

The Power of Local Control



**MESSAGE
FROM
MANAGER
ALAN
LESLEY**

At CECA, we're not alone in our mission to deliver a safe, reliable and affordable supply of power to rural residents. There are 65 other electric distribution cooperatives like us in Texas and more than 850 nationwide. Despite our obvious similarities, each co-op is different—first and foremost because the areas we serve are unique.

Each co-op boasts its own history and serves a distinctive mix of residential, industrial, commercial and agricultural consumer-members. All co-ops make their own business decisions independently, as described in the Fourth Cooperative Principle, "Autonomy and Independence." It's one of seven unique guidelines that govern cooperative operations.

Electric cooperatives are generally subject to less oversight by federal and state utility regulators because of the healthy way in which you, our members, regulate us. This independence, enshrined in the laws of most states, rests on our historic commitment to the communities we serve.

Remaining autonomous and independent allows us to best serve the needs of you, our owners. That's because what might be a sound decision for one co-op, say, with a relatively small number of members spread out over an extremely rural area, might not work for another that has a larger number of members in a more suburban setting.

Local service and attention to your unique needs explains why having local control is best for each locally owned and governed electric co-op.

But while CECA sails its own ship,

so to speak, we are not sailing alone. Our co-op belongs to a statewide association, Texas Electric Cooperatives, and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national service organization representing more than 900 consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives in the United States.

These umbrella groups provide support and products, including Texas Co-op Power and valuable safety courses for our employees. Our statewide association and NRECA advocate for us with lawmakers in Austin and Washington, D.C., keeping these public officials aware of how their votes can impact our electric bills.

Despite these benefits, none of these groups tells us what to do. Decisions about how to deliver your electricity at the lowest possible cost are left to our employees and our board of directors, who are elected by you, our members.

On occasion, we might need a large amount of capital to pay for expansion. We can borrow it from a number of sources, including the federal Rural Utilities Service; the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation, a private lender that's organized and controlled by electric cooperatives; or CoBank, a cooperative bank that's part of the Farm Credit System that offers financial services for agribusinesses and rural water, electric and telecommunications co-ops.

Of course, while we enter into any agreement with a great deal of deliberation—whether it's regarding financing or purchasing materials or contracting with a company to perform line work for us—no deal gives a third party control over our operations.

Leaders of our co-op, who are members just like you, know this area and its needs well.

Our ability to make our own decisions allows us to serve you in the most efficient way possible. And that's the way it should be.



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

HEADQUARTERS

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Comanche, TX 76442
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EASTLAND OFFICE

1311 W. Main St.
Eastland, TX 76448

EARLY OFFICE

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Early, TX 76801

OFFICE HOURS

7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Monday through Friday
Eastland closed from noon to 1:15 p.m.
Early 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 CECA 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.



Conservation MATTERS

THE LATEST NEWS AND INFORMATION ABOUT ENERGY CONSERVATION FROM YOUR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Thermostat Tricks To Help You Save Big Bucks

One of the easiest ways to save energy—and substantial money on your energy bill—is to turn the air conditioning up slightly before you leave the house for an extended period.

If you're going out for a few hours in the evening, taking the family on a weekend trip or even leaving for work in the morning, nudge the thermostat up a couple of degrees. The house doesn't need to be that cool while nobody's home, and it won't take long for it to get back to normal once you return home and adjust the setting down a little bit. A tip: Don't turn the air conditioner completely off when you leave for a vacation. A home that's too hot can become humid, and that invites mold.

A few things to consider:

- People can adjust to an indoor temperature that's slightly less cool in the summer and less warm in the winter. If you usually set your air conditioner at 72, for instance, push it to 74 for a few days until that begins to feel normal. Then, nudge it up 1 degree a week for a few more weeks and see how far you can go and still feel comfortable.

- The U.S. Department of Energy estimates that for each

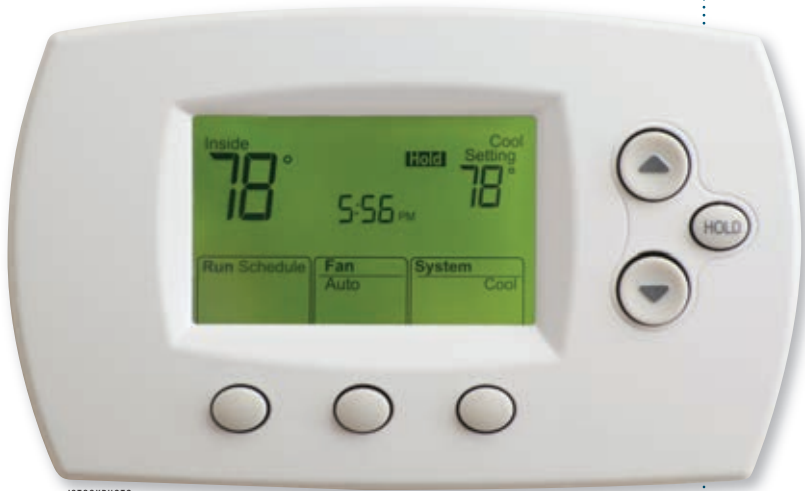
degree you raise your air conditioning thermostat, you can reduce your cooling bill by 1 percent. Raising it 5 degrees when you're away from home could reduce consumption by 5 percent.

- Avoid cranking the cooling way down when you get home from work or from a vacation. Instead, set it back to your normal temperature and let your equipment take its time to condition the air. Air conditioners don't work any faster if the thermostat setting is lower.

- Use your ceiling fans. The fans help air circulate, which makes the room feel more comfortable. That will allow you to set the thermostat a couple of degrees higher while maintaining the same comfort level.

- A programmable thermostat will do all of the resetting for you. You can program it to set the temperature up a few degrees at bedtime and to return to normal half an hour before your alarm goes off. You can have it keep the temperature constant on weekends but save energy on workdays.

- On pleasant summer days when it's nice enough outdoors to open your home's windows, remember to turn the air conditioner off.



ISTOCKPHOTO

During the long Texas cooling season, setting your thermostat at the highest comfortable temperature can mean big savings.



IT'S NOT REAL ... THIS TIME

It's a beautiful morning at Early High School. The sun is shining—it's the first really warm day of the season. The birds are chirping, and all seems right with the universe.

Suddenly the peace is broken by the sound of sirens blasting from police cars, ambulances and fire trucks. Their radios are blaring to the world that there has been an accident over by the tennis courts, and there are multiple injuries and at least one possible death. They are closely followed by an Air Evac helicopter setting down in the grass next to the parking lot, prepared to take a critically injured student to a care facility. A hearse from Heartland Funeral Home, complete with two somber gentlemen in black suits, arrives to pick up a body.

This simulation of a tragedy was played out by a group of students who had been working for weeks on the school's Shattered Dreams program, which brings awareness to students about the dangers of drinking and/or texting and driving.

The accident was not real, but it could have been. Statistics show that someone in Texas is killed or injured every 15 minutes by a drunken driver. So while this scene at Early High School was not real, somewhere in this great state that these kids call home, this same scene may have been played out for real.

The Shattered Dreams program at Early High began in October when a group of 10 of its students attended Comanche Electric Cooperative Association's Leadership

Conference. One of the conference's many activities was for students to identify a school or community need and formulate a plan of action about how to remedy that need. Because there had been three deaths in the past six years involving Early High students, these young men and women felt that their peers needed to be made aware of the dangers of drinking and driving or texting and driving. They chose the Shattered Dreams program to accomplish that goal.

The day began like any other for most students. They filed into class, took their seats and opened their books. They talked, they laughed, they shared their secrets and the events of the previous evening. Their teachers began writing on blackboards, giving lectures and assigning homework. Fifteen minutes into the morning, a heartbeat sounded over the school's intercom system, and a student dressed as the Grim Reaper silently walked into a classroom and removed one of the students as classmates looked on. This scene was repeated every 15 minutes throughout the morning. The students removed by the Grim Reaper dressed in black T-shirts and had their faces painted to represent the "Walking Dead." They were allowed to return to their class, but were not allowed to speak or communicate, and their classmates were not allowed to speak to them. This was meant to demonstrate the void left when someone they love is no longer there.

While these scenes were being played out in classrooms, a group of students and their sponsors, along with police,

COMANCHE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



LEFT: The 'Walking Dead' and the 'Grim Reaper' lead the Early High student body to the scene of the crime. The Walking Dead represent the people killed every 15 minutes in Texas by a drunken driver. One student was removed from the class every 15 minutes. Their obituaries were posted for the remaining student body to read. **CENTER:** The young man playing the drunken driver is interviewed by a police officer and given a sobriety test before being handcuffed and placed in a police car. **RIGHT:** Although the scene was not real, and the students knew it was not, the entire episode had a profound effect on them, as evidenced by the expressions on the student's faces as they watched their classmates in this dramatic enactment.

fire and hospital officials and trained experts from the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission were busy setting up the mock accident scene in the parking lot behind the tennis courts. Makeup artists prepared the students with cuts, bruises and fake blood. They got into the vehicles that had been positioned to represent a three-car pileup.

At 1 p.m., the students were asked to report to the parking lot where the "accident" had occurred. It was as they rounded the corner and glimpsed the scene that the emergency vehicles began to arrive. As one group of paramedics checked for injuries, another group worked to remove the injured using the Jaws of Life. Loudspeakers from the emergency vehicles were crackling as more ambulances and an air ambulance were requested.

Police officers, noticing beer cans outside one vehicle, opened the door to remove the driver. An avalanche of beer cans cascaded from the car, instigating a round of questions aimed at the driver and passengers concerning their drinking. After a sobriety test given at the scene, the young driver was handcuffed, read his rights and placed in one of the police cars to be carried to jail to be booked for drunken driving. A critically injured passenger was placed on a gurney and rushed to the waiting air ambulance and flown to a local hospital, while a sheet was placed over a young woman who had been thrown from a car.

The following morning, the student body saw the video of

the event. They watched as one of their classmates was placed into a black body bag and loaded into the waiting hearse. They saw the horror on the face of that mother as a police officer came to her door to inform her of her daughter's death and her grief as she identified her daughter's body in the morgue.

They watched as a classmate was handcuffed and whisked away to jail. They saw him being dressed in a jail uniform and placed in a holding cell. They listened to his tearful discussion with his mother as he called her and told her where he was and that he had injured and killed people. They heard his heartbreaking sobs as he apologized and expressed how badly he wished he could go back and change things. After the video, they listened as those students and parents tearfully communicated to them how they felt, and what this experience meant to them.

Tears were shed as one mother and father told the true story of how they had lost their 8-year-old son to a drunken driver. Another couple told the true story of how they lost their son when, under the influence of alcohol, he thought he could outrun a train.

No, this day's accident wasn't real. But to the students involved in the simulation, it was VERY real. These students and their families had been preparing for this day for weeks. They knew it was coming, and they were prepared. Or so they thought. But when it all came together, it felt more real for all of them than they ever imagined it would.



"I was sitting in first period when a heartbeat comes over the intercom. I was the first one to get taken out," said Thomas Givan, who was one of the Walking Dead. "I saw my friend (the Grim Reaper) come in, and he points to me, and I thought, I don't want to die right now, this is a bad time. The rest of the day I had to sit in class, seeing everybody, but I couldn't talk. It was like I wasn't there. At the accident scene, I knew it wasn't real, but it could really happen because of poor decisions people make."

Lindyn Davis, another of the Walking Dead, said that when the Grim Reaper came, "I was scared, and I didn't get to say goodbye to my teacher, I didn't get to say goodbye to my friends that were in the classroom, I just had to get up and go. I had to look at these faces as I was walking down the hallway. I knew if this was real I would never see them or get to talk to them again, and that hurt, and it kind of was a wakeup call. It felt real in that moment. I kept thinking, what if that really happened. What if I never saw them again and never got to tell them goodbye. I would never want that to happen to anybody."

The students involved in the program did not return to school that day, nor did they return home that night. They had no visual or phone contact with their classmates or their family. This was to give the program a more realistic feel, and to reinforce the impression that the students were actually dead, in the hospital, or jail, to make the drama appear as real as possible in an effort to convey to the students how dangerous and deadly their decisions can be.

Kerri Jacobson, the mother of the student who was airlifted and "died" at the hospital, said, "In all the preparation we had, you can never prepare yourself to see your child in death, and in that, I've realized how uncertain life is and how quickly it can turn. So we have to look at every moment as if it is our last moment."

Roseann Herrera, mother of one of the Walking Dead, said, "We ran through a gamut of emotions. My husband kept telling me, 'It's not real, it's not real.' But the young man who played the drunk driver, at first I was so angry at him, then I felt sadness because he has to live with this, he has to see the faces of those he has affected."

Perhaps the father of the young man who'd tried to outrun the train summed it all up best: "Over and over today you have heard people say, 'Please, don't drink and drive.' Well I echo that sentiment, but I want to go a step further. I want to say, please, please, please, don't ever take that first drink, whether you are driving or not. You never know which one will be the one that you can't turn back from."

The resounding sentiment among students, teachers and visitors I spoke with about the program that day was, "If this reaches only one person, and saves only one life, still it was worth it."

It is my belief that more than one life was touched that day. The students (and adults) who were affected, and who made a commitment to never drink and drive, will never know whether they would have been a statistic had they not made that commitment. But that's a good thing. Right?

TOP AND CENTER: Firefighters use the Jaws of Life to remove students from one of the vehicles. **BOTTOM:** These students attended the 2011-12 CECA Leadership Conference and were the group who formulated the plan and masterminded the completion of the program. From left are: front row, Amy Hurtado and Logan Speck; middle row, Angelyn Wiley, Lindyn Davis and Hailey Sellars; and top row, Thomas Givan, Sean Jones and Ryan Contreras.

Follow the Rules To Safely Use Portable Generators

Portable generators can be helpful during an extended power outage. But if not operated properly, you can place yourself as well as line crews from CECA at risk of injury or death.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that 190 nonfire carbon monoxide-poisoning deaths occurred in 2008, according to its most recent data. Most were related to portable generator use.

First rule of thumb? Never, ever use a generator indoors—even with windows open—or in an enclosed area, including an attached garage. Locate the generator where fumes cannot filter into your home through windows or doors—even 15



DANIEL CIMA, AMERICAN RED CROSS

Portable generators are helpful in an extended power outage, but they can create serious safety hazards if not used correctly.

feet is too close. Carbon monoxide, which is odorless and invisible, can build up to lethal levels in a matter of minutes. If you plan to use a generator, install a carbon monoxide detector in your home, and test the batteries monthly.

To avoid risk of shock, use your generator only on a dry surface where rain or snow can't leak or puddle underneath. If precipitation poses a problem, create an open-air, tent-like structure above the unit, but make sure to leave at least 3 to 4 feet of space above and around it to vent carbon monoxide. You also need to protect folks working to restore power. Never plug your portable generator into a wall outlet in your home. This produces "backfeeding"—a dangerous risk to the safety of lineworkers because it can energize power lines thought to be dead. For stationary generators that are permanently installed, a licensed electrician will need to install a transfer switch that complies with the National Electric Code. The switch safely cuts the electricity to the power lines. And be sure to call CECA before you install a generator to ensure safety for yourself and lineworkers.

- Plug appliances into the outlet on the generator using only heavy-duty extension cords marked specifically for outdoor use. Check the wattage use of each appliance plugged in and make sure the total does not exceed the cord's wattage rating. In addition, the cords should have three prongs and should not be frayed or cut.

- Shut down the generator and let it cool down before you refuel—gasoline or kerosene spilled on a hot generator could start a fire.

- If you're buying your first portable generator, plan ahead. Count the wattages for the lighting and appliances you want to power. You'll want to purchase a generator that can handle the load.



GET YOUR CFLS AT CECA

CECA now offers a CFL purchase program. Members may visit any of our three offices and purchase bulbs at cost. Currently in stock are:

- 13 watts (replaces 60-watt incandescent)
- 18 watts (replaces 75-watt incandescent)
- 23 watts (replaces 100-watt incandescent)
- 14-watt globe (replaces 60-watt incandescent)
- 9-watt candelabra (replaces 40-watt incandescent)
- 16-watt flood (replaces 75-watt incandescent)

If you have questions, contact any of our member service representatives at 1-800-915-2533, or come into any of our three offices in Comanche, Early or Eastland.