

There's a Long Way To Go



**MESSAGE
FROM
MANAGER
ALAN
LESLEY**

There's no question that demand for electricity, in Texas and nationwide, is increasing. However, there is a big question about how we are going to go about keeping the lights on.

Carbon dioxide (CO₂) has come under scrutiny from those who believe that the gas, a byproduct of burning fossil fuels, contributes to global climate change. In Washington, D.C., and elsewhere, a movement is afoot to discourage the use of CO₂-producing fuels and transition toward "greener" forms of renewable-energy production.

But there's a long way to go.

Recently, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT), the non-profit corporation that oversees the electricity grid serving 85 percent of

the state's power consumers, reported that during the January cold snap that plunged much of Texas into a deep freeze, demand for electricity hit a record seasonal peak. According to preliminary figures, consumers in the ERCOT system used more than 55,000 megawatts (MW) of power at one time on the morning of January 8, a winter record. This means that if that amount of electricity generation were not available, some Texans who depend on electric heat would have been left shivering.

This past summer saw the unofficial, all-time record peak, 63,400 MW. According to ERCOT, one megawatt is roughly enough electricity to supply the needs of 500 average homes under normal conditions in Texas, or about 200 homes during hot weather when air conditioners are running for longer periods of time.

A typical large fossil fuel-burning power plant produces around 600 MW. That means it would have taken more than 100 huge power plants operating at full capacity to fulfill the demand that summer day. Of course,

actual generation comes from a variety of sources, not just large power plants.

Wind power, touted as one of the best current solutions to the CO₂ emissions problem, currently doesn't even come close to filling those needs. There are a nation-leading 8,275 MW worth of wind generation installed in the state. ERCOT estimates that at times of peak load, it can count on only about 8.7 percent (about 700 MW) of that capacity to be available because of wind conditions, lack of available transmission and other factors.

Even at the pace at which wind power is being constructed (almost 1,000 additional MW are slated to be added to ERCOT's system by year's end), it could take decades before it is ready to shoulder a significant amount of the state's energy needs. As of 2008, about 80 percent of the electricity generated in the ERCOT region came from burning fossil fuels. To replace that generation with "green" power will take considerably more time and expense.

The amount of federal funds going into researching alternative energy and making the grid more efficient is heartening, but scientists have a long way to go.

Until then, we can hope that the decision-makers in Washington will make wise choices and not saddle customers with exorbitant electric rates in an attempt to force conservation through the checkbook, as some strategists recommend.

We need your help to keep the lights on at a price you can afford.

Please contact your elected representatives and make your voices heard. To make that easier, co-ops nationwide are participating in the Our Energy, Our Future campaign. Go to www.ceca.coop and click on the Our Energy, Our Future logo for more information, or contact Comanche Electric Cooperative at 1-800-915-2533 and we will help you register your opinion.



While wind power is part of the CO₂ emissions solution, all the wind turbines in Texas currently produce only slightly more power than a single fossil fuel-burning power plant.

AT COMANCHE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Conservation Matters

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Landscape for Energy Efficiency

Solar heat absorbed through windows and roofs makes your air conditioner work harder and gobble up more electricity. But incorporating shading concepts into your landscape design can help reduce this solar heat gain—and your cooling costs this summer and for years to come.

Shading from trees can reduce surrounding air temperatures as much as 9 degrees. Because cool air settles near the ground, air temperatures directly under trees can be as much as 25 degrees cooler than air temperatures above nearby blacktop.

Trees can be selected with appropriate sizes, densities and shapes for almost any shading application. To block solar heat in the summer but allow much of it in during winter, plant deciduous trees. To provide continuous shade or block heavy winds, use dense evergreen trees or shrubs.

Deciduous trees with high, spreading crowns (leaves and branches) should be planted on the south side of your home to provide maximum summertime roof shading. Trees with crowns lower to the ground are more appropriate to the west, where shade is needed from lower afternoon sun angles.

Although a slow-growing tree may take many years before it shades your roof, it will generally live longer than a fast-growing tree. Also, because slow-growing trees often have deeper roots and stronger branches, they are less prone to breakage by windstorms or other severe weather. Slow-growing trees can also be more drought resistant than fast-growing trees.

A 6-foot to 8-foot deciduous tree planted near your home will begin shading windows the first year. Depending on the species, the tree will shade the roof in five to 10 years. If you have an air conditioner, shading the unit can increase its efficiency by as much as 10 percent.

Trees, shrubs and groundcover plants can also shade the ground and pavement around the home. This reduces heat radiation and cools the air before it reaches your home's walls and windows. Use a large bush or row of shrubs to shade a patio or driveway. Plant a hedge to shade a sidewalk. Build a trellis for climbing vines to shade a patio area.

Vines can also shade walls during their first growing season. A lattice or trellis with climbing vines or a planter

box with trailing vines can shade a home's perimeter while admitting cooling breezes to the shaded area.

Shrubs planted close to the house will fill in rapidly and begin shading walls and windows within a few years. However, avoid allowing dense foliage to grow immediately



next to a home, since the resulting humidity may create maintenance-related problems. Well-landscaped homes in wet areas allow winds to flow around the home, keeping surrounding soil reasonably dry.

In all but the most humid climates, low-growing ground cover plants near your house will help keep it cool during summer. The leaves block the sun's heat from being absorbed into the ground, and they give off moisture.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

CONGRATULATIONS!

Comanche Electric Cooperative is a proud supporter of its youth. Pictured are some of the youth who won awards sponsored by CECA at area stock shows.



Left to right: Alberto Martinez, Hagen Hohertz, Jacob Johnson, Darren Massey, Colt Cagle, Kayla Bufe, Bryce Barnett, Tanna Cupps, Flor Martinez.

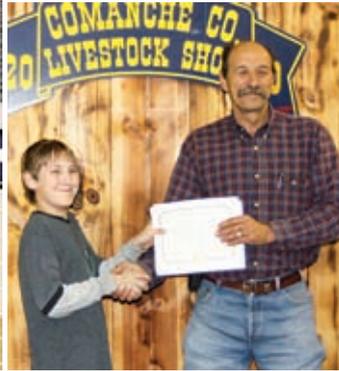
COMANCHE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



Andy Karm



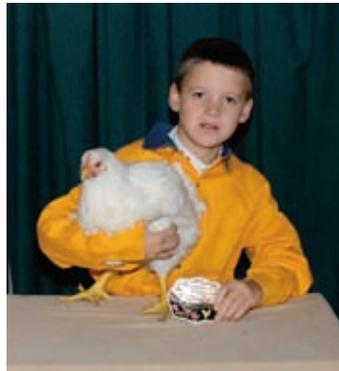
Ashley Mitchell



Cody Dunn



Colt Caffey



Evan Petree



Harli Holland



Kaylen Bonneman



Kobe Conring



Madison Warren



Samantha Garrett



Shandale Riley



T.J. Warren



Zack Cogburn

Why Is My Electric Bill More Than My Neighbor's?

You have a TV, DVD player, microwave oven, electric range and cooktop, refrigerator/freezer, heat pump and personal computer. So does your next door neighbor. So why is your electric bill almost twice as high every month?

Consider this: How well are your walls insulated compared to your neighbor's? Do you take longer, hotter showers? Are you cooking gourmet meals or baking from scratch while your neighbor subsists on quick-heating TV dinners? Does the TV keep you company even when you're not watching it?

No two families live alike. So no two electric bills are the same. Comparing your monthly statement to anyone else's would be like comparing your weekly grocery tabs. Two families of four will never spend exactly the same amount on

food because their tastes and habits are different.

Think about the conveniences you might be willing to pay for, even though your neighbor isn't. Are you more comfortable sleeping in an extra-cool house on hot summer nights? Maybe your neighbor's setback thermostat ekes the temperature up a few degrees at bedtime.

Do members of your family entertain themselves in separate rooms after dinner—watching TV or playing video games—while the folks next door all gather in a family room to play a board game?

Another major factor in today's electric bills is vampire energy loss. Virtually anything that's plugged in these days is drawing some current—even when it's off. Experts estimate that standby energy drains accounts for 5 to 10 percent of an average home's annual power usage. A plasma TV,

for instance, can use \$165 annually for electric power—when it's off.

Consider unplugging items when not in use or using a power strip to disconnect several items at once. There are also "smart" power strips available that automatically cut power to devices in vampire mode.

The way to lower your electric costs is to use energy more efficiently before the bill comes. If your neighbor's bill is lower than yours, ask for some tips about how to save money by conserving energy around the house.

Change the Clock; Change a Lightbulb!

We spring forward this year at 2 a.m. March 14, kicking off months of extra sunlight in the evening. These extra daylight hours help people save electricity by letting them turn the lights on a little later in the evening.

This year, make those energy savings go even further. When you set your clock forward one hour, change a lightbulb in your home from an incandescent bulb to a more efficient compact fluorescent bulb. That single lightbulb would pay for itself many times over in lower energy bills by next March, as the bulbs offer a similar quality of light but use significantly less energy.

Stop by one of Comanche Electric Cooperative's offices to pick up a free CFL bulb.

The change to daylight saving time is also a good time to put fresh batteries in your smoke and carbon-monoxide detectors and then test them to ensure that they work.

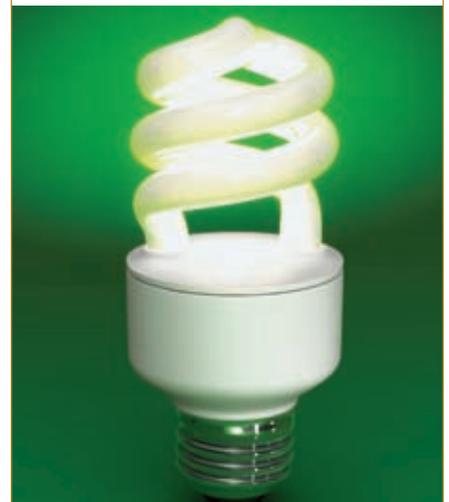
© RICHARD COTE | DREAMSTIME.COM

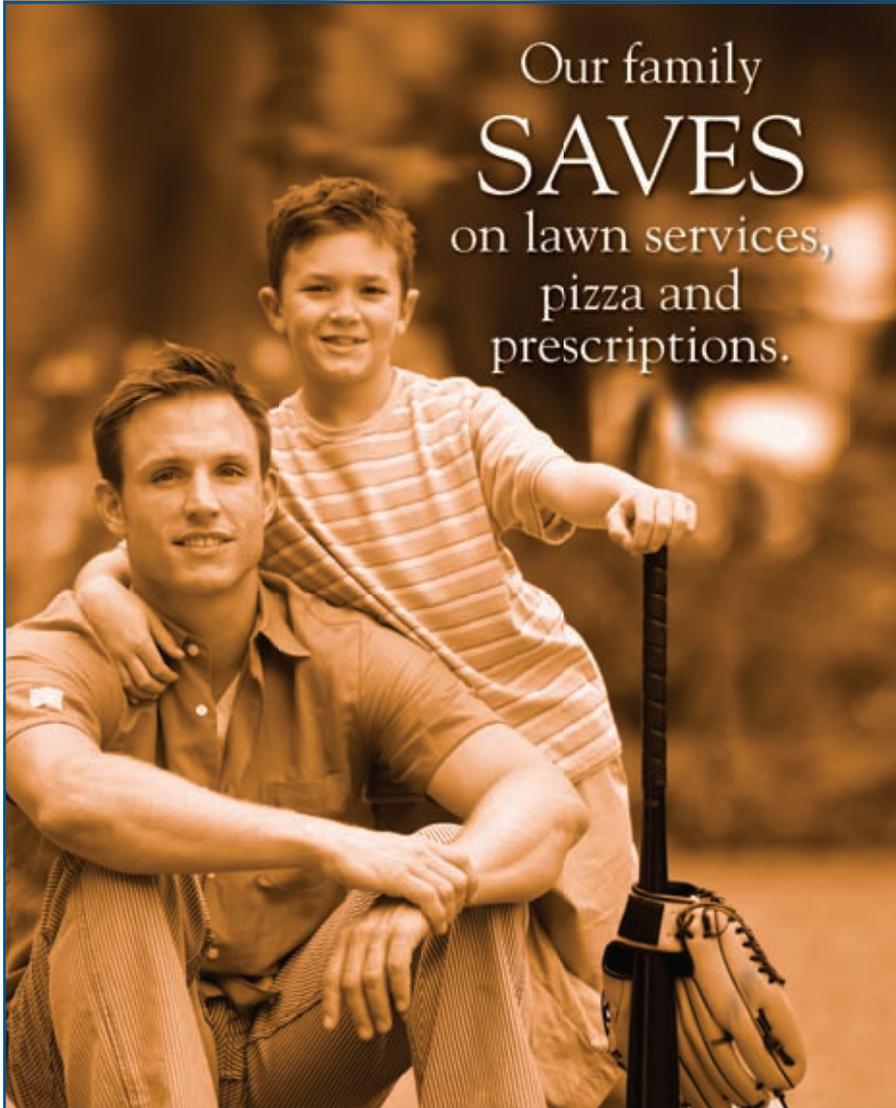


2010 © KEENON. IMAGE FROM BIGSTOCKPHOTO.COM



2010 © CHERRY-MERRY. IMAGE FROM BIGSTOCKPHOTO.COM





Our family
SAVES
on lawn services,
pizza and
prescriptions.

Because we have a Co-op Connections membership card, we save on everyday purchases and services. Our family even saves 10 to 60 percent on prescriptions at our participating local pharmacy. It's just one more way we benefit from being members of a Touchstone Energy cooperative.



Flash your card to save on everyday purchases and prescriptions.

To learn more, visit www.ceca.coop.

Pharmacy discounts are not insurance and are not intended as a substitute for insurance.



**COMANCHE
ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE**

(325) 356-2533
1-800-915-2533

HEADQUARTERS

201 W. Wright St.
Comanche, TX 76442

EASTLAND OFFICE

1311 W. Main St.
Eastland, TX 76448

EARLY OFFICE

1801 CR 338
Early, TX 76801

OFFICE HOURS

7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Monday through Friday
Eastland and Early offices
closed from 1 to 2 p.m.

**FIND US ON THE WEB AT
WWW.CECA.COOP**

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.

COMANCHE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



Your Touchstone Energy Cooperative