MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER

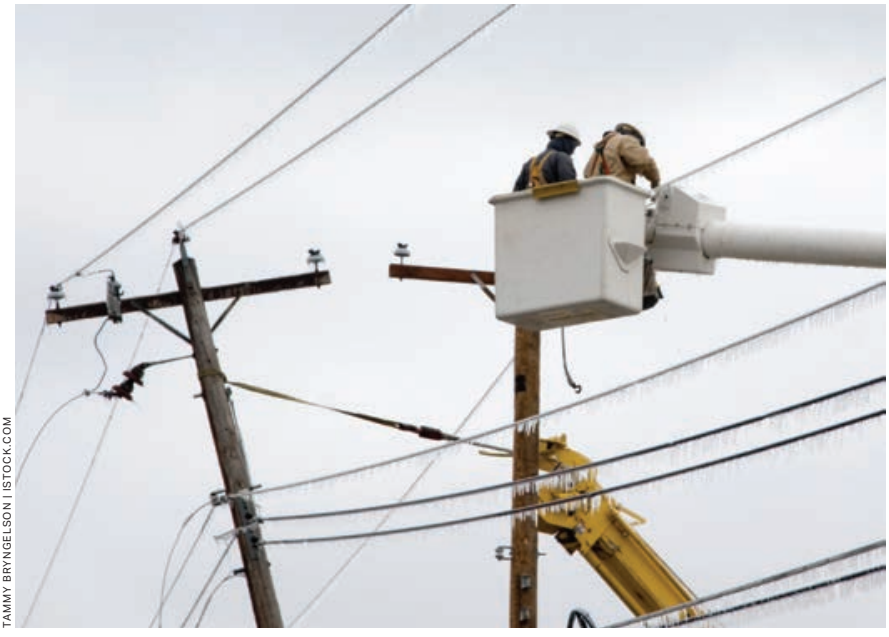
BRAD BIERSTEDT

Giving Thanks for Electric Co-ops

THIS THANKSGIVING, as I reflect on the many reasons for gratitude in my life, I want to share why I am thankful for electric cooperatives.

First, I am thankful for Karnes Electric Cooperative because it provides safe, reliable and affordable electricity to our community. Electricity is a vital part of our modern lives, providing heating and cooling, lighting, convenience in cooking, instantaneous communications, and more.

I'm grateful to be part of an organization that endeavors to make a difference in people's lives because it is the right thing to do. We empower our consumer-members to improve the quality of their lives. We have served residents of our rural area since before investor-owned utilities would even consider stringing immense quantities of line over many miles to provide electricity to a few, spread-out connections.



TAMMY BRYNGELSON | ISTOCK.COM

I'm proud that Karnes EC, as a nonprofit organization, makes it routine to return capital credits to our members. Capital credits are any margins returned to you, the consumer-members, after all operating expenses are paid and investments are made and the board votes to issue retirements.

I'm glad that Karnes EC is part of a network of electric cooperatives across the United States that supports hundreds of thousands of jobs. Here at home we employ members of the community, providing careers with good wages and meaning.

I'm grateful for a job where I have co-workers who are focused on providing excellent service to members. That service includes providing energy conservation tips so your electricity stays affordable and safety tips so you and your family can stay safe around electricity. After all, we serve our friends and neighbors.

I'm pleased, too, that we support the community in other economic and charitable ways. Our payment of state and local taxes benefits all local residents, as tax money goes toward shared services.

It gives me a sense of purpose to know that electric cooperatives are broadening their use of renewable energy sources, such as solar, wind and hydropower, and that we are contributing to cleaner air. Collectively, across the U.S., co-ops have reduced carbon dioxide emissions by more than 18%.

I'm grateful we are not alone in this business. Across the nation electric cooperatives power 56% of the landmass and own 42%—or 2.6 million miles—of electrical distribution lines. Together we serve more than 20 million businesses, homes, schools and farms in 48 states. We join forces through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and Texas Electric Cooperatives for political strength, buying power, mutual aid and other shared resources.

Most of all, I'm thankful for each and every co-op member who makes possible the continuation of Karnes EC—this important business and community supporter. I wish you and yours a happy Thanksgiving. ■

BENKRUT | ISTOCK | THINKSTOCK

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

It's Youth Tour time again!

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES ACROSS THE U.S. send hundreds of high school students to Washington, D.C., each year 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 2021 Karnes Electric Cooperative Youth Tour essay contest will receive a travel package worth $3,150 to 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 13 and end in Austin on June 22. 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 2021 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 ksanchez@karnesec.org. The deadline for applications is Friday, December 18.

Karnes Electric Cooperative
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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24/7 Outage Reporting

TOLL-FREE
1-888-807-3952

ONLINE
At 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

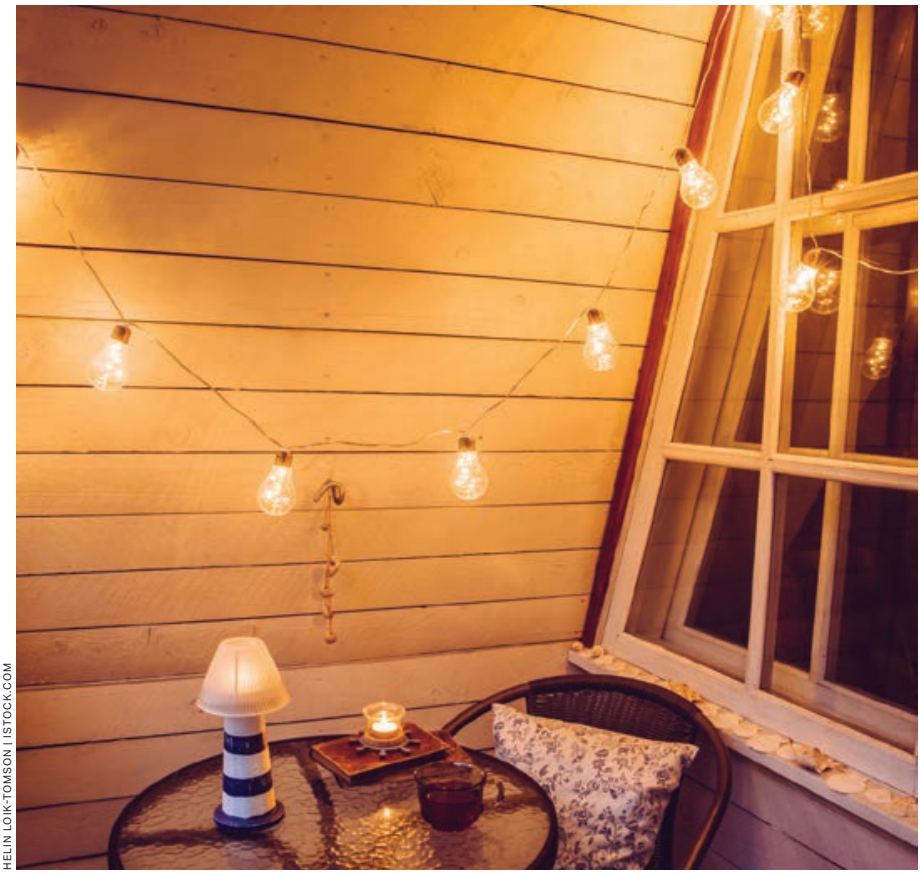
- Online or via the SmarHub app
- 24-hour pay-by-phone
- Auto bill pay
- Mail
- In person
- Night drop
- Kiosk located at Pleasanton Member Service Center

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.



HELIN LOIK-TOMSON | ISTOCK.COM

Whole-House Electrical Safety Checklist

A WHOLE-HOUSE ELECTRICAL safety check can help prevent injuries, deaths and fires caused by faulty products and wiring. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends that homeowners conduct an inspection every six months and provides a checklist to help with the task.

First, check lights.

▸ Are the lightbulbs the appropriate wattage for each fixture? If not, replace bulbs with the correct wattage. While you're at it, consider energy-efficient alternatives such as LEDs.

Check portable electrical heating equipment.

▸ Does the heater have a mark—such as UL, ETL or CSA—of a nationally recognized testing laboratory? If not, replace the heater because it may not have adequate safety features.

▸ Is the heater placed at least 3 feet away from flammable materials? If not, move it that far or farther from combustibles and ensure that nothing could fall onto the heater. Some heaters produce enough heat to ignite even nearby combustible materials.

▸ Is the heater stable? If not, place the heater on a flat, level surface. Fires can start if a heater falls over. Some heaters turn off automatically if tipped, but it is best to make sure it doesn't tip over in the first place.

▸ Is the heater in good condition, without strange smells, sparks or smoke when in use? If not, repair or replace the heater. Odd smells, sparks or smoke could indicate an electrical problem that could result in fire or electric shock.

Check electrical outlets and switches.

▸ Are all outlets and switches working properly? If not, have an electrician check them and correct any unsafe wiring conditions.

▸ Are all outlets and switches cool to the touch? If not, stop using them and make sure the outlet is not overloaded with appliances. Unusually warm outlets and switches could indicate an unsafe wiring condition.

▸ Do all electrical plugs fit into all outlets? If not, have the outlet replaced, as loosefitting plugs can cause overheating and fires.

▸ Do all electrical outlets have faceplates covering wiring? If not, install faceplates. Exposed wiring is a shock hazard.

▸ In homes with children, do all unused outlets have safety covers? If not, insert safety covers over outlets to prevent children from experiencing serious shock if any object is inserted.

Inspect outlets with ground-fault circuit interrupters.

▸ Do you test all GFCI outlets regularly? If not, test them once a month. GFCIs can prevent electrocution and should be used in kitchens, bathrooms and other areas of the home where risk of shock is higher.

Follow this procedure to test GFCIs:

▸ Plug a light into the outlet and turn it on.

▸ Press the test button. Did the light go out? If not, replace the GFCI.

▸ Press the reset button. Did the light come back on? If not, replace the GFCI.

Check countertop appliances.

▸ Are all countertop appliances unplugged when not in use? If not, unplug them, as unattended appliances that remain plugged in may create a fire risk.

▸ Are all appliance cords positioned so that they will not contact a hot surface such as an oven or toaster in the kitchen? If not, relocate cords away from heat sources. Melted or burned cords with exposed wires could lead to electric shock or fire.

▸ Are all appliances located away from sinks? If not, move appliances away from sinks. If it is not possible to move appliances away from sinks, ensure they are plugged into an outlet protected by GFCI. Electricity and water mixing can cause electric shock and fire. ■

LISA THORNBERG | ISTOCK.COM

Decorate Safely This Holiday Season

THE HOLIDAY SEASON offers great moments for building memories, but when it comes to decorating, it's also the perfect time to think about safety.

Fire departments look to the holiday season as a time for increased vigilance because the mix of lighting, candles and electrical wiring can be a recipe for tragedy.

Holiday decorations are designed for temporary use, so don't let them become permanent fixtures in your yard. The safety certification company UL classifies holiday lighting as seasonal products designed for no more than 90 days of use. While the actual holiday season runs about six weeks, weather and busy schedules mean outdoor displays are sometimes put up early and taken down late, exposed to the elements the entire time.

It's always important to inspect holiday lights each year before you put them up. Check for pinches or torn areas on wiring insulation. Exposed wiring and any signs of fraying or pinching are indications of weakened wiring, which can cause a fire.

The U.S. Fire Administration, the Consumer Product Safety Commission and nongovernmental safety organizations also remind consumers that extension cords, whether labeled for indoors or outdoors, are also designed for temporary use only. Household wiring is a solid metal wire, but extension cords are strands of thin wires that are twisted together. That pliability can allow them to break down over time, increasing the chance that they could fail.

Candle use also increases the risk of accidental fires, and experts suggest consumers consider battery-operated LED candles as safer alternatives. According to the National Fire Protection Association, candles start 2 out of every 5 home fires each year, and about 100 Christmas tree fires occur each holiday season, causing about $12 million in damage annually.

You can reduce your risk by placing your live Christmas tree away from heat sources like vents and space heaters and topping off its water reservoir daily.

Karnes Electric Cooperative joins our local firefighters, the NFPA and the CPSC in urging you to consider safety as you decorate and enjoy the holiday season with family and friends. ■

Damaged Home Appliances Risk Health and Home

A FAULTY OR DAMAGED electrical appliance can be more than just an inconvenience when it fails to work properly. It can cause damage to property and pose risks to health.

If a damaged appliance shorts out, it can create a surge in the electrical system, which should cause the breaker to trip, preventing damage. But if the breaker doesn't trip, there's a risk of electric shock or fire.

Surges can also damage sensitive electrical equipment, such as computers, and can harm outlets and switches.

You may have a broken appliance if:

- Your circuit breaker trips. The appliance may be nearing the end of its usefulness.
- Switches stop working. They may have been damaged by a power surge.
- You see or smell smoke. Smoke should not come from a functioning appliance.
- It makes different or unusual noises. The appliance may be developing a fault.
- Performance decreases. Replacement or repairs may be necessary.
- Lights, screens or buttons no longer work. The appliance may need service or replacement. ■

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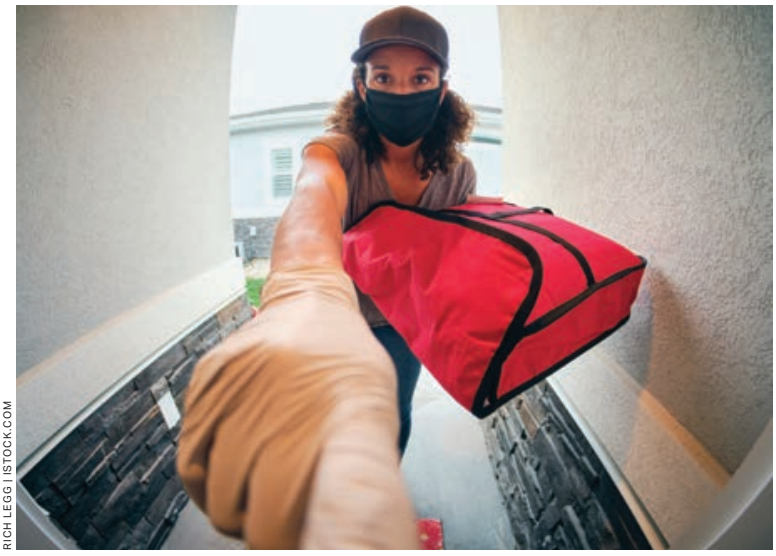

RICH LEGG | ISTOCK.COM

Smart Options for Your Home Security

MANY PEOPLE ARE beginning to realize the convenience and comfort that smart home technologies provide. A smarter home can save time and reduce stress, especially with a home assistant that can integrate all your smart devices, like the Amazon Echo or Google Home.

One motivator for many people is safety. Homeowners want peace of mind when it comes to the protection of their family, and smart security devices are a great way to make your home more secure.

Most smart home security options can be accessed through smartphone apps. So whether at work or on vacation, you can keep an eye on your home 24/7. If you're looking for ways to update the security of your home, these relatively new technologies are worth checking out.

Smart Security Cameras

Security cameras are one of the basics of technology used to monitor your home. Many models are weatherproof, making them suitable for indoor or outdoor use. Wireless cameras are a great option, but wired versions are less expensive. There are many smart security cameras on the market that offer a variety of features, such as cloud storage, built-in floodlights or motion-activated sensors.

Camera prices vary based on features and capabilities, ranging from less than $50 to several hundred dollars.

Smart Doorbells

If you want to see who's at your front door, a smart doorbell can show you. Many smart doorbells can capture footage of up to a few hours at a time or retain footage of just before a disturbance was detected. Smart doorbells are similar to smart security cameras but are built into the doorbell instead of a separate camera. A key difference is that a smart camera captures footage all the time, while the smart doorbell only captures footage when it detects motion or when someone rings the doorbell. Quality versions start at about $100 and go up depending on features.

Depending on your needs and budget, these smart security options can significantly improve your home security and make it easier for you to relax knowing you can monitor it right from the palm of your hand. ■

Change Air Filters All Winter Long

YOU DUTIFULLY CHANGED your air conditioning system's filter every month or two over the summer—right? And now that the weather is cooling off, you might think that job is finished until next summer.

It's not.

Your central heating system also relies on a filter to catch dust, dirt, pet hair and other airborne particles that can clog the system, slow it down and even make it blow that stuff back into your rooms.

A clogged filter restricts airflow, and that can force the system's blower to work harder. This can shorten the life of the equipment, causing it to overheat, break down or unnecessarily increase your heating bill.

That's why it's important to change the filter regularly during cooling and heating seasons. In fact, most heating, ventilating and air conditioning system manufacturers recommend monthly changes all year long.

Especially if you have pets, if you live in a dusty climate, or if someone in your home smokes or suffers from allergies, regular filter changes are critical to keeping your HVAC system in good shape and your family comfortable. ■

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FILADENDRON | ISTOCK.COM

Efficient Holiday Cooking

COOKING ACCOUNTS FOR 4% of total home energy use, the U.S. Department of Energy estimates, and this figure doesn't include the energy costs associated with refrigeration, water heating and dishwashing.

As households gear up for the holiday season, keep these tips in mind to control energy costs.

Smart Oven Use

Before the baking begins, clean the inside of your range, wiping accumulated grease and grime out of the oven and making sure the window is clean and clear so you can see what's cooking.

Don't open the oven door to check on the progress of cooking food. Every time the door is opened, the temperature inside is reduced by as much as 25 degrees, forcing it to use more energy to return to the proper cooking temperature. Use the oven light and the window to keep an eye on those cookies.

For recipes that need to bake longer than an hour, preheating isn't necessary.

If you use a ceramic or glass dish for baking, you can typically set your oven to 25 degrees lower than the recipe directs. Because ceramic and glass hold heat better than metal pans, your dish will cook just as well at a lower temperature.

Stovetop Sense

For your stovetop to function effectively, it's important that the metal reflectors under your electric stove burners stay free of dirt and grime. Electric stovetops transmit heat to pans only by direct contact with burners. The less contact your pan has with the burner, the more energy the stovetop has to expend to heat the pan.

If your pans have warped over time and don't sit flat on the burner, it may be time to upgrade to a new set of cookware. To keep pans from warping, don't clean them while they are still hot. The temperature difference between the pan and wash water can deform the metal.

Think Small Appliances

A slow cooker, microwave, toaster oven or warming plate can do the same job of cooking some dishes with less electricity. For example, the average toaster oven can use about half the energy of the average electric stove over the same cooking time. ■

MAYAAFZAAL | ISTOCK.COM

NOVEMBER HOLIDAYS

Veterans Day
Wednesday, November 11
Our office will be closed in observance of the holiday.

Thanksgiving
Thursday, November 26
Our office will be closed November 26–27 in observance of the holiday.

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What About the Windows?

WINDOWS CAN MAKE or break the energy efficiency of a home. Heat gain and loss through the glass is responsible for 25%–30% of residential heating and cooling energy consumption, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

When selecting windows for new construction or replacing a home's existing windows, choose the most efficient options you can afford.

If that's not an option for you, your windows could benefit from some simple fixes to increase the efficiency and comfort of your home. **Here are some suggestions from the DOE:**

- Check windows for air leaks. Then add caulk and weather-stripping to seal any leaks.
- Add window treatments and coverings to further seal out the elements.
- Add solar film to the interior side of windows.
- Add shading on the exterior, such as awnings, outside blinds or overhangs.

If windows need to be replaced, there are many options to consider, and some are more energy efficient than others. The Efficient Windows Collaborative offers up tips for picking panes in Texas.

- Make sure windows meet your local energy code, and look for the Energy Star label.
- Look for energy-efficient properties on the National Fenestration Rating Council, or NFRC, label.
- Compare annual energy costs for a typical house by using a computer simulation on the EWC website, efficientwindows.org.
- Ensure proper installation for optimal performance and to avoid air and water leaks.

Here's a guide to some of the window jargon you may come across.

- U-factor: the rate of heat loss. The lower the U-factor, the better a window resists heat flow.
- Solar heat gain coefficient: the fraction of incident solar radiation. A low SHGC means a window transmits less solar heat.
- Visible transmittance: the amount of visible light transmitted. The higher the VT, the more light is transmitted.
- Air leakage: The lower the AL, the less air will pass through cracks.
- Condensation resistance: how well a window resists condensation inside. The higher the rating, the more resistant to condensation a window is.

Having an understanding of energy-efficient properties helps make choosing new windows easier. **The DOE recommends the following when selecting new windows based on the climate:**

- In colder climates, consider gas-filled windows with low-e coatings to reduce heat loss. In warmer climates, select windows with coatings to reduce heat gain.
- Choose a low U-factor for better thermal resistance in colder climates.
- Look for a low SHGC. Low SHGC windows reduce heat gain in warm climates.
- Select windows with both low U-factors and low SHGCs to maximize energy savings in temperate climates with both cold and hot seasons.
- Look for whole-unit U-factors and SHGCs rather than center-of-glass U-factors and SHGCs. Whole-unit numbers more accurately reflect the performance of the entire product.

The benefits of high-performance windows can go beyond heating and cooling savings. **High-quality windows can:**

- Improve visibility and the infiltration of daylight.
- Enhance comfort by controlling drafts and reducing direct sunlight with proper coatings.
- Reduce condensation with warm interior surfaces and insulating frames.
- Reduce the fading of fabrics and furnishings by blocking ultraviolet radiation with coatings.
- Reduce peak heating and cooling loads, which may allow for the downsizing of heating and cooling equipment or a reduction in overall energy costs.
- Make the home quieter by preventing noise from penetrating. ■

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

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 regístrese con el State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry en la página 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 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.

CT757FAN | ISTOCK.COM

SEREZNIY | ISTOCK.COM

Home Safety for Older Adults

EVERY 11 SECONDS an older adult is treated in the emergency room for a fall or other home accident. Use this checklist to spot safety hazards in your home and immediately address potential problems.

Remove fall hazards. Falls are the leading cause of injury among older people.

- Remove throw rugs. These may look nice but are easy to trip on.
- Clean up clutter to create a more open environment.
- Don't stretch extension cords across the floor.

Keep emergency numbers handy. Some aging brains can't always remember emergency information. Make it easy to call for help by posting a prominent note with important numbers.

Protect against fire. Home safety also includes addressing fire hazards.

- Change the batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors regularly.
- Check the electric cords of all appliances and lamps. Replace frayed or damaged cords and limit the number of cords plugged into power strips.
- Remove candles, which can easily start a fire.
- Minimize use of space heaters. If you must use one, place it at least 3 feet away from curtains, bedding and furniture and turn it off before going to bed or leaving the house. ■