MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER AND CEO

BRYAN STORY

Co-op Power's Golden Years

YOU'RE HOLDING a piece of history in your hands.

Eighty years ago this month—July 1, 1944—the inaugural issue of the publication that would become *Texas Co-op Power* announced in bold type that "The Baby Is Born."

Issue No. 1 marked "a distinct milestone in the progress to completely electrify rural Texas," the broadsheet announced. "The more the public knows about [electric] cooperatives, how they function, why they function and what they are accomplishing and the service they are rendering directly to rural people and rural institutions and indirectly to urban people and urban institutions, the more friends and supporters they will have."

I couldn't have said it better myself.

Texas Co-op Power looks a whole lot different than it did in 1944, but the mission is still the same.

For nearly as long as our cooperative has existed, *TCP* has helped us reach you, our members, with important news and information. The safety and energy efficiency tips that we publish in these pages are a crucial part of our mission to keep our community safe and thriving.

The feature stories about Texas' people, places and food; the history columns; essays; and reader-submitted content aim to entertain, enlighten and maybe even inspire. It's all part of a tradition that started eight decades ago, not long after Lamar Electric Cooperative was founded.

Long before Facebook and Instagram and well before our website, this magazine served as an important communications vehicle for our community, and *Texas Co-op Power* remains a vital tool.

You see, ever since Lamar EC was built by farmers, ranchers and their neighbors back in 1938, we have remained a local business serving local people. We're proud of that distinction.

When you call the office or come by to pay your bill, you'll speak to one of your neighbors. And the money you pay for electricity is invested in your local utility—not lining anyone's pockets. All the folks on the board of directors, they're members too.

You can feel good about investing in us because we're invested in our community. *Texas Co-op Power* helps us keep it that way.

Thanks for reading along with us. ■

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Fireworks, Power Lines Don't Mix

IF YOUR FAMILY enjoys lighting sparklers or other legal fireworks on the Fourth of July, be sure to do so far away from power lines. If you can see a power line, even in the distance, find somewhere else.

When any kind of firecracker touches a power line, it can cause a fire, a power outage or injuries.

Should a firework accidentally come into contact with an overhead power line, call Lamar Electric Cooperative and 911 immediately.

Remember these additional safety tips:

- Children should never, ever help adults with fireworks. Do not give children fireworks, sparklers or matches.
- Firework spectators should be at least 20 feet away and not downwind of fireworks.
- Only light fireworks on a smooth, level surface away from anything flammable.
- Read all instructions on fireworks.
- Keep water close by in case of a fire.
- If your fireworks don't light or they malfunction, never try to relight.

Your best bet: Take the family to watch a fireworks display supervised by professionals in a public location away from your home. ■

Just like no two people are the same, no two days are the same.
And in between, we all do very different things.

But no matter when or how, Lamar Electric Cooperative
is there to help you power every moment of it.

Visit **lamarelectric.coop** to discover the power of your co-op.

YOUR SOURCE FOR POWER. AND INFORMATION.

Lamar Electric Cooperative

Heating and Cooling Tips for Manufactured Homes

If you own a manufactured home, take measures to ensure you have an efficient heating and cooling system. You can also make simple improvements that save energy and make your home more comfortable.

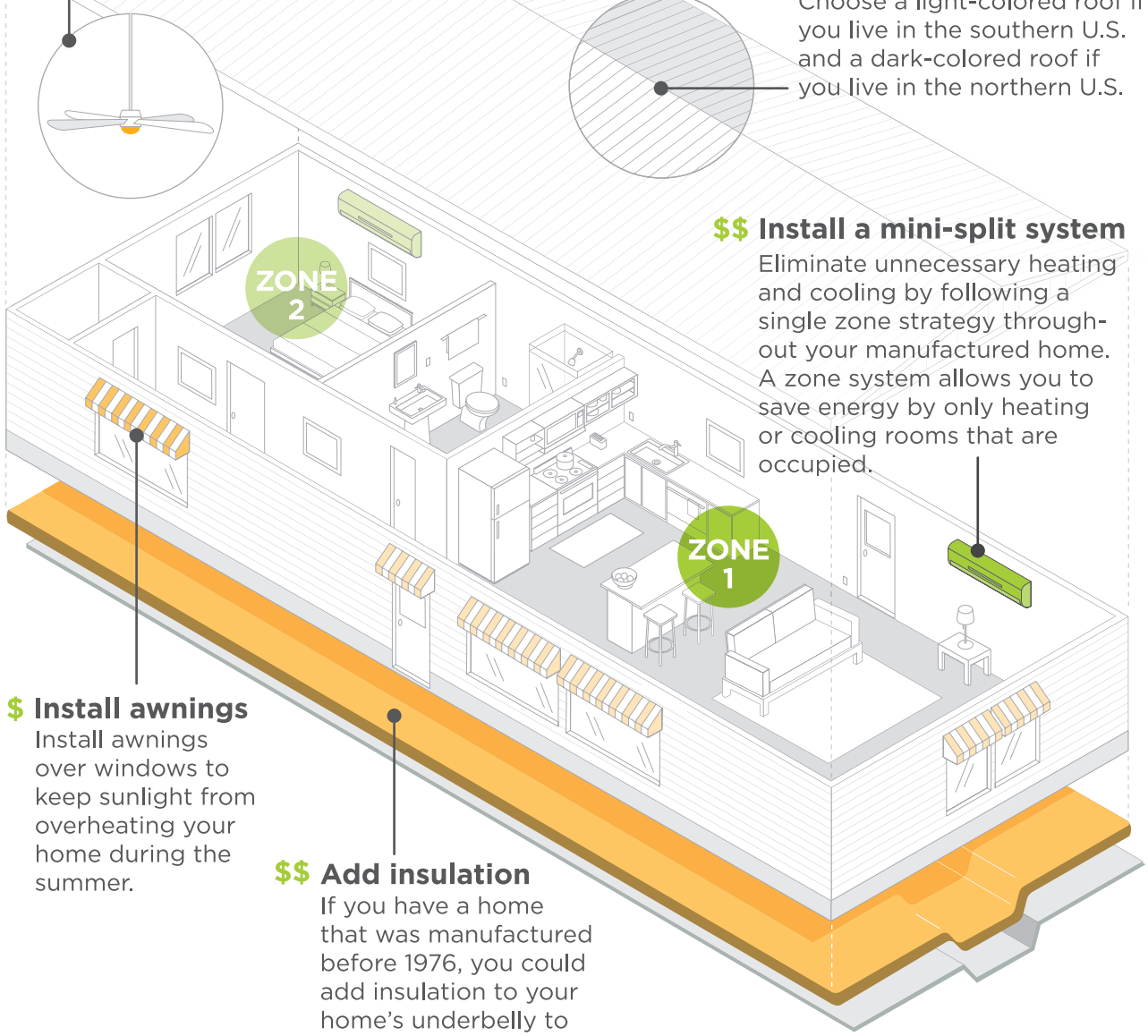
$ Option for smaller budgets
$$ Option for flexible budgets

$ Install ceiling fans

Install ceiling fans throughout your manufactured home. Ceiling fans are energy efficient and can be used to keep warm or cool air moving throughout your home. Be sure to turn them off when you're away. Remember, ceiling fans cool people, not rooms.

$$ Choose an efficient roof color

Choose a light-colored roof if you live in the southern U.S. and a dark-colored roof if you live in the northern U.S.



$$ Install a mini-split system

Eliminate unnecessary heating and cooling by following a single zone strategy throughout your manufactured home. A zone system allows you to save energy by only heating or cooling rooms that are occupied.

$ Install awnings

Install awnings over windows to keep sunlight from overheating your home during the summer.

$$ Add insulation

If you have a home that was manufactured before 1976, you could add insulation to your home's underbelly to reduce heat loss.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy

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Unlock Comfort and Savings

IF YOU'RE WORKING on your summer to-dos, consider adding home weatherization to your list.

We typically think about weatherizing our homes during winter months when we're standing next to a chilly window or a drafty exterior door. But weatherizing your home provides comfort and energy savings year-round, especially during summer months when your air conditioner is working overtime.

A home with insufficient insulation and air leaks wastes more than 20% of the energy used to heat or cool the home—essentially throwing money out the door. Fortunately, most weatherization projects are easy to do yourself and can be completed in a day.

The simplest and most cost-effective weatherization strategies include air sealing around windows and exterior doors.

If you have older windows, odds are you have air escaping through tiny cracks and gaps around the frames. Do a quick visual inspection. If you can see any daylight around the frame or the windows rattle easily, you likely have air leaks. Also check for any small cracks around the frame that may not be visible with sunlight.

If you suspect you have leaky windows and plan to apply caulk, be sure to remove the old caulk and clean the area well before application. Caulking materials vary in strength and properties, but you'll likely need a half-cartridge per window.

Silicone caulk is a popular choice and can also be used to seal joints between bathroom and kitchen fixtures. If you have any leftover caulk, use it to seal those areas.

Another effective but simple weatherization project is installing weatherstripping around exterior doors. The most common types of weatherstripping options are V-channel, felt and foam tape. To choose the best type for your home, consider temperature fluctuations and weather exposure. Most homeowners opt for felt or foam tape.

Both options are easy to install but will need to be replaced every couple years, depending on wear and tear. Weatherstripping should be installed around the top and sides of the door.

If you see daylight through the bottom of an exterior door, consider a door sweep in addition to weatherstripping. Door sweeps are available in aluminum, plastic, vinyl and felt options.

Weatherstripping can also be installed around windows, typically to the sides of a double hung or sliding window, or around the window sash.

If you're unsure how to install weatherstripping or apply caulk, check out trusted websites like lowes.com or energy.gov for step-by-step instructions and video tutorials.

Another way to improve comfort in your home is adding insulation. While this is a more costly project and requires professional help, it's an effective way to decrease heat flow, which impacts energy use in winter and summer months.

Older homes may need additional insulation to either replace older materials or meet newer efficiency standards. Contact a qualified installation specialist if you suspect your home's insulation levels are inadequate.

In addition to saving energy, air sealing can help you avoid moisture control issues, improve indoor air quality and extend the life of your heating and cooling system. ■

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Easy Steps to Greater Energy Efficiency

THE AVERAGE AMERICAN FAMILY spends nearly $2,000 per year on home energy bills, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. Much of that money is wasted via leaky windows or ducts, old appliances, and inefficient heating and cooling systems.

Thankfully, there are several ways to save energy without a huge commitment of time and money. These efforts will help you save whether you own or rent an older or newly constructed home—and you won't have to hire a specialist to help.

Where to Start

Improving the "envelope" of your home is a good place to start. Sunlight, seasonal temperature changes and wind vibrations over the years can loosen up any home, increasing air leakage. Doors and windows may not close tightly, and ductwork can spring leaks.

By weatherstripping and caulking around windows and doors, you can keep cool air inside during warm months and prevent chilly air from penetrating during colder months.

Sealing gaps around ductwork, piping, dryer vents, fans and outlets also helps to close the envelope and creates greater efficiency. Apply weatherstripping around overlooked spaces like your attic hatch or pull-down stairs, too.

Replacing incandescent bulbs with LED bulbs is a fast way to cut your energy bill. By replacing your home's five most frequently used light fixtures or bulbs with models that have earned the Energy Star rating, you can save $75 a year, according to the DOE.

Wrapping Up Savings

Installing a blanket around your water heater could save you about 7%–16% in water heating costs. For an investment of about $30, you can purchase precut jackets or blankets and install them in about an hour.

A safety note: The DOE recommends that you set the thermostat no higher than 130 degrees on an electric water heater with an insulating jacket or blanket because a higher temperature setting could cause the wiring to overheat.

Given that a large portion of your monthly energy bill goes toward heating and cooling your home, it makes sense to ensure that your home's HVAC system is performing at an optimal level. A simple task like changing or cleaning the filters in your system makes your unit run more efficiently.

Air filters prevent dust and allergens from clogging the system. But dirty filters cause their own problems, including reduced airflow in the home, up to 15% higher operating costs, lowered system efficiency, and even costly duct cleaning or replacement.

Take Control

Take a look at your programmable thermostat. When was the last time you checked to make sure it was programmed for the current season and family schedule?

This energy-saving tool enables you to fine-tune the temperature for particular hours of the day. Many models allow you to differentiate between weekday and weekend schedules. Most come with an override option so you can make manual adjustments without losing overall programing.

You can only achieve these efficiencies and savings if it's programmed properly and adjusted periodically to keep pace with changes in household routines. ■

Why Is My Electric Bill So High?

IF YOUR ELECTRIC BILL seems higher than it used to be, it's time to investigate.

Check your history. First, verify that the bill truly is higher. Check SmartHub or call Lamar Electric Cooperative to ask for a review of your bills over the past year. You might be surprised to see how much your usage fluctuates depending on the season.

Check the weather. Fluctuations in outdoor temperatures can lead your family to crank up the air conditioning on especially hot days. Most people use more electricity during the hottest summer months than at any other time of the year. Winter chill also increases utility bills.

Check what's plugged in. If you thought your bill would be lower when your family was on vacation, you might be surprised to realize that many appliances still use electricity when the house is empty. Your refrigerator and well pump, for instance, keep running while you're gone unless you unplugged them. In fact, any appliance plugged into the wall uses electricity, whether anybody is home to use them or not.

Check your equipment. As appliances such as refrigerators and water heaters age, they become less efficient. If your AC or a large appliance is more than 15 years old, consider replacing it with a more energy-efficient model.

Check your lifestyle. If your college-age child is home for the summer, your electric bill will be a bit higher than it was while he or she was away. If your grandkids are enjoying their vacation at your house, your bill could go up. If you've added a major appliance—like a pool with a pump, a hot tub or even an oversized TV—that will affect your power bill, too.

Don't check with the neighbors. No two families use electricity the same way, so if you believe your bill is too high because your neighbor's is lower, you're not making an even comparison. The better comparison is between your use of electricity now compared with the same time last year.

Contact your cooperative. If you still think your bill is higher than it should be, reach out to the energy experts at your co-op. ■

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Mike's Smoked Brisket

2 cups dark brown sugar
1 teaspoon chili powder
¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 teaspoon paprika
½ teaspoon garlic powder
1 cup seasoned salt
1 beef brisket (10 to 16 pounds)

1. Mix sugar and spices. Rub on brisket and wrap with plastic wrap. Put in refrigerator for at least 24 hours.

2. Remove from plastic and wrap in heavy foil. Place in 225-degree smoker (low to medium fire) with fat side down for 3 hours.

3. Place brisket in an empty 40-quart cooler for 12 hours (and don't open the lid).

4. Put back on smoker for 6 hours at 225 degrees.

5. Let set for 30 minutes before slicing.

SERVES 24–40

TCP Find this and more delicious recipes online at TexasCoopPower.com.

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