

# Co-ops Helped Make America Grow



## MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER LEROY T. SKLOSS

As the United States celebrates its 237th birthday on July 4, Karnes Electric Cooperative is observing its 75th anniversary. That's just a fraction of the age of our nation, but over time, I think this and the nation's more than 900 fellow electric co-ops have greatly enhanced the quality of life of Americans of all stripes.

Electric co-ops powered the American dream for the farmers and townfolk who received the tool of electricity that helped them achieve the kind of prosperity that their urban countrymen had enjoyed for years.

And the origins of our co-op and the hundreds of others like it across the nation have their roots in American democracy. The Rural Electrification Administration was created in 1935 by executive order of President Franklin Roosevelt, and it quickly became a permanent institution with a stamp of approval from Congress.

The REA harnessed the power of the federal government to help rural folks organize cooperatives to provide electricity to their neighbors in places where no for-profit company would go. The loans that made it possible to start these democratically governed nonprofits would eventually be paid back, and the program was so successful that within a generation, virtually all rural areas in the country had access to reliable electricity.

Electricity changed life not only in rural areas but also in the country as a whole. The availability of electricity opened up a whole new market, because people in rural areas could finally take advantage of its labor-saving power.

It increased productivity on farms by replacing back-breaking labor with more efficient machines. The demand for electric appliances created wealth with increased manufacturing and sales. The number of tradespeople in professions such as electrician and plumber rose. Cooperatives themselves provided good jobs in the office and in the field. Karnes Electric is still a major employer in our region.

Electric cooperatives have been proudly powering this great nation for more than 75 years.

Electric co-ops haven't forgotten that our roots are planted in democracy. Our very structure depends on governing boards of members elected to make decisions for everyone's benefit. And we work with our statewide and national organizations to represent the interests of rural Americans in the Texas Legislature and the U.S. capital.

And this Independence Day, as we celebrate the founders of this great nation, we also would like to salute those who founded this and other rural electric cooperatives. They helped transform the U.S. into the prosperous power that it is today.

Electric co-ops haven't forgotten that our roots are planted in democracy. Our very structure depends on governing boards of members elected to make decisions for everyone's benefit. And we work with our statewide and national organizations to represent the interests of rural Americans in the Texas Legislature and the U.S. capital.



## Down, But Not Out

**Downed power lines can carry an electric current strong enough to cause serious injury or possibly death. The following tips can help you stay safe around downed lines:**

- ▶ If you see a downed power line, move away from the line and anything touching it and call local law enforcement immediately.
- ▶ The proper way to move away from the line is to shuffle away with small steps, keeping your feet together and on the ground at all times. This will minimize the potential for a strong electric shock. Electricity wants to move from a high-voltage zone to a low-voltage zone—and it could do that through your body.
- ▶ If you see someone who is in direct or indirect contact with the downed line, do not touch the person. You could become the next victim. Call 911 instead.
- ▶ Do not attempt to move a downed power line or anything in contact with the line by using another object such as a broom or stick. Even nonconductive materials such as wood or cloth, if slightly wet, can conduct electricity and then electrocute you.
- ▶ Do not drive over downed lines.
- ▶ If you are in a car that contacts a downed line, stay in your vehicle. Honk your horn for help and tell others to stay away from your vehicle.
- ▶ If you must leave your car because it's on fire, jump out of the vehicle with both feet together and avoid contact with the car and the ground at the same time.

# Karnes Electric Awards Scholarships



GABRIELLA BROOKS



KALEIGH JARZOMBEK



MOLLY JARZOMBEK



LUKE JIMERSON



HAILEY JOHNSON



KELLI KOLODZIEJ



ROBERT MOLINA



SARAH PRUSKI



PRESTON WEDEN



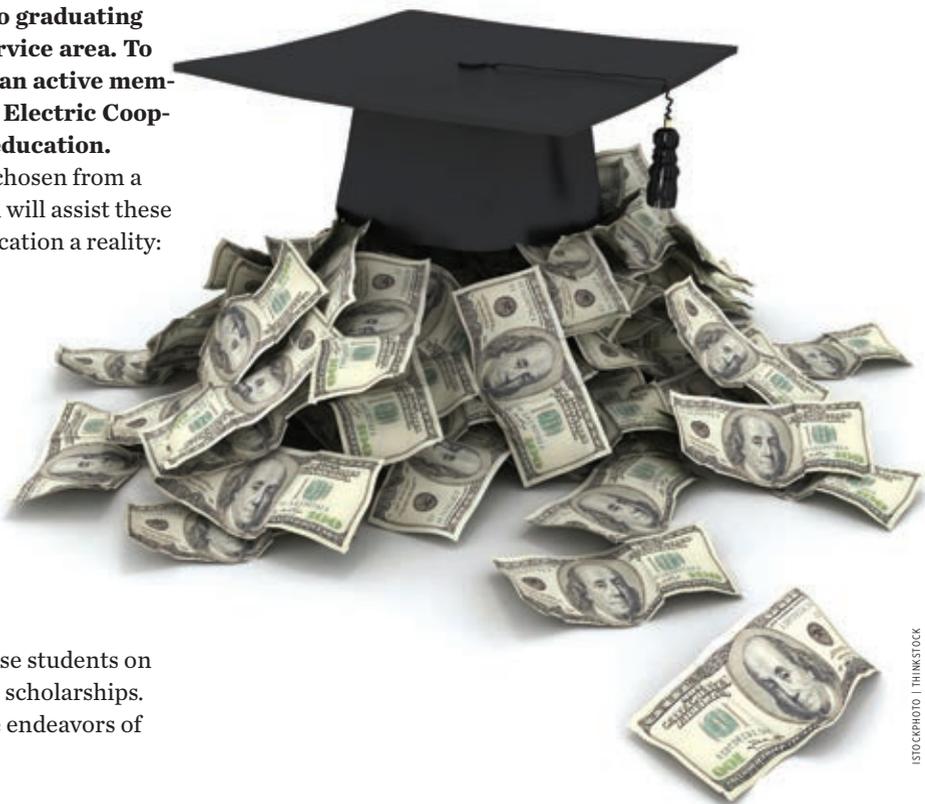
KATY WIATREK

**Karnes Electric Cooperative is pleased to announce the recipients of KEC's Scholarship Program for graduating high school seniors of 2013. This year, the scholarship award in the amount of \$1,000 was given to graduating high school seniors in Karnes Electric's service area. To be eligible, an applicant must be a child of an active member receiving electric service from Karnes Electric Cooperative and have a desire to further their education.**

This year, the following 10 recipients were chosen from a field of highly qualified candidates. This award will assist these students in making their dreams of higher education a reality:

- GABRIELLA BROOKS**, *Pleasanton High School*
- KALEIGH JARZOMBEK**, *Poth High School*
- MOLLY JARZOMBEK**, *Poth High School*
- LUKE JIMERSON**, *Falls City High School*
- HAILEY JOHNSON**, *Karnes City High School*
- KELLI KOLODZIEJ**, *Poth High School*
- ROBERT MOLINA**, *Runge High School*
- SARAH PRUSKI**, *East Central High School*
- PRESTON WEDEN**, *Jourdanton High School*
- KATY WIATREK**, *Falls City High School*

Karnes Electric Cooperative congratulates these students on their accomplishments and for receiving these scholarships. Congratulations and best wishes for the future endeavors of each and every senior in the class of 2013.





HEMERA | THINKSTOCK

# Stay Safe Around Fireworks

The summer heat, the smell of hamburgers on the grill and the sound of fireworks can only mean one thing: It's Independence Day. But before your family celebrates, make sure everyone knows about fireworks safety.

If not handled properly, fireworks can cause burn and eye injuries in kids and adults. The best way to protect your family is to not use any fireworks at home. Attend public fireworks displays and leave the lighting to the professionals.

Lighting fireworks within city limits is illegal in many places, so if you still want to use them, be sure to check with your local law enforcement first. If they're legal where you live, keep these safety tips in mind:

- ▶ Kids should never play with fireworks. Anyone using sparklers should make sure they keep them outside and away from the face, clothing and hair. Sparklers can reach 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit—hot enough to melt gold.
- ▶ Buy only legal fireworks. (Legal fireworks have a label with the manufacturer's name and directions; the labels on illegal ones can carry clues, such as misspellings, or can be unlabeled.) Store them in a cool, dry place until ready to use.
- ▶ Never try to make your own fireworks.
- ▶ Always use fireworks outside and have a hose or fire extinguisher nearby in case of accidents.
- ▶ Steer clear of fireworks after they are lit. Fireworks have been known to backfire and shoot off in the wrong direction. Never throw or point fireworks at someone, even in jest.
- ▶ Don't hold fireworks in your hand or have any part of your body over them when lighting. Wear some sort of eye protection, and avoid carrying fireworks in your pocket—the friction could set them off.
- ▶ Point fireworks away from homes, and keep them away from brush, leaves and flammable substances. The National Fire Protection Association estimates that local fire departments respond to more than 50,000 fires caused by fireworks each year.
- ▶ Light one firework at a time (not in glass or metal containers). Never relight a dud.
- ▶ Don't allow kids to pick up pieces of fireworks after an event. Some may still be ignited and can explode at any time.
- ▶ Soak all used fireworks in a bucket of water before throwing them in the trash can.
- ▶ Be considerate of your pets. Animals have sensitive ears and can be extremely frightened or stressed on the Fourth of July. Keep pets indoors to reduce the risk that they'll run loose or get injured.

Fireworks are meant to be enjoyed, but you'll enjoy them more knowing your family is safe. Take extra precautions this Fourth of July, and make your holiday a blast!



## Karnes Electric Cooperative

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

### GENERAL MANAGER

Leroy T. Skloss

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Arlon Retzloff, President, *Whitsett*  
 Martin R. Harris Jr., Vice President, *Tilden*  
 Larry R. Schendel, Secretary-Treasurer, *Runge*  
 Frank A. Geyer Jr., Assistant Secretary-Treasurer, *Charlotte*  
 Paul T. Brysch Jr., *Karnes City*  
 David C. Davidson, *Poteet*  
 Shirley Hofmann, *Runge*

### 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](http://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](http://karnesec.org)



Board President Arlon Retzlloff congratulates Director Shirley Hofmann on 15 years of service. ▼

▲ Service award winners recognized at the annual meeting were, from left, back row: Janet Scheffler, Barbara Kotzur, Fred Currie, Fernando Garza, Jesse Gonzales, Quint Woelfel, Patrick Janysek and Robert Bazan; and front row: Emily Janysek, Brenda Quintanilla, Barbara Benavides, Hector Lopez and Daniel Saucedo.



# Karnes Electric Cooperative Celebrates 75 Years

**Karnes Electric Cooperative celebrated 75 years of providing electric utility service at the June 3 annual membership meeting at the Karnes City High School Auditorium. Members and guests gathered to exercise their rights as member-owners of their cooperative and have a chance at receiving one of 60 door prizes.**

KEC President Arlon Retzlloff called the meeting to order at 7 p.m., and Director David C. Davidson opened with an invocation. A video on the history of the formation of electric cooperatives was then shown. KEC Secretary-Treasurer Larry Schendel presented the Financial Report and noted that the cooperative’s 2012 Annual Report can be found in the June 2013 issue of Texas Co-op Power.

Schendel reported that the cooperative remains financially sound. Karnes Electric Cooperative ended the year with an equity ratio of 57.9 percent and total margins of \$5,670,589. The cooperative finished the year with a total outstanding long-term debt of \$28,039,180 and total assets of \$106,062,999.

The cooperative refunded capital credits totaling \$390,077. This increases the total amount of capital credits refunded to members to \$4,700,792. Schendel reminded those present that “this is a benefit you enjoy for being a member-owner of this cooperative.”

Retzlloff presented the President’s Report and recognized the efforts of Romeo Korth and Benedict “Ben” Urbanczyk, who along with others, were instrumental in the formation of KEC. On September 17, 1938, the first board of directors of KEC was elected, and the dream of electrifying rural Karnes County and the surrounding areas began to take shape. On February 1, 1940, the first lights on KEC’s system were turned on at the home of H.B. Armstrong—and the rest is history. Because of a dream and the determination of the original group of members and others who worked so hard to provide electricity to the rural areas that the investor-owned utilities deemed unprofitable to serve, your cooperative has become a great success.

Today, Karnes Electric provides electricity to 17,782 meters over 4,098 miles of line throughout parts of 12 counties. Electricity has become something that we all take for granted. Few people actually have an idea of what life would be like without computers, televisions, microwaves and video games. To help with the ever-increasing demand for electricity, the South Texas Electric Cooperative Board of Directors approved a new 225-megawatt gas generation project to be built in the Rio Grande Valley. The land has been purchased, and the permitting process has begun. Just like the original group that worked so hard to form this cooperative, your board of directors, along



Joseph Pacheco and Lucas Janysek were among the scholarship winners recognized. ▼



with other power-supply boards, continually looks to the future to ensure that we always have a reliable source of power available at a reasonable price.

The focus of the meeting shifted to the General Manager's Report with General Manager Leroy T. Skloss thanking everyone for attending.

Skloss then talked about the effect that the Eagle Ford oil activity is having on our system. It has been the focal point of daily activity at KEC for more than two years. Each day continues to bring new challenges. The KEC system was not designed to handle the type of load growth we are experiencing. During the past two years, we have built seven substations and 104 miles of line and added 1,557 new accounts. In addition, we have upgraded or rebuilt 86 miles of existing power lines that were too small to handle the size of the loads that are being added.

As a side benefit to KEC, this growth has allowed us to build additional infrastructure in areas where it would not have been feasible due to meter density and associated costs. Overall, it has provided great access to new service that previously might have been cost-prohibitive. Skloss thanked the membership and employees for their cooperation in making these changes and additions possible.

Skloss continued, saying that over the past 16 years, the cooperative has awarded a total of 160 scholarships totaling \$120,200. He then recognized the 2013 winners of ten \$1,000 Karnes Electric Scholarships. This year's winners are: Gabriella Brooks, Pleasanton High School; Kaleigh Jarzombek and Molly

Jarzombek, Poth High School; Luke Jimerson, Falls City High School; Hailey Johnson, Karnes City High School; Kelli Kolodziej, Poth High School; Robert Molina, Runge High School; Sarah Pruski, East Central High School; Preston H. Weden, Jourdanton High School; and Katy Wiatrek, Falls City High School.

Skloss also recognized this year's winners of the Texas Electric Cooperatives Loss Control Program educational scholarship in the amount of \$500, Lucas Janysek, Joseph Pacheco and Lani Pitts, all of Karnes City High School.

Skloss' report concluded with the recognition of employees for their dedicated service to Karnes Electric Cooperative: Janet Scheffler, 40 years; Daniel Saucedo, 35 years; Barbara Benavides, 30 years; Quint Woelfel, Patrick Janysek and Robert Bazan, 25 years; Brenda Quintanilla, Jesse Gonzales, Emily Janysek and Hector Lopez, 10 years; and Barbara Kotzur, Fred Currie and Fernando Garza, five years.

Director Shirley Hofmann was recognized for 15 years of service to the cooperative.

After a brief intermission, Shawn P. St. Clair, KEC attorney, gave the Report of Election, announcing that Larry R. Schendel of Runge had been re-elected to the Karnes Electric Board of Directors to serve District 1; and Martin R. Harris Jr., of Tilden had been re-elected to serve District 4.

We thank all members and family who attended this year's meeting and also helped make the last 75 years such a success. We look forward to seeing you again next year!

# Cook Food Thoroughly, Cool It Quickly

**A fireworks display might be the highlight of your family's Fourth of July celebration, but your refrigerator can be its hero.**

That's because burns, accidents and large crowds aren't the only holiday dangers from which you need to protect your loved ones. In fact, estimates the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 128,000 people will wind up in the hospital this year because of food poisoning.

Be aware and take care. Here are some tips for keeping your delicious picnic dinner safe:

**USE A FOOD THERMOMETER.** One in four burgers isn't cooked long enough to be safe to eat, says the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Instead of relying on how pink or brown your meat looks to determine if it's safe to eat, use a food thermometer. Don't have one? Neither do 67 percent of American families. Burgers are safe to eat when their internal temperature reaches 160 degrees.

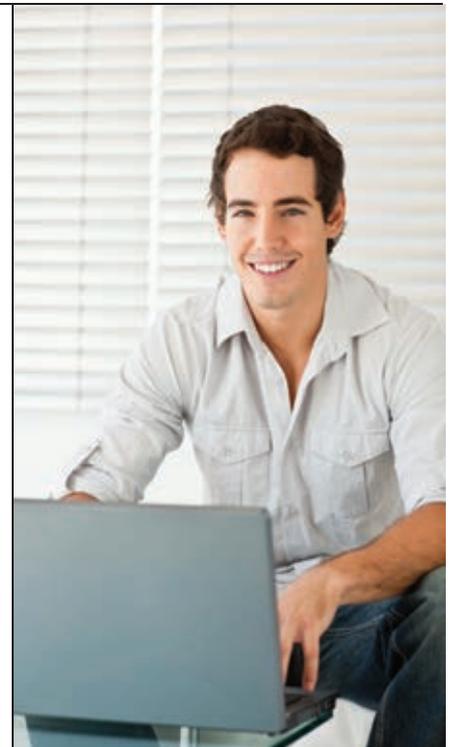
**CLEAN BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER FOOD PREP.** Use soap and water to frequently wipe down surfaces, utensils and your hands when you're handling raw meat. Check your store for sanitation wipes, which can be very handy if you find yourself away from a sink.

**TRIPLE UP ON DISHES.** Use three separate sets of plates and utensils during a cook-out: one for raw meat, another for cooked meat and a third for ready-to-eat food such as raw vegetables. This helps prevent cross-contamination.

**REFRIGERATE.** If you're cooking food in advance of the party, stick the cooked food in the fridge until you're ready to serve. Reheating takes way less time than waiting in the emergency room for your turn to see a doctor.

**BUY A BIG COOLER.** If you're toting cooked food to a picnic away from home, bring a cooler that's big enough for lots of ice and lots of food. Place leftovers in the cooler within an hour after serving if the outdoor temperature is hotter than 90 degrees, or within two hours at room temperature.

**Do you know what internal temperature your hamburger needs to reach to be safely cooked?**



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Before you switch on the lights, we've already put up the poles, connected miles of wire and flipped more than a few switches of our own. All to make sure your life is always "on." Learn more about the power of your co-op membership at [TogetherWeSave.com](http://TogetherWeSave.com).



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