

Co-ops Collaborate To Deal With Disasters



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER LEROY T. SKLOSS

THE DERECHO THAT SWEEPED hurricane-force winds from the Great Plains to the Atlantic seaboard knocked out power to more than 4 million people in summer 2012. The damage caused by this devastating storm cost the nation \$2.9 billion.

Disasters, whether caused by nature, accidents or hostile acts, exact an enormous cost in economic and human terms. Fortunately, electric cooperatives—including Karnes Electric Cooperative—maintain a unique and effective approach to emergency management and disaster recovery: mutual assistance. Following a disaster, co-ops will rapidly deploy support

staff and equipment to emergency and recovery zones to assist sister co-ops.

The national network of transmission and distribution infrastructure owned by electric cooperatives has been built to federal standards, so line crews from any co-op in America can arrive on the scene ready to provide emergency support, secure in their knowledge of the system's engineering.

We work closely with other first responders, state and local government, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency to ensure an effective and coordinated response in the event of an emergency.

Because cooperatives are nonprofit organizations, we are eligible for financial assistance from FEMA, which can fund a major portion of the cost of emergency work to restore power and the cost of repairing, restoring, rebuilding or replacing damaged facilities.

This system gives electric cooperatives the ability to respond effectively and quickly in times of crisis, and protects the financial interests of the cooperative members at the same time.

With tighter budgets, securing FEMA reimbursements after a disaster has become more difficult. Following Superstorm Sandy, Congress changed the rules: FEMA now allocates funds for rebuilding based on an estimate of costs, not on the actual cost. If the estimate is higher than the actual cost, the excess funds must be used for FEMA-approved projects. But if the estimate is low, the co-op must pay the difference.

Electric cooperatives across the country learn from disasters. We learn how to protect our systems better, and we learn how to become more resilient. When it comes to resiliency, we have a good story to tell: We serve our member-consumers in the most rugged, remote terrain in the country, so we have learned how to restore power in extremely difficult circumstances.

I know better than to make any predictions about what Mother Nature has in store for us, but I believe these lessons will help us the next time disaster strikes.

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ALEC



2015 Scholarships Available

RURAL SCHOLARSHIPS WILL AGAIN BE AVAILABLE THROUGH Karnes Electric Cooperative this year, thanks to a law enacted September 1, 1997. HB 3203 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 Board of Directors has approved 10 \$1,000 scholarships to be awarded this year. Each of these scholarships will be awarded to a graduating high school senior who is a legal dependent of an active member receiving electric service from Karnes EC.

Applications will be available at all schools in the Karnes EC service area. Applications must be received by the cooperative's 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 the deadline date.

Karnes EC 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, you may contact Janet Scheffler or Barbara Kotzur in our main office at (830) 780-3952 or email bkotzur@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

KEC Honors Two Retirees

LEON ROY “LEROY” CAMBER WAS HONORED December 11 with a retirement luncheon. Leroy began working for Karnes Electric Cooperative July 11, 1978, as a digger operator. He went on to work as a second class lineman, an aerial basket operator, a material and work order clerk, and a purchasing agent/work order clerk—all before finishing his career as the purchasing agent for the cooperative.

Leroy and his wife, Sheryl, have been married for 29 years and have two children, Kelsea and Clayton, and one grandson, Brenton II. Leroy is looking forward to having time to travel with his family and watch his grandchildren grow up. Other things he is looking forward to are hunting, fishing, training his bird dog and raising cattle.

As Leroy reflected on the past, one particular event stands out in his mind: In 1998, his house was flooded with 2½ inches of water. KEC crewmembers came and helped with the cleanup. The support of his co-op family was overwhelming, and he says he and his family will forever appreciate it. In parting, Leroy wants to remind everyone that, “It’s not the hours you put into your work, but the work you put into your hours.”

JOE REYES ALSO WAS HONORED with a retirement luncheon, December 16. Joe also began his career in 1978. He started September 5 as a serviceman’s helper. He then went on to work as a second class lineman, a first class lineman, a serviceman and then finally a meter reader, and has worked in that capacity for the past 16 years.

Joe and his wife, Isabel, have been married for 45 years and have two children and two great-grandchildren. Joe’s retirement goals are to renew family ties, travel and see the world. His first destination is Seattle, Washington. If he finds time, he will also try to finish some of the projects he has laying around the house!

One of the things Joe will miss about his job is being around people. He has had the privilege of meeting many cooperative members and enjoying great conversations with them.

As Joe leaves, he wants to share a few words of advice with his fellow employees: 1) Stand tall and be proud. 2) Smile. 3) Always do as you are told. 4) Work safe. Remember that no matter how rough the day gets, tomorrow will be a fresh start.

On behalf of the Karnes EC Board of Directors and employees, we all want to wish Leroy and Joe and their families many years of continued health and happiness.

Longtime Karnes EC employees Leon Roy “Leroy” Camber, left, and Joe Reyes retired in December.





WANT TO WIN A TRIP TO THE NATION'S CAPITAL?

It's Youth Tour Time Again!

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES SEND HUNDREDS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS from around the country to Washington, D.C., annually for the 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 at 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 2015 Youth Tour will begin June 10 in Austin and will return June 19. This year, to give participants a snapshot of our state government in action, a day of the trip will include a tour of the Texas State Capitol and a visit to the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum.

Applicants must be high school students who have completed their sophomore year by the end of June 2015 and be a member or the legal dependent of any member of Karnes Electric Cooperative. Anyone wanting complete information may contact Janet Scheffler at (830) 780-3952. Applications may be picked up at any Karnes EC office or by emailing a request to jscheffler@karnesec.org.

Time To Upgrade Electric Service?

IF YOUR LIGHTS FLICKER, circuits blow or lights go out when you plug in electronics or appliances, your home may need an electric service upgrade. Electric service upgrades can be expensive and complicated. However, the alternative is an unstable electrical system that can cause shocks and fire.

You should consider getting your electric service upgraded if the following applies to you:

- ▶ You recently remodeled or added a room.
- ▶ You have new large appliances, such as a hot tub, water heater or air conditioner.
- ▶ You plan on charging an electric vehicle.
- ▶ Circuits trip, lights flicker or electronics turn off when you run several devices at the same time.
- ▶ You live in an older home. Older homes were not designed to accommodate today's electronics and appliances, so you may need upgraded electric service to power your home properly.



If these apply to you, the first step is consulting a qualified electrician. An electrician will be able to tell you if you need a service upgrade or if your electric service has another issue. Consult several electricians to get different opinions. Ask for references, and make your final decision on an electrician based on qualifications and trust—not just price.

To learn more about the electricity in your home and staying safe, visit SafeElectricity.org.



Ice Isn't Always Nice

Although much of the state is unaccustomed to snow and ice, temperatures can fall below freezing even in South Texas. Snow and ice snap tree branches and cause electric lines to sag.

To make our families safe and comfortable during a winter power outage:

- ▶ Report any outages.
- ▶ Turn off electrical appliances that were operating at the time the power went off, including your heating system. Leave one light on so you'll know when service has been restored.
- ▶ Keep warm by closing off rooms you don't need and use only safe sources of heat, such as a wood stove. Do not burn charcoal indoors—it releases carbon monoxide, which is deadly. If you operate lanterns or fuel-fired cookstoves or heaters, make sure that you have adequate ventilation to keep harmful fumes from accumulating.
- ▶ Don't drive unless absolutely necessary until road conditions improve. If you must drive, go slowly and lightly pump your brakes to stop.
- ▶ Be extra careful not to slip on treacherous ice.

Karnes Electric Cooperative encourages you to stay safe this winter.

Save Energy and Money With Your Next Television

IN TODAY'S WORLD, it's hard to find a house in which home entertainment does not include a television. Quite often, it includes more than one television—and sometimes, even more than one per household member. With televisions being such a regular part of our lives, Karnes Electric Cooperative wants you to know how you can save energy and money with your next television purchase.

Big factors in determining power consumption include the size of the screen, the type of TV and the picture settings. After you have made decisions about what you want for viewing quality, then look at the Energy Star-qualified products.

Television technology continues to expand—from the different types of TVs to their various features. Look for aspects that can have an impact on efficiency and the cost of operation, such as:

- ▶ Automatic brightness control, which controls the brightness of the TV relative to the brightness of the room.

- ▶ Local dimming, in which sections of LED backlighting are turned off or dimmed to help produce deep blacks and save energy.

- ▶ Preset picture settings, which are options you can choose that reflect changes in the brightness and contrast ratio. On an Energy Star TV, the default picture setting is the setting that has earned the Energy Star certification.

Even if you are not ready to purchase a new TV, there are still things you can do to be more efficient and thrifty. Because electronics that are turned off sometimes still draw power, a power strip can be used to plug in multiple electronic devices, and the power can be cut off from these devices with a simple flip of a switch. Power strips can be efficiently put to use in a spare room where electronics are not used very often, or in an area where there is a large concentration of electronics, like in an office.