

Co-ops Support Volunteer Firefighters in Shared Mission



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER BRAD BIERSTEDT

WE'RE PROUD OF OUR FIRST RESPONDERS HERE AT KARNES ELECTRIC Cooperative. I'm talking about our lineworkers, who charge into potentially deadly storms to restore power.

We also appreciate another special group of first responders who make our communities better by providing critical emergency services—volunteer firefighters.

Most small communities across the state are served by volunteer fire departments, staffed by civilians who undergo special training so they can fight fires, respond to vehicular collisions and tend to medical emergencies. Some 65% of the more than 1 million firefighters in the United States are volunteers, according to the

National Fire Protection Association. And 95% of volunteer firefighters work in departments that protect fewer than 25,000 people each, which describes many of the communities in Co-op Country.

Needless to say, these firefighters bolster the well-being of our members, and they do so only with the support of the community. Most VFDs are nonprofits with budgets that typically don't benefit from tax dollars, so they rely on grants, donations and community fundraising. The VFD fish fries, barbecues and raffles you hear about are largely their only means to raise money to purchase new equipment.

October is National Cooperative Month, when we celebrate the many ways co-ops serve our communities in addition to providing safe and reliable electricity. Indeed, electric cooperatives, following the cooperative principle of Concern for Community, often work behind the scenes to help fire departments thrive. Read *Putting Others First* on Page 12 to learn more about the close connection between co-ops and VFDs.

We're proud that we've provided electricity to our part of the state for more than 80 years and of the many ways we have improved quality of life in our communities. Volunteer fire departments in this country go back even further in history.

The first VFD was established by Benjamin Franklin in 1736 in Philadelphia. He also helped prove that lightning—a cause of many fires in colonial America—and electricity were the same phenomenon. Franklin thought the lightning rod, which deflects lightning away from buildings to prevent fires, to be his greatest invention.

As we celebrate National Cooperative Month, we also salute volunteer firefighters. Their dedication and selflessness make our communities safer. We're glad to contribute to their success.

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Shop Co-op!

KARNES ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE IS ONE of more than 900 electric co-ops in America. But that's just one type of cooperative—more than 29,000 total co-ops operate in the U.S., including many in the agriculture industry. With products as varied as dairy, oranges, almonds and cotton, our nation's farmers know the value of the cooperative business model.

The next time you're at the grocery store, see how many items you can purchase that were produced by a co-op. Starting in the produce section, pick up some Ocean Spray cranberries or Sunkist oranges, tangerines, grapes or grapefruit.

Cruise on over to the refrigerated cases and take a look at the eggs—95% of America's eggs are produced and marketed by co-ops. Then pick up some Florida's Natural orange juice, Land O'Lakes butter, Cabot or Tillamook cheese, and Organic Valley milk. Need a warm drink? Try Equal Exchange coffee, tea and hot chocolate, which also encourage fair trade. Finally, drop some Blue Diamond almonds into your cart.

Now that you've finished your grocery shopping, make your way to co-ops Ace Hardware or True Value to get supplies for your weekend projects. Or go to the Gap, Banana Republic or Guess—all three get their cotton from Plains Cotton Cooperative Association's Denimatrix. But before you do that, head to your credit union—another cooperative—to make a deposit to cover all your purchases.

Support our nation's cooperatives and local co-ops as we work together to build a better world.

Want To Win a Trip to Our Nation's Capital?

It's Youth Tour time again!



EACH YEAR, ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES ACROSS THE U.S. SEND HUNDREDS OF HIGH school students to Washington, D.C., for the Government-in-Action Youth Tour, which offers teens a chance to learn, explore the capital and meet their representatives in Congress.

The winner of the 2020 Karnes Electric Cooperative Youth Tour essay contest will receive a travel package worth \$3,050 and join other Texas high school students in Washington, where they'll visit the White House, Capitol Hill, the Supreme Court, Washington National Cathedral, Arlington National Cemetery, the Smithsonian Institution, Kennedy Center and many other national landmarks. The travel package includes air transportation to and from Washington as well as hotel accommodations, meals, entrance fees, several Youth Tour T-shirts and \$250 cash for miscellaneous expenses.

Youth Tour will begin in Austin on June 17, 2020, and end in Austin on June 26. To give participants a snapshot of our own state government in action, a day of the trip includes a tour of the Texas Capitol and a visit to the Bullock Texas State History Museum.

Applicants must be high school students who have completed their sophomore year by the end of June 2020 and must reside in the home of a parent or legal guardian who is an active member of Karnes EC. Download an application on the Karnes EC website, karnesec.org; pick one up at any Karnes EC office; or email jscheffler@karnesec.org. The deadline for applications is Friday, December 27.



Karnes Electric Cooperative

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

GENERAL MANAGER

Brad Bierstedt

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COOPERATIVE OFFICES

Main Office

1007 N. Highway 123, Karnes City

District Office

1824 W. Goodwin St., Pleasanton

Pay your bill and view your account summary at 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, Ecleto, 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



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Happy Columbus Day

OUR OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED

Monday, October 14, in observance of Columbus Day.



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Power Tip

Copper-bottom pans heat faster on the stove. In the oven, ceramic and glass dishes are better than metal. When using ceramic or glass, you can turn the oven down about 25 degrees—your meal will cook just as quickly.

Planting Trees?

Stay away from power lines

IF THE TREES IN YOUR YARD HAVE GROWN SO TALL THAT THEY TOUCH OVERHEAD power lines, they can cause all kinds of trouble. Branches that sway in the wind and rain can snap an electric line, sending a live wire to the ground, where it can electrocute anyone who touches it. Plus, lines broken by trees will cause you and your neighbors to lose electricity.

That's why any tree that poses a danger—even an old or favorite tree—could be slated for removal by your electric cooperative.

Prevent problems by planting smart. A few tips:

Do some research about the tree you want to plant. Learn how tall it will grow—and how wide the full span of its branches will become. Use those dimensions to determine how far away from a power line you should plant it. Some trees are safe only when they grow 30 feet or more away from a line.

If the landscape design you like requires you to plant trees near electric lines, choose a low-growing variety that will never be tall enough to pose a hazard.

Before digging any holes to plant trees, call 811, the state's "call before you dig" service. If you don't call and hit underground utility lines, you could be liable for damages.

Avoid planting in the right-of-way on the edge of your yard. Your electric cooperative and other utility companies must maintain that space and could wind up trimming trees out of the way of power lines—possibly leaving the tree looking lopsided.

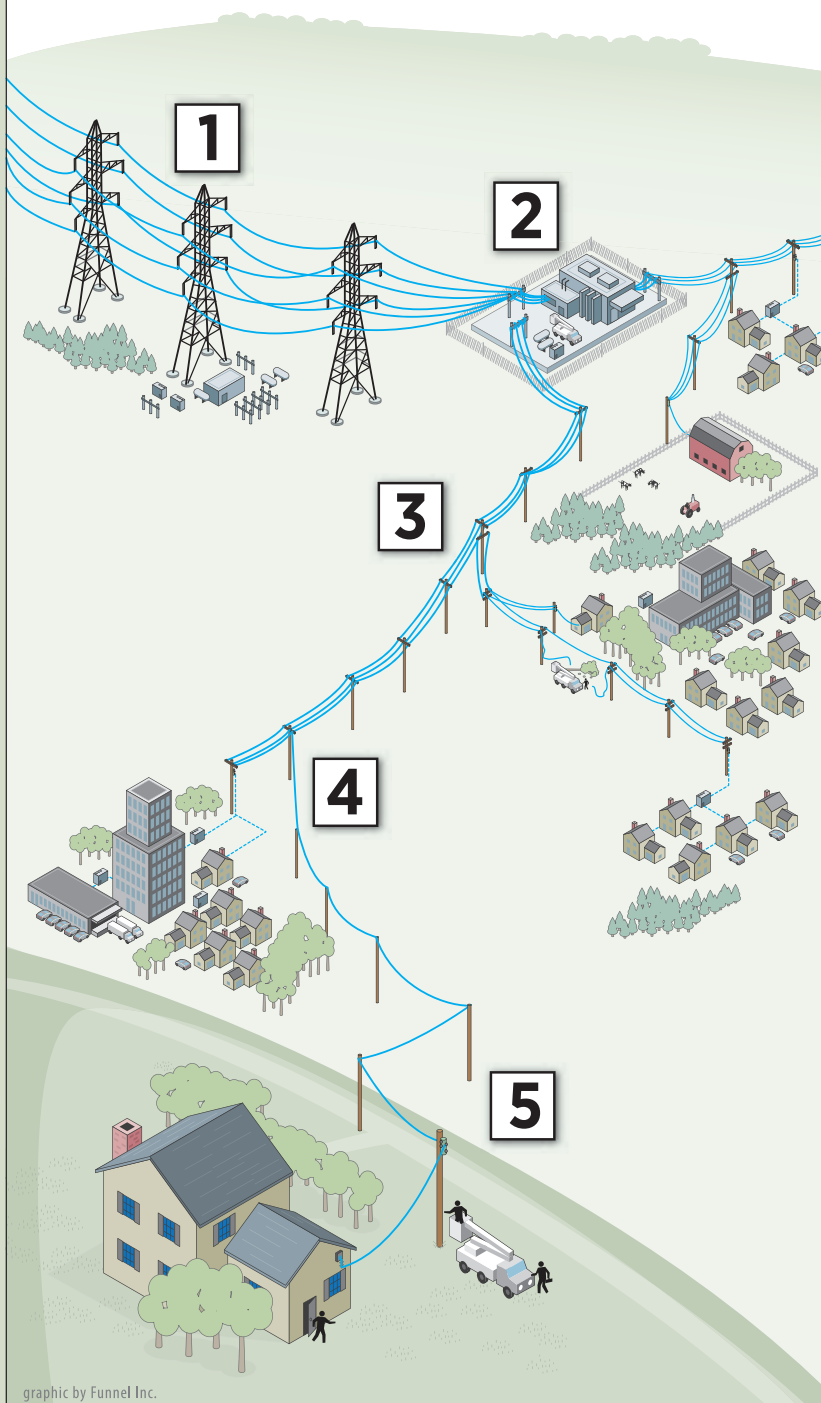
Don't plant shrubs too close to your home's outdoor air conditioning unit. AC units require breathing room and should never be crowded by shrubbery or debris.

If your yard is already home to trees that are close to power lines, keep the trees trimmed so they don't touch any overhead wires. Hire a professional tree trimmer with the proper tools and training to provide this service for you. Don't risk doing it yourself.

Powering Up

When electricity goes out, most of us expect power will be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm causes widespread damage, longer outages may result. Co-op line crews work long, hard hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of consumers in the shortest time possible.

Here's what's going on if you find yourself in the dark.



graphic by Funnel Inc.

1 High-Voltage Transmission Lines

Transmission towers and cables that supply power to transmission substations (and thousands of members) rarely fail. But when damaged, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.

2 Distribution Substation

Each substation serves hundreds or thousands of consumers. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to determine if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation or the substation itself, or if problems exist down the line.

3 Main Distribution Lines

If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of consumers in communities or housing developments.

4 Tap Lines

If local outages persist, supply lines, called tap lines, are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service, outside businesses, schools and homes.

5 Individual Homes

If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your residence may need to be repaired. Always call to report an outage to help line crews isolate local issues.



TEXAS DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Hurricane Preparedness Guidelines

Preparing for Hurricane Season: June 1–November 30

EVACUATION PLANNING: When a hurricane threatens, listen for instructions from local officials. If they call for an evacuation in your area, get going without delay.

- ▶ **Discuss evacuation plans** with your family **before** hurricane season, June 1–November 30. Make a checklist of what you need to do before you leave town and review it.
- ▶ **Monitor NOAA Weather Radio**, local TV and radio broadcasts during storm season.
- ▶ **Prepare an emergency supply kit** that includes a radio, flashlight, extra batteries, extra eyeglasses, bottled water, nonperishable food, dry clothes, bedding, insurance information, important documents, medications, copies of prescriptions and special products for babies, seniors, medically fragile family members and pets.
- ▶ **Learn evacuation routes** before storm season. When there’s a hurricane in the Gulf, keep your gas tank as full as possible. Expect traffic delays in an evacuation.
- ▶ **Register with the State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry online at stear.dps.texas.gov or dial 211 to register if you have a disability or medical needs, or if you simply do not have transportation.** Gulf Coast residents in evacuation zones who have a disability or medical needs who do not have friends or family to help or do not have transportation should register with STEAR in advance.

DIVISIÓN DE ADMINISTRACIÓN DE EMERGENCIAS DE TEXAS

Directrices para Huracanes

Preparando para la temporada de huracanes desde el 1 de junio hasta el 30 de noviembre

EVACUACIÓN EN CASO DE HURACÁN: Cuando exista una amenaza de huracán, escuche las instrucciones de funcionarios locales. Cuando llamen para una evacuación en su área, sálgase del área lo más pronto posible.

- ▶ **Discuta los planes de evacuación** con su familia **antes** de la temporada de huracán, que comienza el 1 de junio y termina el 30 de noviembre. Haga una lista de lo que usted debe hacer antes de salir de la ciudad y revísela.
- ▶ **Escuche la radio** y televisión durante la temporada de huracanes.
- ▶ **Prepare un equipo de emergencia** que incluya una radio, linterna, repuesto de baterías, anteojos extras, agua embotellada, alimentos no perecederos, ropa extra, ropa de cama, información de seguro, documentos importantes, medicinas, copias de recetas medicas y productos especiales para bebés, las personas mayores, miembros de la familia médicamente frágiles y mascotas.
- ▶ **Aprenda sus rutas** de evacuación antes de la temporada de huracanes. Cuando hay un huracán en el Golfo, mantenga el tanque de gasolina lleno. Esté consciente de que habrá demoras de tráfico.
- ▶ **Puede registrarse con el State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry** vía su sitio web, stear.dps.texas.gov, o llamando al 211 para registrarse si usted tiene una discapacidad o necesidades médicas o si simplemente no tiene transporte. Los residentes de la Costa del Golfo en zonas de evacuación con una discapacidad o necesidades médicas quienes no tienen amigos o familiares para ayudarles o no tienen transporte deben registrarse con STEAR por adelantado.



DAVE SHAFER

HAPPY TO WORK ALL NIGHT

If it means getting the lights back on for even one family, we are glad to do whatever it takes.

We’re not your typical electric company. We’re a local not-for-profit electric cooperative.

That means our customers are our members and our top priority.



YOUR SOURCE FOR POWER. AND GREAT SERVICE.

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Time for a Fall Electrical Safety Checkup

WITH THE WEATHER COOLING OFF, THE ITEMS WE USE IN OUR DAILY LIVES ARE STARTING to change. To stay safe this fall, check out these five tips before you start turning off your fans and plugging in your space heaters.

Check your smoke detectors. First things first, test each smoke detector in your home. Since the weather is cooling down, you're probably using more electrical devices to heat your house and to keep warm. It's important that your smoke detectors are working so you'll be aware if a fire breaks out in your home. If you notice they aren't working properly, call an electrician to check it out.

Use space heaters safely. Space heaters can be an easy way to heat your room quickly and efficiently. But be sure that nothing is touching the heater and that nothing flammable is close by. And make sure to plug your space heater directly into an outlet rather than an extension cord.

Check your extension cords. Cooler weather and the holidays call for a lot of lights and a ton of decorations—most of which require electricity. Check your extension cords for damage and replace them as needed to make sure everything is working properly. For all of those outdoor lights, make sure you're using surge protectors and weatherproof extension cords to keep them safe from the elements.

Sweep away leaves. Leaves are bound to end up in your yard as we head into fall. Keep sweeping away those leaves from your outdoor lighting, outlets and power cords because dry leaves can easily catch fire if a spark lands on them. Be sure to keep outdoor air conditioning units free of leaves, dirt and debris as well. This ensures that your unit is in top shape so you won't have to worry about damage later on.

Be careful with electric blankets. What's the best way to stay warm while you watch holiday movies on your couch? An electric blanket, of course. When you start to use yours more frequently this fall, make sure you're using it safely and you aren't putting anything on top of it while it's in use. And never let your pets sleep on it.

Tips for Staying Warm This Winter

COLD WEATHER IS JUST AROUND THE corner, and preparing for winter now can save you money and keep you warmer when the cold air arrives. Here are some simple steps you can take now.

Reverse fans. In the winter, your fans can help circulate warm air. When you reverse the direction of your fan (there's a little switch on the motor housing), the fan will push warm air downward and recirculate it through the room. For winter months, set fans so the blades are spinning clockwise when you look up at them.

Seal air leaks and insulate. Reducing the amount of air that leaks into and out of your home is a cost-effective way to cut heating and cooling costs and increase comfort. Caulking and weatherstripping are two simple and effective air-sealing techniques that offer quick returns on investment, often in a year or less. Proper insulation levels in the attic will also help keep the air you've paid to heat in the house and cold air out.

Spruce up the fireplace. Consider upgrading your inefficient wood-burning fireplace with a more efficient gas insert or adding glass doors with a heat-air exchange system. Make sure your fireplace is cleaned and the flue damper is properly sealed. The damper should be tightly closed unless you have a fire burning.



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