

If the Power Goes Off



MESSAGE FROM
GENERAL MANAGER AND CEO JERRY D. WILLIAMS

POWER OUTAGES ARE A FACT OF LIFE— a disruptive one for co-op employees and members alike. In our December magazine there was an article that described the steps we go through to restore power, but we still get questions from some thoughtful members who wonder exactly what they should do when an outage occurs. Here are the answers to some of our members' frequently asked questions.

Q: Does the Cooperative automatically know when I have lost electric service?

A: No. We still need “some” members to call, text, go on our web site or use our telephone “automated system”. We can “ping” an individual meter or a group of meters to determine if they can respond. If they don't respond within a few minutes, we are reasonably certain power has been interrupted to that meter. This process of “pinging” a group of meters is often done after a large outage to make sure everyone came back on. We also run a report each morning of all meters that did not send in a meter reading during the night.

Q: Why do you only need “some” members to call?

A: After about 6 phone calls, our outage management system starts predicting what section of electric line is off, based on the location of the outage reports received.

Q: How can I be sure I don't need to call?

A: If you have downloaded our “smart hub” app, you can click on “service status”. If you go to our web site and click on “report an outage” you will get the message we are working to restore power. You can also call our office and press #1 for our automated system; when you attempt to report your outage using this self-service system, you will get the message we are already know about your outage. If we have a very large area off, such as an entire substation, a message about the outage will be inserted into our telephone greeting.

Q: If I did not call and report my power being off, how do your systems know my power is off?

A: As soon as a lineman confirms a main power line fuse or breaker is open, our dispatcher is notified. The outage system is updated with the information that every account downstream from the open device is out of power.

Q: What can I do to help get my power back on quickly?

A: First, check your breaker box, making sure you don't have one tripped. If you see a pole down, loud noises, sparks, limb on the line or wire down; call the co-op office and let us know, or enter this information using the smart hub app or our web page. Have your meter number or account number handy. This

will help our field crews find the problem more quickly.

Q: How do you decide whose power to restore first?

A: The outage restoration process begins at the substation where power is supplied into our distribution system. After these repairs have been made, crews work on the lines serving the greatest number of members until electricity is restored to all main lines. Then crews begin repairing lines to individual members.

Q: Why can't you tell me how long it will take to restore my power?

A: Each outage is a result of different circumstances that can make restoration times difficult to predict. During the power restoration process, crews encounter factors that affect the time it takes to find the problem and make the necessary repairs. For large outages, we will attempt to update our Facebook page on the progress to restore power. We cannot receive outage reports on Facebook.

Q: Why would a crew pass by my house without restoring power?

A: Our No. 1 goal is restoring power to as many members as quickly, safely and efficiently as possible. If you see a service crew pass by without stopping, it could be because crews are working to restore main lines; responding to an emergency; or going past your location to access lines and substations serving your area.

Q: Why does my neighbor have power, but I do not?

A: Who is affected by an outage depends upon the cause and location of the problem. If your neighbor has electricity, but you do not, it's likely that you're on separate lines. Also, make sure your power is not out because of a tripped breaker at your home. Major power lines (three phase) typically have three energized wires. About the same numbers of houses are connected to each energized wire. This could mean that every third house is connected to the same hot wire.

Q: Is a generator safe to use when I lose power?

A: A generator can be a wonderful tool during an outage, but it can also be extremely dangerous if not used properly. There are only two ways to safely use a generator: 1. Connect an extension cord from the appliance directly to the generator or 2. Have a transfer switch installed by an electrician. Without a transfer switch, a generator is a fire hazard if it is on line when electricity is restored. Improper connection of a generator also endangers service crews working to restore power. If used without ventilation or near a window, generators can cause deadly carbon monoxide poisoning.



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AND CEO**

Jerry D. Williams

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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.

CONTACT US

CALL US

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

FIND US ON THE WEB

www.lamarelectric.coop



MARK YOUR
CALENDAR!

LAMAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
ANNUAL
MEMBERSHIP
MEETING

Save the Date for Annual Meeting

THE ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING OF LAMAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE will be at 10 a.m., Saturday, April 22, at Paris Junior High School, 2400 Jefferson Road in Paris. Registration opens at 9 a.m. The business session begins at 10 a.m. and includes any necessary reports of officers, board members and committees, as well as the election of directors in districts 1, 8 and 9, 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 7. To be eligible for a scholarship, a candidate:

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

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

Capital Credits Help Member

LYNN WALTON HAS BEEN A PROUD LAMAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBER since 1976. Her husband, Royce, passed away in March 2016. With our special retirement of capital credits to the heirs of our deceased members, Mrs. Walton received enough money to build a new front porch and a handicapped ramp.

“Lamar Electric has been good to me,” she said.

Lamar Electric Cooperative is a member-owned, nonprofit cooperative. At the end of each year, any margins are allocated to each member based on the revenue paid in. The margins are used to fund capital projects such as line upgrades and system improvements instead of using loan funds. This is why each member’s share of the margins is referred to as “capital credits.”

As the co-op is financially able, the margins are returned to the members. All margins for the years before 1970 already have been returned. Lamar Electric recently sent checks for capital credits for current, active residential members who received service from 1970 through 1975.

Currently, Lamar Electric is offering a special retirement of capital credits for the heirs of deceased members, for the years before the death of the member. If your spouse or parent has passed away and has lived in a home served by Lamar Electric, please call us at (903) 784-4303 and ask to speak to someone about capital credits.

Lynn Walton, left, used her capital credits retirements from Lamar Electric to pay for a porch and ramp. Also pictured is Mark Mabry, the man who built the project for her.



Prepaid Metering Update

IF YOU’VE MISSED OUR PAST FEW ISSUES of *Texas Co-op Power*, let us fill you in on our upcoming new option for residential customers. Prepaid metering is as simple as it sounds: Consumers pay for electricity before it is used, then use the electricity until the credit is depleted.

With normal metering, you get a bill after you have used the electricity. Prepaid metering is a daily calculation of your electric usage. There’s no difference in the electricity service you receive—just in HOW and WHEN you pay for it. When you sign up, you pay as often and as much as you’d like. No deposit or credit check required!

Lamar Electric member service representatives are now being trained on working with this new option, and we plan to make the prepaid metering option available to customers in April. To learn more, give a member services representative a call at (903) 784-4303.

Lamar Electric Offers Scholarships

THE APRIL 7 DEADLINE is approaching for high school seniors to apply for one of six scholarships that Lamar Electric will award at the annual meeting April 22. For more information and an application form, visit lamarelectric.coop and apply today.

You can also email Katie Morris at katie@lamarelectric.coop for an application and more information.



HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY

from Lamar Electric!
Friday, March 17

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

begins at 2 a.m. Sunday, March 12. Remember to spring forward—set your clocks an hour ahead.



RECIPE OF THE MONTH



TVIRBICKIS | ISTOCK.COM

Raspberry Shortbread Thumbprints

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup sugar
1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon almond extract
2 cups all-purpose flour
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup raspberry jam

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. In a large mixing bowl, combine sugar, butter and almond extract. Beat at medium speed 2–3 minutes, scraping bowl often, until creamy. Reduce speed to low, add flour and beat 2–3 minutes more, scraping bowl often, until well-mixed.
3. Shape dough into 1-inch balls. Place 2 inches apart on an ungreased cookie sheet. With thumb, make an indentation in the center of each cookie (edges may crack slightly). Fill each indentation with about $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon jam.
4. Bake 14–18 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Let stand 1 minute, then remove from cookie sheet.

A version of this recipe was a winner in the *Cookie Swap* recipe contest for November 2008. Submit your spicy recipes for this month's *Some Like It Hot* contest to *Texas Co-op Power* by March 10 for a chance to win \$100 and be published. Visit texascooppower.com/contests.

Find this and more delicious recipes online at
TEXASCOOPPOWER.COM