

Local Before Local Was Cool

Autonomy and Independence: One of the Seven Cooperative Principles that give all co-ops guidance



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER LEROY T. SKLOSS

WHETHER YOU TRAVEL ACROSS THE COUNTRY or prefer to stay close to your hometown, one thing you may be noticing is an increasing emphasis on “Buy Local” campaigns. This is based on one simple fact: It’s important to support businesses that support your community.

The Small Business Administration and the research firm Civic Economics estimate that dollars spent at a locally owned business stay in the community more than three times longer than money spent at “big box” stores headquartered far away from your hometown. This means your community’s wealth is more likely to grow by shopping locally.

Consumer cooperatives, like Karnes Electric Cooperative, have known this forever. We were formed in 1938 by people in this community to serve the people who work, worship and live here.

A common expression among cooperators is, “If you’ve seen one co-op, you’ve seen one co-op.” That means that although there are many similarities among co-ops, each one looks and acts differently according to the community it serves. The fact that we are controlled locally, allowing us to serve your needs, is a critically important principle.

The fourth of our Seven Cooperative Principles is “Autonomy and Independence,” and it is defined as follows: Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If the co-op enters into agreements with other organizations or raises capital from external sources, it does so based on terms that ensure democratic control by the members and that maintain the cooperative’s autonomy.

These conditions allow us to continue being the kind of self-help organization that was first envisioned by the founders of the modern cooperative movement.

In other words, for the co-op to stay a co-op, it is vitally important that we stay close to you, our members, to ensure that we continue to respond to your needs.

You can be sure that Karnes EC will not be moving any of our operations to Mexico or China, as so many other corporations have done. We began right here in Karnes County, and we plan on being here for a very long time. You can take that to the bank—or better yet, the credit union. Like Karnes EC, credit unions are cooperatives that put service to members first.

As always, we welcome your participation and suggestions about how we can improve our locally owned and controlled services.



Give Your Electric Bill a Vacation, Too

HEADING OUT FOR THE HOLIDAYS?

Taking a vacation can be costly. A great way to save money is to give your electric bills a vacation, too. Follow these tips to ease your mind about your electric bills and let you enjoy that vacation:

Unplug appliances. TVs, DVD players, VCRs, cable TV boxes, microwave ovens, coffeemakers and toasters use electricity when they’re plugged in—even when turned off.

Make the refrigerator warmer. The fridge temperature can be as high as 40 degrees without spoiling food; the freezer can reach 5 degrees. These settings can save up to 40 percent on the refrigerator’s electric usage. If you are going on an extended trip, empty the fridge and turn it off.

Set the thermostat higher/lower. Lowering the heat—to no lower than 55 degrees—typically can save you 10 to 30 percent on heating costs. Or you can shut the air conditioner off—or at least consider setting it higher than normal, to about 80 degrees. A programmable thermostat can make these adjustments automatically.

Turn down the water heater. If you are going on a lengthy trip, turn your water heater down to the lowest setting. This can save you up to \$10 a month.

Use timers to turn lights on and off each night. Timers save energy and give the appearance that someone is home. Use compact fluorescent bulbs for lights that will be on the longest. They use about 75 percent less power and last up to 12,000 hours.

Repairing vs. Replacing Your Appliances

AS HOMEOWNERS WITH MANY BILLS TO PAY, our tendency is to buy an appliance and keep it running as long as possible—but this may not be the greatest strategy for energy efficiency. A key reason electric bills are so high is because old, inefficient appliances eat up more energy than they are worth.

An appliance's energy-efficiency label can help you figure out how much energy your appliances use. The amount of energy typically used per year is listed in kilowatt-hours. If a label is not available, a home inspector can estimate energy use by determining the age of the appliances in the house and assessing their operation by checking for signs of wear and damage.

To translate this energy use into electric expense, check your utility bill to find out the kilowatt-hour rate, then multiply the rate by the number of kilowatt-hours your appliance uses per year to figure out the annual cost it takes to operate the appliance. By adding this figure to the initial purchase cost of the appliance and repair costs, you then have a comparison level to decide whether your appliance would cost you more or less to run than a new one.



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If your appliance is nearing the end of its life span, it is time to calculate whether repairing it or replacing it will cost more. Here is the typical life span of major appliances:

Range	18 years
Furnace	17 years
Washer/Dryer . . .	16 years
Refrigerator	15 years
Microwave	15 years
Air conditioner . .	15 years
Dishwasher	13 years
Water heater	10 years

Consider improvements made on some of the biggest energy-using appliances in the household. For example, a new refrigerator uses about 50 percent less energy than older models. Newer refrigerators feature CFC-free sealed systems, more storage and easier cleaning.

A new washer/dryer unit uses 30 percent less energy than older models. Newer units feature larger capacity, better cleaning performance, quieter operation, pre-programmed cycle selections, reduced water usage and automatic dryness sensors to avoid overdrying.

A new air conditioner is 20 percent more efficient than units 10 years older and can save you roughly \$930 in operation costs over its life span. Newer air conditioners feature automatic temperature adjustments, different air-speed options and increased circulation efficiency for consistent, even cooling.

As a result of constant technological improvements made by appliance manufacturers, newer machines not only use less electricity, but also have more operational features and are made to last longer than counterparts produced within even the last decade. Their efficiency will influence both your lifestyle and your checkbook.

—Energy Efficiency Resource Center

Karnes Electric Cooperative

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Leroy T. Skloss

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COOPERATIVE OFFICES

Main Office

1007 N. Highway 123, Karnes City

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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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Transformers: Directing Traffic on the Electric Highway

SENDING POWER TO YOUR HOME is a lot like driving to a neighboring state. You wouldn't consider taking a two-lane secondary road to travel to a city hundreds of miles away, would you? Of course not: You would find the nearest interstate so you could drive faster and arrive at your destination in less time.

Just like you, your electricity has an interstate that allows it to travel long distances, and a secondary system that winds through back roads and neighborhoods to direct it to its final destination, your home.



Transformers lower the high voltage of electricity as it makes its way through the system, making it safer for distribution to your home.

Transmission lines that deliver power from a power plant to substations are the fast-moving interstate highways of the electric industry. These lines carry from 23,000 to 161,000 volts of electricity into the local distribution substation. They hang on a variety of structures, ranging from large metal towers more than 100 feet tall to a single pole standing 70 to 90 feet in the air.

And just like a car leaving the interstate, the electricity leaving the substation has to slow down when it enters the distribution lines serving Karnes Electric Cooperative's service area. Transformers in the substation provide the braking system for lowering the voltage of the electricity so it can continue safely along its journey.

So, how does it work? Higher-voltage electricity passes through a system of coiled wires located in the substation transformer. The electricity enters a primary side of the transformer, which has metal coil windings surrounding that side of the transformer, and then passes to a secondary side, which has fewer coil windings. Traveling through the reduced number of windings lowers the voltage as it leaves the secondary side and continues the journey along the distribution lines.

The electricity moving along our distribution lines is cruising at between 7,200 and 12,470 volts, depending on whether it's traveling along a single-phase, two-phase or three-phase line. Consider these lines the secondary roads of the electric system. They make the journey through the local co-op's service area.

Distribution lines carry the electricity shorter distances than transmission lines. They transport electricity to the businesses, schools and homes served by your co-op. These are the lines you see Karnes EC crews repairing after a storm.

Your electricity makes one more stop before making its way into your home. Just as you slow down to pull into your final destination, the voltage is lowered one more time. It takes a turn off the distribution line and into another transformer that's located outside your home.

This transformer may be a canister hanging on a pole, or a box in your yard if you have underground electric service. Like the substation transformer, the electricity passes through a primary side with more coil windings to a secondary side with fewer coils. The voltage leaving the secondary side is generally between 120 and 240 volts.

Most transformers service only one home or business, but in some subdivisions, two homes may share a single transformer. These transformers are protected by fuses that will disconnect them from the electric line if there is a fault caused by current surges or overloads.

After the electric current leaves the transformer, it makes its way through a service line, into the meter base and to its final destination—your home, where it powers the appliances and electronics of our modern world.

As you can see, the electric highway plays a key role in powering our lives and delivering safe, reliable and affordable electricity to you.



Merry Christmas

Karnes Electric Cooperative wishes you and yours a richly blessed Christmas season.

To allow our employees to enjoy the holiday with their families, our offices will be closed December 24–25 and January 1.

Nondiscrimination Statement

KARNES ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. is an equal-opportunity provider and employer.

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form (PDF), found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call 1-866-632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.



Youth Tour 2015 Is Coming!

Look for details in the January issue of Texas Co-op Power.

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Safety for All

KARNES ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE has always been dedicated to providing safe, reliable and affordable utility service to you, our member-owners. The lengths to which we go to keep you, your family and our linemen safe are a point of pride for us, and are never taken lightly.

From acquiring new equipment and implementing new procedures to increasing awareness of backup generator systems within the cooperative community, America's electric cooperatives strive to promote the highest standard of safety.

In the 1880s, electric power first came through the direct current supply method, which required generation stations to be located within a mile of a consumer's home.

Because of its inability to travel long distances—and its higher cost—the DC system eventually lost out to the more economical alternating current system. The AC system allowed power to travel across greater distances through the use of transformers. These transformers required higher voltage to pass through stations to bring power to homes at the end of the wire. This increase in voltage spurred the need for increased electrical safety procedures.

High-voltage wires and equipment are a constant danger for cooperative line-workers, but they can also pose a danger to cooperative members. That is why electric cooperatives are proud to be at the forefront of electrical safety equipment development and electrical safety education.

Line crews participate in regular training sessions to ensure that our employees are constantly reminded of the safety aspect of the job and the importance of using equipment in the safest manner possible.

In addition to safety training for employees, Karnes EC is continually raising awareness of electrical safety in our communities by performing demonstrations at local schools and community events. There, we show members just how easy it is for an accident to occur when working around electricity and how to prevent these dangerous mishaps.

At Karnes EC, we know that the more people we have in our communities who are knowledgeable about electrical safety, the safer we all will be. That's why we strive every day to raise awareness of, and encourage development in, electrical safety.

Make the Connection

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HIGH-SPEED INTERNET FOR THE KARNES COMMUNITY

Call **800.699.4832** or visit **www.karnesec.net** to get connected today.

karnesec.net

Know How To Use Fire Extinguishers

PLAIN AND SIMPLE: Fires can happen anytime, anywhere, and fire extinguishers can save lives.

Nearly 30 percent of home electrical fires begin with ignition of wires or cable insulation, according to the National Fire Protection Association. And almost half involve some type of electrical distribution equipment such as outlets, switches or lamps.

The three main components of a fire are fuel, oxygen and heat. This is called the fire triangle, and all three components must be present to produce fire. The fourth component is the chemical reaction of converting the fuel into vapor gas. To extinguish a fire, one of the components must be removed.

Fires are classified according to the fuel source they consume. There are four main classes of fires:

- ▶ **Class A fires** consume ordinary combustibles: wood, paper, plastic, etc.
- ▶ **Class B fires** are fueled by flammable liquids: gasoline, oil, paint, etc.
- ▶ **Class C fires** are electrical fires.
- ▶ **Class D fires** consume flammable metals.

Fire extinguishers are rated according to the type of fires they can be used on correctly. Some extinguishers can be used for different types of fires. Extinguishers will indicate on the label the classes of fires for which they are intended.

Also, look for the Underwriters Laboratory symbol on the label. Near that you'll find a classification such as 2A, 10B, C, etc. This coding represents the capabilities of the extinguishers. For example, 2A means the extinguisher is capable of putting out 2 square feet of class A fire; 10B indicates that 10 square feet of class B fire can be extinguished. Know the capa-

bilities of your equipment before using it.

The correct use of fire extinguishers in an office, workplace or home can make the difference between life and death.

Remember PASS

The acronym PASS stands for Pull, Aim, Squeeze and Sweep: Pull the pin. Aim the nozzle at the fuel source—the base of the fire, not the flames. Squeeze the handle, maintaining a constant spray. Sweep back and forth across the fire until it is completely extinguished.

Once an extinguisher has been discharged, either completely or partially, it must be replaced or recharged. Many extinguishers, but not all, are rechargeable. Check the label.

Is your fire extinguisher handy and ready?

Do not underestimate fire's capability. Fires can double in size every 30 seconds. They can go from controllable to out of control in a very short time.

Fire extinguishers must be accessible. Recommended locations include the kitchen, bedroom and garage. It would be best to have one in each of those places. Keep one in your vehicle, too.

Inspect fire extinguishers at least monthly. This should include checking the nozzle for obstructions and checking the charge indicator. Be sure the pin is in place and hasn't been tampered with. Most household multiclass extinguishers use a fine chemical powder as the extinguishing agent. Shake these extinguishers vigorously during inspections to prevent the powder from settling or solidifying.

Contain Kitchen Fires

One of the leading causes of home fires is cooking. Many of these are initially container fires. If an extinguisher is aimed into the container, the fire likely will be spread instead of put out.

One of the best ways to deal with a container fire is to cover it with a lid or any nonflammable cover, such as a cookie sheet. Never use water on a flammable liquid fire. If water hits burning oil, a superexpansion of the water molecules will occur, causing a violent eruption.



FIRE SAFETY BY THE NUMBERS

A fire department responded to a fire **every 23 seconds** in the U.S.

An outside fire was reported **every 46 seconds**.

A structure fire was reported **every 66 seconds**.

A vehicle fire was reported **every 156 seconds**.

Civilian fire deaths in 2012: **2,855**

Civilian fire injuries in 2012: **16,500**

Source: 2012 statistics by the National Fire Protection Association

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