What Makes a Utility Great?

MESSAGE FROM
GENERAL MANAGER BRAD BIERSTEDT

PERIODICALLY, THE QUESTION COMES UP in discussions: What makes a utility—or any other company—great? There's an easy, one-word answer: People.

People make a utility great, and electric cooperatives know that. Electric co-op employees consistently deliver a higher level of customer service than any other type of electric utility in the country. Even research conducted by our competition gives us higher ratings than investor-owned and municipal utilities.

That fact alone makes co-ops good providers of electric service. It is the spirit of cooperation among people, however, that makes Karnes Electric Cooperative unique and a great utility.

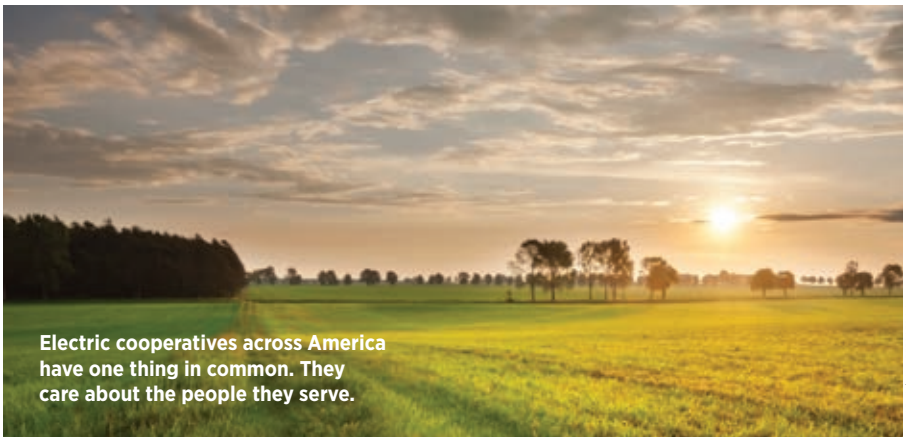
Co-op members all across the country give their local co-op employees high marks for understanding their local needs and having the flexibility to meet their individual needs. Co-op employees also get good grades for delivering state-of-the-art service and caring about consumers and the communities they serve. Research shows that co-ops get strong ratings from consumers for their commitment to local service, innovation and community.

Today, in Washington, D.C., legislation is being debated that could ultimately damage the ability of local co-ops to provide the great service and affordable rates that you have come to expect. But all electric co-op employees, in one way or another, are fighting to protect you from these potentially damaging changes.

The trust and loyalty electric cooperatives have earned give them the ability to continue to work for your best interests. Karnes EC staff, management and directors are united in their efforts to provide you with the best service available anywhere in the country, and they will fight any change that prevents them from doing that.

Electric cooperatives have known all along that to be a great utility, you have to make people your first priority. To be successful in this business, you have to care about the people you serve.

America's electric cooperatives have a strong record of caring about people—a record that cannot be disputed. That record makes us a great utility.



Electric cooperatives across America have one thing in common. They care about the people they serve.

MILOSZ_G | SHUTTERSTOCK

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

PLEASE PLAN TO JOIN US FOR THE

KARNES ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

ANNUAL MEETING

MONDAY, JUNE 6

Next month's issue will contain important information about the meeting.

CALENDAR: TAPHOUSE_STUDIOS | © ISTOCK.COM

Conserve water by investing in low-flow faucets and showerheads.

TAREK EL SOMBATI | ISTOCK.COM

Cut Water Use and Save Energy

THE WATER COMPANY USES electricity to purify water and pump it through your pipes. You use electricity to heat water for showering, washing dishes and doing laundry.

You can save energy—and your energy dollars—by conserving water at home.

Step 1: Buy water-saving low-flow toilets and showerheads when replacing your old ones. Look for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's WaterSense label on products that meet EPA performance and efficiency standards. These typically save at least 20 percent more water than comparable products.

Follow these other tips to save water:

- Attach a timer to your lawn sprinkler, and remember to cut back on watering after it rains or the weather cools.
- Find out how much water each plant in your garden needs. Overwatering certain types of plants can kill them.
- If you have a swimming pool, invest in a pool cover. It will keep heat in your pool and prevent water evaporation.
- Sweep your driveway with a broom instead of hosing it down.
- Don't do laundry until you have a full load of clothes. Even smaller cycles waste energy and water compared to full, large loads.
- Run the dishwasher only when it's full. Keep a bowl of soapy water in the sink for quick dishwashing.

MEMORIAL DAY

MONDAY, MAY 30

Karnes EC thanks all veterans for their service.

Our offices will be closed Monday, May 30, in observance of the holiday.

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Karnes Electric Cooperative

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

COOPERATIVE OFFICES

Main Office
1007 N. Highway 123, Karnes City

District Office
1824 W. Goodwin St., Pleasanton

Pay your bill, submit meter readings and view your account summary at karnesec.org.

Karnes Electric Cooperative is an equal-opportunity provider and employer.

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

Dangers of Electric Shock Drowning

AS WARM WEATHER ARRIVES, many Texans' thoughts turn to the water. The relaxing leisure activities of swimming and boating can quickly become dangerous, however.

During National Safe Boating Week, May 21–27 this year, it's important to remember that water-safety behaviors such as wearing life jackets and maintaining safe boating speeds have become commonplace, but a serious hazard remains that is often overlooked: Electric shock drowning occurs in fresh water when a typically low level of alternating current passes through a body, which causes muscular paralysis and can lead to drowning.

A 21-year-old Illinois man died in 2015 when touching a dock ladder at the Lake of the Ozarks in Missouri. There were two similar fatalities in Kentucky in 2013, and a pair of deaths in Missouri and Tennessee during the 2012 Fourth of July holiday. To complicate matters, electric shock drowning deaths are usually recorded as drownings because victims show no signs of burns, so many instances remain undocumented.

The 2011 National Electrical Code addresses the dangers in marinas and boatyards by requiring the main overcurrent protective device to be protected by a ground-fault circuit interrupter. However, this only applies to installations and inspections, which are recommended annually but not enforced.

Common sense and vigilance are the best ways to protect yourself and your loved ones from the risk of electric shock drowning and common boating and water-related electrical hazards. Keep in mind these strategies.

- Don't allow yourself or anyone else to swim near docks. Avoid entering the water when launching or loading your boat.
- Always maintain a distance of at least 10 feet between your boat and nearby power lines.
- If you feel a tingle while swimming, the water may be electrified. Get out as soon as possible, avoiding the use of metal objects such as ladders.
- Have your boat's electrical system inspected and upgraded by a certified marine electrician who is familiar with National Fire Protection Association codes NFPA 303 and NFPA 70.
- Have GFCIs installed on your boat and test them once a month.
- Install equipment leakage circuit interrupters on boats to protect nearby swimmers from potential electricity leakage into water around your boat.
- Only use shore or marine power cords, plugs, receptacles and extension cords that have been tested by Underwriters Laboratories, the Canadian Standards Association or Intertek.
- Never use cords that are frayed or damaged, or ones that have had the prongs removed or altered.
- Never stand or swim in water when turning off electrical devices or switches.

Electric shock drowning can also occur in swimming pools, hot tubs and spas. Have an electrician inspect and upgrade your pool, spa or hot tub in accordance with applicable local codes and the National Electrical Code.

ANNETTE BIRKENFELD, FOTOGRAFIXX | ISTOCK

Using a combination of fan and air conditioner during the summer months saves money on bills.

Make the Most of Ceiling Fans

By turning on the fan, you can turn up the savings

IF YOU ARE LIKE MOST AMERICANS, you have at least one ceiling fan in your home. Ceiling fans help our indoor environment feel more comfortable. They are a decorative addition to our homes and, if used properly, can help lower energy costs. Follow these tips to make the most of your ceiling fans.

Flip the switch. Most ceiling fans have a switch near the blades. In warm months, flip the switch so that the blades operate in a counterclockwise direction, effectively producing a "wind chill" effect. This pushes air down into the room, making it feel cooler than it actually is.

In winter, move the switch so that the fan blades rotate clockwise, creating a gentle updraft. This circulates warm air from the ceiling out toward the walls and down into occupied areas of the room. Regardless of the season, try operating the fan on its lowest setting.

Adjust your thermostat. In the summer, when using a fan in conjunction with an air conditioner—or instead of it—you can turn your thermostat up 3–5 degrees without any reduction in comfort. This saves money because a fan is less costly to run than an air conditioner. In the winter, lower your thermostat's setting by the same amount. When it's cold out, ceiling fans push the warm, conditioned air that has risen to the ceiling back down toward the living space, which means the furnace won't need to turn on as frequently.

Choose the right size. Make sure your ceiling fan is the right size for the room. A fan that is 36–44 inches in diameter will cool rooms up to 225 square feet. A fan that is 52 inches or more should be used to cool a larger space.

Turn it off. When the room is unoccupied, turn the fan off. Fans are intended to cool people, not rooms.

Clean Up Your Cords

IF YOU PULLED YOUR DESK or TV cabinet out from the wall, you'd probably find a tangle of cords, cables and plugs.

That tangle isn't good for your electronics.

Besides creating a tripping hazard, a mess of electrical cords could lead to a fire if they're all plugged into the same overloaded power strip.

Here's how to untangle—for safety's sake:

Unplug everything—your computer, scanner, phone charger, TV, speakers and printer. In the process, you might find cords that are no longer attached to anything. Weed out those unneeded cords.

Remove all extension cords. They are not designed for permanent use.

Dust the remaining cords. Vacuum the floor and wipe down the wall around the outlet.

Never plug more than one power strip into a single outlet. Multiple strips can overload a circuit and tax your electrical supply. If you don't have enough outlets, call a licensed electrician to add some.

Invest in inexpensive cable ties. Bunch the remaining cords together and wrap the tie around the bundle to keep them neatly together.

Drill a hole into the back of your computer table or TV cabinet that is big enough for all of the cords to pass through. That will keep them together and off the floor.

Use inexpensive cable ties to organize electric cords.

CHARLES SCHMIDT | ISTOCK.COM
ANAKEN2012 | SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Electrical Safety Month

May is National Electrical Safety Month. Here are 31 tips (one for each day of the month) from Karnes Electric Cooperative to help keep you and your family safe.

1. Children should always ask an adult for help when plugging in or removing cords from an outlet.
2. Bulb wattage matters. A lightbulb with wattage that is too high for the light fixture can overheat the fixture, causing a fire hazard.
3. Tamper-resistant receptacles help keep curious little ones safe.
4. Surge protectors can help prevent damage to expensive computers, appliances and other electrical equipment.
5. Big-screen TVs and computer equipment need to breathe. Make sure to leave plenty of space around these items for proper ventilation.
6. Working outdoors? Play it safe and use a wooden or fiberglass ladder, and keep at least 10 feet away from power lines.
7. Never touch anyone or anything that's in contact with a power line—the lines may still be live. Stay a safe distance away and call for help immediately.
8. Smoke detectors in your home should be tested every month to ensure they are working properly.
9. Never place extension cords in high-traffic areas or under carpets where they pose a potential tripping hazard or are exposed to excessive wear.
10. Using a window air-conditioning unit? Make sure the electrical circuit and the outlet are able to handle the load.
11. When you're cooking, set a timer to remind you to check on food that is simmering or in the oven. Always double-check to make sure burners and appliances are turned off when you're done.
12. Make a map showing which fuse or circuit breaker controls each switch, light and outlet in your home.
13. Smoke detectors should be installed in every bedroom, outside of each sleeping area and on every level of your home.
14. If you're working outdoors in a damp location, inspect all electrical cords and equipment being used, and make sure they are in good condition.
15. Recurring tripped circuit breakers or multiple blown fuses can signify a serious and dangerous electrical problem. Contact a licensed electrician immediately.
16. Traditional lightbulbs generate a great amount of heat, so if you haven't switched to cooler CFLs or LEDs, make sure to place lamps away from flammable items.
17. Flickering or dimming lights could mean bigger problems ahead. Contact a qualified electrician to check your home's wiring.
18. Frayed or damaged extension cords are dangerous and should never be used.
19. A wobbling ceiling fan can wear out the fan's motor. Turn it off and tighten mounting screws to correct the problem.
20. Power strips are great—but if you are relying on them too much, you may need to have a qualified electrician install more outlets in your home.
21. Anytime you see an overhead power line, you should assume the line is energized, even if the wire is down or appears to be insulated.
22. For outdoor work, use lighting and power tools that bear the label of an independent testing laboratory and are made for outdoor use.
23. Flying a kite is great for outdoor fun, but remember always to be mindful of overhead power lines.
24. Never throw water on an electrical fire. Use your chemical fire extinguisher instead.
25. Install lightbulbs with extended lifespans in hard-to-reach locations to limit the number of times you have to climb a ladder to change them.
26. Water and electricity do not mix. Keep electrical devices away from water.
27. Electrical equipment and devices should bear the mark of a nationally recognized testing laboratory.
28. When cooking, remember to keep appliance cords away from hot surfaces like the oven, stove or toaster.
29. DIY project for the home? Always turn off the power to the circuit that you plan to work on by switching off the circuit breaker in the main service panel.
30. Use covers on outdoor power outlets, especially near swimming pools.
31. If using a portable generator, make sure it is properly connected to prevent dangerous backfeeding, and always use appropriately rated extension cords.

#ElectricalSafetyMonth

We're committed to electrical safety excellence for our members and employees.

Don't Go Out on a Limb

Your safety is a top priority at your electric co-op. And it's even more important when it comes to our kids. They don't always know—or remember—what can be dangerous, so it's up to all of us to watch out for their safety.

Safety rules for power lines:

- **Don't plant trees or install tall playground equipment under or near power lines.**
- **Don't build tree houses in trees near electric lines.**
- **Don't allow children to climb trees growing near electric lines.**
- **Teach your children to always look up to check for power lines before climbing trees or any tall objects.**
- **Keep children away from ladders, poles or work equipment that may be near power lines.**

And the No. 1 safety rule for everyone to remember is this: Don't touch a power line or anything that's touching a power line. No one can tell simply by looking at a line whether it is energized or not, and contact with a power line can be deadly. Remember, electricity always seeks the easiest path to reach the ground—and, unfortunately, human beings are good conductors of electricity. Look up and live!