

Help Us Serve You Better



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER LEROY T. SKLOSS

I'd like to ask for you, the almost 10,500-strong membership of Karnes Electric Cooperative, for a little cooperation to help us keep your electric rates as low as possible.

You and your fellow members own Karnes Electric. Because all members share the cost of doing business, the less money we must spend to provide service, the more you save on electric rates.

There are several challenges in keeping power flowing safely and economically, and you can help us overcome many of these.

One big way is to keep your eyes and ears open. If you see something that doesn't look right or looks dangerous, please call us at (830)780-3952.

Report trees encroaching on power lines and watch for signs of theft. Clues such as dangling lines or an open gate at a substation may indicate that copper thieves were at work. Copper theft can cost the co-op—and its members—thousands of dollars. It's also dangerous. Each year in the U.S., criminals are injured and even electrocuted attempting to steal copper wire.

You may hear that someone is getting power for free. If they are on co-op lines, that means they are stealing power from you. The co-op has to pay for all power distributed on our lines, so the money lost is paid by the entire membership.

Besides helping us with your vigilance, you can help us serve you better by making sure your contact information is current. If you have recently changed phone numbers or moved within our territory, give us a call to help us to update our records. This is also true if you move away from co-op lines. Keeping your address updated ensures that we can send you capital credit retirements when they are made.

Finally, help us keep electricity costs nationwide affordable by visiting action.coop, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's effort to persuade the Environmental Protection Agency to not take coal off the table as a fuel for electricity generation. Your voice is important. Please make it heard.

If you spot damage to co-op property, please give Karnes EC a call.



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Prevent Hot Water Scalds

Showers that are too hot, food cooking on the stove and even coffee that hasn't cooled enough can cause a scalding injury.

People are scalded when hot liquid or steam damages one or more layers of skin. Children and senior citizens are most likely to become scald victims.

Here are some ways to prevent scald injuries at home

1. Turn pan handles toward the back of the stove.
2. Plug small appliances such as tea kettles and coffeemakers into outlets on the wall next to the countertop. Avoid draping cords across the room or letting them land on the floor.
3. Install grab bars and nonslip bath mats in tubs and showers so anyone can quickly get away if the water is too hot.
4. Turn down the water heater temperature. It only takes five seconds for 140-degree water to scald a healthy adult. The Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends 120 degrees as the maximum safe residential water temperature.
5. Add antiscald valves onto showerheads and faucets.
6. When you finish your shower, turn the faucet to the "cold" position so the next person won't encounter hot water by surprise. For dual-control faucets, turn the cold-water knob on first and off last.
7. Supervise children while you're cooking and at bath time.



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Want To Win a Trip to the Nation's Capital?

It's Youth Tour Time Again!

Electric cooperatives from across the country will send hundreds of high school students to Washington, D.C., in June for the annual Government-in-Action Youth Tour.

The winner of the Karnes Electric Cooperative Youth Tour Essay Contest will receive a travel package valued at \$2,350 to join other Texas high school students to visit the White House, the U.S. House and Senate chambers, the Supreme Court, Washington National Cathedral, Arlington National Cemetery, the Smithsonian Institution, and many other important national sites. The travel package includes air transportation to and from Washington, D.C., hotels, meals, entrance fees and \$250 cash for miscellaneous expenses.

The 2014 Youth Tour will begin in Irving on June 12 and return on June 20.

Applicants must be high school students who have completed their sophomore year by June 11, 2014, and be a member, or the legal dependent of any member of Karnes Electric Cooperative.

For complete information, call Janet Scheffler at (830) 780-3952. Applications may be picked up at any Karnes Electric Cooperative office or by request at jscheffler@karnesec.org.



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

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

FIND US ON THE WEB

karnesec.org

2014 Scholarships Available

Rural scholarships will be available through Karnes Electric Cooperative again this year. Karnes EC can award scholarships thanks to a law enacted in 1997 that allows nonprofit electric cooperatives to put unclaimed funds—previously collected by the comptroller’s office for the State General Fund—to use for student scholarships.

The Karnes Electric Cooperative Board of Directors has approved awarding 10 scholarships of \$1,000 each this year. These scholarships will be awarded to graduating high school seniors who are legal dependents of active members receiving electric service from Karnes Electric Cooperative.

Applications will be available at all schools in the Karnes Electric service area. Applications must be received by the main office in Karnes City by 5 p.m. April 1. Applications received after April 1 will not be considered. Awards will be announced within 60 days of this date.

Karnes Electric is excited to be able to provide these scholarships. Please check with your school counselor if you or someone you know is interested and meets the qualifications. If you need additional information, contact our main office at (830) 780-3952 and ask to speak to Janet Scheffler or Barbara Kotzur or email bkotzur@karnesec.org.



Heat the Air with Care

Electric space heaters can be an affordable alternative to constantly running a central air system if you are heating just a room in your home. But don't try to replace a central heating system with a portable unit, warns Underwriters Laboratories, an internationally recognized safety testing organization.

If not used carefully, portable heaters can spark a dangerous situation for you and your family.

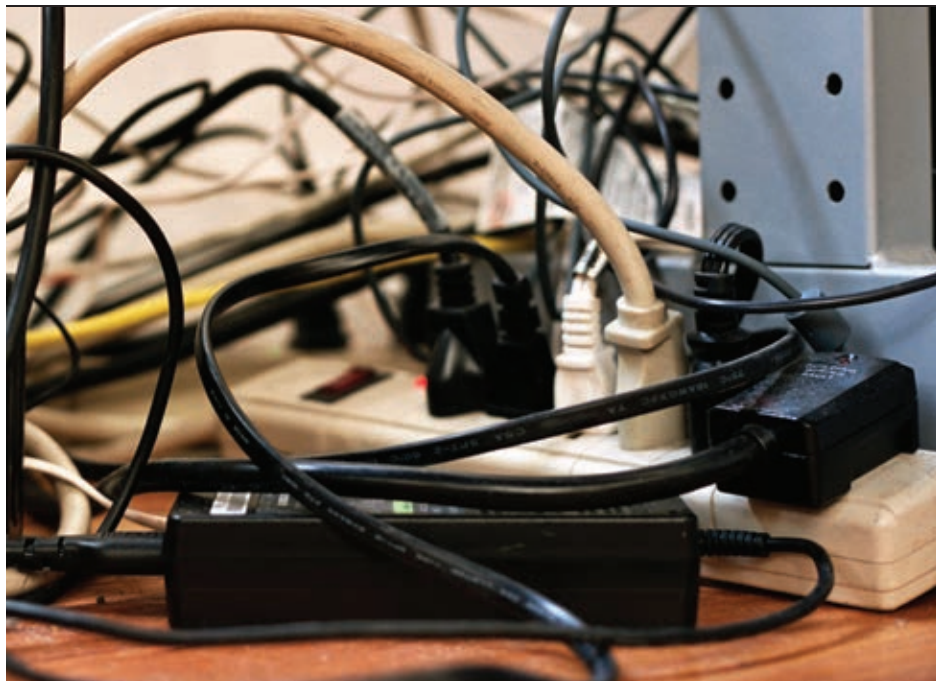
Here are some other safety tips:

- ▶ Don't use the heater unless you have carefully read the instructions. Avoid placing an air heater near water. The box or the instruction manual will indicate whether a heater is intended for use in locations such as bathrooms or outdoors.
- ▶ Carefully inspect your heater and its electrical cord and plug before use. Never use a heater that is damaged.
- ▶ Keep combustibles such as draperies, clothing and furniture at least 3 feet away from the air heater to help prevent risk of fire. Make sure the heater is equipped with a device that will automatically turn it off if it tips over.
- ▶ Unplug heaters when not in use.
- ▶ Pay special attention to children if there is an air heater in the room. Remind them not to poke their fingers or objects through the protective guard. Even the slightest contact with a heating coil can cause a severe electric shock or burn, or start a fire.



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Is something like this lurking under your desk? If so, take the time to untangle the cords and redistribute them to appropriate surge protectors and outlets that can safely carry the load.

Practice Electrical Safety at Work, Too

Your home isn't the only place to control how safely you use electricity. The workplace is another area where good electrical safety habits will pay off.

Here are some ways to prevent accidents involving electricity where you work:

1. Keep your cubicle, office or other work space as clean and uncluttered as possible. Keep walking areas clear of tools and put away any electrical equipment as soon as you're finished using it.
2. If your space is heated by radiators, don't pile stuff on top of them. If it's heated through baseboards, don't block their airflow by stacking files, books, boots or anything else in front of them.
3. Avoid using extension cords except when the tool or device that's plugged into it is in use. When you're finished, unplug it. Extension cords are not designed for permanent use.
4. Turn off computers and appliances when you're not using them.
5. Don't use any electrical equipment that appears to be damaged or whose wires are frayed or cracked.
6. Keep coffee and water away from electronics and other electrical equipment to prevent spills that can cause a shock. Clean up spills immediately.
7. If you use a portable space heater near your desk, turn it off and unplug it every time you walk away, even for a few minutes.
8. Don't overload electrical outlets. Just because a power strip has room for six or seven plugs doesn't mean the electrical circuit you plug the strip into can handle that load.
9. Plug all sensitive electronics into a surge protector.
10. Have your equipment inspected, maintained and replaced regularly to prevent malfunctions that could start fires.

Get a Pet Door That Saves Energy

You've weatherstripped your doors and windows, caulked around electric outlets and other wall penetrations and had your heating system checked by a pro.

Yet you let your dog or cat push through a flap in an uninsulated pet door whenever nature calls.

There's no reason to lose expensive, heated air through a pet door. Manufacturers make energy-efficient models that allow your animals to come and go without wasting electricity.

Here are a few features to consider when replacing your energy-wasting pet door with a more efficient model:

- ▶ Look for an Energy Star-rated model. These are guaranteed to be substantially more energy efficient than older pet doors.



Help Fido enjoy his freedom with an energy-efficient doggy door.

- ▶ Choose a door with magnetic striping so it fits into the door opening as snugly as possible.
- ▶ If you buy a wooden door, look for one that is filled with an insulating material such as polyurethane foam or fiberglass.
- ▶ If you prefer a glass door, buy one with two panes of coated glass that are filled with a nontoxic gas for an extra layer of efficiency.
- ▶ For security, find a door that you can lock at night to keep your pet indoors and unwanted animals out.



Using appliances such as a microwave oven can cut cooking time and save energy.

Cook Up Savings with

Kitchen Efficiency

BY JAMES DULLEY

DEAR JIM: I'm updating my kitchen appliances. I am a bit of a chef, so I want efficient tools. What are the best appliances for cooks? Can you share a few energy-efficient cooking tips?—Barb R.

DEAR BARB: If you're a frequent cook, you consume a lot of energy. The major energy user in the kitchen is the refrigerator. Odds are if you prepare a lot of food, you have a large refrigerator and open it often. Place commonly used items (milk, butter, etc.) near the front of your fridge. Keep the fridge fairly full; use water jugs if needed.

In addition to selecting efficient kitchen appliances, there are simple tips to cut energy use. Keep in mind that cooking tips change from winter to summer.

During winter, the heat and humidity from cooking help warm your house and reduce the heating load on your furnace or heat pump. During summer, this same heat makes your air conditioner run more, increasing electric bills.

When installing kitchen appliances, locate them properly. The range and oven should not be directly next to the refrigerator. Their heat will make the refrigerator compressor run longer. Also, don't put the range or oven under a window; a breeze can carry away heat before it gets into your pots and pans.

When it comes to ovens, electric is preferred by most professionals. It holds more even heat than gas for baking. Another advantage, especially during summer, is that electric does not introduce extra moisture into your house. Extra moisture means more work (and energy use) for your air conditioner. When gas or propane burns, the basic products of combustion are water and carbon dioxide.

Want great energy savings in the kitchen? Use small countertop appliances when possible instead of an oven or stovetop. For example, a toaster oven, especially one with a convection option, uses significantly less electricity than large oven elements.

Microwave ovens are still the most efficient appliance for cooking. They run on lower wattage and offer shorter cook times. However, if you are cooking larger quantities of food, a large oven remains the best choice. Plan your baking to make several recipes simultaneously or consecutively while the oven is hot.

©James Dulley

WARNING:

Don't Bake All Bulbs

Oven lights are handy. Curious if a casserole's ready? Flip the switch. There's no need to open the oven and release heat. But be careful when replacing this little light. Never put a bulb in the oven that's not built for high heat.

Compact fluorescent lamps use less energy than classic incandescent bulbs, but they're not safe in extreme temperatures. Most lighting labels designate safe temperatures, but warnings may be in fine print.

NEED TO REPLACE YOUR OVEN LIGHT? Look for appliance lightbulbs. These bulbs are designed for extreme temperatures in ovens and refrigerators. The hardy bulbs are here to stay; 40-watt appliance bulbs are exempt from federal lighting efficiency standards.

WHY WON'T CFLS WORK? Instead of heating a filament until white-hot to produce light like an incandescent bulb, a fluorescent lamp contains a gas that pro-



CFL lightbulbs are great—but not for every application. A co-op member scraped this melted CFL off the side of his oven. The CFL wasn't designed for oven use.

duces ultraviolet light when excited by electricity. The UV light and the white coating inside the bulb result in visible light. Because CFLs don't use heat to create light, they are 75 percent more energy efficient. But the technology that cuts energy use doesn't stand a chance in an oven's 400-plus degree heat.

Wiring Warning

Electrical problems cause thousands of house fires each year.

If the wiring in your house is 40 years old or more, it might be time to have it checked out. As wiring ages, insulation can get brittle and wires can short circuit.

U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated annual average of 47,820 reported home structure fires involving electrical failure or malfunction from 2007-11, according to the National Fire Protection Association. These fires resulted in 455 civilian deaths, 1,518 civilian injuries and \$1.5 billion in direct property damage.

About half of such fires involve wiring, switches, outlets or lighting equipment, the NFPA reports.



If you have to flip a breaker every time you flip flapjacks on your electric griddle, it's a good idea to have your home wiring inspected and to make the necessary upgrades.

If you don't know how old your wiring is or the last time it was inspected, you can watch for these warning signs of electrical system danger.

- ▶ Outlets or switches feel warm.
- ▶ Fuses frequently blow or circuit breakers trip often.
- ▶ Lights dim or flicker.

If you see any of these problems, contact a qualified electrical contractor for a thorough wiring inspection. While the contractor is there, ask about having arc-fault circuit interrupters installed. Those devices cut the power to an outlet if they detect a short circuit.

Other home electrical fires, the NFPA reported, can be attributed to equipment and appliance malfunctions.

To reduce the chances of starting a fire, replace or repair damaged or loose electrical cords; avoid overloading outlets; and place lamps on level surfaces, away from things that can burn, using bulbs that match the lamp's recommended wattage.

Use extension cords only on a temporary basis. If you find that you are using an extension cord routinely to plug in an appliance or lamp, consider having an electrician add a circuit or outlet.

When you use an extension cord, first inspect it to make sure it's in good working order with no cuts on the insulation and all prongs to fit an outlet. Never remove a grounding pin from a cord to make it fit an outlet. Don't run cords under rugs, where they can overheat.



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Why Animals and Power Don't Mix

BY MEGAN MCKOY-NOE

What do birds, squirrels and power outages have in common? Animals trigger 11 percent of power outages across the nation.

Karnes Electric Cooperative invests time and money every year addressing animal management and removal from co-op lines and facilities.

To ensure safe, reliable power delivery (and healthy wildlife), Karnes EC goes to great lengths to keep animals away from electricity.

Animal Attraction

Electricity seeks the fastest route to the ground. Utility pole insulators keep power flowing safely in your neighborhood, but unwitting squirrels offer high-voltage electricity a way around insulators. If a squirrel doesn't jump far enough, a powerful electric current—up to 12,500 volts—makes the squirrel a conduit to the ground. The squirrel does not survive.

If a squirrel's body falls to the ground, the power blinks but stays on. If it falls into equipment, like a transformer, safety measures shut off power. The co-op then must send a line-worker to remove the animal and restore power.

Squirrels are the main culprit, but they're not alone. Opossums, raccoons, foxes, snakes, birds and other animals trigger outages, too.

Animal attraction to power infrastructure hurts animals and leaves frustrated co-op members in the dark. Cleanup, recovery and restoring power costs utilities between \$15 million and \$18 million a year, estimates Tyco Electronics, a utility equipment firm.



Snakes (like this copperhead) and rats turn a neighborhood's green, pad-mount transformers into cozy dens. The transformers switch electricity from 12,500 to 240 volts. When animals gnaw on wires inside the transformer, they get hurt and cut power.

Grid Guardians

No one wants wildlife hurt. Eighty percent of electric co-ops, public power districts, and public utility districts install animal guards to protect equipment and wayward animals.

Animal guards are not foolproof, but the measures help drive down the number of outages caused by animals. Another option is building habitats to help animals and power safely coexist.

Osprey and other birds of prey are attracted to poles as perches. Raptors often nest on top of utility poles—a dangerous spot. An osprey's nearly 5-foot wingspan can form a conduit between an energized power line and a neutral wire. Like squirrels, these birds may get hurt as high-voltage electricity looks for a path to the ground.

Some co-ops encourage birds to settle on artificial nest platforms. The utility removes a dormant nest from electrical equipment and places the nesting material on a nearby raised platform (as tall or taller than the utility pole). When the birds return to the area, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service claims, odds are good they'll use the safer structure.

Megan McKoy-Noe writes for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. B. Denise Hawkins contributed to this story.

Causes of Co-op Power Interruptions

Power outages may be caused by car accidents damaging poles or other unknown factors. Bad weather remains the primary cause.

PER NUMBER OF INTERRUPTIONS

Weather	31 percent
Equipment	14 percent
Maintenance	12 percent
Animals	11 percent
Planned Outages	7 percent
Other	7 percent
Power Supply	5 percent
Public	5 percent

Source: NRECA



Lines Down—But Not Out

Weather and car accidents are the main causes of downed power lines. Always stay clear of power lines. Even on the ground they can carry an electric current strong enough to cause serious injury or death.

- ▶ If you see a downed power line, move away from the line and anything touching it.
- ▶ 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 to minimize the chance for a human path of electric current.
- ▶ If someone is in direct or indirect contact with the downed line, do not touch the person. Call 911 instead.
- ▶ Don't try to move a downed power line or anything in contact with the line by using another object such as a broom or stick.
- ▶ Don't drive over downed power lines.
- ▶ If you are in your car and it is in contact with a downed line, stay in your car. Honk your horn for help but tell others to stay away from your vehicle. Call 911 if you have a cellphone or ask passersby to do it.