

What To Do When the Lights Go Out



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER AND CEO JERRY D. WILLIAMS

RECENTLY, A MEMBER ASKED WHETHER their electric service would be restored faster if they spoke to a person instead of using one of the many other methods for reporting outages. The short answer is ‘No.’

A lot of folks never call our office, unless the lights go out. The weatherman predicts record-breaking ice and moisture for our area this winter. If this occurs, it is very likely that trees weighted down with ice will fall toward the open area—the power line right-of-way. Soggy ground also creates a problem when the roots on large trees can no longer hold the tree upright. Millions of dollars have been invested by Lamar Electric Cooperative in the past 5 years to clear trees and limbs from the power lines. A more aggressive right-of-way program has resulted in a cleaner area around the wires, but we still have a lot to do. Regardless of how good the right-of-way looks, there will always be millions of trees located just outside the

right-of-way that can fall on the wires. We love living in an area with lots of trees, but those same trees can cause major power outages when they come crashing down. We want you to be prepared if and when a tree falls.

Not many years ago, calling in via your telephone when the lights went out was the only way to let us know you were out of power. This has changed. You can now call us by phone and either talk to a live person or select our automated outage-reporting system. We are working on adding outage-reporting capability to our free SmartHub app. Some will post their outages on our Facebook page, which is not monitored 24/7. Facebook is a great place to check on progress of major outages, but if there is not a major storm then your post could sit for a couple days before anyone sees it. You can also text us the outage report from your smartphone or tablet. If you have a phone with text capability, we highly recommend that you text.

The text system is different from the phone call system, and can handle thousands of text at the same time. Very seldom is a text undelivered due to high volume. A great feature of texting us your outage is that you automatically get a return text confirming your outage, as well as an automatic text confirming

when the power is back on.

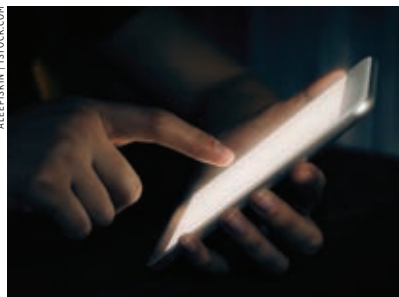
In order to text us an outage, you will need to complete a short registration process to comply with the text laws and link your cellphone number with the correct electric account. Your cellphone number must be on your electric account file at Lamar Electric to start the registration process. Next, visit www.lamarelectric.coop and click on the picture labeled “Click here for outage texting” in the right-hand column. As you follow the instructions, a text will be sent to your cellphone revealing an account verification code, which must be entered on the sign-up webpage. To confirm successful completion of registration, you will receive a text message thanking you for joining the outage texting service.

Our regular phone number, (903) 784-4303, is answered every hour of every day, all year long. Our toll-free number, 1-800-782-9010, is provided as a convenience for those folks who may have to pay long distance. When the toll-free number is dialed, it automatically rings in on the regular phone line, and thus is no different than dialing (903) 784-4303, except there are no long distance charges.

The biggest complaint I hear about calling us is getting a busy signal. Many years ago, the phone company used a slow or fast busy signal to indicate the other party was talking on the line or the telephone circuits were overloaded. Now days the busy signal simply means the call did not go through for a variety of reasons. At Lamar Electric we have 23 phone lines. Depending on the situation, some of those lines are reserved for inbound calls from linemen and some are reserved for emergency outbound calls. If a major electric line serving 500 houses goes out and even half the affected members try to call in at the same time, you can see how there would be a lot of busy signals.

All telephone calls are first answered by our phone system (a computer server sitting in our computer room). The server will play a greeting and give you the opportunity to use our automated system to “make a payment or report an outage by pressing 1” or stay on the line for the next available person.

If your lights are out and you don’t mind talking to a computer, you can speed things up by pressing #1. By pressing #1, your call is quickly routed to a different computer and you are asked if you want to make a payment or report an outage. Those selecting the automated system to report their outage will be asked for either a phone number (most likely your old landline number, if that is all we have on file), account number or meter number. Once the system has identified the specific account,



you will be given an opportunity to give more information, such as: Broken Pole, Wire Down or Heard a Loud Noise. Reporting an outage using this method usually takes less time than speaking to a person, and the outage report flashes on our dispatcher's computer screen the exact same way it does if you speak to a live person to report the outage or if you reported the outage by text.

The more people that use the automated system or text system, the more phone lines are free for inbound calls. The automated system even gives you the option of receiving a call on your cellphone when power is restored. The text system will automatically send you a text when power has been restored. Either of these options allows you to leave during an outage and not return home until power is restored.



If you are in an accident involving a utility pole, stay in the car until help arrives.

Stay in the Car and Stay Safe

WINTER WEATHER often brings hazardous driving conditions. If your car slides off the road and hits a utility pole, **STAY IN THE CAR**, until someone from Lamar Electric arrives.

Scores of people have been electrocuted by getting out of their car after an automobile accident and bumping into downed power lines. Just because the electric wire is no longer on the pole, doesn't mean it is dead. A wire can still be energized even if it is lying on the ground.

Sparks, smoke and wiggling wires are done in the movies; don't be fooled and lose your life. **STAY IN THE CAR!**



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*

Lyle Yoder, Vice President,
Pattonville

Mike Williams, Secretary-Treasurer,
Detroit

Matthew Albus, *Roxton*

James D. Floyd, *Annona*

Jeremy D. Hamil, *Sumner*

Harry R. Moore, *Clarksville*

Ron E. Tippit, *Clarksville*

George M. Wood, *Blossom*

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



New Board Members Appointed

THE LAMAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE BOARD OF DIRECTORS recently announced the appointment of Jeremy D. Hamil and James D. Floyd to the board to serve the balance on the terms of the late Charles Dooley and the late Mark Jones.

Jeremy D. Hamil represents District 2.

“Mr. Hamil has a keen knowledge of the agriculture markets that our members must deal with. He is highly respected in the rural areas of Lamar County,” said Jerry Williams, Lamar Electric Cooperative general manager/CEO.

Hamil has lived in Lamar County for his entire life. He has been a rancher for more than 20 years and lives in Sumner with his wife, Kimberly.



JAMES D. FLOYD



JEREMY D. HAMIL

“I have had so many people give to me through the years,” Hamil said. “It is my turn to give back. I appreciate the hard work done by Lamar Electric Cooperative employees, and I look forward to serving on the board.”

James D. Floyd represents District 4. He has lived in Red River County for his whole life.

“Mr. Floyd is a great addition to the board. His business sense, familiarity and respect with the members in his district will help as

Lamar Electric responds to technology and other changes,” Williams said.

Floyd has been a local owner of a tractor repair shop and a dirt-moving contract company and has been in real estate for the past 25 years. He lives in Annona with his wife, Sharon.

“We have a good board. We are working hard to keep rates low. I think Jerry Williams is a fine man and does a great job,” Floyd said about his experience with the board so far.

Board President Allen Branch said he is pleased with the new members of the board.

“I think we have a good mix of representatives from each district,” Branch said. “The Lamar Electric Cooperative board works hard to make sure each district is represented properly. In the event that we must appoint a new member, we make sure to appropriately research the district and key players within that district. Hundreds of member names were reviewed, and several personal interviews were completed by a board committee to shorten the list before the full board interviewed finalists and selected these men.”



PHONKE/BUSINESSIMAGES/ISTOCK.COM

When you choose to use the oven, bake multiple dishes to take full advantage of the money you're spending to heat it.

Use Appliances Efficiently

JANUARY 10 is National Cut Your Energy Costs Day. No, we're not kidding—it's a real day! And a necessary one.

Follow these tips to get the most out of your appliances while using the smallest amount of energy.

- ▶ Use your microwave oven whenever possible. It's the most energy-efficient way to cook or heat small amounts of food.
- ▶ Consider turning off your oven or electric stovetop before cooking is finished. Retained heat will complete the job. Don't leave cooked food to cool in the oven.
- ▶ Clean your clothes dryer's lint filter after each load. Check the dryer's exhaust duct for leaks or clogs, and make sure it's vented to the outdoors.
- ▶ Don't overdry; it harms clothes and wastes energy. If your dryer has a moisture sensor, use it to automatically turn off the unit when clothes are dry.
- ▶ Many appliances (such as cellphone chargers, TVs and computers) use energy in standby mode, even when you aren't using them. Use a power strip to turn several off at once when they're not in use.
- ▶ Wait until off-peak evening times to run the washer, dryer or dishwasher.

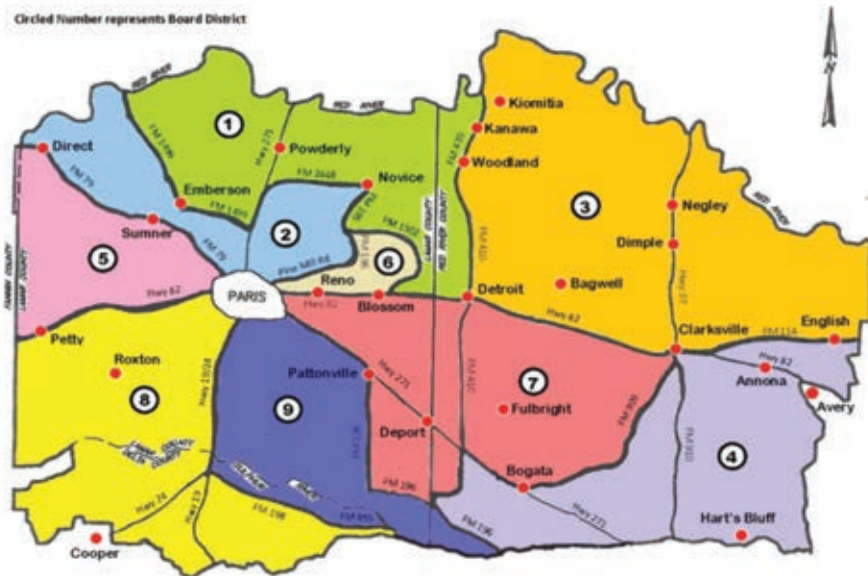
—Energy Star



Co-op Annual Meeting Set for April 16

LAMAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE WILL HOLD its annual meeting at 10 a.m., Saturday, April 16, at Love Civic Center, 2025 S. Collegiate Drive in Paris.

There will be additional information in Texas Co-op Power regarding the meeting over the next few months. Three positions on the board of directors are up for election each year. This year, members from Districts 2, 3 and 4 will vote at the annual meeting. Members residing in Districts 2, 3, and 4 who wish to become candidates for one of the three available board positions must appear in person at the main office of the cooperative and fill out a nomination form no earlier than January 17 and no later than February 16, as outlined in the co-op's bylaws. If you are unsure of which district you live in, please refer to the district map. The bylaws below spell out the qualifications to be a board member.



EXCERPT FROM LAMAR ELECTRIC BYLAWS

Article III

SECTION 3. QUALIFICATIONS.

No person shall be eligible to become a board member of the cooperative who:

- a) Has not been a member of the Cooperative for at least one year prior to nomination;
- b) Has not been a bona fide resident of the board district for which seeking election for at least one year prior to nomination;
- c) Is any way employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise or a business selling electric energy or supplies to the cooperative;
- d) Is an employee of this cooperative or has been terminated from the cooperative less than five years;
- e) Is a close relative of an employee or an employee's spouse ("close" being defined as wife, husband, grandparent, grandchild, parent, child, brother, sister,

step-parent, step-child, step-brother, step-sister, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, and/or sister-in-law);

- f) Has been convicted, pleaded guilty or pleaded "no contest" to a felony; or
- g) Is an incumbent of, or candidate for, an elective public office for which a salary is paid.

No person shall be eligible to remain a board member who:

- a) Is not a member of the Cooperative;
- b) Is not a bona fide resident of the district for which elected;
- c) Is any way employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise or a business selling electric energy or supplies to the cooperative;
- d) Is an employee of this cooperative or has been terminated from the cooperative less than five years;
- e) Is a close relative of an employee

or an employee's spouse ("close" being defined as wife, husband, grandparent, grandchild, parent, child, brother, sister, step-parent, step-child, step-brother, step-sister, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, and/or sister-in-law);

- f) Has been convicted, pleaded guilty or pleaded "no contest" to a felony; or
- g) Is an incumbent of, or candidate for, an elective public office for which a salary is paid.

Upon establishment of the fact that a board member is holding office in violation of any of the foregoing provisions, the board shall remove such board member.

Nothing contained in this section shall affect in any manner whatsoever the validity of any action taken at any meeting of the board or at any special or annual meeting of the members.



Government-in-Action Youth Tour

EACH YEAR, LAMAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE SELECTS two high school students to attend an all-expense-paid tour of Washington, D.C., which includes visiting the U.S. Capitol and meeting members of Congress. Eligible students must be in 10th, 11th or 12th grade and live full time in a residence served by Lamar Electric Cooperative or attend one of the four high schools served by the co-op: Prairiland, Roxton, Detroit and Faith Christian. Home-schooled students whose homes are served by Lamar Electric Cooperative are also eligible. Applications

must be complete with a three-page typed essay titled “What would the world be like without electricity?” and submitted to Lamar Electric Cooperative no later than 5 p.m., February 12.

The application is available online at lamarelectric.coop. Submit by email to dctrip@lamarelectric.coop or in person at 1485 N. Main St. in Paris. It’s that easy! Learn more about the Government-in-Action Youth Tour at lamarelectric.coop under the Youth Programs tab.

LAMAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE 2016 YOUTH TOUR APPLICATION

DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 12

NAME _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S) NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

NAME OF HIGH SCHOOL _____

LAMAR ELECTRIC ACCOUNT NO. _____

Applicants hereby acknowledge that the application essay becomes the property of Lamar Electric Cooperative and may be published.

SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

Academic Scholarships Available

THIS YEAR, LAMAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE will award six \$1,000 academic scholarships to students who plan to pursue an academic degree or certification from an accredited university, college, junior college, technical school or other postsecondary educational institution. Scholarship payment will be made directly to the college, university or school in one lump sum. Scholarships must be used within two years of the award date. Funds may be used for tuition, books, and room and board.

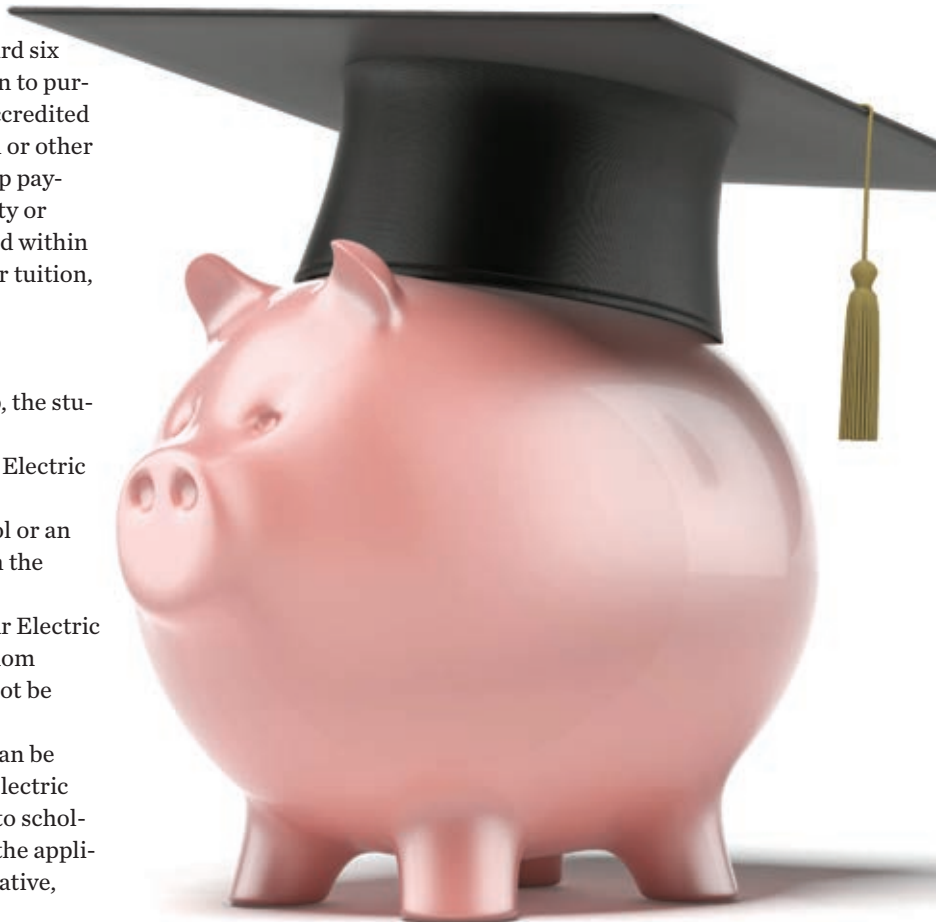
Eligibility Requirements

To be considered for a Lamar Electric scholarship, the student must:

- ▶ Live full time in a residence served by Lamar Electric Cooperative; and
- ▶ Be a graduating senior attending a high school or an accredited home extended studies program within the counties served by Lamar Electric.

Six scholarships will be given away at the Lamar Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting on April 16, in a random drawing of qualified students. The winners need not be present.

The entry deadline is April 8. The application can be found on the Lamar Electric website, www.lamarelectric.coop. Once the application is completed, email it to scholarship@lamarelectric.coop. You may also fill out the application below and mail it to Lamar Electric Cooperative, Attn: Katie Morris, P.O. Box 580, Paris, TX 75461.



LAMAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE 2016 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

DEADLINE: APRIL 8

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

NAME OF HIGH SCHOOL _____

PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S) NAME(S) _____

LAMAR ELECTRIC ACCOUNT NO. _____

PHONE NUMBER _____