



MESSAGE  
FROM  
GENERAL  
MANAGER  
AND CEO

JERRY D.  
WILLIAMS

## A Labor of Love

**EACH SEPTEMBER** we celebrate Labor Day, a national tribute to the contributions American workers make to the strength and prosperity of our country. The word labor is defined as an expenditure of physical or mental effort, especially when difficult or compulsory. That definition is not lost on the employees of Lamar Electric Cooperative.

When the lights go off—whether due to thunderstorms, tornados, or ice storms—our employees leave their families to work tirelessly in harsh and dangerous conditions to restore your power. Other employees handle your phone calls and dispatch crews to get electricity flowing to your home as quickly and safely as possible. We do it because we care about you, our members, who are our friends, family and neighbors. But that doesn't mean the job is a laborious punishment. It's a labor of love.

When the weather goes awry and the calls come in, employees who were safe at home often call in to see if there's anything they can do to help. We've had employees simply show up to see if they can help during a severe storm. This is because they care about what they do. They care about you the member. Working at Lamar Electric is different than most jobs. We have employees that genuinely love what they do and for this reason it is not uncommon to have employees with over 30 year's service. Nothing is more important than making sure that every member is safe and sound—with the power humming—even during crazy bad weather. And it's not just when the lights are off that our employees are working hard. Their dedication is evident every day.

Imagine seeing a classified ad for a job that reads like this: "Linemen wanted: Long and unpredictable hours, hazardous working conditions. Requires a lot of weekend and holiday work. Must be able to learn complex technical operations, work under extreme pressure and deal with people under difficult conditions – all with a smile."

You'd think a job description like this would scare people off, wouldn't you? But not all people. These demanding jobs attract dedicated and highly skilled people. People who know that they'll be out in the middle of the night, working long hours in driving storms, all to make our lives better. These intrepid people are Lamar Electric employees.

To make sure they are ready to respond no matter the situation or weather conditions, these employ-

ees take advantage of dozens of training opportunities and safety courses. Much of this training is done by our statewide association, Texas Electric Cooperatives. Regular training is given to make sure each employee can work safely and proficiently.

A lot of specialized equipment is used to make sure the lights stay on and the voltage is correct. For example, we have over 150 large automatic voltage regulators located throughout the service area. Each one of these devices must be monitored and maintained to ensure each member receives proper voltage, but it only takes one little slip-up and the regulator becomes a bomb containing flaming oil. Several hundred breakers are located on the main lines that help isolate a fault and disconnect power to the fewest members possible. All of this equipment must be coordinated and maintained in order to make over 2,400 miles of high voltage power lines function properly.

Linemen must focus on safety because often there is more than their own life on the line. The action of one man can place the lives of co-workers on the line. For linemen there can be no slip-ups or careless actions on the job. Mistakes can cost a limb or a life. That's one of the reasons linemen form a brotherhood. When you put your life in the hands of co-workers every day, they become more than colleagues. They're family.

Today I want to ask you, our member-owners, to thank a Co-op employee if you see one. Thank them for their commitment, their talent, their hard work and their service to the membership of this cooperative. After all, even though our offices will be closed for Labor Day on September 6, if your power goes out, we'll be on our way to fix it, holiday or no holiday.

They expect no special recognition. It's reward enough for them to know your family is safe and warm, regardless of the weather. Nevertheless, we'd like to thank our linemen and office workers for their hard work and dedication. They are all a part of the team in this labor of love. ■



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## Leave Lawn Ready for Spring

**BEFORE YOUR LAWN** goes dormant for the season, give it a little pampering so that it will look its best next year. Some care and maintenance now can mean a thick and verdant lawn next spring.

**Remove leaves.** A layer of leaves blocks light and traps in too much moisture. Your grass will thank you for keeping up with leaf blowing or raking so that it won't get soggy or decay over the winter.

**Keep mowing.** Grass grows throughout the winter in warm climates and up until the first hard freeze in colder places. Setting your mower deck to a high level will help grass maintain moisture and resist matting. Don't mow it too short because that affects the root system, making it less likely to withstand winter conditions.

**Continue watering.** Just the rain and dew might not be enough to sustain your lawn, so keep the sprinklers or irrigation system going until there's a risk of a freeze.

**Aerate the soil.** Using a core aerator every couple of years prevents soil compaction and breaks up debris that blocks sunshine and nutrients.

**Fertilize.** An extra shot of nutrients found in lawn fertilizer can help your grass get through the winter. Consider a slow-release fertilizer that is high in nitrogen. Fertilizing in the fall helps your turf fight disease, boosts drought tolerance, replenishes nutrients and enriches the soil, and promotes healthy root growth. To maximize the benefits, apply after aerating.

**Spread seed.** Healthy and prolific grass offers good protection against weeds, so sprinkle some more seed over existing turf. Fall is the ideal time to reseed because the days are not as hot and the nights are cool. Remember to apply seed where it can contact the soil and to keep seeds moist until they germinate. ■



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## 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**  
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## Energy Savings for Fall

**IT MIGHT NOT** seem like it now, but colder weather is on its way, even if it takes a while to get to Texas. September is a good time to start planning how you're going to save energy in your home during the colder months.

During the fall and winter, keeping cold air out is the goal. To maintain a warm indoors, there are simple steps you can take to increase energy efficiency.

There's no better time to examine seals on doors and windows to check for air leaks. Caulk and weatherstrip as needed to seal in warm air and energy savings. Similarly, examine electrical outlets for air leaks, and where necessary, install foam gaskets behind them to prevent drafts.

During the day, open curtains or drapes on south-facing windows to let sunlight heat your home naturally. Close window treatments at night for an added layer of insulation.

As the temperature drops, schedule a service appointment for your heating system to ensure that it can operate at an optimal level.

Low-cost or no-cost steps for energy savings include taping or affixing heavy, clear plastic to the insides of your windowpanes to create an additional barrier against cold air. Ensure that the plastic is sealed tightly to the pane to help reduce infiltration.

Use a programmable thermostat to set the temperature as low as is comfortable when you are home (ideally around 68 degrees). When you are asleep or away, turn the temperature down. A downward adjustment of 10–15 degrees over long stretches of time can save 10% a year on heating and cooling costs, according to the Department of Energy. ■

**ALWAYS  
CALL  
BEFORE YOU  
DIG**



**FALL IS THE PERFECT TIME** to plant trees, shrubs and other plants. But before reaching for that shovel, you need to call 811. This is the national number that connects you to your local call-before-you-dig center, where you can ask for the approximate location of buried utility lines to be marked, and it's free.

Many homeowners incorrectly believe they don't need to call 811 before breaking ground on projects such as tree and shrub planting. A call must be placed to 811 before every digging project, not just for tree and shrub planting, but also for projects such as building a deck, putting in a pole for a basketball goal or installing a mailbox.

There are more than 200,000 unintentional hits to underground utility lines annually across the country, and almost 40% of those happen because someone chose to make a judgment call instead of a phone call to 811.

Unintentionally striking an underground utility line while digging can cause harm to you or those around you, disrupt service to an entire neighborhood, and result in bills to cover repair costs and even fines in some areas.

So play it safe and call 811 before you dig. ■

# Understanding Power Blinks and Surges

**HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED** your lights blink during a thunderstorm? Or perhaps you've returned home to find your microwave clock blinking despite a sunny day. When this happens, your home has likely experienced a brief disruption to your electric service, which could result from a power blink or surge. While the symptoms of blinks and surges can appear similar, what's happening behind the scenes can be quite different.

## Power Blinks

Power blinks are brief service interruptions typically caused by a fault (short circuit) on a power line or a protective device that's working in reaction to the fault. Faults are caused by a variety of disturbances, like squirrels, birds or other small animals contacting an energized power line; tree branches touching a power line; or lightning. In fact, when it comes to power disruptions caused by critters, squirrels reign supreme. In 2019 alone, squirrels were responsible for more than 1,200 outages.

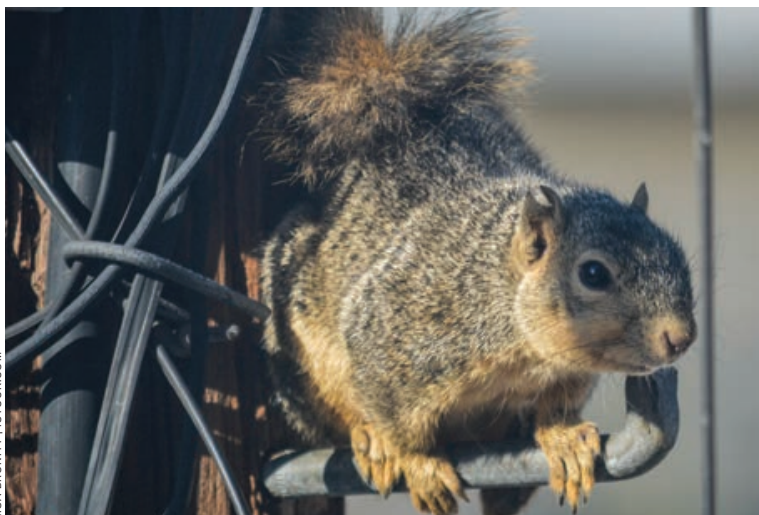
You may also experience a brief interruption when protective devices are working to detect the fault. Believe it or not, these brief power blinks caused by protective devices are actually good because that means the equipment is working as it should to prevent a prolonged outage.

Regardless of the outage cause, Lamar Electric crews will be on their way to inspect the damage and make necessary repairs. Any time you experience repeated power disruptions, please let us know so we can help you determine the cause and minimize future issues.

## Power Surges

Power surges are brief overvoltage spikes or disturbances that can damage, degrade or destroy electronic equipment at your home or business. Most electronics are designed to handle small variations in voltage, but power surges can reach amplitudes of tens of thousands of volts, which can be extremely damaging to electronic equipment.

Surges can be caused by internal sources, like air conditioning systems, or external sources, like lightning and damage to power lines and transformers. We encourage all members to install surge protective devices to safeguard your sensitive electronics. ■



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## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**Labor Day**  
Monday,  
September 6

Our offices will be closed in observance of the holiday.

**Patriot Day**  
Saturday,  
September 11

**National Hunting and Fishing Day**  
Saturday,  
September 25

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