

Keeping Power Flowing

Co-op lineworkers maintain an intricate system of power lines around the clock



MESSAGE FROM **THOMAS CHEEK**
ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER-OPERATIONS

WE OFTEN TAKE ELECTRICITY FOR GRANTED. It makes our homes comfortable day in and day out, and it's ready with little more than the flip of a switch.

But what goes on behind the scenes once that switch is thrown is far more complex. The power grid, which can be described as the largest, most complex machine ever built, involves an intricate network of power lines crisscrossing open country and city neighborhoods. The grid has evolved over the past century to supply consumers with safe, reliable and affordable electricity.

The tricky thing about electricity is that it must be used, or moved to where it can be used, the second it's produced; it generally can't be stored like water or gas. What's more, electricity moves at the speed of light along the path of least resistance. This basic principle calls for a carefully monitored, intricate system to move it 24 hours a day.

Millions of miles of power lines span the United States in a complex series of "highways." These lines can be broken into two main categories: transmission, the high-voltage "interstates" supported by steel towers and other similar structures that move electricity over vast distances; and distribution, the "local roads" that run through small towns and neighborhoods and into homes and businesses. HILCO Electric Cooperative has its own sizeable distribution system to maintain: Our lineworkers stay busy keeping 2,943 miles of line up and running nonstop.

When there's a problem somewhere on our system, a power outage typically results. Pinpointing the cause of an outage among those thousands of miles of line may seem like trying to find a needle in a haystack, but HEC's line crews have it down to a science.

To understand how co-op staff restores power during an outage, think of electricity distribution like a river in reverse: It originates at a single ocean of power—a generation plant—and diverges from there into a series of transmission lines (rivers), substations and smaller feeder lines (creeks) until it reaches homes and businesses at a trickle of its original strength. So when we start assessing storm damage, we work to fix the biggest problems first (those starting near the "ocean"), prioritizing repairs according to which can get the most homes back in service the fastest.

It's a big job, but our line crews are up to the challenge. If there is an outage in your area, let HILCO know immediately even if your neighbors have already called. Every bit of information we have helps get the river flowing smoothly again. You can help crews pinpoint damage by reporting outages on our website at hilco.coop, calling HEC'S office at 1-800-338-6425, or downloading the SmartHub app and reporting outages right from your smart device.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

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, TX 76055
(254) 687-2331
1-800-338-6425

Elm Mott

298 S. Conally Drive
Elm Mott, TX 76640
(254) 829-1448

Midlothian

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

Whitney

4581 FM 933
Whitney, TX 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

FIND US ON THE WEB

hilco.coop

Help HILCO Beat the Peak

Conserve 4-8 p.m. when peak usage is the highest

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

At HILCO Electric Cooperative, the cost of power accounts for the vast majority of our total operating expenses. As a cooperative member, you can help control some of these expenses by helping reduce peak power costs. Every year, HILCO is billed for wholesale power from October of one year through September of the next 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—or use less electricity during peak periods—they can help control costs and reduce expenses. The less electricity we have to purchase at peak pricing, the lower the cost will be to our members.

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

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



Tips to Beat the Peak

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

June Bulletin

June 3-4

Waxahachie

Gingerbread Trail Historic Home Tour

June 17

Midlothian

Wildflower Walk. 9 a.m. at Mockingbird Nature Park. No charge.

June 22- July 2

Waco

Hairspray. Waco Civic Center

Happy Father's Day

from HILCO EC
Sunday, June 18

BILLING SCHEDULE

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

CYCLE 1

Billing Date June 6
Due Date June 22

CYCLE 2

Billing Date June 13
Due Date June 29

CYCLE 3

Billing Date June 20
Due Date July 6

CYCLE 13

Billing Date June 21
Due Date July 6

CYCLE 4

Billing Date June 27
Due Date July 13

Frequently Asked Questions About Peak Demand



SAVE ENERGY AND EXPENSE
Don't use electricity from 4-8 p.m.
when peak usage is highest.

Question: What is a peak demand?

Answer: 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**. This is the time during each month when HILCO's demand for energy is highest during 15-minute intervals.

Question: When does HILCO usually set their peak?

Answer: HILCO usually sees highest demand between 4 and 8 p.m.

Question: What can I do to help set HILCO's demand billing at a minimum?

Answer: Avoid discretionary use of electricity with appliances such as the dishwasher, the electric range and the clothes dryer; or use energy-efficient settings when possible. In summer months, choose to cook on the outside grill rather than inside on the electric range. Or raise the air conditioner's temperature setting by 2-3 degrees in the summer.

Question: If the cost of fuel goes down during the year, will the demand charge be lowered?

Answer: No. Once the demand level is set, HILCO will pay that amount for the next 12 months, regardless of what the cost of fuel does on the market.

Together We Can Save!

Line Locators Headed to Rodeo



**Line Locator
Donald Butler**



**Line Locator
Kevin Unger**

HILCO ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE EMPLOYEES Donald Butler and Kevin Unger will set out to test their skills at the 16th Annual International Utility Locate Rodeo on Saturday, June 24, in Grapevine.

The rodeo has been described as “The Olympics of the Locate Industry.” It was designed to celebrate the art and science behind the craft of underground utility locating. It recognizes and serves as the cornerstone for promoting high-quality, achievable standards in the industry.

During the event, participants compete to locate underground infrastructure. The event tests the skills of professionals who identify and mark the locations of underground utility lines with paint and/or flags so the lines are not struck by people digging near them. Participants may enter one of the four categories of water, gas, electricity or telecom.

In the main events, competitors have 12 minutes to locate

the infrastructure, and must mark and measure the positions of the infrastructure, write them down and report back to the adjudicator within that time. The most popular event, labeled “The Locate from Hell,” is where locators are not allowed to use their own equipment and have to locate a specific utility that may not be one they specialize in.

Butler and Unger take pride in their jobs and the safety of HEC members. Their supervisor recognized that Butler’s and Unger’s work often goes unrecognized, and added that the two work hard protect our safety and ensure that utility service goes uninterrupted.

This will be the second year for Butler to compete and the first year for Unger to compete as a HILCO employee, and the second year the International Utility Locate Rodeo will be hosted in Texas.

We wish Donald and Kevin the best of luck!

Prevent DIY Projects From Landing You in the Hospital

SUMMER HAS A WAY OF SPROUTING do-it-yourselfers. If you like to work around your house and yard, make sure you take the proper steps to do it safely, using these tips:

Everybody likes to feel like the master of their domain, but it's best to leave complicated jobs—especially those involving electricity—to the professionals. Even the most seasoned amateur handymen and women should stay away from jobs that could put them in danger of injury or starting a fire.

If you do work with electricity, your tools need to have insulated grips to keep them from conducting a current into your body.

Switch off the circuit breaker that corresponds to the project you'll be working on.

If you're repairing a lamp, appliance or other plugged-in device, unplug it before you start your work.

Plug any power tools you use into outlets equipped with ground-fault circuit interrupters. GFCIs prevent you from getting shocked.

If you need an extension cord for a power tool, choose a cord that measures less than 100 feet.

Water and electricity don't mix, so don't use power tools in wet or even damp areas.

If you're drilling into a wall for a project, check the placement of electrical or plumbing features so that nails, screws, hammers or power tools do not come into contact with wires or pipes.

Safeguards on outdoor



CATHERINE VEULET | ISTOCK.COM

Wear long sleeves, protective shoes and long pants when mowing or working around the yard.

electric tools are there for a reason. Always make sure they are in place before operating.

If a power tool trips an electrical safety device while in use, stop using it. Take the tool to a manufacturer-authorized repair center for service.

Shield your eyes with safety goggles and ears with hearing protection, and suit up with heavy-duty gloves, dust masks and other safety gear recommended for each tool before you power up.

Wear sturdy, protective shoes or boots, and long pants and sleeves when using power tools—even your lawn mower. Tie back long hair, jewelry, hoodie strings, scarves and other loose-dangling items that could get caught.



SONJABK | ISTOCK.COM

Electronics: Buy Smarter, Use Smarter

HOME OFFICE EQUIPMENT, home theater systems and related electronics consume almost 20 percent of all electricity used in an average home.

Buying energy-efficient devices can save money on operational costs, and changing how you use the equipment can save you even more on your electric bill.

Using energy-efficient electronics can lower electricity bills by about 16–30 percent. For example, using LCD monitors in place of regular monitors can scale down power consumption by about 30 percent.

Once you have energy-efficient equipment, use it wisely. Use the power management options on your computer. For example, keep your PC in “sleep” mode when not in use, if you're unwilling to turn it off completely. Contrary to popular belief, turning a computer on and off is not harmful. Enabling power-saving options can save as much as 60–80 percent of the energy that would have been wasted.

Consider plugging all your entertainment equipment into a power strip. When switched off, it will eliminate any standby draw from these devices.

Efficiency Tips for Shops and Barns

THERE ARE MANY BENEFITS TO ensuring that your shop or barn is energy efficient. Aside from saving energy, an efficient outdoor building can keep the environment around your structure healthy and safe; save money on your bills; keep your animals happier and healthier; and save you from costly structural repairs.

Planning to build a new structure on your property? Follow these tips to achieve energy efficiency:

- ▶ **Location matters.** If possible, carefully assess the area where you plan to build. Consider drainage, sun exposure and how the building might affect your neighbors.
- ▶ **Start with a sustainable design plan.** Such plans protect and conserve water; enhance indoor environmental quality; optimize operational and maintenance practices; and include the use of environmentally preferable products, according to the U.S. General Services Administration.
- ▶ **If you hire a contractor to help build your structure,** consider looking for companies that specialize in “green” buildings and energy-efficient practices.
- ▶ **Choose efficient building methods.** Pole barns, for example, offer reliable shelter without costly excavation, concrete foundations or general site disruption.



Replace old bulbs like these in your shop with LED lightbulbs and save.

If you're upgrading instead of building from the ground up, follow these tips to make energy-efficiency improvements to an existing structure:

- ▶ **Replace indoor lighting with energy-efficient LED lightbulbs.**
- ▶ **Ensure that your existing structure has adequate insulation.**
- ▶ **Choose outdoor lighting designed to be energy efficient,** and install motion detectors to reduce energy consumption when not in use.
- ▶ **Plant trees around your metal shed or barn.** In colder climates, trees act as a windbreak, and in warmer climates, they create a natural cooling effect that can reduce temperatures 3–6 degrees in a metal building.
- ▶ **Consider adding a ceiling fan to circulate air.** Typically, inside a metal building, there is a 2-degree temperature increase for every 1-foot increase in ceiling height. A ceiling fan can help keep warm air close to the ground in the winter and circulate fresher, cooler air in the summer. Not only will this help with energy costs, it also will help keep the air in the building from becoming hot and stagnant, which will keep harmful bacteria and insects at bay.



STEVE DEBENPORT | ISTOCK.COM

Power Tip

Air-dry clean dishes to save energy. If your dishwasher does not have an automatic air-dry switch, then turn off the dishwasher after the final rinse and prop the door open slightly so the dishes will dry faster.

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

Seal Window and Door Trim

SEALING AIR LEAKS AROUND YOUR HOME and adding insulation can add comfort and energy efficiency. It also can provide up to a 10 percent savings on your annual energy bill. Simple fixes include installing weatherstripping on doors and caulking around windows, while bigger jobs might include sealing leaks in ductwork and adding insulation in your attic.

Leaks around windows and doors can lead to uncomfortable drafts and energy losses. Sealing trim in these areas is a moderately difficult do-it-yourself project, but the benefits can be substantial if you are sure of the problem and can address it accordingly.

This project might have less impact on energy use than those in the attic, but doors and windows tend to be more accessible areas and are perfect for a DIY endeavor. Even if your windows are otherwise airtight, the payoff for sealing around window and door trim still can be substantial.

Some obvious signs and symptoms that your home has air leaks and can benefit from sealing are:

- ▶ **Drafts around closed windows or doors.**
- ▶ **Visible gaps around the window or door trim.**
- ▶ **Noticeable pests and dust entering through gaps or holes in or around windows or doors.**
- ▶ **Odors from the outside entering the home.**
- ▶ **Peeling paint around interior window or door frames.**

Sometimes it's not obvious if a window or door is leaking around the trim. There are a few quick and easy ways to locate leaks to see if your home could benefit from these fixes.

Perform a paper test: Close the window on a piece of paper. If the paper easily moves back and forth, this means your window could be tighter. This can be accomplished by adding thicker weatherstripping.

Try a smoke test: Light an incense stick and hold it next to the seams or sash of the window. If you see the smoke pushed in one direction or another, you most likely have a leak.

For detailed instructions on how to prepare and undertake this project—or how to identify a contractor to do it for you—visit energystar.gov.



Evolution of the American Home

HOMES BUILT TODAY are dramatically different from those constructed 40 years ago.

Not only are they larger, but they also contain more amenities that can stress the electrical system.

A look at the following statistics can reveal how homes have changed:

- ▶ More than 44 percent of the nation's housing stock was built before 1970.
- ▶ The median living space of single-family homes built 2005–09 is 2,200 square feet. The median of those built before 1980 is 1,700 square feet.
- ▶ More than half of U.S. homes had three or more TVs in 2009.
- ▶ In 1973, 17 percent of American homes had central air conditioning, and 30 percent contained window units. Today, about 65 percent of homes have central AC, and another 21 percent have window units.
- ▶ About half of U.S. homes have two or more bathrooms, compared to just 19 percent in 1973.
- ▶ A 2009 study found that 26 percent of U.S. homes had a second refrigerator, and that number is growing at a rate of 1 percent per year.

HILCO Electric Cooperative recommends that homes over 40 years old undergo an electrical inspection to ensure that the electrical system can handle modern demands.



Peeling paint around interior doors and windows is a sign that your home needs sealing.

Are You Using Your Co-op Connections Card?

One more benefit of being a cooperative member

AS YOUR COOPERATIVE, WE ARE EXCITED

to offer a program that saves our members money and provides added benefits of being a cooperative member.

The Co-op Connections card can be used at participating national and local businesses to receive various discounts. Some of the discounts available are on hotels, car rentals, pet medication, flowers and many other purchases. HILCO Electric Cooperative has more than 100 local participating businesses, and more are added periodically.

The Co-op Connections card is also a member discount card that can be used for savings on prescriptions. The pharmacy feature can save you 10–85 percent at participating pharmacies. To date, HILCO members have saved an astounding \$1 million on prescriptions by using the Co-op Connections card. 4705364401

The Co-op Connections card saves you money and costs you nothing. There is no membership fee or annual fee; it's an added benefit of being a HILCO Electric Cooperative member. All you have to do to take advantage of this great benefit is present your card!



Co-op Connections Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. How much will I save on the pharmacy discount?** By using your Co-op Connections card, you will receive a 10–85 percent discount on prescription drugs at more than 60,000 national and regional pharmacy chain stores including CVS, Walgreens, Walmart, Target and many more.
- 2. How much does the program cost?** The discount benefits are provided at NO COST to you.
- 3. Can I use my card with my current insurance?** No, your card cannot be used in conjunction with insurance.
- 4. Can I find out the discounted price of my prescriptions before going to the pharmacy?** Yes, If you know the name, strength and quantity of the medication, you can find the discounted price by visiting rxpricequotes.com or calling 1-800-800-7616.
- 5. Where can I get a list of providers that accept the card?** The Co-op Connections card is accepted at more than 100,000 health-related providers nationwide. Find participating locations at healthysavings.coop. Visit hilco.coop to search through 30,000 online shopping and local business discounts.

You can scan the code at right to be directed to the Co-op Connections website. If you are not already a member, you will need to register for an account. For more questions, you may contact Kendra Markwardt at 1-800-338-6425 or kmarkwardt@hilco.coop.

Get in on these benefits and start saving!



RECIPE OF THE MONTH



55SECOND | ISTOCK.COM

Creamy Mexican Corn

- 1 can whole-kernel corn (15.25 ounces), drained
- 2 ounces cream cheese
- 2 tablespoons diced canned green chiles
- 1 teaspoon diced fresh or pickled jalapeño pepper, or more to taste
- Kosher salt and cracked pepper, to taste
- 1–2 tablespoons crumbled cotija cheese
- Chopped cilantro, to taste
- Paprika, to taste

1. Place corn, cream cheese, chiles, jalapeños, salt and pepper in a small saucepan and cook until cream cheese is melted and ingredients thoroughly incorporated.
2. Spoon heated mixture into small bowls and top with crumbled cotija cheese, cilantro and paprika.

This recipe was a winner in the *Spicy Foods* recipe contest for July 2015. Submit your best recipes for *Thanksgiving Side Dishes* to *Texas Co-op Power* by June 10 for a chance to win \$100 in this month's contest and have your recipe published. Visit texascooppower.com/contests.

Find this and more delicious recipes online at
TEXASCOOPPOWER.COM