



MESSAGE FROM  
GENERAL MANAGER AND CEO  
JERRY D. WILLIAMS

## Tree Cutting Improves Service for All Members

**ONE OF THE THINGS** I love most about this part of Texas is the natural beauty that surrounds us. Northeast Texas is simply a wonderful place to live. Every month we hear of someone who has purchased land in this area to escape the big city. We are fortunate to have so many trees that offer beauty, shade and habitat for all sorts of birds and other wildlife. We know that you appreciate our community for many of the same reasons.

That's why Lamar Electric Cooperative strives to balance maintaining beautiful surroundings with ensuring a reliable power supply by keeping power lines clear in rights-of-way. I have been surprised to learn that many of the folks moving from the big city don't know what an easement or right-of-way is. I guess I would be just as lost if someone asked me about city bus routes or pick up points. While we recognize and appreciate the beauty of trees, there are three main benefits to removing trees from ROW areas. But before I touch on those reasons, let me first explain what a right-of-way is and how it may impact you.

All the land that we use to construct, maintain, replace and repair underground and overhead power lines makes up our rights-of-way. These protected

areas enable the co-op to provide clearance from trees and other obstructions that could hinder power line installation, maintenance or operation. ROW areas are typically 15 feet on each side of the power line. Most of the time ROW areas are located along county roads, with the poles just inside the fence. Some are on state highway public land. Regardless, Lamar Electric must be able to maintain the power lines above and below the ROW. That means no permanent structure should be constructed in this narrow strip of land and no trees should be planted close enough to cause limbs to extend into this area.

Mowing the area in front of your home is recommended and will keep bushes from volunteering to grow in the area. This makes a great place to plant flowers, but not tall growing plants like crepe myrtle. The tall growing plants will eventually get tall enough to reach the electric wires and for that reason will likely get sprayed the next time herbicide is applied to the ROW area to kill out brush. The goal of our vegetation management program is to provide reliable power to our members while maintaining the beauty of our community. Proactive vegetation management benefits co-op members in three tangible ways.



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#### **Board of Directors**

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### **Safety**

First and foremost, we care about our members and put their safety and that of our linemen above all else. Overgrown vegetation and trees pose a risk to power lines. For example, if trees are touching power lines in our members' yards, they can pose a grave threat to families. If children can access those trees, they can potentially climb into a danger zone. Electricity can arc, or jump, from a power line to a nearby conductor such as a tree limb. A proactive approach also diminishes the chances of branches or trees falling during severe weather events, which make it more complicated and dangerous for linemen to restore power. 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 lines, 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.

### **Reliability**

Of course, one of the biggest benefits of a smart vegetation management program is reliability. Giving the trees a haircut every few years became too expensive many years ago and is not really healthy for the tree. Our program to maintain safety and reliability is to cut the trees and brush to the ground, which is inside the right-of-way easement. The stumps are then treated with a herbicide to prevent them from sprouting new growth. Limbs extending into the ROW from trees that are located outside the ROW are cut off to keep them back from the power lines. Strategic tree trimming reduces the frequency of downed lines that cause power outages. Tree limbs that fall into power lines due to high wind or storms can knock out power to hundreds of members in a few seconds. Proactive cutting and trimming keep lines clear to promote reliability.

### **Affordability**

As you know, Lamar Electric is a not-for-profit cooperative, and that means we strive to keep our costs in check to keep our rates affordable. This extends to our approach to vegetation management. If trees grow too close to power lines, the potential for expensive repairs also increases. Trimming the same tree every few years is only a stopgap and expensive procedure. Because of the astronomical expense of such a procedure, any tree within the ROW easement is typically permanently removed. Effective tree cutting and other vegetation management efforts keep costs down for everyone.

Our community is a special place. We appreciate the beauty trees provide, but we also know you depend on us to provide reliable electricity. 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. ■

## **Contact Us**

For information and to report outages, please call us.

**(903) 784-4303**

#### **MEMBER BENEFITS**

- Level billing
- Automated meter reading
- Free bank draft service
- E-Bill
- Visa and Mastercard accepted
- Prepaid metering

#### **TEXAS CO-OP POWER**

Lamar Electric provides *Texas Co-op Power* and *TexasCoopPower.com* to give you information about events, safety, special programs and other activities of your cooperative. If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact the co-op office.

#### **VISIT US ONLINE**

lamarelectric.coop





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### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

#### Independence Day

Sunday, July 4

Our offices will be closed Monday, July 5, in observance of the holiday.

#### National Chili Dog Day

Thursday, July 29

#### International Day of Friendship

Friday, July 30

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## 2 Devices That Prevent Shock, Fire

**TWO IMPORTANT SAFETY** devices can protect consumers from electrical hazards in the home: ground-fault circuit interrupters and arc-fault circuit interrupters. Each protects against different dangers: GFCIs address shock hazards, and AFCIs fight fire risks.

GFCIs have cut the number of home electrocutions by more than half since they were adopted for widespread use in the 1970s, according to Electrical Safety Foundation International. By detecting ground faults—an unintentional electric path between a source of current and a grounded surface—a GFCI protects against electric shocks, including electrocutions.

GFCIs constantly monitor electricity moving through a circuit. If the current flowing out differs from what's returning, the device quickly switches off power.

If you have ever experienced an electric shock, it probably happened because part of your body contacted an electrical current and provided a path for the current to go to ground. That can cause serious injury.

AFCIs help prevent home fires caused by arcing faults in damaged or deteriorated wires and cords. Home wiring problems are associated with more than 40,000 house fires each year, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission. These fires kill more than 350 and injure 1,400 victims annually.

Nominal arcs may happen in the brushes of a vacuum sweeper or light switch, producing the small electric shocks that occasionally surprise us. More dangerous arcs can occur in frayed cords. When unwanted arcing occurs, it generates temperatures that can ignite nearby combustibles such as wood, paper and carpet.

Conventional circuit breakers only respond to overloads and short circuits. By the time a fuse or circuit cuts power to defuse these conditions, a fire may have already started. AFCIs use unique current-sensing circuitry to discriminate between normal and unwanted arcing conditions. In the event of an arcing fault, the AFCI shuts off the electricity flowing through a circuit. ■

# Capital Credits Allocated to Member Accounts

LAMAR ELECTRIC RECENTLY allocated 2020 capital credits to each member's account. As a nonprofit organization, after the end of each fiscal year, the cooperative must determine what margins were made during the year and allocate these margins to the members' equity accounts. The margin is the revenue received in excess of all operating costs.

These margins will be returned to members as approved by the board in the future and when doing so will not weaken the financial condition of the cooperative. At this time, all margins from 1938 through 1969 have been returned to the members. Most of the capital credits from 1970 through 1975 have been returned also. Eventually all margins will be paid to each member. In the meantime, the funds are used to construct new lines or make other capital improvements to the electrical system, even though the amount is credited to each member's equity account. For this reason, we often refer to these margins as "capital credits." Capital credits cannot be used to pay your electric bill.

These capital credits remain even if the member is no longer receiving service from Lamar Electric. It is very important that departing members keep the cooperative informed of their current mailing addresses in the future so they can receive capital credits refunds when they are paid.

Capital credits for each member in 2020 were calculated by multiplying each member's bill by 0.1018412. For example:

If your total billing for 2020 from the cooperative (consisting of energy billing and power cost adjustment) was \$2,000, simply multiply that amount by 0.1018412. The product is \$203.68.

In calculating your total bill, include any security light charge if applicable, but do not include any tax, service or miscellaneous charges.

If you have any questions concerning these calculations, please contact the Lamar Electric Cooperative office. ■

*(This article is intended to serve as an official notice of the Capital Credit Allocation for 2020.)*



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## Grilled Jalapeño and Tomato Salsa

**6 jalapeño peppers,  
seeded and stemmed**  
**3 tomatoes**  
**1 tablespoon chopped  
fresh rosemary**  
**2 cloves garlic, chopped**  
**½ teaspoon olive oil,  
plus more as desired**  
**Salt, to taste**

1. Prepare a grill for direct heat cooking and build a medium-high fire.
2. Grill the jalapeños and tomatoes until blistered, turning as needed for even cooking, then place in a paper sack to steam.
3. Combine the rosemary, garlic and olive oil in a food processor and pulse into a coarse purée, then allow the mixture to macerate for a few minutes. Add jalapeños and pulse until the peppers are chopped. Remove to serving dish.
4. Place the grilled tomatoes in the food processor, add a pinch of salt and pulse 4–5 times, then fold into the pepper mixture. Taste for seasonings and adjust salt as desired.

MAKES 1½ CUPS

 Find this and more delicious recipes online at [TexasCoopPower.com](https://www.texascooppower.com).