



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER AND CEO

BRYAN STORY

## ERCOT and Summer Reliability

ONE OF THE DUTIES of the CEO of an electric cooperative is to keep their members informed on topics that can get confusing. As we proceed further into the summer, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas will issue warnings about the conditions of the ERCOT grid as a whole.

I, just like all of you, get frustrated with the current environment that we live in and the constant “bad news” that we seem to get revolving around this subject. Yes, it is Texas. Yes, it gets hot. Yes, we are better than this. Now that we have established those points, what is being done?

Generating resources continue to come online by way of renewables. This is where the potential issue starts. These renewables are good to a certain extent, and that extent does end when the sun doesn’t shine or when the wind fails to blow. When the sun does shine and the wind does blow, it drives wholesale power costs down tremendously.



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Where we are lacking in this area is when the solar curbs off in the summer around 7–8 p.m. In years past, our main concern had been when consumers came home around 5:30 p.m. and their usage ramped up as dinner was being started, a load of clothes went into the washer and dryer, and the air conditioning temperature got turned down.

Research continues to show where we are most vulnerable. The North American Electric Reliability Corp. recently released its 2024 Summer Reliability Study, and it forecast a 16% chance of an Emergency Energy Alert, but the fine print says 8 p.m. is the prime time in August.

It seems to me that ERCOT hopes they can bridge

this daily gap from solar ramping down to wind ramping up by adding battery storage. Across the state, you are now seeing most of the solar farms being built with battery storage nearby. Currently, this two-hour consumption of energy storage from the batteries seems to be helping the situation.

This is a good time to preface where we stand as an organization. Lamar Electric Cooperative’s ultimate goal is safe, reliable and affordable electricity.

Renewables are needed to provide electricity. Closing down coal and natural gas generation before having a plan in place along with having sustained backup generation is a serious lack of proper planning and management. This organization believes that a middle ground must be reached to eliminate these seasonally induced warnings.

Unfortunately, adding generation is not a matter of snapping your fingers and it appearing. Some hoops have to be jumped through that are extremely time-consuming and headache-inducing.

While a 250-megawatt solar farm can come online in roughly 18 months from groundbreaking to energization, a natural gas combustion cycle plant of nearly the same size can take almost three years to complete.

Taking it a step further, nuclear power, which is the future of clean energy generation, can take more than eight years to finish and carries a hefty price tag.

With these numbers, and continued 2%–3% growth, year over year, in ERCOT’s summer peak demand,

the state and grid just can’t catch up.

With an ever-changing state landscape and the tremendous growth we are seeing year after year in Texas, plans have to continue to evolve. Prematurely closing plants is not the answer. We must find a way to work toward the future without jeopardizing the present.

I, for one, thank you for your confidence in the cooperative model, and I will continue to do my part as your CEO to ensure the boxes continue to be checked on the safety, reliability and affordability of our local electric grid. ■



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## Know What To Do in an Electrical Emergency

**YOU KNOW THE** electrical safety basics such as not using appliances near water. But safety isn't just about prevention. It requires knowing what to do if you or someone nearby comes into contact with electricity. **Review this list now, before your next emergency:**

If someone nearby comes into contact with electricity, do not touch that person or anything the person is touching. Instead, call 911. If the source of electricity is an appliance, grab the plug—not the cord—and pull it out of the outlet. If you cannot safely remove the plug, turn off the power at the fuse or circuit breaker.

If an electrical wire falls on your car, do not get out of the car. You're generally safer inside your vehicle. Your tires protect you because electricity seeks the quickest path to the ground—through the outside of the car, through the tires and into the ground. Call 911 and Lamar Electric Cooperative and stay in your car until help arrives and the electricity is shut off.

Most power lines are not insulated, so they're never safe to touch. When a wire falls to the ground, it may still be live, even if you don't see sparks. Call 911 and Lamar EC if you see a downed wire. Warn others to keep their distance.

Wood is a poor conductor of electricity, but it's still a conductor, especially when wet. Don't use a wooden ladder near a power line. If a ladder begins to fall into a power line, don't grab it. Let it fall and call your co-op so we can safely address the problem.

Only pure rubber is an insulator, and most household products don't contain pure rubber. Don't try to handle electrical emergencies at home, even if you're wearing rubber gloves or shoes. ■



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### MEMBER BENEFITS

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### 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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Check us out at  
[TexasCoopPower.com/lamar](https://www.texascooppower.com/lamar)



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## Save Electricity in Your Mobile Home

**WHEN YOU LIVE** in a mobile home, saving energy is different from that of a traditional house, primarily because of the different types of construction materials used. Depending on the age of your mobile home, you could face a number of issues that cause your utility bills to be higher; the older a mobile home is, the more inefficient it's likely to be.

While you may not be able to change the structure of your mobile home, you can make small changes to help you save a little money.

### **Step 1: Prevent air leaks around the home.**

- ▶ Install efficient windows and doors or add weatherstripping around the edges so your heated or cooled air does not escape through cracks in the sides.
- ▶ Use caulk to close up any air leaks around pipes, plumbing fixtures, air ducts, window-mounted air conditioners and other openings.
- ▶ Check for leaks in the walls.

### **Step 2: Ensure your mobile home is properly insulated to prevent heat loss—particularly in older models.**

- ▶ If your home design allows it, add insulation to the walls and to the bottom of the mobile home. You can also add insulated, energy-efficient skirting around the base of the home.
- ▶ To keep heat from getting out through the ceiling, add a roof cap, which is easier than taking off the roof to add insulation.

### **Step 3: Take steps to save money on lighting.**

- ▶ Switch to sheer curtains to take advantage of the sunlight in cooler months, particularly if you have smaller windows.

- ▶ Replace your existing lights with energy-efficient LED bulbs, which use up to 75% less energy and last longer.
- ▶ You can also install lighting timers to automatically turn off lights and use motion sensors or solar lights for outdoor illumination.

### **Step 4: Manage the amount of water you use.**

- ▶ Fix leaks around faucets and in pipes, especially those in uninsulated spaces in your home.
- ▶ To check for leaks, pour food coloring in the toilet tank but don't flush. If there's a problem, the water in the bowl will turn that color in less than an hour.
- ▶ Install aerators in faucets to reduce water use by up to 30%.
- ▶ Replace the showerhead with a low-flow model.

### **Step 5: Reduce the energy you use for heating water.**

- ▶ Insulate your water pipes to prevent energy loss, particularly where they run outdoors or through an unheated crawl space.
- ▶ Wrap your water heater in an insulated blanket. Kits make installation quick and easy.
- ▶ Use cold water for laundry whenever possible. Not only will you save on hot water use, your clothes will last longer.
- ▶ Switch to a more efficient water heater, particularly if you have an older model that came with the mobile home, and turn it down to 120 degrees. ■



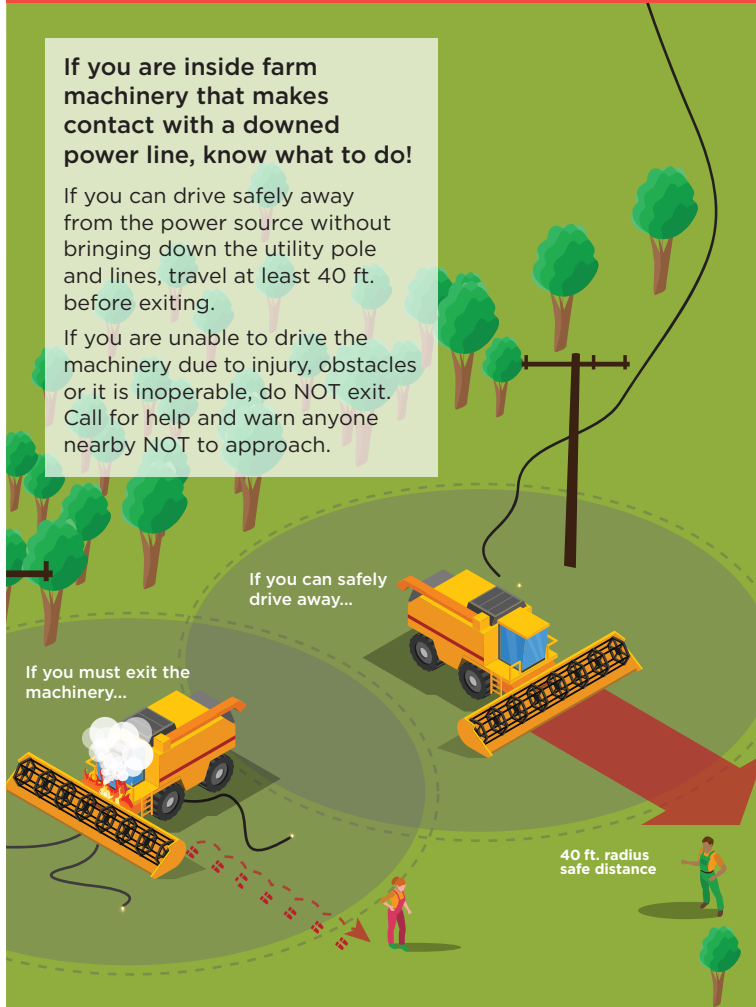
# ALERT TODAY, ALIVE TOMORROW: HEADS UP FOR FARM SAFETY

Stay safe around downed power lines. Consider all lines, equipment and conductors to be live and dangerous.

## If you are inside farm machinery that makes contact with a downed power line, know what to do!

If you can drive safely away from the power source without bringing down the utility pole and lines, travel at least 40 ft. before exiting.

If you are unable to drive the machinery due to injury, obstacles or it is inoperable, do NOT exit. Call for help and warn anyone nearby NOT to approach.



## If the vehicle is on fire, or you must exit for other safety reasons, follow these steps:

- 1 Jump clear of the vehicle. Do not let any part of your body or clothes touch the ground and the machinery at the same time.
- 2 Land with feet together and shuffle away in small steps to minimize the path of electric current and avoid electric shock.
- 3 Keep going until you are at least 40 ft. away.
- 4 Call for help. Make sure no one gets within 40 ft. of the downed line.
- 5 Do not reenter the area or vehicle until emergency responders and your electric co-op crews determine it is safe.



## Make Room for Roadside Crews

WHEN THE POWER goes out, so do Lamar Electric Cooperative's crews.

Lineworkers are the first to respond after an outage occurs, and they work tirelessly to restore power to the communities we serve. If you see one of our line crews on the side of the road, we kindly ask that you move over if possible and give them a little extra space to work.

If you approach a crew on a road with multiple lanes, and if safety and traffic conditions allow, move over into the far lane. Or, if moving over is not an option, we ask that you slow down when approaching roadside crews. We care deeply about everyone's safety, and this extra precaution ensures just that.

Emergency responders, including those in utility vehicles, often find themselves working near busy roadways. Texas law requires drivers to either vacate the lane closest to a stopped emergency vehicle or slow down 20 mph below the speed limit. If the speed limit is below 25 mph, the driver must slow down to 5 mph.

There's plenty of room on the road for everyone. Let's work together to keep our roadways safe. ■



JOHN M. CHASE | ISTOCK.COM



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**DID YOU KNOW?**

Electric co-ops bring power to 22 million homes, businesses, schools and farms in 48 states.

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## Beware When Water and Electricity Mix

**THE BATHROOM IS ONE** of the few places in the home where electrical appliances and water have a great chance to meet—and a higher chance to cause electrical shock or death.

If you have kids, the bathroom can be a room of hazards—electrical or otherwise—waiting to happen. But it doesn't have to be. Try these tips to dampen the danger.

Use a bathmat with a nonskid bottom on the floor and use a nonslip mat or decals on the floor of the tub.

Keep medications and vitamins in their original containers to avoid confusion, and always choose child-resistant caps. Keep meds and cleaning supplies locked away if small children are around.

Make a storage space under the counter and out of the way for hair dryers, curling irons and other electrical appliances that could be hazardous around water. Educate children on the dangers of mixing water and electricity.

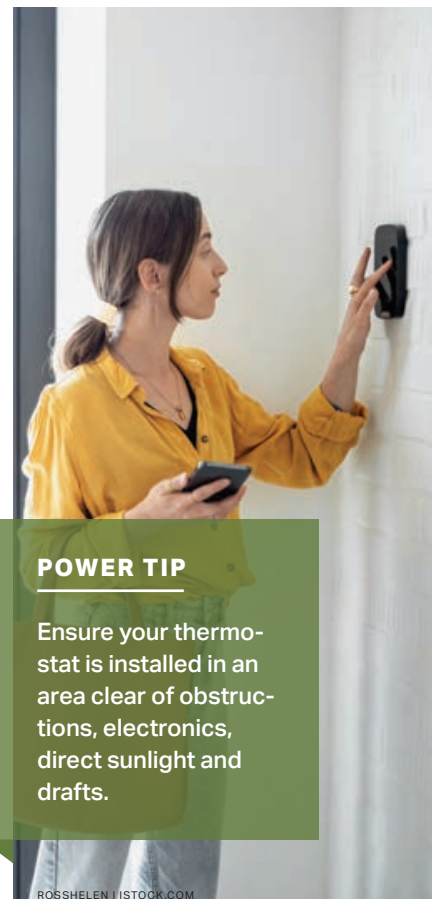
Use night-lights in the hallway and bathrooms for better visibility at night.

If you have toddlers, use toilet seat locks to prevent drowning.

Check the temperature of bathwater and stop filling the tub before putting children in. Tap water can instantly scald if you let it run too hot.

Lower the temperature on your water heater to 120 degrees to guard against burns, but keep bathwater at 100 degrees or lower.

Never leave young children unattended during bath time. ■



**POWER TIP**

Ensure your thermostat is installed in an area clear of obstructions, electronics, direct sunlight and drafts.

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# Quiz Yourself on Air Conditioning

**ON A HOT DAY**, will setting the thermostat at a very low temperature cool your house faster?

If you answered yes, you need to read on. Lowering the thermostat beyond the temperature you desire only makes your air conditioner run longer, not faster. You could end up paying more money for an uncomfortably chilly house.

## Here are a few more lessons to add to your AC know-how.

Want to pay to be cool only when you're at home? Install a programmable thermostat, which lets you set the thermostat higher for hours when the house is empty but lower during your at-home hours. It takes less energy to recool your home when you return than it does to keep it cool while you're gone.

Want to save money on your electric bill? Set the thermostat at 78 degrees. You'll save about 15% on your cooling costs over a 72-degree setting while remaining comfortable.

Want to make sure your thermostat is reading the temperature accurately? Keep lamps and other heat-emitting devices—like TVs and large electronics—away from the thermostat. Such appliances can trick the thermostat into “thinking” the air is warmer than it really is so that it keeps running when the house is already cool.

Want to keep the heat away to begin with? The morning sun might help you wake up, but don't forget to close your curtains and window shades before you leave the house for the day to keep the sun's heat out.

Want to make the most of an AC unit? If you use room air conditioners, make sure they fit snugly into window frames. ■



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## Keep an Eye on Neighbors in the Heat

**HOT DAYS THAT** drag on into September in Texas put people at risk for heat-related illnesses and can exacerbate existing medical conditions. Doctors recommend you spend the hottest part of the day indoors enjoying the air conditioning.

But for those whose homes don't have AC or who can't afford to turn it on, the risk is acute. That's especially true for older adults and those who are ill; they could be at risk for heat stroke or even death.

If you know someone whose house might get too hot to handle this summer, call them or stop by to check on them every day. Use a neighborhood association directory or your own personal contacts to arrange phone calls to older neighbors or those who live alone.

Encourage neighbors and family members to use AC during the hottest part of the day or spend it in an air-conditioned public place, like a mall or library.

You could also help those in need by purchasing a fan to help them feel cool without continuously having to run their air conditioning. Some communities organize fan drives to give them away to older people or those who cannot afford air conditioning.

If you find someone in medical distress because of the heat, don't hesitate to call 911. ■



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