

History Helps Co-ops Stand Strong



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER AND CEO DEBRA COLE

THIS MONTH, I FOUND SOME INSIGHT TO SHARE FROM CO-OP

Historian Ted Case, who is the executive director of the Oregon Rural Electric Cooperative Association. His books, *Power Plays* and *Poles, Wires and War*, describe the effect electric co-ops have had on national policy since the 1930s. Case recently talked with Paul Wesslund from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association about what the history of electric co-ops means for members.

Q: Has researching these books changed your view of electric co-ops?

Case: I have a greater appreciation. The core values of what co-ops do are the same as in 1936 when the Rural Electrification Act became law.

Q: What are those values?

Case: I think of one particular co-op: It has several thousand people who come to the office to pay their bills. They don't need to do that—it's a lot easier to just toss the bill in the mail or pay online. But they go in because the co-op has this value beyond just electric service. It really is the center of everything in the town and the economic driver. The co-op is not just a power company; it's the center of their world.

Q: Does that kind of relationship really apply in this increasingly high-tech world in a high-tech industry?

Case: As I travel the country, I'm blown away by the technical acumen and the vision and the strategic abilities of co-op leaders to see into the future. Some electric co-ops are considering providing broadband internet connections at a time when nobody else will do it.

Q: Can a co-op be successful providing technologies as different as electricity and broadband?

Case: Co-ops will embrace new technologies when that's what their members want. Co-ops have never strayed from that business model that listens and responds to their members, their customers, their owners. 33065000

Q: How does that business model relate to the basic mission of keeping electricity reliable and affordable?

Case: Co-ops are very competitive, in rates, service and reliability. It comes back to that local connection. Members know the folks who work at the co-op and the directors. There's terrific customer service getting the lights back on after an outage.

Q: One characteristic of electric co-ops is their nonprofit nature. How does that affect the members?

Case: A lot. Increasingly, institutions have fallen from grace because everybody believes there's this profit motive that's just out to milk you, and there's such a lack of trust in a lot of the large institutions. Being a nonprofit is an attractive feature that means decisions are based on the best interests of the co-op and the consumer.

Q: So what should members know about their electric co-op?

Case: That they have the ability to influence their co-op more than they ever imagined. Directors are really interested in hearing from folks and take them seriously; the co-op's management takes them seriously. That's the value.



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March Bulletin

March 23–31

Waxahachie

Ellis County Fair
Ellis County Expo Center, Waxahachie

March 24

Waxahachie Spring Lawn & Garden Expo
9 a.m.–5 p.m.
2000 Civic Center Lane, Waxahachie
(972) 825-5175



BILLING SCHEDULE

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

CYCLE 1

Billing Date March 6
Due Date March 22

CYCLE 2

Billing Date March 13
Due Date March 29

CYCLE 3

Billing Date March 20
Due Date April 5

CYCLE 13

Billing Date March 21
Due Date April 5

CYCLE 4

Billing Date March 27
Due Date April 12

Win a \$50 Bill Credit!

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



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



RECYCLE

Your Old Electronics!

March 20- Midlothian location ONLY-
820 Eastgate, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

April 17- Whitney location ONLY- 4581 FM 933,
8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Not Acceptable

- Yard Equipment
- Gas Powered Equipment
- Water Coolers
- Paper Shredders
- Propane Tanks
- Space Heaters
- Household Appliances
- Smoke Detectors
- No CRT tubes without cases
- No Light Bulbs- CFL or Fluorescent
- No Freon- (Refrigerator & Air Conditioner
- Loose Batteries
- Wooden Speakers
- Ceramic & Glass Lamps
- Christmas Tree & Lights
- Crock Pots
- Electronic Blankets
- Fire Extinguisher
- Exercise Equipment
- Garbage Disposals

Acceptable Items

- Computers-CPU-Laptops
- Computer Accessories
- Computer Monitors
- Televisions
- Printers
- DVD/CD Players
- Copiers/Fax Machines
- Typewriters
- Telephones
- Cell Phones/Chargers
- GPS Units
- Pagers
- PDA's
- Tablets
- Answering Machines
- MP3 Players
- Scanners
- External Hard Drives
- Radios & Boom-box
- Video and Camera Equipment
- Video Game Systems
- Cable Boxes/DVR
- Cables, Wires, Power Cords, Power Strips
- Microwaves and more....



***We will properly dispose of the items at NO CHARGE to HILCO Members!
Must have your current electric bill and drivers license with matching info***



Warning Signs of an Electrical Malfunction

WHEN ELECTRIC SERVICE WORKS PROPERLY, WE NEVER NOTICE IT. MOST OF THE TIME, we flip a switch, the lights go on and all is right with the world. It's only when things go wrong that we start paying attention. Here are five warning signs that can indicate an electrical malfunction.

1. Flickering lights. If an electrical circuit in your house is overloaded, it could cause the lights to dim or flicker. This usually happens when you have too many energy-intensive appliances or fixtures wired to the same circuit. For example, your lights may flicker when your washing machine is running if the two are on the same circuit. The solution: Ask a licensed electrician to move the lights to a different circuit or install a dedicated line for the washing machine.

2. Suspicious odors. It's not unusual for a new appliance to smell a little bit bad the first time or two you use it. But if outlets, the breaker box or other appliances emit a foul odor, that could signal a problem with the wiring. Switch off and unplug anything that doesn't smell right, and call an electrician.

3. Sparks. An appliance that sends off a spark could be damaged. Sparks from a breaker panel or fuse box could signal something more serious and should be inspected by a qualified electrician as soon as possible.

4. Tripped breakers. A breaker tripping more often than occasionally isn't normal, and it's probably not safe. Circuit breakers that trip signal an overloaded circuit.

If the same appliance, such as a hair dryer or vacuum cleaner, trips the circuit every time, chances are that the appliance is the culprit. But if the same outlet trips the circuit no matter what you plug into it, it's likely an overload on the system. This is a job for a professional.

5. A buzz. Electric appliances should not buzz. They shouldn't make any sounds. If they do, you might have a problem with an outlet or some wiring. An electrician can fix this.

Laundry Day Savings

TO SAVE MONEY IN THE LAUNDRY ROOM, use cold water and less water overall.

Unless the stains on your clothes are oil-based, warm or cool water in your washing machine will do just as good a job of removing them as hot water, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

Here are some ways to clean your clothes without cleaning out your bank account:

- ▶ Wash clothes in cold water and use cold-water detergents.

- ▶ Wash and dry full loads only. If you must run the washer before it's full, adjust the water level so the whole machine doesn't fill up unnecessarily.

- ▶ Towels and heavy cotton items like jeans tend to take longer to dry than lightweight clothing. Don't dry the two types together.

- ▶ Let the dryer decide how long your clothes need to tumble. Newer models have moisture sensors and automatically stop the cycle when clothes are dry.

- ▶ Clean the dryer's lint screen after each load. Letting the lint build up creates a fire hazard.

- ▶ If you have a high-efficiency washer, use detergents labeled "HE." The American Cleaning Institute says these low-sudsing detergents clean clothes well in machines that use less water.



Spring Break Plans?

Visit Local Museums

Roadside America Museum

roadsideamericatx.com
212 E. Elm St., Hillsboro

Housed in an old Ford dealership, this museum is packed full of American memorabilia from the 1940s and 1950s. Owner Carroll Estes started his advertising memorabilia collection around 1975. With only three in existence, this "Big Boy" may be one of the star attractions. Visits to the museum are by appointment only. Call (972) 291-2958 to schedule your visit.



JULIA ROBINSON

Layland Museum of History

laylandmuseum.com
201 N. Caddo St., Cleburne

The Layland Museum is housed in the 1905 Cleburne Carnegie Library. The museum was established with the 1963 donation of some 500 items from the estate of William J. Layland, a local businessman. There are approximately 10,000 items to see, including books, firearms, Native American artifacts and much more. Check the calendar for temporary exhibitions throughout the year.



LAYLANDMUSEUM.COM

Itasca Depot Railroad Museum

(254) 687-2922, ext. 123
105 Wampus Cat Drive, Itasca

A visit here definitely takes you back in time. Once the railroad stopped service to Itasca in the 1960s, the old Katy Depot was refurbished and moved to its current location. Museum exhibits include old dental equipment, Switzer Women's College memorabilia, railroad station memorabilia and much more. Besides the museum, there are a refurbished Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad caboose and firefighting equipment on display outdoors. Visits by appointment only.



KENDRA MARSHARDT | HILCO EC



WYX MEDIA PHOTOS BY JEFF

Dr Pepper Museum

drpeppermuseum.com
300 S. Fifth St., Waco

If you're a fan of Dr Pepper, then this is the stop for you. This museum offers a look at the history of one of America's favorite soft drinks. You'll enjoy old Dr Pepper commercials, rare memorabilia, live displays, and demos and photo opportunities. Before leaving, make a stop at the soda fountain for an old-fashioned float or a handmade fountain drink.



Cedar Hill Museum of History

cedarhillmuseum.com
607 Cedar St., Cedar Hill

This active community, originally named Cedar Brakes, houses a museum with a collection sure to appeal to visitors of all ages. Enjoy exhibits, an archival research center, oral histories, genealogy resources, topographic maps, educational programs and materials, the museum store, and historic walking and discovery tours.



Ellis County Museum

(972) 937-0681
201 S. College Street, Waxahachie

Located in historic downtown Waxahachie, this museum depicts everyday life from the mid-1880s through the early-1900s. Many visitors find the information presented on interurban rail to be especially fascinating. The museum is open during the week and on Saturdays, 10 a.m.–5 p.m. Admission is free with donations accepted.



Museum of International Cultures

internationalmuseumofcultures.org
411 U.S. Highway 67, Duncanville

Labeled as one of the only cultural institutions of its kind in Texas, this museum is packed full of captivating displays from cultures around the world. Gallery exhibits include interactive videos from Africa, Southeast Asia, Papua New Guinea, China, Mexico and Central America. Also on-site are authentic artifacts from the Lakota Sioux Native Americans and Papua New Guinea. Hours of operation are Monday–Friday, 10 a.m.–4 p.m., and Saturdays by appointment only.



Texas Sports Hall of Fame

tshof.org
1108 S. University Parks Drive, Waco

If you're a sports enthusiast, this is your spot. This museum is 35,000 square feet of Texas sports memorabilia, biographies and much more. During March, there are several special events being held.





STEVECOLEMAN/ISTOCK.COM

Traveling? Let Electricity Keep Your House Safe

IF YOU RESOLVED TO TRAVEL MORE THIS YEAR, IT'S HIGH TIME TO GET YOUR HOUSE ready before you go.

Traveling is more fun and relaxing when you don't have to worry about whether your home is safe and secure. Here are five ways to prevent mishaps—and save some energy—during your absence. 4400385703

1. Create the illusion that someone is home. Ask a trusted neighbor to pick up newspapers, mail and deliveries that might arrive while you're away. A pile of newspapers in the driveway is an invitation to an intruder looking for an empty house to break into.
2. Connect your outdoor lights to timers. Instead of leaving them on day and night while you're gone, install a timer that will switch the lights on when it gets dark and off when the sun comes up each day.
3. Plug indoor lamps into programmable timers set to "random" so the lights turn on and off throughout the day and evening. That will make your home look lived-in. You also can plug a TV or stereo into a timer so your house sounds lived-in, too.
4. Motion detectors not only light your property when your neighbor stops by to check on it but also serve to deter intruders. They save energy because you won't have to pay for light that no one is around to benefit from.
5. Unplug electronic devices such as your TV, computer, printer and small kitchen appliances before you leave. Left plugged into a wall socket, those items continue to draw small amounts of electricity that show up on your energy bill.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH



OLGA KR/ISTOCK.COM

Sweet Savory Brussels Sprouts

- 1 cup finely diced pancetta
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 package (10 ounces) shredded Brussels sprouts
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup dried cranberries
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup slivered almonds
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup
- 2 tablespoons water
- Salt and pepper, to taste

1. Cook the pancetta in a medium, nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until it's almost crisp, then transfer to a plate. Discard all but 1 teaspoon of the drippings.
2. Add butter, Brussels sprouts, cranberries and almonds, and cook, stirring, until heated through.
3. Add the pancetta, brown sugar, maple syrup and water, and toss until well-coated. Adjust seasonings to taste and serve warm.

Find this and more delicious recipes online at
TEXASCOOPPOWER.COM

Don't Fall Victim to a Hack Attack

Keep your identity, money and information safe

MORE AND MORE, HILCO ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE members have smart devices that require Wi-Fi. Controlling garage doors remotely, turning on air conditioners from afar and recording TV shows from the dentist's office are just a few conveniences our members enjoy thanks to the "internet of things."

Remotely turning on your lights may sound like a tempting upgrade, but have you considered the potential drawbacks? An experienced hacker could view your daily habits through your internet-connected security cameras and look in on your spouse, children or grandchildren. They could identify times when you're away from home and let themselves in through remote-access door locks. Hackers also could monitor your online habits, bypass your passwords and log in to your private accounts. YIKES! These are scary thoughts.

There are a few ways to thwart hackers before they even have a chance. No method offers 100 percent guaranteed protection against criminals, but there are a few things you can do to protect yourself from hack attacks.

First, secure your Wi-Fi. If it doesn't require a password, change the settings and implement one immediately. If you aren't sure how to do this, do a quick internet search or call your internet service provider and ask. Without a password, any average Joe driving by could hop on your connection and inflict damage.

Second, keep your devices up to date. Yes, required updates can take forever to download, install and reconcile with your previous settings—but they really do help. Not only do they provide fixes for bugs and other issues discovered over time, they also repair security and hacking vulnerabilities that a hacker could use to get into your system and wreak havoc.

Third, ensure anti-virus software protects your computer. This software functions as an immune system for your computer. Just like your body's immune system, it won't catch every infection or virus, but it will greatly improve your defenses against hackers.

Fourth, use common sense. A prince from Nigeria doesn't need your help in smuggling money out of his country. You didn't magically win that contest you never entered, and you didn't get that job you didn't apply for. DO NOT give out your bank account information carelessly.



MIKKEWILLIAM | ISTOCK.COM

Also, don't click on links or open email attachments that look the slightest bit suspicious, or even unfamiliar. A "Trojan" virus can sneak onto your computer through an email purporting to be from a reputable company—your bank or a familiar shipping service, let's say.

When you open an attachment in the email to see a "statement" or "shipping details," the virus begins to download to your computer. It overtakes your email account, sending bogus emails to your friends and family. If they click the links or download the attachments, the virus spreads like wildfire.

Lastly, use strong passwords—not your dog's name and your anniversary date; anyone can find that out by looking at your Facebook page! Instead use a sequence of letters, numbers and characters that is difficult to guess. A password with more than eight letters and numbers that includes special characters (such as @, \$, * or &) is typically a strong one. The more critical the information you are trying to protect, the sturdier your password should be.

Hackers are typically after one thing: data. They want your passwords, files and personal information. If a hacker learns enough about you, they could steal your identity. Smart devices are fun and convenient, but only if you know the risks when connecting your life to Wi-Fi and take the necessary precautions.