

# Bringing Power Home



## MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER LEROY T. SKLOSS

I saw a statistic the other day that made me stop and think: More than 1.5 billion people around the world lack access to a benefit that most of us take for granted: electricity.

It seems so simple, doesn't it? Flip a switch, and electricity is there to cool our homes, heat our food and light up the darkness.

But when you think of everything that has to happen to bring this power to us, from the generators that start a flow of electrons through hundreds of miles of wires to a vast array of equipment needed to bring those electrons to our homes and businesses, it seems almost miraculous.

This miracle of modern society is brought to you by the dedication and hard work of thousands of people, including the 64 employees of Karnes Electric Cooperative.

Electricity has become so commonplace these days that it's easy to forget that only a couple of generations ago, it was a luxury available to few people outside urban areas.

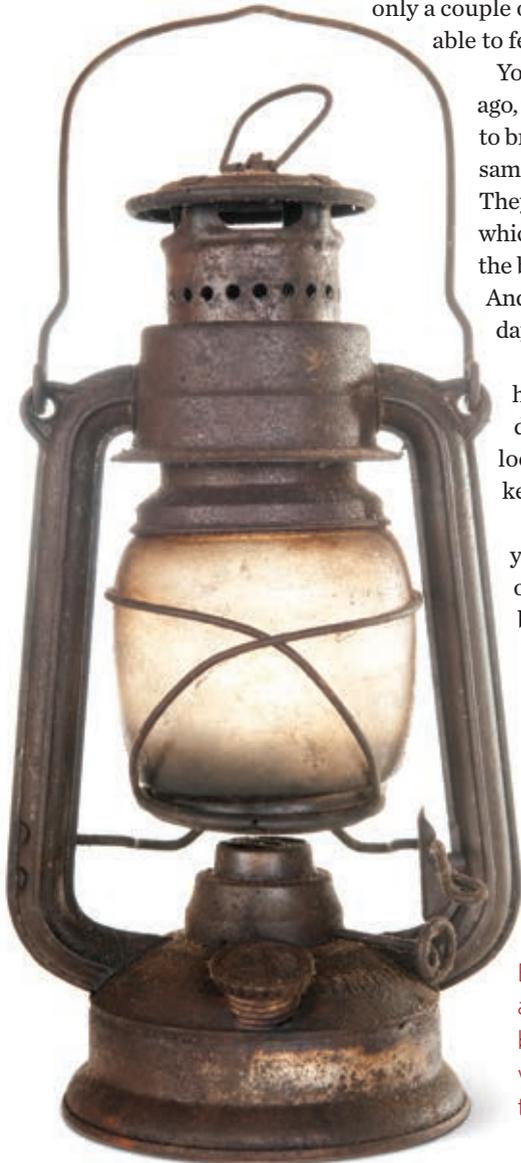
You have electricity today because 74 years ago, the founders of Karnes EC got together to bring themselves and their neighbors the same power that folks in the city enjoyed. They laid the foundation for this company, which strives not to make a profit, but to offer the best service possible at a reasonable cost. And those of us who followed strive every day to uphold that mission.

Although we can look back at a proud history, the leaders of this co-op do not dwell on the past. We are constantly looking for ways to improve service and keep power affordable.

As a member of Karnes EC, you play your part. You have a say in the policies of the cooperative, electing fellow members to serve on the board of directors. Your voice is important to us. If you have any comments or concerns about how we do business, just give us a call at (830) 780-3952 or send us an email at [lskloss@karnesec.org](mailto:lskloss@karnesec.org).

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to serve you and bring you a modern miracle that has become an essential part of our lives.

Electricity has come a long way, and we're proud of our progress, but we'll never lose sight of how we can best serve our members today and tomorrow.



# Doors

Are yours letting IN more than company?

If your air conditioner's thermostat is set below 75 degrees and your house is still too hot, it's a good bet that the cool air is leaking out through cracks and holes around windows, or around electrical outlets and penetrations where cable and phone lines enter the home.

Or your home's older exterior doors are energy inefficient.



It's not uncommon for homeowners to overlook the doors when they replace the old, single-pane windows their homes "came with" with double-pane models that help save energy. But just as much air can escape through or around an energy-inefficient old door, even if there's no glass on it.

A new exterior door is likely to fit more snugly and is bound to be better insulated than one that's a decade old.

Older steel doors, for example, often are hollow. Today's improved models have a core of foam insulation and a seal that prevents air from escaping between the edge of the door and its frame when the door is closed. Fiberglass doors are built with interior insulation as well.

And new sliding-glass patio doors, like windows, feature several layers of glass and energy-efficient coatings that keep the hot air outdoors and your nice, cool air inside during the summer.

If you want to keep your old doors, you can stop some of the leaking by applying weatherstripping around them. Or, you can pair your old door with an aluminum, steel or fiberglass storm door with energy-efficient glass and some insulation in the frame.

A caution: If the hot summer sun targets your exterior door for more than a few hours a day, don't opt for a glass storm door. It can trap the heat and damage your door.

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# Do's and Don'ts of Electrical Safety

## Inside your home

- ▶ **DO** cover all electrical outlets and wall switches with cover plates, and replace any that are damaged.
- ▶ **DO** protect small children and pets by using plastic safety covers on all unused outlets and keeping cords out of sight and reach.
- ▶ **DO** make sure all electrical devices are in good repair.
- ▶ **DO** use extension cords only on a temporary basis.
- ▶ **DO** use a quality surge suppressor with enough sockets for every component.
- ▶ **DO** keep all electrical devices away from water sources.
- ▶ **DON'T** yank electrical cords from the wall—this can damage both the plug and the outlet. Unplug by grasping the plug itself.
- ▶ **DON'T** attach a cord to another surface with nails or staples—they can damage the cord's insulation.
- ▶ **DON'T** use damaged or brittle electrical cords, even if bare wires aren't visible.
- ▶ **DON'T** attempt to fix an electrical appliance or tool while the unit is plugged in.
- ▶ **DON'T** plug one extension cord into another.

## Outside your home

- ▶ **DO** have ground-fault circuit interruptors and waterproof covers on outdoor outlets.
- ▶ **DO** look out for overhead power lines every time you use a ladder or pole. Stay at least 10 feet away from any electrical lines.
- ▶ **DO** call a professional for help trimming trees near power lines.
- ▶ **DO** keep electrical devices and cords away from water.
- ▶ **DO** keep children and pets away from pad-mount transformers. If the door is open or the lock is broken, call Karnes Electric Cooperative right away.
- ▶ **DO** teach kids to stay far away from substations and explain what the warning signs mean.
- ▶ **DON'T** assume the black coating on wires is insulation—it could be just plastic weatherproofing that provides no protection from contact injuries.
- ▶ **DON'T** let kids climb trees or fly kites near power lines.
- ▶ **DON'T** disguise transformers or meters with paint or bushes—a Karnes EC employee might need to work safely around it or find it quickly in an emergency.
- ▶ **DON'T** hang signs on utility poles. Nails, staples or tacks can pose a big danger to Karnes EC linemen who must climb the poles. Plus, the practice is illegal.
- ▶ **DON'T** tamper with an electric meter (it's dangerous and illegal).



Don't pull on the cord because you could damage it. Always unplug cords by grasping the plug.



Using an energy-saving microwave makes this a quick and crunchy treat!

## Microwave Caramel Popcorn

- 4 quarts popped popcorn (plain or butter flavored)
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 stick margarine
- ¼ cup corn syrup
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon baking soda

Put popcorn in large paper grocery sack. Put brown sugar, margarine, corn syrup and salt into a large microwave-safe bowl and bring to boil by cooking 2 minutes on high in microwave. Stir, then cook 2 more minutes. Stir in baking soda.

Dump hot mixture over popcorn in sack. Shake bag well.

Microwave bag on high for 1½ minutes. Remove bag and shake again. Return to microwave and heat for 1 more minute on high. Take bag out and shake really well. Cut open bag and allow to cool. Loosen pieces (or make balls) and eat! Makes 8 servings.

Note: Experiment with light or dark brown sugar and light or dark corn syrup. Light will make a more traditional caramel corn, and dark will make something more like Cracker Jacks.

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# Revealing R-Values

## PEEL BACK INSULATION FOR LAYERS OF COST SAVINGS

BY KRIS WENDTLAND

**With the summer sun blazing, it may be hard to believe your home needs a coat to help keep you cool, but wrapping your home up in the right insulation can make a big difference in comfort and cost. Just as a coat closet features thin jackets and heavy jackets, different types of insulation, ranked by R-value, exist to maximize efficiency.**

R-value reflects the ability of insulation and other parts of your home, like windows, to resist the transfer of heat. The rating depends on material, thickness and density, and a higher R-value indicates more effective insulation. Multiple layers of insulation may be combined for a higher cumulative R-value.

For most of Texas, R-values of 30 to 60 are recommended for the attic, R-15 for walls and R-25 for floors.

### How insulation works

Metals and liquids easily transfer heat, making them bad insulators. Air, however, does not conduct heat, making it a strong insulator when isolated in small pockets.

Just as fur keeps animals warm, insulation holds heat in (or out) of a building. Fur is a collection of hair—tiny hollow cylinders. Air fills the cylinders and spaces in between. The smaller the space for air in between the cylinders and the more spaces there are (longer hair equals more space), the greater the insulation.

Building insulation works on the same principle. Fiberglass insulation, for example, exists as a collection of hollow fiberglass cylinders.

When installing insulation, be careful to preserve the air—the bulk of your home's protection. When 3 inches of insulation is squeezed into a 1-inch space, critical air pockets are eliminated, reducing the actual insulating R-value of the insulation.

### The value of R-values

Boosting the R-value of a wall from 0 to R-10 cuts 90 percent of heat loss (or gain) from one side of the wall to the other. This makes an immediate difference you can feel. Adding an additional layer of R-15 insulation (a total R-value of 25) cuts another 6 percent of heat transmission.

Once you've got the insulation maxed out, consider upgrading your windows. A typical single-pane window has an R-value of 0.9. In contrast, a triple-glazed pane assembly with low-emissivity insulated coatings boasts an R-value of 8.3. Based on an electricity cost of 10 cents per kilowatt-hour, a home with 18 single-pane windows could waste \$31.44 in unnecessary expense in a month.

*Kris Wendtland writes for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.*

**Fluffy mounds of blown-in insulation help cut heating and cooling costs.**



## Karnes Electric Cooperative

P.O. Box 7, Karnes City, TX 78118

### GENERAL MANAGER

Leroy T. Skloss

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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### COOPERATIVE OFFICES

#### Main Office

1007 N. Highway 123, Karnes City

#### District Office

1824 W. Goodwin, Pleasanton

**Pay your bill, submit meter readings and view your account summary at [www.karnesec.org](http://www.karnesec.org).**



## CONTACT US

*For information and outages during office hours*

**(830) 780-3952** Karnes City  
**(830) 569-5538** Pleasanton  
**1-888-807-3952** toll-free

*To report a power outage after 5 p.m. and on weekends and holidays*

Coy City, Ecleto, Floresville, Gillette, Goliad, Karnes City, Kenedy, Runge, Three Rivers, Tilden and surrounding areas

**(830) 780-3952**

Charlotte, Christine, Pleasanton, Poteet, Verdi and surrounding areas

**(830) 569-5538**

**FIND US ON THE WEB**  
**[www.karnesec.org](http://www.karnesec.org)**

**Texas Division of Emergency Management**

**Hurricane Preparedness Guidelines**

**Preparing for Hurricane Season: June 1–November 30**

**Evacuation Planning:** When a hurricane threatens, listen for instructions from local officials. When they call for an evacuation in your area, get going without delay.



- Discuss evacuation plans with your family BEFORE hurricane season June 1–November 30.
- Make a checklist of what you need to do before you leave town and review it.
- Monitor NOAA weather radio and local TV and radio broadcasts during storm season.
- Prepare an emergency supply kit including: radio, flashlight, extra batteries, extra eyeglasses, bottled water, nonperishable food, dry clothes, bedding, insurance information, important documents, medications, copies of prescriptions and special products for babies, the elderly and medically fragile family members.
- Learn evacuation routes before storm season. When there’s a hurricane in the Gulf, keep your gas tank as full as possible. Expect traffic delays in an evacuation.
- Dial 2-1-1 to register if you have special health care needs or if you simply do not have transportation: Gulf coast residents in evacuation zones with special health-care needs—who do not have friends or family to help—should register in advance for a ride by dialing 2-1-1. Residents with no other transportation can register for a ride in advance by dialing 2-1-1.

**División de Administración de Emergencias de Texas**

**Directrices para Huracanes**

**Preparando para la temporada de huracanes durante el 1 de junio hasta el 30 de noviembre**

**Evacuación en caso de Huracán:** Cuando exista una amenaza de huracán, escucha las instrucciones de funcionarios locales. Cuando llamen para una evacuación en su área, sálgase del área lo más pronto posible.

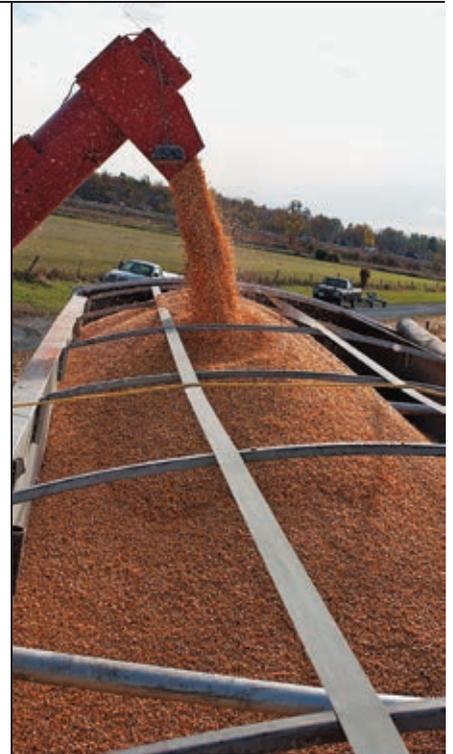


- Discute los planes de evacuación con su familia ANTES de la temporada de huracán, que comienza el 1 de junio hasta 30 de noviembre. Haga una lista de lo que usted debe hacer antes de salir de la ciudad y revísela.
- Escuche la radio y televisión durante la temporada de huracanes.
- Prepare un equipo de emergencia incluyendo: radio, linterna, repuesto de baterías, anteojos extras, agua embotellada, alimentos no perecederos, ropa extra, ropa de cama, información de seguro, documentos importantes, medicinas, copias de recetas medicas y productos especiales para bebés, las personas mayores y miembros de la familia médicamente frágiles.
- Aprenda sus rutas de evacuación antes de la temporada de huracanes. Cuando hay un huracán en el Golfo, mantenga el tanque de gasolina lleno. Este consiente de que habrá demoras de tráfico.
- Si usted tiene necesidad especial de asistencia médica o si usted simplemente no tiene como trasladarse: Los residentes de la Costa del Golfo con necesidades especiales de asistencia médica en zonas de evacuación—sin familia o amigos para ayudarlos—deben registrarse para su traslado por adelantado llamando al 2-1-1. Los residentes sin coche, pueden registrarse por adelantado para su traslado llamando al 2-1-1.

# 10 TIPS FOR Big Summer Savings

- 1 | RAISE YOUR THERMOSTAT TO 78 DEGREES OR HIGHER.** This is the No. 1 way to conserve energy.
- 2 | WHEN YOU ARE AWAY FROM HOME FOR MORE THAN EIGHT HOURS, RAISE THE THERMOSTAT SETTING** and expect to see a 1 percent savings for each degree of setback.
- 3 | KEEP WINDOW SHADES CLOSED WHEN THE AIR CONDITIONER IS ON.** Sunny windows account for 40 percent of unwanted indoor heat and can make your air conditioner work considerably harder.
- 4 | CHECK AND CLEAN FILTERS.** Cleaning and replacing air conditioner filters monthly allows the system to run more efficiently.
- 5 | INSTALL CEILING FANS.** Moving air over the body provides a cooling effect. The use of ceiling fans can mean savings of about 25 percent on cooling costs and make the temperature seem 10 degrees cooler. Just remember, fans cool people, not rooms, so turn them off when leaving the room for an extended period of time.
- 6 | MAKE SURE CEILING FANS ARE BLOWING DOWN.** Most fans have a switch to change the fan direction. Make sure ceiling fans are blowing downward (in a counter-clockwise direction) to send air past your body to make you feel cooler.
- 7 | WAIT UNTIL LATER TO RUN APPLIANCES THAT USE A LOT OF ENERGY.** Use the dishwasher and clothes washer after 7 p.m. When used during the day, these appliances produce additional heat, causing your air conditioner to work harder.
- 8 | USE COLD WATER TO WASH DISHES AND CLOTHES.** This will save on water heating costs.
- 9 | UNPLUG EQUIPMENT WHEN IT IS NOT IN USE.** Electric chargers, televisions and audio/video equipment use electricity and produce heat even when not in use. Running an older refrigerator can use up to three times the energy of a modern one.
- 10 | TURN LIGHTS OFF WHEN EXITING A ROOM.** Consider replacing incandescent bulbs with energy-efficient compact fluorescent lightbulbs. And remember to recycle CFLs.

Ceiling fans are a great way to stay cool and save money. Just make sure they're blowing the right direction: **Down in the summer, up in the winter.**



## Take Time To Harvest Safely

It's easy to get caught up in the rush of late summer harvesting, but don't forget about safety.

Portable grain augers, oversized wagons, combines and other tall or cumbersome equipment could come in contact with overhead power lines, creating an electrocution threat to those on the ground nearby—as well as the operator—if proper steps aren't taken. Always lower a portable grain auger or elevator before you move it, even if only a few feet. As a general rule, keep all objects at least 10 feet away from overhead lines.

Be extra careful when working around trees and brush; they often make it difficult to see power lines.

This year, Karnes Electric Cooperative encourages you to plan to harvest safely. For more ways to stay safe on and off the farm, visit [safeelectricity.org](http://safeelectricity.org).

SPECIAL GUEST COLUMN

# Helping ERCOT Balance Power Supply and Demand



**MESSAGE FROM TRIP DOGGETT, CEO  
ELECTRIC RELIABILITY COUNCIL OF TEXAS**

**Most Texans know that August is typically our hottest month, which means it also is the month when we use the most electricity to help stay cool.**

The state’s power producers, Karnes Electric Cooperative, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas and the Public Utility Commission of Texas are working to ensure that there is enough power available to serve Texas’ growing demand for electricity during the hottest hours of the hottest days of the year—not only this summer, but also in the future when the demand for electricity appears to be growing faster than the amount of power available to serve it.

Providing reliable electric power is fundamental to ERCOT’s mission. The key is to balance the amount we use with the amount being generated—every minute of every day. During last summer’s relentless, record-breaking heat—with your help—we were able to accomplish that goal. There were times when the gap between what we were using and what was available was tighter than ERCOT prefers. On seven days last summer, we asked energy consumers to help keep the grid reliable by reducing electric use from 3 to 7 p.m.

Many of you took actions that made a tremendous difference. By setting your thermostats just a couple of degrees warmer in response to our conservation requests, you may have prevented some of your neighbors or yourself from experiencing rotating outages. Those controlled power interruptions are the last in a series of steps we take to maintain a reliable electric grid when the balance between supply and demand is threatened. ERCOT took many actions to reduce the risk of rotating outages last summer, but your help was vital to help keep the power flowing when power reserve margins became too close for comfort.

Even though ERCOT hit a system peak demand of 68,379 megawatts on August 4, 2011, the lights—and, more important, the air conditioners—continued to hum.

This summer, we do not expect the heat to be quite as brutal, and power plant owners will work to make more electric power available during our peak demand periods. But we still will need your help, especially when we experience triple-digit temperatures or have too many power plants go offline unexpectedly.

Here are ways to find out when it is most important to reduce your electric demand:

- ▶ Our free mobile app, which works on iPhones and Android devices, will notify users when supplies are especially tight. Look for the ERCOT Energy Saver app.
- ▶ If you subscribe to ERCOT Emergency Alerts at lists.ercot.com, you will receive an automated email when certain “energy emergency alert” conditions are met.
- ▶ If you use Twitter or Facebook, you can follow our posts to receive notices.
- ▶ When conditions are especially tight, we also will ask the news media to help spread the word.

It is always good to minimize your energy use from 3 to 7 p.m. during the summer. Turn your thermostat a couple of degrees warmer. Avoid using appliances such as clothes dryers and ovens. And, set pool pumps to run late at night or early morning.

ERCOT thanks you in advance for helping us strike a balance for reliable electric power. It will help us all stay cool when it counts the most.

## Internet for Your Corner of the World

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# ONE SPARK ... THAT'S ALL IT TAKES

**Wildfires start unexpectedly and move quickly and unpredictably, destroying everything in their path.**

## **If Fire Is Reported Near Your Community:**

- Place photos, vital records and small items of value in your car. Park your car facing the direction of escape.
- Clear a fire break around buildings.
- Shut gas off at meter. (Only a qualified professional can safely turn the gas back on.)
- Turn off propane tanks.
- Leave the electricity on, especially if it powers a well.
- Turn on sprinklers. Wet down shrubs close to structures.
- Wet down roof and above-ground fuel tanks.
- If advised to evacuate, do so immediately. Choose a route away from the fire hazard, and be alert to changes in the speed and direction of fire and smoke.

## **Prevention:**

- Take care with flammables.
- Mow grass short. Rake leaves. Clear away refuse.
- Keep hay bales and firewood away from structures, electric lines and rights-of-way.
- Allow your co-op to keep power lines and rights-of-way free of trees and shrubs.
- Trim dead or dormant shrubbery close to houses and other structures.
- Make a family evacuation plan. Have an inventory of home valuables in fireproof box.