

# Higher-Than-Average Bills



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

**AS WE LOOK FORWARD TO THE PROMISE** of warmer weather and a new growing season, we don't always remember the challenges and concerns brought on by the cold weather of the winter just past. One reminder for some of you has been your electric bill: Quite simply, you think it's too high. In many cases, the cold weather may have occurred almost a month before the bill arrives, and we often don't remember how low the temperature was during those days. There have been recent discussions about higher-than-normal utility bills at many Co-ops in North Texas as well as other retail electric providers, so don't feel alone. Of course, we recognize that this can be a situation that causes you to worry. Every one of us pays an electric bill, so we personally understand that you need to keep your household budget balanced.

We operate Lamar Electric Cooperative based on the guidance of Seven Cooperative Principles, which include Concern for Community. We work hard to fulfill that commitment by providing safe and reliable energy for your homes and businesses, but ultimately how much you use is your decision.

We've been hearing from folks around the service area about their dissatisfaction with their electricity bills, and we want to share reasonable answers to each of those questions. There's almost always more than one response to help a situation, so take a few minutes to consider the options.

We'll work with you every way we can. If you have questions about your bill, don't hesitate to call our office at 903-784-4303. We can review your account to make sure the bill is correct and accurate. We should be able to settle most concerns with a straightforward conversation.

One important thing to remember: Please call us as soon as possible, before your bill is due to be paid. That way, we can work through your questions in a timely manner to avoid further inconvenience.

Some may think their electric bill is higher due to some sort of a rate increase. Our base rate has not changed since 2006 but the wholesale cost of power has certainly gone up in the past two years. This has resulted in the Power Cost Recovery Factor (PCRF) going up and down almost every month since 2006.

Lamar Electric does not generate any power. We purchase all electricity wholesale. The PCRF is how we pass on decreases or increases in our wholesale power cost. None of

this money is retained by Lamar. It all goes to pay for wholesale power. When we can purchase wholesale power at a lower cost, every dollar of those savings is passed on to our members, such as the February 2013 bills which had a Credit PCRF of two cents per kWh. This compares to February 2014 bills which had a Charge PCRF of three tenths of one cent per kWh and February 2015 bills which had a Charge PCRF of three fourths of one cent per kWh.

The PCRF factor is printed on every bill, so you can see exactly how your bill was calculated. The wholesale cost of power in Texas has gone up primarily due to Natural Gas being over \$5 per thousand cubic feet, less generating plants in reserve and increase in transmission cost due to completion of the \$7 Billion transmission lines constructed to serve wind power in West Texas. If the EPA has their way, and shuts down all coal plants, you can expect some major increases in power cost.

It might turn out that you have a concern about your meter. If that's the case, we can plan to set up a time to determine whether the meter is working the way it should. Once we get that concern out of the way, we'll be able to review your major appliances to make sure the electrical system is working the way it should. And if it will help you, we can arrange a payment plan that will fit your budget.

It will always be true that the most important way to lower a higher-than-expected energy bill is to look for ways to decrease the amount of energy we use. One thing we can't change, no matter how hard we try, is that colder weather usually means that most folks use more electricity to keep the house warm.

So always be prepared, and manage your energy use. Keep an eye on the thermostat and adjust it to conserve energy. When you leave home, turn the heat OFF, not just down. If you keep shades or curtains and blinds closed at night, you will reduce significant temperature changes inside the house. Always turn off lights you don't need, and avoid using expensive electric space heaters or any unnecessary appliances. They often use more energy than you can imagine.

Again, feel free to call us and ask questions about your bill. As members of your community, we know the importance of working together for the welfare of the community. The cooperative legacy of reliability and safety are values that continue through all seasons.



**These boots were  
made for climbing.**

*And that's just what they'll do.*

**April 13 is National Lineman Appreciation Day.**



1485 N. Main St. • P.O. Box 580  
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.

**CONTACT US**

**CALL US**

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

**FIND US ON THE WEB**

**www.lamarelectric.coop**



# NOTICE OF LAMAR COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEETING OF MEMBERS

**THE ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING OF LAMAR COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE** will be held at Love Civic Center, 2025 S. Collegiate Drive in Paris, Saturday, April 18.

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 board members in Districts 5, 6 and 7, each for a three-year term.

A member who wishes to be elected to the cooperative's board of directors must appear in person at the main office of the cooperative and fill out a nomination form not less than 60 days and no more than 90 days before the date of the annual meeting of the members at which board members are to be elected.

The following members have placed their names in nomination at the cooperative headquarters:

**DISTRICT 5:** Allen Branch, 1216 CR 32240, Sumner 75486

**DISTRICT 6:** George Wood, 796 CR 44750, Blossom 75416

**DISTRICT 7:** Ron Tippit, 4679 Highway 37 S, Clarksville 75426

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 having an election, you may either vote by mail or in person at the meeting.

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

Six \$1,000 scholarships also will be awarded at the meeting. Entries 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 accredited home/extended studies program within the counties served by Lamar EC.

We look forward to your attending. Enjoy your annual meeting.

**Michael R. Williams**, Board Secretary

Dated: March 30, 2015

## Lamar EC 2015 Director Candidate Profiles



### **DISTRICT 5**

**ALLEN BRANCH** has been a member since 1974. He is a graduate of Rehobeth High School in Dothan, Alabama. He has served

on the LEC board since 2003, during which time he has taken several NRECA director training courses. He serves as the LEC board president. After 38 years of service, he is retired from Earth Grains Bakery, where he was fleet superintendent of the Paris plant for 20 years. Before moving to this area, he was fleet superintendent for several other company locations, during which time he attended several fleet-management training courses throughout the United

States. He and his wife, Geri, have two children, Janice and Lana (and one, Kelvin, deceased), and they have four grandchildren.



### **DISTRICT 6**

**GEORGE WOOD** has been a Lamar EC member since 1988. He attended Prairiland High School and the Lone Star steel welder apprentice program. He served in the U.S. Army from 1973 through 1977. He has been employed at Kimberly-Clark for 27 years. He is chairman of the board for Red River Valley Veterans Memorial. He and his wife, Pam, have two children, Amanda and George, and three grandchildren.



### **DISTRICT 7**

**RON TIPPIT** has been a member since 1981. He has served on the LEC board since 2006. He is a Credentialed Coopera-

tive Director through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's director training program. The CCD curriculum consists of five courses designed to provide basic knowledge and skills required of cooperative directors and completing a learning assessment for each. He is a graduate of Clarksville High School. He is retired from Kimberly-Clark and is a rancher. His wife, Jerri, manages Tippit Hilltop Tamales. They have five children.

# SmartHub Is Available

LAMAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE HAS TRANSITIONED our online billing service to an enhanced account management tool called SmartHub. Using SmartHub will allow our members to do more than pay their bill online or look at previous months' bills.

If you were already enrolled in eBill on our website, lamarelectric.coop, you will use the same email and password that you've always used—but instead of logging into eBill when you click on the Online Bill Pay tab or choose the Pay Your Bill Online button, you will be directed to SmartHub.

If you are new to Lamar EC's online services, simply click the "new user" option on the Online Bill Pay tab or the Pay Your Bill Online button and follow the instructions to access our self-service site. This access has previously only been available through our website using your home computer, tablet or smartphone.

## What is SmartHub?

SmartHub is an account management tool that enables you to manage your Lamar EC account via our website or the SmartHub app. At this time, we are only implementing the payment, bill notification, email and prior billing history options. At a later date, you also will be able to view your daily power usage, report an outage, set up customizable alerts to stay in the loop on power restoration, and get news on current events at your co-op. Information will be posted on current right-of-way work, upgrades and line construction, planned outages, Youth Tour, scholarships, annual meeting, etc.



Lamar EC's online bill payment program now uses SmartHub. This new service offers a variety of beneficial features that LEC will be implementing in the future.

You will have the ability to manage your Lamar Electric Cooperative account anywhere, anytime using your mobile device. The free SmartHub mobile app is now available for you to download on your mobile device or tablet by clicking on the App Store icon on your iPhone/iPad or the Google Play icon on your Android phone or tablet, and searching for SmartHub.



## COUNTRY CORNER Events

### April 4

**Easter at the Sam Bell Maxey House.** 10 a.m.–noon. Come and enjoy various Easter activities, including egg coloring, Easter egg hunt and various lawn games at 812 S. Church St. in Paris. [visitsambellmaxeyhouse.com](http://visitsambellmaxeyhouse.com).

### April 8–10

**Junior Livestock Show.** Livestock shows all day Wednesday, April 8, and Thursday, April 9, at the Lamar County Fairgrounds' coliseum and livestock barn at 570 E. Center St. in Paris. Livestock sale Friday, April 10, starting about 6 p.m.

### April 11

**Texas Trash-Off, Reno.** 8 a.m.–1 p.m. Please meet at the Reno Kiwanis Park to be assigned to teams. Reno Parks and Recreation will provide supplies such as trash bags and gloves. A hot dog lunch will be provided for volunteers at the park after the cleanup.

### April 11

**Delta County Fair, Junior Livestock Show and LSGTPA Tractor Pull.** Cooper City Park in Delta County. Pastry cook-off, hamburger luncheon, vendors, kid zone and lots more fun for everyone. Live music begins at 9 a.m.

### April 17–19

**Chisum Days Chuck Wagon Races and Cook-Off.** Hosted by the VFW Post 3990 at Lake Crook Park in Paris. Chuck wagon cook-off and chuck wagon races on Saturday. Trail rides and hay rides beginning at 1 p.m. throughout the weekend, with a dance Friday and Saturday nights.

LAMAR EC  
WISHES YOU AND YOUR  
FAMILY A BLESSED  
GOOD FRIDAY

OUR OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED  
FRIDAY, APRIL 3, FOR THE HOLIDAY.



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