

We're Ready for the Storm



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER LEROY T. SKLOSS

With the coming of spring, thoughts turn to warmer days ahead. And, given the long dry spell we Texans have endured, hopefully we'll have some wetter days ahead.

While it would be a blessing for our area to receive some much-needed rain, what we at Karnes Electric Cooperative don't want to see are the strong storms that often accompany the turning of the season.

Besides hail and the threat of tornadoes these storms bring, they also feature frequent lightning and strong winds. These can all leave damage in their wake, especially to our electric distribution system.

Fixing this damage is a part of our lineworkers' job, and, as I have often stated, these people are exceptional at what they do. If the power goes out, whether from storms, vehicle accidents or even a curious critter getting into equipment, they are there to restore your power—day or night, and usually in a matter of hours.

In fact, they are so good at what they do, longtime co-op members may take this speedy restoration for granted.

A manager of one Texas electric co-op that recently added several new members told me a story about a weather event that spoke volumes about the co-op's reputation for reliable service.

A couple of months ago, the manager said, a storm left some of the co-op's members in the dark. The phones at the office lit up with frantic calls—almost all from

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those newest members, concerned about a long wait without electricity. Virtually none of the old-guard members called, because they were so used to getting their lights back on quickly. Well, as they expected, power was quickly restored thanks to a crew of dedicated lineworkers.

We hope that you take our service equally for granted. But, no matter how much you trust us to return your life to normal after the power goes out, it's still important to report any outages to us so we can more easily pinpoint the source.

I also want to remind you that if a storm or other event downs power lines, stay away from them and call us or local authorities as soon as you can. Even if the lines don't look energized, treat them as if they are. Live lines often don't spark or jump but still carry a deadly current. And if the ground is wet, stay far away from them. Water is an excellent conductor of electricity.

Let's hope for rain. We certainly need it. If that rain comes with storms, we are ready to deal with the aftermath.

After all, at Karnes Electric, our mission is to provide you with safe, reliable electricity at the most reasonable cost possible to improve your quality of life.



Spending too much time dusting? It could be your duct system's fault. The culprit could be in your attic.

Dusty Indoor Air Could Mean Leaky Ducts

If the air inside your house is dusty, it might mean your air-conditioning ducts have sprung leaks.

If you're changing your air-conditioner filter regularly, it will trap dust and pollutants that get into the indoor air so they never make their way into the duct system—or back into the air.

But if the ducts have tiny holes, cracks or joints that aren't well-sealed, dust can bypass the filter and sneak directly into the ducts. Once dust gets in there, the duct system will blow it all over the house.

Dust in the ducts can force your air-conditioning system to operate inefficiently and struggle to keep your home cool during the warmer months.

It's well worth it to have the ducts of your air-conditioning system inspected and properly sealed at the joints. Ironically, duct tape is not the right tool for repairs. You should use mastic or butyl, foil or other heat-approved tapes.

Not only will sealing the ducts prevent dust from flying around your house, but it could also reduce your heating/cooling bills. The average house loses about 20 percent of its conditioned air through ducts that are improperly installed or are leaking at the joints. So seal and save.

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Protect Against Power Surges

Power surges are responsible for millions of dollars of property damage each year and, over time, they can decrease the lifespan of TVs, computers, stereo equipment and anything else plugged into a wall outlet. Being educated is the key to choosing the best surge protection for your home.

How does a power surge cause damage?

A surge is a boost in the electrical charge over a power line. This can be caused by lightning, but it's more commonly caused by motor-driven electrical devices, such as air conditioners and refrigerators, that require a lot of energy for starting and stopping compressors. Some surges can also be caused by faulty wiring.

Frequent, small power surges tend to shorten the life of home appliances and electronics. Power surges come in all shapes and sizes—the most extreme case being a lightning strike, which can destroy equipment and occasionally set houses on fire. Less severe power surges have hundreds of different causes.

The severity of a surge depends not only on the voltage and current involved but how long the event lasts. Most surges are very short in duration. It's important to realize that surges can happen through any connection on your equipment. If there is a wire connected to your equipment, then it provides a path for a surge.

How can I protect my property?

A surge protection device mounted at your home's main electrical panel or the base of your electric meter protects equipment inside your house or business from surges coming through "ports of entry," such as outside electric, telephone and cable TV or satellite dish lines.

Point-of-use surge protection devices do not suppress or arrest a surge but instead divert it to the ground. They're designed to protect your sensitive electronic appliances, such as computers, and resemble a regular plug strip. However, don't assume your plug strip offers surge protection unless it specifically says so. You can also install special electrical outlets that offer surge protection, which can be helpful in places like the kitchen.

One of the most effective ways to protect your property is a two-tiered approach. A service entrance surge protection device reduces power surges to a lower level that protects large appliances, such as your stove or clothes dryer, while point-of-use surge protectors defend your sensitive electronics.

Remember to be cautious when shopping for surge protection equipment. Some items claim that they can save energy, and these claims are generally false. Surge protection is a valuable tool for protecting your home or business but not for saving energy.



Lightning isn't the leading cause of power surges, but it can be one of the most damaging.



Karnes Electric Cooperative

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

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Leroy T. Skloss

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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 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

(830) 780-3952

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

(830) 569-5538

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

FIND US ON THE WEB

karnesec.org



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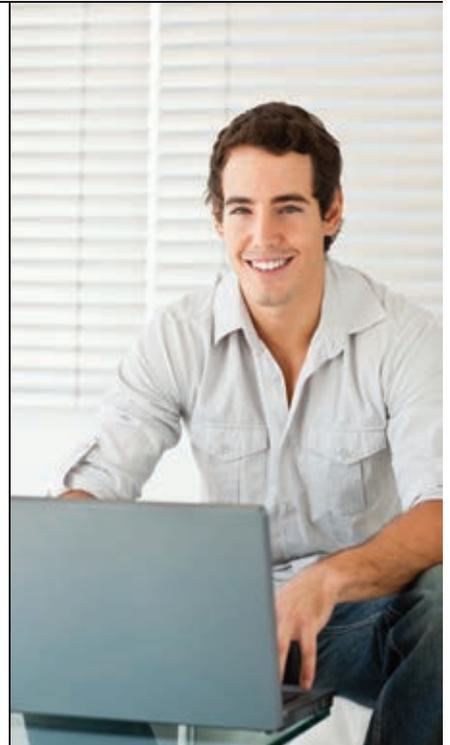
Tame Your Trees

We love our trees, but when branches are too close to power lines, they can cause power outages, fire hazards and other safety concerns.

Here are some rules to follow:

- ▶ If a tree or a large branch is touching—or falls on—an electric line, call your electric cooperative immediately. Tree sap is an excellent conductor of electricity, so a downed branch on a line is an electrocution hazard as well as a fire hazard.
- ▶ Never trim trees that grow close to power lines; that is a job for professionals. Call your electric cooperative for assistance and guidance.
- ▶ Use extreme caution when doing any overhead trimming. Branches often fall in unexpected places.
- ▶ Don't allow children to climb trees or build tree houses close to power lines.
- ▶ Plant trees appropriate distances from all power lines, including those along the street or right-of-way, as well as those running to your home and outbuildings.
- ▶ When planting a tree, plan ahead. A tiny tree may eventually grow large enough to damage power lines and possibly interrupt power during storms. At maturity, your trees should be at least 10 feet away from power lines.

Karnes Electric Cooperative encourages you to always be safe.



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New Windows

Make an energy-smart investment

New windows are an investment in your home that can really pay off. If you're thinking about replacing your windows with more efficient, lower maintenance models, consider:

COST. You get what you pay for when you buy windows. Buy the best ones you can afford, even if you have to purchase and install them a few at a time instead of all at once.

FEATURES. Choose high-performance windows that have at least two panes of glass and a low-emittance coating. Look for a low U-factor for better insulation in colder climates; the U-factor is the rate at which a window, door or skylight conducts nonsolar heat flow. Look for a low solar heat gain coefficient (SHGC)—this is a measure of solar radiation emitted through a window, door or skylight. Low SHGCs reduce heat gain in warm climates. Select windows with both low U-factors and low SHGCs to maximize energy savings in temperate climates with both cold and hot seasons.

ENERGY BILLS. Once you replace your leaky, single-pane windows with double-pane models, you should notice a drop in your heating and cooling bills. Windows with the government's Energy Star label can reduce your energy bills by up to 15 percent.

MAINTENANCE. Wooden windows are beautiful, but they can rot unless you're willing to repaint them every few years. Once the wood rots, it's more than an eyesore. It's an invitation for rainwater to seep through soft, cracked wood and into your house. Sometimes, that water pours in right through the window, but it often leaks into the walls and you never see it.

APPEARANCE. If you replace your windows a few at a time instead of all at once, try to match the new ones so they look like the existing windows, even if they are made from a different material.

INTERIOR DÉCOR. If you want molding and a window sill on the interior wall around the window, you'll need to hire an installer who doubles as or works with a carpenter to install those decorative details, as they're not included with all windows.

INSTALLATION. You don't have to have your window sill and molding replaced when you get new windows. You have two options. For a full pull-out installation, the installer removes all traces of your old window and its surrounds and replaces it with a fresh new one. On a "pocket" installation, you replace just the window itself and keep the old sill and molding. The full pull-out, understandably, costs more than a pocket installation.

Although new windows may be energy efficient, it is still important to caulk and weatherstrip.



Before you climb a ladder, check the area carefully for power lines.

STAY SAFE DURING

Spring Chores

Whether you're pruning a tree, making roof repairs, operating farm equipment or installing an antenna or TV dish, steer clear of overhead power lines.

Contact with a live wire can damage your equipment. If you're touching that equipment when it makes contact, it can seriously injure or even kill you.

▶ If it looks like you or your equipment will come within 15 feet of any power line, make a new plan. Any closer is too close for safety.

▶ Assume any wire you see is a live electrical line. Do not assume the wire is a telephone or cable line. Call Karnes Electric Cooperative to make absolutely sure. Do not touch a branch if it is touching the wire. If the wire breaks, assume it is energized and can injure or kill you. Report the problem to Karnes EC and keep everyone away from it until help arrives.

▶ If you're using a ladder, keep it far enough away from all power lines so it won't touch one if it falls over. The Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that ladders contacting power lines cause 9 percent of electrocutions each year.

▶ Take the day off if it rains. Climbing ladders and working with big equipment in bad weather is an invitation for you to lose your footing and knock something—or yourself—into a power line.

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Scholarship Application Deadline

5 p.m. April 1, 2013

For more information, contact Janet Scheffler or Karen Brysch at (830) 780-3952 or go to karnesec.org and click on "Community".



Install, Test GFCIs at Home

One simple device can make your family 70 percent safer around electricity: the ground-fault circuit interrupter.

GFCIs de-energize an electrical circuit when they sense a "ground fault," which occurs when electricity travels outside of its intended path and tries to take the shortest route to the ground. That route could be through your body if you are touching something electrical—or if you're touching water that's touching electricity—when the ground fault occurs.

Having a GFCI on all electrical outlets in any room where you might touch water can save your life.

Before GFCIs became standard issue in homes, nearly 800 people died every year from electrocution in their own homes, according to the Electrical Safety Foundation International. Now, that number is lower than 200.

After you have your GFCIs installed, don't forget to test them periodically. ESFI reports that virtually everyone who does test them does it wrong. Here's how to test your GFCI the right way:

- ▶ Conduct the test at least once a month and again after every storm.
- ▶ Push the "reset" button on the GFCI receptacle.
- ▶ Plug a light into the GFCI and turn the light on.
- ▶ Push the "test" button on the GFCI. The light should automatically shut off.
- ▶ Push the "reset" button again, and the light should turn itself on.
- ▶ If the light doesn't go out when you push the "test" button, the GFCI is not operating correctly and you should call an electrician to have it repaired.

Spring Forward!

Daylight Saving Time begins March 10.

Set clocks one hour forward, and change the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.



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POWER TIP

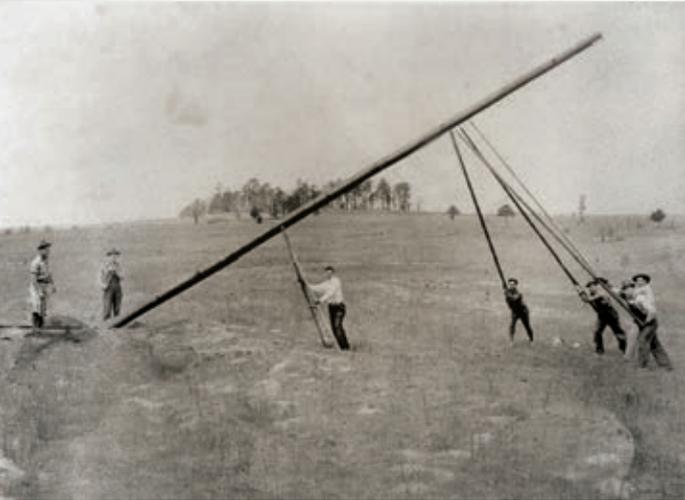
13% of your home's energy is used for appliances.

- ▶ If your appliances and electronics have energy-saving settings, use them.
- ▶ If they're nearing voting age, consider replacing them with a new, energy-efficient model. Consider both the purchase price and operating cost when buying new appliances.
- ▶ Use smart power strips for smaller appliances and electronics that continue to draw power even when turned off.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

Save ENERGY Save MONEY

ELECTRIC CO-OPS WERE CONSTRUCTED WITH LINES, POLES AND THE FOOLHARDY NOTION THAT WE ALL PROSPER BY HELPING EACH OTHER.



It seems obvious in retrospect, but there was a time when getting electricity outside of the city limits wasn't a given. Today, the spirit of community that co-ops were built upon continues to thrive. And as members we can all lend a hand by saving energy. Learn how at TogetherWeSave.com.



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