

Your Summer Job: Keep Electric Bills Affordable



**MESSAGE
FROM
MANAGER
JERRY D.
WILLIAMS**

School's out, vacations are under way, and it seems the heat of summer will never end. It is hard to imagine there was 9 inches of snow just a few months back. This is also the time of year when some pretty important folks return home for a visit. Members of Congress, such as U.S. Rep. Ralph Hall and Senators Kay Bailey Hutchison and John Cornyn, will be traveling throughout our area and state, asking for your thoughts on various pieces of legislation being considered in our nation's capital.

One major concern for electric co-ops—energy and climate-change policy—has returned to the front burner. Legislation on this subject was introduced in the U.S. Senate in April, and co-ops across the country are studying it to see what it might mean for your electric bill.

The administration has been trying to get support for its carbon tax bill for several months. Coming up short, the executive branch has resorted to a different approach. Using the power of the existing Clean Air Act, the head of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has threatened the U.S. Congress. If Congress will not support the administration's carbon tax bill, the EPA will start regulating emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases from power plants—something the law was never designed to do. Many in Congress did not roll over to the threat, and now the EPA is moving forward to make its threat good. If the Democrats and Republi-

cans in Congress will work together, they can stop this extortion plan.

It's too early to know for certain whether Congress will take up this issue—very few legislative days remain in this session. But you can be sure of this: Those of us at Lamar Electric Cooperative, along with more than 900 electric co-ops across the country, are reminding lawmakers that whatever they do, we will judge their action or inaction by whether or not your electric bills remain affordable.

The bottom line is that any decision made by Congress—even the decision of taking no action and allowing the EPA to proceed on its regulatory path—will have some effect on your electric bills.

And this comes on top of other pressures—increased fuel and material costs and higher demand for electricity, to name a few—that are forcing electric bills higher. Rest assured that your local co-op leaders are doing what we can to keep these cost increases constrained.

But we need your help. During the congressional break this summer, I urge you to talk to your U.S. representative and senators about your electric bill. Make sure they understand what higher bills will do to your family's budget. I don't know about you, but for my family, every penny counts, especially at a time when our economy has been hit so hard.

More than 526,000 folks from across rural America have already let their members of Congress know where they stand on energy and climate-change legislation through the Our Energy, Our Future grassroots campaign. These voices have formed a powerful chorus on the need for keeping electric bills affordable as debate on the issue unfolds.

If you haven't done so, please consider adding your voice to this national dialogue at www.ourenergy.coop.

Paperless Billing Now Available

We now have an optional e-bill service that gives our members secure online access to their electric account virtually anywhere, any time. We have recently added paperless billing as an option for those who prefer to conduct business online.

It is easy to use. Just follow these steps:

- Log on to our website at www.lamarelectric.coop.
- Select the "Online Bill Pay" tab at the top of the screen.
- Type in your e-mail address and password. (If you are signing up for the first time, click on "If you are a new user Click Here" to sign up for online account access.)
- Once you have logged onto your account, to begin your paperless billing, select the "Stop/Start Print Bill" on the left side of your screen.
- Under the red box listed "Selection," there is a box that says "Send Me a Statement By Mail." Uncheck the box to stop your statement by mail.
- Click on the Update button.

If you choose to request that we stop printing your bill each month, we will send you an e-mail each month with the message your bill has been prepared and you can log onto our website to view, print or pay the bill.

If you wish, you can still receive a paper bill, even if you want to log in each month to make your payment, or simply wish to establish your log-in password to view your bills online and continue making payments in person or by mail. After you log in and set up a password you can:

- View current and historical billing and payment information.
- Analyze historical usage graphs.
- Make one-time credit card and e-check payments.
- Set up or stop receiving paper billing statements.

For more information, call (903) 784-4303.



DYLAN
ARMSTRONG



WESLEY
MURDOCK



COLTON
PRICE



ALEX
STEPHENSON

LAMAR EC AWARDS SCHOLARSHIPS

This year, Lamar Electric Cooperative awarded four \$1,000 scholarships to high school seniors who live in houses served by Lamar Electric Cooperative. The money that funds the co-op's scholarship program comes from unclaimed deposits or refunds. The law allows Lamar Electric to use a portion of these funds for scholarships; otherwise, the money is turned over to the state.

The winners are **DYLAN ARMSTRONG** of North Lamar High School, **WESLEY MURDOCK** of Prairiland High School, **COLTON PRICE** of Chisum High School and **ALEX STEPHENSON** of Roxton High School.

The four can use their scholarships toward an academic degree or certification from an accredited university, college or junior college of their choice.

Armstrong is the son of John and Bonnie Armstrong of the Hopewell Community. Murdock is the son of Kerry and Sandra Murdock of Pattonville. Price is the son of Rodney Price of the Lake Creek Community and Dondi Woods of Paris. Stephenson is the son of Matt and Lori Stephenson of the Howland Community.



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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 and MasterCard accepted

COUNTRY CORNER EVENTS

AUGUST

5-7 Paris Community Theatre presents "The Complete Works of Shakespeare Abridged" at 8 p.m. at Bywaters Park in Paris. Bring a lawn chair or blanket.

6-7 Third Annual Bluegrass Festival – 7 p.m. at Cooper Lake Center, Birthright. Call 1-800-245-2149 for tickets or visit www.cooperlakecenter.com.

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.

Lamar Electric Supports Livestock Show



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Lamar Electric Cooperative is a proud supporter of the Lamar County Junior Livestock Show. This year was no different. There were lots of excited kids waiting their turn for a spin around the buyers' ring with their prize animals.

The co-op won the bid on the Grand Champion rabbit, the Reserve Champion hog and the Reserve Champion goat. Lamar Electric also sponsored the belt buckle for the Reserve Champion rabbit.

Katie Smelly of Prairiland showed the Grand Champion rabbit. She is the daughter of co-op members Greg and Kelly Smelly of Detroit. **Kylee Scudder** of North Lamar showed the Reserve Champion hog. She is the daughter of co-op members Scott and Tracy Scudder of Powderly. **Trent Evans** of Chisum showed the Reserve Champion goat. He is the son of co-op member James Evans of the Brookston community. The Reserve Champion rabbit belt buckle was awarded to **Kelly Vanderschaaf** of Chisum 4-H. She is the daughter of co-op members Tom and Kim Vanderschaaf of Blossom.

We are very proud of these kids and all who participated. Our young people are our future. We must invest the time and effort to teach them about rural living.

LEFT: Kelly Vanderschaaf. BELOW, FROM LEFT: Katie Smelly, Kylee Scudder and Trent Evans.



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Employees Learn Lifesaving Skills



Lamar Electric conducted CPR training for our employees. The training included first aid and how to use an automated external defibrillator.

Because our trucks travel thousands of miles per year, our employees are often the first on the scene of an accident. For most of the employees, this was just a refresher course, taken every two years.

◀ Lamar EC's Will Armstrong practices the head tilt.

Outage In Red River County

At about 5 a.m. on Wednesday, June 6, most of Red River County went dark. The culprit was a curious snake that crawled up the steel beams in an electric substation owned by Lamar Electric in the Sherry community. The snake made its way onto the 25,000-volt conductors and created a short between two phases. The resulting ball of fire melted the glass insulators and steel buss, affecting electricity to about 4,000 customers.

Unknown to Lamar Electric, a thunderstorm had moved through the area a day earlier, and lightning had struck some of the equipment in the station, burning up a very important relay coil. With the coil damaged, the automatic disconnect switch did not work when the snake started the short circuit. This allowed the fault to continue for several more seconds. Ultimately, a breaker de-energized the Oncor transmission line serving the area. This stopped the large fireball in the substation but turned off power to most of Red River County. Lamar Manager Jerry Williams reported that the ball of fire would have reached several thousand degrees and been visible for several miles.

While Lamar Electric surveyed the damage, Oncor found a problem in its substation serving Clarksville. This delayed restoration of power to the city of Clarksville and surrounding areas.

Lamar crews installed temporary cables to bypass the damaged parts of the Sherry substation and restored power shortly after 10 a.m. the same day. As a backup and as a provision to allow permanent repairs, we activated our emergency response plan and had a portable substation moved to the site. Lamar and four of our sister cooperatives built the mobile substation to share and use for such an event. It is mounted on a very large trailer and moved by an 18-wheeler. Crews hooked up the mobile substation and began the work of making permanent repairs.



Careers on Wheels

Lamar EC visits Aiken Elementary in Paris

Lamar Electric Co-op participated in “Careers on Wheels” at Aiken Elementary School in Paris on May 24 for its first- and second-grade classes. This was an opportunity for children to learn about various jobs, and an opportunity for Lamar Electric to teach safety around power lines.

The bucket truck, yellow extension pole and lineman’s safety gloves were a huge success. The children loved trying on the gloves.

Thanks to Aiken Elementary for letting us share with the students the jobs we do at Lamar Electric.