Lamar ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
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The Attic Is a Hot Topic

MESSAGE FROM MANAGER JERRY D. WILLIAMS

For most of us, the attic is a place to store clothes, luggage and Christmas decorations. For energy efficiency professionals, the attic is a hot topic of discussion. A lady in our office recently asked me if she should replace the whirlybirds on her roof when the shingles are replaced. After doing some checking, I discovered many shingle roofs were damaged by the spring wind and hailstorms that moved through our area. If you are having a roof replaced for any reason, you should know about attic ventilation and ridge vents.

Proper ventilation in your house's attic will help lower your electric bill.

Adding insulation to your attic is generally one of the best returns for your money and will help during summer and winter.

In an ideal world, the summertime attic temperature would be equal to the outside air temperature. Generally that is not possible, but it helps folks understand the goal. In many cases, a maximum attic temperature of 20 degrees warmer than outside air is achievable. Unfortunately, many attics can reach 160 degrees or more in the North Texas area. The primary culprit is the type of roofing material, color and ventilation. A dark shingle roof will absorb more heat into the house, compared to a lighter color roof that will reflect some of the sun's heat. A metal roof with a reflective paint will transmit less heat into the attic than a metal roof with dark regular paint. The color of your roof is likely dictated by what will compliment the overall look of the house siding and most likely not up for discussion. Ventilation options are much easier to deal with.

Besides roofing material, attic temperature is generally a product of attic ventilation and will affect your cooling bill. A very hot attic will penetrate through the ceiling insulation and add to your cooling load in the house. If you don't have about 12-14 inches or more of insulation on the floor of your attic, you should add insulation.

Adding insulation to your attic is generally one of the best returns for your money and will help during the summer and winter. We recommend R-34. Adding 12 inches of blown fiberglass or cellulose to your attic will often pay back the investment in less than two years. You would be surprised at how much insulation you can purchase for less than $1,000.

Regardless of how much insulation you have in the attic, you can reduce your cooling load and increase the life of your shingles by having good attic ventilation.

Ridge vents are the all-natural way of ventilation. Hot air will naturally rise. The most efficient way of ventilating your attic is to have ridge vents along each ridge line of your roof, and soffit vents along the underside of the eave. The soffit vents allow outside air to enter the attic at the lowest point of the roof—along the underside of the eave. As the air heats in the attic and naturally rises to the very peak of the roof (ridge line) a vacuum will be created which pulls in the cooler air through the soffit vents. If you have soffit vents on each side of the house, a natural flow of air will travel along under the roof line and extend the life of shingles and naturally reduce the attic temperature.

The ridge vent can easily be added to your existing roof by removing approximately two inches of the plywood or chip board decking along each side of the very top edge. A roofer with a Skilsaw can perform this event in no time. The ridge vent is typically made of a color matching plastic/nylon or polymer material that comes in a roll or in 10-foot sections. The vent fits directly over the 4-inch opening at the peak of your roof and is nailed down. The vent allows hot air to escape on each side through a mesh opening. The mesh prevents insects from entering, and the top edge extends far enough to prevent blowing rain from entering. The last step is to nail some shingles on top of the vent, allowing the vent to blend in with the roofline.

Thermostat-controlled power vents were once considered a good idea. That belief was shattered when many folks discovered there is no good way to know if the thermostat or electric fan motor is still working. There are just simply too many things that can go wrong with this type of ventilation system and no good way of knowing that it is not working correctly. Of course, another drawback is the cost of electricity used to power the vent fans. Don't get them, and if you already have them, replace them with a ridge vent.

At one time everyone thought

having two or three whirlybirds that turn when the wind blows or when hot air escapes from the attic was the best. The problem is that they only allow hot air to escape at these two or three locations, and they cannot be mounted at the very peak where all the hot air will naturally accumulate. In addition, they can produce a very irritating squeak. Take them out when installing a ridge vent.

Some folks will install louver vents in each gable of the roof. They do allow a small amount of hot air to escape at each gable, but do little for the balance of the attic. There are some nice decorative fake vents to install on the gable if you like the looks. Do not use gable vents with ridge vents. The gable vents will cause you to lose part of the vacuum created by hot air escaping through the ridge vent.

Don't avoid venting your attic for fear of allowing cold air into your home. Your home should be enveloped in at least some insulating material. Your living space is sealed and insulated at the attic floor. The attic is outside the envelope. Adding the ridge vents is easily done by any roofing company when they replace your shingles due to hail damage. If the roofer doesn't have to deal with other types of venting, the cost of adding ridge vents may offset or add very little to the cost.

COUNTRY CORNER EVENTS

June 1–2

5th Annual Highway 82/287 Yard Sale

June 2

Catfish Tournament on Cooper Lake
For information, call (903) 395-4314.

June 8, 15, 22 and 29

Municipal Band Concert at Bywaters Park
8:30 p.m. Bring your own lawn chair or blanket.

June 8

Blast from the Past Cruise Party
6 p.m., Love Civic Center
For information, call (903) 783-6338, visit www.rrvhonkers.com or email showinfo@rrvhonkers.com.

June 9

Red River Valley Honkers Antique Car Show, Arts & Crafts Fair and Swap Meet
8 a.m.-5 p.m., Love Civic Center in Paris

June 15–17 and 21–24

Paris Community Theatre presents "Leading Ladies"
7:30 p.m. June 16, 17, 21, 22 and 23; 2:30 p.m. June 17 and 24

June 16

"Dancing with the Stars"
6 p.m., Love Civic Center in Paris.
For information, call Courtney at (903) 272-6120.

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.

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For information during office hours and outages after hours, call
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1-800-782-9010 toll-free

Operating in Lamar, Red River, Delta and Fannin counties

Find us on the Web at
www.lamarelectric.coop

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

Northeast Texas 5th Annual Classic Car Show, Arts & Crafts Show and Swap Meet

8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Saturday, June 9

Free admission!
Love Civic Center
2025 S. Collegiate Drive
Paris, TX 75460

Chisum FFA—Lamar County Preview Show

Lamar Electric Cooperative sponsored the 2012 Grand Champion Steer Buckle this year, which was awarded to Mason Morrow, who is in Lamar County 4-H. His parents are Mike and Kristi Morrow of Paris.

Want to beat the heat? Run appliances like dishwashers and dryers late in the evening to keep the heat from affecting your comfort. Use ceiling fans to circulate air even when the air conditioner is on, and remember to unplug electric chargers, televisions and any appliances when you are not using them.

CONGRATULATIONS!

To Noe Recendiz, son of Lamar Electric Cooperative employee Jose Recendiz, on his graduation from Chisum High School!

Use Generators Safely

Our Linemen's Lives Are on the Line

June 1 marks the beginning of the hurricane season in the Gulf of Mexico. When one of those huge storms hits the Texas coast, the effects are widespread. Hundreds of thousands of people, stretching well inland, can lose power for an extended period. This can also happen on a smaller but just as destructive scale if severe summer thunderstorms were to roll through our area.

Some folks in an extended outage rely on portable generators while power is being restored. If you use a generator, do you know enough about it to operate it safely?

The safety of our members and our employees is a top priority at Lamar Electric Cooperative, especially during dangerous times. When storms hit our area, we rush to restore power as soon as conditions allow.

Our line crews take necessary precautions before they work on downed power lines, taking care to ensure that a line is de-energized before working on it. But even after these measures, an improperly connected generator can put our workers' lives at risk.

Lamar Electric is proud of our outstanding safety record, but sometimes, no matter how many steps we take to keep everyone safe, the very people we are there to help unknowingly put our lives—and their own—in danger.

Portable generators can prove fatal to linemen when used improperly.

Of course, no one would ever purposely cause the death of a lineman. Nevertheless, a generator connected to a home's wiring or plugged into a regular household outlet can cause backfeeding along power lines and electrocute anyone who comes in contact with them—even if the line seems dead.

Lamar Electric employees are not the only ones in danger when a portable generator is used improperly. Those who operate generators improperly can risk being electrocuted, starting fires, damaging property or being poisoned by carbon monoxide. Portable generators can be very helpful during outages. But it is imperative that you follow these safety guidelines when using one:

- Never connect a generator directly to your home's wiring unless your home has been wired for generator use, which includes having a transfer switch installed by a qualified electrical contractor. The transfer switch will disconnect your home from the power grid. Connecting the generator to a house's wiring without such a switch can cause current to flow out of your home's circuitry and along power lines. This situation can hurt or kill anyone coming in contact with the lines.
- Always plug appliances directly into generators or use only heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cords. Make sure extension cords are free of cuts or tears and the plug has three prongs. Overloaded cords can cause fires or equipment damage.
- Ensure that your generator is properly grounded.
- Never overload a generator. A portable generator should only be used when necessary to power essential equipment or appliances.
- Turn off all equipment powered by the generator before shutting it down.
- Only operate a generator on a dry surface under an open structure.
- Always have a fully charged fire extinguisher nearby.
- Never fuel a generator while it is operating.
- Read and adhere to the manufacturer's instructions for safe operation. Never cut corners when it comes to safety.

We encourage you to protect the well-being and safety of your family during outages and safeguard those who come to your aid during emergency situations. When we work together for safety and the good of our communities, we all benefit.

STAY COOL AND SAVE ENERGY

Keeping your house just a couple of degrees warmer in the summer isn't the only way to save energy—and lower your electric bill—during the summer. You can:

- Cook in the microwave, which uses less energy than the oven and does not add heat to the kitchen air.
- Use your outdoor barbecue grill more often.
- Dust your refrigerator coils. If they get too dirty, they can force your fridge to work harder to stay cold.
- Use a caulk gun to easily plug holes and cracks around windows, doors and electrical receptacles as well as other gaps and openings in walls.
- Invest in a few multiple-plug power strips with surge protection and plug your electronics—like the TV, DVD player and game console—into them. When you're finished using them for the day, unplug the power strip so you're not paying for the "phantom power" that some devices use when they are turned off but still plugged in.
- Likewise, unplug battery chargers, electric toothbrushes and razors, and laptop computers once they're charged up. If the chargers are plugged into the wall, they continue to use electricity, even if the other end is not connected to anything.
- If you're in the market for a new refrigerator, washing machine, computer or other appliance, choose a model with the Energy Star label. In most cases, they're at least 20 percent more energy efficient than other versions.
- Wash clothes and dishes after dark when it's a little bit cooler outdoors. The clothes dryer and dishwasher spew heat and humidity into your home and force your air conditioner to work harder.