

A Fresh Start



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER AND CEO JERRY D. WILLIAMS

THERE'S A CERTAIN POETRY AND CRISPNESS TO OPENING A PRISTINE

calendar each January. The clean slate, absent scribbled-in appointments and obligations, encourages reflection and a bit of personal accounting. Rather than presenting pages of nothing, the calendar's empty grid represents promise—the potential for a fresh start in a new year.

Of course, this month, that sense of possibility is accentuated as we embark on not just a new year but a new decade. It's an especially opportune moment to think about habits and practices that we may want to change, maintain or cultivate.

At Lamar Electric Cooperative, we like to take stock in the same way. Each year presents 365 (or 366 this leap year) new opportunities to earn our members' trust and business, and January 1 is a good time for all of us here to think about the best ways to do that.

As you know, the co-op's most fundamental mission is to provide you the best possible electric service at the lowest possible cost. We also know how important it is for us to keep the lights on to facilitate your busy life schedule. That's what our staff members—from employees at the front desk to dispatch personnel and from the engineering department to our accounting team and everyone in between—dedicate themselves to, year in and year out. For their dedication, I'd like to express my

gratitude. All of them come to work each day with the thought of service to our members foremost in mind.

Our board of directors deserves a big thank-you, too. The members of Lamar Electric's board have taken on the weighty responsibility of running a multi-million-dollar utility. The commitment they display in keeping up with the changing regulatory, technological and legislative landscapes that affect our industry is incredible. Decisions made by the

board aren't undertaken lightly and require hours of study, as directors know that the outcomes of those choices affect thousands of their fellow members. Their efforts are largely considered community service because all they get in return is a couple hundred dollars a month and the satisfaction of knowing their Cooperative is taking care of business. Their diligence is appreciated, and I strive every day to emulate their conscientiousness.

A final thank-you goes to you, our members, who make all our jobs possible. Your support and understanding when things don't go right, and your input, whether via suggestion, compliment or complaint, helps us do a better job for you.

Without you, there would be no Cooperative. For you, for this co-op and for ourselves, you can count on us at Lamar Electric Cooperative to do our best to be worthy beneficiaries of 2020's bounty and promise.



F.HONG | ISTOCK.COM

Space Heaters Need Space

LIKE ANY ELECTRICAL APPLIANCE, PERSONAL space heaters need their space.

It's especially important to position space heaters at least 3 feet away from anything that could catch on fire. Although the handy appliances come with lots of safety features nowadays, it's still up to you to make sure they don't get close enough to be a danger.

Here's how important that is: The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that more than 25,000 residential fires every year are associated with the use of space heaters, causing more than 300 deaths.

To use a space heater safely, use it wisely. Follow these tips for smart use:

- ▶ Stick with space heaters that carry the mark of UL or another nationally recognized testing laboratory. Those models will offer the most current safety features.

- ▶ Keep all objects, bedding, people and pets at least 3 feet away from the space heater.

- ▶ Replace your space heater if it seems to short out or if its electrical cord is frayed or otherwise damaged.

- ▶ Look for safety features such as automatic shut-off that trips if the device tips over.

- ▶ Place your heater on the floor, not on a stand or a desk, where it could get knocked over.

- ▶ Choose a space heater with a thermostat to avoid overheating the room.



BYCHKHIN_OLEKANDR | ISTOCK.COM

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Lamar Electric To Award \$6,000 in Scholarships

LAMAR ELECTRIC WILL AWARD SIX \$1,000 ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS TO STUDENTS who plan to pursue an academic degree or certification from an accredited university, college, junior college, technical school or other postsecondary educational institution. Scholarship payment will be made directly to the institution in one lump sum and must be used within two years of the award date. Funds may be used for tuition, books, and room and board.

Eligibility Requirements

To be considered for a Lamar Electric scholarship, a student must:

- Live full time in a residence served by Lamar Electric.
- Be a graduating senior attending a high school or an accredited home-school program within the counties served by the cooperative.

Six scholarships will be given away at the Lamar Electric Annual Meeting on April 18 in a random drawing of qualified students. The winners need not be present.

Entry deadline is April 3.

The application can be found on our website, lamarelectric.coop. Submit by email to scholarship@lamarelectric.coop or fill out the application below and mail it to **Lamar Electric Cooperative, Attn: Kristen Bollman, P.O. Box 580, Paris, TX 75461**.



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

GENERAL MANAGER AND CEO

Jerry D. Williams

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Blossom

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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

FIND US ON THE WEB

www.lamarelectric.coop



Attention High School Students: Apply Now for Youth Tour

EACH YEAR, LAMAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE SELECTS TWO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TO attend the Government-in-Action Youth Tour, an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., that includes visiting the U.S. Capitol and meeting members of Congress.



Eligible students must be in 10th, 11th or 12th grade and live full time in a residence served by Lamar Electric or attend one of the three high schools served by the co-op: Prairiland, Detroit and Faith Christian. Home-schooled students served by the co-op are also eligible.

Applications must include a three-page typed essay. The essay topic this year is, "What would life be like without electricity?" The essay must be submitted to Lamar Electric no later than **5 p.m. Friday, February 7**.

The application is available on the Lamar Electric website, lamarelectric.coop. Submit by email to dctrip@lamarelectric.coop or in person at **1485 N. Main St.** in Paris. It's that easy! Learn more about Youth Tour at lamarelectric.coop. Look for Youth Tour after clicking on the Youth tab.

LAMAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE 2020 YOUTH TOUR APPLICATION

DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 7

NAME _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S) NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

NAME OF HIGH SCHOOL _____

LAMAR ELECTRIC ACCOUNT NO. _____

Applicants hereby acknowledge that the application essay becomes the property of Lamar Electric Cooperative and may be published.

SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

RECIPE OF THE MONTH



KEN CAVE | ISTOCK.COM

Green Chile Cheddar Cheese Soup

4 large baking potatoes
1 small onion, chopped
4 cans (about 7 cups) chicken or vegetable broth, or 4 bouillon cubes plus water
2 teaspoons salt, or less to taste
1 cup milk, cream or half-and-half
1 can (4 ounces) chopped green chiles
1 cup shredded cheddar cheese, plus more for garnish
Pepper

1. Peel potatoes and chop into medium dice. Put potato and onion in a slow cooker and add broth to cover, reserving remaining broth. You may substitute water and 4 bouillon cubes. Add salt.

2. Cover and bring to a boil on high, then lower heat and simmer 30 minutes or until potatoes are just tender. Remove half of the potatoes to a colander or bowl. Mash remaining potatoes in cooking broth with a potato masher or spoon. Return reserved potatoes to cooker along with milk, green chiles and cheese.

3. Let simmer 30–45 additional minutes. Add pepper to taste. If soup is too thick, add extra broth.

4. Serve with extra shredded cheese, crumbled bacon, sour cream and green onion on top, if desired.

► Serves 6.

Find this and more delicious recipes online at
TEXASCOOPPOWER.COM

Annual Meeting Set for April 18

LAMAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE WILL HOLD ITS ANNUAL MEETING

at 10 a.m. Saturday, April 18, at the Love Civic Center, 2025 S. Collegiate Drive in Paris. There will be additional information in *Texas Co-op Power* regarding the meeting over the next few months.

Three positions on the board of directors are up for election each year, and this year, districts 1, 8 and 9 will be voting for their directors at the annual meeting. Members residing in districts 1, 8 and 9 who wish to be a candidate for one of the three available board positions must appear in person at the main office of the cooperative and fill out a nomination form between January 19 and February 18, as outlined in the co-op's bylaws. If you are unsure of which district you live in, please refer to the district map, below.

Lamar Electric Cooperative Bylaws Excerpt

ARTICLE III. SECTION 3. Qualifications. No person shall be eligible to become a board member of the cooperative who:

- a) Has not been a member of the Cooperative for at least one year prior to nomination;

b) Has not been a bona fide resident of the board district for which seeking election for at least one year prior to nomination;

c) Is any way employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise or a business selling electric energy or supplies to the cooperative;

d) Is an employee of this cooperative or has been terminated from the cooperative less than five years;

e) Is a close relative of an employee or an employee's spouse ("close" being defined as wife, husband, grandparent, grandchild, parent, child, brother, sister, stepparent, stepchild, stepbrother, stepsister, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, and/or sister-in-law);

f) Has been convicted, pleaded guilty or plead "no contest" to a felony; or

g) Is an incumbent of, or candidate for, an elective public office for which a salary is paid.

Circled Number represents Board District

No person shall be eligible

to remain a board member who:

- a) Is not a member of the Cooperative;
 - b) Is not a bona fide resident of the district for which elected;
 - c) Is any way employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise or a business selling electric energy or supplies to the cooperative;
 - d) Is an employee of this cooperative or has been terminated from the cooperative less than five years;
 - e) Is a close relative of an employee or an employee's spouse ("close" being defined as wife, husband, grandparent, grandchild, parent, child, brother, sister, stepparent, stepchild, stepbrother, stepsister, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, and/or sister-in-law);
 - f) Has been convicted, pleaded guilty or plead "no contest" to a felony; or
 - g) Is an incumbent of, or candidate for, an elective public office for which a salary is paid.

Upon establishment of the fact that a board member is holding office in violation of any of the foregoing provisions, the board shall remove such board member.

Nothing contained in this section shall affect in any manner whatsoever the validity of any action taken at any meeting of the board or at any special or annual meeting of the members.

Circled Number represents Board District

