

# A Labor of Love



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

**Each September, we celebrate Labor Day, a national tribute to the contributions American workers make to the strength and prosperity of our country.**

The word *labor* is defined as an expenditure of physical or mental effort especially when difficult or compulsory. That definition is not lost on employees of Lamar Electric. When the lights go off—whether due to tornadoes, fierce wind and lightning storms or ice storms—our linemen leave their families to work tirelessly in harsh and dangerous conditions—to restore your power. Other employees drive through blinding rain to our office so they can field your phone calls and dispatch crews. They all know the goal is to get electricity flowing to your home as quickly and safely as possible.

All of our employees live in the communities surrounding the Cooperative office. Single parents must cart small children and babies to friends or relatives homes in the middle of the night, so they can go to work at the Coop. Dad's having to leave the dinner table, before the first bite so they can rush to the office to get their work truck.

But that doesn't mean the job is a laborious punishment. It is a labor of love.

When the weather goes awry, and the calls begin to come in, not all calls are from members. Often on those days, employees who were safe at home call in to see if there's anything they can do to help. We've had office workers that were not contacted; simply show up to help answer members' calls during a crisis. This is because they care about what they do. They care about the membership. They feel responsible for making sure that every member is safe and sound—with the power humming—even during bad weather.

And it's not just when the lights are off that our employees are working. It is an everyday occurrence, and not just during the 8-to-5 workday.

Our linemen go through extensive training to ensure their safety and the safety of their fellow crew members. Our office staff is trained on how to record your power outage or other problem. They are also trained on explaining electric safety to help make sure you are safe. Lamar Electric is always here to educate you about the dangers of electricity, and through this magazine and other avenues, we are able to pass along tips to help keep you safe and save money by making energy-conscious decisions. We don't do this only because it's our job. We do this because we care about you, the member.

Today, I want to ask you, our member-owners, to thank a Cooperative employee if you see one. Thank them for their commitment, their talent, their hard work and their service to the membership of Lamar Electric. After all, even though our offices will be closed September 2, if your power goes out, we'll be on our way to fix it, holiday or no holiday. Happy Labor Day!

If I stopped here, some of you would feel like I had used one of those articles written for me. No one should be short changed, so I would like to remind you of a few electrical hazards to watch for.

With summer coming to an end, and temperatures finally beginning to cool down, it's time to finish those jobs left over from the summer. (Yes, I know it is still hot, but that will end soon.)

You need to take special care around electricity when working outdoors. If you are planning home maintenance projects such as trimming or removing trees, cleaning gutters or repairing roofs or chimneys, be careful when working near overhead power lines or underground cables where they enter your house. These lines are not safe to touch.

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## Like Us on Facebook

**You may ask yourself: "Why is Lamar Electric jumping on the social media bandwagon—and, for that matter, what is it all about?"**

For many Internet users, Facebook has become the primary means of sharing information with others. Facebook allows users to share links, comments, videos and photos on a "wall." In theory, it resembles a virtual bulletin board. To connect with us on Facebook, you simply log in to your Facebook account, go to [facebook.com/lamarelectric](https://facebook.com/lamarelectric) and "like" our page.

By doing this, you are showing that you are a fan of Lamar Electric! You will then have our updates pushed to your news feed. Do you really like a news story that we posted? Look toward the bottom of the post and "like" it or leave us a comment—we love hearing from you!

What are we posting on Facebook? We are posting news about what's happening at Lamar Electric, updates on our projects and photos from our events, and we are even sharing ways you can save energy and money. When major outages occur, we will post updates on our efforts to restore your power as quickly and safely as possible. You, or someone you know, can log in to view our page via any device with Internet capability to see how our restoration process is coming along.

The bottom line is that social media has become an effective communications tool, allowing businesses and people to reach a broader audience in less time. Best of all, social media is completely free for everyone.

# Retiring More Capital Credits

**Applications for retirement of capital credits to the estates of deceased members are now available to the surviving spouse or heirs of those members. The Lamar County Electric Cooperative Board of Directors has authorized the co-op to begin accepting applications for all members who died before January 1, 1990.**

The only addresses we have for most of these accounts do not comply with current postal address regulations because they were before 911 addresses were used. Should we mail a capital credits check to an address that is not valid, it will most likely be returned by the postmaster and will trigger unclaimed property laws.

Retiring capital credits to the "Estate of" will allow Lamar Electric to give money back to the spouse, heirs or legal representatives that would typically be turned over to the State of Texas as unclaimed property. At the same time, it will allow us to update our records, change the name on active accounts still in the name of the deceased, and update addresses for future retirement of capital credits.

If your spouse died before January 1, 1990, or if you are the heir to a member who died before 1990, you can come by our office or call to request an application packet be mailed to you. Once complete, these applications will be presented to the board each month for approval, and checks will be issued in the order they are received, as funds are available.

To submit an application, you will need a photocopy of the death certificate or other proof of death. A copy of an obituary can help document who the heirs are. All heirs to the estate will need to sign the application. The check will be made payable to only one person.

Once Lamar Electric gets a handle on how many applications we get for years before 1990, consideration will be given to accepting applications for the next 10 years. All capital credits before 1970 have been paid, as well as a small percentage of the capital credits before 2008. In addition, we will be evaluating our financial condition in the future and will likely be considering retiring all the capital credits for the year 1970 and working our way forward.

Lamar Electric Cooperative is a nonprofit organization. Expenses are deducted from revenue, and the balance is called a margin instead of profit. We are required to have a certain amount of margin. Each year we allocate that margin to each member based on how much your electric bills were. Those margins are used to make capital improvements rather than secure a loan every time we need to upgrade a power line or build a line to your new home. This is why they are often referred to as "capital credits." These capital credits are actually each member's share of the margin at the end of each year. There is not a bank somewhere holding all the margins that have been allocated to the members. The allocations have been made on our books, but the money has been invested in poles, wire and equipment.

Eventually, all capital credits will be paid to each member. When that time comes, if you move or no longer have service with Lamar Electric, it is important that you inform the cooperative of your current address so that future retirements can be properly mailed to you. If you purchased electricity during the years being retired, then you are entitled to a capital credits retirement (check), even if you move out of the Lamar Electric service area.

As a locally owned business, Lamar Electric is committed to the people and communities it serves. Enjoy the benefits of personalized and reliable electric service from your cooperative today and look forward to a return on your investment in the future.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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

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**GENERAL MANAGER  
AND CEO**

Jerry D. Williams

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Allen Branch, President, *Sumner*

Charles Dooley, Vice President,  
*Annona*

Mike Williams, Secretary-Treasurer,  
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Billy Hines, *Clarksville*

Mark Jones, *Paris*

Ron E. Tippit, *Clarksville*

George M. Wood, *Blossom*

Lyle Yoder, *Pattonville*

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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

**FIND US ON THE WEB**

**lamarelectric.coop**



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The main overhead electricity lines are not insulated, and if anything capable of conducting electricity touches them, the electricity will pass through that object injuring or even killing the person holding it. A tall ladder, for example, accidentally touching an overhead power line can lead to serious injury or death. Be aware that you don't actually have to even touch the line—almost touching may be enough to trigger the flow of current and cause that shock.

The wires extending from our Transformer to your house are typically secondary wires. This means each one is energized at 120 volts and is usually coated with an insulated rubber substance. If this insulation is worn off, the bare conductor could be dangerous. More people are killed each year from secondary voltage than main power lines.

Follow these simple safety tips for a safe and productive autumn:

A. Before starting on any jobs outside, make sure you locate power lines or underground cables. Plan your work. If you are going to be working near these lines, arrange for Lamar Electric to disconnect your power supply while you are working.

B. If you are handling any tall object near power lines, don't let it come in contact with or even get close to those power lines. Keep yourself and any objects you are handling at least 10 feet away from main overhead power lines and at least 2 feet from secondary wires.

C. Watch out for what's below—make sure you check for any underground gas, power, telecommunications or water services before you dig by calling 811, the state's free utilities locating service.

D. Plant trees well away from power lines and keep branches trimmed before they get too close.

E. Before installing a clothesline, TV antenna or other high structure, check for power line clearance.

F. If you are operating any electrical equipment outdoors, always use a plug equipped with a ground-fault circuit interrupter, especially when working in wet, or even just damp, conditions.

## We Offer Seven Ways To Pay Your Bill

**AUTOMATED BANK DRAFT:** Complete a bank draft authorization form and return with a voided check from your checking account. Forms are available at lamarelectric.coop. Your billed amount will be automatically drafted, but you will still receive a monthly statement. Remember: You must have a zero balance before you can apply for automatic bank draft.

**RECURRING CREDIT CARD PAYMENT:** Complete and return a credit card authorization form using your debit or credit card. We accept Visa or MasterCard ONLY. Forms available on lamarelectric.coop can be printed. You will still receive a monthly statement showing the amount scheduled to be automatically charged to your credit card and the date it will process. Remember, you must have a zero balance before you can apply for recurring credit card payment.

**BY PHONE:** Call Lamar Electric Customer Services at (903) 784-4303 or 1-800-782-9010. Customer service representatives are available 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Friday to help you pay by credit card or e-check. E-check is a payment made by giving us the information off your check. The check amount is taken from your checking account just like a debit card.

**IN PERSON:** Visit our drive-thru or walk into the office at 1485 N. Main St. in Paris. Drive thru hours: 7:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Lobby hours: 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Friday

**BY MAIL:** Mail your payment to Lamar Electric, P.O. Box 580, Paris, TX 75461.

**ONLINE:** Go to lamarelectric.coop to access our website. Click "Online Bill Pay." Then you can pay with your credit card or checking account.

**DROP BOX:** If you are unable to make it to the office during business hours, you can drop your payment in the drop box located in the drive-thru. (It looks like an old postal box, except it is red.) Your bill will be processed the following business day, but no penalty will be assessed if you put the payment in the box on the due date.

# Country Corner Events

## September 6

**Cruisin' on the Plaza,** 5-9 p.m., downtown Paris on the Plaza. Come enjoy looking at vintage and antique cars. For more information, call Bobby Slagle at (903) 785-6526.

## September 7

**REACH Rally,** 2-4 p.m., Love Civic Center Pavilion. Annual Red River Valley Down syndrome walk.

**The Horse Flea,** 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Paris Horse and Tack Auction, nine miles west of Paris on U.S. 82. An antique, vintage and handmade wares market. For more information, call Kevin Cannon at (903) 348-3694.

**Red River County Stew Cook-off,** 5 p.m., Clarksville Fairgrounds. Stew cook-off, bake sale and auction. For more information, call Lynn Golden at (903) 427-3867.

## September 18-21

**Red River County Fair, Parade** 5 p.m. September 18; entertainment 7 p.m. nightly, Clarksville Fairgrounds. Rides, food booths, entertainment, livestock auction, exhibits and judging. For more information, call Lynn Golden at (903) 427-3867.

## September 21

**Ride for a Reason,** Sponsored by Dylan's Drivers, Love Civic Center. All-day event with activities for the entire family. For more information, call Paul Allen at (903) 715-4516.

## September 24-28

**Red River Valley Fair,** 6-10 p.m. Tuesday-Friday; 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Saturday, Paris/Lamar County Fairgrounds. There will be exhibits in the Community Exhibit Center and outside areas, and lots of fun and entertainment! For more information, call Rita at (903) 785-7971.

*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.*



## Lamar Performing Voltage Upgrade North of Novice

The electric load of members in the area north of Novice has increased over the past few years. To provide better service and maintain good voltage on hot summer days, Lamar Electric is in the process of upgrading the main electric lines that serve this area. The main three-phase power line along FM 906 east to CR 47400 will have the voltage increased from 7,200 volts to 14,400 volts. The voltage conversion will require all transformers and some insulators and other devices on the main power lines to be replaced in preparation for the higher voltage. Lines will remain energized as the crews prepare for the upgrade.

Lamar Electric's crews and H&H Construction are making the change. There-

# Saving Our Wildlife

**Animal-caused outages can be a problem for Lamar Electric Cooperative and can cause thousands of dollars of damage to electrical equipment each year. Six percent of outages were caused by animals in the past year.**

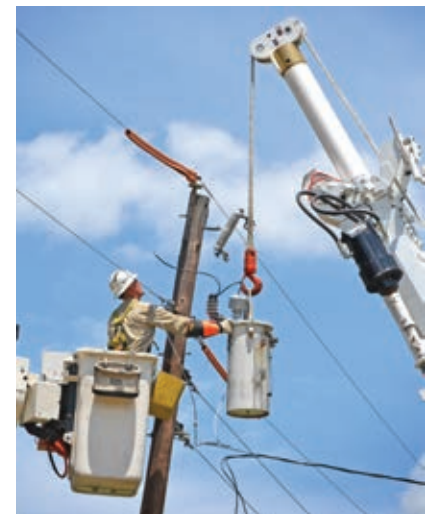
One of the main culprits is the squirrel. Squirrels follow overhead routes through their territories that include electric poles. Once squirrels have established these routes, almost nothing will force them to change, and they are not frightened by any physical barrier in their path. Because their teeth grow continuously, squirrels must gnaw and chew, and they often do so while sitting on top of a transformer. These incidents increase each fall.

Often, squirrels will perch on a transformer and gnaw on a hickory nut or pinecone. Their tail is tall enough to reach the top part of the transformer's high voltage insulator where a jumper wire connects the main power line to the transformer.

When an animal makes contact with electrical equipment, it can cause a temporary short on the line, causing the main power line breaker to turn the power off for a second or two, in turn causing your lights to blink. These "blinks" are indicators that our system is functioning correctly.

To reduce these types of outages, the co-op is placing protective squirrel guards around the exposed connector or top of each transformer and using insulated jumper wires from the main line to the connector. Squirrel guards help protect our overhead equipment and save the lives of squirrels and birds.

Our right-of-way program also plays a role in helping reduce animal-related outages. Because squirrels are hesitant to cross open ground, poles that are well away from trees are not as appealing to them. It is important to Lamar Electric to prevent animal-caused outages and improve service to our members.



**Lineman Cory May changes out a transformer while the lines remain energized.**

fore, crews will be in this area working along the highway and near your home for the next couple of months at different times throughout the workday.

Later in the year, Lamar Electric will schedule a short outage to actually make the final voltage change. Our office will contact the affected members at least three days in advance. We are sorry for any inconvenience this may cause.