

Keep Your Cool



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER AND CEO JERRY D. WILLIAMS

When the Texas heat bears down, there's one appliance that rides to the rescue: your air conditioner. The widespread residential use of air conditioning is a relatively modern development. When I was young, we beat the heat with an old discarded "swamp cooler." The water pump and water trickle filters were missing, but that didn't stop us from lifting a window and enjoy the stiff breeze from the squirrel cage fan. On some hot days I would wonder just how it would feel if we had all the parts. Coercing my big brother into slowly pouring a pitcher of water into the fan was a treat, but our Mom did not appreciate the water blowing onto the living room linoleum.

I must be getting soft. It is a major catastrophe now, when the AC unit stops at our house. Seems like most folks today can't even imagine life without air conditioning.

Even my sister has replaced the attic fan at the old home place with an electric heat pump. (She kept the wood heater)

Cooling in the summer—and heating in the winter—accounts for a major portion of the energy used in the United States. Close to 50 percent of all energy use is devoted to adjusting temperature levels, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

During August in Texas, I imagine that this percentage is considerably higher. Typically the highest Electric Peak in Texas is in August. Before you get that August electric bill, perhaps you would be interested in some ways you can reduce the air conditioning effect on your electric bill.

Change or clean the air filter regularly. This is probably the most important step you can take to increase

efficiency and reduce the wear and tear on your central AC system.

Everyone says "change the filter" but do you know why? The air in our houses has naturally occurring dust. Yes, even you clean freaks have dust! If you don't believe me; just look at the ceiling fan blades. (Assuming you use your ceiling fan) Your AC unit has to work harder to force air through a clogged filter. A filthy filter also allows dust and dirt to build up in your system. The fan blades that blow the cool will get caked with dirt. Changing your air filter regularly can reduce the need for costly maintenance, prevent damage to your system and lower your energy bill. If you forget to change the filter, or operate without a filter for any length of time, you will need to have a service man clean the fan inside your AC unit.

Those who rely on window AC units should wash or clean their reusable filters as well. In addition, ensure that those units are properly weatherstripped to prevent air leakage around the unit. If you don't have weather-stripping for the window unit; duct tape will work.

The energy conservation experts will tell you to use a programmable thermostat. A programmable thermostat will turn your temperature up automatically during times of the day you specify, such as when nobody's home. If it is properly set, they can take a significant chunk out of your cooling bill. I don't recommend a programmable thermostat because most of them do not remain programmed as intended.

My experience is, someone will be home when the program thinks they should be gone and in an effort to get some cool air they fiddle till the unit comes on, or the thermostat loses its brain due to nearby lightening or a momentary power outage. The person that did the initial programming is most likely not around or has forgotten how

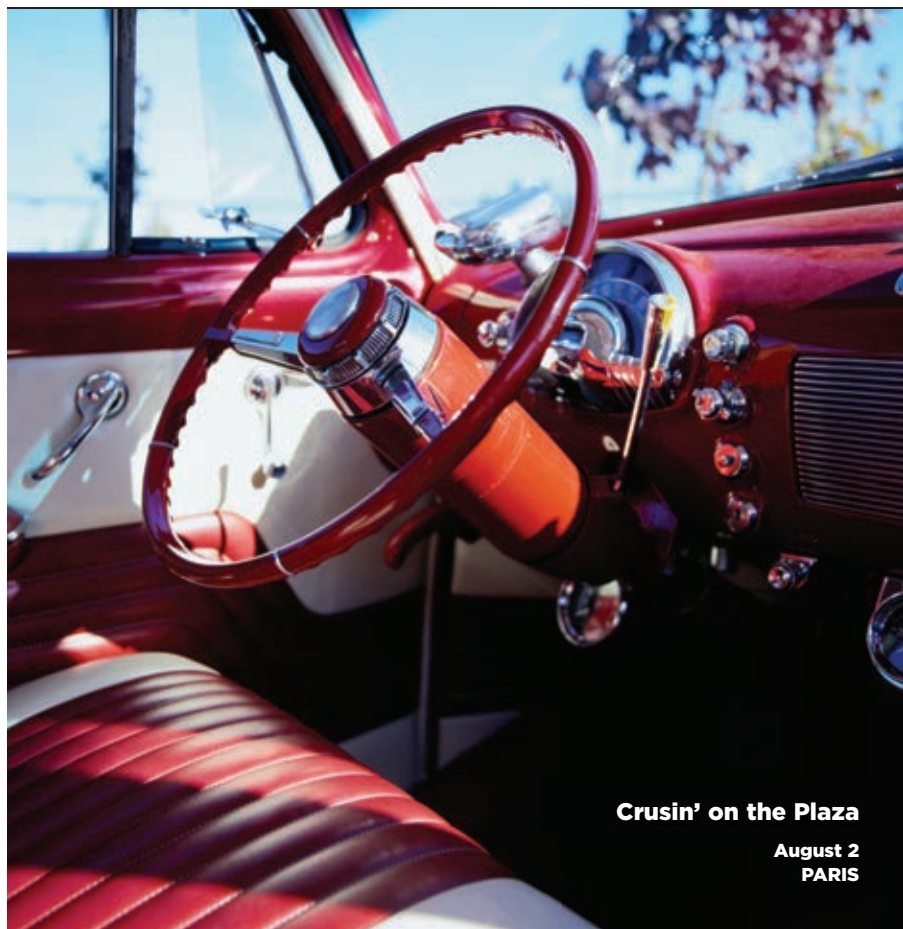
to reprogram the thermostat. Some folks simply get a programmable thermostat and fail to program it or forget to change the time when daylight savings time begins or ends.

The new ones are a lot smarter which just sets up a game of man vs. machine. In the end the human will win by switching to manual use. It is just a headache I don't want. Those of you that like tinkering should get a programmable thermostat that you can change, using your smartphone or iPad.

The simple method is to turn your thermostat to the "off" position when you leave the house for 4 hours or more. Depending on how well your house is insulated, it may be a little or a lot warmer when you come home and turn the AC back on but it will cool down relatively quick. If your thermostat is not digital, this will stop the fine tuning to once again arrive at an acceptable temperature setting.

If it is hot in your house; your house will not get any cooler any faster by selecting a 60 degree setting compared to a 72 degree setting. You should find the setting that you can afford and leave the thermostat alone, except to turn from "cool" to "off." Some folks insist on 68-70 degrees in the summer. This is fine if you can afford it, but you will pay about 30-40% more when the electric bill arrives. A setting of 74, with ceiling fan running, is sensible for us fat folks. The experts will say 76-78 degrees is best in the summer, but they are not in your house.

An easy way to feel comfortable while setting the temperature up a couple of degrees is to use a fan. The air moving against your skin creates evaporation, which makes you feel cooler. Be sure to turn fans off when nobody is present. They are only effective when blowing directly on someone. Leaving the ceiling fan running in every room



Crusin' on the Plaza

**August 2
PARIS**



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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.

Country Corner Events

August 2

Crusin' on the Plaza, 5-9 p.m., downtown Paris on the Plaza. Go back in time with vintage and antique automobiles and visit their proud owners.

August 11

Paris Community Theatre presents "Godspell." 7:30-10 p.m. Paris Community Theatre (downtown Paris)

August 30– September 1

Northeast Texas Travelers 27th Annual Rod Run, 6-10 p.m. Friday, downtown Paris on the Plaza; Saturday and Sunday, Red River Valley Fairgrounds. Events for adults and children. For more information, call Bill Clarke at (903) 785-3181, Herb Schroeder at (903) 784-2037 or James McCarty at (903) 737-0726.

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.

will stir the air, but who cares if you are not in the room.

Draw blinds or shades during the day. Keeping the sun's heat out of a room will help it stay cooler. Open shades after sunset to allow heat to escape. If you have thin curtains or shades, the addi-

tion of a sheet tacked up behind the curtain will help.

With a little effort, beating the August heat doesn't have to be painful. For more energy-saving tips, visit the Lamar Electric Cooperative website at LamarElectric.Coop.

CONTACT US

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

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Youth Tour Winners Return from Washington, D.C.

Sierra Kruse and Dylan Ruthart recently returned from their trip to Washington, D.C., where they participated in the 2013 Government-in-Action Youth Tour. Each June, Lamar Electric Cooperative sends two students to our nation's capital, where they see the sights and visit with elected representatives.



1. Sierra Kruse and Dylan Ruthart take time for a quick photo in front of the Capitol. 2. Youth Tour participants visited the White House 3. Sierra Kruse dances with friends she met in D.C. 4. Youth Tour winners enjoyed visiting with U.S. Rep. Ralph Hall. 5. Dylan Ruthart, far right, enjoys Old Towne Alexandria.

This essay, *The Significance of Washington D.C.*, won Sierra Kruse a trip on the 2013 Government-in-Action Youth Tour.

Washington D.C. is vital to our country. Even though this country was not founded there, it has historical significance. It was decided that Washington, D.C., would be our capital in 1791 after people complained about the capital being located in a state. Citizens of the new country did not want one state to have more power than another. In answer to this logical complaint, our founding fathers created Washington, D.C.

Washington, D.C. is unique among American cities because it was established by the Constitution of the United States to serve as the nation's capital. It was named after President George Washington and Christopher Columbus. The federal district was created as a home for members of the federal government.

George Washington chose the site and three commissioners to help prepare the city for the coming of the new government. Pierre Charles L'Enfant designed the city as a bold new capital with sweeping boulevards and ceremonial spaces reminiscent

of Paris of his native France. Benjamin Banneker, an African-American that was a self-taught mathematical genius, provided the astronomical calculations for surveying and laying out the city. However, the full development of Washington as a monumental city did not come until a hundred years later when the McMillan Commission updated its plan to establish the National Mall and monuments that most people know.

Washington has also been the home of many African-Americans that have created vibrant communities and championed civil rights despite racial segregation and prejudice. Even before the Civil War there were a number of free blacks who worked as skilled craftsmen, hack drivers, businessmen and laborers. It was also the site of slave auctions before it was outlawed in the city in 1850.

There are many reasons Washington D.C. is significant to this country; these are just a few. It is the location of the government and full of history. From our first president, George Washington, to our current president, Barack Obama, there have been many great leaders. Without them, our country could not survive.



What We Are Doing at Lamar Electric

Clearing Rights-of-Way

Besides causing outages, trees that grow too tall or touch power lines can be dangerous. They may become conductors of electricity, which can be dangerous for your family and pets. When trees touch the wire, the electric current is looking for a pathway to the ground. With nobody around, that pathway becomes the tree trunk, unless you or your child may be touching the tree—in which case, you become part of the pathway to the ground.

High winds can blow limbs into the wires that might normally be several feet from the wires. If you have a tree in your front yard, it may be a place for children to play in the shade, but can be hazardous if the winds blow limbs into the wire. This is why we try to remove all limbs and trees in the right-of-way even when that right-of-way crosses your front yard. We love trees as much as you do, but we love our children more.

Lamar Electric recently awarded a contract to ABC Professional Tree Service to clear rights-of-way in the southeast part of Lamar County. ABC crews can be easily identified with the company logo on their trucks and hardhats. The contract crews will be clearing about 45 miles of electric line in the Marvin, Jennings, Biardstown, Glory and Viewpoint communities.

The right-of-way clearing will include clearing brush and trees 15 feet from either side of poles. The stumps will be treated with Garlon 4 to prevent unwanted sprouts.

Rather than trim a tree and return two to three years later to the same tree, Lamar contract crews are removing the entire

tree if it is in the easement area. Cutting the trees at ground level is less expensive and will help keep the electric rates from increasing.

Safe and reliable electric service is our No. 1 priority, and our right-of-way maintenance program supervised by James Smith is vital in helping us meet the commitment to our members.

Two-Way Feed Points

When we are reconducting new electric line, we are always looking for situations in which another electric line from a different source maybe used as an alternate feed for the area. In some cases, two different electric lines can be connected by constructing three or four spans of wire. This gives us options when we find an electric line torn down that may take some time to repair. Having two different sources is called a “two-way feed point.”

With a two-way feed point, we may be able to disconnect the tail end of a line torn down and restore electric power on the end of the line from a different source.

Two-way feed points were recently added to electric lines southwest of Kimberly Clark in Lamar County and in an area south of Roxton and north of Ben Franklin. Southwest of Kimberly Clark, we secured a new easement and built a few spans of wire. South of Roxton, we were able to tie in an old line by cleaning up an old right-of-way, which had not been used for some time, change insulators and string larger wire to another source to have two available sources of power in this area.