

Be Mindful of Your Electric Usage



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER AND CEO DEBRA COLE

IF YOUR ELECTRIC BILL SEEMS HIGHER than it used to be, it's time to investigate.

1. Check your history. First, verify that the bill truly is higher. Call your electric cooperative to ask for a review of your bills over the past year. You might be surprised to see how much your usage fluctuates depending on the season.

2. Check the weather. Fluctuations in outdoor temperatures can lead your family to crank up the air conditioning on especially hot days. Most people with air conditioning use more electricity during the hottest summer months than at any other time of the year.

3. Check what's plugged in. If you thought your bill would be lower during a month when your family was on vacation, you might be surprised to realize that

your appliances still use substantial electricity when the house is empty. Your refrigerator, landscape irrigator and well pump, for instance, keep running while you're gone unless you have unplugged them. In fact, any appliance plugged into the wall uses electricity, whether or not anybody is home to use them.

4. Check your equipment. As appliances such as refrigerators and water heaters age, they become less efficient. If your air-conditioning and heating



Compare your energy bill this summer to what you paid this time last year.

system or another large appliance is more than 15 years old, consider replacing it with a more energy-efficient model.

5. Check your lifestyle. If your college-age child is home for the summer, your electric bill will be a bit higher than it was while he or she was away. If your grandkids are enjoying their vacation at your house, your bill could go up. If you've had houseguests, you've used more electricity. If you've added a major appliance, such as a pool with a pump, a hot tub or even an oversized TV, that has affected your electric bill, too.

6. Don't rely on your neighbors. No two families use electricity the same way, so if you believe your bill is too high because your neighbor's is lower, you're not making an even comparison. The better comparison is between your use of electricity now compared with the same time last year.

If you still think your bill is higher than it should be, contact your electric cooperative for help figuring it out.



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

GENERAL MANAGER AND CEO

Debra A. Cole

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FIND US ON THE WEB

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HILCO EC Youth Tour winner Kennedy Moore, right, along with Faith Griffin, from Grayson-Collin EC.



HILCO Youth Tour Winner Visits Washington DC

MORE THAN 1,500 STUDENTS and 280 chaperones gathered in Washington, D.C., in June for the 2017 Government-in-Action Youth Tour.

Electric cooperatives have been sending high school students to Washington every year since the 1960s.

HILCO Electric Cooperative Youth Tour winner Kennedy Moore joined other high school students from 46 participating states on this year's tour.

Moore graduated from Grandview High School in May and plans to attend Hill College for one semester and transfer to Texas Tech where she will begin law school. During her senior year, Kennedy won a silver medal in UIL Cross Examination Debate.

Youth Tour provides high school students the opportunity to learn firsthand what it is like to be involved in politics, community service and today's issues that surround our nation and world. As a part of HILCO Electric's commitment to the communities it serves, the co-op is honored to provide this opportunity for the youths in its service area.

Electric cooperatives believe that students should see their nation's capital up close, learn about the political process and interact with their elected officials. The participants gain a personal understanding of American history and their role as American citizens.

While student groups are organized at the state level, they all come together for Youth Day, where they get to meet each other and hear featured speakers who provide insight to the important roles electric cooperatives play in their communities.

For more information about Youth Tour, please visit youthtour.coop.

August Bulletin

August 5

Waxahachie

Downtown Farmers Market

8 a.m.-1 p.m.

410 S. Rogers St.

August 5

Midlothian

Midlothian Market

8 a.m.-12 p.m.

Heritage Park

August 26

Waco

22nd Annual Margarita and Salsa Festival

6 p.m.

Extraco Events Center

BILLING SCHEDULE

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

CYCLE 1

Billing Date August 1

Due Date August 17

CYCLE 2

Billing Date August 8

Due Date August 24

CYCLE 3

Billing Date August 15

Due Date August 31

CYCLE 13

Billing Date August 16

Due Date August 31

CYCLE 4

Billing Date August 22

Due Date September 7

SAVE THE DATE! HILCO EC ANNUAL MEETING

Thursday, September 28



Look for your registration card and picnic details in the September issue of *Texas Co-op Power*. We look forward to seeing you all there!

Don't Forget To Vote!

YES, THE BIG, NATIONAL election was last November. But you'll have another chance to vote this year and next—and every year, when your electric cooperative elects members to its board of directors.

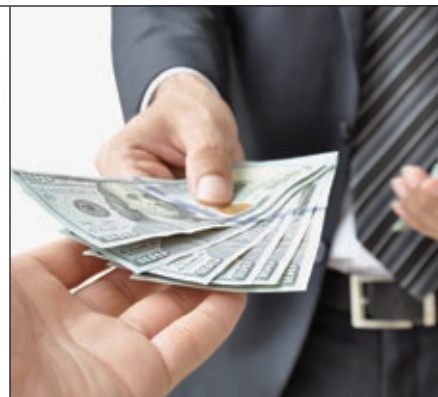
In the cooperative business model, consumers own their electric utility. That means you're more than just a customer; you're a member and an owner.

Because you're an owner, you have the right—and duty—to vote for the utility's directors. Those directors are member-owners, just like you. They're the folks you see at the feed store, festivals and football games. They're your neighbors, friends, co-workers and acquaintances. 4706238501

If you want to be a director, you can run for election, too. Every co-op member has that right.

Customers of big, city-based electric companies don't get to vote for their board of directors. Those utilities are owned by investors who buy stock in the companies. That means they are controlled from afar, unlike your electric cooperative, which is governed by local consumer-members like you.

Being locally controlled means that your co-op considers local voices in everything it does. So make your voice heard: Don't forget to vote!



You Get the Credit

HILCO retires \$ 1.7 million back to members

It's time for you to get the credit—capital credits, that is—for helping build, sustain and grow your electric cooperative.

This summer, the HILCO Electric Cooperative Board of Directors authorized retiring capital credits that were earned in 1986, 1987 and a percentage of 2002 through 2016.

The board members are excited to return your investment in your electric cooperative with this capital credits retirement. As a member of HILCO Electric during 1986 through 2016, you helped provide the funding to build and maintain the electric system. In our non-profit cooperative, all funds not used to pay the wholesale power bill and operating expenses are invested in the facilities, as opposed to borrowing all the money needed for upgrades and growth.

Unlike investor-owned utilities that pay dividends to their stockholders who are often far removed from the service provided, cooperatives return their margins to the members—those who use the service and provide an important investment.

Since inception, HILCO EC has returned more than \$12 million in capital credits retirements to its member-owners.

We believe this is just one of the cooperative differences that makes serving you and our communities a pleasure.

Oven-Free Summer Cooking

WE ARE IN THE MIDST of the season of high air-conditioning bills, and nobody wants to stand over a hot stove or oven to produce a good meal.

With some creative use of your smaller countertop appliances—toaster oven, microwave, pressure cooker and slow cooker—you still can easily make the dishes you usually cook on the stove or in the oven.

Electric Pressure Cooker

Something of a phenomenon in the kitchen, these are bringing back time-saving pressure cooking. New electric ones have more safety measures in place than the stovetop sort, and most of them can take the place of slow and rice cookers.

Pressure cookers can hard-boil eggs in about 5 minutes, and are good for quick-steaming a surprising number of foods you would normally boil or bake. Some models can even cut out stovetop steps, like browning meat, with a sauté function.

Slow Cooker

They're not just for stews anymore!

With the right recipes, slow cookers can perform a marvelous and surprising range of culinary feats, like making bread, yogurt and gooey brownie desserts. Of course, pork and pot roasts cook while you're at work, and black-eyed peas are done overnight. But did you know that a slow cooker also can cook potatoes (properly pierced, oiled and foiled) to perfection in about 8–10 hours?

Rice Cooker

Besides making rice effortless, rice cookers are also good for cooking other grains, such as quinoa, and for steaming. Although making rice is already easy, many home chefs appreciate not having to turn on a stove at all or dedicate a burner to rice when the stove is already busy.

But many might not know of the rice cooker's ability to make entire one-pot meals. And eggs can be hard-boiled perfectly upon a steamer rack set in the top, or set in with rice to be prepared simultaneously.

A steaming tray or basket is essential in many pressure and rice cooker recipes. Some rice cookers even come with steaming baskets, but if yours didn't, you can buy one separately. A



To keep cool this summer, consider steaming your vegetables instead of turning on the stove or oven.

common, useful style is a stainless steel, collapsible basket that fits in just about anything.

Toaster Oven

Besides making toast, a good toaster oven can save you the heat of turning on a full-sized oven. Although you might not trust one to heat evenly enough for baking a cake, it can roast veggies or fish in a snap. Some are also big enough to hold a 2.75-quart baking dish, the perfect size for casseroles and cobblers.

Microwave

These can do a lot more than heat up your leftovers, you know. Microwaves work by spinning water molecules, which means they can steam things easily, too. Also, they melt chocolates and cheeses more easily than a double boiler or an oven, with much less excess heat.

Microwaves easily cook rice in about 15 minutes, scrambled eggs in about a minute and a half, and pierced and oiled potatoes in 10 minutes with one flip. Unshucked corn on the cob cooks in 3–4 minutes; handled with care, the corn should slide right out of the husk and silk after cooking.

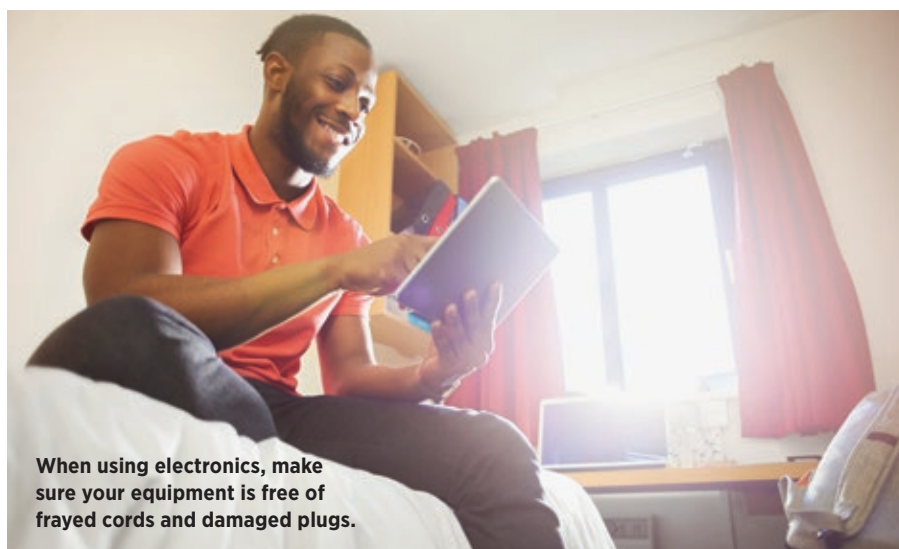
Keeping Safe at College

DO YOU HAVE KIDS RETURNING—or headed for the first time—to live in a college dorm? Among the many things they learn, make sure safety is at the top of the list.

Today's college student uses many electronics for school, work and play. When used improperly, these helpful gadgets can become electrical hazards. HILCO Electric Cooperative has the following tips for college students to prevent electrical accidents in the dorm:

- ▶ A dorm room might not provide enough outlets for all your gadgets at once. If you must use extension cords, make sure to unplug them when not in use. Extension cords are only for temporary use, and overloaded extension cords can start fires.
- ▶ Consider purchasing power strips with an over-current protector, which will shut off power automatically if too much current is drawn.
- ▶ Use lightbulbs with the correct wattage for lamps. If no indication appears on the fixture, use a bulb that uses no more than 60 watts, or the 9-watt LED equivalent.
- ▶ Never tack, nail or staple an electrical cord to any surface, or run cords across traffic paths, or under rugs or furniture.
- ▶ Keep all electrical appliances and cords safely away from bedding, curtains and other flammable materials.
- ▶ Discard or repair damaged electronics. It might be tempting to save money by using an appliance with a frayed cord or damaged plug. However, damaged electronics should not be used because they can shock or electrocute users.
- ▶ If your lights flicker, electronics shut off unexpectedly or circuits trip, notify campus staff immediately.
- ▶ Use only laboratory-certified appliances and electronics. Check for tags or packaging for the UL symbol or similar ones.
- ▶ Watch out for overheated outlets. If an electrical outlet becomes so hot that you cannot leave your hand on it, there is potential for a fire. Unplug everything from the outlet and notify your landlord or dorm officials immediately.
- ▶ Know what to do if there is a fire, including having escape and meeting plans.

There are more than 3,500 fires on college campuses every year. Help prevent some of them by understanding electrical safety and sharing what you know with loved ones.



When using electronics, make sure your equipment is free of frayed cords and damaged plugs.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH



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Taco Soup

- 1 pound ground beef, turkey or venison
- 1 package taco seasoning
- 1 can (11 ounces) tomatoes with green chiles
- 1 can (14 ounces) ranch-style beans
- 1 can (14 ounces) hominy
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 2 cups grated cheddar cheese, divided use
- 4 cups tortilla chips
- 1 cup sour cream

1. Brown the meat, drain off fat and stir in taco seasoning.
2. Put meat mixture, tomatoes, beans, hominy, onion and garlic together into a large pot. Simmer over medium heat for 30 minutes.
3. Stir in 1 cup cheese during final 5 minutes. Serve in individual bowls or pour into an insulated bottle for lunchtime.
4. Top a serving with chips, a dollop of sour cream and a generous sprinkle of remaining cheese.

This recipe was a winner in the August 2013 recipe contest. Submit your best soup recipes to *Texas Co-op Power* by August 10 for a chance to win our *Nourishing Soups* recipe contest. Visit texascooppower.com/contests for rules and details.

Find this and more delicious recipes online at
TEXASCOOPPOWER.COM



Frequently Asked Questions About Your Co-op Connections Card

What is the Co-op Connections program?

As a member of HILCO Electric Cooperative, you receive a FREE Co-op Connections card that allows you to save money at local businesses and online. There is no cost and no expiration. It's simply a benefit of your cooperative membership.

How do I use my Co-op Connections card?

Show your Co-op Connections card at any participating local business and receive their discount. It's that easy! And it's FREE!

Where can I save money with the card?

Visit hilco.coop for a list of participating local businesses. There are more than 30,000 retail discounts nationwide, ranging from dining and clothing to golf and auto repair.

The Co-op Connections card also is accepted at more than 60,000 participating pharmacies and can save you 10–85 percent on many prescription medications.

Plus you can receive Healthy Savings discounts on dental, vision, chiropractic care and more through participating providers.

Can I use my card with my current insurance benefits to reduce my costs?

No, your card cannot be used in conjunction with insurance. However, you can use your card for products and services that are not covered by your insurance plans. The card will even help in conjunction with Part D Medicare.

HILCO Electric Cooperative members have saved more than \$1 million in prescription discounts since the program began in 2007.

Even More Ways To Save

Cash Back Mall—Shop at more than 5,000 online stores and earn cash back with every purchase!

Coupons.com—Print hundreds of coupons that are accepted at 52,000 store locations nationwide.

To find discounts in your neighborhood, go to connections.coop and enter your ZIP code.

Feel a Shock?

Swim away from the dock

BOATING, FISHING AND SWIMMING can be fun ways to enjoy the great outdoors, but they can present dangers, too. HILCO Electric Cooperative wants to help keep water enthusiasts safe from the little-known hazard of electric shock drowning.

Outdated wiring and a lack of proper safety equipment and routine maintenance on docks and boats can cause situations where electricity “leaks” into the water. Between 10 and 15 milliamps, which is just $\frac{1}{50}$ the power drawn by a 60-watt light-bulb, can cause drowning, according to the Electric Shock Drowning Prevention Association.



If electric current is present in fresh water and someone swims into that energized water, the result can be electric shock drowning. If the electrical current is strong enough, the shock can cause muscle paralysis, which leaves the affected individual unable to swim to safety. This is a particularly dangerous hazard because it's impossible to tell by sight if the water is energized.

People should not swim around docks with electrical equipment or boats plugged into shore power. If a person is in the water and feels an electric current, that individual should shout to alert others, try to stay upright, tuck up the legs to become smaller, and swim away from anything that could be energized. The swimmer should not head toward boat or dock ladders to get out but swim to the shore instead.

If you see someone whom you suspect is being shocked, you should not immediately jump in to save them. Instead, throw them a float, turn off the shore power connection at the meter base, and/or unplug shore power cords. Try to eliminate the source of electricity as quickly as possible, then call for help.



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Power Tip

Let the sun work for you! Solar cells convert sunlight into electricity that can be stored in a battery and tapped at night to make light. Consider solar lights for outdoor lighting.

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 August—you have won a \$50 credit on your HILCO electric bill!



(254) 687-2331

or

1-800-338-6425



Keeping the Lights On and the Rates Affordable As HILCO Electric Cooperative, Inc. Continues to Grow

In an ever-changing world where the value of the dollar continues to slip, your cooperative has weathered the storm. Below are some key financial data covering the past five years we wanted to share with you, the member-owners of HILCO Electric Cooperative, Inc.

	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>
What do we cost?					
Average Cost per kWh (Residential)	\$0.1004	\$0.1045	\$0.1140	\$0.1032	\$0.0993
Are we growing?					
Number of Meters	23,703	24,249	24,868	25,611	26,288
Growth in kWh Sales* (Residential)	-7.16%	4.15%	6.67%	1.06%	-2.32%
Miles of Line	2,878	2,889	2,907	2,922	2,939
What are we worth?					
Total Value of Plant at Year End	\$125,538,338	\$130,678,880	\$135,135,820	\$140,868,331	\$145,509,594
How much do we owe?					
Long Term Debt at Year End	\$72,495,654	\$72,044,148	\$73,574,605	\$70,208,950	\$72,500,062
Annual Short Term Interest Expense	\$39,604	\$28,921	\$54,869	\$24,110	\$75,218
Is HILCO retiring capital credits?					
Capital Credits retired and paid to Members	\$847,991	\$1,087,855	\$1,122,109	\$1,232,220	\$1,212,770
Number of HILCO Employees at Year End	85	82	81	85	89

* Several factors contribute to growth or reduction in kWh sales such as extreme weather conditions and participation in energy conservation programs like Beat Our Peak.

While there have been challenges over the past five years, the cost of power has remained stable while assets and growth are going up. All great news for the member-owners of HILCO.