

Trees Are Great, but They Can Be a Problem



**MESSAGE
FROM
MANAGER
JERRY D.
WILLIAMS**

Last month, we discussed why you want your lights to go off in certain circumstances. Unfortunately, most of the time your lights go off, the reason is something other than a device allowing a lightning strike to make its way to the ground. At Lamar Electric, trees were the cause of outages over 36 percent of the time last year, whereas lightning was the cause about 32 percent of the time. Ways to reduce the problems from trees has recently been the subject of many hours of discussion and planning at Lamar Electric.

Most of the areas served by your cooperative are blessed with an abundance of trees. I wouldn't want to live in an area without trees.

Many of the trees in this area have been forestland for years. Other areas are growing trees after farming was abandoned on the land, and fence rows overgrown with brush are becoming more commonplace. For some reason, most of the farmers with row crops or hay meadows 50 years ago kept the fence lines free of brush. Now that we have more modern methods of farming, many of the fence rows seem to be ignored.

In the past several years, your cooperative would pay contractors to trim any limb in the right-of-way that was within 10 feet of the electric wire. They cut it back to have only a 10-foot clearance. Of course, all the brush and limbs that were not as tall were

ignored and allowed to grow. The result was only one or two limbs would be trimmed on each tree while the remaining limbs continued to grow until they were within 10 feet. The same tree was often trimmed every three years. Brush in fence rows continued to grow until it finally became a problem.

These procedures were creating a situation where in the near future, our entire 2,000 miles of electric lines would have limbs within the 10-foot barrier. Had we reached that point (and we continued to only trim back to 10 feet) we would need to trim over 700 miles of line each year or we would be allowing hundreds of miles

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of line to have contact with limbs every time there was a breeze. Some trees grow faster and could have limbs touching the line before the area would be due for trimming again. Trimming 700 miles of line would cost about \$3 million just to keep up. We think we can do a better job within our existing budget. The rates are already too high, and this is one area we can do a better job with what we have.

In 2009, we went back to some of the old, tried and tested methods of keeping the right-of-ways clear—with a touch of modern arborist practices. We now cut the trees and brush to the ground, then treat the stumps with a herbicide to prevent sprouting out.

Fence rows that have pasture on one side and a road on the other are being treated with a herbicide that kills the brush before it reaches the electric wires.

Sections of line that have some of the worst tree problems are selected, and contractors are requested to provide a lump-sum bid. These sections are typically for 10 to 20 miles of line. As the bids are awarded, we are issuing press releases to the newspapers in the areas affected. We want you to know a contract crew will be working in your area and what they are being paid to do. The contractors are cutting the brush and trees inside the right-of-way easement to the ground

and side trimming the trees on each side of the right-of-way.

You may see two cooperative employees applying the herbicide to the fence rows using backpack sprayers. The chemical is sprayed onto the ground in a band about 4 inches wide. The herbicide soaks into the dirt and is drawn up into the brush through the roots. Tonto and Little Bull have already sprayed

over 65 miles of fence row.

In addition, we are experimenting with a Trees Inc. contract crew that is using a Jarraff machine to trim the trees on the sides. They are currently working along Highway 195. The Jarraff has a long boom with a sawblade on the tip and moves on tracks. This crew is using chainsaws and a shredder to clear the balance of the right-of-way.

We are now getting more of the right-of-way cleared for the same or less money. We are working on a herbicide plan to attack the brush that may sprout or grow from seed, after we get the right-of-way cleared. We will be giving you more information on this plan in the future.

LEC Annual Membership Meeting

Lamar Electric Cooperative will hold its Annual Membership Meeting at 10 a.m. Saturday, April 17. The meeting will be held in the Paris High School auditorium, 2400 Jefferson Road in Paris.

Each member in attendance at the meeting will receive a registration gift, and a drawing for other prizes will be held. Two \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded at the meeting. Members' children who are high school seniors may submit their names for the drawing. Details can be found in another article in this magazine. There will not be a meal served.

There will be an election for the board of directors in Districts 2, 3 and 4. You do not have to be present at the meeting to vote in the director election. Prior to the meeting, ballots will be mailed to members who reside in those districts. If you reside in one of the districts having an election, you may either vote by mail or in person at the meeting.

Watch for additional details in the next issue of Texas Co-op Power.



**LAMAR
ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE**

1485 North Main St.
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
- Free bank draft service
- Visa, Discover, MasterCard and American Express accepted

PLEASE GIVE at BLOOD DRIVE



GIVEN BY: Carter Blood Care

HOSTED BY: Lamar Electric Co-op (in our parking lot)

DATE: Tuesday, March 2, 2010

TIME: Noon to 4 p.m.

Our goal is 18 units. We would like to get more if we can!

Donors will get a free T-shirt, cookies and juice. Make sure you eat a good breakfast that morning.

At the end of the day, we will give away the "60 Years of Home Cooking" cookbook to one of the people donating blood.

If you give blood on a regular basis and have an appointment coming up soon, please wait and give at the blood drive.

If you have any questions or want to schedule your appointment for that day you can contact Marci Thompson at Lamar Electric Co-op at (903) 784-4303.



Carter BloodCare



**LAMAR
ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE**

LAMAR ELECTRIC GIVING AWAY TWO \$1,000 SCHOLARSHIPS

At the April 17th Lamar Electric Annual Meeting two \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded to students who plan to pursue an academic degree or certification from an accredited university, college, or junior college. Scholarship payment will be made directly to the college or university in one lump sum. Scholarships must be used within 2 years of the award date.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE SCHOLARSHIP:

- The student must reside with a parent or legal guardian in a home served by Lamar Electric Cooperative, and
- Be a graduating senior attending a high school or an accredited Home Extended Studies program within the counties served by Lamar Electric Cooperative.

Two (2) names will be drawn from a hopper at the Lamar Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting on Saturday, April 17th. You need not be present to win.

Entries must be received on April 9, 2010 by 5:00 p.m. at the Lamar Electric Office

Return completed Scholarship Entry Form to:

Lamar Electric Cooperative
Member Services Department
1485 North Main Street
Paris, TX 75460

Or mail to:

Lamar Electric Cooperative
Member Services Department
PO Box 580
Paris, TX 75461

(cut along dotted line—Xerox copies are acceptable)

STUDENT NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

NAME OF HIGH SCHOOL _____

PARENTS/GUARDIAN NAME _____

COOP ACCOUNT # _____

PHONE # _____



SAVE ENERGY ■ SAVE MONEY

A dirty track on a sliding glass door can create a gap in the door's seal that will allow air infiltration. Clean dirt out of the track regularly.

Caulk around the edges of the sliding glass doors and seal any cracks where the door frame meets the house.

NEW SPRING 2010 CONTEST!

TEXAS CO-OP POWER
Co-op Teens Power Texas

SHOOT A VIDEO AND WIN \$1,500!

High school students:

Make your own YouTube video, and you could win a cash prize!

TEACHERS

You could win **\$1,000** for your school by sponsoring the grand prizewinner.

GO TO
www.texascooppower.com
FOR FULL DETAILS!

COUNTRY CORNER EVENTS

MARCH

2 Carter Blood Care and Lamar Electric Co-op Blood Drive at Lamar Electric Co-op parking lot, noon to 4 p.m. (Donors can register to win a 60 Years of Home Cooking cookbook to be given away.)

4-6 Going Hog Wild in Red River County - Wild Hog Hunt at Red River County Fair Grounds in Clarksville. Contact Red River Chamber of Commerce for more information at (903) 427-2645.

5-6 Kiwanis Pancake Days at Red River Valley Fairgrounds in Paris. Serving times 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. each day. Advance tickets, \$5; at the door, \$6.

12-13 American Heritage Coon Hunters Association Hunt at Red River Valley Fairgrounds in Paris. Contact Lamar County Chamber of Commerce for more information at (903) 784-2501.

Paris Community Theatre presents "See How They Run"

- March 19 at 7:30 p.m.
- March 20 at 7:30 p.m.
- March 21 at 2:30 p.m.
- March 25 at 7:30 p.m.
- March 26 at 7:30 p.m.
- March 27 at 7:30 p.m.
- March 28 at 2:30 p.m.

20 Paris Bluegrass Show. 18 West Hearne St. (next to South Main Café), Paris. Matinee 4-5:30 p.m., and evening session 7-9 p.m.

23-24 Chamber Archery Shoot at the Love Civic Center Archery Trails in Paris. Contact Lamar County Chamber of Commerce for more information at (903) 784-2501.

24-28 ASA Archery Shoot at the Love Civic Center Archery Trails in Paris. Contact Lamar County Chamber of Commerce for more information at (903) 784-2501 or visit www.redrivervalley.info.

27 Chips Foundation Banquet. 6 p.m. at Chisum High School.

If you have any events that you would like listed for Delta, Lamar or Red River counties, please contact Marci Thompson. Information must be submitted two months in advance for the magazine. E-mail marci@lamarelectric.coop or call (903) 783-4911.