



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER AND CEO JERRY D. WILLIAMS

Growing Up Co-op

I LOVE THE FEELING of being able to walk into my favorite locally owned shop, restaurant or store knowing that its profit, product and labor can have positive impacts on my community. Try using the local hardware store or plumbing store instead of visiting one of the big box stores, and see if you don't get a different level of service. The spirit of neighbors helping neighbors is embodied in these local businesses, just as it is in Lamar Electric Cooperative.

Electric Co-ops are as local and community centered as they come. Unfortunately, many of the young folks have not been educated on the history of their local area. Rural Electric Cooperatives were founded as a means for bringing electricity to communities that didn't interest profit-seeking investor-owned utilities. The rural people were told they should move to town if they wanted electricity. Electric co-ops have been a cornerstone of commu-

Co-op lines is an investment in our community and its members. If the lights do go out, you can be sure the people that respond are your neighbors and appreciate living in the rural area where neighbors help neighbors.

You see, Lamar EC is a not-for-profit business. Every year, 100% of the margins (income minus expenses) are allocated back to the members of the Co-op who had service that year. The allocation is calculated based on the amount they paid that year for their electric use. These margins are initially used for capital improvements instead of borrowing money; therefore they are often referred to as Capital Credits. These Capital Credits are returned to the members (that's you) in future years when doing so will not weaken the financial condition of the Co-op.

This means that after all Co-op expenses are paid, any additional money we earn goes back into our community, instead of into a shareholder's pocket—which is pretty great. In the past 8 years over \$4.6 million have been returned to our members.

And because we are owned by you, our members, we have a vested interest in making sure our community prospers. We do this by investing in economic development by helping provide local businesses with the electricity facilities they need to expand. Donations to rural community service projects are always on our budget list. Local community youth are helped through our scholarship program, and our Washington D.C. youth tour program. Almost \$86,000 in scholarships has been awarded to local



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nity and economic development in rural America and beyond for decades.

That feeling I get when I visit local businesses in our community is the same feeling I get when I walk into work at the Co-op every day. It's a feeling of pride. I'm proud to be part of an organization that serves the community where we live instead of a group of shareholders who may never set foot in our service territory.

Living on Co-op lines is more than just knowing there are people out there working to bring you safe, reliable and affordable electric service. Living on

graduating seniors.

I hope that you view Lamar Electric Cooperative not just as your electric utility provider but as a local business that brings pride and prosperity to our community. If you're interested in learning about how we keep the lights on and more please stop by the Co-op, visit our website or give us a call. We love being a part of this community, and we hope you feel the same way. ■



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Security Tips for Connected Devices

THERE IS A LARGE variety of gadgets and devices that claim to make our homes smarter, safer and more efficient. But as with any new technology, consumers should take extra precautions to keep their data safe.

Get creative with passwords. Consider creating the longest password permissible, and use familiar phrases you'll remember, like the lyrics to your favorite song. A great example would be "DON'tStOpBelIevIng" or "@in'tNOMount@InHghEnOugh"

Avoid Phishing (Fishing) scams. Phishing scams are those phone calls you receive non-stop from an unknown number and those texts and emails you get that are too good to be true, like winning a \$100 Amazon gift card. Phishing scams can even be performed on social media sites. Avoid giving out personal and financial information to unknown and suspicious sources.

Dodge the robocalls. Robocalls are those phone calls you get that are concerned about your extended car warranty, paying off your student loans, and lowering your credit card interest. Don't be fooled by the Caller ID because with today's technology, those robocallers can change their number to whatever they want, even a number that looks to be a local number. Credit card companies and the IRS will not call, they will mail a letter. Once you realize that it is a robocall, hang up.

Connect and protect. Whether it's your computer, smartphone, game console, camera or other connected device, the best defense is to stay on top of things by updating to the latest security software, web browser and operating system. ■



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For information and to report outages, please call us.

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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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Beware of Solar Scams

IN SOME AREAS in the U.S., authorities are warning against impostor scams taking advantage of consumer interest in the solar power industry. With solar farms popping up around our communities, Lamar EC wants you to be safe.

The scheme goes like this: A solar power company falsely claims to be some kind of state agency for clean energy or a government-affiliated entity. They use this fraudulent identity to falsely convince consumers that their business' services are being performed on behalf of a state, county or city.

In a recently reported scam, solar sales representatives provided a company name that appeared to be connected with a state government to gain access to a resident's home. Once inside, the scammers took pictures of the residents' appliances and energy meters and aggressively marketed vague solar products to them. These scammers disparaged other legitimate solar companies in an attempt to persuade the residents to purchase would-be solar power systems from them.

Consumers may be more likely to believe these sales representatives because they present themselves as employees of official government offices. However, these scammers are simply misleading victims to gain entry to homes.

Government impostor scams are prevalent and may increase

during the hot summer months.

Always think twice and check references and reviews before inviting someone into your home or purchasing any services. A government entity will not go door to door to sell you solar power equipment.

Always verify the legitimacy of the company that a sales representative says he or she is affiliated with.

Ask for proper verification before letting any sales representative into your home. If you are suspicious of their identity or the sales representative refuses to provide it to you, do not hesitate to ask them to leave.

You should always verify the information you were given with Lamar Electric before signing a contract. We can help you double-check the facts before getting locked into a major investment. ■

Keep Cool This Summer Without Blasting Cold Air

THERE'S NO NEED to lose your cool when you get your electric bill during the hottest days of the year. Instead, try some alternatives to cranking up the air conditioning when the sun is blazing and it hasn't rained in days.

Install a dehumidifier. If it feels as humid indoors as it does outdoors, it's not just the heat making you uncomfortable. If you see water dripping out of the air conditioner or if you have to set it so low that you're freezing just to feel comfortable, a dehumidifier will help.

Cook outdoors or eat cold food. Salads, raw veggies and fruit make great bases for summer meals, and they don't require the stove or oven, which can make the air in the kitchen too warm.

Instead, gather the family for a barbecue and fire up the outdoor grill or serve a cold buffet on extra-hot evenings.

Seal cracks and openings to prevent warm air from leaking into your home. Check doors, windows, outlets, attic access doors and anywhere else that outside air might enter your home.

Hang bright curtains. Red, orange and yellow tend to deflect heat, so for curtains, those colors are energy efficient. Closing the curtains or blinds during the day will keep sunrays from heating up the home you're trying to keep cool. Or install solar screens or a window tint to let in the light but keep out the heat.

Run fans. Ceiling fans with blades

that turn clockwise will send a soft breeze down, so anybody nearby will feel cooler. Electric fans placed in windows can draw heat out of a room on days when you want to give your AC a break.

Run your dishwasher, clothes washer and dryer after dark.

Appliances that use heat to operate also throw some heat into the rooms they're in. So run them during the coolest part of the day—after the sun goes down. ■

