

Engage in Your Cooperative



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER BRAD BIERSTEDT

IN 2012, THE NATIONAL RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION, the trade association representing approximately 900 electric cooperatives in 47 states, released a report titled, *The Electric Cooperative Purpose: A Compass for the 21st Century*. A blue-ribbon task force of co-op leaders from across the country arrived at the conclusion that an electric cooperative's purpose is to “power communities and empower members to improve the quality of their lives.”

Karnes Electric Cooperative is a member of NRECA and firmly believes that you, our members, need to be at the heart of everything we do. We are proud that

we are different from investor-owned utilities, where the primary purpose is to generate profit for their stockholders.

Cooperatives are different. Co-ops enjoy the support of people from all walks of life. We operate in every type of business, from agriculture, housing and finance to health care, food, technology and many more. Co-ops can be found from the most rural to the most urban areas.



Please feel free to talk to any co-op staff member when you see us out and about in the community.

While the co-op must, of course, generate enough revenue to cover costs, profit is not our motive. Serving you and your neighbors is our No. 1 priority.

As *The Electric Cooperative Purpose* noted, “Our story is about ordinary people who banded together to improve the quality of life by providing electricity to our community when no one else would do it.” But that was 78 years ago, when Karnes EC was founded. As we look to the future, we once again need your active participation to determine the future of our co-op.

We welcome your input on what we can do to ensure that we meet your needs. You can provide us that input in several ways: You can attend the co-op's annual meeting, vote on co-op matters and ask questions of cooperative staff and management. You can call us at 1-888-807-3952 or contact us via karnesec.org with questions, comments and suggestions. And you can talk to any Karnes EC staff member when you see them during community events.

One thing you can absolutely count on: We will never move to Mexico or China, as so many other companies have done. We will always be local—right here, ready to listen and ready to serve our members.



Don't forget to put the garage on your spring-cleaning list.

Add Electrical Jobs to Spring-Cleaning Checklist

HERE ARE A FEW ITEMS to add to your spring-cleaning checklist:

- ▶ While cleaning windows, check for loose or cracked glass panes and for peeling caulk around them. Either one is a path for your conditioned air to escape outdoors, and for winter cold and summer heat to waft into the house. Replace broken windows and caulk that's past its prime.

- ▶ Compact fluorescent lightbulbs and light-emitting diodes last a lot longer than the traditional incandescent bulbs everybody grew up with. Instead of replacing them regularly, start dusting them. Unplug the light, then use a soft cloth to remove excess dust that could leave the light looking dim.

- ▶ Before the start of air-conditioning season, replace your system's dirty air filter. Then, replace it again every month during the cooling season to help your HVAC run as efficiently as possible.

- ▶ Pull your refrigerator away from the wall once a year and vacuum behind it.

- ▶ Check the utility closet or garage and move boxes and other items at least 5 feet away from your furnace and water heater. Appliances need air to circulate around them. While you're there, remove old cans of paint and other chemicals and debris from the vicinity of your furnace to prevent an explosion or fire.

Karnes EC Offers \$15,000 in Scholarships

TEN \$1,500 SCHOLARSHIPS ARE AVAILABLE THIS YEAR through Karnes Electric Cooperative. These scholarships will be awarded to graduating high school seniors who are legal dependents of active members receiving electric service from Karnes EC.

The electric cooperative can give scholarships because of a law enacted September 1, 1997. HB 3203 allows nonprofit electric cooperatives to put unclaimed funds previously collected by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts for the state's general fund to use for student scholarships.

Applications will be available in a PDF format on the Karnes EC website, karnesec.org, as well as through the high school counselors 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. Applications received after the deadline will not be eligible. Awards will be announced within 60 days of this date.

Karnes Electric 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 the co-op's main office at (830) 780-3952 and ask to speak to Janet Scheffler or Barbara Kotzur, or email bkotzur@karnesec.org.



KARNES ELECTRIC WISHES YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONES A BLESSED EASTER

SUNDAY, MARCH 27

Our offices will be closed Friday, March 25, in observance of Good Friday.



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, Kennedy, 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

Breaker Box Safety Basics

WE USE ELECTRICITY IN OUR HOMES throughout the day, but we rarely think about how it gets to the wall outlets or switches. Distribution lines bring electricity to homes and most commonly connect to a house through a service drop. The electricity goes through the meter box to the service panel, which is typically found in a basement or garage. The service panel, often called a breaker box, is where breakers and fuses protect the wires inside your house from electrical overload.

With so much electricity funneling out of the breaker box through the rest of the home to your outlets and switches, it is important to know how to use a breaker box safely.

Arc-fault circuit interrupters are installed directly in the breaker box and are designed to protect against fires caused by arcing faults in home electrical wiring. Arcing faults can be triggered by overloaded circuits, damaged wires, cracked wire insulation, loose or improper connections, faulty electrical equipment or overheated electrical wires.

An AFCI monitors current flow and can distinguish between normal, working arcs and unwanted, dangerous arcs. When an unwanted arcing condition is detected, it shuts down the circuit immediately. It is important to note that AFCIs do not provide protection against all of the possible circuit faults that can cause fires, but they are a significant step forward in electrical fire safety. Contact a qualified electrician to have them installed.

If an appliance is malfunctioning, if there is another electrical malfunction in your

Breakers and fuses in your service panel protect the wires inside your house from electrical overload.

home, or if the circuit breaker flipped during a power outage, it may be necessary to cut off or switch on the power at the breaker box. If you must flip a switch at the breaker box, always remember to step away and look away. Protect your eyes and body just in case an arc were to occur.

Never attempt to turn off power at the breaker box if you must stand in water to do so. If you touch the breaker box while wet or while standing in water, it could cause electric shock or death. If you cannot reach your breaker box safely, call your electric cooperative to shut off power at the meter.

Be sure to call a qualified electrician if blowing fuses or tripping circuit breakers are a recurring problem. This means there is something wrong with your electrical system, and it needs to be inspected.

—SafeElectricity.org



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HIGH-SPEED INTERNET FOR THE KARNES COMMUNITY

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

karnesec.net



How To Clean Refrigerator Coils

Yearly maintenance helps ensure efficiency and long life

Your refrigerator is one of the largest, most-used appliances in your home. It requires only minimal maintenance—just simple cleaning of the condenser coils, which disperse heat. If the coils are covered with dust, gunk or pet hair, they cannot diffuse the heat properly, and the unit will not run efficiently. A bigger problem can result if the compressor burns out from having to run constantly because of the grimy coating. This can be an expensive problem. But a minor time investment once a year can save you cold cash down the line.

1. **Locate the refrigerator's coil**, a grid-like structure or fan that will likely have a covering or grate protecting it. The coil is usually concealed behind the front toe-kick or in the back. Some newer models have internal coils, so if you don't see them in the front or back, this may be the case with your fridge.
2. **If the coil is in the back**, slide the refrigerator away from the wall, removing the plug from the electrical outlet if possible. You may also need to disconnect the line to the water dispenser or ice maker to allow enough room to work.
3. **Gently vacuum and clean the coil**. Using the brush or crevice attachment, carefully vacuum the dust and dirt wherever you see it. If you have pulled the fridge out, vacuum and wipe down the sides and back of the fridge and the floor.
4. **Once the floor is dry, plug the refrigerator back in**, and rearrange the power cord and supply lines so they don't get kinked or stuck under the weight of the refrigerator or behind it. Slide the refrigerator back into place. Be sure to replace the toe-kick panel if it was removed.

Look Up Before You Plant

SPRING IS A GOOD TIME to plant shade trees, which eventually will grow up and out and cast some nice shade on your house, keeping it cooler during summer.

But beware of where you plant. Tree branches can conduct electricity, creating a possible shock hazard for utility workers who need to service overhead power lines that are too close to towering trees.

Do some homework about the trees you've chosen before you plant them. Know how tall and wide each tree will grow. That way, you can plant it in a spot where, when it's fully grown, it will still be at least 10 feet away from a utility pole and overhead wires.

Here are a few other smart springtime precautions:

- ▶ Don't climb a ladder that's within reach of a power line.
- ▶ Hire a professional to prune tree branches that are near overhead wires. That's not a job for a do-it-yourselfer.
- ▶ Call your electric cooperative and 811 before you dig a hole to plant a tree—to make sure you won't interfere with underground lines on your property. That one is not only a safe practice; it's also the law.

How tall will that new tree get? You should know before you plant to make sure it won't grow into power lines.

