



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER BRAD BIERSTEDT

## 'Texas Co-op Power' Gets a New Look

But all your favorite content is here to stay

**YOU MIGHT HAVE NOTICED** something was different when you pulled this magazine out of your mailbox this month. Perhaps you thought the cover looked a little different. Well, you're right, but the changes go deeper than that.

*Texas Co-op Power* has undergone a complete redesign. But even though it has a new look and feel, it's the same magazine you know and love.

Every month, *Texas Co-op Power* is delivered to you to entertain, enlighten and educate you and your family. The magazine is a warm and friendly source for all things Texan, and like a well-informed neighbor, it can offer the secrets to making fabulous, family-pleasing meals; reveal hidden gems of the Texas landscape; and recount the humorous, quirky, solemn and often untold stories of our state's history. Also like a good neighbor, it even reminds you how to save on your electric bill.

Most importantly, *Texas Co-op Power* is one of the primary vehicles through which Karnes Electric Cooperative communicates directly with you, our members, and is a critical component in our efforts

to fulfill Cooperative Principle No. 5— Education, Training and Information.

Through these pages we report on matters important to the co-op, such as director elections and changes to our bylaws; share tips to help you maximize the energy efficiency of your home; and offer safety information that could save your life. We also use this magazine to help you understand

how new technologies—which continue to advance at a sometimes overwhelming pace—fit into your daily life.

As with everything in life, tastes change—and magazine design is no exception. While Karnes EC is not one to jump on the bandwagon for the latest craze, we do realize when one of our products or

services is in need of an overhaul. That's why we're excited to share this redesign with you.

For more than a year, the team behind *Texas Co-op Power* has worked diligently to update the look and feel of the magazine without sacrificing any of the content or character that inspires our members, month after month, to crack open these pages for some uniquely Texan stories—and a healthy dose of the cooperative spirit.

One of the major changes you may have noticed is the refreshed cover design and new *Texas Co-op Power* logo. The last time the logo was updated was in the mid-1990s, and though it suited that era well, sensibilities have changed. The new logo incorporates a modern feel that's in line with the magazine's evolution but sticks to its roots.

As you flip through this month's issue, you'll also see some smaller yet still significant changes, such as new colors and typefaces, new section headers, and more visually striking page layouts. Despite these changes all of your favorite content is still here.

*Texas Co-op Power* remains dedicated to telling the stories of Texas' unique people, history, mythology, culture and geography—the Texan way of life—as seen through the equally unique co-op lens. Readers will still enjoy all the best the magazine has to offer, from recipes, contests and event listings to travel narratives and other features, as well as local news concerning Karnes EC and the communities we serve. Readers can also still enjoy expanded content, contests and other special treats at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com), on our Facebook page and by subscribing to our e-newsletters.

The magazine has evolved with an eye toward the future, but it retains all the hallmarks that generations of electric cooperative members have cherished since the first issue in 1944. Just like Karnes EC, it's here to stay and better than ever. ■



# Karnes EC Returns \$2 Million in Capital Credits to Members

**KARNES ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE** and its board of directors understand the difficult times many of our members are facing because of the COVID-19 pandemic. In response the board has voted to return \$2 million in capital credits to members to provide immediate support when it is needed most.

As a not-for-profit utility, Karnes EC works hard to provide affordable and reliable service. Each year, revenues that exceed expenses, called margins, are returned to members in the form of capital credits.

The cooperative typically returns capital credits to its members in September, but the board of directors elected to expedite returns to July to

help members dealing with the economic toll of the pandemic. Capital credits returns appeared as a bill credit on active members' July statements and varied based on length of membership and the amount of electricity used during the years retired. Any member no longer receiving service from Karnes EC should have received a check by mail.

After reviewing the co-op's finances each year, the Karnes EC Board of Directors determines

whether a portion of capital credits can be retired, or returned, to members. This commitment to our members has led to the return of more than \$18.7 million in capital credits since the cooperative was established.

Karnes EC is proud of its 81-year heritage of providing electricity in 12 South Texas and Coastal Bend counties. Karnes EC is headquartered in Karnes City, and our newly completed member service center is in Pleasanton. ■



## POWER TIP

Save electricity and money on laundry day by washing clothes in cold water, doing full loads and air-drying clothes instead of using a clothes dryer.

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## Karnes Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

### CONTACT US

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### General Manager

Brad Bierstedt

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## 24/7 Outage Reporting

### TOLL-FREE

1-888-807-3952

### ONLINE

At [karnesec.org](http://karnesec.org) using your SmartHub account, or use the SmartHub app on your mobile device.

Please be prepared to provide your account number and meter number.

### PAYMENT OPTIONS

- Online or via the SmarHub app
- 24-hour pay-by-phone
- Auto bill pay
- Mail
- In person
- Night drop
- Kiosk located at Pleasanton Member Service Center

### OFFICE LOCATIONS

Open Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

#### Karnes City Headquarters

1007 N. Highway 123, Karnes City

#### Pleasanton Member Service Center

1824 W. Goodwin St., Pleasanton

### MISSION STATEMENT

Providing quality service to empower communities and improve lives.



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## Make Energy Savings Fun for Kids

**WANT TO TRAIN YOUR CHILDREN** to use energy more efficiently? Make it a fun, interactive learning experience.

### Here are some ideas:

- ▶ Give your kids a penny or even a quarter every time you see them turning off the lights or TV when they leave a room. Take a coin back if they leave their video games running or leave lights on in an empty room.
- ▶ Reward older kids with a small bonus on their allowance

## COVID-19 To Impact Co-ops Nationwide for Years To Come

**AS THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC** has caused local businesses to close their doors and hardworking Americans to lose their jobs, new economic projections show the nation's electric cooperatives could suffer up to \$10 billion in lost revenue through 2022. The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association is asking Congress to step in.

New research shows that electric co-op operating revenues are expected to decline by \$7.4 billion as electricity sales fall by 5% through 2022 due to lower U.S. economic output. And a surge in unemployment coupled with mandatory and voluntary moratoriums on service disconnections in 46 states is expected to increase the balance of unpaid electric bills to \$2.6 billion through 2022.

"The economic health of electric co-ops is directly tied to the well-being of their local communities," said Jim Matheson, NRECA CEO. "As the economic impact of this pandemic

each month that they help lower the household energy bill.

- ▶ Educate your children about how they might be wasting energy by holding the refrigerator door open or leaving the front door ajar when they run outside. Then deputize your little ones as your home's "energy police." Put them on the lookout for energy wasters like phone chargers that are plugged into the wall without a phone on the other end or TVs that are on when nobody's watching.
- ▶ Spend an afternoon decorating badges that put your children in charge of your home's Operation Save Energy. Then take them on a "raid" of the house, looking for ways your family is wasting energy.
- ▶ Set up an energy efficiency obstacle course. Send your kids on a race through the house to find other family members or friends acting out energy-wasting activities. Tell your kids they have to find culprits in each room and correct the energy wasters before they can move on. Time them as they race through the house and award points each time they correct an action.
- ▶ Each week, post a chart on the refrigerator and keep a tally of each time a family member gets caught wasting energy. The person with the fewest tallies by Friday night gets to pick the movie.

If you make saving energy a game rather than a chore, you might get your kids excited about your cause. Soon enough they'll be correcting you when you forget to flip the switch.

In addition to making it fun and offering rewards, remember to explain the "why" of energy conservation. Why should kids care? Saving money on the electric bill could mean more money for fun activities. ■

spreads, electric co-ops will be increasingly challenged as they work to keep the lights on for hospitals, grocery stores and millions of new home offices. Policymakers should be mindful of the economic threat facing rural communities and their electric cooperatives by taking steps to prevent the possibility of significant disruptions."

Not-for-profit electric cooperatives have no shareholders, are owned by the communities they serve and routinely return excess revenues to their consumer-members. Lost revenue can severely constrain the ability of certain electric co-ops to meet the needs of their communities. Electric co-ops face high fixed costs, particularly from their responsibility to maintain 42% of the nation's electric distribution lines to serve just 13% of the nation's electric consumers.

"Electricity powers the American economy, and a stalled economy uses less energy," said Russell Tucker, NRECA's chief economist. "As GDP growth falls in the wake of COVID-19, co-op electricity sales are projected to decline. We expect reductions in electric co-op sales of 6.1% in 2020, 6% in 2021 and 3% in 2022."

Despite these challenges Karnes Electric Cooperative will continue to provide you with the same reliable service you deserve and have come to expect. ■





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## 5 Home Energy Hogs

**IF YOU'VE EVER COMPARED** your electric bill with a neighbor's and found your bill to be notably higher, even though your homes are similar in size, you might be wondering why—and how you can lower your bill.

Even though your homes may be similar, your families probably aren't—and you may have a hidden energy drain causing your bills to be higher. Here are five energy hogs to watch for.

### 1. Old Fridge or Freezer in the Garage

That second fridge or freezer may be costing more than you think. If the model was produced prior to 1990, it's likely using twice as much energy (or more!) than a newer Energy Star-rated model. If it's located in the garage, it may run constantly in the summer, which could lead to higher electric bills. It might be time to rethink that spare fridge that's out there holding beverages; instead, bring those drinks into the kitchen refrigerator and retire the spare.

### 2. Cooling or Heating an Uninsulated Area

Cooling or heating an uninsulated workshop or garage can be expensive. For example, if a homeowner heated an uninsulated shed to keep several half-empty buckets of paint from freezing, they're paying more to keep paint warm than the paint was even worth. Pet owners have been known to heat and cool an uninsulated garage to keep pets comfortable, not realizing that this might be costing more than heating their actual home. If you really want to heat or cool these types of spaces, they need to be well insulated and heated and cooled efficiently, perhaps with a ductless minisplit system.

### 3. Hot Tub

The average operating cost of a hot tub is \$250 per year. But that amount may be higher if your hot tub is an older, less efficient model or if you live in a colder climate. A smaller hot tub with better insulation, a cover and a pump that runs on a lower voltage will use less energy than other models. In the long run, getting a "good deal" on a used hot tub may cost more in energy bills than a newer, more efficient model.

### 4. Swimming Pool

If you have a swimming pool, consider installing a smaller, more efficient pump and reducing how often it runs. Putting it on a timer can be a convenient way to reduce operating time. You can also look at installing a larger filter and maximizing the flow of water through the pipes by making them larger and reducing how sharply the corners turn. These measures could cut your electric use for the pool pump by as much as 75%. Consult with a pool installation specialist to find the most efficient setup that will still keep your pool clean.

### 5. Pumps

If you live on acreage or a farm, you probably have several pumps, including irrigation, well, septic and sump. If you're like most of us, you use those pumps until they break down. Consider replacing the oldest and most used pumps over time with new, more efficient ones that are sized correctly for their task. Also make sure you're eliminating leaks in the water lines. ■



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## Choosing the Right Lightbulb

**STANDING IN THE LIGHTING AISLE** of a hardware store can be overwhelming because of the wide variety of lightbulbs and changes in lightbulb technology over the past several years.

The incandescent lightbulb was the go-to option for years, but now there are choices that are more energy efficient and better suited to specific tasks. Sometimes it can be hard to know where to start choosing the right bulb.

Standard light, can light, floodlight, globe light, candle light, tube light, vintage light, track light—the list of bulb types goes on and on. And it's not just the type of bulb up for consideration; there are also watts, lumens, light quality and temperature, and dimmability to think about.

### Types

CFLs and LEDs are the energy-efficient bulbs of choice, and they last longer than traditional incandescents.

### Watts and Lumens

Wattage refers to the amount of energy a lightbulb uses. Lumens refers to how much light the bulb gives off. A higher number of lumens per watt equates to more energy efficiency, so look for a high lumens-to-watts ratio.

If replacing an incandescent bulb, consider a low-watt LED equivalent. Some general guidelines are less than 60 watts (220–700 lumens) for ambient room lighting, 60–100 watts (700–1,300 lumens) for task lighting and 100-plus watts (1,300-plus lumens) for large-area lighting.

An LED bulb might be more expensive upfront, but it will save money in the long run because of its long life and energy efficiency.

### Color and Temperature

The quality of light varies by lightbulb as well, and some thought should be given to color and temperature of the light. There are soft white lightbulbs for a warm, comfortable look; bright white lightbulbs for a cool, refreshing look; and daylight lightbulbs for an energizing, natural daylight look.

### Choose a Star

As always, look for the Energy Star logo to ensure that you are buying the most energy-efficient bulb. ■

## Choose the Right Extension Cord

**WHEN THE RIGHT CORD** is used for the right purpose, extension cords can temporarily and safely deliver electricity when there is no outlet nearby.



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**Pay attention to these extension cord designations when selecting a cord, and remember that indoor cords should not be used outside and vice versa.**

**S:** Indicates that the cord is for general use.

**W:** Indicates the cord is for outdoor use.

**J:** Indicates that the cord has standard 300-volt insulation.

**T:** Indicates that the cord is made from vinyl thermoplastic.

**O:** Indicates the cord is oil-resistant.

**P:** Indicates that the cord is made from parallel wire construction, used in air conditioner cords and household extension cords.

**E:** Indicates the cord is made from thermoplastic elastomer.

Make sure that any extension cord you use has the mark of an independent testing agency, such as UL, Intertek or the Canadian Standards Association. ■

## 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](http://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

# Guía 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, evacue del área lo más pronto posible.

- ▶ **Discuta los planes de evacuación** con su familia **antes** de la temporada de huracanes, que empieza 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 un radio, linterna, repuesto de baterías, anteojos extras, agua embotellada, alimentos no perecederos, ropa extra, ropa de cama, información de seguros, 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 haya un huracán en el Golfo, mantenga el tanque de gasolina lleno. Esté consiente de que habrá demoras de tráfico.
- ▶ **Puede regístrase con el State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry en la página web, [stear.dps.texas.gov](http://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 que viven en 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.

# Electrical Safety Tips for Hurricane Season

**THE ATLANTIC HURRICANE SEASON** runs from June to November, but the peak begins in August. An average of six hurricanes churn through the Atlantic each year, and three of those are usually categorized as severe.

A Category 1 hurricane can have winds up to 95 mph, damaging roofs, felling branches or trees, and harming electrical infrastructure. A Category 5 hurricane brings winds greater than 156 mph and can cause catastrophic damage, such as extreme home damage, uprooted trees, downed utility poles and long-term power outages.

**Remember these electrical safety tips from Electrical Safety Foundation International to prepare for, weather and recover from a storm.**

## Before

Charge all phones and communications devices. If there is an extended power outage, you'll want to have a full charge on your cellphones, laptops and tablets.

Unplug all electronics and move them as high as possible to keep them out of floodwaters' reach and protect them from water damage.

## During

Stay inside and away from windows and glass during hurricanes. Strong winds and flying debris could break windows.

Never operate a portable generator indoors. Doing so can lead to the buildup of carbon monoxide, an odorless gas that is deadly.

Never plug a generator directly into your home's wiring unless you have a transfer switch, which isolates home circuits from the power lines to protect your home, generator and lineworkers.

## After

Don't use electrical devices, equipment or outlets that have been submerged in water.

Moisture can lead to corrosion, parts failure and fire risk.

Have a qualified electrician inspect any water-damaged electrical equipment and electronics. Replace any electronic components, including circuit panels, outlets and fuse boxes, if they get wet. ■