

School Days in Co-op Country



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER BRAD BIERSTEDT

AUGUST IS BACK-TO-SCHOOL SAFETY MONTH. For parents, back-to-school time across Texas is a bittersweet reminder of the passage of time as we watch our children grow and become increasingly independent. It's also a time when we think about their safety.

At Karnes Electric Cooperative, we share that concern. That's why we are looking out for the safety of our children. With the beginning of every school year, our lineworkers keep an eye out for students on their way to and from school. Sometimes it means helping a broken-down school bus. Other times it means using our mobile communication systems to report a traffic problem or a suspicious occurrence in a neighborhood. It always means being there to lend a hand, whatever the problem.

Being committed to the communities we serve means much more than just making sure your electric service is reliable.

Even in these days when electric utilities face competition that's getting tougher every day, going the extra mile in member and community service is standard operating procedure for your electric cooperative. It has to be that way because electric cooperatives are unique. Every day, we hear reports of other utility companies closing their local offices and moving out of town to save money. When that happens, their customers have to do business long distance, frequently talking to people hundreds and sometimes thousands of miles away.

Karnes EC is different. Our first obligation is to our members. You can still stop by the local office and talk to someone you know about any part of your service. When you call us, you'll speak to someone close by who knows the community and what's happening in it. Being a local electric cooperative means doing business close to home.

Because our members are also our owners, your cooperative gives first consideration to what's in the members' best interest. At first glance, it might seem that there is little connection between school kids waiting for their bus and the line crew in the co-op truck. But look again. Members of the line crew might have kids waiting for the school bus alongside your kids. Making sure all our children stay safe is part of what holds local communities together. It's part of the work we take pride in every day.

Lineworkers look out for the safety of our children as they go to and from school.



Something's Different About Your Electric Utility

THE WORD "COOPERATIVE" in the name of any business means it operates a little bit differently from other organizations.

Like any cooperative business, an electric cooperative belongs to the people who use it. So you and your neighbors who buy your electricity from the co-op actually own the business.

As a member-owner of your electric cooperative, you may attend our business meetings, vote for the members of the board of directors, or run for a seat on the board yourself. If the cooperative has any money left over at the end of its fiscal year after paying its bills and taking care of business, you could even get a little money back.

More than 100 million Americans belong to some sort of cooperative business. Credit unions are cooperatives. Some food stores are cooperatives. Many farmers belong to cooperatives. Many news organizations belong to a cooperative called The Associated Press.

More than 900 electric utilities are organized as cooperatives, and those organizations serve about 12 percent of the U.S. population.

3 Ways To Prevent Electrical Fires

THREE OF THE MOST COMMON CAUSES of electrical fires in the home are 100 percent preventable.

More than 1,300 people die or are injured in the 26,000 house fires caused by electricity mishaps every year, the U.S. Fire Administration estimates. Here's how to rid your home of the most common culprits:

1. Extension cords. These handy wire-stretchers are not designed for continuous use. They're made to solve temporary problems: When a Christmas tree is too far from an outlet, for instance, an extension cord could be used for a couple of weeks for a few hours a day.

Too many homeowners use extension cords year-round, and that can cause them to overheat. An overheated cord is a fire hazard.

If you don't have enough outlets, or if your heart is set on putting a lamp out of reach, have an electrician install additional outlets, including one closer to the lamp's ideal location.

2. Old wiring and outlets. If your home is more than 20 years old and its electrical wires and outlets have never been updated, a hazard could lurk behind its walls.



Plugging too many appliances into one power strip or outlet can cause a fire in your home or office.

Electrical standards have changed over the years as the experts have become more knowledgeable about electrical safety. Also, the electrical load in your home has grown as computers, phone chargers and mega-sized TVs have moved in.

The electrical systems in older homes were designed to handle less activity. Overloading that system can trigger a fire. Likewise, electrical components don't last forever. If yours are deteriorating, it's time to replace them.

Finally, older homes have few grounded outlets. All outlets in every room that has water or that gets wet—bathrooms, kitchens, basements, garages and laundry rooms, for instance—need ground-fault circuit interrupters. Adding them is a job for a professional electrician.

3. Overloaded outlets. Even if your home is new, you can overload its outlets.

Plugging too many appliances, lamps and electronics into a single outlet can overheat the wires and the outlets. That can lead to a fire.

If your circuits are tripping often, that's a sure sign that something's wrong. Call in a pro to fix the problem.



Karnes Electric Cooperative

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

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Brad Bierstedt

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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

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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 NOAA weather radio and local TV and radio broadcasts during storm season.

Prepare an emergency supply kit, including a radio, flashlight, extra batteries, extra eyeglasses, bottled water, nonperishable food, dry clothes, bedding, insurance information, important documents, medications, copies of prescriptions and special products for babies, seniors, medically fragile family members and pets.

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.

Register in the State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry online at STEAR.dps.texas.gov or Dial 211 to register if you have a disability or medical needs or if you simply do not have transportation: Gulf Coast residents in evacuation zones with a disability or medical needs—who do not have friends or family to help—or do not have transportation should register in STEAR in advance.



Division de Administración 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, miembros de la familia médicamente frágiles y animales domesticos.

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.

Puede regístrase con el 'State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry' vía su sitio web STEAR.dps.texas.gov o llamando al 211 para registrarse, si usted tiene una discapacidad o necesidades médicas o si simplemente no tiene transporte. Los residentes de la costa del golfo en zonas de evacuación con una discapacidad o necesidades médicas—quienes no tienen amigos o familiares para ayudarlo—o no tienen transporte debe registrarse con STEAR por adelantado.

Still Using Old Lightbulbs? Make the Switch

IF YOUR HOME'S LAMPS and light fixtures still house old-fashioned incandescent lightbulbs, it's time to switch to something that's far more energy efficient.

Yes, LEDs cost more than other kinds of lightbulbs—sometimes more than twice as much. But they use about 80 percent less energy than out-of-date incandescents. CFLs use about 70 percent less energy than the old bulbs.

Over time, though, LEDs shine the brightest of the three types

when it comes to energy use and cost savings. The average life span of an LED bulb is 25,000 hours, compared with 1,200 hours for a traditional bulb and 8,000 for a CFL.

At about 12.5 cents per kilowatt-hour—the national average, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration—you'll pay \$38 to operate an LED bulb for 23 years. If an incandescent or CFL bulb lasted 23 years (which it won't), you would pay \$201 or \$48.

So make the switch for a couple of decades of energy savings.



Cultivate Farm Safety

Because many pieces of farm equipment reach heights of 14 feet or higher, always remember to look up when entering fields and barn lots to make sure there is enough room to pass beneath electric lines. Electric contact accidents can result in loss of limbs or even death.

Here are some rules to follow:

- ▶ The No. 1 electrical farm hazard is the potential contact from a grain auger to a power line. Always look up before raising or moving an auger.
- ▶ The same is true of metal irrigation pipe, often stored along fence lines under an electric line. Never raise or move irrigation pipe without looking up. A few seconds of caution can mean the difference between life and death.
- ▶ Be sure hand tools are in good working order and use them according to the manufacturers' instructions.
- ▶ Ensure that the wiring in your workshop is adequate to handle your tools. Never operate any electric tools near water.
- ▶ Read labels and handling instructions carefully and follow them when using chemicals and herbicides. Never leave chemicals where children or animals can get into them; store them in a locked cabinet if possible. Safely dispose of containers.



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Canning or Freezing?

ONE OF THE JOYS OF SUMMER is growing and picking the fruits and vegetables we've grown in the garden. But when it comes to preserving the bounty, there is one timeless question: Which is better, canning or freezing?

The answer is: It depends—on variables like preference, time, space and the type of food. But there are other variables that perhaps are worth mentioning, too.

Which has a smaller energy footprint?

Canning involves boiling jars of food to sterilize and seal them, requiring a one-shot—though considerable—burst of energy use. Freezing food requires a long-term consumption of continuous electricity, and the longer you store the food, the more it costs.

A 1980 academic study published in the *Journal of Food Science* calculated the energy use for processing and storing 50 pounds of vegetables. The study determined that freezing them for six months used about three times as much energy as canning them.

However, it's hard to extrapolate this information to today's numbers. New freezers use a third of the electricity used by freezers in 1980, while electricity costs about 2½ times as much as it did then. The numbers also vary significantly depending on whether the freezer is full or not. Also, chest freezers are twice as efficient as uprights, so the difference can greatly affect electricity use.

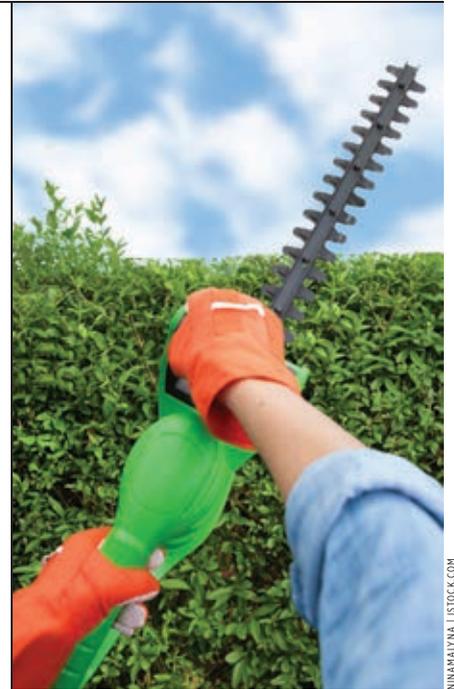
A more recent analysis concludes that freezing uses 15 times as much electricity and costs four times as much per pound as canning, once the cost of the equipment is factored in.

Which method has a smaller physical footprint?

Another source, *The Natural Canning Resource Book*, made a couple of relevant points about the issue besides energy use.

Availability of resources is an important factor in the equation: If you often deal with outages or other power disruptions, canned food keeps a lot better than thawed-and-refrozen food. If you live in a small space, or if you're a renter rather than an owner, it's a lot easier to store and move canned food than it is to store and move a freezer.

Finally, the issue of taste: *The Journal of Food Science* study found that people preferred the taste of frozen food over canned by a huge margin. Whatever method you use, the end result is that you want people to eat it and like it.



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Look Before You Lop

AMAZING HOW THOSE HEDGES and shrubs grow this time of year, isn't it? Across America, thousands of electric shears are at work. Trimming. Pruning. Shaping. And—*pfrrrrrr!*—cutting thousands of extension cords.

Use heavy-duty, bright orange extension cords rated for outdoor use to help you avoid cutting your own cord. Stay vigilant about the amount of space between the blades of your trimmers and where your power cord and extension cord are lying or hanging.

If it does happen, though, remember that one end of the severed cord is a live wire that can cause serious injury! Immediately unplug the cord from the wall outlet.

Also, check the integrity of the outlet where you plug in the cord. Often, cutting through a cord can zap the outlet—and possibly others on the same circuit. In your breaker box, find the correct breaker for the affected circuit and switch it off and back on. Then test the outlet to see if it's receiving power. If not, call an electrician to have it replaced.

Buy a new cord instead of trying to repair the old one. And next time: Look before you lop.



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Some prefer to freeze food for storage while others say canning is best.



Save energy by only washing full loads and avoid using washers during peak hours.

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The Cleanest, Greenest Energy Is the Energy Not Used

MANY PEOPLE ARE LOOKING FOR WAYS TO CUT ENERGY COSTS—including renewable energy options. But before you invest in a renewable system, first make sure your home or business is as efficient as possible. The cheapest, cleanest and greenest energy is the energy not used, and this comes from energy efficiency.

Let nature do some of the work. Consider leaving your windows open and turning off the air conditioner at night, when temperatures are much more moderate. Then keep the windows shut during daylight hours to help keep that cooler air inside. You can also install window coverings, which can block out sunlight and heat during the day. Also, increase insulation and seal cracks that let out cooled air.

Make sure that your cooling equipment is in top-notch condition. If possible, move the air conditioner out of direct sunlight. Regularly clean or replace dirty air-conditioner filters. A new, more energy-efficient air conditioner can also cut energy use.

A programmable thermostat can cut back on costs while you are away from home. Program the thermostat to a warmer temperature while away and to a cooler temperature when you expect to return home. Setting the thermostat as high as you can while still remaining comfortable can help reduce costs and lead to a smaller cooling bill. Also, fans can make higher temperatures in the home feel more comfortable.

On the warmest days, avoid using the oven. Grill outside or use the stove or a microwave.

Cut back on water-heating costs by taking shorter showers and using low-flow showerheads. Run clothes washers and dishwashers only when they have full loads. Additionally, lower the set temperature on the water heater. Energy.gov suggests setting the water heater temperature to no higher than 120 degrees.

Take into account the best times to run your appliances. Avoid using them during typical peak electricity demand hours, around 4–7 p.m. Also be sure to switch off and unplug appliances when they are not being used. Consider air-drying clothes and dishes. Turn off lights that are not in use, and switch to light-emitting diode bulbs.

If you are still interested in incorporating renewable energy after implementing these conservation tips, the Energy Education Council has developed a checklist, available at energyeducationcouncil.org/checklist.pdf, to help you assess your energy use, goals, property and more.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Inside-Out Burgers

- 1½ pounds lean ground beef
- 1 tablespoon garlic purée
- 1½ tablespoons dry ranch dressing mix
- 1 tablespoon black pepper
- ½ cup finely shredded cheddar
- ½ cup finely shredded mozzarella
- 1 can (4 ounces) mushrooms
- ¼ cup finely chopped onion

1. Mix ground beef, garlic, ranch dressing mix and pepper, and divide into 8 equal-sized balls.
2. In a separate bowl, mix the cheese, mushrooms and onions to form a stuffing. Flatten 4 of the meatballs into thin patties and center a quarter of the stuffing on each.
3. Flatten the remaining 4 balls into patties and place them atop the first 4 to cover filling. Seal the edges together with your fingers.
4. Grill or fry the patties until cooked through, about 6 minutes per side on medium heat.

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