

What Would Life Be Like Without Electric Co-ops?



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER BRAD BIERSTEDT

FOLKS OFTEN TAKE STOCK OF BLESSINGS and challenges at the beginning of each year, thinking about the impact their lives have made on the world and envisioning the effect they'd like to have on the future. At Karnes Electric Cooperative, we approach the new year with this spirit of contemplation.

In the classic movie *It's a Wonderful Life*, lead character George Bailey wishes he had never been born because he is in financial trouble. With the help of an angel, he sees how many lives would have been negatively affected if he didn't exist. Bailey comes to realize that, even with his problems, he has a wonderful life with great friends and family.

So what do you think life would be like if community leaders had not founded Karnes Electric Cooperative all those years ago?

Living in the United States in 2016, it is nearly impossible to imagine life without

electricity. So many of our modern conveniences that improve the quality of our lives depend on electricity as the "fuel" to make them work. From the alarm clock that wakes us up, to the refrigerator that keeps our morning milk cold and fresh. From the air-conditioning and heating units that keep us cool in summer and warm in winter, to the vacuum that lets us

clean more efficiently and all those kitchen appliances that save us time and effort. So much of our entertainment, whether from the TV, radio or computer, depends on the kilowatt-hours that your electric co-op provides. Just think: There would be no smartphones or cellphones if there were no electricity.

As you consider the new year, remind yourself to be thankful for all that you have. It also is important to remember the 1.3 billion people in the world who still live without reliable electric service—a number equal to about four times the U.S. population.

Many of the things we take for granted living in the U.S. are much harder and more time-consuming for people in developing countries around the world. We are proud members of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, which works through its affiliates, NRECA International and the NRECA International Foundation, to help empower people in developing countries such as Haiti and Liberia.

We are thankful that our community ancestors had the vision and foresight to do for themselves what needed to be done, gathering friends and neighbors to form our electric co-op. As the electric business of the 21st century continues to evolve, you can count on Karnes EC to meet all of your electric energy needs. More important, we are here to help improve the quality of your wonderful life.

Americans are blessed to have ready access to electricity. In some countries, as few as 5 percent of the residents share that privilege.

SEERGEY NIVENSI | DOLLAR PHOTO CLUB



A popping noise and even a slight odor signal that a compact fluorescent lightbulb is working safely in its final hours.

Bulbs Die Differently

WORRIED WHEN YOU HEAR a compact fluorescent lightbulb pop or sizzle? Don't be fooled: These sounds signal that the bulb is working safely in its final hours. Smoke, a popping noise and a slight odor are typical of CFLs and do not pose a fire risk.

About 150 million CFLs are sold every year in the U.S., according to Underwriters Laboratories. While the bulbs produce less heat and use less energy than incandescents, differences between the bulbs go deeper. As the first wave of CFLs begins to reach the end of its life span, consumers are learning that bulbs die differently, too.

Most folks know how traditional incandescent lightbulbs tend to burn out: a pop, a flash and, when shaken, the familiar rattle confirming that the bulb needs to be changed.

With CFLs, the light dims over time, and the lamp may produce a more dramatic pop, emit a distinct odor and release some smoke. Sometimes the plastic at the base of a CFL will turn black, which is normal in most cases because safety standards require application of special flame-retardant plastics.

Win a Trip to the U.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 \$2,725 to join other Texas high school students at the White House, the U.S. Capitol, the Supreme Court, Washington National Cathedral, Arlington National Cemetery, 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 2016 Youth Tour begins June 8 in Austin and returns to Austin on June 17. This year, to give participants a snapshot of Texas government in action, a day of the trip includes a tour of the Texas State Capitol and a visit to the Bullock Texas State History Museum.

Applicants must be high school students who have completed their sophomore year by the end of June 2016 and be a member or legal dependent of a 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 can be requested by emailing jscheffler@karnesec.org. The deadline for submitting the application is 5 p.m., February 12.



Karnes Electric Cooperative

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

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Brad Bierstedt

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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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Stop Electric Shock Before It Stops You

ELECTRICITY SEEMS SO EASY TO USE that you probably take it for granted. But you might be surprised to learn that each year, electricity-related incidents in the home cause approximately 200 electrocutions, 4,000 shock injuries and 45,000 fires.

Most people think injuries happen by chance or “accident”—a word that implies an event that can’t be foreseen or avoided. Electrical injuries typically can be foreseen and avoided. Take time to learn how to avoid electricity’s hazards at home.

How Shock Happens

Avoid electric shock by learning how electricity travels—and how to stay out of its path. Electricity always seeks the easiest path to the ground. It tries to find a conductor, such as metal, wet wood, water—or your body. The human body is 60–70 percent water, so if you touch an energized bare wire or faulty appliance while you are grounded, electricity will instantly pass through you to the ground, causing a shock that can be harmful, if not fatal.

Grounding: The Third Wire

When you use a plug with three prongs, the third prong connects inside the outlet with a ground wire, which usually connects to a water pipe or a ground rod at the service panel. As a result, in case of a short circuit, electricity should flow through the grounding system instead of through you. To ensure this safeguard, you should never remove the third prong from a plug.

Use GFCIs for Extra Protection

Ground-fault circuit interrupters are found in some outlets and service panels. They monitor the flow of current to and from appliances. If there’s an imbalance in

the flow, current may travel through you, and the GFCI will immediately cut power to prevent serious injury. Use GFCIs in bathrooms and garages, near kitchen sinks and outdoors.

Appliance Safety

Remember the most important rule for appliances: Electricity and water don’t mix. Keep all appliances away from bathtubs, sinks, puddles and wet hands. Wet skin increases the risk of shock, so unplug an appliance before cleaning it—even if it’s off, it can shock. If an appliance overheats, unplug it and have it checked. Don’t overload outlets. Use only appliances that are approved by a nationally recognized testing laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories.



Electric blankets combined with lower thermostat settings can mean big savings in home heating costs.

Turn on Your Blankets

STOP SHIVERING AT NIGHT with a little help from an electric blanket or mattress pad that could save you up to 3 percent on your heating bill for each degree you lower your thermostat overnight.

Don’t plug in an old electric blanket that you haven’t used in years. Chances are, it’s no longer safe. Newer models have better warming technology and built-in safety features, and they come in up-to-date fabrics, textures and colors.

Most new electric blankets come with temperature sensors that automatically warm the coldest parts of your body and prevent the blanket from overheating. Electric blankets and mattress pads are less bulky than they were in the past, and their wires are hidden.

As you shop for a new electric blanket or mattress pad, rule out any products that are not rated as safe by a trusted product safety testing organization, such as Underwriters Laboratories.

Here are a few safety tips to follow once you get your cozy new bedding home:

- ▶ Don’t leave it plugged in overnight unless it is specifically designed for extended use. Instead, turn your blanket or pad on about 20 minutes before bed and turn it off when you get in.
- ▶ Electric blankets can burn the sensitive skin of the elderly and infants, so never leave the devices unattended with the heat on.
- ▶ Buy a product with an auto-off feature, and check it for defects or damage before plugging it in.



The third prong on a plug is there to protect you, so you should never remove it.

A Year of Saving

GOT CABIN FEVER THIS WINTER? Spend some time making your home more energy efficient—and start saving for your summer vacation!

You can trim your electric bill all year long by taking a few simple steps throughout the year. Here's a list of Karnes Electric Cooperative's recommendations for year-round energy and money savings:

January: Lowering your thermostat just a few degrees during winter months can save as much as \$85 per year. Bundle up and save! Programmable thermostats make it easy by offering preprogrammed settings to regulate a home's temperature throughout the year.

February: Adjust your water heater. Turning down the temperature gauge to 120 degrees can heat up your savings. Insulation around the tank also can help your water heater work more efficiently.

March: Stop air from escaping your home and money from escaping your wallet. Head down to your home's basement and seal those leaky ducts.

April: A little caulk can go a long way. Air leaks in your home add up. Caulking cracks and openings to the outside could save more than \$200 per year.

May: Make sure your refrigerator is on your spring cleaning to-do list. Throw out expired items; clean the refrigerator inside and out; and check the temperature gauge. For maximum operating efficiency, a refrigerator's temperature should be between 37 and 40 degrees.

June: When was the last time you changed your furnace and air-conditioner filter? Replacing HVAC filters regularly can have a big impact on a home's energy use. Dirty filters can restrict airflow and reduce the overall efficiency of your cooling system, forcing it to work harder on hot summer days.

July: During summer months, your home's cooling costs can skyrocket right along with the temperature outside. Keeping your thermostat set between 78 and 80 degrees can save up to 8 percent on monthly cooling bills.

August: Heading out of town on vacation? Be sure to unplug all of your electronic devices including computers, monitors, printers, TVs, cable boxes, DVD players and microwaves. Elec-

tronics with digital displays and instant-on features consume energy even when they're not in use.

September: Be a "fan-atic." Although it doesn't replace an air conditioner or a heat pump, a fan moves the air so everyone feels more comfortable. On a milder day, a fan is a much more energy-efficient choice than cranking up the air conditioning. Fans cool people, not rooms, so turn them off when you leave.

October: Get ready for winter by insulating your attic. Adding 9 or more inches of insulation could save you more than \$150 a year.

November: As the weather cools down, pull up your window shades during the day. Keeping blinds open during cold weather lets in heat from the sunlight, reducing the need to turn up your home's thermostat.



Need to seal your ducts? Don't reach for the duct tape. Use a mastic sealant or metal tape.

December: Put a new Energy Star appliance at the top of your Christmas wish list. Upgrading appliances such as washing machines to Energy Star-rated models can save up to \$140 per year.

Karnes EC is dedicated to being an energy-efficiency resource for its members. To learn more about how you can save money through energy-efficient practices, call us at (830) 780-3952.

Prepare for Winter Storms

WHEN WINTER TEMPERATURES DROP and storms hit, it can be challenging to stay safe and warm. Winter storm severity varies depending on where you live, but nearly all Texans are affected by extreme winter weather at some point. Karnes Electric Cooperative cares about your safety, and we want you to be prepared.

Heavy snow and ice can lead to downed power lines, leaving co-op members without power. During extremely low temperatures, this can be dangerous. If there is a power outage, our crews will continue to work as quickly and safely as possible to restore power, but there are a few things you can do to prepare yourself.

Stay warm. Plan to use a safe alternate heating source, such as a fireplace or wood-burning stove during a power outage. These are great options to keep you and your loved ones warm, but exercise caution when using them, and never leave the heating source unattended. If you are using gasoline-, propane- or natural gas-burning devices to stay warm, never use them indoors. Remember that fuel- and wood-burning sources of heat should always be properly ventilated. Always read the manufacturer's directions before using.

Stay fed. The CDC recommends keeping handy several days' supply of food that does not need to be cooked. Crackers, cereal and canned goods are good options. Five gallons of water per person should also be available in the event of an extended power outage.



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Although fascinating to see, ice-laden branches and power lines can cause power outages, so it's important to be prepared.

Stay safe. When an outage occurs, it usually means power lines are down. It is best not to travel during winter storms, but if you must, bring a survival kit along, and do not travel alone. If you encounter downed lines, always assume they are live. Stay as far away from the downed lines as possible, and report the situation to our dispatchers if possible by calling (830) 780-3952.

Winter weather can be unpredictable and dangerous, and planning ahead can often be the difference between life and death. Karnes EC is ready for what Mother Nature has in store, and we want you to be ready, too.

Watts vs. Lumens

YOU KNOW BY NOW that energy-efficient lighting can save you a bundle on your energy bill over time. New high-efficiency lightbulbs use up to 75 percent less electricity than standard bulbs, last about 10 times longer and can produce equivalent amounts of light.

But with new packaging and new units of measure, you may be confused about the difference between watts and lumens.

The Difference

The basic difference is this: Watts measure the amount of energy required to light products; lumens measure the amount of light produced. The more lumens a lightbulb produces, the brighter the light will shine.

Lightbulb manufacturers include lumen information and the equivalent standard wattage right on the packaging. Common terms are “soft white 60,” “warm light 60” and “60-watt replacement.”

Energy Star provides a chart of rough equivalences between traditional bulbs’ wattages and energy-efficient bulbs’ lumens:

	INCANDESCENT BULBS	ENERGY STAR BULB BRIGHTNESS
	(WATTS)	(MINIMUM LUMENS)
	40	450
	60	800
	75	1,100
	100	1,600
	150	2,600

However, keep in mind that multiple bulbs with the same lumen rating can require varying amounts of wattage.

Choosing a Bulb

To save energy, find a bulb with the brightness—or lumen rating—that you need, and then choose the one with the lowest wattage. You can also look for an Energy Star-certified bulb that is labeled as equivalent to the standard bulb you are replacing.

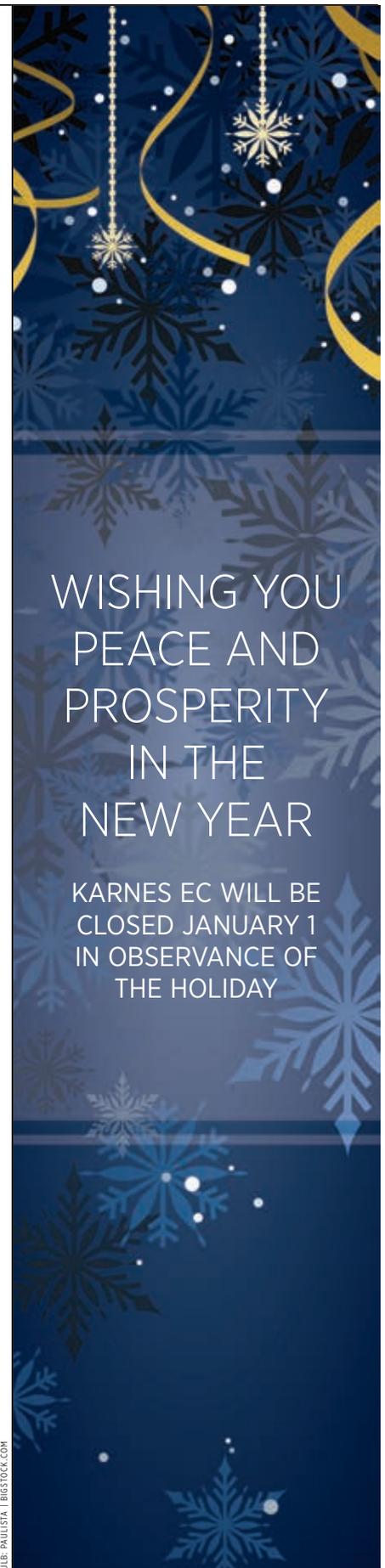
Color Considerations

The color of light might also affect how bright a bulb appears, even if the lumen levels are the same. Because most people are used to the soft yellowish glow of incandescent lightbulbs, Energy Star-certified bulbs that produce light closer to the color of daylight may appear brighter because the color is “whiter,” or less yellow.

Extra Lighting Tips

- ▶ Use bulbs with lower lumens where less light is needed. Higher lumens are appropriate for kitchen, bathroom and hobby areas.
- ▶ Make sure outdoor energy-efficient lights, especially fluorescent types, will work at extreme temperatures, whether high or low.
- ▶ If you need help selecting the right bulb, ask your electric cooperative or lighting dealer. Check with your co-op about rebates or discounts on energy-efficient lighting.

—Energy Star



BULB: PAULISTA | BIGSTOCK.COM