

The Turtles Are Slowing Down



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER AND CEO JERRY D. WILLIAMS

About 20 years ago, Lamar Electric started reading electric meters through the electric lines. At the time, this was fairly new technology. In 1985, Hunt Technologies developed a transmitting module that is easily installed inside an electric meter and would send a meter reading each day. Hunt called their system Turtles, because the packets of information moved so slowly. It takes all day for the five numbers on each electric meter register to travel from the meter to our substation. That seems like Cave Man communication compared to high speed internet connections available in today's world.

The Turtles (packets of information containing the reading on your meter) travel very slow in order to jump the transformer at your home. The Transformer is the gray bucket looking object on the pole near your house. The gray bucket actually contains two coils of wire, some steel plates and mineral oil (better known as baby oil). A lot of folks don't realize there is not a wire that goes from our electric substation all the way to your meter. The High Voltage wires end with a coil of wire inside your transformer. The Hot Wires connected to your house meter actually start with a large coil of wire inside your transformer. The two coils of wire do not actually have any connecting point. Some steel plates extend through the middle of each coil of wire in your transformer. When the High Voltage coil (typically 7,200 or 14,400 volts) is connected to our main high voltage wires, a magnetic field is



created around the steel plates that extend through the middle of each coil of wire and induces a voltage in the other coil of wire, which connects to your house. The voltage going to your house is determined by the number of coils in the low voltage coil. This is how we Transform 7,200 volts to 120 volts for household use. You would think the Turtles would get up some speed so they could jump from one coil to the other coil, but slow and steady is how the technology was designed.

Over the past few years, many of our Turtle modules have quit transmitting, which has resulted in hundreds of meters being replaced each year. We have had problems getting the Turtle Modules and are reading hundreds of meters by hand each month. The meters are still working, but the Turtle

transmitter slows down to the point it stops transmitting. Our staff and I have been researching all the available technology for reading electric meters. That is a daunting task! Many companies use a radio frequency, which has its own set of problems due to the rolling hills and valleys in our area. Some use cellular signals, but everyone knows that despite the proliferation of cell towers, there are still dead spots with poor cell signals. Every company has glowing comments about their products and tend to gloss over the shortfalls. After much research we have concluded the TWACS system fits best with our situation. TWACS stands for Two Way Automated Communication System.

In the next few months you will hear more about the TWACS system. This system will also send a signal through the existing electric lines, faster than a speeding bullet chasing a cottontail. Having two way communications with each meter will allow us to "ping" all the meters in an area after a large outage and determine if power was restored. This should alleviate some of those 2 a.m. automated call back messages to determine if your power was restored. Of course you will still be able to report an outage and request a call back to your cell phone so you will know power was restored, even if you are out of town. Instead of one meter reading per day, we will be able to help you pinpoint the cause of high electric usage, using hourly data for each day. This system will use an entirely different technology to send data at a much faster speed. In many cases we will be able to turn power off or on from our office, thus eliminating the wait when you move locations.

For those of you that like to tinker with Pads or smart phones, you will get the opportunity to follow your electric usage till your head spins. Of course we will continue to add more usage data that you can access through our web site. If you have not already done so, go to www.lamarelectric.coop and click on "Online Bill Pay." You will be asked to set up a password that will give you access to your account information. You do not have to pay your bill on line, but that is an option. Clicking on this link takes you to a secure site that contains copies of your past electric bills and electric usage information. In the future you will have a lot more usage information available. Take a look now, and follow what we add in the future to provide more information.

To implement the new system we will be installing equipment at each substation and replacing the meter at your house. It will take over a year to get the system up and running faster than a "Hare." We have got to make a change and we think you will like the additional information the TWACS system will provide. Most of all it will help us serve you better, and keep the cost down to read meters.



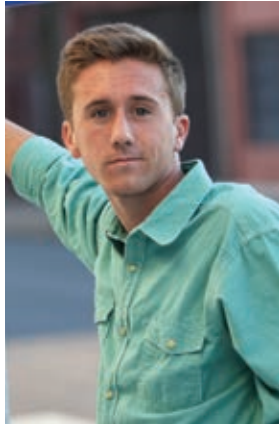
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Congratulations to Our Scholarship Recipients



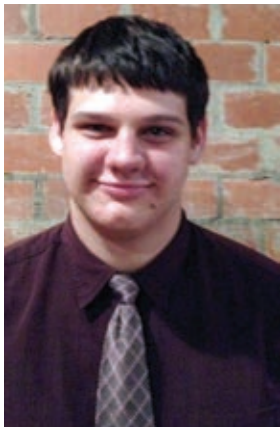
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Member Benefits

- 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.

2014 Annual Meeting Prizewinners

Vickie George, Sumner TV
Raymond Guffey, Blossom Nook Tablet
Carl Peek, Reno Coffee Maker
Harold Smith, Paris Stand Mixer
W.H. Brumley, Sumner Microwave
Roger Wettschreck, Paris Pocket Knife (Crazy House)
Q.B. Spencer, Sumner Leaf Blower/Vacuum
Mrs. Herbert Nabors, Cooper Tower Fan
Charles Gilbert, Pattonville Vacuum
Silas Rosson, Cooper Western Men's Wallet (Crazy House)
Don G. Smith, Lake Creek . Western Ladies' Bracelet (Crazy House)
D.B. Westerman, Lake Creek Drill

Debbie Goodrich, Sumner Hedge Trimmer
Doug Cato, Reno Blender
Fern Rees, Pattonville Hand Vacuum
Lawrence K. Brown, Honey Grove Toaster Oven
Harlan Alexander, Cooper Slow Cooker
Martha Buster, Sumner Electric Skillet
Tony Ballard, Pattonville Floor Lamp
Ruth Murray, Clarksville Can Opener
James Wade, Blossom Sander
Thomas Rossiter, Sumner Skill Saw
Lynda Bryan, Paris Food Processor

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▲ LEC's Dena Beason, Marci Thompson and Rachael Whipkey

Members enjoyed the meeting. ▶



◀ Mr. and Mrs. Rook have been members of Lamar for 37 years.

▼ District 9 Director Lyle Yoder



▼ Ashton Williams helps draw names for prizes.



▲ Jerry Williams and his helper, Dalin Murdock, draw names for door prizes.



Annual Meeting Highlights

The Lamar Electric Cooperative Annual Membership Meeting was held Saturday, April 19, 2014, at Love Civic Center in Paris.

Lamar Electric had three directors up for re-election. In District 1, Brian Kruse ran against incumbent Michael Williams; Kruse received 48 votes and Williams received 90 votes. In District 8, Matthew Albus was uncontested with 126 votes. In District 9, Charles Gilbert ran against incumbent Lyle

Yoder; Gilbert received 52 votes and Yoder received 133 votes.

General Manager Jerry Williams updated the members on the financial reports and ongoing projects. He reviewed several current and future projects being implemented to help improve service reliability and make sure power is available when needed.

The names of six high school seniors were drawn out of a hopper for a \$1,000 scholarship each. There were 72 entries.



▲ Look who won a prize!

Delana McFadden and Leslie Collard visit with Harlan Alexander while he registers. ►



▲ District 1 Director Michael Williams



▲ District 8 Director Matthew Albus

General Manager Jerry Williams updates the members on financials and special projects. ▼



The \$1,000 scholarship can be used at any university, college, junior college, technical school or other post-secondary educational institution of their choice.

Money for these scholarships comes from unclaimed deposits and unclaimed refunds from our members. Each member can still file a claim with the state of Texas to recover unclaimed checks, but the law allows Lamar Electric to use a portion of these funds for scholarships.

Scholarship winners were Katy Bridges of Detroit High School; Kelby Cole of Prairiland High School; Madison Harper of Honey Grove High School; John Herrmann of Chisum High School; and Ashley Miller and Chase Ramsey of North Lamar

High School.

Katy is the daughter of Leanna Watson of Detroit. Kelby is the son of Todd and Mendy Ramsey of Pattonville. Madison is the daughter of Richard and Gina Harper of the Harmon community. John is the son of James and Taunya Herrmann of the Broadway community. Ashley is the daughter of Michael and Sarah Miller of Sumner. And Chase is the son of Kyle and Stacy Ramsey of the Caviness community.

The names of all members present at the meeting were placed in the hopper for drawings. Prizes were won by 23 members. The grand prizewinner of a 42-inch LCD HDTV was Vickie George of Sumner. Other prizewinners are listed on Page 21.