

This May, Plug Into Safety



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER AND CEO JERRY D. WILLIAMS

THIS MONTH, I'D LIKE TO TAKE A MOMENT to reflect on the importance of safety. We all depend on electricity to power our lives, but accidents can happen when electricity is improperly used.

May is National Electrical Safety Month, and throughout the month, Lamar Electric Cooperative will work to raise awareness about the dangers of electricity. Visit our website, www.lamarelectric.coop, and our Facebook page to see safety tips and reminders.

Our Responsibility to You

We care deeply about the well-being of our members and encourage you to plug into safety especially this month. Thousands of people in the U.S. are critically injured or killed each year as a result of electrical fires, accidents and electrocution in their own homes, according to the Electrical Safety Foundation International.

To promote safety education in our local communities, we conduct safety programs for local schools and other groups. We provide electrical safety content in *Texas Co-op Power*; and we encourage the public to contact us if they see a downed power line or any other type of dangerous electrical situation. We strive to provide our communities with safe, reliable and affordable electricity and serve as your trusted energy advisor, now and well into the future.

We receive more phone calls about wires down than most any other safety subject. You can help us prioritize our response to downed wires. About 95 percent of the time the call is about a telephone or cable TV line. Without touching or getting very close to the wire, you can help us by providing some simple identification information. None of our high voltage power lines have black rubber type insulation or any other covering. If you see a downed black wire, please pass the color information to us. Almost all of our 120/240 volt secondary wires have black rubber insulation, and virtually all have two insulated wires wrapped around a silver or bare (neutral) alu-

minum third wire. Virtually all telephone and cable TV wires are black and covered in some type of rubber looking insulation. We are going to check on all downed wires, but a potentially hot 14,000 volt high voltage bare wire presents a more immediate life threatening danger compared to a 120 volt wire that is covered with insulation. We are aware of how difficult it

is to report a downed wire to the phone or cable company and understand why we generally get all the calls.

Our Responsibility to Employees

It is no accident that safety is a top priority at your electric co-op. We are committed to a culture of safety that is integral to our daily operations. We participate in programs and follow specific guidelines and protocols for electrical safety that are considered leading practices. Our linemen are required to wear personal protective equipment at all times when on the job. This includes special fire-resistant clothing that will self-extinguish, limiting potential injuries from burns and sparks. Insulated and rubber gloves are worn in tandem to protect from electrical shock.

Every lineman is tested each year on their ability to rescue a fellow worker from the top of a pole. Our employees are often first responders to automobile accidents that involve utility poles and wire. Often, other first responders such as ambulance, fire and sheriff can only keep the public back until our team of safety professionals arrive and make the scene safe for others to do their job, therefore we must continually educate and train our employees on how to make an area safe for themselves and the general public. Our safety team regularly discusses important safety issues pertaining to work in our training room and out in the field.

As the CEO/general manager of Lamar Electric Cooperative, I believe it is my duty and responsibility to raise awareness about the importance of electrical safety. Take a moment to plug into safety. Please visit www.lamarelectric.coop for tips about how to keep yourself and your loved ones safe.



Ease Into Green

Easy changes add up to earth-friendly savings

IF YOU WANT TO DO YOUR PART for the environment by using less energy but you're worried about making your home uncomfortable, make changes that nobody will notice.

Here are a few ways to conserve energy and reduce your carbon footprint that you might not have considered.

- 1. When you use your printer—at home or at work—print on both sides of the paper.**
- 2. Invest in a single power strip to tuck behind your entertainment center.** Plug your TV, DVR, DVD player, speakers and other electronics into it. Then, switch the power strip off every night before bedtime so none of those devices draws any electricity when not in use. Be sure to turn it back on for shows you want recorded.
- 3. Wait until your dishwasher is full before running it.** Also, stop washing dishes by hand: That uses up to twice the water and energy as the dishwasher.
- 4. Wash your clothes in cold water instead of hot.** This could save you up to \$40 a year.
- 5. Lower your water heater's temperature by just 2 degrees.** You won't notice the difference when you shower, but you will notice it on your energy bill.
- 6. Keep your freezer full.** It takes more energy to cool an empty space than a full one.
- 7. Hang an outdoor clothesline.** Pull clothes that are nearly dry out of the washer and hang them; they don't need to go into the dryer. That will cut the number of dryer cycles you use.
- 8. Slide your refrigerator a couple of inches away from the wall.** Pressing it up against a wall limits air circulation behind it and makes the appliance work harder, which uses more energy. Clean the lint from the coils under or behind your refrigerator.
- 9. Skip the hair dryer.** You'll save energy by air-drying rather than blow-drying—and your hair will be healthier, too.
- 10. Turn things off when you're not using them:** lights, ceiling fans, space heaters, the TV, your computer—anything that's electric. Yes, you save electricity by turning your computer off, and doing so increases the life of the computer.



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GENERAL MANAGER 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



Deposit Refunds Go Unclaimed

LAMAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE IS ATTEMPTING to locate former members who have not cashed refund checks issued between March 2013 and February 2016. The checks are for deposits, final bill refunds and membership fees.

“Many of these checks go unclaimed because members fail to provide us with a forwarding address,” said Katie Morris, director of communications for Lamar Electric. “These checks are returned to us by the postal service.”

Lamar Electric is allowed to hold funds only for a certain amount of time and is required by law to send unclaimed money to the state of Texas. For refund checks not claimed at Lamar Electric in the next couple months, claimants will need to file a claim with the state of Texas to receive their refunds.

A full list of names is below and at our office. If your name appears on the list, or if you are the legal heir to the estate of an account whose name is on the list, please contact Delana at Lamar Electric at (903) 784-4303 to claim your refund.

McFrazier, Lawayne	\$45.00	Srader, Lynzi M	\$110.25
Bonner, George	\$5.00	Louis, Debbie A	\$144.27
Hausler, Adolph	\$5.00	Ortiz, Jorge	\$14.17
Skidmore, Robert G	\$25.00	Preas, Dustin C	\$12.25
Summerford, Gladys M	\$25.00	Armstrong, Derek Lane	\$126.02
Cranford, Michael S	\$45.00	Slanker, Ted E	\$50.00
Reese, Kathie H	\$25.00	Summerford, Jenny M	\$227.58
White, George	\$5.00	Rangel, Leandro	\$137.61
Carson, Angela M	\$25.00	Bozeman, Wanda L	\$5.00
Nance, Charles L	\$25.00	Clark, Dean A	\$175.32
Smith, Nellie A	\$10.00	Smith, Paul Francis	\$156.25
Brown, Robert L	\$92.36	Honea, Anita D	\$107.30
Camp, Mildred	\$26.25	Hicks, Breah A	\$219.96
Shull, J P	\$25.00	Herrington, Anthony V	\$7.82
Wear, Julie Rene	\$10.37	Underwood, Shawnee L	\$25.00
Applegate, Christi A	\$25.00	Evans, Shelly D	\$50.00
Cook, Newt	\$18.70	Sharp, Olivia C	\$37.11
Nelson, Ashleigh	\$11.30	McKelvey, Katrina L	\$175.24
Peters, Steven D	\$25.00		



The Value of Membership

SERVICE IS OUR MISSION. Electric co-ops were established to provide safe, reliable and affordable power. This has remained our mission since day one.

You are a member, not a customer. Cooperatives are businesses owned by members. Members elect the co-op's board of directors and can run for seats on the board. All board members are first cooperative members. Your votes and participation help shape the co-op's direction.

We are a nonprofit. Unlike investor-owned utilities, which operate to make profits for stakeholders, electric co-ops do not earn profits. Instead, revenue remaining after expenses is returned to members in the form of capital credits.

We are community-focused. Electric co-ops are committed to local community development programs and projects such as Habitat for Humanity, Relay For Life, Youth Tour and others.

We are guided by a set of principles. All co-ops are guided by the Seven Cooperative Principles: Voluntary and Open Membership; Democratic Member Control; Members' Economic Participation; Autonomy and Independence; Education, Training and Information; Cooperation Among Cooperatives; and Concern for Community.

We are committed to innovation. Electric cooperatives are able to respond quickly to changing member needs. We are committed to experimenting and innovating in ways that benefit the communities and members we serve.

Happy
Mother's Day

from Lamar Electric

Sunday, May 14



The Well-Connected Lineman

WHEN LAMAR ELECTRIC WAS FORMED IN 1938, technology was primitive by any standard: digging holes by hand, walking utility poles up into those holes using pike sticks, and using ladders to service equipment. If you had to get in touch with the line crew, face-to-face communication was the only option. Members reported outages using a postcard provided by the co-op.

Today, the lineman rivals anyone when it comes to using technology to get the job done safely, quickly and accurately. Let's take a look at a few of the devices behind this evolution.

All Lamar Electric crews carry iPads loaded with color-coded maps bearing the name, address and meter number for every location. Many electric co-ops use these mobile computers for work orders detailing each day's project. We have not converted to this system but will in the future. Our staking engineers carry computers that include construction drawings, system maps and a bill of materials detailing the necessary equipment. Gone are the reams of paper and cumbersome map books of the past.

Equally important is the use of GPS. All our co-op maps have GPS coordinates for all poles and wires. This allows a lineman to enter a pole number, which directs the iPad to search the system and zoom in on the pole's exact location. County and state roads are one of the layers on our maps. A marker on the map shows the lineman exactly where he is as he travels to his selected meter or pole destination. This increases efficiency, especially for younger linemen, who may not be as familiar with local roads.

With a forward-looking infrared, or FLIR, camera, Lamar Electric crews can rapidly scan power lines and other equipment for "hot spots." A piece of distribution equipment about to fail often gets hot. Although not visible to the naked eye, it shows up clearly on a FLIR display. Scanning the system with a FLIR camera is a fast and accurate means of spotting a problem before it becomes an outage. This is done routinely in each Lamar Electric substation, where a loose connection can affect thousands of members.

Today, many lineworkers have eyes in the sky, in the form of drones. Electric cooperatives often need to survey territory that is difficult to access on foot or in quads to make repairs or locate a new power line route. Flying a drone above the area

gives a great view of the situation and allows a crew to make an assessment without having to be there in person. This is especially useful after a major storm, when roads might still be impassable. FAA regulations on drones make it more difficult for co-ops to use drones than a private citizen. Now those rules have loosened a bit, and it's likely a small drone is in our future.

Co-ops are laser-focused on getting the lights back on as soon as possible after an outage. Key in this effort is the outage management system. This system builds on a geo-tagged system, maps of poles, sophisticated engineering models of

the distribution system and an advanced metering system. The ability to "ping" every meter in a specific area after a large outage is especially helpful to detect sections of line that may not have come back on when power to the main lines were restored. This allows the crews to finish the job while in the area.

When an outage occurs, the system determines the line section where the fault is located and the extent of the outage, and then crews are sent to the spot to correct the problem. If needed, our dispatcher can track each iPad to determine the exact location of each crew, but generally this is not needed. The crews closest to the outage are sent to restore power—and essential information can be accessed via tablets, depending upon the situation. At specific locations, we have small devices that hang on the high-voltage wires to help linemen pinpoint the exact location of the fault. These devices are called "navigators." A navigator turns on an LED strobe when the fault is downstream of the device and automatically resets after four hours. Many members have assumed these devices are cameras.

Sometimes an old-fashioned visual inspection is required. During daylight hours, it can be easy to see the cause of a problem. At night, however, lineworkers need a reliable source of light. That comes from powerful LED flashlights and truck-mounted lights. In the hands of a lineman, these provide an amazing view of the lines during the darkest of nights.

Technology now permeates every aspect of cooperative operations, allowing Lamar Electric to constantly improve service. The well-connected lineworker is at the forefront of that technical evolution.



Technology allows your electric cooperative to continue improving service for members across Co-op Country.