

Cooperating for Privacy and Safety



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER LEROY T. SKLOSS

LATELY WE'VE BEEN HEARING disturbing stories about employees from different cooperatives being threatened when they come onto members' property to do work. Residents have even pointed guns at co-op employees—sometimes when the crews were there only to restore power after an outage.

We Work for Safety

These incidents are distressing because member and employee safety is every electric cooperative's top priority. Conflicts like these also threaten the trust that we at Karnes Electric Cooperative work so hard to build with our members. We want you to feel free to call us at 1-888-807-3952 if you have a question about co-op personnel being on your property, or anything else.

Many circumstances require the presence of co-op personnel on a member's property: restoring power, repairing and maintaining lines and equipment, checking meter readings or installing new meters, addressing bill payment issues, or trimming vegetation in rights-of-way.

"Co-op employees highly respect their members' private property and personal privacy," said Eric Craven, senior vice president of government relations and legal affairs for Texas Electric Cooperatives, "but there are times when cooperative personnel simply must go onto a member's land or knock on the door to do their job."

We Have the Right and Responsibility

Co-op personnel have a legal right and responsibility to enter a member's property for the limited purpose of ensuring that electric service, relied on by people to maintain their health, safety and well-being, is delivered safely and with as little interruption as possible.

Not only do Texas laws protect electric cooperative employees from criminal trespass charges, but they also impose a stiff penalty on anyone who threatens a cooperative employee while on official co-op business. Anyone pointing a gun at a co-op worker could face a second-degree felony charge, punishable by two to 20 years' imprisonment and a possible fine of up to \$10,000.

"People need to know that in Texas, it is a felony to threaten

a co-op employee—or anyone else—with a deadly weapon. The safety of our personnel and our members is extremely important, and such threats are taken very seriously," Craven said.

When you became a Karnes EC member, you signed an agreement that spelled out your rights and responsibilities, as well as the cooperative's. Among those member responsibilities is allowing co-op personnel (and any contractors hired by the co-op) access to your property—whether easements underneath power lines, or the home or business where your meter is located. Landowners and members must comply with requirements mandated by state law and outlined in their co-op's application for membership, bylaws and right-of-way easement agreement.

We Need Your Help

We do understand that there may be reasons why members worry about people coming onto their property, so Karnes EC workers display the co-op's name and logo on their trucks and uniforms, and they provide notice of their activities whenever possible. However, if you don't recognize our crews—or you have concerns about the work they're doing—then we urge you to call 1-888-807-3952 immediately.

If you call us when you have a question or suspicion about co-op workers on your property, we can verify who they are and why they're there. A simple phone call can prevent a dangerous confrontation.

Our members are also our neighbors, and we deeply respect issues surrounding private property. Karnes EC employees do everything possible to minimize our need to access your property, but when it is necessary, we do our best to notify you before, during and after maintenance or repairs. We wear ID and provide all of our contractors with ID to display. We also show the greatest respect possible to members' property while we are on-site.

Working together, we can ensure that members are comfortable and co-op employees are safe whenever we must access private property. If you have a question about the presence of co-op personnel on your property, please call us immediately at 1-888-807-3952.



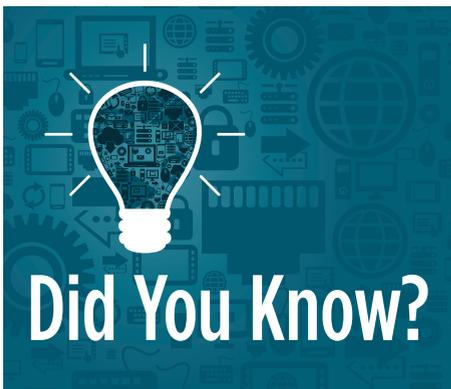
KEC Honors Retired Director

KARNES ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE HONORED retired director David C. Davidson with a luncheon January 20. Davidson was elected June 6, 1991, to serve as the representative of District 6 on the board of directors for Karnes EC, and he remained in that capacity until his retirement December 31.

Davidson and his wife, Sandra, have relocated to Mason to help with a family business.

General Manager Leroy T. Skloss thanked Davidson for his many years of service to the cooperative. Davidson was an integral part of the board, and his knowledge and insight will be greatly missed.

On behalf of the KEC Board of Directors and employees, we want to wish David and Sandra Davidson and their family many years of health and happiness.



A 10-watt compact fluorescent lamp turned on for 100 hours would consume 1 kilowatt-hour of electricity.

A 100-watt incandescent lightbulb would consume the same amount of electricity in just 10 hours.

—National Geographic

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Karnes Electric Cooperative

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

GENERAL MANAGER

Leroy T. Skloss

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Arlon Retzloff, President, *Whitsett*
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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

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Plan Ahead for a Safe Planting Season

FARMING IS PERENNIALY NEAR THE TOP OF THE LIST of the most dangerous jobs in the United States, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Electricity is one of the hazards farmworkers need to be cautious around, especially when they are feeling pressure to work quickly to get the crops in the ground or harvested. However, with proper planning and education, the risk of accidents involving electricity and the equipment that carries it to homes and businesses can be greatly reduced.

One critical part of safety around electricity is awareness. With the use of large equipment, farmers can easily find themselves in dangerous proximity to overhead lines. Being aware of the location of those wires can help reduce accidents.

Karnes Electric Cooperative urges farmers and farmworkers to remember these guidelines:

- ▶ Keep a 10-foot minimum distance around power lines. That means 10 feet above, below and to the sides of power lines.
- ▶ Use a spotter when moving machinery around the farm. It can be difficult to judge from the driver's seat how close a piece of machinery is to electric lines.
- ▶ Use caution when handling long items such as irrigation pipe, ladders and rods. Coming too close to a power line can cause electricity to arc, or "jump," to conducting material or objects.
- ▶ Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting tractors on trailer beds. Many tractors are now equipped with radios and communications systems with very tall antennas extending from the cab, which could make contact with power lines.
- ▶ Avoid raising the arms of planters, cultivators or truck beds near power lines.
- ▶ Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path.
- ▶ Remember, even nonmetallic materials such as lumber, tree limbs, tires, ropes and hay will conduct electricity depending on dampness, dust and dirt contamination.
- ▶ If you hit a pole's guy wire and break it, call the cooperative to fix it. Do not do it yourself. Guy wires, used to stabilize utility poles, are grounded. However, when a guy wire is broken, it can cause an electric current disruption. This can make those neutral wires anything but harmless.

—SafeElectricity

What Is a Load Forecast?

WHEN WE HEAR the word "forecast," we typically think of the weather. But electric cooperatives are tasked with managing a different type: a load forecast.

A load forecast is an estimated prediction of how much electricity will be needed in the future. We all depend on power to meet our daily needs, but the amount we use varies from season to season, day to day and even hour to hour. This is why South Texas EC, the generation and transmission cooperative that is Karnes Electric Cooperative's power supplier, plans far in advance to make sure there is enough power available to meet electricity demands.

As demand fluctuates, South Texas EC is prepared to maintain electrical loads and keep the system running efficiently. This means extensive planning—even up to decades in advance. Your cooperative works with the G&T, evaluating areas of growth and predicting demand patterns for our local communities.

For example, if a new subdivision or residential area is constructed in our service territory, it's our responsibility to ensure that adequate power supply will be provided to the members of that community. This type of growth may mean running new poles and electrical lines to the site or even building a new substation. Whatever the need, Karnes EC is prepared.

In addition to working with our cooperative, South Texas EC collects data from other electric cooperatives in Texas, and from there they project future demand. Planning ahead improves reliability, and projecting the amount of electricity that will be purchased ensures the best economic price for power.

At Karnes EC, we can't predict the future, but we can be prepared for what it may hold. So leave the forecasting to us, and we'll continue to provide safe, reliable electricity to power your life.

SAFELECTRICITY



Karnes EC Offering Scholarships

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 EC 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.

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.



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Paying the Price of Power Theft

IT'S OFTEN AN "INVISIBLE" CRIME: Someone illegally hooks into a power supply, hooks up a line that has been disconnected, or tampers with a meter to avoid recording electricity use. Legitimate electricity consumers do not engage in these behaviors, so the impact of electricity theft—including the danger—is frequently unrecognized.

Power theft carries deadly risks. Many thieves pay for the power they steal with their lives. Electricity theft is not just dangerous for those who steal. If you are on the same power line as someone who steals electricity, you could pay the cost for their theft, too. The power line could become overloaded with electric energy, which could harm your electronics and appliances that are designed to receive a certain, steady amount of electricity.

Electricity theft makes power service less reliable and lower quality for paying customers.

Electricity thieves may also unknowingly feed energy back into the power line. This is dangerous for linemen who may assume that the line they are working on is de-energized.

Karnes Electric Cooperative reminds you that everyone can help prevent and reduce power theft:

- ▶ Notify your electric cooperative immediately if you know of an illegally connected consumer.
- ▶ Do not cut the seal on your meter base or tamper with your own meter for any reason.
- ▶ Apply for a legal connection if you do not have one.
- ▶ Remain aware of your surroundings and report any suspicious activities to your electric cooperative.

Most electrical theft crimes occur through meter tampering, bypassing meters and tapping power lines. Other less frequent crimes include tapping into neighboring premises, using illegal lines after being disconnected, self-reconnection without consent and electrifying fences. Possessing fraudulent electricity bills is also a federal crime and is punishable by law.

Everyone is affected by power theft, and detecting and reporting illegal activity will help reduce the price that everyone pays.

—SafeElectricity



Make the Connection

Shop online, pay bills, download music, watch movies—faster!

HIGH-SPEED INTERNET FOR THE KARNES COMMUNITY

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

karnesec.net

Electricity thieves are not just stealing from your cooperative. As co-owners of the co-op, they're stealing from all our members, too.



Using a surge protector is a good way to protect electronics at their point of use, but be sure it's actually equipped with surge protection and not just a power strip. Look for a "Ground & Surge" or "Surge Protection" indicator light and make sure it is green when plugged in. If it ever turns red, the surge protection feature is no longer working, and the unit needs to be replaced.

Implementing Surge Protection

THERE IS LITTLE, IF ANYTHING, YOU CAN BUY TODAY that does not have some electronic component—even clothing with wearable electronics is starting to take hold. So it's time to take a look at making sure your electronics last as long as possible by protecting them from electrical surges.

The first order of business is to define a surge. Here's one definition: "Alternatively known as a line surge, a surge is an unexpected increase in voltage of an electrical current that causes damage to electrical equipment. For example, the standard United States voltage is 120V. If an electrical current above this rating was to come through a power outlet for more than three nanoseconds, this would be considered a surge. Anything less is considered a spike. A surge is often created by lightning and can damage unprotected computers—and sometimes even protected computers."

Many people think a blink from Karnes Electric Cooperative's system is a surge, but blinks are generally caused by something like a tree contacting a line. In such cases, the system's protective devices work, causing an interruption to protect the wires and other components. These are not surges but blinks, and are more like turning a light on and off.

True surges will enter a home through any number of avenues. The most obvious way is through the power lines. Less obvious ways are through the telephone lines, cable/satellite connections, water lines, etc. To protect against surges, you need to take a three-pronged approach.

Step One

Perhaps the most important thing to do is to be sure all the grounds in your home are solid and that they are bonded

together. Over the years, grounds can deteriorate, or perhaps new services were added without adequate grounding. A faulty ground will allow surges into the home rather than bleeding them off into the earth. Get a qualified electrician to test and correct your grounding system.

Step Two

Next, protect your electrical service entrance with a surge protector. The easiest to install are those mounted behind the meter. They can also be mounted at the main electric panel. When a surge travels down the electric lines, a surge protector will act to "clamp" the surge and reduce its power, allowing itself to be destroyed in the process rather than allowing the surge to pass through and damage your home's system.

Step Three

The third line of defense is to protect expensive devices at their point of use. Computers and entertainment equipment are prime examples. Remember that surges can enter the home via avenues other than the power lines. Computers and entertainment equipment are frequently connected to cable or phone lines. Those devices need to have protection at the point of use that covers all possible avenues.

These guards are generally found in the form of a power strip or wall device. Look for one with a rating of at least 1,000 joules, a connected equipment warranty and compatibility with digital signals from cable and satellite. While you are at it, look for a "smart" strip that turns off all but one connected device when not in use. Not only will it protect your equipment, but it also will help you save electricity.



Don't Go Out on a Limb

Your safety is a top priority at your electric co-op. And it's even more important when it comes to our kids. They don't always know—or remember—what can be dangerous, so it's up to all of us to watch out for their safety.

Safety rules for power lines:

- ▶ Don't plant trees or install tall playground equipment under or near power lines.
- ▶ Don't build tree houses in trees near electric lines.
- ▶ Don't allow children to climb trees growing near electric lines.
- ▶ Teach your children to always look up to check for power lines before climbing trees or any tall objects.
- ▶ Keep children away from ladders, poles or work equipment that may be near power lines.

And the No. 1 safety rule for everyone to remember is this: Don't touch a power line or anything that's touching a power line. No one can tell simply by looking at a line whether it is energized or not, and contact with a power line can be deadly. Remember, electricity always seeks the easiest path to reach the ground, and, unfortunately, human beings are good conductors of electricity. Look up and live!



Write the date you install it on the battery to quickly tell if it's time to change it.

Smoke Alarms

ALMOST TWO-THIRDS OF HOME FIRE deaths result from fires in homes with no smoke alarms—or none that were operational before the fire. Follow these simple tips to ensure that your home is adequately protected by smoke alarms.

- ▶ If possible, alarms should be mounted in the center of a ceiling. If mounted on a wall, they should be located 6 to 12 inches below the ceiling.
- ▶ For the best protection, smoke alarms should be interconnected so that they all sound if one sounds. Manufacturers are now producing battery-operated alarms that are interconnected by wireless technology.
- ▶ Combination smoke alarms that include both ionization and photoelectric alarms offer the most comprehensive protection. An ionization alarm is more responsive to flames, while a photoelectric alarm is more responsive to a smoldering fire.
- ▶ Hardwired smoke alarms with battery backups are considered to be more reliable than those operated solely by batteries.
- ▶ Avoid locating alarms near bathrooms, heating appliances, windows or ceiling fans.
- ▶ Install smoke alarms at least 10 feet from cooking appliances to reduce the possibility of nuisance alarms. Alarms installed within 10 to 20 feet of a cooking appliance must be photoelectric, or have a "hush" feature to temporarily reduce the alarm sensitivity during cooking.
- ▶ Never paint over a smoke alarm, and occasionally dust or lightly vacuum the exterior to remove cobwebs.

10 Ways To Cut Energy Bills

IT COSTS MORE THAN \$2,200 A YEAR in energy bills to run the average American home, and more than half of that is for heating and cooling.

The experts at personal finance resource WalletHub have this advice for lowering those bills:

- 1. Get an energy audit.** You'll have an easier time sealing energy leaks if you know where they are, and an auditor can show you.
- 2. Replace all of your incandescent lightbulbs with LEDs**—even if they're not burned out yet. They're wasting more money in energy costs than you'll waste by replacing them before they're spent.
- 3. Use caulk to seal cracks** and gaps around windows.
- 4. Add attic insulation** and make sure it's properly attached.
- 5. Learn about the energy use of your appliances.** The more you understand about energy, the less of it you'll waste.
- 6. If you're planning to move into a newly built home,** choose an architect or builder who is committed to "green building" and energy efficiency. Many green building strategies don't cost any more when they're incorporated during construction—like making energy-efficient choices for the direction the house faces and where the windows are placed.
- 7. Replace outdated furnaces and air-conditioning systems** with updated models that are designed to work more efficiently, waste less energy and save you money.
- 8. When you replace appliances, look at more than the price tag.** Consider how much it will cost you each year to operate the equipment. Often, the savings on your energy bill will more than make up for the slightly higher price you pay for more efficient models.
- 9. If you're remodeling your home,** make energy efficiency as high a priority as more visible upgrades like granite countertops or new cabinets. You can't "see" energy efficiency, so it's too often out of sight, out of mind.
- 10. Installing high-performance windows** will improve your home's energy performance. While it may take many years for new windows to pay off in energy savings, the benefits of functionality, added comfort and improved aesthetics can easily offset the cost.

Use the energy-saving features on your appliances so they operate at maximum efficiency—using less electricity and saving you more money.



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Power Tip

Seal air leaks with weatherstripping and caulking, and be sure your house is properly insulated. This could save you up to 20 percent on heating and cooling bills while increasing home comfort.



DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

BEGINS SUNDAY,
MARCH 8. REMEMBER TO
SPRING FORWARD!