

Membership Matters



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER BRAD BIERSTEDT

OCTOBER IS NATIONAL COOPERATIVE MONTH, the time of year to celebrate what the benefits of cooperative membership truly mean. You could be a member of many institutions—a gym, a 4-H club, a food-of-the-month club—the list goes on and on. But being a member of a co-op is different.

When you are a member of a co-op, you are also an owner. When you signed up to be a member of Karnes Electric Cooperative, you “bought” a stake in our business; and just like any stakeholder, you are offered the benefits of membership.

As a member, you have a say in electing the directors who democratically represent the membership on the co-op’s board. You have an opportunity to make your voice heard every year at our annual meeting. You get to register your opinion on local, state and national policy issues that your electric cooperative supports or opposes.

Also, you receive capital credits whenever the board of directors decides it makes financial sense. Our bottom line is providing you with safe, reliable and affordable electricity, which demands that we think about expenses, overhead and other aspects of daily business. But when we have a little left over, we send it right back to you. Whether we return capital credits to you in the form of a bill credit or a check, you have a say in where that money goes. Returning capital credits to you is another major part of why being a co-op member matters.

As your local electric co-op, we have the privilege of being a vital part of the surrounding communities. When we think about membership, we think about all of the ways we can give back to you, our members.

Improving the quality of life for our members and giving back is what cooperatives are all about.



Sealing leaks and adding insulation can improve the overall comfort of your home and make a difference on utility bills.

Why Seal and Insulate?

THE LEAKS, HOLES AND GAPS that allow air to escape from a typical home create an effect equivalent to leaving a window open every day of the year.

Creating barriers to the places where outside air can get into your home—or where indoor, conditioned air can get out—is often cited as one of the most important home improvement measures you can take. But how does it work?

Save energy and money: Air that leaks through your home’s “envelope”—the outer walls, ceilings, floors, windows, doors and other openings—wastes a lot of energy and increases your utility costs. A well-sealed envelope, coupled with the right amount of insulation, can make a real difference on your utility bills.

Increase comfort: Sealing leaks and adding insulation can improve the overall comfort of your home and help fix many common problems, such as drafty rooms; too-hot or too-cold rooms; uneven temperatures among rooms; cold floors in the winter; and high energy bills.

Sealing and insulating can also result in other environmental benefits, such as reduced noise from outside; less pollen and dust and fewer insects or pests entering your home; and better humidity control by your HVAC system.

Most homes will benefit: Most homes in the United States don’t have enough insulation and have significant air leaks.



Co-op, Employees Assist With County Fire



From left, Hector Lopez, Buddy Kerlick, Karnes City Fire Chief Charlie Malik and Cory Ebrom participate in a check presentation from Karnes EC to the local fire departments. Lopez, Kerlick and Ebrom work for KEC, and Lopez and Ebrom serve on the Karnes City VFD.

ON JULY 29, THE KARNES CITY AND GILLETT volunteer fire departments responded to a fire in northern Karnes County. Their quick response saved many acres from destruction. The cause of the fire was an arrestor that had shorted out, causing the line to burn to the ground.

Karnes Electric Cooperative made a donation to each fire department to thank them for their volunteer service to the county.

Bathroom Luxury With Less

THE RAIN-CAN SHOWERHEAD is still among the most popular bathroom upgrades a decade after it became what some thought would be a passing fad. During that decade, the bathroom has become a place to escape from the stress of the rest of the world—so homeowners are sparing no expense to make it luxurious but are also adding fixtures that use less water and lights that use less energy. If you're ready to revamp the most-used room in your house, consider these possibilities:

Replace outdated toilets, faucets and showerheads with low-flow versions. The latest models are designed to make it feel like you're using plenty of water while they still conserve.

Add more light. Consider adding sconces on either side of the mirror, plus an over-head light, and even a light on the ceiling inside the shower. The extra light will help prevent accidents and illuminate your face better. If you use LEDs or CFLs, the budget impact is minimal.

Install grab bars next to the toilet and inside the shower. Don't mistake this important safety device as an accommodation for older residents. You're never too young to slip in the shower.



Karnes Electric Cooperative

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

GENERAL MANAGER

Brad Bierstedt

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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

Karnes EC Gives Back \$749,370 in Capital Credits

THE KARNES ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE Board of Directors authorized the retirement of \$749,370 in capital credits to the cooperative's members. Any member of Karnes EC with an active account received their capital credits retirement in the form of a credit on their September 2015 bills. Any member no longer receiving service from Karnes EC had a check mailed to them.



You've probably heard of profit sharing for people who work for employee-minded companies. But did you know that a rural electric cooperative that sells electricity hands its profits back to its consumers, who are called members?

Electric cooperatives are nonprofit organizations. They strive to charge a fair rate for electricity and use the money to make sure there's enough power to go around. They use it to maintain their equip-

ment, pay their staff and run the business. Anything that's left over is returned to members, those who use the electricity.

Cooperative employees don't even refer to that money as "profit" because they know the utility isn't going to keep it. There are no stockholders to pay because cooperatives are owned by the people who buy their services, not by investors. So cooperative employees call the money left over after all expenses are paid "margins." They call the refunds, or retirements, they send to their members "capital credits" or "patronage dividends."

Getting a capital credits retirement is a bonus that consumers get for buying their electricity from a cooperative. Another bonus is that those consumers are actually members—and part-owners—of the cooperative, rather than just customers. So capital credits are a benefit of membership.

Including the amount authorized for return this year, the total amount of capital credits returned in Karnes EC's history is \$6,347,965.

Karnes EC is proud of its 77-year heritage of distributing electricity in 12 South Texas and Coastal Bend counties. We are headquartered in Karnes City with a district office in Pleasanton.

MGKAYA | ISTOCK.COM

Keep Safety First During Fall Chores

SUMMER'S OVER; SCHOOLS ARE OPEN; and it's time to prepare your house and lawn for fall and winter. The first thing to prepare: power tools and electrical cords—including extension cords—in the home, garage, shed and yard.

- ▶ Check that your power tools are designed for outdoor use and that there is no damage to the wires.
- ▶ Never carry a power tool by the wires or use it near water.
- ▶ Check to see that a tool is in good working condition before use. If it's not, don't repair it yourself. Have it repaired at a certified repair center or send it back to the manufacturer.
- ▶ Unplug electric tools and disconnect spark plug wires on gasoline-powered tools before making adjustments or clearing jams near moving parts.
- ▶ Be sure power tools are turned off and made inoperable if they must be left unattended, to prevent use by children.

▶ Always wear proper safety equipment and clothing (eye protection, long sleeves, etc.) for the task.

▶ Never use any accessory or power tool attachment except those specifically supplied or recommended by the manufacturer. They should be described in the tool's instruction manual.

And don't overlook extension cords. Some tips for safety:

- ▶ For outdoor jobs, use extension cords designed for outdoor use. They're thicker, more durable and have connectors molded on them to prevent moisture damage.
- ▶ Do not plug one extension cord into another. Buy the proper length instead, but do not buy a longer cord than you need.
- ▶ Store extension cords in the garage so they won't be exposed to rain or cold weather.



Straight Shooting on Safety

Texans love to hunt. Nature beckons. There's suspense, excitement and escape from the daily routine.

Here are the "10 commandments" of shooting safety:

- ▶ Always point the muzzle of your gun in a safe direction.
- ▶ Treat every firearm or bow with the same respect you would show a loaded gun or nocked arrow.
- ▶ Be sure of your target.
- ▶ Unload firearms and unstring conventional bows when not in use.
- ▶ Handle firearms, arrows and ammunition with care.
- ▶ Know your safe zone-of-fire and stick to it.
- ▶ Control your emotions when using weapons.
- ▶ Wear hearing and eye protection.
- ▶ Don't consume alcohol or drugs before or while handling firearms or bows.
- ▶ Be responsible: Never use electrical equipment, such as insulators and transformers, as targets.

If you practice these rules, you'll help to ensure a safe future for yourself, others and the shooting sports.

Karnes Electric Cooperative encourages you to always practice safety.

Ditch the Fridge in the Garage

IT'S CONVENIENT TO HAVE AN EXTRA REFRIGERATOR in the house for overflow food storage during holidays and parties—but the garage isn't necessarily the best place to put it.

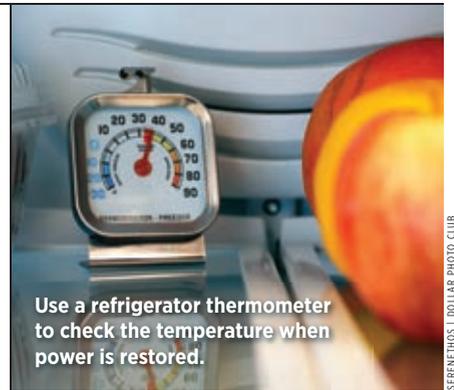
Unless your garage is air conditioned or insulated, it gets awfully hot in there during the summer, and that can force the refrigerator to work overtime to keep the food cold. You'll see the cost of that hard work on your electric bill.

However, if you must keep a refrigerator in the garage, keep a few things in mind:

- ▶ It's not just the heat that stresses out a refrigerator in the garage: Manufacturers also advise against placing one in any space where the temperature dips below 55 degrees in the winter. In an unheated garage, the fridge can actually warm up frozen food if the room temperature dips below freezing.
 - ▶ Have an electrician upgrade the electrical circuits in your garage before you plug in a refrigerator. If the appliance overtaxes the circuit and flips a breaker, you could wind up with a lot of smelly, spoiled food.
 - ▶ Plug your refrigerator only into a grounded wall outlet.
 - ▶ Avoid plugging the appliance into an outlet that's controlled by a switch. Someone could accidentally turn the switch off and cut power to the fridge.
 - ▶ Clean a garage-based refrigerator more often than the one in the kitchen. The garage gets a lot dirtier than the house does, and older fridges often have looser seals.
 - ▶ Don't stack items

around the refrigerator or lean anything against it. Like any appliance, it needs room to "breathe," or it won't operate efficiently.

▶ If your garage refrigerator used to be your kitchen refrigerator, it's probably pretty old and very inefficient. You're better off buying a small, new refrigerator and recycling the old one so you won't waste energy and unnecessarily run up your electric bill. Keeping that old fridge running in your garage for just a few cold drinks could cost you \$150 per year, or more, depending on its energy efficiency.



Use a refrigerator thermometer to check the temperature when power is restored.

SERENETHOS | DOLLAR PHOTO CLUB

Storm Headed Your Way?

Think about electricity

STORMS SEEM TO BE INCREASING in frequency and severity, and that can lead to more power outages.

To avoid disaster, plan your response to a sudden storm. Here are a few tips:

- ▶ If the power goes out, unplug all major electrical appliances and your expensive electronics. This could prevent an electrical surge from damaging them when the power is restored.
- ▶ Unplug basement appliances if you expect flooding.
- ▶ If water gets into the house, turn off the electricity to those areas before stepping into a wet room. Stepping in water—even just a puddle—that is touching plugged-in appliances can electrocute you.
 - ▶ Before turning wet appliances back on, have an electrician inspect them.
 - ▶ Keep the refrigerator door closed during a power outage. Food will stay good for four to six hours in an unopened refrigerator.
 - ▶ Keep a refrigerator thermometer on hand to check the temperature when power is restored. If the temperature is still below 40 degrees, the food is safe to eat.
 - ▶ Know where you can get dry ice if the power is off for more than four hours.
- Keep ready-to-eat, nonperishable food—and a manual can opener—on hand.
- ▶ If someone in the house is on a life-support system or relies on an electric medical device, make a plan for where to take the person if the power goes out.

TOUCHSTONE ENERGY



Extreme temperature changes, substandard circuits and extra dirt can make the garage a less-than-ideal place to put that old refrigerator.

Texas Division of Emergency Management

Hurricane Preparedness Guidelines

Preparing for Hurricane Season: June 1–November 30

EVACUATION PLANNING: When a hurricane threatens, listen for instructions from local officials.

When they call for an evacuation in your area, get going without delay.

- ▶ Discuss evacuation plans with your family BEFORE hurricane season, June 1–November 30.
- ▶ Make a checklist of what you need to do before you leave town, and review it.
- ▶ Monitor National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration weather radio and local TV and radio broadcasts during storm season.
- ▶ Prepare an emergency supply kit including: radio; flashlight; batteries; eye-glasses; bottled water; nonperishable food; dry clothes; bedding; insurance information; important documents; medications; copies of prescriptions; and special products for babies, the elderly and medically fragile family members.
- ▶ Learn evacuation routes before storm season. When there's a hurricane in the Gulf, keep your gas tank as full as possible. Expect traffic delays in an evacuation.
- ▶ Dial 2-1-1 to register if you have special health-care needs or if you simply do not have transportation. Gulf Coast residents in evacuation zones with special health-care needs—who do not have friends or family to help them—should register in advance for a ride by dialing 2-1-1. Residents with no other transportation can register for a ride in advance by dialing 2-1-1.



Division de Administracion de Emergencias de Texas

Directrices para Huracanes

Preparando para la temporada de huracanes durante el 1 de junio hasta el 30 de noviembre

EVACUACIÓN EN CASO DE HURACÁN: Cuando exista una amenaza de huracán, escucha las instrucciones de funcionarios locales. Cuando llamen para una evacuación en su área, sálgase del área lo más pronto posible.

- ▶ Discute los planes de evacuación con su familia ANTES de la temporada de huracán, que comienza el 1 de junio hasta 30 de noviembre. Haga una lista de lo que usted debe hacer antes de salir de la ciudad y revísela.
- ▶ Escuche la radio y televisión durante la temporada de huracanes.
- ▶ Prepare un equipo de emergencia incluyendo: radio, linterna, repuesto de baterías, anteojos extras, agua embotellada, alimentos no perecederos, ropa extra, ropa de cama, información de seguro, documentos importantes, medicinas, copias de recetas medicas y productos especiales para bebés, las personas mayores y miembros de la familia médicamente frágiles.
- ▶ Aprenda sus rutas de evacuación antes de la temporada de huracanes. Cuando hay un huracán en el Golfo, mantenga el tanque de gasolina lleno. Este consiente de que habrá demoras de tráfico.
- ▶ Si usted tiene necesidad especial de asistencia médica o si usted simplemente no tiene como trasladarse: Los residentes de la Costa del Golfo con necesidades especiales de asistencia médica en zonas de evacuación—sin familia o amigos para ayudarlos—deben registrarse para su traslado por adelantado llamando al 2-1-1. Los residentes sin coche, pueden registrarse por adelantado para su traslado llamando al 2-1-1.



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