



## Happy New Year

BY SHIRLEY DUKES

**H**appy New Year! Chu Shen Tan! Gelukkig Nieuwjaar! Onnellista Uutta Vuotta! Prosit Neujahr! Feliz Año Nuevo! Prospero Año Nuevo! No matter what country you are in or how you say it, it still means the same thing: **HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

New Year's Day is the oldest of all celebrated holidays, beginning about 4,000 years ago in ancient Babylon. This tradition began about 2,000 B.C. and was celebrated on the first day of spring. This was a logical time to start a new year. After all, it is the season of rebirth, planting new crops and blossoming. The celebration lasted 11 days, and each day had its own particular mode of celebration.

New Year's customs are about as diverse as the countries in which they are celebrated. "Auld Lang Syne" is sung at the stroke of midnight in almost every English-speaking country in the world.

In Mexico, many people gather with their relatives and friends to celebrate the New Year. When the clock strikes midnight they eat 12 grapes, one with each toll, to bring good luck for the next 12 months. There are also those who take out their suitcases and walk around the block, meaning they



wish they could travel next year.

Many German-speaking areas celebrate by attending a "Sylvester Ball," where there is eating, drinking, dancing and singing. It may be accompanied by the popular "Sylvester" custom of Bleigiessen. A small piece of lead will be melted over a flame in an old spoon and dropped into a bowl of cold water. From the shape you can supposedly tell your fortune for the coming year. People would also leave a bit of every food eaten on New Year's Eve on their plate until after midnight as a way of ensuring a well-stocked larder. Carp was included, as it was thought to bring wealth. The tradition of an image of a baby with a New Year's banner as a symbolic representation of the new year originated in Germany sometime in the 14th century.

Of course we all know what Americans do: We party till midnight, watch the ball drop at Times Square in New York City and kiss for good luck at the stroke of midnight. We eat black-eyed peas for luck and watch football on New Year's Day as we make countless New Year's resolutions, which most of us can't keep past the first day.

At Comanche Electric Cooperative, our resolution for the upcoming year will continue to be what it has been since 1938: to provide the best possible service at the least possible price. We strive to accomplish this goal every day of every year.

Our focus for 2008 will be on conservation. Join us each month in this section of *Texas Co-op Power* as we help our members learn the best ways to practice conservation in all aspects of our lives. Check out our website, [www.ceca.coop](http://www.ceca.coop), and click on "Home Energy Saver" on the right side of your screen for a do-it-yourself energy audit, along with links to other sites that will help us learn to be more energy conscious. Or call for a free in-home energy audit by one of our trained professionals.

And have a Happy New Year!!!!



### COMANCHE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
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#### YOUR "LOCAL PAGES"

This section of *Texas Co-op Power* is produced by Comanche EC each month to provide you with information about current events, special programs and other activities of the cooperative. If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact Shirley at the Comanche office or at [sdukes@ceca.coop](mailto:sdukes@ceca.coop).

COMANCHE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

# It's Time To Think Conservation

BY SHIRLEY DUKES

**T**urn off those lights. Electricity is expensive, and money doesn't grow on trees you know!"

"Close that door! You're letting out all the cool/warm air."

"Don't stand there with that refrigerator door open! Do you know how much it costs to keep that thing cold?"

How many times did you hear these comments as you were growing up? I, and most of my generation, heard them repeatedly. We grew up in an era when many families still had only one working parent. Mom stayed home, Dad went to work, money was scarce, and we were expected to learn how to be efficient in all ways possible.

We had only one family car, and even though we were only 3 miles from town, we rarely made the trip for anything frivolous. We hung our clothes out on the clothesline instead of using a dryer, we were expected to turn off the lights when we left a room, and the TV was never to be left on unattended. Daddy milked the cow daily, and Mother made butter and cream out of it. We fought the copperhead snakes for the privilege of fresh blackberries picked from the fence line in the pasture and battled yellow jackets and wasps for the juicy peaches and plums from the trees in the orchard. We raised chickens to have eggs in the refrigerator and poultry in the freezer. We turned off the heat at night and bundled up in our beds to save on energy. We took baths with only a few inches of water because it took money to run the pump to transport that precious commodity into the house. Such was the life of a rural kid in the 1960s. Money was hard to come by, and we kids were expected to do our part to conserve in every way imaginable.

Things have changed a lot in the past 40 years. Most people think nothing of walking out of the house with the lights on and the TV blaring. We are constantly on the go, whether it is for business, pleasure or the kids' or grandkids' ballgames or piano and dance recitals. We may complain about the cost of fuel

or the gas mileage we get, but we don't slow down much. We pay more money than it is worth for the convenience of fast food that is not healthy, and we buy bottled water instead of drinking from the tap. Whatever happened to conserving not only our precious dollars, but our natural resources as well?

"Texas Wants More Kilowatts," "Will Texas Run Out of Electricity?" "Texas Reviews Water Shortage," "Gas Prices Rising." These news headlines should be enough to open our eyes and send us reeling in the direction of change, but we opt for convenience and pleasure over efficiency and conservation. We read of the high cost of fuel, our dwindling water supply, global warming, possible rolling blackouts and the high cost of new power plants. We go to the mailbox each day with a feeling of dread, not wanting to face the mountain of bills waiting for us to open them. We get lightheaded at the staggering numbers on them.

We would like to help make a change, but the natural resource that seems to be dwindling the most is our time. Society and our fast-paced lives force us to lean more toward convenience and less toward saving our planet, or our kilowatt-hours.

The price of power is rising rapidly, and Comanche Electric Cooperative is working hard to control the cost of that power. Across the board, electricity providers need to build new power plants and transmission lines, and that requires a long-term investment of time and money. The consensus is that there must be new generation built in Texas by 2012, or there could be a shortage of spinning reserve capacity. This could result in power curtailments and/or revolving blackouts. Electricity cannot be stored. It must be generated on demand, at time of use.

Our society's demand for electric power is growing faster than production is coming online. To supply our future needs for electric energy, plans must be set in motion today to ensure that tomorrow's needs can be met.

Coal is plentiful and relatively inexpensive but has environmental issues. Natural gas supplies are limited, and the fuel is becoming more expensive every day. Wind power is environmentally friendly but, unfortunately, is expensive and doesn't work when the wind doesn't blow and is able to supply only a small portion of our energy needs. Nuclear generation is efficient and clean; however, construction of new units requires 10-25 years and is the most expensive to build, and there is still an issue with the disposal of spent fuel. Brazos Electric Cooperative, our power supplier, is building a new-technology coal-fired generation plant as well as natural gas plant additions and is participating in wind projects.

After analyzing the situation, what choice do we have? While there is no one big answer to this problem, one part of the solution points toward conservation. At least it is the one thing that we as individuals can do. Individually, we cannot build a coal plant or a nuclear plant. But we can do our part by conserving the resources that are available to us now. The cheapest, cleanest and most conservative power plants are the ones we don't have to build.

Through our conservation efforts, we can more easily afford the increased cost of living. During the course of the next few months, we will dedicate space in these local pages to inform you of ways you can make a difference in all aspects of conservation, from electric service to natural gas, water and fuel.

Comanche Electric Cooperative is committed to keeping you informed about the cost of your electric service, our efforts to curtail those costs, and ways you can minimize those costs through your own efforts. Our recent survey proved that you place a lot of confidence in us, and our goal is to maintain that trust by continually looking for new ways of providing the best possible service at the least possible cost. After all, without you there would be no Comanche Electric Cooperative.

# Help Us Locate These Accounts

**T**hese capital credit checks were issued on June 4, 2007, and were returned because of insufficient addresses. They represent a portion of \$1 million refunded for service from 1971-81.

A OK Oil  
Abilene Paving  
Hershel Ackers  
William A. Adamek  
C.N. Adams  
David Adams  
E.A. Adams  
Jack Adams  
Judy Adams  
J.V. Adams  
L. Llaydoyt Adams  
Adobe Oil & Gas Corp.  
E.E. Agnew  
Mrs. James Ed Agnew  
James R. Agnew  
Agriplex Producers  
Alamo Explosives  
A.F. Aldridge  
J.L. Aldridge  
Alexander Land & Cattle  
A.D. Alexander Jr.  
Kent Alexander  
Roy Alexander  
Charles R. Alford  
J.M. Alford  
Mack G. Alford  
M.W. Alford  
R.D. Alford  
Ronald Alford  
Allan Construction Co.  
Eugene Alldredge  
H.M. Allen  
Keith Allen  
Thomas C. Allen  
W.C. Allen  
James E. Allison  
Margaret Allison  
Alpha Pork Producers  
Altex Oil Corp.  
Amco Energy Corp.  
American Petrofina Co.  
Anchor Sales & Service  
E.E. Anders  
B.J. Anderson  
Deborah D. Anderson  
Gary Anderson  
Huston Anderson

P.H. Anderson  
Mrs. W.T. Anderson  
Mel Anders  
Andover-Santa Fe Minerals  
Donald R. Andrews  
Jim Andrews  
Kenneth Andrews  
T.D. Andrews  
Bruce Angerstein  
Peggy Ann Inc.  
Apollo Oil Co.  
G.S. Aguirre  
Arapaho Petroleum  
Arcardia Refining Co.  
Aries Petroleum  
Arklatex Corp  
Armer Oil Co.  
Armstrong & McLernon  
W.H. Bill Armstrong  
Willis R. Armstrong  
E.R. Arnold Jr.  
John A. Arnold  
M.P. Arrant  
Ascot Oil Company  
L.L. Ashe  
R.L. Atchley  
Jim Atkinson  
Roy A. Atkinson  
Atlanta Pet Prod.  
Austin Pence Oil Co.  
Robbie Autrey  
T.G. Auvenshine  
Larry Avants  
J.C. Avary  
James K. Avent, M.D.  
Ayers & Burch  
B&C Land Co.  
B&C Texas Oil Property  
BPP&W  
John B. Bachman  
Kermit Baer  
George Bagley  
Arthur L. Bailey  
Henry Bailey  
Inez Bailey  
J.W. Bailey  
Lee Bailey

Leston Bain  
J.M. Baines  
Boyd Baker  
Burl Baker  
Ira Baker  
Jerry Baker  
Mrs. Juanita Baker  
K.R. Baker  
R.B. Baker  
Ray Baker  
Stanley E. Baker  
Wesley Baker  
Chris Ball  
Gerald Ballard  
W.H. Ballew  
Guadalupe Banda  
Don Bandy Const. Co.  
Jethro N. Banks  
Banleham Oil Co.  
Ben R. Barbee Jr.  
Earl A. Barber  
C.R. Barbian  
Barco Oil & Gas Co.  
E.C. Barker  
Margie Barley  
Daniel D. Barnes  
E.M. Barnes  
Harold Barnes  
Randy Barnes  
T.T. Barnes  
Regenia Barnett  
Mack Barrett  
Brent Barron  
J.R. Barron  
Lanny Barron  
Ray Barron  
C.S. Barrow  
Lavonda Bartee  
Bartlett Oil & Gas  
James I. Barton  
Donald Bates  
W.D. Bates  
Ollie Batson  
John L. Bauman  
Tim Beal  
E.F. Bean  
R.J. Bean

Lowell Bearden  
Beattie Ch. of Christ  
Jan Beck  
Roy Beech  
G.K. Beeman  
Samuel O. Beene  
Mrs. Walter Beene  
Richard Beighle  
Stiles Belcher  
George C. Bell  
J.L. Bell  
Lonnie Bell  
Beller Production  
Bill Belyew  
Darren Belyeu  
Bend Arch Oil  
L.D. Bender  
Steve P. Benifiel  
Daniel G. Bennett  
Kenneth Bennett  
Ramus Bendit  
D.V. Benson  
Floyd Benson  
Gerald Benson  
Jay Benson  
L.F. Benson  
Odell Benson  
George A. Bentch  
Bentley & Laing  
Don H. Bentley  
Wayne Bergerson  
Ted Bergkamp  
Andy Berry  
J.B. Berry  
Mrs. Marshall Berry  
Bob Bertelson  
J.B. Bettis  
J.C. Bibby  
A.L. Bible  
Big Country Explor.  
Big Four Chemical  
Novella M. Bigby  
G.C. Bingham

More accounts will be listed in the next *Texas Co-op Power*.

**ATTENTION: HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS!**

*Government-in-Action*

# Youth Tour

## June 12-20

### Win a Trip to Washington, D.C.!

Students whose parents or guardians are members of Comanche Electric Co-op may enter the essay contest. Students must have begun their sophomore, junior or senior year in the fall of 2007 to qualify.



2007 Comanche EC Youth Tour Winners  
Veronica Hogue and Monique Barrios

### Application Deadline January 31

**Essay Contest Topic:**  
“The Advantages of Coal as a Power Source”

For additional information, contest rules  
and applications, contact:

Comanche Electric Cooperative  
Attn: Shirley Dukes  
201 W. Wright St.  
P.O. Box 729  
Comanche, TX 76442

Phone: 1-800-915-2533 • E-mail: [sdukes@ceca.coop](mailto:sdukes@ceca.coop)

**youth  
t**our

**ROCKS**

**dc**

# Riding the Wild Technology Cycle

*Emerging technologies cycle from inflated expectations, through disillusionment to enlightenment and productivity.*

by Kaye Northcott

If it seems to you that the news media hypes unproven technologies, you're right. Inflated expectations come well before a technology is ready for prime time.

Speculation about fuel cells capable of powering automobiles has been bandied about for more than a decade. But they are still experimental. Ed Torrero, executive director of the Cooperative Research Network (CRN), and members of his staff like to demonstrate the life cycle of emerging technologies with a graph showing the tortuous path of a typical technology. A simplified version of the graph can be seen below.



What makes the graph so interesting is that a technology's highest visibility may be at the initial "gee whiz" stage. Some then sink into obscurity never to be heard from again. Weren't we supposed to have flying cars by now? What about robot valets?

The CRN's chart has some catchy phrases. There's the "Trough of Disillusionment," where many technologies go to die. That's followed by a gradual "Slope of Enlightenment" as some technologies become productive.

The initial media buzz may be helpful in attracting research and development programs. "In R&D it's no sin to back a loser," Torrero says. In fact, in the electricity business and other businesses as well, the sin comes in failing to back a winner.

So up, up the excitement rises as media and technology promoters announce prematurely that Product X "is commercial." Then it turns out there are competing technologies and most don't work. Down, down the disappointments push the hopeful new technology. Will Product X enter what CRN labels the "Valley of Death," where our personal robots went to rust? "The simple fact of the matter is that most technologies never get past this point," explains Torrero. "The problems are huge. They are not solvable by the available engineering resources, so the market doesn't grow."

Sometimes the failure is because companies cannot afford to keep producing due to limited sales or an apathetic market or formidable technical problems. Investors cut back on their funding, and the federal government pulls the plug on much-needed grants.

Let's say Product X is lucky enough to come out of the slump. It's due to steady engineering improvements, attractive performance/cost ratio and good sales. Gradually it climbs to a "Plateau of Productivity" as prices stabilize, the manufacturing becomes more automated, improvements are made, and warranties and guarantees are offered. Product X is a good bet—at least until a lower-cost, better-performing competitor appears.

*Kaye Northcott is editor of Texas Co-op Power.*

## TECHNOLOGY MATURITY

### HERE AND READY

#### *Renewable Energy*

- Wind power
- Landfill gas
- Animal waste-to-electricity

#### *Energy Efficiency*

- Compact fluorescent lights
- Energy Star appliances
- Heat pumps

#### *Transportation Fuels*

- Ethanol
- Biodiesel

### NOT READY FOR PRIME TIME

#### *Renewable Energy*

- Utility-scale solar
- Fuel cells
- Hydrogen economy

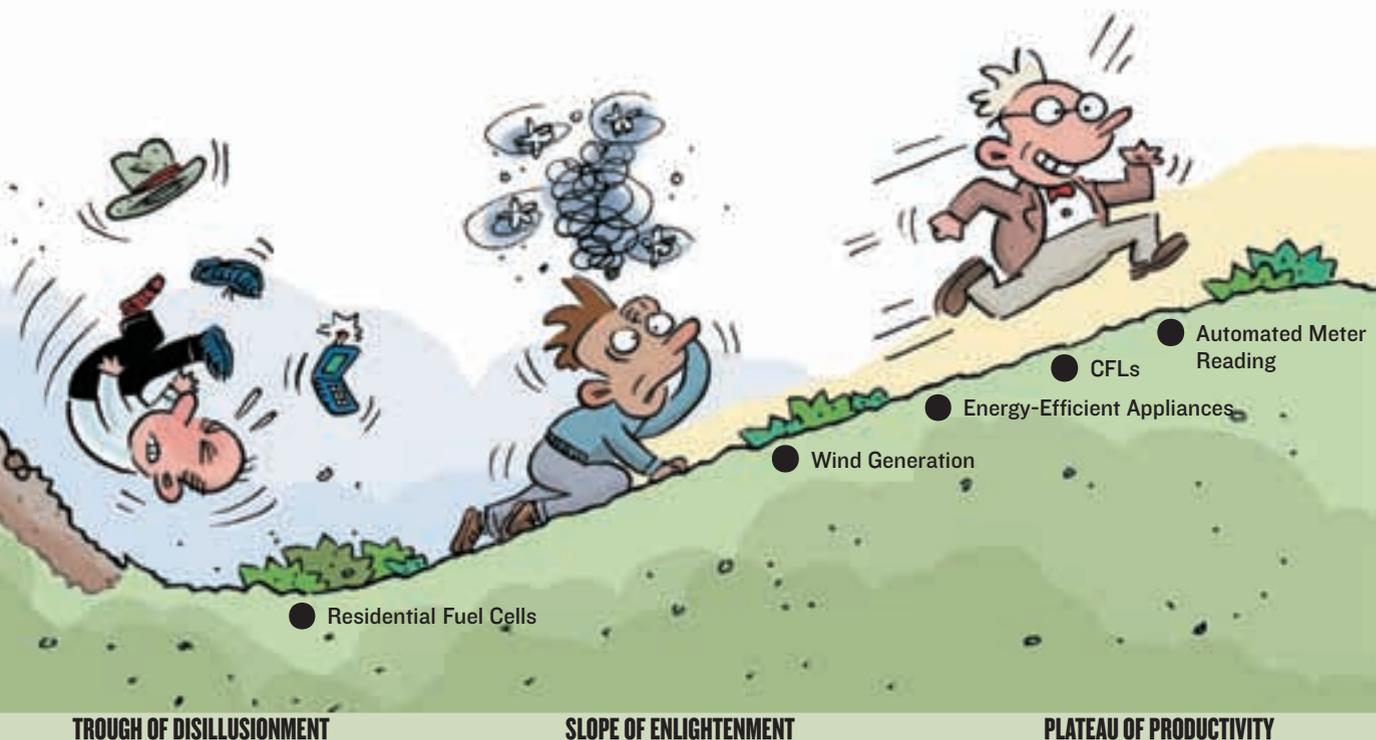
#### *Energy Efficiency*

- Smart appliances
- Residential LEDs
- Plug-in hybrid autos

#### *Transportation Fuels*

- Cellulosic ethanol
- Coal-to-liquid

SOURCE: ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE TODAY



TROUGH OF DISILLUSIONMENT

SLOPE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

PLATEAU OF PRODUCTIVITY