

# The Sky is Falling! The Sky is Falling!



## MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER AND CEO JERRY D. WILLIAMS

### **The Environmental Protection Agency seems to think they can save the world**

**from certain destruction caused by global warming. They have concluded the release of carbon dioxide (yes, the gas we exhale every time we breathe) in the United States will cause global warming and destroy the planet.**

A couple years ago, the EPA declared CO<sub>2</sub> a hazardous gas. They have targeted the burning of coal to generate electricity as a major contributor of CO<sub>2</sub>, and as such, should be banned. This same group of people thinks the coal was created with a big bang, so I guess it is not much of a leap for them to conclude they can regulate the weather by shutting down coal-fired power plants. They ignore the fact that if every coal-fired electric generating plant in the United States were to shut down tomorrow, the reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> released into the atmosphere of the Earth would only be a token gesture.

While I believe God wants all of us to be good stewards of all that was created for man's use, the EPA thinks they are God. This is not a new problem. We humans started this a long time ago in the Garden of Eden.

The EPA and the Obama administration have recently released a slug of anti-coal regulations. We are told these regulations are needed to protect us from global warming. It appears they will use any means to accomplish their goal, even if they ignore the truth and make up their own version of the facts. In my article in the Texas Co-op Power September 2012 issue, we revealed the junk science and truth-stretching used by the EPA for one particular set of regulations.

The media has joined with the EPA and other policymakers and are focused on the amount of carbon dioxide that coal-fired power plants emit. Climate scientist James Hansen declared in a 2009 opinion piece for The Guardian, "Coal is the single greatest threat to civilization and all life on our planet," adding, "The trains carrying coal to power plants are death trains."

National environmental groups like the Sierra Club echo the same sentiment. The recent regulation pointed out that greenhouse gases "endanger both the public health and the public welfare of current and future generations."

The recent rule would cap the amount of carbon dioxide that new fossil-fueled electricity generation units can emit at 1,000 pounds per megawatt-hour. That would rule out coal-fired plants, which emit around 1,800. The rule even comes close to shutting down natural gas-fired generators that emit about 800.

The EPA claims that it has the authority to regulate carbon dioxide under the Clean Air Act and therefore doesn't need congressional approval to impose the regulation. This is the

position they took after the Congress failed to approve the administration's effort to pass carbon cap-and-trade legislation.

Thankfully, most of the new EPA regulations have not taken effect, primarily due to lawsuits. The existing power plants in Texas were able to handle this year's summertime peak demand for electricity without any blackouts. Our Texas Public Service Commission is still struggling with how to maintain the existing electric energy market and convince investors to build more power plants for future growth, while the EPA tries to shut down all coal-fired power plants.

Coal has been used as fuel for electricity production ever since September 1882, when Thomas Edison used it to power the first central power generating facility, called the Pearl Street Station. After the 1893 World's Fair electric exhibits, the construction of coal-fired electric generating plants flourished. It can be said that coal powered the Industrial Revolution. Unlike today, there were no scrubbers to clean the particles that belched from the smoke stacks, making it almost impossible to breathe in some cities.

In many parts of the World, not much has changed. The government of China shut down hundreds of factories, steel mills, and several coal-fired power plants in the Beijing area in July 2008. The two-month shutdowns were started in July to allow the air quality to improve and the pollution to blow out of the area for the August 8 opening day of the Summer Olympics. The smokestacks returned to normal as soon as the Olympic cameras left China.

Over the past decade coal consumption in the United States fell by 9 percent, but global coal consumption soared. Between 2002 and 2011 global coal consumption increased by 52 percent. Coal is helping many countries meet their growing electricity needs because it is cheap. Coal deposits are abundant, it is easily mined and it is not controlled by any OPEC sheik. According to the Energy Information Administration, coal was consistently the cheapest source of fossil fuel for electricity generators from 1999 through 2010, usually costing about half as much per Btu as the next cheapest fuel, natural gas.

Many entrepreneurs have tried and failed to beat the price of coal. In 2007, Google announced its plans to develop renewable energy sources that would be even cheaper than coal. Google's co-founder Larry Page said, "We are optimistic this can be done in years, not decades." In 2011, Google quietly abandoned its quest, saying "other institutions are better positioned than Google to take this research to the next level."

Electricity use in Vietnam increased by 227 percent between 2001 and 2010, which is faster than any other country. This tremendous increase in electricity corresponds to Viet-

nam's demand for coal increasing 175 percent, which is also more than any other country. Vietnam is also the fastest growing in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. What can the Obama administration say to Vietnam about curbing their apparent threat to the world climate? In a country with an average annual income of \$1,200, I doubt they want to hear about not using low-cost coal. The same goes for other developing countries.

China has about 650,000 megawatts of coal-fired electricity generation capacity, more than twice as much as the 317,000 megawatts of coal generation in the United States. China is in the process of building another 273,000 megawatts of coal generation. Of course the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in China are increasing proportionately.

The use of coal to generate electricity is surging in Japan and Germany after the Fukushima nuclear facility accident last year. After the problems at Fukushima, Japan shut down all their nuclear reactors and Germany is in the process of doing the same. Both countries are turning to coal. Within the past few months, Germany placed a massive new 2,200 megawatt coal-fired electric generating plant on line, near Cologne.

Regardless of what happens in the United States, coal will produce a major share of the world's electric energy for decades to come. The United States EIA projects that coal will provide 27 percent of all global energy by 2035. At this time nuclear energy is the best option for cutting CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, but it is hampered by astronomical construction costs, and many countries such as Africa, Asia and India simply don't have the infrastructure or trained personnel needed to support the nuclear industry.

Since the early days of Edison, the United States has relied on abundant supplies of coal to sustain its economy and to produce electricity. There is really no natural reason for that dependence on coal to end. The coal deposits in the United States are the equivalent of 900 billion barrels of oil, which is almost as much as the 1 trillion barrels of proven oil reserves held by OPEC. At the current rate of mining, our coal reserves will last another 200 years.

The only obstacle is the EPA, which by trying to shut down our coal-fired generation will only encourage our coal producers to ship more of their product to overseas markets, and drive up the price of electricity in the United States. Increasing the price of electricity by as much as 40 percent will not only hurt Americans, but will result in more jobs being moved overseas and increase our unemployment.

If you consider the world's appetite for electricity and all the wealth- and health-enhancing opportunities that come with cheap, abundant, reliable supplies of electricity, it's obvious that coal will continue powering electric generating plants around the planet for many decades to come. The EPA should consider the long-term effects their war on coal will have on the United States and understand they really cannot affect global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.



#### **Windows and doors account for about 30 percent of a home's heat loss, but using blinds and drapes can help reduce this.**

- ▶ Place a "draft dodger"—a sand-filled tube, for example—along the bottom of draperies.
- ▶ Seal drapery edges to the sides of windows using magnetic tape or Velcro.
- ▶ Use a closed cornice board at the top of window coverings. The board will keep heat from entering the top of draperies and pushing cold air into the room.
- ▶ Open your blinds and drapes on sunny winter days to invite the sun's warm rays indoors. Close them at dark when the temperature drops.



## **Lamar Electric Cooperative**

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

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

#### **GENERAL MANAGER AND CEO**

Jerry D. Williams

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#### **Member Benefits**

- Level billing
- Automated meter reading
- Free bank draft service
- E-Bill
- Visa and MasterCard accepted

#### **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.



## **CONTACT US**

*For information during office hours  
and outages after hours*

#### **CALL US**

**(903) 784-4303** local or  
**1-800-782-9010** toll-free

#### **FIND US ON THE WEB**

**lamarelectric.coop**

# Happy Holidays

From your Lamar Electric Cooperative employees

## OUTSIDE EMPLOYEES



From left, back row: Dustin Dale, Danny Michael, George Scroggins, Cory May and Ryan Dean; front row: Ronnie Bridges, Michael Sorensen, Scott Sansom, Wade Niblett, Casey Martin, Jose Recendiz, James Smith, Rayford Dodd, Will Armstrong, Rick Crump, Drew Conder, Barry Murchison, Jay Henry and Jerry Williams. Not pictured: Larry Bills and Charlie Brazeal.

## FRONT OFFICE



From left, back row: Jerry Williams, Marci Thompson, Laura Williams, DeLana McFadden, Rachael Whipkey and Mike Davidson; front row: Grettia Ashford, Leslie Collard, Betty Wood, Marti Chumbley, Tessi McFadden and Dena Beason.

## Country Corner Events

### December 1

**Christmas in Fair Park.** Paris / Lamar County Fairgrounds. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. For more information, call (903) 785-7971.

**Historic Trolley Rides on “Trolley de Paris.”** Corner of South Main and Clarksville streets. Rides begin at 1 p.m. or 3 p.m. Tickets are \$5. For information, call (903) 784-2501.

**Third Annual Lighted Christmas Parade.** Parade will start at the Lamar County Courthouse at 6 p.m.

**Santa and Reindeer on the Plaza.** Downtown Paris. For more information, call (903) 784-2501.

**Clarksville Christmas Parade and Lighting of the Square.** 5 p.m.

**Avery Christmas Parade**

**Detroit Christmas Parade**

### December 1, 7-8

**“A Christmas Carol.”** Paris Community Theatre, downtown Paris. 7:30 p.m. each night.

### December 8

**Santa Paws Dash.** 10 a.m. For more information, call (903) 784-9293.

**Historic Church Trolley Tour on the “Trolley de Paris.”** Tour begins at 1:30 p.m. For more information, call (903) 784-2501.

### December 14

**Holiday in Paris Annual Christmas Banquet.** St. Paul Baptist Church, 444 NE Second St. 7:30 p.m. For more information, call (903) 783-1640.

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](mailto:marci@lamarelectric.coop) or call (903) 783-4911.



Lamar Electric Cooperative will be closed Monday and Tuesday, December 24-25, in observance of Christmas.

As always, crews will be on standby in the event of an emergency.

We wish you and your family a richly blessed holiday season.



## Holiday Energy Savings

The holiday season is generally a big time for energy use, but that doesn't mean it has to be that way. Here are ways to save energy (and money) during the holidays.

**USE FIBER OPTIC DECORATIONS.** Fiber optic trees and decorations are the ultimate in energy efficiency. In most cases, they use a single lightbulb located in the base of the unit to light the entire decoration—that's both energy smart and budget smart!

**LIMIT THE TIME THE LIGHTS ARE ON.** Wait until dark to turn on your Christmas lights; then, turn them off before you go to bed. Six hours or less of daily use is a good goal. Do you have trouble remembering to turn your lights off? Then set a timer and forget about it.

**TURN OFF ROOM LIGHTS WHEN TREE IS LIT.** The lights on your Christmas tree should provide more than enough lighting to navigate around a room.

**TURN THE THERMOSTAT DOWN WHEN YOU HAVE GUESTS.** Extra bodies in the house mean extra warmth at no cost to you.

**INVEST IN RECHARGEABLE BATTERIES AND A CHARGER.** If you buy or receive gifts that require batteries, consider purchasing rechargeable batteries and a charger. Recent advancements have made rechargeable batteries better than ever.

**BUY ENERGY STAR ELECTRONICS.** Energy Star-certified electronics—TVs, DVD and Blu-Ray players, refrigerators, computers, etc.—use up to 60 percent less electricity than their noncertified counterparts.

**TAKE A WALK TO SEE THE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS.** Leave the car in the driveway this year when you go out to look at Christmas lights. A walking tour of your neighborhood could be just as fun, and you won't use any gas.

**BAKE SEVERAL DISHES AT A TIME.** The holiday season is a big time for baking. Make the most of your oven and the energy that goes into heating it by cooking several dishes at once. Remember: It takes about the same amount of energy to operate a full oven as it does a nearly empty one.

**USE THE SMALLEST APPLIANCE TO GET THE JOB DONE.** Use your microwave and toaster oven for small holiday cooking tasks, and save the oven for the big ones.

**KEEP LIDS ON POTS.** Foods cook faster (meaning less energy use) when the lid is on.

**UNPLUG PHANTOM ENERGY USERS BEFORE YOU GO ON VACATION.** TVs, DVD players, computers, printers and many other electronics use energy even when they aren't turned on. Unplug them before you go on vacation to enjoy the energy savings.

## Life before electricity?

Shoot an interview with someone who remembers those days. You could win

\$1500

### STUDENTS

Make your own YouTube video and you could win a cash prize!

### TEACHERS

Win \$1000 for your school by sponsoring the grand prizewinner.

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OPEN TO STUDENTS IN GRADES 6-12!