



MESSAGE
FROM
GENERAL
MANAGER
AND CEO
BRYAN STORY

The Season of Giving at Lamar Electric

THE HOLIDAY SEASON is a time of reflection and gratitude, and I'm thankful for both my own family and my co-op family here at Lamar Electric Cooperative. Our team is driven by purpose and a shared commitment to serve—not only because it's our job, but because this is our home too.

At Lamar Electric, we talk often about Concern for Community. It's not just a tagline—it's one of the principles that defines who we are as a cooperative. We work hard to keep the lights on, but we work just as hard to make life better for our members, neighbors and friends.

Throughout the year and especially during the holidays, that spirit of generosity shines through. You'll see our employees volunteering at local events, coaching youth sports, serving on community boards and partnering with local organizations that keep our area strong. Giving back isn't a requirement here—it's simply part of who we are.

We're proud to invest in our young people through programs like the Government-in-Action Youth Tour, which sends local students to Washington, D.C., to experience democracy in action. Over the years, LEC has also awarded tens of thousands of dollars in scholarships to area students—because supporting their future helps strengthen ours.

We're equally committed to safety and education. Our team visits schools and community groups across our service area to teach the importance of electrical safety. Knowledge is one of the greatest gifts we can share.

As we close out the year, I'm grateful for every member, every employee and every community partner who makes Lamar Electric Cooperative what it is today. Because of you, our future is bright.

All of us at Lamar Electric wish you and your loved ones a safe, joyful and meaningful holiday season. ■



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JUNE 14–21, 2026



POWER TIP

Wood stoves manufactured before 1990 are inefficient. Newer models use one-third less wood for the same amount of heat and reduce the risk of a home fire.

DOUGLAS RISSING | ISTOCK.COM

Prep Your Home for Winter Travel

WHILE IT'S GREAT to celebrate the holiday season at home, winter can also be a time to take an extended trip to visit family or escape to a destination with warmer weather. If you plan to be away from home for most of the season, use these recommendations to keep your home safe and save on your electric bill.

Set the thermostat to 50 degrees. This is a happy midpoint that avoids wasting energy to warm an empty house while still preventing damage to pipes and plants. If freezing temperatures are forecast for while you're away, drip faucets and consider turning off your water at the shut-off valve.

Turn off your electric water heater at the breaker or set it to the lowest temperature possible.

To avoid a fire hazard, unplug the washer and dryer when you leave. Disconnect the hoses leading to the washer to prevent them from freezing.

Unplug all small appliances. You'll reduce the risk of a house fire and save a bit on your electric bill.

Don't broadcast your travel plans on social media. Instead, share photos from your trip after you return.

If you set a timer for lights and sprinklers, make sure to switch up the times over the days you'll be gone so it's not obvious to any onlookers that the house is empty. It can look suspicious if the lights go on at 6 p.m. every day like clockwork. If possible, stagger several timers that control different lights to approximate the natural movement of someone through a house.

Close blinds and curtains. Don't advertise your belongings to any would-be burglars.

Be strategic about putting out post-holiday recycling and trash. If there are a lot of boxes from new gadgets or other expensive electronics, wait until you get back to put them out so they're not sitting outside in full view for days. Or have a trusted neighbor set them by the curb on the appropriate day.

Place a hold on mail and newspaper deliveries, and ask a neighbor or friend to pick up any packages from your porch. ■



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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.

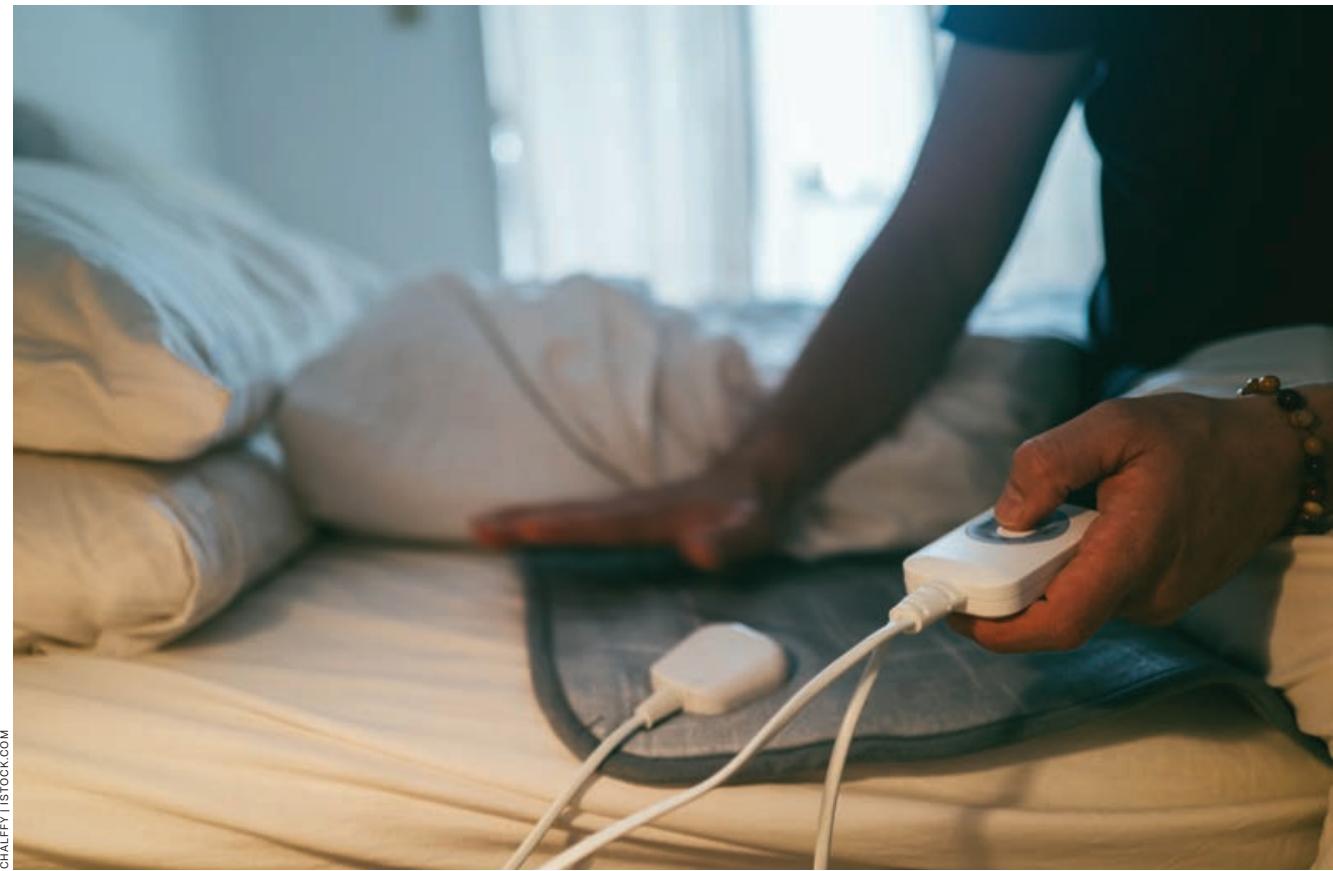
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5 Tips for Winter Safety

IT'S NO SURPRISE that winter months bring increased potential for fire risks and electrical safety hazards. During the coldest months, people use more devices and appliances, like space heaters, electric blankets and portable generators.

Data from the National Fire Protection Association shows that at average of more than 46,000 home fires occurred each year in the U.S. due to electrical failure or malfunction between 2015 and 2019. These fires resulted in an average of 390 deaths, 1,330 injuries and \$1.5 billion in property damage annually.

This winter, safeguard your loved ones and your home with these electrical safety tips.

Don't overload outlets. Overloaded outlets are a major cause of residential fires. Avoid using extension cords or multi-outlet converters for appliances. They should be plugged directly into a wall outlet.

If you're relying heavily on extension cords in general, you may need additional outlets to address your needs. Contact a qualified electrician to inspect your home and add new outlets.

Never leave space heaters unattended. If you're using one, turn it off before leaving the room. Make sure heaters are at least 3 feet away from flammable items and plugged directly into a wall outlet; never use them with an extension cord or power strip. It should also be noted that space heaters take a toll on your energy bills.

If you're using them throughout your home, it may be time to upgrade your home heating system.

Inspect heating pads and electric blankets. These items cause nearly 500 fires every year. Electric blankets more than 10 years old create additional risks for a fire hazard. Inspect your electric blankets and heating pads. Look for dark, charred or frayed spots, and make sure the cord isn't damaged. Don't place anything on top of a heating pad or electric blanket, and never fold them when in use.

Use portable generators safely. Unfortunately winter storms can cause prolonged power outages, which means many consumers will use portable generators. Never connect a standby generator directly to your home's electrical system. Start the generator first, then plug appliances into the outlets on the generator.

Run the generator in a well-ventilated area outside your home. The carbon monoxide it releases is deadly, so keep it away from your garage, doors, windows and vents.

Take care during the holiday season to avoid common hazards. You can avoid a Christmas tree fire by watering natural trees daily to keep them hydrated. Inspect all decorations and throw away those with damage. Keep decorations away from open flames, like lit candles. Always turn off or unplug holiday lights (both indoor and outdoor) when you leave your home and when you go to bed. Ensure that you use the appropriate extension cord for outdoor lights. ■

Your Home's 5 Biggest Energy Hogs

A HOME'S HUNGRiest energy consumers are the appliances left running all day or for days at a time. Here's a look at the top five electricity eaters and some tips on how to stave off their appetites.

The No. 1 home energy hog is the **heating system**. Ways to control your heater's energy consumption include using a programmable thermostat, upgrading to a more efficient unit, sealing ducts and replacing filters.

Next up is the **cooling system**. You can improve the efficiency of your air conditioner by having a technician service it every year, using a programmable thermostat and ensuring adequate attic insulation.

Third is the **water heater**, which can account for up to 12% of a typical home's energy bill. Actual energy demand for water heating depends on the model of water heater you have. Yet no matter the type of unit, these habits can help you conserve: taking quick showers, washing clothes in cold water, setting the water temperature to 120 degrees, insulating the storage tank and regularly draining sediment.

Next on the list are **dehumidifiers**, which typically run constantly to discourage mold growth and preserve stored items. To make sure your dehumidifier isn't wasting energy, close off the room where the machine is operating, set it at a reasonable level and consider upgrading to an Energy Star-certified model.

Fifth on the list—but still major power users—are **refrigerators** and **freezers**. Fridges generally are the top-consuming kitchen appliance, especially those that are a few decades old. Regardless of model, you can save energy by setting the temperature to 36–38 degrees for the refrigerator and zero to 5 degrees for the freezer, discarding freezer ice thicker than a quarter inch, checking seals, and cooling hot food before putting it inside. ■



MARYVIOLET | ISTOCK.COM



KAORINNE | ISTOCK.COM

Spiced Banana Muffins

2 cups all-purpose flour
1 cup whole-wheat flour
2 teaspoons baking soda
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1/2 teaspoon ground cardamom
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, softened
1/2 cup brown sugar
1 1/2 cups sugar
4 eggs
5–6 ripe bananas, mashed
1/2 cup vegetable oil
2 teaspoons vanilla extract

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Apply cooking spray to 2 muffin tins or line with paper baking cups.
2. Whisk together flours, baking soda, spices and salt in a medium bowl.
3. In another bowl, cream butter and sugars. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each. Add bananas, oil and vanilla; mix well. Add dry ingredients and mix until moistened, being careful not to overmix.
4. Spoon batter into muffin tins. Bake 15–17 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean.
5. Remove from oven and cool muffins in tins 5 minutes. Invert and finish cooling right side up on a wire rack.

MAKES 2 DOZEN MUFFINS

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