

Speak Up: Energy Policy Will Affect Your Pocketbook



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER RONNIE ROBINSON

More than 70 years ago, a fledgling network of locally controlled, member-owned, not-for-profit utilities tackled the massive task of bringing safe, reliable and affordable electric service to America's rural heartland. After meeting that initial challenge, electric co-ops have continued to expand operations and now serve more than 40 million consumers in 47 states.

But a new challenge, as daunting as any faced since those early days, is putting electric co-ops to the test. Between now and 2030, consumer demand for electricity is expected to increase by 30 percent. To meet that demand, our nation must add about 264,000 megawatts of power plant capacity. However, roadblocks—some out of our control, some not—are delaying this required boom in generation construction.

Economic growth around the world has produced record orders for basic construction materials such as steel, cement and crushed stone. As a result, the average cost of building power plants here at home has increased by 27 percent over the past year and is up a full 130 percent from 2000.

Now a second factor, the need to develop climate-change policy, has slowed desperately needed power plant construction even further. With uncertainty about potential costs of climate-change policy, many lenders see the needed plants as too risky. Of 151 coal plants announced since 2002, only 15 have been built.

Issues preventing development of

coal and nuclear power facilities are forcing power suppliers to increasingly use fuels such as natural gas, which is subject to wide swings in price, to generate electricity. Coal itself, a once-inexpensive fuel, has also recently shot up in cost. The impact of these mounting fuel issues is compounded across the country as dramatic electric rate hikes are announced.

But the economic effect of climate-change policy has yet to be seen. Electric cooperatives are fighting to protect our members; fighting to minimize the cost impact of legislation currently being discussed by lawmakers—legislation that could otherwise go wrong for consumers and go wrong for the country.

As your provider of safe, affordable and reliable electric service, Comanche Electric Cooperative is a champion of the right policy, which meets its climate-change goals while keeping bills affordable. What has been described as the perfect storm—the clash of growing demand, skyrocketing costs for power plant construction and fuel, and climate-change policy constraints—has hit home. It is no longer a far-away problem reserved for backroom discussions in Washington, D.C., or state capitols.

As you may know, electric cooperatives across the country have launched a grassroots campaign called "Our Energy, Our Future: A Dialogue with America" to ensure that your voice gets heard. This campaign seeks to engage elected officials on critical energy questions, such as how to balance growing electricity needs and environmental goals, and how much all of this will affect electric bills.

Please visit WWW.CECA.COOP to join this important conversation. Let lawmakers know that what actions they take regarding our energy challenges will carry enormous consequences for the folks back home. It is time to make our voices heard.



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FIND US ON THE WEB AT
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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.

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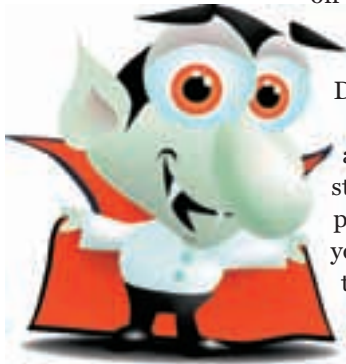
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Watch Out for Those Energy ‘Vampires’

Beware: There’s a power-hungry fiend haunting your house—and, no, it’s not a Halloween visitor. With vigilance, you can stop the drain on your pocketbook by fighting the electricity “vampires” that you may find lurking in every room.

Vampire power, also called standby power, is the energy used by many appliances when they are turned

off but still plugged in. TVs, DVD players and stereos all use standby power after you shut them off because they need



to stay energized to remain responsive to your remote control.

Your desktop computer also uses electricity when it’s in sleep mode. And anything with a built-in clock uses electricity even when the appliance isn’t running.

You can turn those items off and unplug them when you’re not using them. Or, better yet, plug them into power strips with a switch and turn the strip off.

Each appliance wastes just a little bit of power in standby mode, and those kilowatt-hours add up. In fact, the U.S. Department of Energy reports that standby power can account for as much as 20 percent of home energy use.

This year, slay the vampires in your home. Here’s how:

■ Unplug all of your electronics—

including the pieces of your entertainment system—if you go away for the weekend.

■ Unplug seldom-used electronics like a second TV or your old VCR until you want to use them.

■ Power down desktop computers and laptops when you’re finished working. If you have a home office, the same goes for printers and fax machines.

■ Choose new products that bear the Energy Star label. They typically use less standby power.

■ Invest in an “intelligent” power strip for your computer equipment. It “knows” when you turn your computer off—and it turns off your monitor, printer and scanner at the same time, so you don’t have to remember. It turns them all back on when you power up the computer.

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Comanche Electric Cooperative 70th Annual Meeting Held Despite Inclement Weather

The forecast read “50 percent chance of thunderstorms,” but that did not deter employees from setting the stage for the 70th anniversary of Comanche Electric Cooperative. Members, who began arriving at 9 a.m. for registration for the cop’s annual meeting, were greeted with a health fair as well as Comanche Electric Cooperative booths. On hand for the health fair were: Abilene Regional Hospital Wellness; Air Evac; CARE, Inc.; Comanche County Clinic; Comanche County Medical Center; Comanche Hospice; Comanche County Extension Service; Comanche Home Health; Cross Timbers Community Health Center; Curves; EnCompass Home Health; Juice Plus; Med Way Health Care; and Western Hills Nursing Home. Girling Heath Care donated fans for the occasion.

Fortunately, Comanche Electric Cooperative had leased a huge tent to protect the members from the elements. And thankfully, almost everyone was registered and under the tent before a downpour hit. Once under the big tent, members were entertained by The New Bluegrass Combination Band, which played a delightful mixture of bluegrass, country and folk music.

At 10 a.m., the entertainment, registration and the health fair ended, and the business meeting began. Comanche Boy Scout Troop 47 presented the colors and led the members in the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the national anthem, sung by Christine Salmon and signed by Kari Rust.

Comanche Electric Cooperative Board President Lewie Newman gave the opening report.

“We were able to meet all of our financial obligations and maintain our electric rates for the seventh consecutive year,” he told members. “Our ser-

vice reliability rating was better than any of the investor-owned utilities in our service area. Our rates, including



‘Let me take this opportunity to say that I appreciate the confidence the members have placed in me by re-electing me for another term. I will strive to do the best job possible. It is my hope that the members know I am here to serve them to the best of my abilities.’

—Doc Murphree

power cost and all other costs, were lower than any investor-owned utility service in our area. Last year, we returned \$1,031,000 in general refunds to the members and \$93,069 in estate refunds while maintaining a 38 percent equity ratio. We negotiated a new power supply agreement with

Brazos Electric Power Cooperative. Brazos, along with Comanche Electric Cooperative and several other cooperatives throughout the nation, banded together to form the National Renewable Cooperative Organization. This new organization will serve to identify viable renewable energy projects, which could help us diversify our generation portfolio on a competitive basis in the future.”

Randy Robbins, CPA partner at Bolinger, Segars, Gilbert & Moss, gave the annual audit report.

The election of directors was next on the agenda, with James “Doc” Murphree of District 2 and Monty Carlisle of District 4 being elected for additional three-year terms. Murphree has served on the Comanche Electric Cooperative Board of Directors since 1996. He and his wife, Janet, live in the Sidney/May area, where they raise a variety of crops such as hay, alfalfa, silage and corn, as well as cattle. They are also involved in oil-field exploration. Carlisle also has served on the board since 1996. He and his wife, Carla, live on a ranch north of Mullin. They own and operate a cattle feedlot.

Youth Tour participants Lupe Esquivel of Comanche and Lauren Svoboda of Mullin gave a report on their trip to Washington, D.C., and Noemi Martinez thanked the members for the \$1,000 scholarship she received.

General Manager Ronnie Robinson then thanked the employees for a job well done and presented five-year service pins. Those receiving pins were: Keith Steward, 5 years; Jill Cleere, Mary Johnson, Alan Lesley and Tim Palette, 10 years; and Kay Branham, 15 years. Larry Morgan and Bobby Reed received their 25-year watches.

Fifty-four door prizes were awarded before the meeting was adjourned,

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and members were fed a lunch of fish, chicken and all the trimmings by J.C. Cook's Fish Barn.



'I just want to say thank you for electing me for another term on the Comanche Electric Cooperative Board of Directors. Your vote shows your confidence in me, and I will do all within my power not to break that confidence.'

—Monty Carlisle

Lots and lots of pictures were taken, but unfortunately, the rain was just a little hard on our camera, and all pictures were lost. We hope next year to be able to bring you a photo collage to make up for this year's loss.

Yes, there was lots of rain, and yes, it was a little bit of an inconvenience. But the general consensus of the crowd seemed to be that "if sitting outside under a tent will bring rain, then let's bring it on again next year!"



We have an energy challenge, America.

When it comes to finding solutions, we must meet climate-change goals while keeping costs down and electricity available. America needs a plan. Immediately. Because we all know that our energy needs keep on growing—every day.

Now is the time to have a candid conversation with your elected officials. Together, we can find answers and take action.

Start the conversation today at www.ourenergy.coop.

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Our Energy, Our Future
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