

Co-ops Helped Make America Grow



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER AND CEO JERRY D. WILLIAMS

As the United States celebrates its 237th birthday on July 4, Lamar County Electric Cooperative Association is observing its 75th anniversary. That's just a fraction of the age of our nation, but over time, I think this and the nation's more than 900 fellow electric co-ops have greatly enhanced the quality of life of Americans of all stripes.

Rural Electric Co-ops powered the American dream for farmers and rural folk who received the tool of electricity which helped them achieve the kind of prosperity their city countrymen had enjoyed for years. The origins of Lamar Electric and the hundreds of others like it across the nation have their roots in American democracy.

A quick review of the nation in the early part of the 20th century will help us understand exactly how vital the Rural Co-ops were. Tuesday October 29, 1929 became known as Black Tuesday, because the Stock Market crashed and became the official start of the Great Depression. As stock prices fell, panic struck as masses of people tried to sell their stock. Much of the stock had been purchased in the Roaring 20's as people attempted to improve their financial standing by investing in stock. Instead of getting rich, they found a path to bankruptcy. Many banks were forced to close because they had used their customers' savings to invest in the stock market. Many people lost their job as businesses cut back.

This depression turned out to be different than any prior depression to hit the United States. In previous depressions, farmers fared pretty well because they could at least feed themselves. In 1930, little rain fell and by 1931 a drought started across the Great Plains that lasted for 8 years. In addition to no rain, the temperatures were hotter than

usual. Pastures soon dried up and cattle either starved or were sold. High winds soon caused the top soil to disappear and crops died.

By 1931 over 90% of the folks living in Cities had access to electricity, but over 90% of the folks living in the rural areas had no electricity. In 1932, Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) was elected as President (and went on to be elected three more times). FDR realized the rural parts of America needed electricity if they were to ever pull out of the Great Depression. He went to the Investor Owned Power Companies and tried to convince them to extend lines into the rural areas.

The for profit power companies refused because they felt they could not recover their investment and rural people could not afford electric appliances anyway. The message was sent that rural folks should move to town if they wanted electricity. The federal government's offer of low interest loans and long repayment schedules was turned down by the big power companies.

Rural farmers petitioned the federal government for help providing electricity to their own communities. The rural farmers banded together and formed their own Cooperatives and asked the government for the low interest loans. FDR realized the farmers had no expertise with electricity and in 1935 the Rural Electrification Administration was formed within the Department of Agriculture.

The REA helped the rural farmers as they formed non-profit Rural Electric Cooperatives across Texas and the Nation. The REA produced many brochures about how to form and operate a Cooperative, similar to those produced by the Agriculture Extension Service. In many cases the founders of the Cooperatives helped dig the holes for poles leading to their own farms.

The REA held demonstrations of

electric appliances in large circus type tents. No one had ever run electric lines out through the country side and REA engineers had to develop specifications on the best way of constructing the structures to hold electric lines. To this very day, updated versions of those REA brochures are used by Rural Electric Cooperatives across the nation. This is why a Lamar Electric power line looks identical to other rural power lines across the nation. (This also helps when we send crews to help other co-ops)

The loans that made it possible to start these democratically governed non-profit cooperatives would eventually be paid back, and the program was so successful that within a generation, virtually all rural areas in the country had access to reliable electricity.

On June 15, 1938 Mark Kennedy from Sumner, M.E. Boaz from Route 2, Brookston, John R. Emmons from Route 5, Honey Grove, Harrison Wooldridge from Atlas and T. L. Hollingsworth from Route 1, Petty, signed the original articles of incorporation for Lamar County Electric Cooperative Association in front of local attorney and notary J. M. Braswell in Lamar County Texas. The Board selected Mr. Kennedy as Chairman and Mr. Boaz as Secretary. At a Board Meeting held at Brookston on July 11, 1938 Ural L. Darling of Bonham was selected as Project Superintendent to "secure membership applications and easements from the residents of Lamar County and do any and all other things as from time to time the Board may direct." He received \$100 per month for his services and 5 cents per mile for the use of his car, with "such mileage not to exceed \$50 per month."

On July 30, 1938 Bedford Booth, Lloyd Steele, Mrs. Dunagan, Jack Wooldridge and T. L. Hollingsworth were appointed to secure applications and easements, receiving \$5 per day and



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

1485 N. Main St. • P.O. Box 580
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*Operating in Lamar, Red River,
Delta and Fannin counties*

**GENERAL MANAGER
AND CEO**

Jerry D. Williams

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Allen Branch, President, *Sumner*

Charles Dooley, Vice President,
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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

CALL US

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

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lamarelectric.coop

5 cents per mile. By August 13, about 800 applications had been received which was a sufficient number to begin the process of constructing about 250 miles of electric line in Lamar, Delta and Red River Counties. By October there were enough applications for a \$316,000 loan application to REA at 2.73% interest and a 29 year repayment schedule.

On August 27, 1938 the Board borrowed \$400 from Liberty National Bank to pay expenses. Miss Wilkerson, the County Home Demonstration agent, came before the Board and suggested the following articles be displayed in a booth at the County Fair and agreed to aid in putting it up: Iron, Washing Machine, Water Pump, Refrigerator, Lights, Radio, Cook Stove, Churn and Electric Roaster.

On September 17, 1938 the Board met for the first time at the Co-op office located at 28 North Main St. in Paris. By the November Board meeting they were searching for a different office location. Apparently the office space was shared with others and made having private meetings with prospective members difficult. Finally, the Manager installed some walls and the Cooperative continued to rent 28 North Main Street from Mr. Frank J. Wood until a building owned by W. O. Richey, located at 50 Lamar Avenue in Paris, became available in June, 1942. The headquarters continued at Lamar Avenue until August 1948 when the present location at 1485 North Main Street was purchased from the City of Paris. The headquarters office was moved to a newly constructed building where we are located on North Main Street in November, 1949.

In November 1938 Marjorie McDowell was appointed stenographer and bookkeeper at a salary of \$60 per month. In August, 1939 two Maintenance Men were hired. They were H.W. Lowery and C.H. Jenkins. They were to take care of the first two sections of line constructed.

On August 22, 1942 the Annual Meeting of Members was held at the District Courtroom in Paris. During his address to the members, Board President Paul T. Hill stated "that he was grateful for the accomplishments of the Cooperative thus far and further that if and when this

World War is over the Cooperative would be in a position to complete the job it had begun." Manager V.A. Rogers pointed out he had been optimistic about the future of the Cooperative as members had increased to 1600 but he "could not be as optimistic in the future with reference to new connections ...due to War Production Board restrictions, but that was as it should be, but the Cooperative had a big job to do in the War Program." He continued "the rural people now had the tool that was vital to the War effort." He pointed out that the Cooperative was serving more than 100 dairies that were in turn supplying dairy products to our armed forces. He cautioned members who had appliances to "take the best of care of them in order that they might last for the duration and suggested that members take advantage of any opportunity to purchase motors and put them to work to help in the labor shortage on the farms."

Electricity changed life not only in rural areas but also in the country as a whole. The availability of electricity opened up a whole new market, because people in rural areas could finally take advantage of its labor-saving power.

The demand for electric appliances created wealth with increased manufacturing and sales. Many homes started with naked light bulbs hanging in the center of each room with a pull string. The electric iron was one of the most sought after appliances. Cooperatives themselves provided good jobs in the office and in the field. Lamar Electric is still a major employer in our region.

Electric co-ops haven't forgotten that our roots are planted in democracy. Our very structure depends on governing boards of members elected to make decisions for everyone's benefit. And we work with our statewide and national organizations to represent the interests of rural Americans in the Texas Legislature and the U.S. capital.

And this Independence Day, as we celebrate the founders of this great nation, we also would like to salute those who founded this and other rural electric cooperatives. They helped transform the U.S. into the prosperous power that it is today.

Country Corner Events

July 3

Fourth of July Fireworks, 7:30 p.m.
Noyes Stadium at PJC. For more information, call (903) 784-2501.

July 4

Fourth of July Parade, 10 a.m. Parade starts at the Lamar County Courthouse. For more information, call (903) 784-2501.

July 5

Cruisin' on the Plaza. 5-9 p.m., downtown Paris. For more information, call Bobby Stagle at (903) 785-6526.

July 5

Movies in the Park, "Captain America," 8:30-10:30 p.m., Bywaters Park. Bring lawn chairs, blankets and friends! Concessions will be available.

July 11

Movies in the Park, "It Happened One Night," 8:30-10:30 p.m., Bywaters Park. Bring lawn chairs, blankets and friends! Concessions will be available.

July 12

Paris Municipal Band Concert, 8:30-10 p.m., Bywaters Park. Bring lawn chairs or blankets for seating. Concert will feature an assortment of music. For more information, call (903) 784-2501



July 18

Movies in the Park, "Twilight," 8:30-10:30 p.m., Bywaters Park. Bring lawn chairs, blankets and friends! Concessions will be available.

July 25

Movies in the Park, "Ratatouille," 8:30-10:30 p.m., Bywaters Park. Bring lawn chairs, blankets, and friends! Concessions will be available.

If you have any events that you would like listed for Delta, Lamar or Red River counties, please contact Dena Beason. We need the information two months in advance for the magazine. Email dena@lamarelectric.coop or call (903) 783-4949.

OFFICIAL NOTICE

2012 Capital Credit Allocations

Lamar Electric Cooperative recently allocated 2012 capital credits to each member's account.

As a nonprofit organization, after the end of each fiscal year, the cooperative must determine what margins were made during the year and allocate these margins to the members' equity accounts. The margin is the revenue received in excess of all operating costs.

These capital credits will be returned to members as approved by the board in the future and when doing so will not weaken the financial condition of the cooperative. At this time, all margins from 1938 through 1969 have been returned to the members. Eventually all capital credits will be paid to each member. In the meantime, the funds are used to construct new lines or make improvements to the electrical system even though the amount is credited to each member's capital credit account. The capital credits cannot be used to pay your electric bill.

These capital credits remain even if the member is no longer receiving service from Lamar Electric. It is very important that departing members keep the cooperative informed of their current mailing addresses in the future so they may receive capital credit refunds when they are paid.

Capital credits for each member in 2012 were calculated by multiplying each member's bill by 0.0501088341. For example:

If your total billing for 2012 from the cooperative (consisting of energy billing and power cost adjustment) was \$2,000, multiply that amount by 0.0501088341. The product of this arithmetic is \$100.21.

In calculating your total bill, include any security light charge, but do not include any tax, service or miscellaneous charges.

If you have any question concerning these calculations, please contact the cooperative office.

(This article is intended to serve as an official notice of the capital credit allocation for 2012.)



Happy Independence Day!

Lamar Electric Cooperative will be closed Thursday, July 4, in observance of the holiday. As always, crews will be on standby in the event of an emergency.

GIVE THE GIFT OF LIFE BLOOD DRIVE



July 2

Noon to 4 p.m.

Lamar EC

1485 N. Main St.
Paris, Texas



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Historical Significance of Washington, D.C.



This essay by Dylan Ruthart made him the winner of Lamar Electric's 2013 Government-in-Action essay contest.

Washington, D.C., is the only city in the United States with the distinction of being established by the Constitution to serve as the seat of our nation's capital while at the same time not belonging to any one state. This city houses so much of our nation's history and artifacts that help us as citizens understand who we are and where we have come from. Our roots as a nation are firmly centered in this 68 square miles of land.

Washington, D.C., is not unlike most major cities in the U.S. in many ways. It has internal political struggles, sectional conflicts such as the various quadrants aggressively looking out for their own best interests, problems with race relations, needs for collaboration and compromise to make the city work, and the usual struggles for power.

D.C. may also be compared to a church. People go to church to connect with and rekindle their religious faith. Citizens can go to Washington to reconnect with the roots of the founding American principles. In that way, D.C. is like the church for American ideals.

I believe during tough and uncertain political times it is of great benefit to revisit Washington, D.C., both literally and figuratively to increase our understanding of our nation's history, purpose for being and the founding documents of our forefathers. This revisit can help us understand our role and responsibilities as citizens and importance of becoming involved in the governmental process so our nation remains strong and true to the ideals laid as the foundation for our nation by our forefathers.

Washington, D.C., provides each of us an opportunity to visit its national monuments, read its historical documents, increase our knowledge and renew our patriotism. This city holds everything necessary to have an invigorating homecoming and reunion that will remind its visitors of our past and our struggles. The founding principles and purpose for the United States are all still there, waiting to be discovered.

Eat Locally, Save Energy

It's a no-brainer that buying fresh fruit, produce, milk and meat from local farmers helps the community's economy. It's also an energy saver.

When you patronize local farmers markets and produce stands, you forego the food sold in grocery stores, which ship in much of their fare from out of town. The more traveling your bananas, bread and beef have to do before you buy them, the more greenhouse emissions they contribute to the environment.

In fact, some estimate that between 5 and 20 percent of the energy spent in the production of food is for transporting it—sometimes as much as 1,500 miles from where it was grown—to your local grocer.

So do yourself a favor by enjoying fresh, flavorful, locally grown food. Do your neighbors a good turn by buying from the food producers in your own community, or at least those who grow within a 100-mile radius. And do your small part for the environment by choosing your chow from the many locals who can deliver it to you with a far smaller carbon footprint than stores that import it from far away.

Buying local produce is healthier for you and the environment.



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