

Free Dinner for Two



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER AND CEO JERRY D. WILLIAMS

You have been selected to receive a free delicious dinner for two. That's how my invitation started. In addition to a free meal, I would learn how to significantly cut my energy costs! Over the past several years I have received many of those cards and letters inviting me to have a free meal and learn how to cut my electric bill. Many of you have probably received similar invitations. Many members have called me and wanted to know if it is a scam or if they should go. Recently, I decided to respond to one of the more reputable sounding offers. I will admit, I enjoyed the Ribeye steak and my wife and I gathered information to share with you. Our host RC was entertaining and some of his jokes were funny.

The primary product demonstrated was two layers of Aluminum foil with a thin layer of polyethylene foam as a core between the perforated sheets of foil. This aluminum barrier is supposed to be installed on top of existing attic insulation for the purpose of keeping Radiant Heat out of your house during the hot summer months and the heat inside your home during the cold winter months. The foam core is primarily to add strength and keep the foil from tearing.

The most common Radiant Heat barrier in existence is simply called a shade tree. If tree limbs shade your roof from the sun, you don't need any additional barrier for radiant heat. Most of us don't have that much shade. On a sunny summer day, solar energy (heat from the Sun) is absorbed by your roof, heating the roof shingles, felt paper and decking by conduction. These surfaces then radiate heat downward toward the attic floor. A radiant barrier (Aluminum Foil) installed on the attic floor on top of existing insulation reduces that energy flow by reflecting it back toward the roof. This makes the top surface of your regular fiberglass insulation cooler than it would have been without a radiant barrier and thus reduces the amount of heat that moves through the insulation into the rooms below the ceiling. The radiant barrier does very little to reduce indoor heat loss in the winter. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, "Reflective insulation and radiant barrier products must have an air space adjacent to the reflective material to be effective."

NASA developed a similar thin aluminum film, which reflected radiant heat for their Apollo program. A lot of you will remember seeing pictures of the lunar landing module, covered with reflective metallic looking film. If you missed it, there is one on display in Washington, D.C., in the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum. The film was used to protect spacecraft, equipment and astronauts from thermal radiation and to

retain heat in the extreme temperature fluctuations of space. In the vacuum of space temperatures can range from 250 degrees F to 400 degrees below zero and heat transfer is only by radiation, so a radiant barrier is much more effective than it is on earth. Of course, RC was quick to point out how his product was based on the same NASA concept.

So, is it a good or bad thing? Did I buy? If an Aluminum Foil barrier in the attic will reflect radiant heat, why is it not found in all new houses? Probably the best answer is the cost compared to the savings. Some well known national laboratories have demonstrated that installing a Radiant Barrier in an average home in our area of North Texas with air conditioning ductwork in the attic could reduce your electric bill up to \$100 per year (about \$8 per month). According to the Reflective Insulation Manufacturers Association International (RIMA-I), one of the most common misrepresentations of radiant barrier distributors is exaggerating savings on your energy bill.

RIMA-I is a nonprofit industry trade association that exists to propagate the knowledge, use and benefits of reflective insulation, radiant barriers. The product we were shown was promised to save 20-30 percent on our electric bill, which is simply not true. In order to get the price, I had to agree to buy the product.

At a follow up appointment, RC measured our home and determined we needed 2,080 square feet of the Aluminum Barrier. The installed retail price was quoted as over \$6,000, but if I combined the barrier material with a device that will "condition" all the electric power at my breaker box, he could reduce the total \$12,000 retail cost for both products combined. The Aluminum Barrier would be installed, but I would need to hire an electrician to install the power conditioner, and pay cash to get the reduced price of \$5,100.

In order to be clear, you should understand I am of the opinion that neither of these products are bad. They are simply overpriced, their savings claims are overstated and the stated warranty is somewhat misleading. There are many companies that produce Aluminum Radiant Barriers. You can locate many of these products on the internet. The radiant barriers are typically in rolls 48 inches wide and 100-250 feet long. You can easily purchase enough rolls for a 2,000 square foot home for about \$250-\$400, depending on the manufacturer. You can check the RIMA-I website to see if the product claims of effectiveness have been verified. My product was not on their list.

RC told me his product was guaranteed for life against weather, water or aging damage. He even produced a certificate that stated the product is guaranteed for the life of the Structure. When I read the fine print, I discovered the barrier is only guaranteed against a manufacture's defect. If I happen to dis-

cover the manufacturer produced some defective material, they will send me the replacement square footage, with me doing the removal and reinstalling. Their company printed written sales document stated I “should see ##### (company’s) Written Warranty for a complete discussion of various responsibilities....” When I finally was able to contact their corporate headquarters, they could not produce the written warranty referenced in the fine print of their sales document. The company was hard to contact. Their main corporate number was answered with a recording they were not accepting calls from my area. I have never heard that one before. Paying \$5,100 for about \$400-\$500 worth of products and a Ribeye dinner is not what I would call a very good deal. After doing my research, I decided to cancel the \$5,100 order.

You may be wondering about the device that would “condition” all the electric power at my breaker box. It was the typical “power factor correction box” we discussed in the August 2011 issue of Texas Co-op Power. You can read the details by going to www.lamarelectric.coop and click on the picture of the Texas Co-op Power cover in the lower left-hand corner of the Home page; then click on the August 2011 issue. The article is titled: “Scam or Not?”

The presentation made by RC was almost exactly as I described in the magazine article. An amp meter was connected to an ordinary electric motor. The motor was turned on and the amps noted. He then turned on his device to show the motor is drawing fewer amps, and indicated the device can reduce your electric bill in a similar way. A 10-15 percent reduction was suggested. The truth is your electric meter records “real power” not “apparent power” and the device will not reduce your electric bill. The device contains a capacitor. Capacitors do help electric motors. That is why all modern appliances such as your A/C unit, refrigerator, deep freeze and most every other electric motor in your home comes from the factory with a capacitor built in.

At best, this conditioning device may serve as a lightning arrestor, but otherwise it will not serve any practical purpose. A good quality lightning arrestor can be purchased for less than \$100.

When your invitation arrives, you will have to decide if 2-3 hours of wasted time is a fair exchange for a free meal. There is almost always a bit of truth in all scams, so be wary of exaggerated claims, and overpriced products. Seems the sale of snake oil and magical elixir continues to this day!



Lamar Electric Cooperative will be closed Thursday and Friday, November 22-23, in observance of the holiday.

As always, crews will be on standby in the event of an emergency. We wish you and your family a richly blessed Thanksgiving.



Lamar Electric Cooperative

1485 N. Main St. • P.O. Box 580
Paris, TX 75461

*Operating in Lamar, Red River,
Delta and Fannin counties*

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Member Benefits

- Level billing
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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.



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*For information during office hours
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(903) 784-4303 local or
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INGRAM PUBLISHING | THINKSTOCK

Straight Shooting on Safety

Texans love to hunt. Nature beckons. There's suspense and excitement and escape from the daily routine.

Here are the "10 commandments" of shooting safety:

- ▶ Always point the muzzle of your gun in a safe direction.
- ▶ Treat every firearm or bow with the same respect you would show a loaded gun or nocked arrow.
- ▶ Be sure of your target.
- ▶ Unload firearms and unstring conventional bows when not in use.
- ▶ Handle firearms, arrows and ammunition with care.
- ▶ Know your safe zone-of-fire and stick to it.
- ▶ Control your emotions when using weapons.
- ▶ Wear hearing and eye protection.
- ▶ Don't consume alcohol or drugs before or while handling firearms or bows.
- ▶ Be responsible: Never use electrical equipment, such as insulators and transformers, as targets.

If you practice these rules, you'll help to ensure a safe future for yourself, for others and for the shooting sports.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Dishwasher or Hand-Washing?

Gathering family members to help you carefully wash and dry your dishes by hand is a great way to keep everyone together in the kitchen after a big holiday dinner. It's also a big waste of hot water.

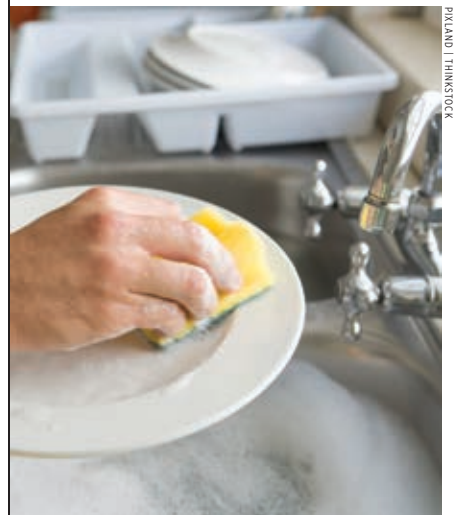
Cleaning dishes in the dishwasher typically uses 37 percent less water than washing them by hand. The reason: Most of us run the hot water constantly while washing plate after glass after casserole dish.

A tip: If you have a divided sink, plug the drains and fill one side with warm, soapy water and the other with clear rinse water, and then turn the faucet off. You'll use half as much water cleaning your dishes with this method as you would if you ran the dishwasher.

If you do load the dishwasher, wait until it's full to turn it on. If you have to rinse dried-on food from dishes beforehand, use cold water only.

Always opt for the "energy-saving" cycle when you run your dishwasher. And deactivate the "heated drying" cycle in favor of letting the dishes air-dry. You'll save up to 10 percent on dish-washing costs if you do.

Hand-washing dishes is an energy-efficient choice if you don't leave the water running.



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Country Corner Events



November 10

Chisum Trails Cowboy Church Annual Chuck Wagon Cook-Off. At the church in Powderly. Meal tickets \$7. For more information, call Cory Gray at (903) 272-4653.

November 10

Red River Valley Coin Show. Lamar County Fairgrounds. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. For more information, call Ricky McFadden at (903) 491-3426 or (903) 782-8722.

November 10

Veterans Day Celebration. Red River Valley Veterans Memorial next to the Love Civic Center in Paris. For more information, call Doug at (903) 784-4563.

November 17

Tinsel & Tidings Craft Show. Love Civic Center in Paris. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. For more information, call (903) 784-2501.

November 27

47th Annual All-Breed Bull Sale. Cattlemen's Livestock Commission. 1 p.m. For more information, call (903) 784-2501.

November 30 and December 1

Christmas in Fair Park Craft Show. Lamar County Fairgrounds. Friday, 4-8 p.m. and Saturday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. For more information, call (903) 785-7971.

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.

LAMAR ELECTRIC

Fall Blood Drive

Tuesday, November 6 • Noon-4 p.m.

GIVEN BY: Carter BloodCare

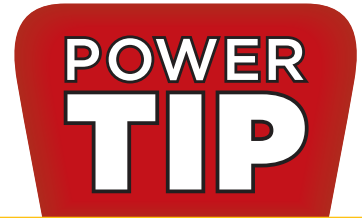
HOSTED BY: Lamar Electric Co-op (in our parking lot)

Thirty-seven percent of the population is eligible to donate blood at any given time, but less than 7 percent actually give. Be a part of something great. Give the gift of life!

You get points for free gifts or gift cards, plus there will be cookies and juice.

Make sure you eat a good breakfast that morning.

If you have any questions or want to schedule your appointment for that day, call Marci Thompson at (903) 783-4911.



Save ENERGY • Save MONEY

Lights Out ... Maybe Not

The cost-effectiveness of when to turn off lights depends on the type of bulb and the cost of electricity.

Incandescent lights should be turned off whenever they are not needed, because they are the least efficient type of lighting.

Since they are already very efficient, the cost-effectiveness of turning CFLs off to conserve energy is a bit more complicated. A general rule of thumb is this:

- If you will be out of a room for 15 minutes or less, leave it on.
- If you will be out of a room for more than 15 minutes, turn it off.



Daylight Saving Time Ends Sunday, November 4, at 2 a.m.

And as you set your clocks back an hour, Lamar EC encourages you to use the occasion as a reminder to change the batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Smoke alarms have significantly reduced fire fatalities—but they can only help if they work.