



MESSAGE
FROM
GENERAL
MANAGER/
CEO

JEFF LANE

We're Thankful for Your Membership

AUTHOR WILLIAM ARTHUR WARD once said, "Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it."

In the spirit of those wise words, I'd like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for your membership in our cooperative. Because of your connection to Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative, we're able to make our community a better place.

I typically use this space to provide updates on new projects and developments and report on the progress of ongoing initiatives. We share these updates so that our members have a window into our priorities, progress and challenges.

However, during this season of giving thanks, I think it's equally important to let you and other members of TVEC know the impact you have on our co-op and the greater community, likely in ways you may not even realize.



TVEC's annual membership meeting provides a yearly opportunity for members from across the TVEC service territory to enjoy the bond of rural roots and care for our community that is common to co-op members.

As part of the cooperative business model, one of our core principles is Concern for Community. While our priority is always to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy, we take pride in our role in the community as a catalyst for good.

We are purposeful in partnering with local charitable organizations to help those in need.

We work closely with local schools to provide safety demonstrations and award college scholarships. TVEC also participates in the annual Government-in-Action Youth Tour, where we take some of our community's brightest young people to Washington, D.C., for a weeklong

immersive experience of democracy in action. The trip is inspirational for many students, and we are humbled and honored to be a part of their leadership development.

Ultimately, the larger community benefits from these programs because of you. You empower the co-op through your membership and through your participation in and support of these programs.

When you attend co-op events, alert us to problems, or provide suggestions online or to our employees, you help us improve operations and thereby better serve the membership at large.

Because we're locally governed by members of our community, we have a firsthand perspective on community priorities, better enabling us to make more informed decisions on long-term investments, such as equipment and technology upgrades.

We're thankful that our board members carve

out time to attend important training sessions, participate in planning meetings and keep abreast of industry trends. This investment of time results in better informed advisers who serve the co-op's interests in a way that our members expect and deserve.

On a more personal note, we appreciate the countless acts of kindness toward our lineworkers and other employees when they're working in severe

weather and dangerous conditions. Our employees are thankful for your patience and consideration when we're trying to restore power during challenging situations.

TVEC was originally established 85 years ago to bring electricity to our area when no one else would. The co-op is a reflection of our local community and its evolving needs. Together, let's continue making our corner of the world a better place.

We can't do it without you, and for that we're thankful for your membership. ■



ALEKSANDR ZYABLITSKIY | ISTOCK.COM

Maintain Automatic Garage Doors for Safety

YOUR AUTOMATIC GARAGE DOOR is probably the largest moving object in your home, and if you use it every day, you might open and close it more often than the front door of your house. It's important to keep the garage door and its automatic opening system in good shape.

Here are some maintenance and safety tips for the garage door.

Keep the garage door's remote control out of the reach of children. They could leave the door open and unattended, which is an invitation to thieves and animals.

Likewise, don't allow your kids to make a game out of opening and closing the garage door, even when you're supervising them. A garage door closes more quickly—and is much heavier—than you might expect and can present a serious hazard to a small child who gets in its way.

If your garage door has panels or sections, keep fingers far away. Closing the joints exerts enough pinching pressure to break or sever a finger. Consider investing in pinch-resistant door panels to prevent accidents.

Inspect the garage door a couple of times a year for wear and tear on springs, cables, rollers and pulleys.


Don't adjust or repair a garage door's moving parts on your own. It truly is a job for a trained technician.

Regularly test the door's reversing mechanism—its ability to automatically reopen if something gets in its way while closing. To test it, place a two-by-four under the door and try to close it. If the door doesn't automatically stop closing and start to reopen, call a garage door professional to repair it.

Replace any garage door opener purchased before 1993. Newer ones have updated safety features.

Disable your garage door before you go on vacation. Most models have a security switch on the wall console that allows you to render the remote useless. ■

Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

CONTACT US

1800 E. Highway 243
Kaufman, Texas
Local (972) 932-2214
Toll-Free 1-800-766-9576
Web tvec.net

Board of Directors

Howard Tillison, Chairman, District 6
Carolyn Minor, Vice Chairwoman, District 1
Jo Ann Hanstrom, Secretary, District 4
Jeff Priest, District 2
Paul Weatherford, District 3
Edward Reeve, District 5
Jack Endres, District 7

General Manager/CEO

Jeff Lane

24/7 Outage Hotline Numbers

For information and
to report outages,
please call us.

TOLL-FREE
1-800-967-9324

**AUTOMATED
ASSISTANCE**
1-800-720-3584

ABOUT TRINITY VALLEY EC

TVEC operates in Anderson, Dallas, Henderson, Hunt, Kaufman and Van Zandt counties.

OFFICE LOCATIONS

Kaufman District Headquarters

1800 E. Highway 243, Kaufman

Athens District Office

909 W. Larkin St., Athens

Cedar Creek District Office

1012 W. Main St., Ste. 102
Gun Barrel City

Wills Point District Office

582 N. Fourth St., Wills Point

Lobby Hours

8:15 a.m.–4:45 p.m.

VISIT US ONLINE

tvec.net





Annual Meeting Report: Growth, Inflation and Regulations Impact Co-op Members

MORE THAN 750 TRINITY VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE members and employees gathered at the Canton Civic Center October 5 for the co-op's annual membership meeting. With a milestone 85 years of rural electricity service in 2023, it was in many ways a celebration of more than eight decades of progress and a common bond of community.

Dinner and conversation, along with more than 120 door prizes may have been the highlights of the evening, but there was plenty of food for thought as well, as co-op leaders brought members up to speed on matters affecting the co-op and electricity market.

Assistant General Manager and Chief Operating Officer Tony Watson gave attendees a summary of the co-op's efforts to keep costs down while maintain a high level of service and reliability. He noted that along with the area's rapid growth, the co-op is also investing throughout the system for increased reliability.

"Our engineering department prepares extensive work plans for future upgrades and preparations for increased load growth," he said. "In 2022, more than \$37 million in system upgrades and improvements were completed."

That work included about 140 miles of new line construction with the addition of 4,566 new service locations. Along with the physical plant additions and upgrades, Watson highlighted the commitment to a high level of member service by co-op employees.

"In 2022, the Member Service department handled more than 256,000 phone calls, with an average answer time of just

20 seconds," he said. "The board also approved new billing and accounting software upgrade. What we hope to accomplish is providing an interface that will be more user friendly for staff and members, as well as a reduction in fees that the co-op has been paying. The cost savings over the next five years will be around \$1.5 million."

Those savings will be important, as Chief Financial Officer Bobby White noted in his remarks that rising costs of supplies and wholesale energy have been a financial challenge.

"It boils down to this—more consumer growth means you have to build more infrastructure to provide power and we are not immune to the effects of inflation," he said.

Out of more than 800 electric co-ops in the nation, TVEC ranks 20th fastest in growth, and 50th largest overall.

"By any measure we are a pretty large co-op," White said. "If you look at every dollar we take in, 75 cents goes to power costs, three cents goes to the bank in interest and about seven cents goes to depreciation. That last 15 cents is everything else—the people, supplies, tree trimming, storm restoration, and everything we use to operate as a business. We are proud that we do everything in our power every day to conserve and keep that as low as we possibly can."

The theme of higher costs carried over to General Manager/CEO Jeff Lane's message as well, noting that the co-op's fifteen year hold on rate changes may be coming to an end next year.

"We are continuing to watch costs and do everything we can to avoid a rate increase, with our base rate of 10.4 cents since 2008," he said. "We've had to adjust the PCRF (power



The Hollywood theme brought out contagious smiles all around, with TVEC members young and old gathering for an evening of information and fun.

cost recovery factor) on that, which is a direct pass-through dedicated to wholesale power. While inflation has slowed back down somewhat, it is up 41.3 percent since 2008 so that is quite a bit of inflation that we are dealing with.”

Finishing off the rate discussion, Lane noted that maintaining reliability would be key in

the decision making process.

“Last year I told you that we are committed to doing everything we can to avoid an increase as long as we are not hurting reliability or service,” he said. “I believe we are in the early stages of those two things being impacted and an increase 2024 is very possible. We will continue to monitor and communicate with you well in advance if a decision is made to increase rates.”

Along with rising costs, another challenge in the coming year will include regulatory changes at the state level and a potential redesign of the Electric Reliability Council of Texas wholesale power market. While the state makes moves to address power generation capabilities, Lane noted that the state’s reliance on wind and solar power this summer showed a vulnerability that must be addressed.

“The 88th legislative session saw more than 300 bills aimed at the electric industry with ultimately 70 bills signed into law,” he said. “They are taking measures to incentivize and promote dispatchable generation. We will continue to work with our wholesale supplier, statewide and national organizations to fight for an all-of-the-above approach to power supply that ensures reliability at a reasonable cost.”

The co-op’s first year to add electronic voting was deemed a success, with member votes meeting the three percent quorum number for the first time in three years. The vote was handled by Survey and Ballot Systems for both mail-in and electronic voting. 2,961 valid ballots were received.

Board districts one, four and five were on the ballot this year, with the three incumbents, Carolyn Minor, Jo Ann Hanstrom and Ed Reeve running unopposed. All three were declared winners in the voting.

David Copeland, partner with Bolinger, Segars, Gilbert & Moss, gave the gathered members a report on the co-op’s yearly audit. That audit was conducted and approved by the board of directors in April.

Copeland noted that along with managing the rising costs mentioned by others, the co-op had still managed positive cash flow and had allocated money back to members through capital credits.

“Total margins for 2022 was \$14,337,501,” Copeland said. “Each year the board of directors has to look at the margins and cash management to decide what will be returned to members.”

Look for additional information regarding any capital credit returns in a future edition of *Texas Co-op Power* and TVEC member communications.

We look forward to seeing you all next year at the 2024 TVEC Annual Membership Meeting. ■



TVEC board member Jo Ann Hanstrom talks with co-op members at the 2023 TVEC annual meeting in Canton Oct. 5.

THE TRIP OF A LIFETIME

GOVERNMENT-IN-ACTION

YOUTH TOUR

JUNE 16-23, 2024



Are you a Texas high school student? Would you like to travel to Washington, D.C., and visit historic landmarks—all without spending a dime of your own money?

Perhaps you’d like to meet elected officials, or maybe you’re looking for an inspirational experience in the company of other Texas teens. If that sounds like you, then the Government-in-Action Youth Tour is your tour. Apply now!

For more information, visit tvec.net.

Start your adventure at TexasYouthTour.com.



Success Checklist



SmartHub will help you save time and money by managing your account at any time from anywhere. Here is a checklist to put you in control of your account from day one. Please reach out if you have any questions.

☐ What you will need for registration

- An **email address**
- Your **current account number**. You will be able to find your account number on your latest bill. You can also call our customer service team at **1-800-766-9576**.

☐ Download the SmartHub app

Follow these instructions if you would like to use SmartHub on your mobile device.

- Open up the Apple or Google Play app store (depending on your device)
- Search for "SmartHub" in the app store and install the app on your device.
- You can find instructions on our SmartHub support site at tvec.net/smarthub.



☐ Register your account in SmartHub

The first thing you will need to do is register your account in our new SmartHub system.

- Mobile: Click the "Don't have an account? Register now" link on the app's log in page.
- Web: Visit our SmartHub support page at tvec.net/smarthub and click on Register button.
- You can also find instructions on that page.

☐ Auto pay re-registration (if enrolled)

If you use our auto pay program with a debit/credit card or bank draft, you will need to re enroll.

- On either web portal or app, click on Bill & Pay.
- Click on Auto Pay Program link.
- If you use your bank's payment service to schedule payments, you will need to verify your [NAME] account number to ensure payments are routed properly.

☐ Consider trying paperless billing

Save time by getting your bills instantly through SmartHub and save the cost of printing and mailing your bill.

- You can activate paperless billing during your account registration.
- Web portal: Under the My Profile menu, click on Update my Paperless Settings submenu.
- Mobile: Select Settings and Paperless Billing.

☐ Set up notifications

Choose how you receive notifications from SmartHub (email or SMS)

- Under the Notifications menu, click Manage Contacts to add email and/or text numbers.
- Enter verification code to activate.
- Click on Manage Notifications to set up email and/or SMS alerts using the contact info you entered.

Need assistance? We are here to help!

memberrelations@tvec.coop

1-800-766-9576



TVEC ENERGY
MANAGEMENT ADVISER
CHRIS WALKER, BAP

Where Can You Find the Most Home Energy Savings?

MANY PRODUCTS AND services claim to be energy-efficient, so it can be challenging to know where to start when it comes to cutting back. Fortunately, monthly electric bills can help identify the

areas most ripe for energy savings.

The months that require the most energy use for the vast majority of homes are in the winter and summer, when temperatures are most extreme. Just total up your average energy use for the months when you use the most energy, then subtract the average amount you use during months when you're barely using your heating or cooling system, typically during fall and spring.

The main reason for the difference in energy use is heating and cooling your home. If someone says switching to a new heating or cooling system could save you 20%, they likely mean you can save 20% on heating or cooling costs, which are a portion of your overall energy costs.

Every home is different. For example, some homes have a well pump, swimming pool or a home business that requires more energy than heating or cooling. But typically, heaters and air conditioners are by far a home's largest energy users.

Sealing air leaks is often the least expensive energy-saving measure that delivers the most bang for your buck. The second-most cost-effective way to cut heating and cooling costs depends on your situation.

If you have an older air conditioning system, replacing it with an energy-efficient heat pump might be your best investment. If you already have a relatively

efficient AC unit, insulating your attic could be the next most cost-effective measure, followed by insulating exterior walls or your home's crawl space.

Replacing windows might be a high-priority project for many homeowners, and new windows can certainly add value and beauty to your home. However, this can be a costly endeavor, making it difficult to justify solely based on potential energy savings. If your windows are old and leaky, it could be worth the investment. Do your research upfront so you fully understand the costs of the project and the potential long-term payback.

After you've found ways to reduce your heating and cooling costs, where else should you look for energy savings? Your next largest energy use is likely water heating. Over time water heaters can become less efficient, with buildup of mineral deposits and other impurities from the water. Follow the manufacturer's guidelines for maintenance and cleaning.

Appliances and lighting account for a much smaller portion of your energy use. As you replace older appliances and lighting, look for options that include the Energy Star logo. You should also review energy use information found on the EnergyGuide label. ■

Win \$100 Just for Reading

Somewhere, hidden on pages 16–23, is a TVEC account number. Read closely. If the account number is yours, contact the member services department by November 30 to receive a \$100 credit on your electric bill. Don't miss out—you could be our winner.





Energy Quiz



Which of these uses about one kWh of energy?

- A** • Baking a cake 40 minutes in a 1,500 watt oven
- B** • Two 250 watt heat lamps 8 hours
- C** • Running a 4,000 watt clothes dryer for one hour

Win **\$100!**

Send your answer and contact information to **contest@tvec.coop** or contact TVEC Member Services by November 30. One \$100 bill credit winner will be chosen from all correct replies. Look for the correct answer in a future **Texas Co-op Power**.

October Energy Quiz: Texas Peak Demand Record

IT WAS A HOT SUMMER but you knew that already. Combined with the economic and population growth Texas has seen over the last decade, there was no question that energy demand would be high.

On August 10, the ERCOT grid set a new peak demand record of 85,464 MW. This was even revised slightly higher than the initial 85,435 MW number we put in the quiz!

Congratulations to September Energy Quiz winner, Jackie Brooks, of Wills Point.

Look for the winner of this month's contest in the January issue of **Texas Co-op Power**. ■

TEXAS DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Hurricane Preparedness Guidelines

Hurricane season is June 1–November 30

Preparedness Checklist

- ▶ **Make an evacuation plan.** Find activated evacuation routes at drivetexas.org or by dialing 1-800-452-9292. Call 211 to find out if you live in an evacuation zone.
- ▶ **Sign up for emergency alerts.** Make sure your mobile device is enabled to receive wireless emergency alerts.
- ▶ **Prepare an emergency supply kit.** Learn how to build an emergency kit at ready.gov/build-a-kit.
- ▶ **Review your home insurance policy.**
- ▶ **Register with the State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry** at stear.tdem.texas.gov or by dialing 211 if you live in an evacuation zone and:
 - Have a disability or medical needs and do not have a car or other vehicle to use in an evacuation.
 - Have a disability or medical needs and do not have friends or family to help in an evacuation.

Information collected for STEAR is confidential.

Hurricane Preparedness Online Resources

Texas Division of Emergency Management: tdem.texas.gov
Texas Department of State Health Services: texasready.gov
American Red Cross: redcross.org
U.S. Department of Homeland Security: ready.gov
Office of Texas Gov. Greg Abbott: gov.texas.gov

DIVISIÓN DE ADMINISTRACIÓN DE EMERGENCIAS DE TEXAS

Preparación para huracanes

La temporada de huracanes es del 1 de junio al 30 de noviembre

Lista de verificación de preparación:

- ▶ **Haga un plan de evacuación.** Encuentre rutas de evacuación activadas en drivetexas.org o marcando 1-800-452-9292. Llame 211 para averiguar si usted vive en una zona de evacuación.
- ▶ **Regístrese para recibir alertas de emergencia.** Asegúrese de que su dispositivo móvil esté habilitado para recibir alertas de emergencia inalámbricas.
- ▶ **Prepare un kit de emergencia.** Aprenda como construir un kit de emergencia en ready.gov/build-a-kit.
- ▶ **Revise su póliza de seguro de hogar.**
- ▶ **Regístrese con el Registro de Asistencia de Emergencia del Estado de Texas** en stear.tdem.texas.gov o marcando el 211 si vive en una zona de evacuación y:
 - Tiene una discapacidad o necesidades médicas y no tiene un auto u otro vehículo para usar en una evacuación.
 - Tiene una discapacidad o necesidades médicas y no tiene amigos o familiares para ayudar en una evacuación.

La información recolectada para STEAR es confidencial.

Recursos en línea para la preparación para huracanes

División de Administración de Emergencias de Texas: tdem.texas.gov
Departamento de Servicios de Salud del Estado: texasready.gov
Cruz Roja Americana: redcross.org
Departamento de Seguridad Nacional de los Estados Unidos: ready.gov
Oficina del Gobernador de Texas Greg Abbott: gov.texas.gov

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Your Generosity in Action

Operation Round Up Spotlight: A Decade of Member Generosity

THEY SAY TIME FLIES WHEN YOU ARE HAVING FUN so it is no surprise that the first 10 years of existence of the TVEC Charitable Foundation has gone by in a blink.

Many co-ops around the nation have some form of Operation Round Up, which was pioneered by Palmetto Electric Cooperative in South Carolina in 1989. By rounding up bills to the nearest dollar, members who participate donate an average of about \$6 per year to the program. When combined, the combined giving adds up to a lot of money for local charitable organizations. 2706-003

“From the beginning, TVEC members’ support of Operation Round Up has been amazing,” said Bobbi Byford, TVEC director of corporate relations. “As our co-op has grown, the mission of the charitable foundation has grown along with it and now it is hard to imagine the lives that have been changed and made better in some way through these grants.”

Since the inception of the TVEC Charitable Foundation in 2013, those donations have funded more than \$3.5 million in



Area fire departments have been the largest recipients of Operation Round Up grants, with more than 50 volunteer and city first responder groups receiving funding each year since 2013.

grants specifically targeting work in the TVEC service area.

At monthly board meetings, the TVEC Charitable Foundation board considers grant requests submitted by area organizations.

In addition to those grants, each year the board has allocated grants to all area fire departments. With more than 50 volunteer and full time agencies serving the TVEC service territory, these grants support the many area first responders who put in countless hours to enhance our public safety and save lives.

“It is easy to see the dollar amount, which is impressive of course,” Byford said. “But it is so important to recognize the people who take these grants and turn them into real help for people. As a cooperative community, we really also want to encourage our members to be involved in some way. That is how we make our community the best it can be, together.”

Find more TVEC Charitable Foundation information, grant request forms and a list of past grants at tvec.net. ■

September 2023 Operation Round Up Grants Awarded

Grants

Athens Animal Rescue Shelter - \$2,000
Texas Ramp Project - \$7,500
The Community Food Pantry of Tool - \$5,000
Wills Point Junior High Backpack Program - \$1,500

Food and Bill Assistance

Salvation Army of Kaufman - \$3,000
St. Charles Borromeo Food Pantry, Frankston - \$2,000