

# What To Do If the Lights Go Out



**MESSAGE FROM  
ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER THOMAS CHEEK**

**WHAT IS YOUR FIRST REACTION WHEN THE LIGHTS GO OUT?** Do you refuse to believe it's really happening and flick the light switch on and off several times? Or does a song pop into your head like "The Night the Lights Went Out in Georgia" or "When the Lights Go Down" by Journey? Whatever your reaction is, I am sure you are not literally dancing in the dark like Bruce Springsteen says.

If your service is interrupted, you can help us get your lights back on as soon as possible by reporting the outage. If your breakers are not tripped, then keep in mind the outage may still be only at your location. Early notification of an outage will ensure that it is coordinated and responded to as promptly and safely as possible. Don't always assume that someone else will report the outage. HILCO has some simple and convenient options to report outages. Choose the one that works best for you.

1. Call our toll-free number at 1-800-338-6425 or dial (254) 687-2331 to speak directly to one of our member service representatives or navigate through our interactive voice response system.
2. Report outages online at [hilco.coop](http://hilco.coop).
3. Email outages to [outages@hilco.coop](mailto:outages@hilco.coop) (be sure to include your name and account number).
4. Report outages from your smartphone using the SmartHub app. This app also allows you to view and pay your bill online. SmartHub is available on any Android or iOS smartphone or tablet.

You may also view and track current outages by visiting our website and clicking on the Outage Map. The map provides real-time outage information.

At HILCO Electric, we know it is never convenient to lose power, but be certain our team is on the job. HILCO is available 24/7 for power restoration. We are here to serve you, our members.

For more helpful outages tips, visit our website at [hilco.coop](http://hilco.coop).



In the event of an outage, always keep a storm kit handy.



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

- George Thiess, President, *District 6*
- Joseph (Joe) Tedesco, Vice President, *District 4*
- Janet (Jan) Smith, Secretary-Treasurer, *District 7*
- Leroy Huff, *District 1*
- Margaret Hill, *District 2*
- Bill Allen, *District 5*
- Ron Roberts, *District 3*

Operating in Dallas, Ellis, Hill, Johnson and McLennan counties

**GENERAL MANAGER AND CEO**

Debra A. Cole

**COOPERATIVE OFFICES**

**Itasca Headquarters**

115 E. Main St. • P.O. Box 127  
Itasca, Texas 76055  
(254) 687-2331  
1-800-338-6425

**Midlothian**

300A Silken Crossing  
Midlothian, Texas 76065  
(972) 723-2900

**Whitney**

4581 FM 933  
Whitney, Texas 76692  
(254) 694-5237  
1-888-850-6551



**CONTACT US**

For information during office hours and outages after hours:

**CALL US**

**(254) 687-2331** local or  
**1-800-338-6425** toll-free

**EMAIL**

[hilco@hilco.coop](mailto:hilco@hilco.coop)

**FIND US ON THE WEB**

[hilco.coop](http://hilco.coop)

# Safety First Under the Sun

**SUNSHINY DAYS** are an invitation to head outdoors—sometimes for fun, sometimes for chores. Either way, HILCO Electric Cooperative offers these tips to keep you safe:

Products like tillers, lawnmowers, mulchers, hedge trimmers, leaf blowers and chain saws can cut, burn and even blind when directions are not followed. Study each product's manual for safe operation rules and always follow them.



© RUNZEKORN | DOLLAR PHOTO CLUB

**Outdoor electrical appliances and power tools should always be:**

- ▶ Plugged in and turned on only when in use.
- ▶ Stored indoors (with a few exceptions such as electric barbecue grills, which can be covered to remain outdoors) and away from water and excessive heat.
- ▶ Used only when all safety guards are in place.

**Outdoor electrical appliances and power tools should never be:**

- ▶ Left unattended, even temporarily. If there is a key, remove it. Put the product where no curious child or unqualified adult can misuse it.
- ▶ Carried by their cords.
- ▶ Used while wet or close to water.
- ▶ Used near sharp edges or in conditions that can damage the product, its cord or its plug.
- ▶ Repaired by anyone who is not authorized by the manufacturer or trained to repair the particular product.

## Win a \$50 Bill Credit!

As you're reading your Texas Co-op Power, look for the "hidden" account number in the local HILCO pages in the center of the magazine. If it's YOUR electric account number, call us before the end of June—you have won a \$50 credit on your HILCO electric bill!

**(254) 687-2331 or 1-800-338-6425**



## Power Tip

Having your AC inspected by a professional before you fire it up for the summer can save you money and headaches in the future. A serviceperson should check the motor, blower, drain line, coils, operating pressures and temperatures, return and supply lines, refrigerant levels and the air filter.

## JUNE Bulletin

### June 5-6

Hillsboro's New Bond's Alley Art Festival  
Hillsboro

### June 6

1st Annual 5K Color Run/Walk  
Whitney Elementary, 7 a.m.-1 p.m.

### June 12-14

Riverplace Friends Art Workshop  
Clifton, (254) 622-8364

### June 20

Father's Day Tailgate Cook-Off  
Laguna Park Library, (254) 622-2665

## HAPPY FATHER'S DAY SUNDAY, JUNE 21

"My father gave me the greatest gift anyone could give another person: He believed in me."  
—Jim Valvano

## BILLING SCHEDULE

Payments are due by close of business at 5 p.m. on the due date.

### CYCLE 1

Billing Date ..... June 2  
Due Date ..... June 18

### CYCLE 2

Billing Date ..... June 9  
Due Date ..... June 25

### CYCLE 3

Billing Date ..... June 16  
Due Date ..... July 2

### CYCLE 13

Billing Date ..... June 17  
Due Date ..... July 2

### CYCLE 4

Billing Date ..... June 23  
Due Date ..... July 9

# Electrical Fact and Myth: Know the Difference

**WHEN IT COMES TO ELECTRICITY**, you have to know the facts. They might save your life one day. Here are some common electrical myths proved false:

**Myth: Once an electrical line is down, it is dead.**

**Fact:** The electric current does not always turn off when a power line is down. Even if lines do not show signs of life (arcing, smoking, buzzing, popping), they can still hold a dangerous electrical current. Always treat a downed wire as if it's energized because there is no way for you to know by looking whether it is hot or not. Just stay away, and keep others away.

**Myth: All power lines are insulated.**

**Fact:** Most power lines actually are not insulated. The coating on the lines is mainly for weatherproofing and will not offer any protection from the electrical current. Even if a power line is insulated, its insulation can crack due to weather, reducing its safety. No matter the case, it is never safe to touch a power line.

**Myth: There is no need to worry about power lines when digging a hole.**

**Fact:** Always call 811 before you dig to have a professional come to your home and locate buried public utility lines, free of charge. No matter the size of a digging project, if you come into contact with a buried power line, you could be electrocuted or seriously injured.

**Myth: It is safe to work around a power line at home as long as direct contact is not made.**

**Fact:** Electricity can jump, or "arc," from a line to the near-

est conductor—which could be you. Always keep yourself and equipment at least 10 feet from power lines. This goes for ladders, pool skimmers, pruning poles and any other equipment. Always be aware of where power lines are so you do not risk electric shock. If you are planning to trim trees or attempt any do-it-yourself project near power lines, always call professionals for the job instead.

**Myth: It is safe to remove the third prong from a plug.**

**Fact:** The third prong is a safety feature designed to reduce the risk of shock or electrocution. That prong grounds the electrical current. If the outlet is only fit for a two-pronged plug, replace the outlet with a three-pronged one—or, even better, a ground-fault circuit interrupter outlet, which prevents electric shocks.

**Myth: Tires insulate my car from electrical dangers.**

**Fact:** If a wire falls on your car while you are in it, the tires do not keep you from being injured by the electricity. The vehicle is the path to ground for the electrical current, so while you remain in the car, you are safe. As soon as you step out of the car, you become the path to ground and are in immediate danger.

If you find yourself in a situation where your car has hit a utility pole or power lines have fallen onto or near it, stay in the car and warn others to stay away. Wait for a utility crew to cut the power to the lines. Only exit the car if it is on fire. Make sure to not touch the ground and the car at the same time. Jump from the car, keeping your feet together, and hop away from the scene.





# HILCO Members Honored at Picnic

**HILCO EMPLOYEES, WEARING RED SHIRTS, LINED UP TO GREET** members and their families as they filed in on the mild, spring day of March 27 for the Annual Southern Member Appreciation Picnic.

Doors opened promptly at 5:30 p.m. and guests entered to the sound of Czech music being played by the Charles Nemecek Band. Employees passed out canvas tote bags filled with HILCO-branded goodies as members made their way to the food line where Michna's Bar-B-Que served up more than 650 plates of mouth-watering barbecue with all the trimmings.

Once members and their guests found their way to their seats, General Manager/CEO Debra Cole welcomed them with opening statements and her humorous jokes before turning the mic over to Board President George Thiess to give his welcoming speech, followed by Board Vice President Joe Tedesco, who gave the invocation and led guests in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Cole expressed her gratitude to the directors, staff, employees and members for attending the picnic. "We look forward to our picnics every year as a means of getting to

see our members and showing our appreciation to them," she said. 18270100

The highly anticipated prize drawing was conducted by HILCO Assistant General Manager Thomas Cheek. Names were drawn for a total of 28 great prizes. A special thank-you to the kids for helping with our big prize drawing. The kids did an outstanding job, and we appreciate their help.

Our vendors and subsidiary also deserve a big thank-you for their generosity in contributing prizes. HILCO U.S. Propane donated two 50-gallon deliveries of propane; T&D Solutions donated an electric scooter and helmet; and Schneider Engineering donated a \$100 Walmart card.

The event is hosted each year by the HILCO Board of Directors—President George Thiess, Vice President Joe Tedesco, Secretary-Treasurer Jan Smith, Director Ron Roberts, Director Bill Allen, Director Margaret Hill, Director Leroy Huff—and staff and employees to show their appreciation to the members of HILCO Electric. We would like to thank everyone for coming out, and we look forward to seeing you all next year!

# Stay Connected

## *Update your contact information*

**IN THE UTILITY BUSINESS**, we know rough weather will occur, and sometimes power outages simply can't be avoided. But did you know there are steps you can take to ensure that your electricity is restored as quickly and safely as possible?

If HILCO Electric Cooperative doesn't have the correct phone number linked to your home address, it becomes much more difficult for you to report an outage. By keeping your contact information up to date, you can take full advantage of the services we offer.

Remember when you had to speak to a customer service representative to report a power outage? Waiting on hold could be frustrating and time-consuming, especially in a house with no power. Today, with the press of a button, you can easily report an outage. 14912513

At HILCO EC, we use the phone number you provide to link your service address to our outage-management system. For example, if you call us to report an outage, our automated system instantly recognizes your phone number and can determine the particular service address from which you are reporting an outage. Once you give our system a response, your outage is reported. It's that simple! But remember: A link to an old number gets us nowhere. The system only works if your current phone number is linked to your service address.

Updating your contact information also is helpful because it speeds up the power restoration process. With correct information, our outage-management system can predict the location and the possible cause of an outage, making it easier for our crews to correct the problem.

Keeping the co-op updated with your contact info also helps us when there's a question about energy use or billing. If we can reach you readily, any discrepancies on your account don't have time to become big problems, and they can be taken care of promptly.

Visit [hilco.coop](http://hilco.coop) or call 1-800-338-6425 and make sure you're up-to-date.

**By keeping your contact information up-to-date, you can take full advantage of the services your electric cooperative offers.**



**Despite how appropriate its name sounds, duct tape is not a good choice for sealing duct work.**

## Ducts Make a Difference

**DOES THE CONDITION OF MY AIR DUCTS** make a difference in my home's energy use? The short answer is, "Yes."

Ducts that move air to and from a forced-air furnace, central air conditioner or heat pump are often big energy wasters if they have leaks. Sealing and insulating ducts can improve the efficiency of your heating and cooling system by as much as 20 percent.

Focus first on sealing the ducts that run through the attic, crawlspace or unheated basement in your home. Use duct sealant, also known as mastic, or metal-backed tape to seal the seams and the connections between ducts. After sealing the ducts in those spaces, wrap them in insulation to keep them from getting hot in the summer or cold in the winter.

Next, seal any ducts that you can access in the heated or cooled part of the house. And as with any home maintenance job, if you don't feel capable of doing the work yourself, call a professional. Any extra time and expense will be worth the savings you could see.



# Help HILCO Beat the Peak

**BEAT THE PEAK IS A VOLUNTARY PROGRAM** designed to encourage members to reduce energy usage during peak hours, 4 to 8 p.m., every day from June through September.

At HILCO Electric, the cost of power accounts for the vast majority of our total operating expenses. As a cooperative member, you can help control some of that expense by helping reduce peak power costs.

Each year, HILCO is billed for wholesale power from October of one year through September of the following year based on an average of the highest peak usage in June, July, August and September. Because demand is so high during those months, energy prices increase, and the co-op must pass those costs on to the members. If HILCO members can collectively beat the peak, they can help control costs and reduce expenses. The less electricity we have to purchase at peak pricing, the lower the costs to our members.

Beating peak demand may seem overwhelming at first, but small changes can make a big difference. We hope that the tips provided on this page will serve as a guide to energy conservation. You can learn more about Beat the Peak on our website at hilco.coop.

Your efforts, combined with those of your fellow members, will make a BIG difference. Let us all work together to beat the peak!



**SAVE ENERGY AND EXPENSE**  
 Don't use from 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM  
 When peak usage is highest



**Keep your refrigerator's temperature set at 35 to 38 degrees, and make sure the seals around the doors are airtight.**

## Cool Down Refrigerator Costs

**AS WARM TEMPERATURES** settle in for the summer, refrigerators are set to get a workout keeping food and drinks cool for hot and thirsty friends and family members. Follow these tips to reduce the amount of energy your refrigerator uses.

**Minimize the number of times you open your refrigerator.** Plan accordingly so you don't have to leave the door open for prolonged periods of time. An open door allows warm, moist air to enter, which makes the compressor work harder.

**Set the appropriate temperature.** Keep your refrigerator at 35 to 38 degrees Fahrenheit.

**Place your fridge in a cool place.** Position the refrigerator away from a heat source such as an oven, a dishwasher or direct sunlight from a window.

**Allow air circulation behind the fridge.** Leave a few inches between the wall and the refrigerator, and keep the condenser coils clean if you have an older model. Read the user's manual to learn how to safely clean coils.

**Check the door seals.** Make sure the refrigerator seals around the door are airtight. If not, replace them.

**If you buy a new refrigerator, be sure to recycle your old one.** Many appliance retailers will pick up and recycle your old refrigerator when you purchase a new one.

## Tips To Beat the Peak

- ▶ On nice days, choose to cook on your outdoor grill rather than using your electric range.
- ▶ Delay major appliance usage—especially in the kitchen and laundry room.
- ▶ Turn off all unnecessary lights and appliances.
- ▶ Delay hot water usage.
- ▶ During peak times, raise your thermostat 2 to 3 degrees and use ceiling fans to keep air circulating.

# Locally Grown Goodness

## A Visit to Majestic Farms

**WITH BRISK WINTER IN THE REARVIEW MIRROR** and a delightful spring coming to an end, a joyful summer approaches us with the promise of juicy, chin-drippin' peaches, mouth-watering plums and sweet, succulent blackberries.

There's something exhilarating about sinking your teeth into the fruit you just picked with your own hands—fruit that hasn't been coated with wax and has never seen a grocery store or a barcode sticker. This is what HILCO members and Majestic Farms owners Ray and Ann Mershawn promise us.

In 2004, the Mershawns set out to fulfill their dreams of having a farm and getting back to the basics of life. They decided they would plant five plum trees on their 23-acre farm for plum jelly, and the planting never stopped. Today, they have more than 1,000 peach trees, 35 pear trees, 30 plum trees and 1 acre of blackberries.

In 2008, Ann and Ray decided to let locals come in and pick their own fruit. Thus began "Pick-Ur-Own" at Majestic Farms.

Majestic Farms offers a wide variety of fruits, but what's available depends on what's in season. To get the best fruit, you need an idea of what to look for:

► **Blackberries** usually ripen in May and go to July. Berries should be uniform in color and should come off easily from the plant if ripe. When picking, you should pick berries that are growing knee- to chest-high.

► **Peaches** are usually available June to mid-August. Peaches that are ripe will separate easily from the twig, be rich in color, smell sweet and have a little softness.

► **Plums** usually start in June. As plums ripen, they first change color, then soften, then the skin takes on a powdery appearance.

If you are looking for something to do with the kids or simply want to make your own fruit-infused treat with the fresh fruit picked by your own hands, visit Majestic Farms in western Hill County of Peoria. Call first to check availability.

Visit their website for more information at [majesticfarms.net](http://majesticfarms.net).



### RECIPE OF THE MONTH



© ISTOCK.COM | ROJOIMAGES

## Blackberry Cobbler

- 8 cups fresh blackberries
- 1¼ cups plus 1 tablespoon sugar, divided use
- 5 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon fine salt
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 12 pieces
- 1 9-inch frozen deep-dish pie crust, thawed

1. Heat oven to 375 degrees and put a rack in the middle. Line a baking sheet with paper towels; set aside.
2. Rinse the berries and place them in a single layer on the prepared baking sheet to dry slightly. Transfer the berries to a large bowl; add 1¼ cups sugar, flour and salt, and stir gently to combine.
3. Place a 9-inch deep-dish pie plate on a foil-lined baking sheet. Pour the berry mixture into the pie plate and spread into an even layer. Distribute butter evenly on top.
4. Tear the thawed pie crust into large pieces and place over the berries, leaving some space between the pieces so that the berries are visible. Sprinkle with the remaining tablespoon sugar.
5. Bake until the berries are bubbling and the crust is golden-brown, about 40 to 45 minutes. Place on a wire rack and let cool for at least 30 minutes before serving. Serve with vanilla ice cream, if desired.

BLACKBERRIES © ISTOCK.COM | KARAN AYES

# FACES OF HILCO

## Meet the People Who Work for You



**Todd Anderson** has helped provide members with safe, reliable electricity for over 13 years. As a first-class lineman, Todd fully embodies the heart and dedication it takes to do a lineman's job. Todd always ensures safety while performing his daily operations and braving the elements of our unpredictable weather. Todd says that he appreciates his co-workers and fellow linemen he works alongside each day.

Todd enjoys hunting, fishing, golfing and coaching little league T-ball. He and his wife, Ashley, have three daughters: Maci, Taytum and Bryton.

**Lacey Warren** has committed to putting HILCO members first for over 12 years. Lacey began her career with HILCO as a dispatch clerk in 2003 and today is the assistant office manager in HILCO's satellite office in Whitney. She remains dedicated to ensuring that members still receive the friendly service they deserve. Lacey enjoys her co-workers and the members she works with on a daily basis, and prides herself on her responsibilities with the electric and subsidiary services that HILCO provides to our members.

Lacey takes pleasure in spending time with her husband, Jeremy, and their two children, Jeremy Jr. and Lily. She loves being outdoors and woodworking.



**Sue Rivera** has brought her friendly demeanor to HILCO and its members for more than 13 years. Sue began her career as a dispatch clerk, and a few years later, HILCO called upon her expertise as an operations clerk. In this role, she works diligently to keep the linemen and operations in order. Sue says that she loves everything about her career, from working with the linemen and crews to working outages and restorations.

In Sue's free time, she enjoys traveling with her husband, Chris, and his band, as well as gardening, gathering with family and friends, and spending time with her grandchildren.

**Sheri Sanders** has devoted 12-plus years to HILCO and its members. She began her career working as a member service representative at HILCO's satellite office in Whitney. Today, she brings that same commitment and efficiency to the accounting department as an accounts receivable/billing clerk. Here, Sheri is in charge of resolving meter discrepancies, assisting with billing adjustments and other responsibilities.

Sheri enjoys spending time with her husband, Jeff, and their two daughters, Kylie and Payden. Some of her favorite hobbies include team roping, running and watching her children engage in sport activities.



**Pam Lewis** has provided HILCO with hard work and dedication for more than 14 years. Pam began her career with HILCO as accounting coordinator and still holds that position today. She has a strong eye for detail and exceptional organizational skills, which help make her daily operations run more efficiently. Pam states that always-changing technology gives her the opportunity to learn new and more efficient ways to perform her duties.

Pam and Bob, her husband of 44 years, love camping, boating and traveling to state and national parks. They have two children and six grandchildren.