

What to Do When the Lights Go Out



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER AND CEO JERRY D. WILLIAMS

SOME POWER OUTAGES ARE A FACT OF LIFE IF you live in the rural areas. Rural areas have more trees, creek banks that erode tree roots, electric poles with copper ground wires that work as lightning rods, and automobiles sliding off the road way, etc. One of the most common questions I get is about what to do if the lights go off. Here are the answers to some of our members frequently asked questions.

Q: Does the co-op automatically know when I have lost electric service?

A: No. Not immediately. We still need “some” members to call, text, use our free SmartHub app, 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 week day morning of all meters that did not send in a meter reading during the night. In the past 12 months we have restored power to 323 locations that were never reported out. Each one had a transformer fuse blown by lightning.

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

A: After about 6 phone calls from an area, 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 SmartHub app, you can click on “service status” or if you go to our website 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 SmartHub 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. Many times a picture of the problem can be secured from the linemen that will help our members better understand the issue. We



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

**GENERAL MANAGER
AND CEO**

Jerry D. Williams

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cannot receive outage reports on Facebook.

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

A: Our number one 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. Power from the generator can energize the transformer at your home and send high voltage power to the downed line being worked on. If used without ventilation or near a window, generators can cause deadly carbon monoxide poisoning.

Q: What about members with special medical needs?

A: In case of extended outages, members who require electricity for health care should have an emergency backup plan, such as moving to an alternative location, using a portable generator or installing battery backup for medical equipment. You can also complete our Life Support Registry Form. The form is available on our website or by calling our office. Being designated as a life support location is not an indication your power will be restored first, but it will help us try our best to help you.

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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www.lamarelectric.coop





Lamar Electric Annual Meeting Highlights

THE LAMAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP Meeting was held Saturday, April 27, at Paris Junior High School in Paris. Lamar Electric had three directors up for election, and all ran unopposed. In District 2, Jeremy Hamil received 110 votes. In District 3, Harry Moore received 96 votes. And in District 4, James Floyd received 88 votes.

These directors were declared elected and will each serve another three-year term.

Jerry Williams, general manager/CEO, updated the members on financial reports and ongoing projects.

The names of six high school seniors were drawn out of a hopper to receive a \$1,000 scholarship each. There were more



1. Jerry Williams delivers a speech.

2. Williams and volunteer Ty Henry draw prizewinners' names from the hopper.

3. Members express excitement about the prizes they won.

4. Eugene Adams wins the grand prize, a 55-inch LED high-definition TV.

5. The Lamar Electric Cooperative Board of Directors.



than 60 entries. The \$1,000 scholarships can be used at any university, college, junior college, technical school or other postsecondary educational institution of the students' choice. Money for these scholarships comes from unclaimed deposits and unclaimed capital credits retirements from our members. Each member can still file a claim with the state of Texas to recover unclaimed checks, but the law allows Lamar Electric to use a portion of these funds for scholarships.

Scholarship winners are **Sarah Morales** of Chisum High School, daughter of Ron and Susan Morales of Sumner; **Melissa Stronick** of Detroit High School, daughter of Laura Jones of the Dimple community; **Mason Ragsdale** of Paris High School, son

of Shonda Ragsdale of the Roxton area; **McKayla Scott** of Rivercrest High School, daughter of Elizabeth Scott White of the Fulbright community; **Christina Nicholson** of Chisum High School, daughter of Linda Posey of the Glory community; and **Savannah Moore** of Prairiland High School, daughter of Kimberly Moore of the Clardy community.

The names of all members present at the meeting were placed in the hopper for prize drawings. Prizes were won by 39 members. The grand prizewinner of a 55-inch high-definition TV was Eugene Adams of the Pattonville area.

See our scholarship recipients and lucky prizewinners on Page 22.

Lamar Electric Annual Meeting Highlights continued

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



SARAH MORALES



MELISSA STRONICK



MASON RAGSDALE



MCKAYLA SCOTT



CHRISTINA NICHOLSON



SAVANNAH MOORE

ANNUAL MEETING PRIZEWINNERS

Pacio Baptist Church	Cutting board, donated by TEC	Lynn Lowrey	Shovel and rake
Susan Morales	Pruners and lopper	Ashley Martin	Iron
Gary Butler	Toaster	Jennifer Norton	Zero-gravity chair
Frank McHam	Power strip and surge protector (small)	Jimmie Shields	Socket wrench set
Bobbie Thompson	Case pocketknife	Betty Rowe	Tower fan
Raymond Rosebrough	Slow cooker	Bobby Slagle	Drill
Patsy Rees	Extension cord	Daniel Beard	Yeti bucket
Doug Winn	Sawzall	Helen Dickson	Cast-iron skillet set
Harlan Alexander	Garden hose	J.P. Duke	Trifold wallet
William Splawn	Skilsaw	Jimmy Fodge	Lamp
Connie Alsap	Hand mixer	Neil Collard	Leaf blower
Eugene Adams	Sander	Jane Washington	Hedge trimmer
Debie Dean	Grinder	Carrie Betts	LED spotlight
Hilda Perkins	Toaster oven	James Hill	Fire extinguisher
James Gullion	Coffee maker	Currey Jones	Vacuum cleaner
Linda Bryan	Surge protector (large)	Carl Hausler	Brighton necklace
Rebekah Teubner	Work light	Monda Fults	Concealed weapon purse
Gerald Pardue	Hand vacuum	Ronnie Hostetler	Crock-Pot pressure cooker
Willie Pace	LED lights	Robbie White	Microwave
Marilee Miller	Blender	Eugene Adams	55-inch LED HD TV

RECIPE OF THE MONTH



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Baked Tater Salad

- 8 pounds red potatoes
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- Kosher salt and black pepper, to taste
- 1 pound bacon
- 4 bunches green onions, tops only, or chives
- 4 cups sour cream
- 2 cups mayonnaise
- 2 teaspoons dried dill weed (or 2 tablespoons fresh minced)
- ½ pound sharp cheddar cheese, finely grated

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Scrub potatoes and cut into approximately 1-inch chunks. Place in even layer in large roasting pan, brush with olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Roast in oven 30 minutes, stirring halfway through roasting, or until potatoes are tender.
3. Remove from oven, place in large mixing bowl and allow to cool to room temperature.
4. Meanwhile, render bacon until crisp and drain on paper towels. When cool, crumble into bits and put in mixing bowl.
5. Mince onion tops and add to bacon along with sour cream, mayonnaise, dill and cheese. Mix well.
6. Pour over potatoes and mix until well-coated. Refrigerate until ready to serve. ▶ Makes 35-40 servings.

Find this and more delicious recipes online at TEXASCOOPPOWER.COM

Lamar EC Recognized for Safety



Lamar EC employees accept a safety award from Ronnie Wiggins, TEC Loss Control specialist.



Jerry Williams, left, general manager/CEO, and Scott Sansom, center, operations manager, accept an award from Wiggins.



Lamar Electric employee Gretta McDowra accepts an award from Wiggins for 30 years without a lost-time work injury incident.

LAMAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE HAS REACHED A MILESTONE IN its safety record. Ronnie Wiggins, Texas Electric Cooperatives Loss Control specialist, presented a framed certificate to Lamar Electric for working 10 years without a lost-time accident. That's 3,650 days.

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

The award was accepted by Scott Sansom, operations manager, and Jerry Williams, general manager/CEO, along with several Lamar Electric employees.

This feat of no lost time is due to the commitment to safety from the co-op's board of directors, general manager/CEO,

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 Lamar Electric employee, Gretta McDowra, received an award for operating without a lost-time work injury for 30 years. McDowra has worked at the co-op since 1988.

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

"Safety is more than a choice we make as employees; it is a way of life," Williams said.