

# Voluntary and Open Membership

*Your co-op values customer service, day in and day out*



## MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER LEROY T. SKLOSS

**WHEN ELECTRIC CO-OP MEMBERS** look at the Seven Cooperative Principles, some might question whether co-ops really live up to the first principle, Voluntary and Open Membership.

It is a fair question. There is a two-part answer.

First, it's important to remember that when Karnes Electric Cooperative was first being formed back in 1938, every potential member had the option to refuse service. It might be hard

to believe today, but there are numerous stories from electric co-ops throughout the country when the farmer said, "No, thanks. We are doing fine with kerosene." Over time, of course, they changed their minds and became members of the co-op.

Because offering electric service comes with a sizable cost, most people and businesses in co-op territory have only one choice if they want to connect to the grid and receive electricity. That situation might evolve in the future, but for most people, the best option now for safe, reliable and affordable power is your electric cooperative.

Today, electric co-ops focus on the second part of the principle, Open Membership. All residences and businesses in the service territory of Karnes EC are welcome to receive power. By providing electric service and being an active part of our community, co-ops continually strive to ensure that your membership offers value to you.

Your co-op welcomes your participation in the governance of the organization through the election of a democratically elected board of directors. As a locally owned and controlled utility, a co-op is in an ideal position to understand the needs of its members and can quickly respond to help ensure that the membership receives the best service possible.

Members are encouraged to suggest improvements to the co-op's operations and, unlike large investor-owned utilities, many of which serve millions of customers, you can be assured that a real person in real time will receive your ideas.

All cooperatives, whether your credit union, farm co-op, telephone co-op or any other of the thousands of co-ops that exist in the U.S. today, operate by these Seven Cooperative Principles:

- 1. Voluntary and Open Membership**
- 2. Democratic Member Control**
- 3. Members' Economic Participation**
- 4. Autonomy and Independence**
- 5. Education, Training and Information**
- 6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives**
- 7. Concern for Community**

By abiding by all of these principles integrated together, Karnes EC is able to serve your needs every day.



# National Lineman Appreciation Day

**AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES DESIGNATED** the second Monday of April each year as National Lineman Appreciation Day.

On April 13, Karnes Electric Cooperative honors the hardworking people who often work in challenging conditions to keep the lights on.

To mark the occasion, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association unanimously adopted this resolution:

“Whereas linemen leave their families and put their lives on the line every day to keep the power on; whereas linemen work 365 days a year under dangerous conditions to build, maintain and repair the electric infrastructure; whereas linemen are the first responders of the electric cooperative family, getting power back on and making things safe for all after storms and accidents, and; whereas there would be no electric cooperatives without the brave men and women who comprise our corps of linemen;

“Therefore be it resolved that the NRECA recognizes the second Monday of April of each year as National Lineman Appreciation Day ... to recognize the contributions of these valuable men and women to America’s electric cooperatives.”

Co-ops everywhere proudly acknowledge all electric lineworkers for the services they perform around the clock in dangerous conditions to keep power flowing and protect the public’s safety.

“Electric lineworkers do not often receive the recognition they deserve,” said Leroy Skloss, KEC general manager. “They work all hours of the day, often in hazardous conditions far from their families, going above and beyond to restore power to their communities. Our linemen, as well as linemen from across the nation, truly deserve this special day of recognition.”

Karnes EC invites our members to take a moment and thank a lineman for the work they do. If you use Twitter, you can use #ThankaLineman to show your support. Or you can simply tell the next lineman you see how grateful you are for the men and women who power our lives.



**On the second Monday of April, co-ops across the nation recognize the sacrifices made by their electric linemen.**



## 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*  
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](http://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](http://karnesec.org)

# Nominating Committee To Be Appointed

**THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS** of Karnes Electric Cooperative meets April 2 to appoint a committee of members who will nominate candidates for the directors' election to be held at the annual meeting, Monday, June 1. The nominating committee meets Tuesday, April 21.

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 committee nominations 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.



# MARK YOUR CALENDAR!



Please plan to join us for the  
**KARNES ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

# ANNUAL MEETING

**Monday, June 1**

## Karnes EC Offering Scholarships

**RURAL SCHOLARSHIPS** are offered through Karnes Electric Cooperative, thanks to a law enacted September 1, 1997. HB 3203 allows nonprofit electric cooperatives to put unclaimed funds previously collected by the Texas 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. These scholarships will be awarded to graduating high school seniors who are legal dependents of active members 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 main office in Karnes City by 5 p.m., April 1. Those received after April 1 will not be eligible. Awards will be announced within 60 days of this 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 our main office at (830) 780-3952 and ask to speak to Janet Scheffler or Barbara Kotzur, or email [bkotzur@karnesec.org](mailto:bkotzur@karnesec.org).



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**WE'RE HERE FOR YOU**  
*365 days a year.*

**April 13 is National Lineman Appreciation Day.**



## Technology Lowers Energy Bills

**CAN'T REMEMBER TO TURN** the thermostat down at bedtime? Always forgetting to unplug your home's electronics before leaving on vacation? Technology can come to your rescue.

Automatic thermostats and smartphone apps can “remember” these tasks for you—and lower your energy bills in the process.

**Consider these strategies:**

- ▶ Installing a programmable thermostat that you can set just once so it will turn the heat down a few degrees (or the AC up) at bedtime and after everyone leaves the house in the morning. Those hours of slightly lower temps can save you a bundle on your heating and cooling bills.

- ▶ Investing in a new “learning” thermostat. These nifty devices collect data about your preferences every time you raise or lower your home's temperature. Then, it will start adjusting the thermostat accordingly—without being told to.

- ▶ Switching to a wireless thermostat that allows you to change the temperature via your computer or smartphone.

- ▶ Trying out an energy-management smartphone app. These free apps monitor your home's electricity use and share the info with easy-to-read graphics. The more you know about the way your family uses energy, the easier it is to change habits that waste it.

## GEOTHERMAL VS. AIR-TO-AIR

# Choose the Right Heat Pump

**HEAT PUMPS ARE CONSIDERED** one of the most energy-efficient products for heating and cooling today, but homeowners and building operators have a choice: an air-to-air heat pump or a geothermal heat pump.

Unfortunately, there is no easy answer. Economic values vary for each building, and preferences vary for each individual making the decision. With numerous choices about energy efficiency and potential tax credits, even a knowledgeable consumer can find the decision difficult. An overview of the two types of heat pumps can help:

### Geothermal

Geothermal heat pumps obtain their heat from the ground. Because the earth absorbs solar energy, keeping a constant 55 degrees even hundreds of feet underground, using that energy is efficient for heating or cooling your home.

To access that constant temperature, pipes and conduit are buried underground or submerged in a lake, pond or well. An antifreeze/water solution circulates inside these pipes, and a heat exchanger concentrates the gathered heat to release warm air inside the home. In summer, the process is reversed, and heat inside a structure is transferred underground, where it is released. Geothermal systems not only provide comfortable temperatures, but they are also efficient water heaters.

However, the initial price of installing a geothermal pump is substantially more expensive than an air-to-air heat pump. To offset installation expenses, the IRS offers a tax credit for 30 percent of the cost.

### Air-to-Air

An air-to-air heat pump absorbs heat from the atmosphere. Warmth is collected from outside air, concentrated and circulated inside in the winter, and the process is reversed in the summer to provide cool air to a building's interior. An air-to-air heat pump has an optimal temperature range of about 35–65 degrees.

If the outside air temperature varies far beyond optimal operating conditions, a backup furnace may be necessary to create enough heat to maintain a comfortable winter temperature inside the home. An air-to-air heat pump can be extremely efficient when the outside temperature does not vary much from optimal operating conditions and can save about 30–50 percent on heating and cooling bills.

As with geothermal heat pumps, there are incentives for homeowners to install air-to-air heat pumps.

The higher the SEER rating a heat pump has, the more efficient the heat pump will be. And always remember that with any type of HVAC system, air leaks must be sealed and the home must be properly insulated for the unit to achieve energy efficiency.



Homeowners can take advantage of tax incentives when installing a heat pump.



## Did You Know?

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Thomas Edison built the first commercial electrical generation facility in 1882. Pearl Street Station in lower Manhattan served 85 customers within 1 square mile.

Brazos Electric Power Cooperative in Waco, Texas' first cooperatively owned electric generation facility, was organized in 1941.



KARNES EC  
WISHES YOU AND YOUR  
FAMILY A BLESSED

GOOD  
FRIDAY

FRIDAY, APRIL 3

OUR OFFICES WILL BE  
CLOSED IN OBSERVANCE  
OF THE HOLIDAY.

# Clearing for Reliability

**THERE ARE MANY WAYS THAT** Karnes Electric Cooperative provides you with safe, reliable electric service. One of the most common—and crucial—ways is referred to as right-of-way clearing, or vegetation management.

A right-of-way, often abbreviated ROW, refers to a strip of land underneath or around power lines that your electric cooperative has the right and responsibility to maintain and clear. Trees must grow at a distance far enough from lines and conductors where they will not cause harm to individuals or a disruption to electrical service.

Specifications can vary, but a general guideline of maintaining a safe ROW is 15 feet of clearance on either side of the primary conductors and 20 feet of vertical overhead clearance from the highest wire on the pole.

Clearing the ROW is critical to keeping our members' lights on. An average 15 percent of power interruptions occur when trees, shrubs or bushes grow too close to power lines.

If vegetation encroaches on this safe distance, our vegetation management team will trim back branches and brush using chain saws, bucket trucks, tree climbers, brush chippers and mowers. Chemical control methods can also be used as a way to support the growth of low-growing plant species that will outcompete the tall trees growing beneath power lines.

ROW clearing also keeps your family safe by ensuring that tree branches do not become energized due to close contact with a downed power line. Power lines can carry up to 34,500 volts, and an energized tree branch is incredibly dangerous—even deadly. Be mindful when you're around trees close to power lines, and make sure your children know that climbing trees near power lines is extremely dangerous.

ROW clearing is also critical to ensuring that we provide members with affordable electricity. Staying ahead of the game often keeps us from having to come out after a storm to restore power outages caused by fallen trees.

Remember to contact Karnes EC if you decide to trim or remove trees near any power service or line. And never trim a tree in the right-of-way zone on your own.

ROW clearing just makes sense. Visit [karnesec.org](http://karnesec.org) to find out more about our vegetation management program and how it keeps the rights-of-way clear in our service territory.

**Right-of-way clearing reduces power interruptions and ensures safe, reliable electric service.**



## 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](http://www.karnesec.net)** to get connected today.

**[karnesec.net](http://karnesec.net)**

# With Safety and Service for All

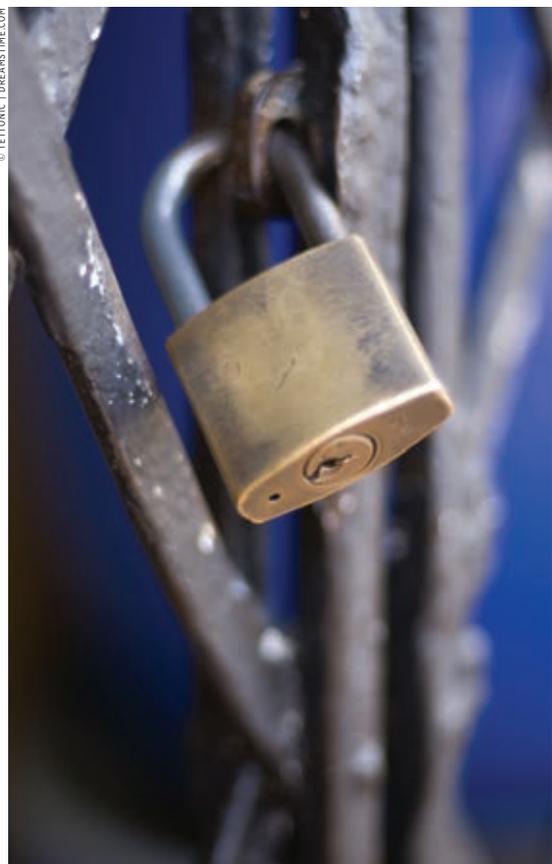
**IMAGINE YOU'RE A KARNES ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE LINEWORKER** and your crew has been called out to a member's property to restore service after an outage. There are a million things going through your mind about the job at hand: The members depending on you to restore the power they rely on for health, safety and comfort. The unseen hazards created by the storm that blew through and knocked out the power. The equipment and procedures necessary to get the power back on properly, quickly and safely.

Probably the last thing you're thinking about is having to defend yourself. However, some electric co-op workers have been threatened by members who want to

keep strangers off their private property at all costs. Using measures from locked gates and guard dogs to rifles and shotguns, some residents resist the presence of anyone on their property—even if they are co-op workers with a duty to restore power.

Not only are these incidents distressing, they're also illegal. Cooperative personnel have a legal right—and responsibility—to enter a member's property on official co-op business. Texas laws protect electric cooperative employees from criminal trespass charges, and they impose a stiff penalty on those who threaten a cooperative worker. Anyone who points a gun at a co-op worker (or anyone else) could face a second-degree felony charge, punishable by two to 20 years' imprisonment and a possible fine of up to \$10,000.

There is a simple way for members to avoid confronta-



**Co-op workers need access to your property to get the power back on and perform right-of-way maintenance.**

tions with co-op crews on private property: Call the co-op immediately at 1-888-807-3952 so we can verify the presence of our employees or contract workers and let you know why they are there.

Every employee of Karnes EC works with the members' best interests in mind and respects your property. When we must come onto your property, we want you to be comfortable, and we want our employees to go home safe at the end of each day. Working together, we can keep the electricity flowing and everyone safe.



**Always read labels carefully to avoid buying counterfeit products.**

## Deadly Deals: Counterfeits

**THE SAYING, "IF IT'S TOO GOOD** to be true, it usually is," should come to mind when you find any products that are far below competitive prices. But an electrical product is uniquely hazardous when impersonated.

A counterfeit electrical product has not undergone testing by an independent laboratory and likely does not comply with industry safety requirements. Because its origin is often unknown, the manufacturer isn't held accountable for the potentially deadly results.

Learn what to look for to protect yourself and your loved ones from fires or injuries associated with counterfeit electrical products.

- ▶ Use established vendors who purchase their goods from legitimate distributors and genuinely licensed manufacturers.

- ▶ Read the packaging and labels carefully. Text should be free of grammatical errors and should not contain conflicting information.

- ▶ Inspect the packaging. It should bear the name and contact information of the manufacturer.

- ▶ Avoid unknown brands and products that do not display any brand affiliation.

- ▶ Do your research. Organizations such as the Consumer Product Safety Commission, CSA Group and Underwriters Laboratories provide information on their websites about product recalls—including those related to counterfeiting.

—Electrical Safety Foundation International

JAMIE D. TRAVIS