

Give the Gift of Your Time



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER BRAD BIERSTEDT

MANY OF US HAVE THAT ONE FAMILY MEMBER— or maybe even a few—who, when asked what items are on his or her Christmas wish list, invariably answers, “I have everything I need.” This well-intentioned reply can frustrate a desire to cross a name off your list or check a box during the frenzied run-up to the holiday. But it’s also an opportunity to present a loved one with a more meaningful gift.

Time spent completing an errand or task that might be impractical or difficult for a relative or friend is a way to express affection without resorting to the often-impersonal gesture of pulling an item off a store shelf in defeat.

Tasks like changing the filter in a heating, ventilating and air conditioning system; replacing batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors; or caulking around windows can help make someone’s home safer or shave a few dollars off an electric bill. While you’re at it, make lunch or bring a baked good. The trinity of time together, a needed home repair or chore accomplished, and a homemade treat or meal is a tough one to

improve upon, as gifts go.

Karnes Electric Cooperative also appreciates the gift of your time. Whether it’s spent in attendance at the annual meeting, where we get valuable feedback on how to continually improve our processes and operations, or it’s a moment taken to alert us to a problem you notice with a power line or meter, those small yet meaningful measures of your time allow Karnes EC to thrive. Your willingness to engage with the co-op and frequent role as our eyes and ears in the field enable us to maintain a level of service that we’re proud of.

So why not extend that tradition of providing gifts of time and service to those closest to you this year? Take a look around an older relative’s home for any leaky faucets or outdoor light-bulbs that need replacing. Check for loose door or window locks, or clean an out-of-reach window. Your thoughtful gift will keep on giving, as it makes someone’s life that much easier or safer.

From all of us at your electric cooperative, merry Christmas and happy holidays.





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

It's Youth Tour time again!

EACH JUNE, ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES AROUND THE COUNTRY SEND HUNDREDS OF HIGH school students to Washington, D.C., for the Government-in-Action Youth Tour.

The winner of the 2020 Karnes Electric Cooperative Youth Tour essay contest will receive a travel package valued at \$3,050 to join other Texas high school students in the nation's capital to visit the White House, Capitol Hill, Supreme Court, Washington National Cathedral, Arlington National Cemetery, Smithsonian Institution and many other important national sites. The travel package includes air transportation to and from Washington, hotel accommodations, meals, entrance fees and \$250 cash for miscellaneous expenses. Karnes EC's selected delegate also will receive eight Youth Tour T-shirts to wear on the trip and keep as mementos.

Youth Tour begins June 17, 2020, in Austin and ends there 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 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. Applications will be available at karnesec.org, may be picked up at any Karnes EC office or can be requested by emailing jscheffler@karnesec.org. 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

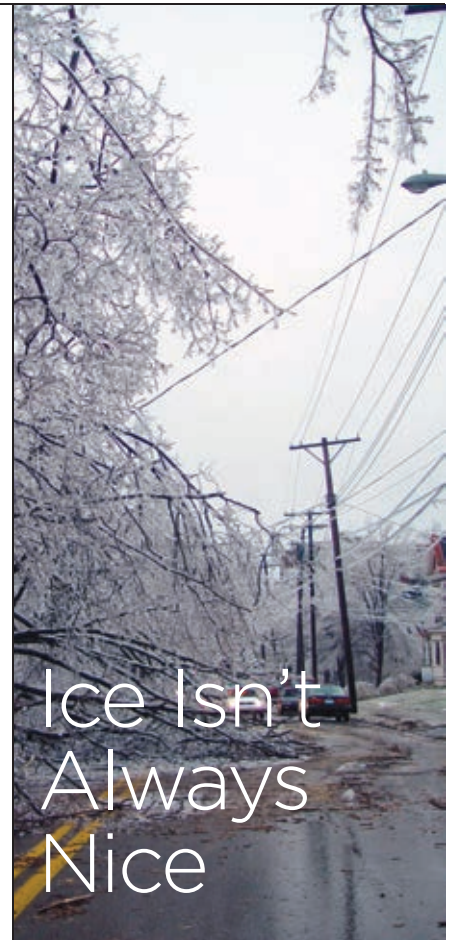
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Charlotte, Christine, Pleasanton, Poteet, Verdi and surrounding areas

FIND US ON THE WEB
karnesec.org



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Ice Isn't
Always
Nice

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Kids, Cookies and Christmas

CHRISTMAS COOKIE SEASON IS UPON US. MAKING THE SWEET TREATS CAN BE ONE OF the most pleasant ways to pass a chilly, indoor afternoon with your children.

Baking with kids teaches them kitchen skills that they'll use for the rest of their lives. You also can use the opportunity to pass along some lessons about choosing healthy ingredients, practicing portion control and the joy of giving gifts baked with love when someone nearby needs a little cheering up.

Here are six tips for baking with kids:

Be present. If you usually watch TV while you bake, turn it off and give your full attention to your children. Baking can be a time to teach and bond with them.

Take your time. Choose a day when you want to bake, not one when you have to—because six dozen cookies are due at your kids' school the next day. Make it an event, not a chore.

Don't sweat the small stuff. So what if the cookies are all different sizes and there's sticky dough all over the countertop? Embrace the magic; don't expect perfection.

Assign tasks based on your children's ages. Little ones can stir cookie dough and add the chocolate chips. Kids who are a little older can scoop the dough onto baking sheets. As they grow, show them how to use an electric mixer, turn on an oven and safely slide baking sheets onto heated racks.

Teach along the way. For example, you can have the kids separate eggs, even if the recipe doesn't call for it. That way, it doesn't matter if the yolks spill into the whites as they practice.

Clean up as you go. Putting away the ingredients and wiping off counters after you finish each step of the prep is a good habit for any young baker or cook to form. And it will save you from cleaning up a mess once the fun is done.

While sharing this special time with your children, don't forget to set a good example by following cooking safety rules.

Although much of the state is unaccustomed to snow and ice, temperatures can fall below freezing even in South Texas, potentially causing power outages. To keep safe and comfortable during a winter power outage:

Report outages to your co-op.

Turn off electrical appliances that were operating at the time the power went off. Leave one light on so you'll know when service has been restored.

Keep warm by closing off rooms you don't need and use only safe sources of heat, like a wood stove. Do not burn charcoal indoors. If you operate lanterns or fuel-fired cook stoves or heaters, make sure that you have adequate ventilation.

Don't drive unless absolutely necessary until conditions improve. If you must drive, go slowly.

Karnes Electric Cooperative encourages you to always practice safety.



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Decorate Your Home Safely During the Holiday Season

IT'S TIME TO DECK THOSE HALLS—SAFELY. MORE THAN 800 HOME FIRES ARE CAUSED by holiday decorations each year, according to the National Fire Protection Association. An additional 170 home fires are caused by Christmas trees each year.

Keep these tips in mind for a safe holiday season.

Carefully inspect all electrical decorations before you use them. Cracked or damaged sockets and loose or exposed wires can cause serious shock or start a fire.

Make sure all extension cords and electrical decorations are being used properly—indoor-rated cords indoors, outdoor-rated cords for outside decorations.

Inspect extension cords for damage and discard (not repair) any that are not completely intact.

Never mount or support light strings in a way that might damage the cord's insulation.

Outdoor electrical lights and decorations should be plugged into circuits protected by ground-fault circuit interrupters.

Exercise caution when decorating near power lines. Keep yourself and your ladder at least 10 feet from power lines.

Turn off all indoor and outdoor electrical decorations before leaving home or going to sleep.

Avoid overloading electrical outlets with too many decorations or electrical devices. They can overheat and cause a fire.

Never connect more than three strings of incandescent lights together.

Water your Christmas tree daily.

Keep all decorations at least 3 feet away from heating elements.

Avoid using candles. The flames are just too dangerous with all the flammable decorations around.

Purchase electrical decorations from reputable retailers and that are approved by a nationally recognized testing lab such as UL, Intertek or CSA.

Got Gas Appliances?

Then you need carbon monoxide detectors

ANY HOME WITH GAS HEAT OR OTHER gas appliances needs carbon monoxide detectors.

You can't see or smell carbon monoxide, which is a potentially deadly byproduct of burning fuels like natural gas, propane and kerosene.

Follow these guidelines:

▶ You should have a CO detector on every floor, outside of the bedrooms and in the garage.

▶ Place your detectors a minimum of 15 feet away from a gas stove or oven, which may emit a small amount of carbon monoxide on ignition.

▶ Detectors don't operate properly in humid areas like bathrooms.

▶ Replace the batteries in your alarms twice a year.

▶ Properly maintain your gas appliances, including the furnace and stove.

▶ Know the warning signs of too much carbon monoxide in the house: stuffy, stale air; condensation on windows; yellow burner flames on the stove; and fluttering or extinguishing pilot lights.

▶ If you see warning signs or your alarm sounds, turn off your gas appliances, open doors and windows, and leave the house. Then call 911.

▶ If your garage is connected to your house, avoid idling your car inside it.



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24 Days of Holiday Advice

In the tradition of an Advent calendar, here are 24 tidbits to promote safety, efficiency and overall well-being during the hectic holiday season.

1 Set realistic expectations. Don't try to do everything.

2 Test smoke alarms before holiday visitors arrive.

3 Keep halls and stairs free of clutter and well illuminated.

4 Have mobility-impaired guests sleep on the ground floor.

5 Water live Christmas trees daily.

6 Rethink giving: Experiences make better gifts than stuff.

7 Keep all decorations 3 feet from heat sources.

8 Place hazardous items out of pets' and young visitors' reach.

9 Don't overload electrical outlets.

10 Unplug decorations before leaving the house or going to bed.

11 Look for a holiday event that you can volunteer for or donate to.

12 Don't leave a space heater running unattended.

13 Never leave an open flame, including a fireplace, unattended.

14 Consider using flameless, battery-operated candles.

15 Indulge in holiday goodies in moderation.

16 Stay in the kitchen when grilling, frying or broiling.

17 Keep towels and potholders away from hot surfaces.

18 Turn off overhead lights when the Christmas tree is lit to reduce energy use.

19 Turn the thermostat down. Guests generate warmth themselves.

20 Take a walk to look at Christmas lights for a break from hosting.

21 Use a slow cooker to make apple cider or mulled wine.

22 Bake dishes at the same time to conserve energy.

23 Wrap gifts in reusables, such as a scarf, tea towel or canvas bag.

24 Breathe, look around and enjoy. You're at the holiday finish line!

SNOWFLAKES: BGBLUE | ISTOCK.COM. CALENDAR: JAWWINK | ISTOCK.COM



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Cool Off Your Winter Energy Bill

YOU'VE BUDGETED FOR HOLIDAY GIFTS, MEALS, MAYBE A VACATION—BUT WITH MONEY tight, that doesn't leave much room for energy efficiency upgrades at home. Does that mean you're powerless to lower your electric bill? Not at all. Keep your energy bill cool this winter with these tips and tricks.

Drape delivery. Are you using your curtains to retain heat? Open drapes and shades to catch free solar heat during the day. Close them at night to keep the heat inside.

Got tape? Though not as durable as foam or vinyl, you can use nonporous tape (first-aid cloth tape, for example) to keep cold air from infiltrating your home. Tape is good for blocking corners and irregular cracks, and can be used at the top and bottom of a window sash, door frames, attic hatches and inoperable windows.

Pull the plug. Unplug any appliance or electronic device that you don't regularly use. Most devices use electricity anytime they are plugged in even if they are off.

Be a fan of fans. Run ceiling fans on low and reverse the rotation to blow air up in winter. This keeps warm air circulating without cooling you.

Flue flux. Be sure your fireplace damper is tightly closed anytime the fireplace is not being used.

Free your vents. Your heating, ventilating and air conditioning system will have to work twice as hard if your air vents are blocked by rugs, furniture or drapes. Keep them clear to allow air to flow freely.

Get caulking. Add caulk or weatherstripping to seal gaps around leaky doors and windows.

Garage drain. Leave your garage door down. A warmer garage in winter will save energy.

Rug relief. Have a spare rug? Use it to cover bare floors for added insulation.

Bundle up. Slip on some fuzzy socks and a sweater and lower the thermostat. You can save 5% for every degree you drop your thermostat between 60 and 70 degrees.

Smart food. When cooking, keep lids on pots and let hot food cool off before placing it in the refrigerator.

There are other ways to conserve energy, too. Remember, you don't pay for what you don't use. When you're not watching TV or using lights, computers or other electronics, turn them off.

Safety First for Holiday Toys

DECEMBER IS THE MONTH WHEN YOU'RE most likely to buy toys and gifts. Purchase safe ones.

If you're shopping for children, buy toys that are age appropriate. You don't want your gift to spoil a child's holiday or cause it to turn tragic.

Here is a checklist for buying safe toys this season:

- ▶ Check the minimum age recommendation on the package. Buy a gift that suits a child's age, ability and interest level.

- ▶ Supervise children while they are using electronic toys. After playtime, put the toys away in a dry area out of smaller kids' reach.

- ▶ Teach your children how to use their toys safely. For example, if a toy has a cord that plugs into the wall, teach the child how to safely use electrical outlets. Demonstrate how to unplug by pulling on the plug itself, not the cord.

- ▶ Look for the letters ASTM on the packaging of toys you buy. That means the toy meets ASTM International's rigorous safety standards.

- ▶ Buying toys from thrift shops, flea markets and garage sales will save you a few bucks, but secondhand toys may not adhere to current safety standards and could be dangerous.

- ▶ Keep an eye out for toy recalls online at cpsc.gov.



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“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.”

—James 1:17

The offices of Karnes EC will be closed Tuesday–Wednesday, December 24–25, and Wednesday, January 1, for the holidays.



Merry
Christmas



Safety First

For home improvement and repair projects

IF YOU'RE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF TIME OFF DURING THE HOLIDAYS to tackle home remodeling, repairs, maintenance or landscaping projects, Karnes Electric Cooperative urges you to keep safety in mind. Caution is particularly important when working around electrical equipment and overhead power lines.

Make sure outdoor outlets have ground-fault circuit interrupters. Use a portable GFCI if your outdoor outlets don't have them. It's also a good idea to have GFCIs professionally installed in wet areas of the home, such as the kitchen, bathrooms and laundry room.

More safety tips to keep in mind:

Look up and around. Always be mindful of the location of power lines, particularly when using long metal tools like ladders, pool skimmers and pruning poles, or when installing rooftop antennas or satellite dishes or doing roof repair work.

Be especially careful when working near power lines attached to your house. Keep equipment and yourself at least 10 feet from wires, and never trim trees near power lines—leave that to the professionals. Never use water or blower extensions to clean gutters near electric lines; also leave that to professionals.

Call the national underground utility locator at 811 before you begin projects that include digging, such as building a deck or planting a tree. Never assume the location or depth of underground utility lines. The locator service is free and can help you avoid inconvenience and serious injury.

Work in a well-lit area. Working during daylight will increase your ability to notice details in your project. If the area you are working in is not well lit, add lighting for adequate illumination.

Keep your work area tidy to avoid creating your own hazards.

Don't allow power cords to tangle. Pick up and properly store power tools, sharp tools or dangerous materials that might cause injury. Pull all nails from old lumber.

Have a fire extinguisher, first-aid kit and emergency numbers readily available. Hopefully you won't need them, but if you do, having them close at hand could minimize damage.

Always check the condition of cords and power tools before using them. Repair or replace worn or damaged cords and tools.

Be sure to wear appropriate safety equipment, including gloves, earplugs and protective eyewear and shoes.

Utilize all safety features of your tools and make sure you know how to use a new tool before operating it. Trust the instructions, not your intuition.

Electricity + water = danger. If it's raining or the ground is wet, don't use electric power or yard tools. Never use electric appliances or touch circuit breakers or fuses when you're wet or standing in water. Keep electric equipment at least 10 feet from wet areas.

Know when the project requires a professional. You know your own abilities. Knowing which projects you can handle yourself and which ones you should consult an expert for is not only important for safety but can also save you time and money.

Ensure home electrical systems and wiring are adequate to support increased electric demands of new appliances, home additions or remodeling projects. An older home may be inadequately wired for today's electricity consumption, putting your family at risk for fire and electrical shock. Have a professional replace worn and outdated circuitry, and add outlets for appliances and electronics—not a job for casual do-it-yourselfers.