

What's Good for the Members Is Good for the Co-op



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER LEROY T. SKLOSS

The effectiveness and vitality of electric cooperatives testify that the cooperative business model is working. One of the amazing facts about electric co-ops is that they have operated in the United States for more than 75 years, and during that time, the basic model hasn't changed.

Electric cooperative members and co-op staff don't want to miss a single opportunity to keep the cost of electricity to a minimum. For us, that goal involves minimizing expenses and maintaining a quality system that delivers the kind of service members expect and deserve.

The co-op focuses on keeping expenses down without compromising service, and members can also play a role. The most effective way to lower your monthly bill is through energy conservation.

Factors that affect the level of your energy consumption at home include the energy efficiency of your home, the number and type of electric appliances used, and your household's lifestyle. As a conscientious co-op member, you might want to look at these three areas to find ways to minimize your consumption.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY: The type of home you live in represents a decision to consume a certain range of electricity each month. The energy efficiency of a structure plays a major role in determining how much electricity is actually used. With less-than-recommended insulation, inefficient heating and cooling systems, inefficient appliances, and leaky doors and windows, a smaller home may use more energy than a larger, energy-efficient home. If your home is leaky, weatherstripping and caulking are inexpensive ways to stop air infiltration and are tasks you can do yourself.

QUANTITY AND TYPE OF ELECTRIC APPLIANCES: It's especially important to make sure that appliances—including air-cooling and heating systems—have good energy-efficiency ratings. As computers and other electronic appliances have become a greater part of household life, their presence adds to the demand for energy. Without really thinking about the additional energy use, families might add TV sets, game systems and computers to the home; over time, the sum of those additions can drive up demand for power. The newest technologies and devices might make our lives easier, but their overall cost involves the electricity necessary to keep them running.

When replacing appliances, look for the Energy Star label to help ensure that those additions to your home are not going to consume any more electricity than necessary. All appliances should be kept in good repair—for safety and efficiency. That's especially true of your home's air-conditioning system. A thorough maintenance check by a qualified technician should be an annual ritual. Changing your system's filters at least monthly is also important. A clean filter allows the system to run more efficiently and do its job properly.

LIFESTYLE AND ENERGY USE: If you're "hot natured," you may prefer to frequently cycle the air conditioner. If that's the case, be aware that your choice has an effect on your electric bill. Similarly, having a lot of people doing things—such as leaving doors open, taking long, hot showers and leaving lights or appliances on when not in use—can drive up the demand for kilowatt-hours. Even with our modest cost per kWh, consuming more power means a higher electric bill.

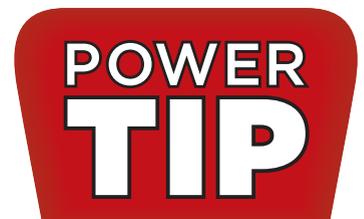


Clarence Janysek Honored at Luncheon

Clarence Janysek was honored March 13 with a retirement luncheon celebrating his 31 years of service to Karnes Electric Cooperative.

Janysek began working for KEC on October 2, 1978, as a right-of-way crewman. In January 1981, he became a construction helper, then in March 2008, he became the custodian and remained in that position until going on long-term disability in September 2009.

The KEC Board of Directors and employees want to wish Janysek, his wife Linda, and their family many years of continued health and happiness.



Save **ENERGY** • Save **MONEY**

Properly installed shades can be one of the most effective ways to improve windows' energy efficiency.

Lower them during summer; in winter, raise them during the day and lower them at night on south-facing windows. Dual shades, with reflective white coating on one side and a heat-absorbing dark color on the other, can be reversed with the seasons and save even more energy.

And, adding awnings and solar screens outside is effective in reducing heat-gain during the summer.

Learn more at EnergySavers.gov.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy



Stay Cool with the Right Fan

If the warm spring weather tempts you to turn on your air conditioning too early, don't do it.

Reach for your ceiling fan instead.

Ceiling fans can make a room feel cooler, and they use 90 percent less energy than an air conditioner.

If you're looking into getting a new ceiling fan, answer these five questions:

1. HOW BIG IS YOUR ROOM? The bigger the room, the longer the blades should be. A rule of thumb: For a room smaller than 100 square feet, such as a bathroom or laundry room, buy a fan with 32- to 36-inch blades. For a medium-sized bedroom, office or kitchen—up to about 225 square feet—you'll need a fan with blades measuring 42 to 48 inches. Large master bedrooms and dining rooms up to 485 square feet: 50- to 56-inch blades. Large rooms such as a living room—up to around 600 square feet: 60 inches or more.

2. WHAT STYLE AND COLOR DO YOU LIKE? Fan blades come in painted colors, metallic coatings and wood finishes so you can match them to your furniture, floor or even cabinet hardware. Some manufacturers make two-sided blades so you can flip them when you're in the mood for a new look.

3. HOW HIGH IS THE CEILING? For the most comfortable results, install the fan 7 to 8 feet from the floor. If your room has a high ceiling, buy an extension downrod to lower the fan to the ideal location. Some manufacturers have special close-mount fans for rooms with extra-low ceilings.

4. DO YOU WANT TO COMBINE THE FAN WITH A LIGHT? Most manufacturers will double them up for you. Fixtures with downlighting create a traditional effect, while those with uplighting will bounce the light off the ceiling to diffuse the light and make it softer. If you do opt for lighting with your fan, be sure to look for the Energy Star label for the light. Energy Star-qualified units are more than 50 percent more efficient than conventional units and can save you money on your utility bills.

5. HOW DO YOU WANT TO OPERATE THE FAN? You can pull a cord, flip a light switch or tap a remote control.

Now that you've picked the perfect fan, be sure to use it wisely. In the summer, run the blades to push air downward to create a cool breeze. If you raise your thermostat by only 2 degrees and use your ceiling fan, you can lower air-conditioning costs by up to 14 percent over the course of the cooling season. And remember: Ceiling fans cool only people, not the room, so when you leave the room, turn the ceiling fan off.

Karnes Electric Cooperative

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

GENERAL MANAGER

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

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FIND US ON THE WEB

karnesec.org

Include Garage in Spring Cleaning

If your garage doubles as a catch-all room for junk you haven't gotten around to organizing, your house has a den of hazards waiting to happen.

If you want your garage to be safe for your family to park cars, retrieve sports equipment or even root around for lost stuff, clean it up.



Storing gasoline in a closed garage is not a good idea, but if you must, be sure it is in a proper container and tightly sealed.

Here are seven ways to make your garage safer:

1. Keep power tools, extension cords and adapters unplugged and stored out of the reach of children.
2. Ventilate your garage with fans or ceiling vents.
3. Keep raccoons, squirrels, mice and other rodents out of the garage by storing garbage and uneaten food away from it. Such pests can nest in air intakes and vents and chomp on wiring.
4. If you must store fuel in the garage, keep it in proper containers that are free from corrosion and sealed tightly.
5. Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in the garage.

6. Clean up spills. They could be flammable or dangerous to children and pets.
7. Discard old batteries by taking them to a recycling center.

If you store valuables in your garage, check with your insurance agent to make sure the contents of your garage are covered in case of fire or other damage.

Why Is My Electric Bill More Than My Neighbor's?

You have a television, DVD player, microwave oven, electric range and cook-top, refrigerator/freezer, stereo, heat pump and personal computer. So does your next-door neighbor. So why is your electric bill almost twice as high every month?

Consider: How well are your walls insulated compared to your neighbor's? Do you take longer, hotter showers? Are you cooking gourmet meals or baking from scratch while your neighbor opts to microwave? Does the TV keep you company even when you're not watching it?

Just as no two families live alike, no two electric bills are the same. Comparing your monthly statement to anyone else's would be like comparing your weekly grocery tabs. Two families of four will most likely not spend exactly the same amount on food because their tastes and habits are different.

Think about the conveniences for which you might be willing to pay, even though your neighbor isn't. Are you more comfortable sleeping in an extra-cool house on hot summer nights? Maybe your neighbor's thermostat setting is a few degrees warmer at bedtime.

Do members of your family entertain themselves in separate rooms after dinner—turning a light on in each—while the folks next door gather all together in a family room to watch baseball games on TV or play a board game?

The way to lower your electric costs is to use energy more efficiently before the bill comes. If your neighbor's bill is lower than yours, ask for some tips about how to save money by conserving energy around the house or contact Karnes Electric Cooperative for energy-saving ideas.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

This year's annual meeting will be held on Monday, June 3.

Next month's issue of Texas Co-op Power will contain important information about the meeting.



Memorial Day

Karnes EC's offices will be closed Monday, May 27, in observance of the holiday.

As always, crews will be standing by in the event of an outage. We wish you and yours a happy, safe and restful holiday.

Wicked Wiring Warnings

What is your home telling you?

Our homes are a lot like us. They age just like we do. They begin to creak and moan. They begin to show their age. They, like us, have aging systems, some that can be seen and some that cannot. Just as we need to get checkups from time to time, our homes also need checkups. When it comes to the electrical system in our homes, it is important to schedule a house call in response to these warning signs. If you notice any of these issues, you should immediately call a licensed electrical contractor and have him or her give your home a checkup.

YOU EXPERIENCE FREQUENT TRIPPED CIRCUIT BREAKERS OR BLOWN FUSES. Breakers and fuses are rated in amperes and protect the wiring in our houses from overcurrent. Overcurrent may result from an overloaded or short circuit, or a ground fault.

YOU FEEL A TINGLING SENSATION WHEN YOU TOUCH AN APPLIANCE OR METAL OBJECT. Getting a shock from appliances in your house can indicate a more serious problem. You should immediately unplug the appliance and discontinue its use.

YOU NOTICE THAT A RECEPTACLE OR WALL SWITCH BECOMES DISCOLORED OR IS ABNORMALLY WARM AND/OR SHOOTS SPARKS. This could indicate arcing, smoldering or burning happening behind your outlets due to loose connections, damaged or improperly installed wiring in the outlet, or a problem with the receptacle itself. You should immediately avoid using the outlet or switch and contact a licensed electrical contractor as soon as possible to correct the problem.

YOU DETECT A PERSISTENT BURNING SMELL FROM A LIGHT FIXTURE, APPLIANCE, ROOM OR AREA. This may indicate that a light fixture may have the wrong size lamp. Use only the specified wattage and trims indicated by the lighting fixture. It may also indicate that an appliance is overheating or malfunctioning. In this case, unplug the appliance or turn off the circuit breaker until further investigated.

YOU SEE FLICKERING OR DIMMING LIGHTS. This could indicate loose connections at electrical termination points on switches causing arcing and overheating. Left uncorrected, this poses a fire hazard. It could also indicate a short in the wiring system.

In summary, all these warning signs can be detected when your home is given its proper electrical checkup. A licensed electrical contractor may recommend the installation of lifesaving devices, such as ground-fault circuit interrupters, smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors. He or she may also introduce you to arc-fault circuit interrupters, which have been required in new homes since 2000. These devices are intended to provide protection from the effects of arc faults and de-energize circuits before a fire can start. He or she might suggest that you get a total rewire of your electrical system. This is also recommended by the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the National Fire Protection Association and Underwriters Laboratories when a home is more than 40 years old. Know the warning signs, and if your electrical system is beginning to show its age, get your checkup to ensure the safe and proper operation of your electrical system.

Source: *Safe Electricity*



Even Superheroes Need To Be Careful Around Electricity

We all know the wonderful things electricity makes possible. There are TVs, video games and computers. Not to mention that electricity keeps us warm in winter, cool in summer, cooks our food, heats our water and keeps our homes and schools bright, even when there's no sunshine outdoors.

While we enjoy what electricity provides, we should also remember that electricity is powerful, and we must be careful when using it. Here are some kid-friendly tips on electrical safety:

- ▶ Never touch damaged electrical cords or ones that have wire showing.
- ▶ Never stick your finger or any object into light sockets or electrical outlets. Ask your mom or dad to buy plug covers so no one will get hurt.
- ▶ Do not pull on cords to unplug them. Hold onto the plug.
- ▶ Do not touch anything electrical while you are wet or standing in water.
- ▶ Did you know that electricity can travel down kite strings or wires? Never fly kites or balloons near any power lines.
- ▶ Do not climb power poles or trees close to power lines.
- ▶ If one of your toys gets caught in electrical equipment, don't touch it. Find an adult to help you.



Any discoloration around an electrical outlet requires immediate attention and repair.

Costs for Consumer Goods Climb

Electricity prices hold line

Popular demand and short supply drive the cost of everyday necessities higher. Some price tag changes—like the cost to fill your car’s gas tank—are obvious to anyone driving down the road. Other increases at the grocery store are more subtle but still affect your family’s bottom line. Compare the average price increase of a few household expenses to see how the rising cost of electricity stacks up.

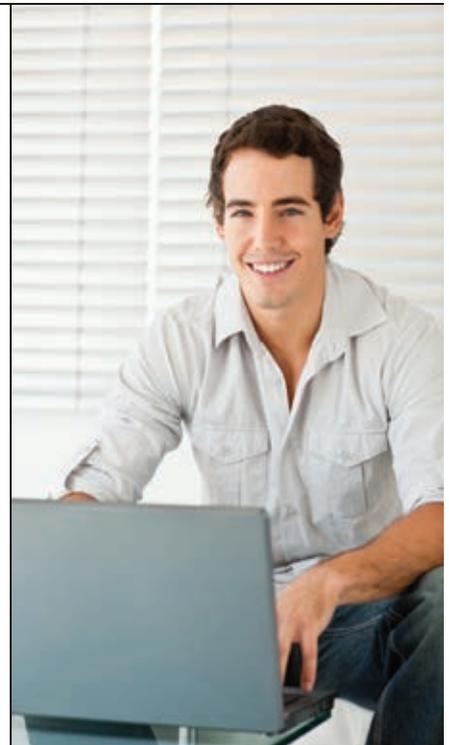
The cost for a gallon of unleaded gasoline shot up 11.1 percent on average every year between 2002 and 2012, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Eggs don’t go over easy—the cost for a dozen eggs increased 7.8 percent. Bakers watched the price of flour rise 5.7 percent, and apples felt the crunch with a jump of 4.8 percent—every year.

The cost of electricity rose at a slower pace—3.2 percent a year, on average. Unlike eggs or apples, electricity is a 24-hour-a-day commodity. Despite energy-efficiency advancements, the average household uses more electronic gadgets—and needs more power to operate them—every year.

In the past 30 years, the portion of residential electricity used by appliances and electronics has increased from 17 to 31 percent, according to the Residential Energy Consumption Survey by EIA. More homes than ever have major appliances and central air conditioning. Digital video recorders, computers and multiple television sets are commonplace as well.

Karnes Electric Cooperative works hard to keep your electricity safe, reliable and affordable. But you play a role in the price of your power. Just as you might cut back on eggs if your budget is tight, we can work with you to cut your monthly electric bill.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Energy Information Administration

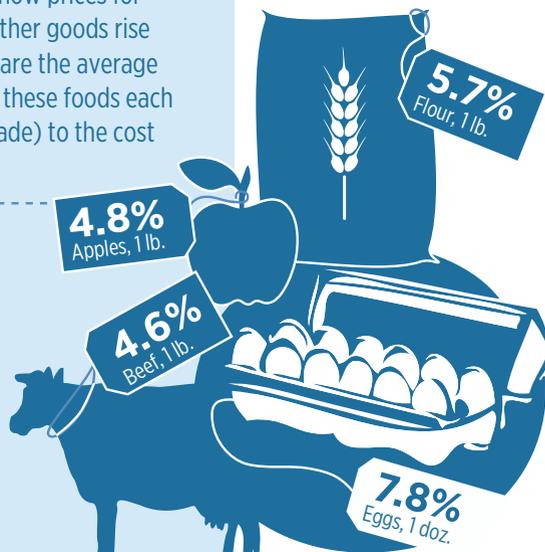
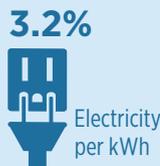


**Shop online,
pay bills,
download
music, watch
movies—
faster!**

**HIGH-SPEED INTERNET
FOR THE KARNES
COMMUNITY**

‘CHECK OUT’ THE VALUE OF ELECTRICITY

Next time you’re at the grocery store, check out how prices for beef, eggs and other goods rise over time. Compare the average price increase of these foods each year (over a decade) to the cost of electricity.



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index 12-month percent change averaged from 2002 through 2012

Getting Comfortable with Home Energy Efficiency

Melanie wants her home to be comfortable, cheerful and bright. Blowing winter gusts send her to the thermostat to fight the chill. In the summer, she nudges the temperature down to keep cool, all while avoiding her husband's detection.

Melanie's husband, Scott, frowns on tweaking the thermostat. He canvases the home, turning off lights. While his wife finds comfort leaving lights on and turning up (or down) heat, he finds comfort in lower utility bills.

Fortunately, a comfortable middle ground is affordable and available. Energy-saving products combined with efficient home-design trends and building techniques are revolutionizing home energy use.

Regardless of location or type of residence, people like Scott and Melanie are finding that being energy efficient at home not only brings comfort, but also positively affects both wallets and the world.

"If you're concerned about the environment, being energy efficient is a priority," says Brian Sloboda, senior program manager with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. "But efficient energy use is important for other reasons. First, you save money. Second, you save energy, which leads back to saving money."

It's easy for us to ignore being wise with our energy consumption. After all, electricity is a good value, especially when compared with other forms of energy. Unlike other sources of energy, however, electricity is very flexible—we can use electricity for everything from helping with cooking and cleaning to powering entertainment devices and even our automobiles. Regardless, it makes sense (and cents) to be more energy efficient in all areas, especially at home.

But how can Melanie still be comfortable and avoid sending Scott into a frenzy when he opens the monthly power bill? Experts say future home construction and remodeling will focus on energy efficiency. One of the key things to focus on in new construction or remodeling is properly sealing a home.

The best time to focus on energy savings is at construction, but there are tasks any homeowner can do to better seal penetrations and gaps between the conditioned space—areas of the home that we heat and cool—and unconditioned spaces. Find and seal gaps, cracks and penetrations near plumbing, cables, utilities, furnace runs, fireplace installations and electrical wiring—anything that may let air move from one space to another. Weatherstripping, caulking and insulation are the keys to tightening up your home. When you seal these gaps in a typical home, energy costs can drop between 20 and 40 percent.

Energy efficiency comes not only from construction methods, but also from a home's appliances. Like the houses themselves, many appliances are designed and manufactured with an emphasis on saving energy. Clothes washers, refrigerators and other household aids bearing the Energy Star logo are specifically designed for a higher level of efficiency.



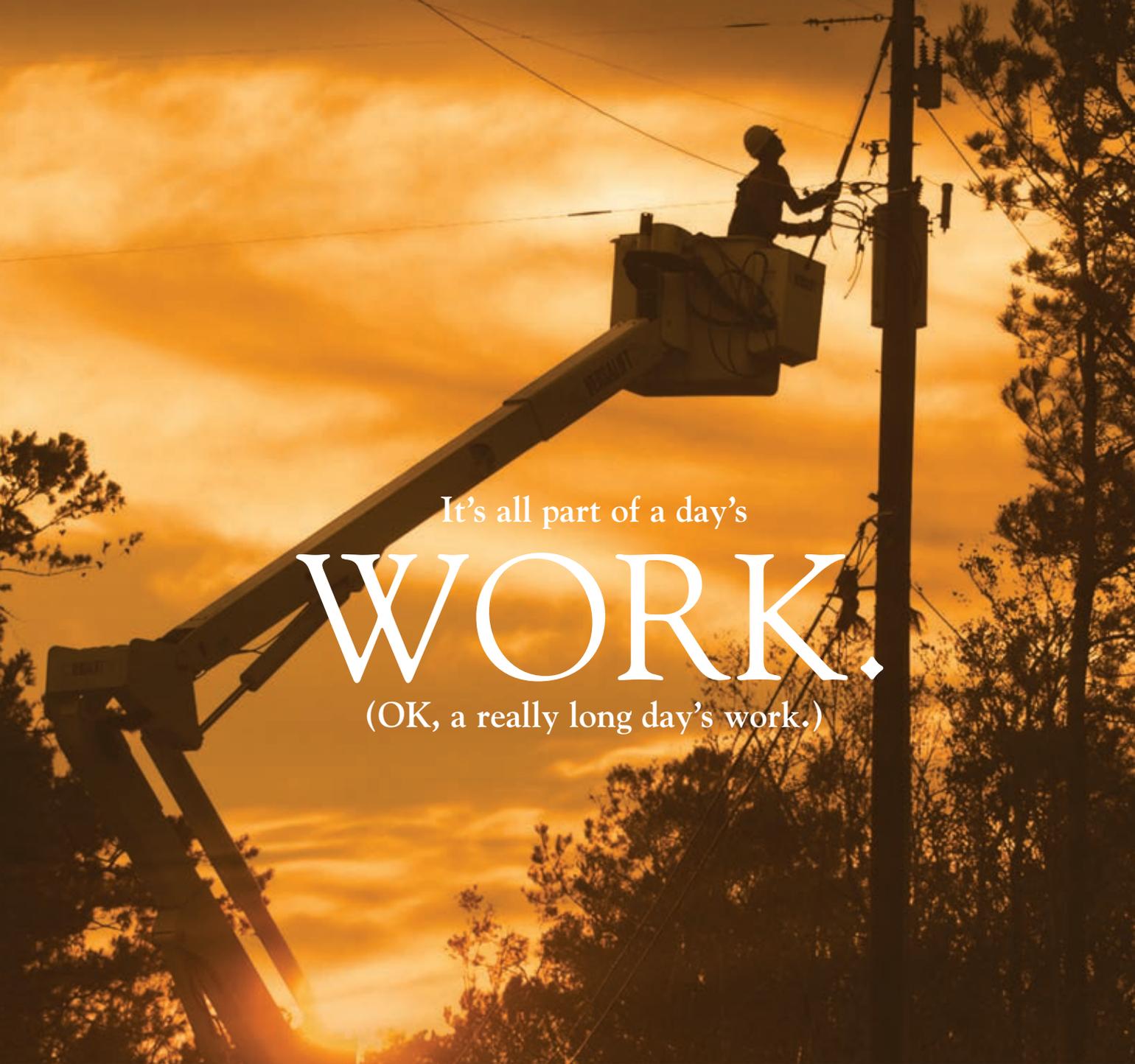
Caulking is a simple, do-it-yourself project that can help seal your home and lower your electricity bill.

Energy Star is branded by the Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency, and the endorsement means a better long-term value and shows that the manufacturer has tested the appliance to prove that it provides significant energy savings over comparable products.

Perhaps nothing is as valuable to consumers as savings realized after installing a geothermal heat pump as an alternative to more traditional means of heating and cooling. Using a series of liquid-filled loops buried at least 10 feet underground, this system uses the steady temperature below ground to transfer heat.

Installation costs are high, but geothermal heat pumps deliver a 30 to 70 percent reduction in home heating and cooling costs. Plus, by using a desuperheater, geothermal heat pumps deliver around 60 percent of a family's hot water heating needs at no additional cost. This waste-heat recovery system works best in the summer but also provides "free" hot water in the other months.

In addition to electricity savings, geothermal heat pumps are also eligible for tax credits. High-efficiency geothermal heat pumps will typically pay for themselves in a few years.



It's all part of a day's

WORK.

(OK, a really long day's work.)

At your electric cooperative, we're not satisfied until every one of our members is satisfied. That's why our employees have a passion for their jobs. We constantly train and provide them with all of the latest resources to get their job done and get it done correctly the first time—no matter how long it takes. Our mission is to provide reliable electricity and peace of mind to all of our members.



Looking out for you