

Metal Theft Risks Safety, Lives



**MESSAGE
FROM
MANAGER
JERRY D.
WILLIAMS**

Would you risk being hit by lightning for \$100? Seems a bit ludicrous, but desperate times cause folks to do foolish things.

Thefts of copper, aluminum and bronze are on the rise at abandoned commercial buildings, empty homes and—most dangerously—at power substations in rural areas. We need your help to keep our equipment safe, prevent outages and save lives.

At one electric co-op last year, metal thieves took off with about \$100 of wire from a substation, but left behind a \$1 million repair bill after a fire destroyed regulators, switches and a \$600,000 transformer. More than 3,500 consumers were temporarily left in the dark after the incident, although the co-op moved quickly to reroute power to affected areas.

Recently, copper thieves struck in North Red River County. The thieves were using a long pole in an attempt to cut down the neutral copper wire from poles alongside the county road. In the middle of the night, they made a mistake and cut a hot wire. They were very lucky and narrowly escaped what could have been an immediate death by electrocution.

It's hard to understand why folks would risk their lives for a few dollars. Last summer, thieves in the Enloe area of Delta County removed short lengths of copper wire that was being used to ground our main line at each pole. Driving an all-terrain vehicle to move from pole to pole, they got about 6 feet of wire from more than

80 poles. Two men worked several hours for less than \$200 worth of copper. They could have made more money at an honest job with a lot less stress.

Regardless of who is doing it, the damage done to our system packs a big punch because equipment can be ruined without the protection copper wires provide. There's also the potential for loss of life. Last year in the U.S., several deaths related to metal theft occurred.

Just a few years ago, a Lamar Electric lineman was injured by electricity near Roxton, in Lamar County, because copper thieves stole wire off a



Thieves in substations are not just risking getting caught, they're risking their lives.

pole. The Good Lord smiled on us, and today, the lineman is now our safety coordinator and teaches other linemen about the dangers caused by copper thieves.

The cost for scrap copper goes up and down, but recently it's been on the rise—and so have theft attempts. In January, scrap copper sold for five times the amount it went for in 2001. Many cooperatives, including Lamar

Electric, have now started in some situations using steel wire that is plated with copper.

Some copper wire manufacturers now etch a microscopic serial number into the wire every 12 inches. This number will allow us to identify any wire found at a recycling plant and trace it back to the seller for prosecution. If the theft of the wire results in major damage or physical harm to a person, the copper thief may find he or she is facing major prison time for a much more serious offense than theft alone.

We use copper to ground our equipment, protecting it from electrical surges and lightning by giving electricity a safe path to the ground. We use a lot of copper wire in our substations, where we step down high-voltage electricity arriving from distant power plants before it travels to your neighborhood. Then another transformer near your home—either mounted on a utility pole or in a green box on the ground—lowers the voltage again so you can use the power at home. Copper is an essential component every step of the way.

Our linemen are highly trained professionals who understand the dangers of working with electricity and take proper safety precautions.

To protect the public, we surround our substations with “smart” fencing that will detect intruders. This alert then allows our cameras to zoom in on the area being disturbed. We also have large warning signs, but some thieves will not be deterred.

Please help us prevent these thefts. If you notice anything unusual, such as an open substation gate, open equipment or hanging wire, call Lamar Electric Cooperative immediately at (903) 784-4303 at any time—day or night. If you see anyone other than our utility personnel or contractors around substations or other electric facilities, call the sheriff.

Employee Anniversaries



JAY HENRY
Lineman
3 years on May 19



CORY MAY
Lineman
3 years on May 19



CASEY MARTIN
Staking Engineer
4 years on May 7



GEORGE SCROGGINS
Serviceman
21 years on May 14



JAMES SMITH
Right-of-way Superintendent
33 years on May 1

COUNTRY CORNER EVENTS

May 6 Cruisin' The Plaza—Begins at 5 p.m. around the Plaza in Downtown Paris

May 7 24th Annual Uncle Jesse's Big Bass Classic Fishing Tournament—Sanders Cove at Pat Mayse Lake. For more information, call (903) 784-2501.

May 7 Paris Art Fair—9 a.m.-4 p.m. Love Civic Center in Paris. For more information, call (903) 785-5221.

May 7 Roxton Hawg Waller Festival—9 a.m.-4 p.m. Roxton High School

May 21 Best of Lamar County BBQ Cook-Off—Sponsored by Red River Valley Fair Association. For more information, go to www.rrvfair.org or call (903) 785-7971.

May 21 Red River Valley Antique Tractor Club Show—Love Civic Center in Paris. For more information, call (903) 785-1365.

May 21 Women in the Outdoors Pioneer Chapter of NE Texas—Rusty Lowe's Ranch in Clarksville. For more information, call Angie Bishop at (903) 249-1466, Chance Bishop at (903) 249-7961 or Sherry Rice at (903) 244-5256.

May 28 Historic Clarksville Square Fine Arts Festival—9 a.m.-4 p.m. Downtown Clarksville on the square. For more information, call Larry Algaier at (903) 427-5618.

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@lamar-electric.coop or call (903) 783-4911.

2011 Youth Tour Participants Selected

Lucy Enns and Lori Thiessen are the winners of Lamar Electric Cooperative's Washington, D.C., Youth Tour Essay Contest.

The two winners are among approximately 100 students from other cooperatives in Texas who will make the trip June 9-17 to the nation's capital for a tour of its many historic sites.

Lucy is the daughter of Jacob and Elizabeth Enns of the Brookston community, west of Paris, and attends Faith Christian School. Lori is the daughter of Frank and Susana Thiessen of Honey Grove, west of Paris, and also attends Faith Christian School. Their winning essays follow.

The tour will originate in Irving. From there, the group will fly to Washington, D.C., where they will meet with approximately 1,200 other students from across the nation. Once in Washington, the tour participants will get to see and tour many historic places such as Mount Vernon and the U.S. Capitol, where they will visit with their congressmen and tour the House and Senate chambers. One day, all the Youth Tour participants will come together to visit the White House and conclude the evening with an all-states dinner and dance.

Also included on the tour will be places such as the National Cathedral, Ford's Theatre and Petersen House, the Smithsonian museums, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, the Washington Monument, FDR Memorial, National Geographic Society, Kennedy Center, Arlington Cemetery, Kennedy's grave, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Jefferson Memorial, Supreme Court, Library of Congress, Korean War Memorial, Lincoln Memorial and Vietnam War Veterans Memorial. Tour participants will have an opportunity to win other trips while they are in Washington.

Lamar Electric sponsors two area students on this trip each year. To be

eligible for the Youth Tour contest, you must be a junior or senior in high school. In addition, your parents or legal guardians must be residing members of Lamar Electric Cooperative, or applicants must attend one of the four high schools serviced by Lamar Electric Cooperative: Detroit, Prairiland, Roxton or Faith Christian. Home-schooled students in homes served by Lamar Electric are also eligible.



Electricity of the Future

BY LUCY ENNS

Like water and oxygen, humans cannot live without electricity. Everything, from curling irons to the Internet, runs on electricity. Because electricity is such an important part of life today and most definitely will be a huge part of the future, scientists and engineers have done a lot of research to make the world a more energy-efficient, pollution-free world by finding different means of generating electricity.

A lot of study has been put into electricity by walking, which is a sure method of electricity in the future. The system by which electricity can be generated through walking is called piezoelectricity, or a property that certain materials have to generate an electric current when they are squeezed or

pressed. The first prototype of piezoelectricity was developed in 2000 by John Sarich, using a shoe. The energy that this shoe generated was enough to power devices such as a cell phone, camera or iPod. In 2008, Telecom giant NIT announced that it was developing shoes that generated electricity as you walked, using John Sarich's method. Each shoe had water-filled soles that have a small generator inside the sole. Pressure is applied to the soles each time you take a step. This causes the water to spin a small turbine and power is generated. Harnessing electricity through the electricity-generating shoe is a sure way to design a more energy-efficient and sustainable future.

Another aspect of piezoelectricity was developed in Japan by Kohei Hayamizu. He experimented with this idea by covering one square meter of the ground in the Shibuya train crossing into an electric generator. The electricity is generated every time a person walks over the square meter, thus converting the vibration into electricity. With 900,000 people passing through Shibuya each day, Kohei was able to generate enough electricity in 20 days to power 1,422 televisions for one hour. His goal is to install these systems on highways so as to harness the electricity generated by the movement of the automobiles passing over it. This system, which is still a work in progress, would prove very useful to our world considering it is totally pollution-free. This is definitely a form of electricity of the future in my opinion.

Another means of generating electricity, which is definitely going to be a big part of the future, is converting food waste into electricity. People of Seattle, Washington, are already trying this method. All the families that live there have to keep their food waste separate from other trash. This food waste is then turned into compost.

They now want to start turning food waste into an alternative source of energy before they turn it into compost. Bacteria is sprinkled over the food, which would help it to break down. The food is then put into a large closed container where it releases large amounts of methane. Instead of allowing this gas to escape into the atmosphere and contribute to global warming, they could burn it to power and heat the facility. The natural gas produced can also be used to provide electricity, which can power over 400 homes for a whole year. This plan is highly developed in Europe, and I am confident that America will soon be using this form of electricity not so long into the future.

There are many new ways of generating electricity but these three means, in my opinion, are going to be highly used in the future. Some of these forms may take longer to develop, but they will eventually be a huge part of electricity in the future.



Electricity of the Future

BY LORI THIESSEN

There are so many possibilities to look forward to in the near future of electricity. Experts say we can expect lots of benefits we don't currently receive from our electric companies, such as wireless electricity, having more control of our electricity, and electricity that is green.

The technology we use today for

transmitting electricity depends largely on power lines. Hundreds of miles of wires are used to transmit electricity from power plants into cities. A huge network of power cables underground are used to get electricity right into our homes.

Can you imagine electricity being wireless? No more tangled wires lying around everywhere! According to an experiment conducted by a team of experts at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology last year, it won't be long before we start seeing this new technology in our homes. It will only be a matter of time until we have electrical appliances charging themselves off air!

In the future we will have more control of the electricity we use. Industry experts believe that our power supply will not depend on the local electricity company but on us. Also they claim we will have control over how we want the electricity to reach our homes.

Electrical energy will be clean. As of now, we mainly rely on fossil fuels to generate electricity. We can't keep going like this because it is nonrenewable and will eventually run out. The results of electricity production releases huge quantities of carbon dioxide in the air. This generation is learning to use renewable energy as a source of generating electricity, such as wind farms and solar power plants. This kind of electricity doesn't produce toxic elements, it is free, and we can enjoy a less polluted environment.

No more outages! We can look forward to absolutely no power outages.

Today's electricity system is 99.97 percent reliable, and yet it allows for outages and interruptions that cost Americans at least \$150 billion each year. With our increasing dependence on electricity for everything, it is necessary to have an uninterrupted supply of power. Experts say that alternate power options can provide exactly that.

The possibilities are endless! I, for one, am very excited about all of this.

It will make our lives so much simpler!

PARIS ART FAIR

SATURDAY, MAY 7

9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Love Civic Center, Paris

More than 150 vendors and concessions!

Fine arts, home decor, apparel, jewelry, unique gifts, accessories for home and garden, food and entertainment!

Visit downtown Paris

April 30-May 6 for

PARIS ART FAIR SQUARED,
a fine arts show around the plaza.



**Lamar Electric honors
the brave men and
women who have given
their lives so that we might
live in a free and prosperous
United States of America.**

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Our office will be closed
Monday, May 30, in
observance of Memorial Day.