

Powering the Future



**MESSAGE
FROM
GENERAL
MANAGER
RONNIE
ROBINSON**

It's a painful subject, but let's talk straight about electricity costs. Power is no longer cheap. But there are some steps you can take, some steps your co-op can take, and some steps we can take together to get a better handle on rates and resources.

There's no getting around the fact that we consume more energy each year. Our homes are bigger. Our appliances are more complex. We have an insatiable thirst for new audiovisual products.

Count how many radios, digital clocks, TVs, TiVos, DVD players and console games you have around your house. Many of these amenities run full time. On average, one 50-inch HD plasma TV uses roughly the same amount of energy annually as a new 15-cubic-foot refrigerator. New generation game consoles such as the Xbox 360 or PlayStation 3 are the second-heaviest electricity users in the entertainment arsenal, next to big TVs.

So those of us who are fortunate enough to have discretionary income have to ask ourselves how much of this good stuff we are willing to forgo in order to use less energy. It's the same question we face when purchasing a gas-guzzling vehicle versus a compact hybrid or a 1,000-square-foot house versus one with 3,000 square feet.

Helpful energy-management tips are available from your cooperative and many other sources. After that, it's up to you.

From the electricity suppliers' side of the dilemma, as resources become more precious, the cost of producing

electricity rises. The basic cost of fuels used to generate power—natural gas in particular—fluctuates between high and exorbitant. Meanwhile, we must help pay for new generation plants and transmission lines required by consumer demand. I hope you have visited our website at www.ceca.coop and read the articles on "Our Energy, Our Future."

For our part, we will strive to be thrifty, competent managers of Comanche Electric Cooperative and will seek the most feasible, diversified fuel sources to keep the generators running. We know you want us to keep the power flowing every minute of every day.

Fortunately, cooperative ratepayers have an advantage over customers of big utilities. Co-ops are not operated to generate profits for distant investors. The cost of our product simply has to cover expenses and provide for future system improvements. If there is a margin left over, it is returned to you as a capital credit.

We also are sensitive to the growing interest in renewable energy sources such as wind power and methane gas. Our power supplier, Brazos Electric Power Cooperative, has hydroelectric in its generation portfolio and partners with a wind project.

We will be straight about what particular power sources and new technologies will cost to implement.

There are ways to reduce the demand. Changing wasteful practices and embracing technological solutions can help. Updating your old home appliances with new, more energy-efficient models can, too.

At least initially, such energy-management steps can be costly. But reducing both individual bills and the need for new power plants can provide long-term savings and benefit our environment. Together, as co-op members and co-op managers, we can choose our lifestyles and shape the kind of co-op we want.

DON'T MESS AROUND WITH POWER LINES— EVEN IF THEY'RE DOWN

Downed power lines can look relatively harmless. But don't be fooled. They likely carry an electric current strong enough to cause serious injury or possibly death. These tips can help you stay safe around downed lines:

- If you see a downed power line, move away from the line and anything touching it.

- The proper way to move away from the line is to shuffle with small steps, keeping your feet together and on the ground at all times. This will minimize the potential for a strong electric shock. Electricity wants to move from a high voltage zone to a low voltage zone—and it could do that through your body.

- If you see someone who is in direct or indirect contact with the downed line, do not touch the person. You could become the next victim. Call 911 instead.

- Do not attempt to move a downed power line or anything in contact with the line by using another object such as a broom or stick. Even normally nonconductive materials like wood or cloth, if slightly wet, can conduct electricity and then electrocute you.

- Be careful not to put your feet near water where a downed power line is located.

- Do not drive over downed lines.

- If you are in a vehicle that is in contact with the downed line, stay in the vehicle. Honk your horn for help and tell others to stay away from your vehicle.

- If you must leave your vehicle because it's on fire, jump out of the vehicle with both feet together and avoid making contact with the energized vehicle and the ground at the same time. This way you avoid being the path of electricity from the vehicle to the earth.

AT COMANCHE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Conservation Matters

Your Touchstone Energy Cooperative 



Keep Cool and Trim Costs This Summer

By James Dulley

DEAR JAMES: I want to try to use less energy this summer. I know I will have to use my air conditioner less, but I like it comfortably cool in my house. What things can I do to make me feel cooler with less air conditioning? —*Linda L.*

DEAR LINDA: Using a central air conditioner or heat pump during summer can significantly increase your utility bills. In today's economic climate, everyone is trying to reduce their housing budget in every way possible. Using less air conditioning, especially during the hottest summer weekday afternoons, can save you money on electric bills while helping your electric cooperative reduce peak demand. This helps hold down future rate increases because less investment will be needed for additional electric generating plants.

It is not too difficult or uncomfortable to get by with much less summer air conditioning. After all, up until just a couple of generations ago residential air conditioning did not even exist—and we have all survived. I recall when I was a child, we had a window fan and a floor fan for a family of four. It got a little warm and we perspired, but we just accepted that in the summer, one perspires.

But summers don't have to be all about perspiration these days. There are four good methods to keep comfortable without air conditioning: bringing in cooler outdoor air when possible; increasing the air velocity inside your house; minimizing the indoor humidity level; and blocking heat transmission into your house.

Using all of these methods or a combination of a few can make a significant improvement.

Installing a whole-house fan accomplishes two of these methods. At night, it typically brings in cooler air and exhausts the hot air from your house. A large whole-house fan can also create quite a pleasant breeze throughout your home. A typical unit uses just a small fraction of the electricity a central air conditioner does.

Increasing the velocity of the indoor air can make a room feel 5 to 10 degrees cooler than still air at the same temperature. This is the theory behind using ceiling fans. They use very little electricity and they can create a comforting effect.

During summer, set the ceiling fan blade rotation so it blows the air downward (turning counter-clockwise as you look up) and run it on medium or high speed for the most comfort. During winter, reverse the blade rotation so the air blows upward (turning clockwise as you look up) and run it on low speed. This will gently move the warm air at the ceiling out to the walls and down. Since it is on low speed, it will not create a draft which could feel chilly during winter.

If you plan to rely on natural ventilation through windows to use no electricity, hopefully you have casement windows. When the sash projects out from the house, it tends to catch and direct the natural breezes into your house more than vertical or horizontal slider windows.

If you do have sliders, all is not lost. Fully open the windows on the downwind side of your house. There usually

is a slight lower pressure on this side so some air will be drawn from your house. Open the windows just a bit less on the windward side. This creates a faster air flow in through these partially open windows, making you more comfortable if you sit near them.

Need a few more quick tips for keeping things cool?



- Run your kitchen and bathroom vent fans whenever you are cooking or bathing to remove the moisture.
- Use the summer weather as an excuse to grill outside more often and reduce the cooking heat in your kitchen.
- Make sure the clothes dryer vent duct is not leaking and allowing hot, humid air to stay indoors.
- Block heat from entering your windows and glass doors with awnings and window film.
- Install reflective foil under the attic rafters to block radiant heat from a hot roof.
- And make sure you have adequate attic ventilation and that insulation is not blocking soffit vents.

By following some of these steps, you'll be saving money while keeping cool in no time.

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CONNECTIONS CARD NOW OFFER

According to the Texas Medical Association, Texas is the uninsured capital of the United States with more than 5.5 million people lacking health insurance. In fact, in the seven counties served by Comanche Electric Cooperative, statistics show there are more than 18,500 uninsured people, many of whom are children. The uninsured are up to four times less likely to have a regular source of health care and are more likely to die from health-related problems. As you can see, this is a serious problem for Texans.

Comanche Electric Cooperative realizes the need for affordable health care and has taken one more step toward helping our members. In November 2008, the Co-op Connections® Card was distributed to all members via *Texas Co-op Power* magazine. This card gives member discounts on many local, as well as national, deals. One of the best features of the card is that it offers a 10 to 60 percent discount on prescription medications. During this age when many people have to choose between their prescription medications and some of the other necessities of life, this discount can be a very valuable asset. In fact, since its inception in November, members of Comanche Electric Cooperative have saved in excess of \$8,000 on prescription medicines alone. As our members realize the value of the savings from use of the card, we expect that number to grow to a staggering amount.

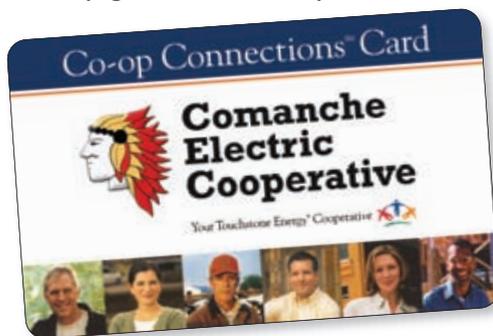
But the prescription benefit is only the beginning of what Comanche Electric Cooperative members can look forward to receiving from the Co-op Connections Card. The latest benefit of the program is the newly launched Cooperative Healthy Savings (CHS) Program. This offer allows Co-op Connections cardholders to obtain savings on the cost of dental, vision and hearing needs at the low cost of

\$4.25 per month, or \$50 annually.

Co-op members who elect to register for the program will receive a personalized CHS membership card with a toll-free number for questions and a booklet with descriptions on how to use the benefits, along with a list of participating locations in their area. This membership kit will arrive seven to 14 days after registration.

VISION CARE

The discount vision program has contracted with over 12,000 eye-care locations nationwide. Members save on eyeglasses, contacts, eye exams



and surgical procedures. The vision provider network is the most comprehensive in the U.S. and includes ophthalmologists, optometrists, independent optical centers and national chain locations such as Pearle Vision, JC Penney Optical, Sears Optical, Target Optical, LensCrafters and EyeMasters.



Highlights

- Savings of 20 to 60 percent on prescription eyewear.
- Savings of 10 to 20 percent on contact lenses (excluding disposables) at participating retail locations.
- Savings of 10 to 30 percent on eye exams.
- Save 40 to 50 percent off the

overall national average on LASIK surgery (PRK and CK available at select locations).

- Most frames, lenses and specialty items such as tints, coatings and UV protection are available.
- No limit on the number of times membership may be used during the year.
- Two guarantees: a 30-day unconditional money-back satisfaction guarantee and a low-price guarantee on eyeglasses.
- Members may nominate their own eye-care professional to join the network.

DENTAL CARE

The discount dental program is simple to use. Members may choose from more than 76,000* dental practices nationwide—one of the country's largest dental discount networks. Then just show your CHS card at the dentist's office, and you'll receive an instant discount off the cost of services. There is no paperwork and no health restrictions. Plus, you can use the card as often as you like.

Highlights

- Members save 15 to 50 percent** on everything from general dentistry and cleanings to root canals, crowns and orthodontia.
- Over 76,000 dental practice locations.
- Save on routine dental services such as X-rays and fillings.
- Save on specialty care such as orthodontics and periodontics where available.

*According to the Aetna Enterprise Provider Database as of October 1, 2008

**Actual costs and savings vary by provider and geographical area.

HEARING AIDS

Members will enjoy access to a variety of hearing programs providing hearing-

RS 'HEALTHY' SAVINGS

aid discounts of 15 to 58 percent in retail locations nationwide and discounts of 40 to 60 percent through the mail-order program.

Highlights

- Free hearing screening.
- Members may select from 1,350 Beltone locations nationwide to receive a free hearing screening and 15 percent off over 70 models of Beltone hearing aids. All technologies and models are available, including state-of-the-art digital hearing aids, along with Completely-in-the-canal, In-the-ear and Behind-the-ear models.
- The BelCare™ standardized 12-point customer-service program ensures consistent delivery of professional and comfortable service, regardless of location.
- Save 40 to 60 percent off average National Retail Pricing on over 100 models of name-brand hearing instruments through the mail order hearing aids program. Receive the lowest price available and a 45-day in-home trial period with one full year factory warranty.
- Members receive a 25 percent discount off a complete line of products designed specifically for people who are experiencing hearing and/or vision loss, including amplified corded and cordless telephones, large-display alarm clocks, portable telephone amplifiers, amplified telephone ring signaler personal communication systems and a TV listening system.

These discounts can be used as many times as needed for each member of the family. For example, a family in which three members wear glasses and/or contact lenses can save on each order of contact lenses or on each pair of glasses purchased, including the frames, lenses and any special coating applied.

Before signing up for the program, visit www.locateproviders.com and use

the code 22222 under the "Groups" section to find out if there are providers within your community.

To sign up for the program, simply click on the Dental, Vision & Hearing Savings logo on the Comanche Electric Cooperative website at www.ceca.coop and follow the instructions, or call 1-800-915-2533 or come by one of the Comanche Electric Cooperative offices for assistance.

THIS PLAN IS NOT INSURANCE. This plan does not make payments directly to the providers of medical services. The plan member is obligated to pay for all health-care services but will receive a discount from those health-care providers who have contracted with the discount plan organization. This plan provides discounts at certain health-care providers for medical services.

This discount card program contains a 30-day cancellation period. FL, LA, ND, OK, SC, SD and TX residents: Member shall receive a full refund of membership fees, excluding registration fee, if membership is canceled within the first 30 days after receipt of membership materials. AR and TN residents: A refund of all fees will be issued if membership is canceled within the first 30 days. MD residents: The membership fee and one-time registration fee (minus \$5) will be refunded if canceled within the first 30 days and upon return of the discount card. The range of discounts for medical or ancillary services provided under the plan will vary depending on the type of provider and medical or ancillary service received. The discount medical card program makes available, before purchase and upon request, a list of program providers, including the name, city, state and specialty of each program provider located in the cardholder's service area. The Internet address to obtain participating providers is <http://home.locateproviders.com>.



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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