equipment in substations: transformers, lightning

arrestors, circuit breakers, insulators and much more. A transformer performs the main substation function, which again is to alter the voltage to an acceptable level for distribution. The voltage regulator then maintains a constant outgoing voltage. Lamar Electric has four of these types of substations: Reno, Sherry, Brookston and Cooper/Enloe.

The last step-down of voltage is done near your house or business. The thing that looks like a garbage can near the top of a pole is, in fact, the transformer. Transformers, like the one near your house, can increase voltage for efficient long-distance

transmission and lower voltage for use by customers.

So the next time you drive by one of those fenced conglomerations of power lines and equipment, remember that, in spite of appearances, it’s an important part of your cooperative’s power system. It is helping ensure that you receive electricity in a reliable and safe manner.

But the most important thing to remember about substations is to observe the warning signs and stay away. The substation fences are there to protect you and the equipment that keeps your power on.



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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
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- Free bank draft service
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Storm May Have Caused Low Turnout at Lamar Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting

A storm that blew through Northeast Texas in the early morning hours of May 9 knocked out more than 400 meters in Lamar Electric Cooperative's service area. In some areas, winds reached gusts of more than 70 mph. Trees toppled onto

the meeting was truly a cooperative effort. LEC employees greeted guests, handed out door prizes, soft drinks, coffee and cookies, set up the Love Civic Center and even provided the entertainment. Employees Leslie Colvard and Tessi McFadden sang "God Bless the U.S.A." and "The Star-Spangled Banner," respectively, and each received standing ovations.

Jerry Williams, who at the time had been LEC's general manager for just more than a month, took a few moments to introduce himself to the members. Williams, no stranger to the co-op industry,

worked for six years as the administrative manager for Choctaw Electric in Hugo, Oklahoma, and for 17 years as general manager for Claiborne Electric Cooperative in Homer, Louisiana.

"One thing you'll learn about me pretty fast is, I don't like to stay at my desk much. I'll do my best to answer every phone call that you give me, but I love to be out there to see what's going on," said Williams, who replaced Billy Kulwicki as general manager. "I've done just about every job for an electric co-op that you can think of. I have been a co-op lineman, bookkeeper, accountant and general manager, and it's important for me to see the lines, rights-of-way and services we are performing for you, rather than having someone just hand me a report.

"The last couple of months there

has been a lot of discussion about a carbon tax or a tax on pollution to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere. At the same time, China and other countries continue building power plants that release carbon dioxide without any rules," Williams said. "This kind of tax could easily raise your electric bill by 30 percent or more. The government's philosophy is that if you have to pay more for it, you won't use as much of it. The price of power may be something that you will have more control over than us."

Williams reminded everyone of the national campaign, "Our Energy, Our Future," stressing the importance of contacting elected officials to express concerns about energy costs and how the simple act of writing a letter or sending an e-mail could have a tremendous effect.

He also said that one way to lessen the blow of increasing power costs, besides using less electricity, is to use the Co-op Connections® Card. Since its inception, Lamar members have saved \$20,022 on prescriptions alone. Williams pointed out that, in the recent gap he had in insurance coverage due to switching jobs, he used his card for his prescriptions and saved money.

Williams concluded by letting everyone know Lamar Electric recently received notice that for the first time, it had been accredited by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association for the co-op's safety program. Accreditation is based upon extensive review of the local safety program and submission of numerous policies and records, as well as a thorough inspection by an outside team of safety professionals.

When the business session ended, the highly anticipated door prizes were given away. Richard Eatherly walked away with the grand prize of the day, a 32-inch LCD flat-screen HDTV.



Grand-prize winner Richard Eatherly

homes, cars and power lines, forcing several LEC employees to miss the annual membership meeting, scheduled for 10 a.m.

The storm may have affected attendance: Only 117 members (about 200 people total) registered for the meeting, and more than 400 members are needed to establish a quorum for a general business session. Fortunately, no business was on the agenda. There were enough mail-in ballots, however, to establish a quorum for the election of directors for Districts 5, 6 and 7. Allen Branch, the current board chairman, was re-elected to the District 5 seat. George Wood replaced incumbent Billy E. Cunningham in the District 6 seat, and Ron Tippit was re-elected to the District 7 seat.

Despite the lowered attendance,

Co-op Connections

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\$21,964.43 Saved

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

In April, 253 prescriptions were filled and members saved \$1,941.69, averaging 21 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.