

The Challenges of Trees and Power Lines



MESSAGE FROM
GENERAL MANAGER AND CEO JERRY D. WILLIAMS

RIGHT-OF-WAY MAINTENANCE ENSURES

Lamar Electric Cooperative delivers safe and reliable electric service. Clearing limbs and trees away from power lines not only helps prevent outages and blinking lights, it also reduces many potential hazards. In the past, Trees and brush accounted for over half the Lamar Electric power outages. That statistic has now been cut in half due to changes we made to our right of way program several years ago. Lamar Electric has developed a system wide right-of-way management program overseen by a licensed arborist that includes various mechanical clearing methods and low-volume herbicide applications.

Why We Cut Trees

Safety. A very important reason for keeping rights-of-way clear is safety. Kids climbing trees can be a tragedy waiting to happen if they touch a limb in contact with an energized line or touch the line itself. The result can be severe injury or even death. A child playing in the yard that happens to touch the trunk of a tree at the same time the wind blows a limb into the electric wire can result in the child being electrocuted. Adults also are at risk if working around lines in trees. Never touch an electrical wire or anything it is in contact with; always assume it is conducting electricity and is dangerous.

Lamar Electric, like all utility companies, must comply with National Electric Safety Code standards to keep trees out of power lines for safety reasons. If you are planning to trim or remove a tree near any power line, please contact us first. Our trained personnel can identify potential safety or reliability threats and advise you on what can be done. Often times, the power line can be de-energized while you cut the tree. These requests are pretty common for yard trees that become a danger to the home.

The Program

Giving the trees a haircut every few years became too expensive many years ago. Our program is to cut the trees and brush to the ground, which is inside the right-of-way easement. We then treat the stumps with a herbicide to prevent sprouting out. Trees or brush with fence wire attached are cut off at post top height. About every 3-4 years a herbicide is applied to the easement area using low volume back pack sprayers worn by

men that walk the right of way spraying. This is done to take care of brush that sprout up from remaining roots or seeds that drop to the ground. About every 4-5 years, the trees that have limbs extending into the easement area will be side trimmed with a machine.

Cutting trees before they become a hazard, helps improve service reliability. We all appreciate trees, which beautify our property, cool our homes and provide privacy. But we need electricity. Our consumer-members expect reliable electric service.

Trees that fall into power lines due to high wind or storms can knock out power to hundreds of members in a second. Not only do lines come down, but utility poles can snap due to the weight of fallen trees—potentially causing lengthy outages.

Pruning trees is only a stopgap because the trees will grow back. Therefore, any tree within the right-of-way easement will typically be permanently removed. Not all storm-related outages can be prevented, but we can certainly minimize the damage by keeping rights-of-way clear.

We Need Your Help

We grow accustomed to our surroundings and this blinds us to some details. Why else would so many people plant trees or bushes directly under the power line without even looking up? When the tree or crepe myrtle bush is small it is probably hard to imagine what will happen in just a few years. The problem is we are obligated to imagine the future and take steps today to prevent problems from occurring down the road.

Before planting trees in your own yard, think about how tall they could grow and how wide their branches could spread. Although our right-of-way easement is typically 15 feet on each side of the power line, a good rule of thumb is at least 25 feet of ground-to-sky clearance on each side of our utility poles to give power lines plenty of space and allow room for small trees to branch out without the tips being cut off. Choose tree varieties carefully, and plant with power lines in mind.

As your Cooperative, Lamar Electric will strive to provide reliable safe electricity in an economical manner. We all live in this beautiful abundantly tree filled part of Texas together, so we will do our best as your Cooperative to retain the beauty of the area while keeping the wires safe and reliable.

Lamar Electric Annual Meeting Canceled

THE OFFICIAL NOTICE OF THE LAMAR ELECTRIC ANNUAL MEMBER MEETING WAS PRINTED in the April issue of *Texas Co-op Power*.

Historically, the annual member meeting has taken place in April each year. We announced the postponement of this year's annual meeting on our website and Facebook page in March. This precaution was taken with our members in mind as we continued to evaluate concerns surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions on gatherings of more than 10 people.

Now the board of directors has decided to cancel the meeting for 2020. This decision is due to the rising number of cases of COVID-19 across our service area and social distancing recommendations. The board of directors is taking these steps to protect the health and safety of our members and employees.

The director elections that were scheduled to take place in April for districts 1, 8 and 9 will now take place at the annual meeting in April 2021, in accordance with our bylaws. According to General Manager Jerry Williams, "Members who live in these districts will be able to vote in the director elections next year." The directors who would have been up for election at the 2021 meeting will have their term extended until the next annual meeting, in 2022, as stated in our bylaws.

"We hope to be able to host next year's member meeting at the new Lamar Electric headquarters building," said Kristen Bollman, communications director.

Sleep Better

YOUR BEDROOM IS MORE THAN YOUR BODY'S RECHARGE ZONE. IT'S NOT ONLY WHERE you rest after a day's work but also where you plug in your personal electronics for powering up. They get plugged in alongside lamps, fans and other electronics in your room.

All of the devices combined in your bedroom could create a high demand on your home's electrical system. You can give your system some rest and increase the safety of your bedroom environment by following these guidelines.

- ▶ Always turn off lamps when you leave the room for long periods of time.
- ▶ Replace lamps that have cracked or damaged cords.
- ▶ Use lightbulbs with the appropriate wattage for the light fixture or switch to LED bulbs.

LED bulbs.

- ▶ When using a rechargeable battery, be sure it's in the proper charger.
- ▶ Unplug battery chargers and power adapters when they're not in use.
- ▶ Clean and tighten the screws on your ceiling fan to eliminate wobbling.
- ▶ Give large window air conditioning units separate electrical circuits to avoid overloading the system.

overloading the system.

- ▶ Before installing a portable air conditioner, make sure the circuit and outlet can bear the load.
- ▶ Turn portable air conditioners and fans off when you leave the room.



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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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

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www.lamarelectric.coop



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Tips for Tiptop Kitchen Efficiency

THE KITCHEN IS ONE OF THE HOME'S BIGGEST ENERGY CONSUMERS, SO KEEPING IT IN tiptop shape can help save money on your electric bill.

When replacing appliances, look for Energy Star-certified products. An Energy Star-rated refrigerator uses half as much electricity as a 15-year-old fridge, and an Energy Star-rated dishwasher is 12% more efficient than noncertified models.

Make sure your refrigerator door seals are airtight. Test them by closing the door over a piece of paper or a dollar bill so it is half in and half out of the refrigerator. If you can pull the paper or bill out easily, the latch may need adjustment, the seal may need replacing, or you may consider buying a new unit.

Keep your refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible.

Turn off the heated dry function on your dishwasher and opt to air-dry dishes instead. Be sure to run only full loads, as dishwashers take the same amount of energy to wash a partial load as a full one.

Cover pots while cooking to keep the heat in and lessen cooking time by up to 10%.

Use the right size burner for your pot. A burner with a larger circumference than the pot wastes energy.

Cook with copper pots or copper-bottomed pots on electric stoves. Copper is an efficient conductor of heat, which means it takes less time to get hot.

Make sure your pots and pans are flat on the bottom to ensure good contact with heating elements. Warped pots and pans don't heat up as well and waste energy.

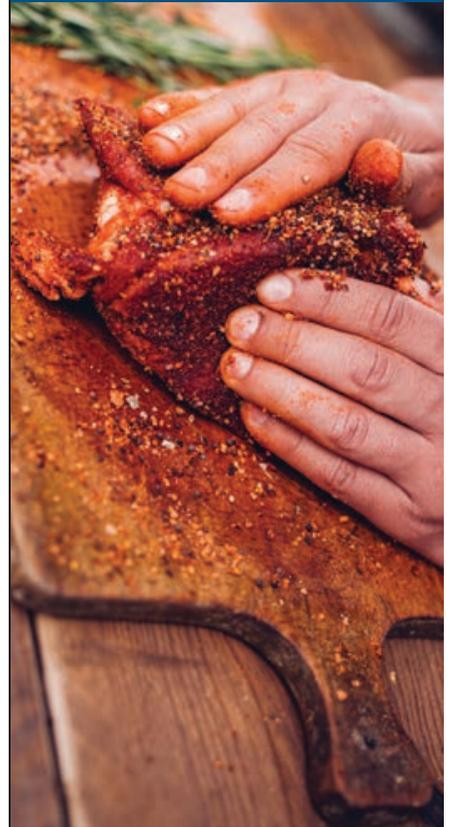
When you can, use your microwave instead of the stovetop.

Don't open the oven while baking. Opening the oven door can reduce the temperature by about 25 degrees each time. If you need to take a peek, turn on the oven light instead.

Use glass or ceramic dishes in the oven. They retain heat better than metal pans, allowing lower oven temperatures when baking.

Unplug appliances when they're not in use. Coffeepots, toasters and blenders that have multiple functions can consume electricity even when they're off.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH



WUNDERVISUALS | ISTOCK.COM

Basic Barbecue Rub

4 parts salt
4 parts brown sugar
4 parts cracked or coarse-ground black pepper
4 parts paprika
2 parts garlic or onion powder
1 part chili powder
Ground red pepper (cayenne, ancho or chipotle, for example), to taste

1. Thoroughly mix spices in a bowl with a tight lid.
2. Rub a generous amount of spice mix on all surfaces of meat before grilling or smoking. Keep surplus rub covered.

COOK'S TIP When using this rub with pork, try adding ginger, dry mustard or turmeric. For beef, crank up the red pepper. Toss in a little lemon pepper or citrus zest with chicken.

Find this and more delicious recipes online at
TEXASCOOPPOWER.COM



NEESHAM | ISTOCK.COM

Lamar Electric To Award Scholarships

LAMAR ELECTRIC WILL AWARD SIX \$1,000 ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIPS JULY 31. TYPICALLY, Lamar Electric awards these academic scholarships at our annual meeting in April. Despite the cancellation of this year's annual meeting due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the drawing for scholarships will still take place.

Lamar Electric has reopened and extended the scholarship application deadline. Applications must be received at the cooperative office no later than **5 p.m. Friday, July 24.** Recipients will be selected in a random drawing of qualified students that will stream live on the Lamar Electric Facebook page **Friday, July 31, at 10 a.m.** The winners of the scholarships will be announced on Lamar Electric's Facebook page and website.

"The money used for these scholarships is from unclaimed deposits or refunds from our members," said Jerry Williams, general manager. "The law allows Lamar



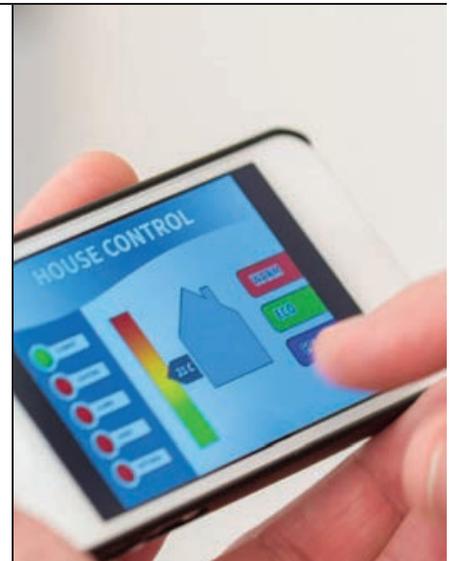
Electric to use a portion of these funds for scholarships; otherwise, the money is turned over to the state. Each member can still file a claim with the state of Texas for unclaimed checks."

To be considered for a Lamar Electric scholarship, a student must live full time in a residence served by Lamar Electric and be a graduating senior attending a high school or accredited extended studies program within the counties served by the cooperative.

"We are proud to support the academic success of local students," said Kristen Bollman, communications director. "During the past 21 years, Lamar Electric has awarded \$80,000 in scholarships to local high school seniors."

To get more information and fill out an application, please visit our website, lamarelectric.coop. There is no need to send in an application if you have already applied. Students who are unsure if they have applied or if their entry has been received can email kristen@lamarelectric.coop to verify.

Applications can be submitted by email to scholarship@lamarelectric.coop or mailed to **Lamar Electric Cooperative, Attn: Kristen Bollman, P.O. Box 580, Paris, TX 75461.**



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Power Tip

Raising the temperature setting on your thermostat just 1 degree could save 6%–8% on energy use. An efficient summer thermostat setting is 78 degrees.



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Happy Independence Day

Saturday, July 4

Our offices will be closed Friday, July 3, in observance of the holiday.