

The Life of a Lineman



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER LEROY T. SKLOSS

They wake before the sun, pour steaming cups of coffee and kiss their families goodbye. After swinging by the office to get the day's orders, they climb into their trucks and head out. Lineworkers form a solid team with one job: Deliver safe, reliable electricity. But that job can change in a million ways when rough weather sets in.

We often take power—and the men and women who provide it—for granted. Let's take a moment and stand in their boots.

Linemen have to work safely and efficiently—all while 40 feet in the air wearing sturdy, thick rubber gloves that protect their lives but make performing many tasks more difficult. On a typical day, lineworkers maintain electrical distribution lines or build service to new homes and businesses. They have a lot on their plates. But when our dispatch center calls with a problem, everything else takes a backseat.

Power restoration takes precedence over a lineworker's daily to-do list. We have crews standing by to serve you 24 hours a day, every day of the week, including weekends and holidays.

Can you imagine getting a call at 3 a.m. telling you that you must go work outside during bad weather? Not many people are even willing to face storms, but our lineworkers face the harsh elements every day, all to serve you.

Lineworkers also focus on safety. The lives of co-workers are on the line. Job safety is important to everyone, no matter the occupation. But for lineworkers, there can be no slipups or careless actions. Mistakes can cost someone a limb or their life. That's one of the reasons linemen form a brotherhood. When linemen put their lives in the hands of co-workers every day, they become more than colleagues—they're family.

That sense of family extends to electric co-ops across the nation. One of our principles is Cooperation Among Cooperatives. We help other co-ops in their time of need, and they extend that service to us, too. It's reassuring to know that if a severe storm strikes, a national team of lineworkers stands ready to answer the call.

To be ready to respond no matter the situation or weather conditions, linemen are highly trained. At Karnes Electric Cooperative, lineworkers go through regular training to ensure that they can work safely with various kinds of equipment. The equipment itself is tested regularly, too.

These highly skilled workers help to provide the power we need to light our homes and businesses every day. They endure harsh weather and long hours, all to make our lives better. Please take a moment to thank them.



2014 Scholarships Available

Rural scholarships will again be available through Karnes Electric Cooperative this year. The Karnes Electric Board of Directors has approved awarding 10 scholarships of \$1,000 each. These scholarships will be awarded to graduating high school seniors who are legal dependents of an active member 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 eligible. Awards will be announced within 60 days of this date.

Karnes Electric is excited to be able to provide these scholarships. They are possible 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's General Fund to use for student scholarships.

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

(C) PHOTODISC



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SAVE THE DATE!

KARNES EC

ANNUAL MEETING

Monday, June 2



Karnes EC Employees Clock

300,000 Hours of Safety

Karnes Electric Cooperative is proud to announce that on December 11, its employees successfully reached 300,000 hours of work without any lost-time accidents. The last lost-time accident was recorded October 12, 2011.

Our safety program has been helpful in the cooperative's effort to make Karnes Electric an accident-free workplace. It not only helps ensure the safety of the employees, but also of the public.

The board of directors and management extend thanks to employees for their effort in keeping Karnes Electric an accident-free workplace.



BARRIALTA Y / DOLLAR PHOTO CLUB

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.



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

Nominating Committee To Be Appointed

The Board of Directors of Karnes Electric Cooperative, will meet on April 22 and appoint a committee of members that will nominate candidates for the directors' election that will be held at the annual meeting on Monday, June 2, 2014. The Nominating Committee meeting will be held April 28.

The following is an excerpt from the bylaws pertaining to the nomination of such candidates.

QUALIFICATIONS AND TENURE:

To become and remain a Director, a Person must comply with the following general qualifications:

(a) be an individual who is a member in good standing and who is domiciled in the area certified by the Public Utility Commission as being within boundaries served by the Cooperative under its certificate of convenience and necessity, and whose domicile is receiving electrical service from the Cooperative A Member in "good standing" means a member who has timely paid all bills received from the Cooperative for the most recent twelve (12) consecutive billing periods without having been issued a termination notice or a disconnect notice;

(b) be above the legal voting age;

(c) have not been previously removed or disqualified as a Director;

(d) while a Director, and during the five years immediately before becoming a Director, not be convicted of, or plead guilty to, a felony or a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude;

(e) before becoming a Director, graduate from high school or earn an equivalent degree or certification;

(f) except as otherwise provided by the Board for good cause, attend at least three-fourths of all Board Meetings during each twelve month period;

(g) while a Director and during the three years immediately before becoming a Director, is not engaged in business with, employed by or materially affiliated with, and does not have a material financial interest with another director, a competing enterprise, or a business selling electric energy, supplies or services to the Cooperative or its members;

(h) is not the incumbent or a candidate for an elective public office in connection with which a salary is paid;

(i) when a membership is jointly held by husband and wife, either one, but not both, may be elected a director, provided, however, that neither one shall be eligible to become or remain a director of the Cooperative unless both shall meet the qualifications hereinabove set forth;

(j) is not the spouse, parent or child (including step and

adopted) of an incumbent director or Cooperative employee;

(k) an individual who was, at one time, or is currently, employed by the Cooperative is not eligible to serve as a director until at least sixty (60) months after leaving the employment of the Cooperative. Once becoming a director, an individual will not be eligible to be employed by the Cooperative until at least sixty (60) months after leaving the position of director;

(l) be bondable; and

(m) comply with any other reasonable qualifications determined by the Board.

NOMINATIONS: It shall be the duty of the Board of Directors to appoint, not less than thirty (30) days nor more than sixty (60) days, before the date of a meeting of the members at which directors are to be elected, a committee on nominations consisting of one (1) committee man from each district, for which a director is to be elected, and one (1) committee man at large, who shall be selected, so as to give equitable representation on the committee to the geographical areas served, or to be served by the Cooperative. No officer, or member of the Board of Directors, shall be appointed a member of such committee.

The committee shall prepare and post, at the principle office of the Cooperative, at least twenty (20) days before the meeting, a list of nominations for directors; but, any one hundred (100) or more members may make other nominations in writing, over their signatures, not less than forty five (45) days prior to the meeting; and the Secretary shall post the same, at the same place, where the list of nominations made by the committee is posted.

The Secretary shall mail, with the notice of the meeting, or separately, but a least ten (10) days prior to the meeting, a statement of the number of directors to be elected; and, showing separately the nominations made by the committee on nominations; and, the nominations made by petition, if any.

Nothing contained herein shall, however, prevent additional nominations to be made from the floor at the meeting of the members.

The members may, at any meeting at which a director or directors shall be removed, as herein provided, elect a successor or successors thereto without compliance with the foregoing provisions with respect to nominations.

Notwithstanding anything in this section contained, failure to comply with any of the provisions of this section shall not affect in any manner whatsoever the validity of any election of directors.

Karnes Electric Co-op Earns National Safety Recognition

On November 12, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association awarded Karnes Electric Cooperative the national Safety Accreditation distinction.

The voluntary national Safety Accreditation program involves an on-site facility inspection, a review of compliance and loss-control sample documents, and a six-year traceable history of safety training, safe work practices and public education and training.

This is the cooperative's eighth national Safety Accreditation award. Karnes Electric also received this honor in 1974, 1983, 1986, 1991, 2004, 2007 and 2010.

The communities served by Karnes Electric Cooperative receive benefits in a number of ways. Co-op employees are annually trained in multiple areas, including first aid, CPR, AED use and hazardous material containment. Also, monthly training events including driver safety, OSHA requirements and safe work practices directly translates into fewer utility accidents and injuries among the public.

Additionally, public safety in the cooperative's 12-county area is enhanced by a number of free services offered to civic groups, including electrical safety demonstrations and literature.

KEC employees benefit from the cooperative's participation in the NRECA Safety Accreditation program because of enhanced requirements for insulated equipment dielectric testing, protective equipment standards and electric utility safety rules.

"We are especially proud of receiving this national Safety Accreditation because it means that the community, as well as Karnes Electric employees and their families, can rest assured that our work practices, facilities and equipment are recognized by our peers as being well above electric utility industry standards," said KEC General Manager Leroy Skloss.



Working on Electricity? Be Smart

The smartest, safest way to fix an electrical problem around your house is to call a licensed electrician.

Even if you are an expert handyman, it's just not smart to fool around with electricity.

If you must do it yourself, however, at least:

- ▶ Turn the power off at the breaker box. Don't just switch the appliance or light off if you're going to tinker with it. No power means no chance of a shock. In fact, tape the breaker into the "off" position and let everyone in the house know you're working with that electrical circuit so nobody will switch it back on.

- ▶ Check all of the wires. When you open a fixture or an electrical box, use a circuit tester to assure yourself that none of the wires are "hot."

- ▶ Wear gloves, goggles and conductive shoes, which prevent the buildup of static electricity in your body.

- ▶ Avoid metal-handled tools or ladders. Choose properly insulated tools for electrical jobs. Invest in a wooden or fiberglass ladder with insulated feet.

- ▶ Stay away from water. If you've got an electrical problem in a wet location, call for help. This is a job for a professional electrician.

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Karnes Electric Cooperative
will be closed Friday, April 18, in observance of
Good Friday.

Storm Safety

When thunderstorms and tornadoes strike

BY B. DENISE HAWKINS

Beware. Spring can usher in more than April showers. From now through the summer months, thunderstorms can quickly roll in and tornadoes can touch down, often during the afternoon and evening hours, according to researchers at the National Severe Storms Laboratory, part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Follow these tips from NOAA and the American Red Cross to keep you and your home safe when tornadoes and severe thunderstorms come your way.

- ▶ Remove diseased and damaged tree limbs before storm season begins.
- ▶ Listen to local news or National Weather Service broadcasts to stay informed



about tornado watches and warnings.

▶ If you are in a mobile home, immediately head to a sturdy shelter. Mobile homes, especially hallways and bathrooms, are not safe places to take shelter during tornadoes or other severe winds.

▶ Designate a family meeting place for shelter during and after a storm. If possible, go to your home's basement, a small interior room, or under stairs on the lowest level. Also, have a battery-operated weather radio handy along with emergency supplies.

▶ Unplug electronics. Avoid using electrical equipment and corded telephones while lightning is in the area.

▶ Remember that there is no safe place outside during

a severe storm. If you are caught in a storm while driving, switch on your headlights, try to safely exit the roadway, and park. Stay in the vehicle with your seat belt on, and turn on the emergency flashers until the heavy rain ends. If thunder and lightning is occurring, avoid touching metal or other surfaces that conduct electricity in and outside the vehicle.

▶ As a storm moves in, move or secure lawn furniture, trash cans, hanging plants or anything else that can be picked up by the wind and become a projectile.

▶ Stay safe after a storm. Remain indoors at least 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder. Also, stay away from downed power lines and avoid flooded areas. Power lines could be submerged and still live with electricity. Report them to public safety authorities and Karnes EC at 1-888-807-3952 immediately.

B. Denise Hawkins writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Test Your Smart Meter Knowledge

Most Americans use electricity in some form all day and evening long. Smart meters provide a more accurate and efficient way of keeping track of that energy use—for both utilities and consumers.

A smart meter is an electrical meter that records the consumption of electricity and sends that information back to the utility. Smart meters differ from traditional meters because they allow for two-way communication, making the distribution system more efficient and outages less frequent while shortening restoration time.

Because this system is fairly new, there is some inaccurate information out there. Do you know the difference between what is real and what is myth?

SMART METERS CAUSE CANCER:

MYTH. Although some smart meters rely on radio frequency to communicate with your utility, not all do. Radio frequency, RF, is labeled as a “possible carcinogen” by the World Health Organization.

In other words, it does let off radiation. However, this radio frequency is comparable to a garage door opener, baby monitor or wireless router. In these low amounts, RF is not a threat to human health.



SMART METERS CREATE JOBS: REAL.

Smart meters decrease the need for meter readers, but not metering support services. Implementing smart meters and monitoring the new data will create jobs.

SMART METERS MAY BE USED TO VIOLATE MY PRIVACY: MYTH.

Although smart meters collect information about your energy use, they record no personal information. You and your electric cooperative are the only ones with access to that information.

PHOTO: I. STOCK / THINKSTOCK



Safely Responding to an Electrical Accident

Traffic accidents, high winds and other events can bring down power lines within range of pedestrians and vehicles. Electricity can be an unforeseen hazard, particularly when overhead power lines fall and make contact with vehicles, the ground, or anything that conducts electricity.

The wire may not be sparking or making signs that it is live, but it may be sending deadly voltage into whatever it's touching. Therefore, always assume the power line is energized, and never touch it or even approach it.

If responding to an accident scene involving a vehicle and downed lines, stay back and warn others to stay away. Make sure the occupants of the car stay inside until the utility has arrived to de-energize the lines.

In a rare circumstance, a vehicle may catch fire. The only way the occupants can safely exit is to jump free and clear without touching the vehicle and ground at the same time. Advise them to jump and land with feet together, then hop away to safety.

If someone has been in contact with electricity, there are not always obvious injuries. **These are the symptoms to look for:** changes in alertness; headache; problems with vision, swallowing or hearing; irregular heartbeat; muscle spasm and pain; numbness or tingling; and breathing problems.

If you come upon someone who may have suffered an electrical shock, do not touch the person. He or she may still be in contact with the source and may be energized. If there is water involved, do not get in the water. Call 911 and the electric utility immediately.

If it can be done safely, turn off the electricity at the source (the circuit breaker or breaker box). Otherwise, wait for the help of emergency responders. Once the source of electricity is off, then it is OK to check vital signs. However, do not move a person with an electrical injury unless he or she is in immediate danger.

Anyone who has come in contact with electricity should see a doctor to check for internal injuries **even if there are no obvious signs or symptoms.**

At the scene of an accident, looking out for electrical hazards until an electric utility crew cuts off the power is vitally important for professional first responders and bystanders.

For more information on staying safe around electricity, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Install CO Alarms Properly

If your home has any appliance that burns gas, kerosene, wood or charcoal, you need carbon monoxide detectors.

So if you ever use a gas-operated furnace, space heater, boiler, stove, water heater or clothes dryer or any type of fireplace, install CO alarms to protect your family in case anything goes wrong. CO alarms alert you when the appliances omit too much of the odorless, colorless gas into the indoor air you breathe.

If you have a barbecue grill, lawn mower, backup generator, camp stove, car or power tool, and you store them in your home or attached garage, install CO alarms.

Install at least one alarm on each floor of the house. Every bedroom needs one in the room or within 10 feet of every sleeping area.

If you use your attic as a living space, install a CO alarm there, too.

If your garage is attached to the house, place another CO detector inside the home near the garage—not in the garage.

Place another one about 20 feet away from your furnace. Keep all CO alarms away from open flames, including pilot lights.

If you install CO alarms near bathrooms, place them about 10 feet away so the humidity from the shower doesn't interfere with the device.

Mount the CO alarm on the wall about 5 feet above the floor or on the ceiling.

Electric appliances do not produce carbon monoxide.



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Efficiency for Your Home Office

Almost a quarter of employed Americans do some or all of their work from a home office, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. If you have a home office, take steps to make your workspace more energy efficient and help you save money on electric bills.

Start by making your computer more energy efficient by employing its energy-saving settings. Make the computer go into sleep mode when it is not in use instead of using a screen saver.

You can also use a power strip or a smart strip to prevent electronics from drawing electricity when not in use. Plug all electronics in your office—including your computer, printer, chargers, etc.—into a power strip, and simply switch off the current when you have finished working.

Similar to power strips, smart strips offer energy efficiency to your home but are set apart because of the ways they conserve energy. Smart strips automatically cut off the electric current to electronics. According to energystar.gov, there are three main types of smart power strips:

- ▶ Timer-equipped power strips are controlled by programmable timers, so all electronics plugged into the strip can be shut off at a designated time.
- ▶ Occupancy-sensing power strips detect active use of a device and shut it down after a specific period of time if unused.
- ▶ Current-sensing power strips have the ability to cut or add power to a device as it senses when a device is powered off or on.

Other energy-efficiency steps include:

- ▶ Use electronics with the Energy Star label. Most Energy Star-endorsed products draw smaller than average amounts of electricity when not in use or turned off.
- ▶ Check your lighting fixtures. Make sure that the bulbs being used match the wattage of your fixture(s) and/or lamp(s). Replace traditional incandescent bulbs with more energy-efficient compact florescent lightbulbs or light-emitting diodes.
- ▶ Operate the ceiling fan clockwise at low speed during winter months and counterclockwise during the summer. By properly using your ceiling fan you can adjust the thermostat by a few degrees and still remain comfortable.
- ▶ Make sure your home office vents are not blocked. This allows for continued airflow and reduces work for the furnace or air conditioning unit.
- ▶ Close window blinds or drapes in the summer to keep the room cooler, and leave them open in the winter to let the heat from the sun warm up the room.

For more information on energy efficiency, visit EnergyEdCouncil.org.

Using power strips with a built-in timer can increase energy efficiency.



Seal Air Leaks; Save Energy

Heating and cooling your home costs money, yet most homes let some of that conditioned air escape to the outdoors through tiny leaks, like cracks around windows; doors that don't close quite tightly enough; and holes in walls that allow cable, telephone, sump pump and electrical lines to enter the building.

Those same holes and cracks allow hot air to seep into your air-conditioned home from the outside during the summer and cold air to sneak in during the winter.

No matter if conditioned air is getting outside or fresh air is coming in, the result is the same: Your air-conditioning or heating system has to do extra work to keep the indoor air at the temperature you like.

Remove old, cracked caulking and replace with new caulking designed for the application. Caulking can be designated for exterior, interior and bathroom applications, and you don't want to use bathroom caulk on the outside of your home. Also, make sure the caulk can be painted if you want it to blend in with colors used in the rest of your home.

So find those leaks and seal them. Here are some tips:

- ▶ On a windy day, light a stick of incense or a match indoors, blow it out and hold it near the interior of each window, door, electrical box, plumbing fixture, electrical outlet, ceiling fixture, attic hatch and anywhere else where you see an opening that lets something from the outside in. If the smoke moves, you have found an air leak.

- ▶ Plug the leaks. You can do that by applying caulk right into the hole or crack. You also can install weatherstripping around doors and windows.



Pack Your Emergency Kit

Have you taken steps to prepare for severe storms before they strike? If you put together an emergency supply kit now, you and your family will be ready for almost anything.

Here are some important items to include in your kit:

- ▶ First-aid kit and fire extinguisher
 - ▶ Cash (banks and ATMs may be unavailable in a power outage)
 - ▶ Battery-operated radio, flashlight and extra batteries
 - ▶ Important documents and records, photo IDs, proof of residence
 - ▶ Three-day supply of nonperishable food (including special needs such as baby formula and pet food)
 - ▶ Three gallons of bottled water per person
 - ▶ Coolers for food and ice storage
 - ▶ Blankets, sleeping bags and extra clothing
 - ▶ Prescription medications, written copies of prescriptions, hearing aids and other special medical items
 - ▶ Eyeglasses and sunglasses
 - ▶ Extra keys
 - ▶ Toilet paper, clean-up supplies, duct tape, tarp, rope
 - ▶ Can opener, knife, tools
 - ▶ Booster cables, road maps
-