

Service Is Our Goal



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER ALAN LESLEY

The primary goal of Comanche Electric Cooperative is to provide our members reliable, affordable electricity. We do this with a focus on service that comes from being locally owned and locally run.

Cooperatives—and other electric utilities not part of Texas’ deregulated electricity market—offer lower residential rates compared to those of deregulated investor-owned utilities, according to a recent study.

In the 2013 analysis, the Texas Coalition for Affordable Power, or TCAP, found that utilities exempt from deregulation consistently charge less for residential electricity than deregulated utilities.

“Despite the drop in deregulated prices, Texans in deregulated areas have continued to pay significantly higher residential rates, on average, than Texans living in areas exempt from deregulation,” the report said.

The TCAP study used data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration spanning the years 2002, the year Texas deregulation took effect, through 2012, the last year data was available. TCAP is an alliance of cities and other political subdivisions that purchase power for governmental use.

This finding certainly reflects the nature of electric cooperatives where service—not profit—is emphasized.

Because this co-op and others like it are owned by members like you and don’t need to make money for investors, we can focus on keeping electricity rates low. The prices we charge for power are set to cover costs, plus leave an emergency reserve. Anything left over when the financial year is through is put into a capital credits account and is eventually returned to you when the financial health of the co-op allows.

We are careful stewards of your money and are accountable directly to you, through the board of directors elected by and composed of members like you. At CECA there is no profit motive. The directors, management and employees work hard every day to give you the best possible service at the lowest possible cost. That’s the cooperative difference.



Don't Be a Target for Lightning

Lightning kills as many as 2,000 people worldwide every year. Hundreds more people are struck but survive, usually with lingering and debilitating symptoms. Here are some things you can do to avoid electrical storms or decrease your chances of getting struck.

Safety Tips

- ▶ If outside, seek refuge in a car or grounded building when lightning or thunder begins.
- ▶ If inside, avoid taking baths or showers, and washing dishes. Also avoid using landline phones, televisions and other appliances that conduct electricity. If your home’s electronics aren’t protected by a surge protector, it’s best to unplug them.
- ▶ Stay inside for 30 minutes after you last see lightning or hear thunder. People have been struck by lightning from storms centered as far as 10 miles away.
- ▶ If caught outside away from a building or car, stay clear of water bodies and tall objects such as trees. Find a low spot or depression and crouch down as low as possible, but don’t lie down on the ground. Lightning can move in and along the ground surface, and many victims are not struck by bolts, but by this current.



Whether it’s buying poles to extend a line or office supplies, every decision CECA makes is focused on providing the best service while holding the line on costs.



Scholarship Deadline

Each year, CECA offers four \$1,000 Scholarships for Excellence and two \$1,000 Operation Round Up Scholarships to students within the CECA territory. To qualify, the student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) must reside on CECA lines. The student can be a graduating senior or a student currently enrolled in a qualifying institution of higher learning. Deadline for applications is March 31. For applications or questions, call Shirley at 1-800-915-2533 or email sdukes@ceca.coop.



2014 Youth Tour Representatives Selected

Sam Seay of Clyde and Cy Tongate of Early have been selected to represent CECA on the 2014 Government-in-Action Youth Tour. Sam and Cy will travel to Washington, D.C., in June for a weeklong tour of the capital, where they will visit historic sites and learn the history of our great nation.

Sam is a junior at Clyde High School and the son of Jody and Duke Seay. Cy is a junior at Early High School and the son of James Tongate and Susan Sanders.

Please join us in congratulating these exceptional young men as they represent YOUR cooperative.



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

EARLY OFFICE

1801 CR 338
Early, TX 76801

EASTLAND OFFICE

1311 W. Main St.
Eastland, TX 76448

OFFICE HOURS

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

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

Eastland Office: Tuesday and Thursday 8 a.m. to 4 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

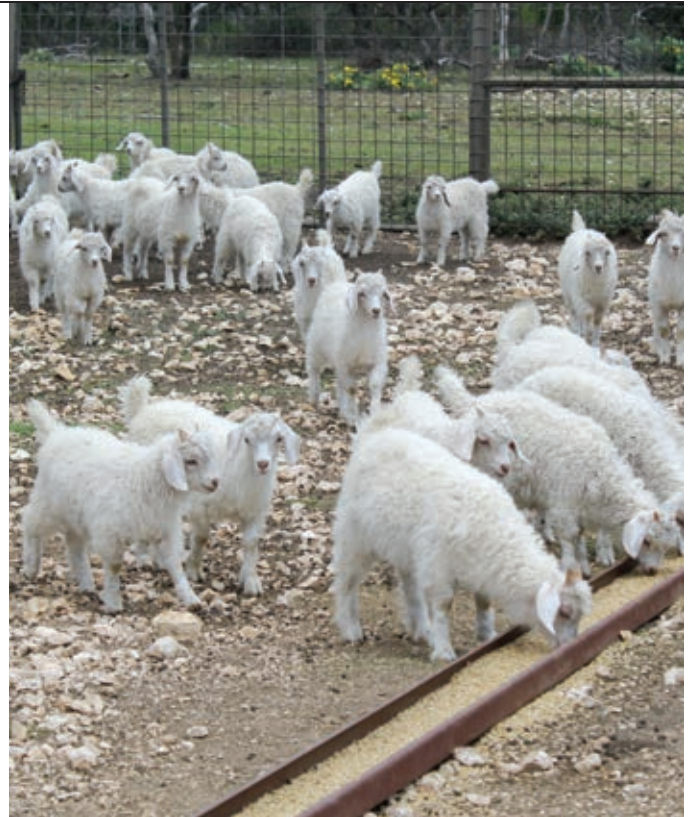
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Jule and LaNita Richmond with their angoras



Through Peaks and Valleys, Goat Rancher Perseveres

BY SHIRLEY DUKES

Approximately 2.5 million goats are used for meat, milk and mohair production in the United States, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In Texas, until the loss of the Wool Act in the early 1990s, that primarily involved the raising of angora goats, from which the textile fiber mohair is harvested.

Having always raised cattle, and never having any contact with goats or sheep, I know very little about the industry. While visiting with Jule Richmond of Blanket on a beautiful day this past spring, the conversation soon turned to a history of the goat industry and his family's involvement in that history. My interest was piqued, and it wasn't long before I was back on the family ranch asking questions and digging deeper into both the history of the angora goat industry and the legacy of the Richmond family business.

Richmond can't remember a time without goats. His dad and older brother leased a large portion of the hills around the Sidney area, and there were several thousand in each herd. Richmond began his own herd in 1969 at the age of 23. Shortly after, he made a major investment that left some seasoned ranchers shaking their heads in disbelief.

"A lot of high-quality goats came on the market, and I took advantage by investing in them," said Richmond. "I remember at that auction the average nannies were bringing \$2 to \$2.50 per head, but that high-quality herd came through, and I paid

\$3.90 per head. Everybody thought I had lost my mind."

That purchase turned out to be a positive move, as the industry soon changed direction toward goats producing a finer fleece.

Wool and mohair have a prominent place in Texas history. Angora goats originally entered the state after the Civil War, when livestock raisers began looking for increased profits from wool and mohair. In the early 1900s, the Texas Sheep and Goat Raisers Association, or TSGRA, was founded to further the interest of Texas wool and mohair producers. At that time, Texas was dominating the industry, producing 20 percent of the nation's wool and 90 percent of its mohair.

Both world wars affected the wool and mohair industry. A "Raise More Wool" campaign revived the Texas industry after several years of decline during World War I. During World War II, the need for wool and mohair as a fiber for the military prompted the creation of the Wool Act, which levied a tariff on all wool and woollen products and thus established an incentive for producers to continue improving the quality of their product entering the U.S, while providing a stabilizing mechanism for the industry.

During the 1980s, the industry suffered highs and lows, but the Wool Act was always there as a safety net, ensuring that producers continued profits. Then in 1993, under the direction of President Clinton, the Wool Act was phased out in an effort

to clean up wasteful spending.

“The frustrating part of it for us,” said Richmond, “was that the Wool Act didn’t use any tax dollars, only tariff dollars. So the act really had nothing to do with government savings.”

Richmond had been involved with the TSGRA since the early 1970s. He attributes much of his political involvement to his mentor, TSGRA Executive Director and State Sen. Bill Sims. Richmond was appointed to sit on the Livestock Protection Committee and eventually became its chairman. He later became the president of the TSGRA in 2000.

By the late 1990s, the wool and mohair industries were barely hanging on. At that time, Richmond had a six-year stockpile of mohair in a warehouse that he could not sell. Richmond’s dad had always told him to “never give up on the mohair industry. It will have downturns but it will always come back.” With his father’s belief in the industry, and the support of the TSGRA, Richmond managed to keep a positive focus during a very trying time.

That’s when Richmond, as an officer with TSGRA, suggested to other TSGRA officers that they consider getting back into the Farm Bill. His reasoning was that existing enabling legislation for a wool and mohair loan, which was enacted during the phaseout proceedings for the Wool Act, was never funded. This wool and mohair loan and a severe drought in the late ’90s that generated public sympathy for agriculture prompted the TSGRA officers to take on Washington.

The wool and mohair industry had the support of some influential Texas congressmen on the House Agriculture Committee: Chairman Larry Combest; Charlie Stenholm, the ranking minority member; and Henry Bonilla, who was chairman of the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee. At this point, TSGRA was poised to work toward inclusion in the 2001 Farm Bill.

The next big challenge was the need for research funding to justify the request to Congress. This need was initially met by a grant to the TSGRA for the wool and mohair producers, being facilitated by then-Texas Ag Commissioner Susan Combs.

Eventually this detailed involvement from TSGRA, the American Sheep Industry and the Texas agricultural commissioner. With very strong support from Texas congressmen on the House Agriculture Committee, the wool and mohair loan program became a part of the 2001 Farm Bill.

“Almost immediately, you started seeing stabilization coming back into the industry because at that point producers knew they could produce a product and could at least get enough guaranteed from the government to make ends meet,” Richmond said. “What will happen now with all the changes in the Farm Bill we don’t know, but the industry is alive and well again. No government support payments have been made to producers in a number of years.”

Today, Jule and his wife, LaNita, still live on the family ranch and continue to raise angora goats. Though he threatens on a regular basis to sell his stock and retire, his heart is just too invested in his animals to ever follow through on that threat.

“I’ve done this all my life, and it’s part of my family heritage. I love this industry, and I’m not sure I can give that up,” he said.



TOP: From left are Steve Salmon, Natural Resources chairman; Pierce Miller, past Texas Sheep and Goat Raisers Association president; Pat Jackson, TSGRA second vice president; then-U.S. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison; Glen Fisher, TSGRA first vice president; and Jule Richmond, TSGRA president.

MIDDLE: Charlie Torres from Eden shears goats while Jule Richmond’s granddaughters Brooklynn and Preslee look on. Torres is one of the few professionals still shearing in this part of the country.

BOTTOM: Jule Richmond, right, with his family during the spring goat shearing in 2012. From left are son Cade, daughter Wendy, wife LaNita and son Cody.

CECA Branch Offices Get New Hours

Based on a recent member survey and in conjunction with an inventory of local traffic, CECA is adjusting the days that the Early and Eastland offices will open. This decision was not made lightly, but it was done with thought and consideration for our members. The deciding factors included increasing operating costs and decreasing member traffic, along with the fact that CECA offers members a wide variety of alternate ways to pay their bills.

For example, processing payments that are mailed in costs about 20 cents per item, while the cost-per-transaction associated with keeping the branch offices open was averaging more than \$10. Based on these figures and the survey results, the CECA Board of Directors and staff have determined that operating and maintaining full-time front office personnel at these locations primarily for payment transactions is cost-prohibitive.

Beginning March 1, 2014, the Western Division office at 1801 CR 338 in Early will be open from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and will be closed from 1 to 2 p.m. for lunch. The Northern Division office, 1311 W. Main St. in Eastland, will be open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The corporate office at 201 W. Wrights Ave. in Comanche will remain open from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Mondays through Fridays.

The maintenance and construction personnel who are housed at the Eastland location will continue to operate from that facility.

Members in the branch locations will still be able to drive in or walk in to their respective offices on the designated days to pay bills, fill out paperwork and make other requests. In addition, a variety of payment options are available, including:

- ▶ Payment by mail at 201 W. Wrights Ave., Comanche TX 76442
- ▶ Payment by phone at 1-800-915-2533
- ▶ Online payments at ceca.coop
- ▶ Mobile payments that can be made after downloading the mobile app to your iPhone or Android

CECA will endeavor to make this process go smoothly with as little disruption to your routines as possible. We ask for your understanding and patience as we make this transition in an effort to keep our rates as affordable as possible.

If you have questions, please call 1-800-915-2533.



Jenny Parker is CECA's new customer service representative assisting members at the Eastland and Early offices.



Spring Forward

Daylight Saving Time begins at 2 a.m. on Sunday, March 9.

Remember to set your clocks ahead one hour when you go to bed Saturday.

EWAPIX | ISTOCK | THINKSTOCK



Did You Know?

Line Loss

Line loss is electricity that is generated but never reaches the end user. There are several reasons for line loss, including resistance in transmission lines and the process of increasing voltage for long-distance transmission then decreasing it for end-user consumption.

New Phone App

With CECA's new mobile apps for iPhones, iPads and Androids, you can manage your account anywhere you can make an Internet connection. You can view your bills and make payments, check your usage and payment history, report outages, and sign up for alerts and reminders.

To download the app, go to your app store and type in Comanche Electric Cooperative. Downloading is easy, and the app is free.

You will need to have your CECA online account, username and password handy. If you don't already have one, call our office at 1-800-915-2533, and a temporary one will be issued to you.

For questions concerning the app or any other CECA issue, call 1-800-915-2533.

And while you are at it, why not go ahead and sign up for paperless billing? It clears clutter out of your mailbox (and off your desk), and helps save our natural resources at the same time. And, it saves your cooperative time and expense, helping to keep your electric rates affordable. Afraid you will need one of those bills at some time? No problem—you can print bills anytime you need them from our CECA website.



CECA's new mobile apps help you manage your account on the go.

CECA To Update Metering System

In an effort to update and streamline our metering process and better serve our members, CECA will soon begin the long process of updating our current metering system to a newer and improved system.

CECA has entered into a contract with Texas Meter Device, or TMD, an experienced electric system installation service out of Waco. Over the next 12 to 13 months, you are likely to see these crews in your area from time to time. Each vehicle representing TMD should have a sign visibly displayed on it identifying workers as CECA contractors.

All meters on the CECA system must be changed. Therefore each meter location in our service territory will be visited by TMD at some time. As the project progresses, we will do our best to inform you when we will be in your area.

Should you have any questions or concerns in relation to this project, you can call CECA's metering department at 1-800-915-2533.



Co-op Connections Featured Businesses

CJ's Diner

Located on the northwest corner of the Comanche Courthouse Square, CJ's offers a full menu of classic Texana dishes, all served in a friendly atmosphere, featuring homemade pies and real homestyle cooking. Original hardwood flooring and collectible decorations create a setting that is unmatched in Central Texas. A full menu and an excellent noon buffet are served from 5:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 6:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. A separate dining room is available for private parties, special occasions and meetings.

LOCATED: 135 W. Grand Ave., Comanche

PHONE: (325) 356-5330

HOURS: Monday- Friday, 5:30 a.m.-2 p.m., Saturday- Sunday, 6:30 a.m.-2 p.m.

OFFER: Free tea with buffet on Monday

Carstens Motor Co.

If you are looking to buy a new or used Buick, Cadillac or Chevrolet, look no farther. Carstens Motor Co. has a wide selection of new and used vehicles. They can also assist you with any service and parts, including engine repairs and bodywork, and help you with financing on your new mode of transportation.

LOCATED: 601 W. Walker St., Breckenridge

PHONE: (254) 559-2266

HOURS: Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Saturday 9 a.m.-noon

EMAIL: wes_king@att.net

OFFER: Preferred pricing discount on any new vehicle purchase