

# Rigors and Rewards



## MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER BRAD BIERSTEDT

**IF YOU WERE TO POLL A RANDOM SAMPLE OF LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL or college students about their career aspirations, not many would have electrical line work at the top of their lists. And truthfully, anyone considering a career in the utility industry would be wise to carefully consider this specific role.**

Line work is no picnic. Lineworkers often must battle the elements and work long, irregular hours to restore outages as quickly as possible. They take on many of the challenges of a first responder's dangerous work with perhaps less recognition, and, through it all, they must maintain a friendly and professional demeanor

as a customer-facing representative of their employer. But for the right person, the job's rigors are more than offset by its rewards.

Karnes Electric Cooperative's lineworkers have lit up our members' lives since 1938, powering people's dreams and empowering them to achieve their goals. From providing the lamplight that our members study by to the internet connectivity most of us need to move ahead professionally, electricity is the unseen, often unconsidered workhorse humming in the background. Our linemen are the unsung facilitators of this energy source and form a brotherhood in their daily reckoning with and management of this volatile but crucial resource.

That's why we honor them annually on National Lineman Appreciation Day, April 8 this year.

Since there is no equivalent day of tribute for our equally integral behind-the-scenes staff at the cooperative and other crew members, we ask that you include all our employees in your expres-

sions of gratitude this month. Karnes EC works as a team to keep your lights on. Some of our workers risk life and limb in the aftermath of torrential rain while others weather storms of a different sort. Member services staff often absorb the brunt of members' frustrations, and dispatchers must allocate co-op resources and personnel effectively and efficiently during chaotic weather events, often while juggling other tasks.

Please join us this month in thanking all lineworkers and electric cooperative staff. Their service and pride brighten our community immeasurably.



DAVE SHAFER



KAL NINE LLC | ISTOCK.COM

## Test Your Power Line Safety Knowledge

**TRUE OR FALSE? POWER LINES ARE** insulated to allow safe contact.

**False.** While some power lines may have a covering to protect against weather, they are NOT insulated for contact. Birds can sit on power lines unhurt because they don't represent a path to the ground. You and your ladder do.

**TRUE OR FALSE?** I should keep myself and any equipment I'm using at least 10 feet away from any power lines.

**True.** You don't need to contact a power line to be in danger; electricity can jump, or arc, from a power line to a person who gets too close. The best insulator is lots of space. You should keep yourself and any equipment you're using a minimum of 10 feet away from power lines, but far greater distances are recommended.

**TRUE OR FALSE?** I can be electrocuted by a power line even if I am wearing gloves and rubber boots.

**True.** Work gloves and rubber boots offer no protection against contact with a power line. Once again, space—and lots of it—is the best insulator.

# Nominating Committee To Be Appointed

**THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF KARNES ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE** will meet April 23 and appoint a committee of members to nominate candidates for the directors election, which will be held at the annual meeting Monday, June 3. The nominating committee meeting will be held Monday, April 29.

The following is an excerpt from the bylaws pertaining to the nomination of such candidates.

## QUALIFICATIONS AND TENURE

To become and remain a Director, a Person must comply with the following general qualifications:

(a) be an individual who is a member in good standing and who is domiciled in the area certified by the Public Utility Commission as being within boundaries served by the Cooperative under its certificate of convenience and necessity, and whose domicile is receiving electrical service from the Cooperative. A Member in “good standing” means a member who has timely paid all bills received from the Cooperative for the most recent twelve (12) consecutive billing periods without having been issued a termination notice or a disconnect notice;

(b) be above the legal voting age;

(c) have not been previously removed or disqualified as a Director;

(d) while a Director, and during the five years immediately before becoming a Director, not be convicted of, or plead guilty to, a felony or a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude;

(e) before becoming a Director, graduate from high school or earn an equivalent degree or certification;

(f) except as otherwise provided by the Board for good cause, attend at least three-fourths of all Board Meetings during each twelve-month period;

(g) while a Director and during the three years immediately before becoming a Director, is not engaged in business with, employed by or materially affiliated with, and does not have a material financial interest with another director, a competing enterprise, or a business selling electric energy, supplies or services to the Cooperative or its members;

(h) is not the incumbent or a candidate for an elective public office in connection with which a salary is paid;

(i) when a membership is jointly held by husband and wife, either one, but not both, may be elected a director, provided, however, that neither one shall be eligible to become or remain a director of the Cooperative unless both shall meet the qualifications hereinabove set forth;

(j) is not the spouse, parent or child (including step and adopted) of an incumbent director or Cooperative employee;

(k) an individual who was, at one time, or is currently, employed by the Cooperative is not eligible to serve as a director until at least sixty (60) months after leaving the employment of the Cooperative. Once becoming a director, an individual will not be eligible to be employed by the Cooperative until at least sixty (60) months after leaving the position of director;

(l) be bondable; and

(m) comply with any other reasonable qualifications determined by the Board.

## NOMINATIONS

It shall be the duty of the Board of Directors to appoint, not less than thirty (30) days nor more than sixty (60) days, before the date of a meeting of the members at which directors are to be elected, a committee on nominations consisting of one (1) committee man from each district, for which a director is to be elected, and one (1) committee man at large, who shall be selected, so as to give equitable representation on the committee to the geographical areas served, or to be served by the Cooperative. No officer, or member of the Board of Directors, shall be appointed a member of such committee.

The committee shall prepare and post, at the principal office of the Cooperative, at least twenty (20) days before the meeting, a list of nominations for directors; but, any one hundred (100) or more members may make other nominations in writing, over their signatures, not less than forty-five (45) days prior to the meeting; and the Secretary shall post the same, at the same place, where the list of nominations made by the committee is posted.

The Secretary shall mail, with the notice of the meeting, or separately, but at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting, a statement of the number of directors to be elected; and, showing separately the nominations made by the committee on nominations; and, the nominations made by petition, if any.

Nothing contained herein shall, however, prevent additional nominations to be made from the floor at the meeting of the members.

The members may, at any meeting at which a director or directors shall be removed, as herein provided, elect a successor or successors thereto without compliance with the foregoing provisions with respect to nominations.

Notwithstanding anything in this section contained, failure to comply with any of the provisions of this section shall not affect in any manner whatsoever the validity of any election of directors.

# April 22 Is Earth Day



LDPROD | ISTOCK.COM

**EARTH DAY—AN ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT—IS A GOOD TIME TO** resolve to save some energy around your home. You can start this month by:

**Paying your bills online.** You'll save paper, stamps and time.

**Caulking around windows and doors to seal air leaks and adding insulation to your attic.** Both will prevent air-conditioned air from escaping your house through the roof this summer.

**Taking shorter showers** and using a water-saving showerhead.

**Unplugging the TV, stereo, computer, cellphone chargers and other electronics** when you're not using them.

**Running your dishwasher and clothes washer only when they're full** to save water and energy.

**Replacing your old thermostat with a programmable model.** You could save up to 10 percent on cooling and heating with these devices, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

**Investing in LED light fixtures.** You'll save energy and you won't have to replace any lightbulbs for up to 10 years. If changing out fixtures isn't practical, use LED bulbs and be sure to turn off the lights when you leave a room.

**Lowering your water heater's temperature to 120 degrees.** Wrap your storage tank in a blanket designed to keep it warm so it will use less energy to heat the water.

**Washing clothes in cold water.** You could save more than \$60 a year.

**Switching to Energy Star-rated appliances, fans and electronics.** Using Energy Star-certified products throughout your home could save you nearly \$750 over the lifetime of the products.

**Replacing your air conditioner's filters before the cooling season begins.** Clean filters help the system operate more efficiently.

**Putting off using the air conditioner, especially at night, until the weather gets hotter.** Open windows instead and let the spring breeze into your house to keep you cool.



When the lights go out, it's their time to shine.

DAVE SHAFER

Lineman Appreciation Day  
Monday, April 8



**KARNES**  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE  
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



## MARK YOUR CALENDAR!



# KARNES EC ANNUAL MEETING

**MONDAY, JUNE 3**

TAPHOUSE\_STUDIOS | ISTOCK.COM



**HAPPY EASTER | APRIL 21**

Karnes Electric Cooperative will be closed April 19 for Good Friday.

DILIANANKOLOVA | ISTOCK.COM

## Karnes Electric Cooperative

P.O. Box 7, Karnes City, TX 78118

### GENERAL MANAGER

Brad Bierstedt

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Paul T. Brysch Jr., President, *District 5*

Clif Royal, Vice President, *District 6*

Larry R. Schendel, Secretary-Treasurer, *District 1*

Frank A. Geyer Jr., Assistant Secretary-Treasurer, *District 3*

Martin R. Harris Jr., *District 4*

Shirley Hofmann, *District 2*

David Ross Nieschwitz, *District 7*

### COOPERATIVE OFFICES

#### Main Office

1007 N. Highway 123, Karnes City

#### District Office

1824 W. Goodwin St., Pleasanton

**Pay your bill, submit meter readings and view your account summary at [karnesec.org](http://karnesec.org).**

Karnes Electric Cooperative is an equal-opportunity provider and employer.

## Contact Us

*For information and outages during office hours*

**(830) 780-3952** Karnes City

**(830) 569-5538** Pleasanton

**1-888-807-3952** Toll-free

*To report a power outage after 5 p.m. and on weekends and holidays*

**(830) 780-3952**

Coy City, Ecletto, Floresville, Gillette, Goliad, Karnes City, Kenedy, Runge, Three Rivers, Tilden and surrounding areas

**(830) 569-5538**

Charlotte, Christine, Pleasanton, Poteet, Verdi and surrounding areas

**FIND US ON THE WEB**  
**[karnesec.org](http://karnesec.org)**

# Spring Cleaning for Safety and Efficiency



FOTODUETS | ISTOCK.COM

**IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR, WHEN WE CLEAN BASEBOARDS, WASH DUVETS AND TACKLE** other chores that need to be done at least a few times a year, rather than weekly. While you go about this season's deep cleaning, take a few extra steps to maximize your home's energy efficiency.

Breathe a little easier with freshly cleaned vents. This frequently overlooked step improves your home's air quality and takes some of the pressure off your home's heating, ventilating and air conditioning system. The most effective method is to remove wall and ceiling vent covers with a screwdriver and then rinse them. Once they dry completely, replace the covers and enjoy your home's newly purified air.

Another area to address is the dryer vent. Even if you empty the lint tray completely after each laundry day, the vent that transmits hot air from the dryer to the outdoors can remain full of flammable material. Have a qualified professional clean the dryer vent at least annually. Maintaining the vent will keep your dryer operating smoothly and could help prevent a fire caused by an obstruction.

Dusting may seem like an exercise in futility, but it's worth doing to maximize the efficiency of lighting in your home. A layer of dust can dull a lightbulb's illumination. Turn off fixtures and use a dry microfiber cloth to wipe down bulbs in lamps, sconces and ceiling fixtures. While you're at it, dust the tops and bottoms of ceiling fan blades. The yuck factor may be off-putting initially, but this is another worthwhile task to get your home sparkling clean.

One last thing to add to your list: Change your HVAC system's filter. Keeping the filter up to par means cleaner air in your home due to fewer irritants like pollen, pet dander and dust, and a less taxed, more efficient HVAC system—which saves you money on your electric bill.



PELOVARGA | ISTOCK.COM

## Recycle, Don't Toss, Used Electronics

**WHEN YOU RECYCLE OR DONATE YOUR** used electronics, such as computers, cell-phones and TVs, you do the environment a big favor. Recycling your unwanted electronic products helps prevent hazardous materials from filling up landfills and polluting the environment with toxic chemicals.

Recycling 1 million laptops saves roughly the amount of energy it takes to power more than 3,500 homes in a year.

Even if the device isn't usable, it still contains metals, plastics and glass that can be reused by someone else for another purpose. In fact, from 1 million useless cellphones, recyclers can reap 35,000 pounds of copper, 772 pounds of silver, 75 pounds of gold and 33 pounds of palladium.

After electronics are recycled, they can become parts for a range of new products. For example, the casing around a TV can be turned into a high-quality plastic to be used for automotive products, such as seat padding or insulation. The glass from the TV screen also can be melted and then reused for other glass products.

To find a place near you that recycles electronics, visit [ecyclingcentral.com](http://ecyclingcentral.com).

# 7 Reasons To Consider a Co-op Career

AS WE CELEBRATE LINEMAN APPRECIATION DAY THIS MONTH, YOU MAY BE WONDERING if working for an electric cooperative is a good idea. There are many ways to earn a paycheck, but some are more rewarding than others. Here are seven reasons to consider joining the electric cooperative family.

**1. Business on a human scale:** Cooperatives hold themselves to the highest standards of professionalism and integrity while still maintaining a close-knit, family-friendly working environment. Decisions are made locally by managers who know employees by name, not halfway across the country in a corporation's headquarters.

**2. Retirement security:** It might seem a long way off, but we all need to plan for retirement. Co-op employees deliver a valuable service to their communities, and they're rewarded for that dedication with outstanding retirement benefits.

**3. National reach:** America's 900-plus electric cooperatives serve 47 states and 56 percent of our nation's landmass. So whether you want to stay in your hometown or explore another part of the country, odds are good that there will be an electric cooperative nearby.

**4. Stability:** There are no guarantees in life, but some bets are safer than others. Electronics play a critical and growing role in our daily lives, and as our reliance on technology increases, so too will our demand for electricity. As long as we need electricity, we'll need workers to ensure it is safe, reliable and affordable.

**5. Principles, not profit:** When you work for an electric cooperative, you're not helping some Wall Street banker get richer. You're working to serve your friends, family and neighbors who collectively own the cooperative.

**6. Competitive pay:** You won't get rich working for your local electric co-op, but you'll enjoy excellent pay and benefits that can help you and the people you love achieve the American dream, whatever that means to you.

**7. Build a stronger community:** Safe, reliable and affordable energy is critical to the health and prosperity of a community. Electric cooperatives power our homes, schools, farms and businesses, and keep rural America connected to the global economy.



MONKEYBUSINESSIMAGES | ISTOCK.COM



LAST  
CHANCE  
ENTER BY  
APRIL 10

One lucky Karnes EC member  
will win 5 season passes!

Get details and enter online at

**TexasCoopPower.com/contests.**

Find Schlitterbahn info at [schlitterbahn.com](http://schlitterbahn.com).



# Tools of the Trade

ON MONDAY, APRIL 8, NATIONAL LINEMAN APPRECIATION DAY, KARNES ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE honors the employees who keep the lights on. You see them stationed in the sky, in the partial enclosure of a truck's bucket, working diligently to maintain lines and restore power after a storm. What may not be evident from the ground, though, is all the equipment a lineworker needs to do his or her job safely. **A lineman's personal protective equipment includes:**

- ▶ Fire-resistant clothing that self-extinguishes, limiting injuries from burns.
- ▶ Insulated rubber gloves, often worn with a pair of leather gloves over them to prevent punctures to the rubber beneath.
- ▶ Insulated hard hats worn at all times for protection from falling objects.
- ▶ Steel-toe boots that prevent gouges.
- ▶ Safety goggles that protect against loose debris and other hazards when working on electric lines and rights-of-way.

Linemen also may wear equipment belts, tool pouches, safety straps and other equipment. Those additional items typically weigh about 50 pounds altogether, a heavy burden while negotiating hazardous conditions 40 feet in the air, surrounded by dangerously high voltage.

A less obvious component of the lineworker's experience is all the time and training that goes into preparing for the job. Classroom training programs last a few months, followed by intensive, yearslong apprenticeships that continue training on the job, ensuring that journeyman linemen are ultimately experts at what they do.

Next time you see a lineworker, be sure to thank him or her for their time and dedication in honing their vital skills, along with their selfless application of those skills in service to our community. Our lives would be pretty dim without them!



DAVE SHAFER

## RECIPE OF THE MONTH



MARGOULLATPHOTOS | ISTOCK.COM

### Bumbleberry Cobbler

- 1 cup blackberries
- 1 cup blueberries
- 1 cup hulled and quartered strawberries
- 1¼ cups sugar, divided use
- ⅓ cup cornstarch
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- ½ cup water
- ¼ cup (½ stick) butter, melted
- ½ cup whole-wheat flour
- ½ cup flour
- ¼ teaspoon allspice
- 1½ teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup milk
- 1 cup sliced almonds

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
  2. Combine berries, ½ cup sugar, cornstarch, cinnamon, lemon juice and water in a pan over medium heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, until mixture thickens, then remove from heat.
  3. In a bowl, combine butter, remaining sugar, flours, allspice, baking powder, salt and milk and mix until smooth. Fold in almonds.
  4. Pour batter into an 8-by-8-inch baking dish. Spoon berry mixture into center of dish. Bake 45 minutes or until pastry top is browned. Allow to cool about 15 minutes before serving.
- ▶ Serves 8.

Find this and more delicious recipes online at  
**TEXASCOOPPOWER.COM**

# Landscaping for Efficiency

**LANDSCAPING DOESN'T JUST ADD BEAUTY TO YOUR** home—it also can improve your home's comfort and lower your energy bills. On average, a well-designed landscape saves enough energy to pay for itself in less than eight years. Benefits include reduced heating and cooling costs, protection against cold winter winds and hot summer sun, and reduced water use.

## Shade

Shading is the most cost-effective way to reduce solar heat gain in your home and cut air conditioning costs. In tree-shaded neighborhoods, the summer daytime air temperature can be up to 6 degrees cooler than in treeless areas. A well-planned landscape can reduce an unshaded home's air conditioning costs by 15 to 50 percent.

Deciduous trees block solar heat in the summer but let in sunlight during the winter because they lose their leaves in colder months. Evergreen trees and shrubs provide continuous shade because they hold onto their foliage all year long.

Check with your local nursery or do online research to determine the best trees and plants for your area. **Here are some general planting tips.**

- ▶ Plant a 6- to 8-foot-tall deciduous tree near your home, and it will start shading your windows in the first year. Depending on the species and the home, it will shade the roof in 5 to 10 years.
- ▶ Plant deciduous trees to the south of your home—they can screen 70–90 percent of the hot summer sun while allowing breezes through.
- ▶ Plant trees with crowns lower to the ground to the west to shade from lower, afternoon sun.
- ▶ Plant bushes, shrubs or climbing vines with a trellis to shade a patio area.
- ▶ To cool air before it reaches your home, plant shrubs and ground cover plants near your home.

## Windbreaks

A windbreak reduces heating costs by lowering the wind chill near your home. It also creates dead air space that insulates your home in the summer and winter. Windbreaks to the north, west and east of houses cut energy consumption by an average of 40 percent.

- ▶ Plant evergreen trees and shrubs to the north and north-west of your home to stop wind. The distance between your home and windbreak should be two to five times the height of the mature tree.



OSCAR COSMIN | ISTOCK.COM

- ▶ Install a fence or wall in addition to evergreen trees to deflect the wind over your home.
- ▶ Plant trees on either side of your house to direct cooling wind toward it in the summer.

## Saving Water

Design your landscape to not only save energy but also conserve water.

- ▶ Always group plants with similar water needs together.
- ▶ Use water-sipping types of turf grass.
- ▶ Aerate your soil to improve water flow to plants' roots and reduce water runoff.
- ▶ Water in the morning when it is cooler and evaporation rates are low.
- ▶ In the summer, raise your lawn mower cutting height—longer grass blades help shade each other and retain more water.
- ▶ Use mulch to keep plant roots cool, minimize evaporation and reduce weed growth.

No matter where you live or what you plant, always call 811 to have underground utilities located before you dig, look up for overhead power lines and take their location into account for tree growth.