

Cooperating for Privacy and Safety



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER AND CEO JERRY D. WILLIAMS

LATELY WE'VE BEEN HEARING disturbing stories about employees from different cooperatives being threatened when they come onto members' property to do work. Residents have even pointed guns at co-op employees—sometimes when the crews were there only to restore power after an outage. Recently one of our employees was threatened with a shotgun in Lamar County when he was replacing a meter that had quit transmitting meter readings. We would have had to visit the residence every month to read the meter had we not done the replacement.

We Work for Safety

These incidents are distressing because member and employee safety is every electric cooperative's top priority. Conflicts like these also threaten the trust that we at Lamar Electric Cooperative work so hard to build with our members. We want you to feel free to call us at (903) 784-4303 if you have a question about co-op personnel being on your property, or anything else.

Many circumstances require the presence of co-op personnel on a member's property: restoring power, repairing and maintaining lines and equipment, checking meter readings or installing new meters, addressing bill payment issues, or cutting vegetation in rights-of-way.

Our employees highly respect members' private property and personal privacy, but there are times when cooperative personnel simply must go onto a member's land or knock on the door to do their job.

We Have the Right and Responsibility

Co-op personnel have a legal right and responsibility to enter a member's property for the limited purpose of ensuring that electric service, relied on by people to maintain their health, safety and well-being, is delivered safely and with as little interruption as possible. Not only do Texas laws protect electric cooperative employees from criminal trespass charges, but they also impose a stiff penalty on anyone who threatens a cooperative employee while on official co-op business. Anyone pointing a gun at a co-op worker could face a second-degree felony charge, punishable by two to 20 years' imprisonment and a possible fine of up to \$10,000.

People need to know that in Texas, it is a felony to threaten

a co-op employee—or anyone else—with a deadly weapon. The safety of Lamar Electric personnel and our members is extremely important, and such threats are taken very seriously.

When you became a Lamar Electric member, you signed an agreement that spelled out your rights and responsibilities, as well as the cooperative's. Among those member responsibilities is allowing co-op personnel (and any contractors hired by the co-op) access to your property—whether easements underneath power lines, or the home or business where your meter is located. Landowners and members must comply with requirements mandated by state law and outlined in their co-op's application for membership, bylaws and right-of-way easement agreement.

We Need Your Help

We do understand that there may be reasons why members worry about people coming onto their property, so Lamar Electric workers display the co-op's name and logo on their trucks and uniforms. However, if you don't recognize our crews—or you have concerns about the work they're doing—then we urge you to call (903) 784-4303 immediately.

If you call us when you have a question or suspicion about co-op workers on your property, we can verify who they are and why they're there. A simple phone call can prevent a dangerous confrontation.

Our members are also our neighbors, and we deeply respect issues surrounding private property. Lamar Electric employees do everything possible to minimize our need to access your property, but when it is necessary, we do our best to be visibly identified. We publish articles in this magazine and local newspapers informing our members of planned right-of-way clearing by contractors and how to identify the contractor employees. We do the same for planned line upgrades or line construction. Our contractor's equipment also displays identification. We also show the greatest respect possible to members' property while we are on-site.

Working together, we can ensure that members are comfortable and co-op employees are safe whenever we must access private property. If you have a question about the presence of co-op personnel on your property, please call us immediately.



SAVE THE DATE!

LAMAR EC ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Saturday, April 18

THE ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING of Lamar County Electric Cooperative will be Saturday, April 18, at Love Civic Center, 2025 S. Collegiate Drive in Paris.

Registration opens at 9 a.m. The business session begins at 10 a.m. and includes any necessary reports of the officers, board members and committees, as well as the election of directors in Districts 5, 6 and 7, each for a three-year term.

You do not have to be present at the meeting to vote in the director election. Before the meeting, ballots will be mailed to members who reside in those districts. If you reside in one of the districts holding an election, you may vote either by mail or in person at the meeting.

Each member in attendance at the meeting will receive a registration gift, and drawings for other prizes will be held. You must be present at the time of the drawing to be eligible to win a prize.

Six \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded at the meeting. Applications must be received at the cooperative office by 5 p.m., April 10.

To be eligible for a scholarship, a candidate:

- ▶ Must live full time in a residence served by Lamar EC, and
- ▶ Be a graduating senior attending a high school or home-school program within the counties served by Lamar EC.

We look forward to your attending and enjoying your annual meeting.

Watch for additional details in the next issue of Texas Co-op Power.



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Paris, TX 75461

GENERAL MANAGER AND CEO

Jerry D. Williams

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Allen Branch, President, *Sumner*
Mike Williams, Secretary-Treasurer, *Detroit*

Matthew Albus, *Roxton*

Mark Jones, *Paris*

Harry R. Moore, *Clarksville*

Ron E. Tippit, *Clarksville*

George M. Wood, *Blossom*

Lyle Yoder, *Pattonville*

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.



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Power Tip

Seal air leaks with weatherstripping and caulking, and be sure your house is properly insulated. This could save you up to 20 percent on heating and cooling bills while increasing home comfort.

CONTACT US

CALL US

(903) 784-4303 local or

1-800-782-9010 toll-free

FIND US ON THE WEB

www.lamarelectric.coop



New Board Member Appointed

LAMAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE would like to announce that the board has appointed Harry R. Moore to serve the balance of Billy Hines' term on the board of directors. Hines resigned in August for health reasons and died in December.

Moore's appointment to the board occurred at the January 13 board meeting. "This was done after a lengthy selection process that involved committee members interviewing several potential board members before selecting two individuals to be interviewed by the full board," said Jerry Williams, Lamar EC general manager.

Moore represents District 3. He has lived in Red River County all his life and lives north of Clarksville with his wife, Linda. Moore and his son farm soy beans, wheat and milo. He received an associate degree from Paris Junior College. Some of his hobbies are hunting and fishing with his wife. Moore has been a member of Lamar EC since 1974.

"I was impressed with the amount of highly qualified individuals that expressed a desire to serve on the board, and the final choice was really tough," said Board President Allen Branch.

"I am honored to be selected for this position, representing the Red River County area," Moore said. "The cooperative appears to be a well-run organization, and I hope to keep it that way. I have noticed an improvement in service and right-of-way maintenance in the past few years and want to do everything I can to make sure the service level is maintained."



HARRY R. MOORE



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Stay Safe From Lightning

SPRING WEATHER CAN BRING THUNDER

and electrical storms. Fortunately, accidents involving lightning are avoidable. Safe Electricity marks Texas' Severe Weather Awareness Week, March 1-7 this year, with the following suggestions to stay safe from the dangers of lightning:

There is no safe place from lightning when you are outside. It is important to be aware of weather forecasts and watch for developing thunderstorms, which occur more often in spring and summer.

Lightning can strike many miles ahead of a storm front. Hearing thunder indicates that lightning is within 10 miles of you. Seek shelter immediately. Safe shelters include inside a building or in an enclosed, metal-topped vehicle.

If you are inside a building, the National Weather Service advises you to stay off corded telephones and away from any electrical device that could carry an electrical surge if lightning entered the building through wiring. Turn off or unplug such appliances. Do not depend on surge protectors to absorb a lightning strike. A house's plumbing can also act as a conductor, so avoid taking a shower or bath during a storm.

Authorities warn against outdoor activity until 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder is heard.

If a person near you is struck by lightning, call 911 and care for the victim immediately. You are not in danger of being shocked or electrocuted by the victim.

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

BEGINS SUNDAY, MARCH 8. REMEMBER TO SPRING FORWARD!



Did You Know?

A 10-watt compact fluorescent lamp turned on for 100 hours would consume 1 kilowatt-hour of electricity.

A 100-watt incandescent lightbulb would consume the same amount of electricity in just 10 hours.

—National Geographic

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Plan Ahead for a Safe Planting Season

FARMING IS PERENNIALY NEAR THE TOP OF THE LIST of the most dangerous jobs in the United States, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Electricity is one of the hazards farmworkers need to be cautious around, especially when they are feeling pressure to work quickly to get the crops in the ground or harvested. However, with proper planning and education, the risk of accidents involving electricity and the equipment that carries it to homes and businesses can be greatly reduced.

One critical part of safety around electricity is awareness. With the use of large equipment, farmers can easily find themselves in dangerous proximity to overhead lines. Being aware of the location of those wires can help reduce accidents.

Lamar Electric Cooperative urges farmers and farmworkers to remember these guidelines:

- ▶ Keep a 10-foot minimum distance around power lines. That means 10 feet above, below and to the sides of power lines.
- ▶ Use a spotter when moving machinery around the farm. It can be difficult to judge from the driver's seat how close a piece of machinery is to electric lines.
- ▶ Use caution when handling long items such as irrigation pipe, ladders and rods. Coming too close to a power line can cause electricity to arc, or "jump," to conducting material or objects.
- ▶ Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting tractors on trailer beds. Many tractors are now equipped with radios and communications systems with very tall antennas extending from the cab, which could make contact with power lines.
- ▶ Avoid raising the arms of planters, cultivators or truck beds near power lines.
- ▶ Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path.
- ▶ Remember, even nonmetallic materials such as lumber, tree limbs, tires, ropes and hay will conduct electricity depending on dampness, dust and dirt contamination.
- ▶ If you hit a pole's guy wire and break it, call the cooperative to fix it. Do not do it yourself. Guy wires, used to stabilize utility poles, are grounded. However, when a guy wire is broken, it can cause an electric current disruption. This can make those neutral wires anything but harmless.

—SafeElectricity

Scholarship Deadline Quickly Approaching

THE APRIL 10 DEADLINE is approaching for high school seniors to apply for one of six scholarships that Lamar EC will award at the annual meeting April 18.

For more information and an application form, visit lamarelectric.coop and apply today. You can also email Dena Beason for an application and more information at dena@lamarelectric.coop.

