

Cooperative Principles and Independence Day Reflect Similar Values



MESSAGE FROM
GENERAL MANAGER AND CEO JERRY D. WILLIAMS

ONE MEMBER, ONE VOTE. THIS SIMPLE EDICT describes a fundamental element of the way cooperatives operate and is one of the Seven Cooperative Principles—Democratic Member Control.

With Independence Day just around the corner, this essential component of the cooperative business model strikes a fitting chord. Our nation's founding citizens sought control over their own destinies, religious and political freedom and a system of government resistant to tyranny. They sought democracy rooted in the concept of equality—as the Declaration of Independence elegantly asserts, “all men are created equal.”



Our country's founding principles resound within your electric cooperative's structure and election process. Each year, as part of Lamar Electric Cooperative's annual meeting, each member gets to vote on director candidates—your co-op decision-makers. We implement Democratic Member Control

by putting the decision of who should serve on our board of directors in your hands. Similar to the US Congress, our service area is divided by district and each district elects a representative that lives in that district.

Representative democracy, coupled with personal investment, is crucial to the co-op way, one that is deeply rooted in connection, goodwill and equality, and maintains an overarching vision that benefits us all. That's the cooperative difference.

Autonomy and Independence is another of the Seven Cooperative Principles. As the Second Continental Congress adopted our nation's Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, so too do cooperatives establish and safeguard their independence.

We at Lamar Electric maintain our autonomy by only entering into agreements with organizations and raising capital under terms that ensure we carry out the vision and meet the needs of our members. We honor the trust of our members through judicious use of funds and know that integrity rivals electricity as our most precious resource. Without the confidence of our membership, we cease to operate effectively. So, we plan to maintain our autonomy and your trust for generations to come.

It is also important to remember that Lamar Electric Cooperative is a not-for-profit power provider. That means our mission is to provide you with the electricity you need to improve your quality of life—not turn a profit for investors. Providing reliable power at a reasonable price replaces the profit motivation. We want you to stay comfortable this summer but encourage you to only use what you can afford and don't waste any.

Finally, as July 4 nears, consider the principle of Voluntary and Open Membership. As a voluntary organization, Lamar Electric is open to all, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination. Perhaps there is no higher or more patriotic tenet to uphold in our cooperative or our country. In times of strife or discord, I look to these unifying principles for comfort and inspiration and as a reminder of all that unites us.

Side by side with our members, neighbors and friends, we honor our history this Independence Day and the spirit of cooperation that conceived this great nation.

Lamar Electric Recognized for Safety

LAMAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE HAS ACHIEVED NINE YEARS, OR 3,285 DAYS, WITHOUT a lost-time injury. Texas Electric Cooperatives Loss Control Specialist Scott Corley presented a framed certificate to Lamar Electric for reaching the milestone.



“A lineman’s job is one of the top 10 most dangerous jobs in the United States,” Corley said. “An entire organization like this one having a no lost-time incident for nine years is an exceptional safety record.”

The award was accepted by Lamar Electric Operations Manager Scott Sansom and General Manager Jerry Williams.

Lamar Electric could not have achieved this record without the commitment to safety displayed by our board of directors, managers, superintendents and employees.

“We have weekly safety meetings, and we review our safety manual continuously,” Sansom said. “We even go above and beyond the guidelines in our safety manual to ensure all employees get home safely to their families.”



One of our employees, Larry Bills, above, received an award for operating without a lost-time injury for 35 years. Bills has been a Lamar Electric employee since 1979.

We are truly a cooperative family, looking out for each other at work and off the job to ensure that all employees arrive back home to their families each and every day—all while striving to provide our members with safe, affordable and reliable electrical service.

“Safety is more than a choice we make as employees,” Williams said. “It is a way of life.”



1485 N. Main St. • P.O. Box 580
Paris, TX 75461

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.

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(903) 784-4303 local or
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www.lamarelectric.coop



Happy Independence Day

Our offices will be closed Wednesday, July 4, in observance of the holiday.



Big Bucket Farms

A local option for local farmers

A WISCONSIN TRANSPLANT IS PRODUCING ALL NATURAL soybean and canola meal and oil in the rural landscape of Red River County Texas. Nine years ago, owner Lon Berndt decided he had enough Wisconsin winters and purchased over 1,000 acres of farm land just north of Clarksville TX. He enjoyed the Texas weather and the smell of rural farm land. He planned to eventually move to Texas, but when his tenant farmer went busted, Berndt decided to try his hand at farming wheat, soybeans and canola while commuting from Wisconsin. In 2012 he had sold his Wisconsin business (Berlon Ind.) that had taken him 30 years to build, so his ties to Wisconsin were cut. Soon he decided there was no joy in being a long distance farmer. He and his new bride moved to Texas in 2013 and became a member of Lamar Electric. Having grown up in Wisconsin and spent over 30 years manufacturing attachments for skidloaders he was accustomed to working hard but had never been a farmer. One of the most popular attachments he had manufactured was a very Big Bucket to go on the front of a skid steer machine; it seemed appropriate to name his new farm Big Bucket Farms. After all, those Big Buckets helped pay for the new farm. This name seemed to fit better in Texas than “Berlon” which was a combination of his first and last names.

Berndt described farming as a “tough deal” with little pay-

out. He quickly realized there were few options when it came to selling his oilseed crops. Trucking canola all the way to Oklahoma was bringing \$14 per bushel and got lower each year till it reached \$8. He refused to sell at that price. When he was told there was nowhere else to go for a higher price, he told them he would just crush the crop himself. He was told “you can’t do that” and according to Berndt, “that was the wrong thing to tell me!” He decided to keep his crop and purchased a small farm that had bins for storing grain. He then proceeded to build his own press equipment and crushed the crops himself so he could market his own end products. He started out with a small “tinker toy” press and other farmers began coming to him asking him to press their crops as well. In the beginning it would take him 8 full days, to process a semi load. A bigger extruder, presses and feed system was needed to keep up the increasing demand from surrounding farms. He recently completed fabrication of a much larger set of machines that will complete a truck load in 28-30 hours.

He discovered that oil seed crops like soy beans, sunflower seeds, flax and canola is a major source of protein and vegetable oil for animals and humans. Unfortunately most commercial operators take a shortcut and use Solvent Extraction to process their beans and seeds. The use of Hexane solvent is



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1. A closer look at Lon Berndt's soybean meal product

2. These large bins hold soybeans prior to being pressed. Berndt calls them his "six pack."

3. Lon Berndt sits in a bucket made by Berlon Industries, his former business in Wisconsin.

4. The Big Bucket Farms extruder

5. Lon Berndt, owner of Big Bucket Farms

6. A large pile of soybean meal at Big Bucket Farms

very common. Adding a highly flammable chemical solvent to his crops did not appeal to Berndt. He wanted to produce an All Natural product and his bigger extruder would use physical pressure to squeeze the oil out of the product without any chemical additives. Doing all the fabrication himself, he installed a long screw press that provides less space for solid material as the screw turns. It looks similar to a long hamburger meat grinder; but with only one small exit hole. The immense pressure on the bean or seed also increases the temperature on the inside of the screw press to several hundred degrees. The stream squirting out the end of the press is very hot and some of the moisture becomes steam.

Two roller presses were fabricated to squeeze the oil out of the solids, and provide natural oil and a dry flake that can be used for animal feed. Laboratory test of his end product shows that it is higher in protein than other animal feeds on the market. The crude fat, which is energy for cattle, is higher than what is available from large commercial operations and the moisture content is less. Less moisture means more feed and less water per pound of product.

Berndt said "With this operation the end product can be used at animal farms right here in neighboring counties." Instead of selling to a big broker, Berndt goes directly to ranchers and dairy farmers to sell his end product to them as feed for their animals. "I can actually help the local farmers have a place to go with their crops," he stated, excitedly. At this time the oil is sold for a few different purposes, one being an ingredient for penetrating oil manufactured here in north Texas.

Lamar Electric is proud to provide the electric energy needs to our member Big Bucket Farms. Entrepreneurs like Berndt and his Big Bucket Farms will help make the rural areas of north Texas a better place to live and work.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH



RICK PATRICK

Twisted Texas Chicken Diablos

- 2 pounds chicken tenders
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup orange juice
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons dry steak seasoning
- 8 ounces cream cheese
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup chopped Texas pecans
- 12 whole fresh jalapeños
- 2 pounds thinly sliced bacon
- 2 cups barbecue sauce

1. Place chicken tenders in a bowl, add orange juice and 1 tablespoon steak seasoning. Stir, cover and set in refrigerator to marinate at least 1 hour but no longer than 4-5 hours.
2. In a separate bowl, mix cream cheese, pecans and $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoon steak seasoning. Blend well by hand and set aside.
3. When ready to assemble, wash and slice jalapeños in half lengthwise, remove seeds, then rinse again. Fill each jalapeño half with cream cheese mixture, place chicken tender on top of filling, wrap with 1 slice of bacon, and secure with large grilling skewer so that bacon stays wrapped around jalapeño. Place three stuffed jalapeños on each skewer.
4. When finished, brush all finished jalapeños generously with barbecue sauce. Bake or grill until chicken is thoroughly cooked, approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour at 350 degrees, turning halfway through cooking time and basting with more sauce. Baste one last time about 5 minutes before finishing cooking or use remaining sauce to serve.

Find this and more delicious recipes online at
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