

Looking Ahead With New Communication Efforts to Connect the Co-op Community



MESSAGE FROM
GENERAL MANAGER/CEO JERRY BOZE

Historically, electrification of the large rural swaths of the United States is one of the great triumphs of the 20th century.

The same “Greatest Generation”

that won World War II would also lead the way in bringing the benefits of electric service to the countryside and make possible the great quality of life we enjoy in the TVEC service area today.

Just as electricity revolutionized rural living in 1930s and '40s, instant digital communication and social networks have changed the way we interact with each other and raised expectations for how we communicate within our growing co-op community. I would like to tell you a little bit about how we are working to meet the challenge of keeping multiple generations of TVEC members informed and up-to-date.

We are putting a new emphasis on using our digital resources in ways that best serve you. Increased responsiveness on social media platforms, especially during storm events, will give you more information about the power situation in your area.

We are also utilizing other new media channels like YouTube, Twitter and Instagram to show you more of what goes

on here at the co-op. As a membership organization, co-ops are fundamentally different from for-profit utilities. We want you to see how that difference works to your benefit.

In both digital and print outlets, we are incorporating more local stories and content that matters to members. For example, you will see more coverage of the TVEC area in these local pages of *Texas Co-op Power*, and a new place for local content on TexasCoopPower.com.

We are also exploring updates for our website that will make it easier to navigate and utilize tools for alerts, outage information and paying bills.

Technology has made us more connected than ever, but that has not changed the basic co-op commitment to serve the needs of the membership. As we try to keep you informed, you can help us by being involved in the co-op and giving us feedback.

If you haven't already, come like our Facebook page and follow along on Twitter. Let us know what kinds of stories and features you like to hear about.

The pioneers of rural electricity built the lines that power the rural lifestyle as we know it today. But it is only by hearing from TVEC members that we know how best to serve you as we move into the future.

How Does Your HVAC Flow?

YOUR HVAC SYSTEM plays a key role in your comfort, so keeping it in tiptop shape is important.

The connections at vents and registers in your heating, ventilation and air-conditioning system are common spots for air leaks and disconnected ductwork. Make sure these areas are well sealed where they meet floors, walls and the ceiling.

Sealing and insulating ducts can help with common comfort problems, such as rooms that are too hot in the summer or too cold in the winter.

Leaky ducts can reduce heating and

cooling system efficiency by as much as 20 percent. Sealing and insulating ducts increases efficiency, lowers your energy bills and can often pay for itself in electricity savings.

Clean the area around the outdoor components of your HVAC system.

As the seasons change, it's a good idea to have a professional inspect and tune up the HVAC system.

Don't forget to change air filters regularly. Dirty filters lower efficiency and increase the cost of operating your HVAC system.



Hire a professional to get your HVAC system ready for summer.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH



Raspberry Shortbread Thumbprints

¾ cup sugar
1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened
½ teaspoon almond extract
2 cups all-purpose flour
½ cup raspberry jam

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. In a large mixing bowl, combine sugar, butter and almond extract. Beat at medium speed 2–3 minutes, scraping bowl often, until creamy. Reduce speed to low, add flour and beat 2–3 minutes more, scraping bowl often, until well-mixed.
3. Shape dough into 1-inch balls. Place 2 inches apart on an ungreased cookie sheet. With thumb, make an indentation in the center of each cookie (edges may crack slightly). Fill each indentation with about ¼ teaspoon jam.
4. Bake 14–18 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Let stand 1 minute, then remove from cookie sheet.

A version of this recipe was a winner in the *Cookie Swap* recipe contest for November 2008. Submit your spicy recipes for this month's *Some Like It Hot* contest to *Texas Co-op Power* by March 10 for a chance to win \$100 and be published. Visit texascooppower.com/contests.

Find this and more delicious recipes online at
TEXASCOOPPOWER.COM

Give Your Electric Bill a Vacation, Too

TAKING SOME MUCH-NEEDED TIME AWAY during spring break can be expensive. A great way to save money is to give your electric bills a vacation, too. There are several steps you can take to trim your electricity usage while you're away:

Unplug some of your household appliances. Your house has many items that always use electricity when they're plugged in, even when turned off. Unplugging these items not only saves energy but also can prevent fires during your absence. Some of the more common items are: TVs, DVD players, cable TV boxes, microwave ovens, toasters and other small kitchen appliances.

Adjust the refrigerator control to a warmer setting. The fridge can be set as high as 40 degrees without spoiling food; the freezer can be set at 5 degrees. On these settings, you can conserve up to 40 percent of the refrigerator's electric usage.

Set the thermostat higher (or lower) than the typical comfort level. In warmer weather, you can shut off the air conditioner during your absence, or at least consider setting it to a higher-than-normal temperature, 80 degrees or above.

If it's still cold out, you should consider lowering your thermostat but to no lower than 55 degrees. Typically, you can save 10–30 percent on heating costs by doing this.

Turn down the water heater. A large percentage of the cost of running a water heater comes from just keeping the water at the selected temperature.



Headed out on spring break? Set the thermostat temperature higher than usual to give your electric bill a break.

If you are going on a lengthy trip, turn down the temperature to the lowest setting. This can save you up to \$10 a month.

Consider using timers to turn lights on and off every night. Timers can save energy and also give an appearance that someone is home. For the lights that will be on the longest—inside and outside—use CFL or LED bulbs. These use at least 75 percent less power than traditional bulbs and last longer.

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 March 31 to receive a \$25 credit on your electric bill. Don't miss out—you could be a winner.



TVEC Safety Demo Brings Classroom Lessons to Life



Martins Mill ISD students watch Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative's Chris Walker demonstrate the dangers of a downed electrical wire January 18.

Fiery flashes, pops and sizzles, and sometimes even a whiff of burning fabric tend to hold an audience's attention during Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative's electric arcing and safety demonstration. For an enterprising educator, however, that lesson is just a starting point for numerous lessons and discussions with students.

"I have been teaching physics for 15 years, and I remembered a presentation like this from when I was a student," said Winfield Munns, a teacher at Martins Mill High School. "We are dealing with DC and AC electricity in class, and I wanted them to see that ... they have front row seats to something they may remember for the rest of their lives."

While large electrical arcs tend to steal the show during the demo, Munns took the less obvious educational aspects back to his students to reinforce the hands-on learning in the classroom.

"We set up circuits, we talk about transformers, getting into the details of how a circuit is set up and talking about it," he said. "I think anyone who teaches any kind of physics and science, you could even tie it into chemistry, there are a whole lot of topics that can be tied back to electricity."

Munns' approach is certainly working. He also heads up the school's robotics program, which in December took top state awards in the 2016 Texas Best and UIL State Championship event. The team's agricultural robot won "Most Elegant" and "Top Gun" awards, as well as first place in the Texas Instruments Game Competition. 60151678001

The team's overall performance earned them the title as first ever UIL Group 1 Robotics Champion, competing against schools of all sizes from around the state.

"This ties it all together ... why things happen, why something gets shocked," Munns said. "For them to come in and hear the terminology that we have been using is good. I thought the demo was excellent and the presenters did a fantastic job."

For information about available educational and safety demonstrations from TVEC, contact Public Relations Manager Bobbi Byford at (469) 376-2234 or bobbi@tvec.coop.



TVEC employees Paul Camacho and Anibal Zarate (top photo) and Chris Walker answer questions for physics teacher Winfield Munns and his students after the arcing demonstration.

Put a Lid on It: Metal Roofing

WHETHER YOU'RE REPLACING

your home's roof or choosing one for a new structure, the decision is complicated, with long-term considerations. Metal is one option that's a cut above the rest.

Metal roofs are becoming a signature of expensive, high-end homebuilders. They cost more to install than shingle roofs, but the price difference is not as pronounced when reroofing. Metal roofs can be applied over several layers of old shingles, so tear-off expenses are eliminated. If you like a tile or slate look, the lighter-weight metal will not require roof reinforcement.

Metal roofing offers many advantages: long life, fire resistance, energy efficiency, and a long-lasting, attractive appearance. Installing a metal roof can lower air-conditioning costs and improve indoor comfort.

The main drawback to metal roofing is its higher initial cost. Considering that you likely will never have to replace it, the cost of a metal roof measured across its entire life cycle is reasonable, especially compared with other materials.

Material Choices

The most common metal roofing materials are aluminum (often recycled from beverage cans), copper and steel. Aluminum and steel are strong enough to handle the weight of a person carefully walking on the roof. Copper and stainless steel are more durable, but their cost is often outside the budgets of many homeowners.

Aluminum is an excellent material because it can easily be formed to simulate tiles, slate or cedar shakes. Aluminum doesn't rust, so if there is an imperfection in the paint or it gets scratched, durability is not affected. Its irregular surface dampens or eliminates noise from raindrops.



Metal roofing is more expensive, but the energy savings and fire-resistant qualities can make it worth the investment.

Aluminum and copper roofing are particularly popular because of their efficiency and high content of recycled material. The materials naturally form a protective oxide coating to inhibit corrosion.

Thickness and Weight

All types of metal roofing are relatively lightweight, aluminum being the lightest. As for thickness of the materials, it is not necessarily important to install the heaviest-gauge metal roofing. Your roofing contractor can advise you on what thickness is best for your house.

Treatments

Steel roofing base materials are coated with a zinc compound to retard rust. Like aluminum roofs, most are painted with tough resin-based paint. For the most authentic appearance, some include real stone granules in the final stage of a 10-coat process.

Powder-coated resin paint, applied

after the panels are formed, is the most durable and attractive. Standing seam roofing is ideal on contemporary homes, and simulated tiles create a "Western-style" appearance.

Advantages

The Florida Solar Energy Center built test homes with various types of roofs. In 90-degree weather, the attic temperature with a simulated cedar shake, aluminum roof was almost 30 degrees cooler than one with traditional asphalt shingles. A difference like this can mean a whopping 33 percent less cooling load on your air-conditioning system.

Another advantage of metal roofs is they are fireproof. Fires are often spread from house to house by glowing embers carried on the wind to ignite other rooftops. If embers settle on a metal roof, however, they will not start a fire.

A house with a metal roof might be eligible for a discount on your homeowner insurance policy.

Stay Alive After Storms

IN TEXAS, STORM SEASON STARTS EARLY and stays late, so Texans need to know how to avoid the deadly hazards that severe storms can leave in their wake.

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

If the power goes out, you might need to use alternate means to power appliances for light, heat or cooking. Gas-powered devices can pose hazards if not used safely. Make sure portable generators are installed according to the co-op's safety specifications. Use generators, grills and camp stoves outside the house and garage, at least 20 feet

away from windows, doors and vents.



Even in good weather, grills and camp stoves should only be used outdoors.

Electrocution

Severe weather can snap electric lines and break poles, leaving live electric wires down where you or family members could be in danger of touching them. Power lines can carry enough voltage to injure and even kill, so exercise extreme caution around them if you must venture outside.

Never assume that a line isn't "live" just because it doesn't throw sparks, pop or hiss. Stay away from all downed wires and whatever they are touching, including water or wet items.

Closer to home, make sure the electrical cords and

cables you use with portable generators are undamaged and in good repair. Keep all cords away from puddles and sources of water.

Storms also can bring flooding that affects the inside of your home. Avoid standing water that covers electric outlets or is in contact with electrical equipment. Don't operate electric appliances and equipment that are in water or have been underwater. Dry them out and have a qualified technician clear them for use first.

House Fires

You might be tempted to light candles for light if the power goes out. Place candles on stable, flat surfaces, out of traffic areas and away from the reach of children. Better yet, use flashlights and battery-powered lanterns instead.

Gas Explosions

Storms can damage or swamp gas lines easily. If you smell or hear gas leaking, don't use electrical equipment—including landline phones—or switch lights on or off. Before you use a gas appliance or gas cylinder that has been underwater, have a professional check it for damage and leaks.



TRINITY VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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

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For information during office hours and outages after hours

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Volunteer Advocates Make the Case for Kids

Operation Round Up
SPOTLIGHT
 Your donations are making a difference!

From food and clothing assistance to educational and community programs, most charitable organizations fill physical or social needs that are easy to grasp.

For the volunteers of CASA, Court Appointed Special Advocates, there is a harsher reality that must be dealt with—a growing demand for assistance with abused and neglected children.

“I think we are remarkable because we serve a rural area, primarily Anderson, Henderson and Cherokee Counties, but we are ranked sixth in the state by number of children served each year,” said CASA of Trinity Valley Executive Director Emily Heglund. “The top five are Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, Fort Worth and Austin, then there is us. Last year we were at 789 children, and we are seeing a 5-7 percent increase year over year of children coming into foster care. The need is astounding.”

CASA volunteers spend an average of 8-10 hours each month getting to know the individual situations and needs of each child, then acting as an independent advocate for the child’s best interests in the court system.

While some funding comes through state and federal programs, local donations are key to recruiting and training efforts for the volunteers.

“There is no way we could do what we do without the support of our local community,” Heglund said. “As with any 501(c)(3), there is a portion of funding we have to raise ourselves, and we are so grateful that we have the support in this region.”

For more information about CASA and volunteering in your area, visit texascasa.org.



CASA of Trinity Valley—\$3,000

CASA of Trinity Valley Executive Director Emily Heglund, left, receives a grant check from TVEC Public Relations Representative Kari Wilmeth.



Lake Area Shared Ministries \$5,000

Lake Area Shared Ministries provides food for people in need and utility payment assistance. Pictured are Gary Cannon and Joy Long. lakeareasharedministries.org



Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas \$1,000

GSNET serves more than 26,600 girls with learning and leadership opportunities. Pictured are Joy Long and Brenda Rozinsky. gsnetx.org



The King's Storehouse \$5,000

The King's Storehouse distributes food to charities throughout east Texas. Pictured are, from left, Bobbi Byford, Robert Taylor, Bryan Campbell and Elaine Estridge. kingsstorehouse.org

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.