

Happy Holidays and Hopeful New Year



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER BRAD BIERSTEDT

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, BUT I AM EXCITED about the end of this year and the approach of the clean slate that a new year offers.

Events in 2015 presented some challenges for ordinary folks and businesses such as Karnes Electric Cooperative—but thanks to the hard work and dedication of our employees and the forward-thinking leadership of our board of directors, your co-op met those challenges. We're poised to meet whatever challenges and opportunities might come our way in 2016.

The cooperative exists to fulfill a purpose: To provide the best possible electric service at the lowest possible cost, improving the quality of life for our communities in the process. That's the cause to which everyone at your co-op is dedicated, year in and year out.

So as the new year draws near, I'd like to take a moment to thank all the employees at Karnes EC. I've never seen a more dedicated group of people. They come to work each day with service to the co-op's members on their minds and the safety of themselves and their fellow workers foremost.

I'd also like to thank the co-op's board of directors, whose members have taken on the responsibility of directing a multimillion-dollar utility. It takes a real commitment to keep up with the ever-evolving standards of this complex and fast-changing industry while making decisions that affect thousands of their fellow members.

I'd especially like to thank you, our member-owners, who make all of our jobs possible. Thank you for your support and understanding when things don't go right; thank you for paying your bills on time, which keeps the cooperative financially strong; and thank you for your participation in our annual meeting and community activities.

Without your cooperation, there would be no cooperative.

As we say goodbye to 2015 and look ahead to 2016, let us hope it will be a great year for all of us. Merry Christmas, happy holidays and happy new year from Karnes Electric Cooperative!



Improve fireplace efficiency by replacing flue damper seals, insulating the chimney and closing the damper when not in use.

Minimize Fireplace Heat Loss

IF YOU USE AN OLD-FASHIONED fireplace—even though you know it's sucking heat out of your house—you can do a few things to improve its efficiency:

1. Close the damper when you're not using the fireplace. As soon as the fire has burned out, close it and keep it closed until it's time to fire it up again.

2. Update your fireplace with tempered glass doors and a heat-air exchange system that blows warm air back into the room.

3. Replace the seals around your fireplace flue damper. Seals that aren't tight can let heat leave the house even when the damper is closed.

4. Insulate your chimney. Exhaust that exits the fireplace through the chimney can create creosote buildup and make the unit even less efficient. A chimney liner helps prevent buildup and can protect masonry from the corrosive byproducts of flue gases.

5. Call a chimney sweep. A proper inspection and cleaning once a year keeps a fireplace functioning safely and more efficiently.

If you don't use your fireplace anymore, have the unused chimney flue sealed. Consider inserting an electric log set. The latest models look much more realistic than earlier versions.



LEDs for the Holidays

“L-E-D! L-E-D! L-E-D!” (Imagine this being chanted the way “U-S-A” is done at the Olympics.) Although light-emitting diodes won’t necessarily anchor a relay to victory, they are most certainly the current champions when it comes to energy-efficient lighting, and a perfect choice for holiday decorating.

Fifty years ago, we enjoyed decorating with large, painted incandescent bulbs. They were glorious—and hot, posing a real danger when used on a dry tree.

Fast-forward a couple of decades, when the energy-conservation movement created a demand for more efficient options. Enter miniature incandescent light strings. These still are widely used today and use dramatically less power than their predecessors.

As is often true in our technological age, manufacturers didn’t stop looking for even more efficient alternatives. This led to the introduction of LED lights. The first incarnations generated less-than-appealing garish blues, greens and reds but quickly softened into a more eye-pleasing spectrum.

Today, LEDs are the undisputed champs of holiday lighting. There is no reason to let concerns over cost of operation limit your decorating genius. You could wrap your home in LED light strings, become visible to the International Space Station and still have a pleasantly manageable power bill at the end of it all.

LEDs are also showing up in other forms and places. They are available in clear tubes that you can wrap around objects for extra interest. Many yard figures are constructed with these as the main lighted element.

How about wearing some holiday LED bling? Yes, the tacky (but ever so popular) holiday tie with tiny lights has been around for years. But combine the advances in LEDs with conductive paints and microcontrollers, and you can create some truly memorable fashions for the holidays.

You have worked hard all year to reduce your energy consumption to save money and slim down your carbon footprint. Now reward yourself with a splendid holiday display that will be the envy of all who see it—while you still conserve electricity.

HOLIDAY LIGHTING COMPARISON

Holiday lighting options have come a long way over the past few decades. The chart below shows three types of lighting options, including wattage and operating cost comparisons.

TYPE OF LAMP	WATTS PER LAMP	WATTS PER 50 LAMPS	SEASONAL OPERATING COST*
C9 INCANDESCENT 	7	350	\$13.33
MINI INCANDESCENT 	0.425	21.25	\$0.81
LED 	0.069	3.45	\$0.13

*Based on 40 days of operation, eight hours per day, \$0.119 per kilowatt-hour (Department of Energy average). In addition, the LED will last as much as 40 times longer than the incandescent lamps. *Source: energy.gov*



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

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karnesec.org



Space heaters can be dangerous when placed near combustibles or improperly plugged in.

Space Heater Safety

PORTABLE ELECTRIC SPACE HEATERS can be a convenient source of supplemental heat for your home in cold weather, but they also increase the risk of fire and electric shock if they're not used properly. Half of all home heating fires occur in December, January and February, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

Heating equipment is the second leading cause of home fires in the United States. More than 65,000 home fires are attributed to heating equipment each year. These fires result in hundreds of deaths, thousands of injuries and millions of dollars in property damage.

Fire and electrical hazards can be caused by space heaters without adequate safety features, space heaters placed near combustibles or space heaters that are improperly plugged in. Safety should always be a top consideration when using space heaters. Here are some tips for keeping your home safe and warm when it's cold outside:

- ▶ Make sure your space heater has a label showing that it has been tested by a recognized testing laboratory.
- ▶ Before using any space heater, read the manufacturer's instructions and warning labels carefully.
- ▶ Inspect heaters for cracked or broken plugs or loose connections before each use. If anything is frayed, worn or damaged, do not use the heater.
- ▶ Never leave a space heater unattended. Turn it off when you're leaving a room or going to sleep, and don't let pets or children play too close to a space heater.
- ▶ Space heaters are meant to provide only supplemental heat and should never be used to warm bedding, cook food, dry clothing or thaw pipes.
- ▶ Proper placement of space heaters is critical. Heaters must be kept at least 3 feet away from anything that can burn, including paper, clothing and rugs.
- ▶ Locate space heaters out of high-traffic areas and doorways, where they may pose a tripping hazard.
- ▶ Plug space heaters directly into wall outlets. Do not use an extension cord or power strip, which could overheat and result in a fire. Do not plug any other electrical devices into the same outlet as the heater.
- ▶ Place space heaters on hard, level, flat surfaces. Never place heaters on cabinets, tables, furniture or carpet, which can overheat and start a fire.
- ▶ Always unplug and safely store the heater when it is not in use.

—ESFI

Clean Filters, Vents in Winter

EVEN IF YOU'RE WAITING until spring to do a floor-to-ceiling home cleanup, three cold-weather cleaning jobs can't wait.

First, clean your clothes dryer vents. A clogged dryer vent can start a fire—but a clean one helps your dryer use up to 25 percent less energy. Pull the dryer away from the wall, remove the back vent hose and vacuum it out. If it's especially clogged, a handyman with a "snake" tool can help.

Next, do the same thing with bathroom and kitchen vents. In the bathroom, remove the vent cover and suction out whatever is in it. The stove vent is a bit trickier: It's more likely to be clogged with grease than lint, and could need to be soaked and scrubbed. The effort is worth it, as it could prevent a grease fire.



Clean or replace furnace filters at least every three months.

Finally, clean or replace furnace filters at least every three months. Filters get clogged with airborne debris, including dust, dirt and bugs. A dirty filter forces your furnace to work harder to keep your home comfortable. The harder it works, the more energy it uses.

Most filters are disposable, but if yours is not, rinse it with water and brush away the dirt. Avoid using chemical cleaners, as the furnace fan could push residual toxins into the indoor air you breathe.

DEHAN GEORGEV / DOOLAR PHOTO CLUB

JANICE CHARD / ISTOCK.COM



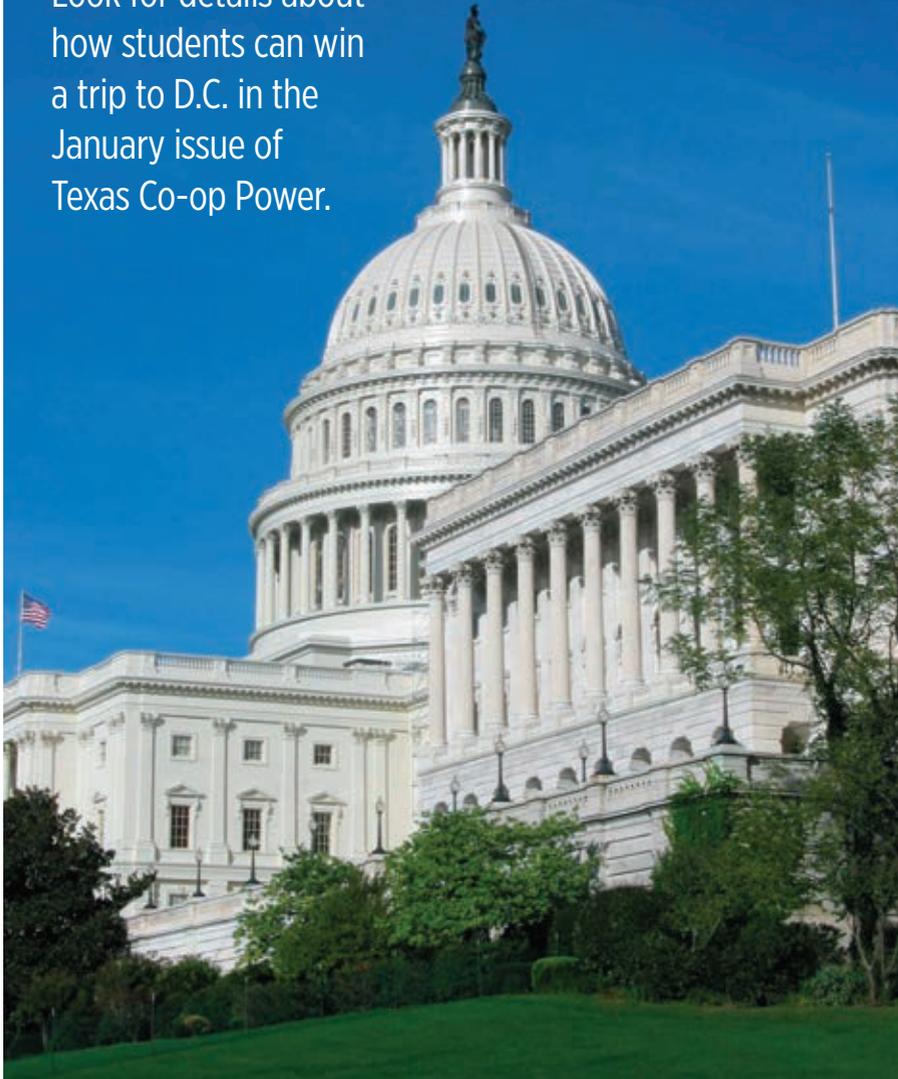
MERRY CHRISTMAS

Karnes EC wishes you and yours a blessed and joyful Christmas season.

Our offices will be closed Thursday and Friday, December 24–25, and Friday, January 1, to allow our employees to celebrate the holidays with their families.

Youth Tour 2016 Is Coming!

Look for details about how students can win a trip to D.C. in the January issue of Texas Co-op Power.



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

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Power Tip

Reduce energy for water heating. Simple steps like lowering your heater's temperature and installing low-flow showerheads can reduce your water heating bills.

ILKAY MURATOGLU | ISTOCKPHOTO

Tips for a Safe and Happy Holiday Season

THE HOLIDAYS ARE UPON US. For many, that means more celebrations with friends and family, travel, decorations, cooking and shopping. Karnes Electric Cooperative wants you to stay safe during the holidays, so here are a few tips to consider as you gear up for the season.

We can't guarantee that the hustle and bustle of the season won't leave you with a few frayed nerves, but we can certainly help you avoid frayed wires.

Inspect Your Seasonal Items

Many of us have treasured holiday mementos that we bring out of storage and proudly display every year. The holidays are also a time when we dust off specialized cooking gadgets that allow us to prepare our favorite seasonal treats. These items are often handed down through generations and might lack modern safety features.

Take a few moments to carefully inspect all your holiday items to ensure that everything is in safe, working order. A few things to look out for include:

- ▶ Brittle insulation on wires
- ▶ Rodent damage to wires
- ▶ Chafed or frayed wires, especially at stress points
- ▶ Worn switches with the potential to short-circuit
- ▶ Corroded metal parts
- ▶ Broken legs, unstable bases and other tip-over hazards

Extension Cords Are Temporary

When you asked your teacher for an extension on your term paper, it was a one-time thing, right? The same holds true for extension cords. They are designed for temporary use and should never be used as a permanent or long-term solution.

Never Defeat Safety Devices

There are reasons why some devices have fuses, why some plugs have three prongs instead of two, and why one prong is wider than the other on two-prong outlets. When those safety features get in the way of your grand holiday décor plans, you might be tempted to tamper with or defeat those features. Don't do it! If your plugs won't fit together, that means they're not designed to work together. Rather than tampering with a safety feature, find a safe solution.

Look Up and Live

When working outside with a ladder, be mindful of the location of overhead power lines. Always carry your ladder so that

it is parallel to the ground. Before placing your ladder in an upright position, look around to ensure that you are a safe distance from any power lines.

Beware of power lines running through or near trees. Over time, tree branches can grow around power lines running along the street and to your home. If those branches come in contact with power lines, they can become energized, too. If your holiday plans call for stringing lights through trees, this can create a safety hazard. If you notice tree limbs that are too close to electric lines, contact Karnes EC.



A new chew toy? Protect pets and children by closely supervising them around the holiday season's twinkling lights and bright ribbons.

Stay Away from Your Service Connection

The overhead wire bringing power from the utility pole to your house is dangerous. You should treat this line the same way you'd treat any other power line on our system. Maintain a safe distance—even if that means a small gap in the perfect gingerbread house outline of lights.

Don't Forget About the Kids and Pets

If you have small children, you've probably spent a great deal of time making sure every square inch of your home is child-proof. Every cabinet is locked, and every outlet is covered. But sometimes the joy of celebrating the holidays with our little ones makes us a little less vigilant about electrical safety. Make sure your holiday décor receives the same level of safety scrutiny you apply to all of the permanent items in your home.

Curious and mischievous pets can present similar challenges. Make sure Fluffy isn't nibbling on those extra wires or using your tree as her personal back scratcher or jungle gym.