

The New Generation of Co-op Members



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER/CEO JERRY BOZE

WHILE MANY URBAN Americans enjoyed the comforts of household electricity in the early 1930s, much of the United States had not yet experienced this luxury. Still in need of power were the country's rural farmlands, where privately owned utility companies determined it was not cost-effective to provide electricity.

Fortunately, President Franklin Roosevelt had a plan. In 1935, the Rural Electrification Administration was established as part of the New Deal, allowing farmers and ranchers to borrow money from the federal government to form local, consumer-owned electric cooperatives, owned and operated by the determined and hardworking people who created them. These men and women worked to bring electricity to rural America not only for their own benefit but also for the benefit of their friends and neighbors.

The establishment of electric cooperatives transformed rural America. Farmers could work more efficiently, bringing higher profit in the long run. Parents cooked more easily on electric stoves; children studied longer under the glow of light bulbs; and farm families' lives were forever changed.

Thanks to the men and women who worked together to energize rural America, there are now more than 900 electric cooperatives providing electricity across the nation. Each one operates with the same goal: to provide the greatest service to members at the lowest possible cost and enhance members' quality of life.

Electric cooperatives are tasked with the job of serving members 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. To do this effectively, it is imperative that co-op employees adapt to the ever-changing needs of members. Demographics have shifted over the years. Co-op memberships span from generations of members who might have played a role in founding the cooperative to younger generations raising kids.

To better serve all our members, Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative employees are adjusting how we communicate. The convenience of smartphones and apps means we can provide instant access to information. Like cooperatives across the country, we are adopting new technologies to help provide this kind of instant access for those who wish to use it.

By working to meet demands for instant information, we've found opportunities to communicate with members whom we might never have reached in the past. With the ability to access account and usage information from computers and mobile devices, tech-savvy members have more control over electricity usage than ever before.

Yet we continue to offer the same member services we've always had. Members are still welcome to stop by the office to visit with a member services representative about their service or pay their electric bill, if they wish. Those who stop by always will be greeted by a smiling face.

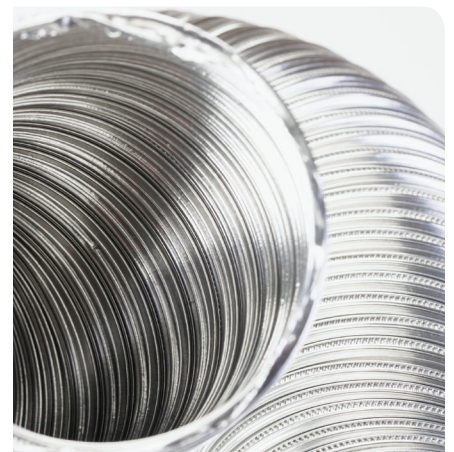
At TVEC, our members are our top priority. We remember why our co-op was started so many years ago, and we strive to maintain a relationship with every one of our members, from every generation. Upholding the values of the men and women who founded the cooperative, we can live up to our mission statement, to "deliver safe and reliable electricity at a competitive price, with a strong emphasis on member service, community and sound business practices."



Happy Independence Day

Trinity Valley Electric Co-op will be closed July 4. Crews will be on-call for any outages or emergencies.

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Power Tip

Periodically inspect your dryer vent to ensure that it is not blocked. This will save energy and could prevent a fire. Manufacturers recommend using rigid venting material—not plastic vents that may collapse and cause blockages.

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Enjoy Water Safely

SINCE 1990, THERE HAVE BEEN 60 electrocutions and nearly 50 serious electrical shocks involving electrical hazards in and around swimming pools in the U.S., reports the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Heed these pool and spa safety tips to swim safely and enjoy the water wisely.

- ▶ All outdoor electrical receptacles should be covered to keep them dry. This is especially important around pools, spas and summer water activities.

- ▶ Use a ground-fault circuit interrupter for electrical devices used outside to help prevent electrocutions and electric shock injuries. Portable GFCIs require no tools to install and are available for \$12–\$30.

- ▶ Make sure all electrical equipment used for swimming pools (even the cleaning equipment) is grounded.

- ▶ Electrical devices and cords should be kept at least 10 feet away from water sources such as pools and spas. When possible, use battery-operated electrical devices outside.

- ▶ Never handle electrical devices when you are wet—either from water activities or perspiration.

- ▶ To avoid electric shock drowning, have an electrician inspect and upgrade your pool, spa or hot tub to see that it's in accordance with applicable local codes and the National Electrical Code.

Avoid Circuit Overload

WITH SO MANY ELECTRICAL DEVICES in every room of the home, there's a possibility you're overloading your circuits.

That means that either you're plugging too many devices into a single outlet via a power strip or you're plugging in devices that require more power than your home's wiring can handle.

If your circuits are overloaded, it's time to call a licensed electrician to upgrade your electrical system so it can keep up with the demands that new technology places on it.

Here's how to tell if your home's circuits are overloaded, according to the Electrical Safety Foundation International:

- ▶ Lights are flickering, blinking or dimming.
- ▶ Electrical receptacles on the walls are warm to the touch or have become discolored.
- ▶ You smell a burning odor coming from receptacles or wall switches.
- ▶ Circuits trip on a regular basis, especially when you turn on "this" appliance at the same time as "that" one.

Here's how to prevent overload from happening:

- ▶ Do not plug large appliances into extension cords or power strips. They each need an outlet all to themselves.
- ▶ Get rid of extension cords. They're meant for temporary use—not permanent. Don't rig up year-round devices, like lamps or TVs, to extension cords.
- ▶ Notice how many extension cords you use. If it's a lot, that could signal that you don't have enough outlets. An electrician can add more.
- ▶ Don't mistake a power strip for extra juice. It doesn't make more electricity available; all a power strip does is allow you to plug more devices into a single outlet—and doing so can overload that outlet.



Texas Division of Emergency Management

Hurricane Preparedness Guidelines

Preparing for Hurricane Season: June 1- Nov. 30



Residents of Texas Gulf Coast **EVACUATION ZONES** should **BEGIN NOW** by making an evacuation plan, preparing an emergency kit and learning evacuation routes well in advance.

If you have a disability or medical needs, register in the State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry (STEAR) online at <https://STEAR.dps.texas.gov> or by dialing 2-1-1. Gulf coast residents with additional needs (including those who are disabled or medically fragile) who live in evacuation zones and do not have friends or family to help in an evacuation should register in advance online at <https://STEAR.dps.texas.gov> or by dialing 2-1-1. Registration should be completed in advance of an emergency event. DO NOT WAIT, REGISTER NOW! Information collected is confidential.

If you need transportation, register in the State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry (STEAR) online at <https://STEAR.dps.texas.gov> or by dialing 2-1-1. If you do not have a car or other vehicle, and you cannot get a ride with friends, neighbors or family, register **IN ADVANCE** for assisted transportation by dialing 2-1-1.

Evacuation zone information: If you are interested in registering and you want to find out whether you are living in an evacuation zone, dial **2-1-1** for information.

Hurricane Preparedness tips online:

Texas Division of Emergency Management Website: www.dps.texas.gov/dem

FEMA Website: www.Ready.gov

American Red Cross Website: www.redcross.org



TVEC Goes International

Linemen take 'Cooperation Among Cooperatives' out of the country

Over the course of the last century, the co-op model has proved to be a successful and cost-effective way of providing electrical service to rural areas in the United States. With the help of American cooperatives, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association has been taking life-changing access to electricity to developing countries.

As part of that effort, three Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative linemen spent three weeks in Haiti, a country still trying to recover from a major 2010 earthquake and routinely ranked

among the world's poorest.

After a few days of working through language barriers and proving themselves to the local lineworkers, Josh Lathem, Adam Wolking and Zach Pollett started to put their knowledge and expertise to work in a big way.

"Their most senior guy has four years of experience ... that is how long the project has been there," Lathem said. "We have a little more than 30 years of experience between us, so there was just a lot that we were able to do and to show them."

The NRECA project, called Pilot Project for Sustainable Electricity Distribution, serves some 7,000 members, and is one of the few places in Haiti to have electricity 24 hours a day. Power comes from a diesel-fueled generation plant located in a nearby industrial park that houses manufacturing facilities.

Outside the plant, the availability of electricity is changing lives in similar ways to rural electrification in the United States in the 1930s.

"Linemen over there are like rock stars; they are the ones that come and turn the lights on," Lathem said. "It was amazing to watch them unload off a truck, getting hi-fives from the adults and kids running over. It gathers a crowd and you might have 50 people watching you work."



TVCC-Terrell Phi Theta Kappa members collected hygiene items for delivery to Haiti.

While the working conditions and availability of supplies created a few challenges, the overall construction techniques and methods were similar enough that the three Texas linemen could fit right into the crew.

“Being on an island, they sometimes have to wait weeks or even months for supplies,” Wolking said. “They work on things based on what they have available, maybe putting up the poles but then not coming back to add the wires for weeks



because they don't have it. But that makes them efficient ... they measure out exactly what you ought to need, and there is absolutely no waste.”

The crew helped lead two major projects, including the addition of service to a well pump for fresh water that has been installed but unusable for years.

Adding their muscle to the effort was helpful, but the biggest impact may come from helping to educate the local lineworkers. Sharing tips and techniques on job sites led to the TVEC crew spending several hours of their last day teaching an impromptu basic electricity class for most of the local workers.

“They don't have much, and it is hard to get anything on the island,” Pollett said. “But they had the desire to learn as much as they could, it was just amazing.”

Along with their expertise and hard work, Pollett, Wolking and Lathem also took along some gifts: three large bags of personal hygiene items donated by Trinity Valley Community College-Terrell students through the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society. Lathem noted that, while items like soap, deodorant and toothpaste are available, the cost is out of reach for many Haitians, who make average about \$5 per day.

“The way everything has to be imported, something like deodorant can be \$20,” he said. “When I opened one of the bags up to show the head lineman, he sat down and nearly cried. We let him distribute one bag to his guys and it was a really big thing for them.”

Of course the impact went both ways, with the TVEC crew picking up some new words, new experiences and a new perspective on modern life as we know it.

“The whole trip, just being able to help people and building lines to places that never had electricity ... Seeing how people respond to that gives you a whole new outlook,” Wolking said. “For them it is a step to a better future, and that is an experience that is hard to put into words. Unless you've done that, it is hard to explain.”

“You can't come back the same person,” Lathem said. “I've always thanked God that I was born in America. Now we got the opportunity to go and use the talents and abilities that God blessed us with over there. When you meet people's needs, you have changed lives, and your life has been changed.”

For more information on NRECA international projects, visit nrecainternational.coop.



Linemen Josh Lathem, Zach Pollett and Adam Wolking pose for a group photo with their lineworker crew in Haiti.

SAVE THE DATE!

TVEC ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

OCTOBER 12, 2017 • REGISTRATION AT 6 P.M.

CANTON CIVIC CENTER • CANTON, TEXAS

Watch for the official notice and ballot for director elections in the September issue of *Texas Co-op Power*.

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Seal Ducts Save Dough

IN HOUSES WITH FORCED-AIR heating and cooling systems, ducts are used to distribute conditioned air throughout the house. In a typical house, however, 20–30 percent of the air that moves through the duct system is lost through leaks, holes and poorly connected ducts. The result is a higher utility bill and difficulty keeping the house comfortable, no matter how the thermostat is set.

How do you know that your home has poorly performing ducts?

- ▶ You have high summer and winter utility bills.
- ▶ You have rooms that are difficult to heat and cool.
- ▶ You have stuffy rooms that never seem to feel comfortable.
- ▶ Your ducts run through an attic, crawl space or garage.
- ▶ You find tangled or kinked flexible ducts in your system.



Sealing cracks and ducts can save you a bundle and keep your house cool and comfortable.

A duct system that is well designed and properly sealed can make your home more comfortable, energy efficient and safe.

Because ducts are usually concealed behind walls, floors or ceilings, repairing them can be difficult, but there are worthwhile improvements you can make.

Some homeowners choose to take on duct sealing as a do-it-yourself project. Start by sealing air leaks using mastic sealant or metal tape and insulating all the ducts that you can access. Despite its name, never use duct tape because it is not long-lasting.

Also, make sure that the connections at vents and registers are well sealed where they meet the floors, walls and ceiling. These are common places to find leaks and disconnected ductwork.

Many homeowners choose to work with a professional contractor for duct improvement projects. Most heating and cooling equipment contractors also repair ductwork.

Win \$25 Just for Reading

Somewhere, hidden on Pages 18-23, is a TVEC account number. Read closely. If the account number is yours, contact the Member Services Department by July 31 to receive a \$25 credit on your electric bill. Don't miss out—you could be a winner.



TRINITY VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Operating in Anderson, Dallas, Henderson, Hunt, Kaufman and Van Zandt counties

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582 N. Fourth St., Wills Point

Lobby Hours

Monday-Friday-8:15 a.m.-4:45 p.m.



Contact Us

For information during office hours and outages after hours

CALL US

(972) 932-2214 local or
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FIND US ON THE WEB AT
tvec.net

Operation Round Up
SPOTLIGHT
Your donations are
making a difference!

Adoptions Add Up at HSCCL

Many people consider their pets as part of the family, but for the staff and volunteers who operate the Humane Society of Cedar Creek Lake, it is the lost and stray animals in Kaufman and Henderson Counties that are made to feel at home. The facility, located in Tool, receives dogs and cats picked up by county animal services departments and surrendered by individuals.

"We want to help as many animals as we can, whether reuniting them with their owners or getting them adopted to a new home," said HSCCL Operations Manager Theresa Henderson. "We see so many come in with malnutrition and deteriorating health ... Thankfully, we have been more successful over the last year by using Facebook and doing a lot of adoption events."

The organization does not receive any outside funding from state or government programs, putting its success in the hands of the area community that benefits from the service it provides. That means a constant need for awareness, volunteer workers and donations.

"There is no outside funding whatsoever, so donations like this really help us," said Lanette Ainsworth, who serves as the president of the HSCCL Board of Directors. "The safety of the public and getting the animals off the streets is a real service to the community. The shelter has struggled and has been underfunded for many years, but it is nice to see that we are now stable and able to make sure the animals are healthy and ready to adopt."

For families looking for a pet, the \$100 adoption fee, which covers up-to-date vaccinations and spay or neuter procedures can be a real bargain.

Adoption fees and donations may cover some operational costs, but volunteer workers really make a difference.

"We could always use more volunteers," Ainsworth said. "We average 85 adoptions per month, and a lot of that is from taking these animals out to adoption events every weekend. As we are able to get out into the public and raise awareness, that makes a huge difference, and volunteers make that possible."

For more information visit the organization's website, hsccl.org, or find them on Facebook.



**Humane Society of
Cedar Creek Lake**
\$1,500

THE TVEC CHARITABLE FOUNDATION recently awarded six grants totaling \$18,000. Recipients of the grants include:

Hunt County Kids
\$3,000

Hunt County Kids in Quinlan provides backpacks and school supplies for children in need, as well as summer educational opportunities and food support.

Friends of Riter Hulsey Library
\$2,000

The Riter Hulsey Library in Terrell hosts more than 3,500 attendees for a 10-week summer reading program.

Forney Arts Council
\$3,000

The Forney Arts Council hosts art-based educational opportunities, public events and contests, as well as two scholarships for high school seniors entering arts-related programs.

East Texas Crisis Center
\$3,500

Athens-based ETCC provides safety, shelter and education to victims of family violence.

Kaufman Senior Connect
\$5,000

Organized in 1979, Senior Connect offers services to increase quality of life for citizens aged 60 and above. The Meals on Wheels program and food service at senior center locations provided almost 200,000 meals in 2016.

Founded in 2013, the TVEC Charitable Foundation is an independent, nonprofit organization. The foundation was created to serve the community and help improve the quality of life for residents in our service area. **The foundation is funded entirely by donations from TVEC members who participate in Operation Round Up.** For more information, please call 1-800-766-9576 or visit tvec.net.