

School Days in Co-op Country



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER AND CEO JERRY D. WILLIAMS

AUGUST IS BACK-TO-SCHOOL SAFETY MONTH. For parents, back-to-school time across Texas is a bittersweet reminder of the passage of time as we watch our children grow and become increasingly independent. For some of us, it is a reminder of how much our grandchildren have grown. It's also a time when we think about their safety.

At Lamar Electric Cooperative, we share that concern. That's why we are looking out for the safety of our children. With the beginning of every school year, our lineworkers keep an eye out for students on their way to and from school. Sometimes it means helping a broken-down school bus. Other times it means using our mobile radio's to report a traffic problem or a suspicious occurrence in a neighborhood. It always means being there to lend a hand, whatever the problem.

Being committed to the communities we serve means much more than just making sure your lights are on and service is reliable.

Even in these days when electric utilities face competition that's getting tougher every day, going the extra mile in member and community service is standard operating procedure for your electric cooperative. It has to be that way because electric cooperatives are unique. Every day, we hear reports of other utility companies closing their local offices and moving out of town to save money. When that happens, their customers have to do business long distance, frequently talking to a computer or people hundreds and sometimes thousands of miles away.

Lamar Electric is different. Your co-op is the only electric utility in the counties we serve that has a local office where you can go to talk about a bill, leaning tree or even a low wire. Our first obligation is to our members. You can still stop by the local office and talk to someone you know about any part of your service. When you call us, you'll speak to someone close by who knows the community and what's happening in it. Every employee of Lamar Electric lives in the local area. Often we are your neighbor down the road. Most of the employees receive electric service from the co-op, just like you. Being a local electric cooperative means doing business close to home.

Because our members are also our owners, your cooperative gives first consideration to what's in the members' best interest. At first glance, it might seem that there is little connection between school kids waiting for their bus and the line crew in the co-op truck. But look again. Members of the line crew might have kids waiting for the school bus alongside your kids. Making sure all our children stay safe is part of what holds local communities together. It's part of the work we take pride in every day.

Lineworkers look out for the safety of our children as they go to and from school.



RECIPE OF THE MONTH



Inside-Out Burgers

- 1½ pounds lean ground beef
- 1 tablespoon garlic purée
- 1½ tablespoons dry ranch dressing mix
- 1 tablespoon black pepper
- ½ cup finely shredded cheddar
- ½ cup finely shredded mozzarella
- 1 can (4 ounces) mushrooms
- ¼ cup finely chopped onion

1. Mix ground beef, garlic, ranch dressing mix and pepper, and divide into 8 equal-sized balls.
2. In a separate bowl, mix the cheese, mushrooms and onions to form a stuffing. Flatten 4 of the meatballs into thin patties and center a quarter of the stuffing on each.
3. Flatten the remaining 4 balls into patties and place them atop the first 4 to cover filling. Seal the edges together with your fingers.
4. Grill or fry the patties until cooked through, about 6 minutes per side on medium heat.

Find this and more delicious recipes online at
TEXASCOOPPOWER.COM

3 Ways To Prevent Electrical Fires

THREE OF THE MOST COMMON CAUSES of electrical fires in the home are 100 percent preventable.

More than 1,300 people die or are injured in the 26,000 house fires caused by electricity mishaps every year, the U.S. Fire Administration estimates. Here's how to rid your home of the most common culprits:

1. Extension cords. These handy wire-stretchers are not designed for continuous use. They're made to solve temporary problems: When a Christmas tree is too far from an outlet, for instance, an extension cord could be used for a couple of weeks for a few hours a day.

Too many homeowners use extension cords year-round, and that can cause them to overheat. An overheated cord is a fire hazard. Most extension cords have smaller wires than wires located in your walls.

If you don't have enough outlets, or if your heart is set on putting a lamp out of reach, have an electrician install additional outlets, including one closer to the lamp's ideal location.

2. Old wiring and outlets. If your home is more than 30 years old and its electrical wires and outlets have never been updated, a hazard could lurk behind its walls.

Electrical standards have changed over the years as the experts have become more knowledgeable about electrical safety. Also, the electrical load in your home has grown as computers, phone chargers and mega-sized TVs have moved in.

The electrical systems in older homes were designed to handle less activity. Overloading that system can trigger a fire. Likewise, electrical components don't last forever. If yours are deteriorating, it's time to replace them.

Finally, older homes have few grounded outlets. All outlets in every room that has water or that gets wet—bathrooms, kitchens, basements, garages and laundry rooms, for instance—need ground-fault circuit interrupters. Adding them is a job for a professional electrician.

3. Overloaded outlets. Even if your home is new, you can overload its outlets.

Plugging too many appliances, lamps and electronics into a single outlet can overheat the wires and the outlets. That can lead to a fire.

If your circuits are tripping often, that's a sure sign that something's wrong. Call in a pro to fix the problem.



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Member Benefits

- Level billing
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- Free bank draft service
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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.

Country Corner Events

Sharing Highways with Agriculture, August 5, 4 p.m., Love Civic Center in Paris. The Farm Bureau hosts a seminar to review the Slow Moving Vehicle sign.

Supper catered by Hole-in-the-Wall. For more information, call Paul Bayer at (903) 732-4563.



Cruisin' On The Plaza. August 5, 5-10 p.m., on the plaza, downtown Paris. Antique and classic car owners show off their cars.

Back to School Livestock Show, August 6, 9 a.m.-noon, Lamar County Fairgrounds.

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Government-in-Action Youth Tour Winners Return From Washington, DC

CAMERON EDWARDS, COURTNEY “DANI” HUNTER AND HEIDI KORNELSEN were the winners of Lamar Electric Cooperative’s 2016 Government-in-Action Youth Tour essay contest. The three winners were among approximately 125 students from other cooperatives in Texas who made the trip to the nation’s capital June 8–17 for a tour of its many historic sites.

Cameron Edwards, the son of Donnie and Amanda Edwards of Paris, is a senior at North Lamar High School. **Courtney “Dani” Hunter**, the daughter of Travis and Tonya Hunter of Pattonville, is a junior at Prairiland High School. **Heidi Kornelsen**, the daughter of Allen and Nettie Kornelsen of Sumner, is a sophomore at Faith Christian School.

Youth Tour was born from a speech given at the 1957 National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Annual Meeting by then-Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson. He was a longtime advocate of electric co-ops, having lobbied for the creation of electric cooperatives in 1937 as a young politician in Texas. “If one thing comes out of this meeting, it will be sending youngsters to the national capital where they can actually see what the flag stands for and represents,” Johnson said. With that encouragement, Texas electric co-ops began sending summer interns to work in the senator’s Washington, D.C., office. In 1958, an electric co-op in Iowa sponsored the first group of 34 young people on a weeklong study tour of the nation’s capital. Later that same year, another busload came to Washington from Illinois. The idea grew, and other states sent busloads of students throughout the summer. By 1959,

130 students were sponsored by electric co-ops to visit Washington, D.C., and see their government in action. The program has steadily grown in popularity since its beginning more than 50 years ago.

This year, the tour originated in Austin for Texas’ participants so they would have a chance to see their state government in action and tour historic sites. From there, the group flew to Washington, D.C., where they met with approximately 1,500 other students from across the nation. Once in Washington, the tour participants got to see and tour many historic places such as Mount Vernon and the U.S. Capitol, where they visited with Texas Congressman John Ratcliffe and toured the House and Senate chambers. Also included on the tour were historic sites including the National Cathedral, Ford’s Theatre and the Smithsonian museums, the Washington Monument, FDR Memorial, Kennedy Center, Kennedy’s grave and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington Cemetery, as well as the Jefferson, Lincoln, Korean War Veterans and Vietnam Veterans memorials.

Lamar Electric sponsors area students on this trip each year. To be eligible for the Youth Tour contest next year, a student must be a sophomore, junior or senior in high school and live in a home served by Lamar Electric, or attend one of the four high schools served by Lamar: Detroit, Prairiland, Roxton and Faith Christian Academy. Home-schooled students in residences served by Lamar Electric are also eligible.

What Would the World Be Like Without Electricity?

COURTNEY “DANI” HUNTER, A JUNIOR at Prairieland High School, submitted this winning essay as her entry for the Youth Tour Essay Contest for Lamar Electric Cooperative based on this question: “What would the world be like without electricity?”



COURTNEY HUNTER

Bill Bryson once said, “We forget just how painfully dim the world was before electricity. A candle, a good candle, provides barely a hundredth of the illumination of a single 100-watt lightbulb.” Electricity is very much depended upon by people to carry out their day-to-day activities; without it the world would, quite literally, be left in the dark.

If Benjamin Franklin had never discovered electricity, the world would be without many of the technological advances that are apparent today; however, more than just technology would suffer from the lack of light. The well-being of people would decline due to the fact that central heating and cooling is powered by electricity. Communication with family and friends would not be as simple as it is today. The world now revolves around the presence of light, heat and power at their fingertips. If we were left without it, even for a day, there would be chaos.

The world around us is obsessed with technology. Most cannot go a full day without checking social media, playing computer games, or lounging on the couch to watch a favorite television series. These things all require electricity. Electricity to charge the device being used and electricity to power the towers which produce the signals. Many people enjoy these pastimes; however, they would not be available if electricity was not present. Even the simplest conveniences such as turning on a light switch as you walk into a dark room would not be accessible.

Before electricity was discovered, workers only had bright light while the sun was up, and once the sun went down there was only the minute light given off by oil or gas lamps. Even the lamps were uncommon within the poorer family possessions, though. Once the convenience of lightbulbs were common, the amount of time a person was able to work became greater. If an individual was able to put in more time working on a project, for example, then they were able to finish it sooner. Thus concluding that more advancements in various fields were done at a faster rate. The technology today is available to nearly everyone. This would not be the case if a situation arose such a complete loss of electricity.

Without electricity, the medical field would not be advanced as it is today. Research conducted in labs would be impossible. The

machines used today for medical research all require electricity and have led to great discoveries that have saved many lives. Amazing surgeries are now performed using a variety of tools and methods that all require electricity. Doctors are using 3D printing to help save lives—this requires electricity. People are kept alive awaiting transplants by machines powered by electricity.

Human comfort would be diminished with no electricity. It would not be as easy to heat or cool buildings or food items. Let’s use an example, such as it being a very hot day outside: It would be quite difficult to cool a room down to a tolerable temperature. If a person becomes sick, they would have a better chance of spreading the disease they had obtained, due to the fact that germs spread faster in heat than in an a cool atmosphere. On another note, people don’t

think about many of their appliances being powered by electricity, such as the refrigerator. Without being able to keep food refrigerated as a convenience, many people were destined to get sick from eating unkept food items.

If the world was without electricity, news—being good or bad—wouldn’t travel as quickly as it does today. Some examples of this were when slavery was abolished or the news that the Civil War had ended. It took several days for the news of these important announcements to spread to every corner it needed to. Some even continued to fight during the Civil War due to the fact that the message had not yet reached them that it was over.

On a smaller scale, simply sending a letter took many days. If a family member was sick or had passed away, there was no way to quickly get the news to friends and other relatives. Businesses would also get the short end of the stick when it came to communication without electricity. There is a chance they could miss out on several opportunities such as citizens requesting job offers, the possibility of expanding your business further, and marketing options. Living without the convenience of fast messaging, the people would be left clueless in certain circumstances.

The world without electricity does not hold a bright future. So many people take for granted the amazing privilege we have with such power. There would be many things to change or become different without the power of electricity. There would be less technological advancements, there would be more illnesses, and letters or news would not be sent or received at a fast rate. Most do not realize how much they rely on electricity to carry out what is considered normal activities. It’s when we are left in the dark that we realize how significant the light source is.