

Dead Tree Patrol Is On the Way



**MESSAGE
FROM
MANAGER
JERRY D.
WILLIAMS**

We may not understand why, but the fact is Northeast Texas was hit with a severe drought and 100-plus-degree weather this past summer. The result is many trees that survived extreme conditions in the past have died. Why some trees lived and others died is a question you will have to take up with God. Unfortunately, many of those trees could hit Lamar Electric high-voltage power lines when they fall. Often a dead tree will simply drop limbs and leave a tall snag as it falls to the ground in chunks. Other trees will

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develop wood rot near the base and be blown over when the first strong wind hits. The dead trees that blow over while still pretty much a whole tree will still have a lot of strength in the main limbs and tend to do more damage when they hit a power line or electric pole.

My experience has been that trees that get a lot of moisture will tend to rot a lot faster near the base. This is the main reason we do not reuse old

electric poles. Once most of the preservative has leached out of a pole near the ground line, the naturally occurring microbes in the soil will attack the wood pole. The microbes that cause wood to rot only need two conditions to flourish, water, and oxygen. Warm weather will allow the wood to decay fast. We have had a very wet spring, and the weather has already started to warm up. It is only a matter of time before we have another storm front with severe winds. This combination means that unless something is done, you can expect that a lot of dead trees in our area are going to fall in the next couple of years.

Many of these dead trees are set back 30, 40 or even 80 feet from the cleared power line right-of-way. We are only worried about the ones tall enough to strike the electric wire or poles when they fall. We generally don't have very many dead trees to

worry about, but our forefathers obviously contemplated this problem when Lamar Electric and other REA cooperatives were being formed. Our original easement forms in 1938 included the words *"and to cut down from time to time all dead, weak, leaning or danger-*

ous trees that are tall enough to strike the wires in falling." Our current standard right-of-way easement forms still contain that exact wording.

We normally think of the easement only including an area 15 feet on each side of the power line. This clause in the easement form actually expands the easement to include specific dead trees that are farther back from the power line. Of course, if a tree is dead, it will eventually fall to the

ground in pieces or one large piece, but it will surely fall to the ground. In the past month on separate occasions, two large trees have blown over in severe windstorms. Both tore a main three-phase line down, breaking all wires, and one tree broke a main line pole. These outages were lengthy and expensive to fix and resulted in several hundred members with lights off for several hours. Without an action plan, we can expect this to happen many, many more times in the next few years.

We have an action plan. That plan is a "Dead Tree Patrol." A three-man contract crew has been assembled and will start with patrolling all main three-phase electric lines. They will then follow all the single-phase power lines, until all 2,000 miles of main power lines have been covered. This crew will have a very limited work description. **They will be cutting down all dead trees that are leaning or a danger to our power lines and that are tall enough to strike the wires if the tree falls.** This crew will start at a substation and follow each main three-phase to the end of the three-phase.

The idea is for this crew to move very fast and cover many miles each day. They will be using chainsaws and ropes. The ropes will help them pull the tree in the right direction. Once the tree is down, they will move along looking for the next dead tree. If this crew finds a tree near a house or in a front yard, they will mark the tree with a ribbon, report the tree to our office and leave this tree for another Lamar Electric crew or the landowner to deal with.

We are counting on our members to cooperate as this new crew does their work. We believe most members will understand that a dead tree is destined to fall down at some time, and allow us access to manage the direction and time in which the tree falls. It is not likely a member will

want the liability of keeping a dead tree standing and being responsible for future damage done by the tree, when there is an opportunity for the Lamar Electric crew to take the tree down in a safe manner.

The Dead Tree Patrol crew will not have a bucket truck or chipper and therefore will not be equipped to deal with trees in yards or near houses that may have to be taken down limb by limb or the disposal of trees. Our objective is for this crew to cut down thousands of dead trees in a short period of time. For this reason, this crew will not be responding to calls from members about a dangerous dead tree. If you call the office to report a dead tree that is in danger

of falling on a main power line, please let us know if the tree is close to a house and if you think the tree can last until the Dead Tree Patrol gets to your particular line (which could take several months). Once this crew completes the entire system, they will most likely need to start over and deal with trees that are continuing to die or were missed the first time around.

If you have a dead tree near your house or in your yard that you are willing to cut down, please let us check it out. Often our main power lines or the secondary wires from the transformer to your house can be lowered to the ground while you cut the tree, and then returned to the pole, later the same day.



1485 N. Main St.
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Phone (903) 784-4303

For information during office hours 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 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
- E-Bill
- Visa and MasterCard accepted

COUNTRY CORNER EVENTS

May 3-5

Paris Rodeo

8 p.m. nightly, Lamar County Fairgrounds in Paris. For more information, call Larry Bramhall at (903) 739-3527.

May 5

Roxton Hogwaller Festival

10 a.m.-3 p.m., Roxton School

May 5

Optimist Fundraising Auction

6:30 p.m., First Baptist Church Family Life Center, 207 S. Church St. in Paris

May 5

Uncle Jesse's 25th Annual Big Bass Classic Tournament

6 a.m., Sanders Cove at Pat Mayse Lake on Loop C

May 6

Paris Community Choir Concert

2:30 p.m., First United Methodist Church, 322 Lamar Ave. in Paris

May 12

Paris Art Fair

9 a.m.-4 p.m., Love Civic Center in Paris

May 25

PBR Bull Riding

7 p.m., Lamar County Fairgrounds in Paris

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. Email marci@lamarelectric.coop or call (903) 783-4911.

Kids Safe Saturday

Lamar Electric Co-op set up an electrical safety display at the 19th Annual Kids Safe Saturday on March 17 at Love Civic Center in Paris. This community event gave Lamar Electric Cooperative the opportunity to teach children about electrical safety.

This year, Lamar Electric gave away clip-on blinking lightbulb reflectors for kids' bikes or backpacks and lightbulb erasers with a pencil.



Clockwise from top left: Lamar Electric Cooperative employees Rick Crump and Scott Sansom demonstrate electrical safety using a tabletop model. Pencils with lightbulb erasers and blinking reflectors were popular items at the Kids Safe event. LEC employees Scott Sansom and Jose Recendiz take a break at Kids Safe Saturday. From left, Gail Crump (wife of co-op employee Rick Crump), LEC Member Services Director Marci Thompson, and Lori Sansom (wife of co-op employee Scott Sansom) smile for the camera.

More than 150 Vendors and Concessions!
FINE ARTS, HOME DECOR, APPAREL, JEWELRY, UNIQUE GIFTS, ACCESSORIES FOR HOME & GARDEN, FOOD & ENTERTAINMENT!

Paris Art Fair

Saturday, May 12th
9am-4pm @ Love Civic Center @ Paris, Texas

Visit Downtown Paris May 5th through May 12th for Paris Art Fair Squared, a Fine Arts Show around the Plaza.



The offices of Lamar EC will be closed Monday, May 28, in observance of Memorial Day.

2012 Youth Tour Participants Selected



JAMIE LANDERS



COBYN BRAKEBILL

Jamie Landers and Cobyn Brakebill are the winners of Lamar Electric Cooperative's Washington, D.C., Youth Tour Essay Contest.

The two are among about 100 students from other cooperatives in Texas who will make the trip to the nation's capital for a tour of its many historic sites from June 14-22.

Landers, daughter of Lamar EC members James and Karleen Landers of Cooper, attends Chisum High School. Brakebill, son of Chad and Jeri Brakebill of Blossom, attends Prairiland High School.

The Youth Tour will originate in Irving. From there, the group will head for Washington, D.C., where they will meet with about 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 congressman and tour the House and Senate chambers. One day, all the tour participants will come together to visit the White House and conclude the day with an all-states dinner and dance.

Also included on the Youth Tour will be sights such as the National Cathedral, Ford's Theatre and Petersen House, Smithsonian museums, Bureau of Engraving and Printing, Washington Monument, FDR Memorial, National Geographic Society, Kennedy Center, Arlington Cemetery, Kennedy's grave, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Jefferson Memorial, Supreme Court, Library of Congress, and the Korean, Lincoln and Vietnam memorials. 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 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.



SALES TAX HOLIDAY

Save on Appliances
Memorial Day Weekend

Texas' fifth annual Energy Star Sales Tax Holiday this Memorial Day weekend is a great time to purchase new energy-efficient appliances without paying state or local sales taxes on qualifying items.

By purchasing an Energy Star-rated appliance during the tax holiday, you will not only save the sales tax, you will also save on your monthly utility bills by reducing your water and energy use.

The Energy Star Sales Tax Holiday begins Saturday, May 26, and runs through Memorial Day, Monday, May 28. The tax savings apply to the following appliances and household equipment bearing the Energy Star label:

- Central or room air conditioners priced at \$6,000 or less
- Refrigerators priced at \$2,000 or less
- Ceiling fans
- Incandescent and fluorescent lightbulbs
- Clothes washers
- Dishwashers
- Dehumidifiers
- Programmable thermostats

Visit www.texaspowerfulsmart.org for details about the tax holiday.

