

Keeping a Secure Electric Grid



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER ALAN LESLEY

Several months ago, a piece of speculative fiction was shown on cable television depicting events that could happen should an electricity grid failure cause a national blackout.

In the yarn spun by the show's writers, a cyberattack causes a lengthy national grid failure, and life without electricity is difficult, as you can imagine.

The program's theoretical plot is, of course, a worst-case scenario with far-reaching consequences that we don't want to experience in real life. This is why electric cooperatives have worked diligently with the North American Electric Reliability Corporation and federal agencies over the past several years to strengthen reliability and cybersecurity standards for the nation's bulk power infrastructure system, known collectively as the grid.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association is working with its member cooperatives, including Comanche Electric Cooperative, to help ensure that co-ops comply with NERC reliability and cybersecurity standards.

Cooperatives are also working on the cutting edge of research into cybersecurity.

The U.S. Department of Energy recently awarded \$3.6 million to the NRECA's Cooperative Research Network to develop cybersecurity management tools for small utilities. NRECA and Honeywell Corp. plan to provide additional funding for a total of \$4.7 million.

NRECA will collaborate with researchers to create a simple, automated network device that will enable small utilities, such as cooperatives, to manage system security more reliably and cost-effectively, according to Craig Miller, chief scientist at NRECA.

"The system will simplify cybersecurity management for small utilities with limited IT resources," Miller said, adding that improved security for small systems supplements the security of larger utilities.

No one can guarantee that a large-scale blackout caused by cyberterrorists can't happen. Even small electric cooperatives are part of a national effort to protect the reliability and security of our power grid.



Co-ops across the nation are banding together to protect the security of our power grid.



Instead of cranking up the thermostat, slip on a sweater to keep warm.

What Not To Do When It's Cold Outside

Follow these tips to stay safe and save energy during winter.

1. DON'T OVERSTUFF YOUR REFRIGERATOR. Stacking holiday leftovers on top of each other and squeezing extra containers of food onto every refrigerator shelf will prevent the air from circulating. That forces the appliance's compressor to work harder and use more electricity.

2. DON'T CRANK THE THERMOSTAT WAY UP to heat a cold house in a hurry. Turning the heat up to 90 degrees won't warm a 60-degree house any quicker than turning it up to 72 degrees.

3. DON'T RUN BATHROOM AND KITCHEN EXHAUST FANS any longer than you have to. Flip them on to clear smoke while cooking and steam while showering.

4. DON'T USE A BARBECUE GRILL OR A PROPANE PATIO HEATER INDOORS, even if your central heating system is on the fritz. This is a fire hazard and can expose you to carbon monoxide poisoning.

5. DON'T TURN OFF YOUR CEILING FANS. Ceiling fans can save energy during winter. The trick: Set the spin direction to push air up. In this mode, the blades slant downward. Heat rises, so in the winter, the blades should move warm air toward the ceiling and walls and down into the room.

The Cooperative Difference

Occasionally in these pages of Texas Co-op Power, you'll see a reference to "the cooperative difference," and although the idea is clear to us, you may wonder what exactly that means. On the surface, it might be difficult to perceive what makes an electric co-op different than another type of business, especially for the person who pays the bills.

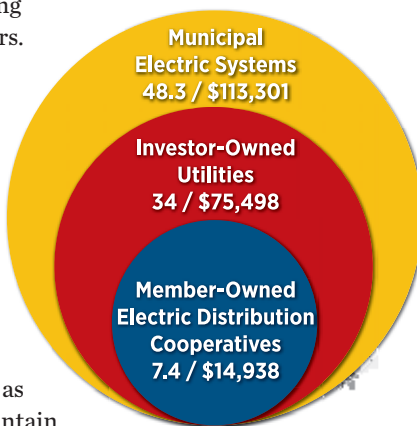
A cooperative is a business, but it operates differently than many other types of business. The most important difference is that you and the other people and businesses that receive electricity from CECA are not just customers—you collectively own the business as members.

Another difference is that cooperatives are nonprofit entities. There are no stockholders and no dividends paid to investors who don't live in our service territory.

When the co-op collects more revenue in a year than it takes to pay its bills, what's left after covering operating expenses will eventually be refunded to members.

Consumers Served/Revenue per Mile of Line for Different Utilities

Because of higher population densities (more consumers served per mile of line), municipal electric systems and investor-owned utilities receive more revenue per mile of line than electric cooperatives.



But first, the co-op uses that money, referred to as capital credits, to invest in the business and maintain an emergency reserve.

A few years down the road, when financial circumstances warrant, the co-op may opt to return that excess capital to its members in a capital credits refund. Those refunds are given back to members in proportion to the amount of business they did with the co-op in a given year.

Because capital credits can exist on the books for several years before retirement, it's important to update CECA with your new address if you move. The refunds are still yours, even if you are no longer a member.

One of the most important differences between electric cooperatives and for-profit utilities is that co-ops are headquartered right here and hire local people. Co-ops are also locally managed and overseen by boards made up of members just like you. The electricity we provide may be generated far away, but the people who do the administrative and technical work necessary to serve you live here.

The directors who make the long-term decisions about how the business is run understand local concerns because they're your neighbors. You elect those board members to represent you, giving you an important voice in how the co-op operates.

Electric cooperatives exist to serve communities in our territories with reliable, affordable power. But we also act to enhance the quality life in those communities. That's the cooperative difference.

CECA

P.O. Box 729
Comanche, TX 76442

Operating in Brown, Callahan, Comanche, Eastland, Mills, Shackelford and Stephens counties

HEADQUARTERS

201 W. Wrights Ave.
Comanche, TX 76442

EASTLAND OFFICE

1311 W. Main St.
Eastland, TX 76448

EARLY OFFICE

1801 CR 338
Early, TX 76801

OFFICE HOURS

Comanche Office: Monday through Friday 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Early Office: Monday through Friday 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., closed from 1 to 2 p.m.

Eastland Office: Tuesday and Thursday 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., closed from noon to 1 p.m.

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.



CONTACT US

CALL US

(325) 356-2533 local or
1-800-915-2533 toll-free

FIND US ON THE WEB

ceca.coop

Tractor Drive 2013

BY SHIRLEY DUKES



Breckenridge FFA Chapter members pose with Agnes the tractor in front of its new home.



Cisco FFA Chapter



Agnes the tractor, driven by CECA Director of Member Services Doug Erwin, makes an entrance leading the tractor drive.



Kenneth Hagood, chairman, and Bill Works, lead volunteer of the Salvation Army, discuss the needs of the food pantry and the benefits the community will receive from the money raised during the drive.

In 2012, 27 percent of Texas families were below the poverty line, and a staggering 68.2 percent of Texas students qualified for free and reduced lunches, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. For a nation as caring and giving as the United States of America, these statistics are simply not acceptable.

“But what can we, as individuals, do about that?” you may ask. The answer is, “More than you think!” Early last summer, Comanche Electric Cooperative was given the opportunity to co-sponsor an event called “Tractor Drive 2013: Driving Hunger Out of Rural Texas.” The purpose of the drive was to raise awareness about rural hunger while teaming up with FFA chapters to obtain donations for local food pantries.

The event, underwritten by AgTexas Farm Credit, was to be a summerlong tractor drive in its 23-county market area. It included the seven counties within the CECA service territory, and the CECA Board of Directors quickly took up the challenge to participate.

“CECA’s service territory is predominantly rural and agricultural, so rural hunger is an issue that hits close to home,” said

General Manager Alan Lesley. “And since we enjoy opportunities to work with our local school districts, being able to work with the FFA chapters, also ag-related, was a bonus for us.”

The drive featured a John Deere 5045 tractor traveling from community to community as a visual aid to assist in obtaining donations. Local FFA chapters held fundraising events, with proceeds being credited to the food pantries in the county in which each was donated.

When CECA decided to join the cause, plans began to assist the chapters raise as much money for the pantries as possible. Hamburger and hot dog luncheons were planned, at each of CECA’s three offices. In addition, CECA applied for and received a \$5,000 grant from CoBank and matched that grant for a total donation of \$10,000, to be divided evenly among the participating FFA chapters.

As the day for the first luncheon neared, the Texas weather began to cool off, with rains predicted over much of the area. AgTexas brought in a tent to help keep participants dry, and backup plans were made in the event the weather became too intense to hold the event outdoors. But nature smiled on us as



Breckenridge FFA Chapter



Blanket FFA Chapter



Chad Alleva and Joe Bob Huddleston with AgTexas grill up some tasty burgers and hot dogs.



Gary Kafer, district director for state Rep. J.D. Sheffield, discusses hunger in Texas and the number of students on free and reduced-cost lunches.



The communities enjoyed a wonderful buffet of hamburgers and hot dogs served by CECA employees.

the weather held out all three days until the last moments of the final event.

The first event, held at the CECA office at 1311 W. Main St. in Eastland, was a cooperative effort among CECA and the FFA chapters in Breckenridge, Cisco and Eastland. The John Deere 5045 tractor, named Agnes, led the parade of a dozen tractors and trucks. Approximately 50 hamburgers were cooked, and \$352 was raised. Once CECA donated \$2,000 each to the credit of the three participating FFA chapters, the total donations for that area came to \$6,352.

The following day, CECA held the second of the drives at the Comanche office at 201 W. Wrights Ave. Seven tractors and several trucks participated in the parade to draw attention to the plight of rural hunger. Supporters consumed more than 200 hamburgers and hot dogs that day, with donations in the amount of \$1,535.70. With CECA's \$2,000 donation credited to the Comanche FFA fundraising, the total for that day was \$3,535.70.

The third and final drive was held at the Heartland Mall parking lot in Early. There was no actual tractor drive that day

due to a 70 percent chance of rain, cloudy skies and wind. While the threatening storm never completely developed, it was enough to hold the crowds back and \$661 was raised, with CECA adding \$2,000 to the Blanket FFA fundraiser for a total of \$2,661.

Total breakdown in numbers for the five FFA chapters in the CECA territory were:

- ▶ BRECKENRIDGE FFA: . . . \$19,493.00
- ▶ CISCO FFA: \$5,668.00
- ▶ BLANKET FFA: \$3,544.67
- ▶ COMANCHE FFA: \$3,535.70
- ▶ EASTLAND FFA: \$2,433.00
- ▶ TOTAL \$34,674.37

As of November 5, 2013, all participants in the AgTexas "Tractor Drive 2013: Driving Hunger Out of Rural Texas" had raised more than \$105,000. It is with great pride that CECA is able to announce that the five FFA chapters in its service territory raised over one-third of that total!

Congratulations to the Breckenridge FFA chapter, who won Agnes the tractor with more than \$200 per member donated.



NYULI THINKSTOCK

Keep your home and family safe by properly maintaining your fireplace.

Spruce up Your Fireplace

If you've used your fireplace much this winter, or if it has several winters of use, it might benefit from a facelift.

Here are some ideas for making your fireplace a glowing centerpiece of your house.

REPLACE YOUR MANTEL. You can order pre-cut mantels in any price range and in materials ranging from hardwood to marble to plaster. This is a weekend job for a handy do-it-yourselfer.

CLEAN YOUR FIREPLACE AND CHIMNEY. Wait at least a day after your last fire and shovel out the ash and unburned pieces of wood. Then sweep the interior of the fire box out. Make sure you use a metal bucket for gathering ashes in case an ember is still live.

Or, hire a chimney sweep and save yourself the trouble. Even if you're not burning wood in your old fireplace anymore, give it a good cleaning.

CLEAN THE BRICK OR STONE THAT SURROUNDS YOUR FIREPLACE. If the brick is sealed, most of the soot should scrub off with detergent and a cloth. Tougher stains might require a mixture of ammonia and water with a stiff-bristled brush. Test a small area first to make sure the brush doesn't damage the brick's surface and the solution doesn't discolor it. If your brick is unsealed or old, don't scrub it; instead, just sweep it.

REPLACE YOUR WOOD-BURNING FIREPLACE WITH AN ELECTRIC MODEL. You might feel some heat if you sit close to your wood-burning fireplace, but it's not producing enough heat to help your furnace keep the house warm. In fact, it's sucking your home's heated air right up the chimney. Consider converting that energy-inefficient fireplace to an electric version. If you haven't seen one in awhile, you'll be amazed by how realistic its "flames" look, thanks to technological advancements.

Statement of Nondiscrimination

Comanche Electric Cooperative is the recipient of federal financial assistance from the Rural Utilities Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and is subject to the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, and the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture which provide that no person in the United States on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, or disability shall be excluded from participation in, admission or access to, denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any of this organization's programs or activities.

The person responsible for coordinating this organization's nondiscrimination compliance efforts is the Human Resources Administrator. Any individual, or specific class of individuals, who feels that this organization has subjected them to discrimination may obtain further information about the statutes and regulations listed above from and/or file a written complaint. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call 1-800-795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Complaints must be filed within 180 days after the alleged discrimination. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible.



Happy New Year

FROM CECA

The directors and employees of CECA hope that 2014 brings peace, prosperity and happiness to all of our members.

As on all holidays, crews will be on standby in case of a power interruption. Call our outage hotline at 1-800-915-2533 if you need assistance.

Co-op Connections® Card



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Co-op Connections Featured Businesses

United Health Care

United Health Care is helping people live better lives through the services we offer. These services include Medicare information, Medicare plans, coordination with community and state benefits, Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage Part D, Medicare supplement and Medicare health plans.

We provide compassionate advice and products for a healthy future.

Contact Dawn at (325) 627-6918, or visit our website at unitedhealthcare.com.

HOURS: Monday-Saturday, 9 a.m.-6 p.m.

OFFER: Free calendar and pen

Hardin's BBQ

Nothing says "Texas" like a big plate of barbeque with all the fixin's. And Hardin's BBQ says it better than most. Nestled inside the Conoco Station, Hardin's BBQ features the best mesquite-smoked barbeque north of Interstate 20. So stop by and fill your fuel tank and your appetite all in one stop. We'll be looking for you!

LOCATED: 3300 E. I-20, Eastland

PHONE: (254) 629-1227

HOURS: Wednesday, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.; Thursday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-7 p.m.; Sunday 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

OFFER: Buy any plate, get 50 percent discount on the second plate.