



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER AND CEO BRYAN STORY

The Co-op Way

Why we celebrate our unique business model

BY WHAT I CONSIDER a true blessing from the Lord above, I have been a Texan my entire life. Unfortunately though, I haven't been lucky enough to be a part of an electric cooperative for all of those years.

I became a member of Lamar Electric Cooperative in spring 2007 and became an employee seven years later, in May 2014.

Why is this so significant to me? Well, it's because of what is truly at the heart of being a part of our electric cooperative—the seven principles we live by here at Lamar Electric.

These principles are:

1. Open and Voluntary Membership
2. Democratic Member Control
3. Members' Economic Participation
4. Autonomy and Independence
5. Education, Training and Information
6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives
7. Concern for Community

In July, with Hurricane Beryl bearing down on the coast of Texas, principles six and seven were administered in full force for the cooperatives in the hurricane's path. The membership of those cooperatives benefited from the incredible cooperation of mutual aid from across the state.

Those same co-op members were communicated with and were informed about the progression of outages. A few weeks later, it was fully understood

how well electric cooperatives work together when Texas Senate and House committee meetings commenced to address a Houston-based investor-owned utility's poor performance during the hurricane.

Multiple Gulf Coast and East Texas cooperatives were praised for their performances by those same state officials, and many of them were left asking why multibillion-dollar utilities can't perform like those cooperatives did.

In my opinion, it comes down to heart and the rural way of living. Inside and outside crews ultimately have the membership's best interest at heart. You must admit, the rural way of life is different, and I appreciate that. It's people helping people, and honestly, our world needs more of this.

LEC was formed 85 years ago to meet the rural member where the investor-owned utility wouldn't—at their home outside of town.

Today we stand strong and united with our members to continue to serve you wholeheartedly. While some organizations and businesses may lack heart, our No. 1 goal of serving our membership will always be at the forefront of Lamar Electric's existence.

You have my word on that. ■



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7 Ways To Save on Water Heating

NEXT TO HEATING and cooling your home, heating the water your family uses eats up more energy than anything else. Here are several ways to cut down on your use of hot water, which could shave a few bucks off your energy bill.

Take shorter showers. Set a timer for four minutes before you hop into the shower. You'll have plenty of time to lather up and rinse off without wasting hot water.

Wash dishes in the dishwasher instead of by hand. The dishwasher uses less energy and less water than hand-washing. It also does a better job of sanitizing dishes because it operates at higher temperatures than you typically get with hand-washing.

Fix leaky faucets. That tiny drip—even at a rate of one drip per second—can add \$35 per year to your energy bill and waste more than 1,600 gallons of water.

Wash clothes in cold water. Most laundry detergents clean clothes just as well in cold or warm water as they do in hot water. Your clothes will get just as clean without the extra energy use.

Wait until the dishwasher and the clothes washer are full before running them. The fewer loads you run, the less hot water you'll use.

Although some households like to set their water heater temperature to 140 degrees, most families are satisfied with a 120-degree setting, which is much safer.

Try insulating your water heater tank with an insulating blanket. Combined with insulating exposed water heater pipes, the effort can increase water temperature 2–4 degrees, according to the Department of Energy. Additionally, insulating pipes helps keep water warmer for when it's delivered to your faucet so you don't have to let it run as long to get warm. ■



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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

lamarelectric.coop



Check us out at
TexasCoopPower.com/lamar



To celebrate *TCP's* 80th year, we're giving away 80 heirloom-quality No. 12 skillets from Fredericksburg Cast Iron Co.

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Tips for Keeping Comfortable This Winter

WHEN WE TALK ABOUT comfort in our homes, we usually think about where the thermostat is set. But there's more to the picture than just the indoor temperature.

An important piece of the comfort puzzle is radiant heat, which transfers heat from a warm surface to a colder one. A person sitting in a room that's 70 degrees can still feel chilly if there's a cold surface nearby, like a single-pane window, hardwood floor or exterior wall.

Covering these cold surfaces can help. Try using area rugs, wall quilts or tapestries, bookcases, and heavy curtains to help prevent heat loss and make your home feel more comfortable.

Keep in mind, radiant heat can also work in your favor. A dark-colored tile floor that receives several hours of direct sun can retain heat during the day and radiate it into the room during the evening.

Another possible cause of discomfort during the winter is air movement. The wind chill factor, which is a calculation of air temperature and wind speed, is a good example of this. Moving air makes us feel colder, and during the winter, cold outdoor air can infiltrate our homes.

On average, a typical home loses about half its air every hour, and that amount can increase when outdoor temperatures are extremely cold and the wind is blowing. In this case, the best way to keep your home toasty is to minimize air leaks.

You can easily locate air leaks in your home with a blower door test, which is typically conducted by an energy auditor. These are some of the most common spots air leaks occur:

- ▶ Penetrations and cracks around windows and doors
- ▶ Exterior cracks in brickwork and siding
- ▶ Plumbing and wiring penetrations from the exterior to the interior of the home
- ▶ Mail slots and pet doors

Caulk, weatherstripping, outlet cover gaskets and dryer vent covers can be used to seal these leaks.

A fireplace can also be a major source of air leakage. If you don't use your fireplace, you can seal the opening or install an inflatable chimney balloon.

Before using the fireplace, consider this: Unless you have a high-efficiency insert, your fireplace will suck heated air from the room

out through the chimney. Always close the fireplace flue when it's not in use.

Your pursuit of comfort should also include a careful look at your home's heating system. Is it distributing heat evenly and efficiently? Forced-air systems distribute air through supply ducts and registers. Small rooms may only have one register, but large rooms could have several. You may find some registers are blowing copious warm air and others little at all.

Ideally, every room should have return air registers. If you see possible shortcomings with your forced-air system, enlist the help of a certified contractor who knows how to improve ductwork.

Ensure your furnace is running at peak efficiency by scheduling an annual inspection. Check your filter monthly and replace or clean it as necessary.

Beyond that, you can always warm yourself by wearing heavier clothing, doing some light exercise throughout the day, and snuggling with a pet or under a blanket. ■

Stay Safe With Outdoor Lighting

ADDING OUTDOOR LIGHTS around your home is one of the best ways to protect it from break-ins while adding safety and style. Some tips:

Place a light at every entry point to your home: above or beside windows and doors, including the garage door.

Mount lighting fixtures on exterior walls near first-floor windows to discourage burglars.

Illuminate your front, back and side yards with floodlights so nobody can skulk around without being seen.

Light up your driveway with pathway lights and another light above the garage door to lower the chances someone will break into your car.

Send a message to prowlers that the neighbors will notice them. Mount lanterns in trees to pour light into your yard and onto your deck. Likewise, post upward-facing lights at the base of trees and shrubs.

If you have a security camera or a security system warning sign, train a light on it so it's visible to would-be intruders.

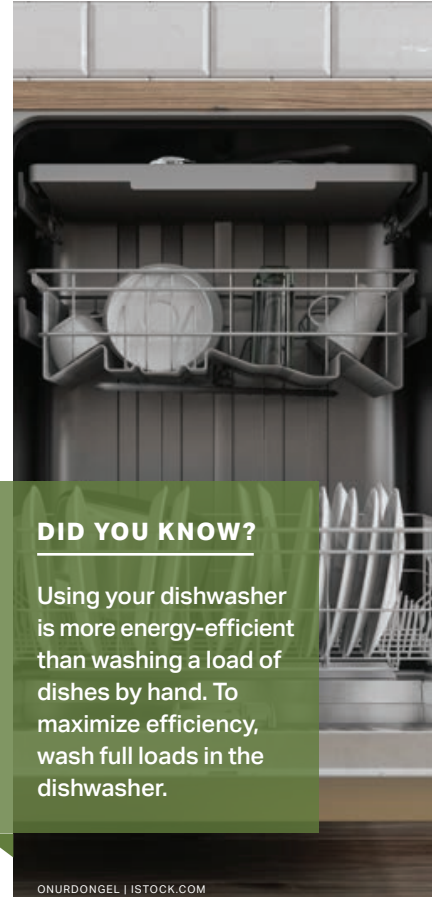
Arrange outdoor lights so they're high enough to be out of the reach of vandals. Security experts say that's 9 feet off the ground.

Rig your outdoor lights to a timer so they come on at dusk and off at dawn.

Take care with placement so light doesn't glare into your home or your neighbors'.

If your lights are rigged to motion detectors, set them so they spot people near your house but not birds, bats or bugs.

Remember, any light bulb you add or change is a chance to practice energy efficiency, so look for LED models. They'll use the least electricity and save you money over time. ■



DID YOU KNOW?

Using your dishwasher is more energy-efficient than washing a load of dishes by hand. To maximize efficiency, wash full loads in the dishwasher.

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POWER TIP

During the fall, HVAC technicians are typically less busy, making this an excellent time for maintenance and any necessary repairs before winter begins.

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Tame Your Trees

We love our trees, but when branches are too close to power lines, they can cause power outages, fire hazards and other safety concerns. Here are some rules to follow:

If a tree or a large branch is touching—or falls on—an electric line, call your electric cooperative immediately.

Never trim trees that grow close to power lines; that is a job for professionals. Call your electric cooperative for assistance and guidance.

Use extreme caution when doing any overhead trimming. Branches often fall in unexpected places.

Don't allow children to climb trees or build treehouses close to power lines.

Plant appropriate distances from all power lines.

When planting a tree, consider how tall the tree will grow. At maturity, trees should be at least 10 feet away from power lines.

Lamar EC encourages you to always practice safety.



October Is National Co-op Month

LAMAR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE is celebrating the co-op business model with other co-ops across the U.S. this month.

This October, we're focusing on the ways co-ops "grow" for their members.

Grow communities: Co-ops help communities grow by promoting economic empowerment, fostering community engagement and supporting the unique needs of co-op members. Concern for Community is one of our core principles, and being community-focused is essential to everything we do.

Grow together: Co-ops are all about cooperation, not competition. That's why electric co-ops work together to share lessons learned, successful strategies and better ways to serve our members. We're better when we grow together!

Grow tomorrow's leaders: Electric co-ops serve as fertile ground for cultivating leaders through various youth engagement programs and scholarships. We're committed to providing opportunities for local youths to learn and thrive in our community and beyond.

Co-ops grow for you: At Lamar Electric, your satisfaction is our No. 1 goal. It's why we were formed many decades ago to fulfill a uniquely local purpose. We've come a long way since then, and your needs continue to evolve. That's why we'll never stop growing for you. ■



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Expanding Your Home? Steer Clear of Power Lines

YOU'VE HAD AN EYE on the perfect spot for your getaway cabin. The view—well, it's breathtaking! But if you try to build your dream home too close to a power line, you may not live long enough to enjoy it.

Building your new home or barn where the roof is less than 8 feet from an existing power line or adding a swimming pool underneath a line is a dangerous idea. When you think about a builder hauling in materials and working in those areas and then folks using the pool or getting too close to the roof, it's pretty scary.

Whether you're a contractor or a do-it-yourselfer, always use caution when working near power lines, and never get closer than 10 feet to an overhead line.

Electricity flows through metal, wood, water and many other conducting materials, including human beings—all in an effort to reach the ground. Small birds can sit on power lines unhurt because they don't create a path to ground. But you and your ladder do.

A line doesn't have to be touched to spark danger; electricity can jump, or arc, from a power line to a person or equipment that gets too close. When equipment comes into contact with power lines, it becomes energized and dangerous.

Overhead power lines are not insulated. Touching a power line or an object in contact with one can result in serious injury—even death. Please contact Lamar Electric Cooperative if you need to work near power lines so that we can help you stay safe.

Working too close to power lines is not only deadly—often it's against the law. Texas has a statute in place, commonly called the 10-foot rule, requiring land owners to notify the local utility if any work will be done within 10 feet of a power line.

The U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration advises the best protection is lots of space. Don't operate equipment around overhead power lines unless you're authorized and trained to do so. **OSHA provides these general guidelines:**

- ▶ When working near overhead power lines, use nonconductive fiberglass ladders.

- ▶ If an object (scaffolds, cranes, etc.) must be moved near overhead power lines, appoint a worker whose sole responsibility is to observe the clearance between the power lines and the object. Warn others if the minimum distance is not maintained.

- ▶ If an overhead line has been brought down by machinery or has fallen, don't touch it—with anything. Never assume lines are dead.

- ▶ When a machine is in contact with an overhead line, do not allow anyone to come near or touch the machine. Stay away from the machine and contact Lamar EC immediately.

- ▶ If you're in a vehicle in contact with an overhead power line, don't leave the vehicle. As long as you stay inside and avoid touching outside metal, you should avoid being shocked. If you need to exit to summon help or because of fire, jump out without touching any wires or the exterior of the vehicle, keep your feet together, and shuffle to safety. ■