

# Cooperatives Take Cue From Declaration of Independence



MESSAGE FROM  
**GENERAL MANAGER AND  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER DARRYL SCHRIVER**

**WHEN BENJAMIN FRANKLIN SIGNED THE** Declaration of Independence, he is credited with saying, “We must, indeed, all hang together, or most assuredly we shall all hang separately.” That recognition of the need to work together may also be why, in 1752, Franklin founded the first successful cooperative in (what would become) the United States, the Philadelphia Contributionship for the Insurance of Houses From Loss by Fire, which still operates today.

can buy more control than another member. This principle stands in stark contrast to investor-owned businesses, in which only shareholders have a vote in how the business is run, and even among shareholders, some have more votes than others depending on how many shares they own.

The Declaration of Independence declared the equality of rights of American citizens and that people had the right to organize to secure their futures when their rights were

infringed upon. At the time the declaration was written, democracy was a fairly untested idea—but the founders of our country were determined to make it work.

The concept of popular sovereignty, the idea that the government exists to serve the people who elect representatives to express their will, is also found in cooperative principles. Cooperatives exist to serve their members and are governed by boards of directors composed of co-op members. 800822270

So when you celebrate with family and friends this year the many liberties and rights we enjoy, think about those principles that inspired our Founding Fathers. They also inspired the pioneers who established electric cooperatives—folks who were determined to provide safe, reliable and

affordable power to secure the futures of rural communities.

Tri-County Electric Cooperative has always operated under the principles of democracy, and we are dedicated to fulfilling that promise as we serve our members today and in the future. Happy Independence Day!



The principles that underlie the Declaration of Independence and form the basis of American democracy find a counterpart in cooperatives. Co-ops are owned and democratically controlled by the people who use their services. Each member has one vote regardless of his or her stake; that is, no member



# Electricity Theft: Unsafe, Costly for Co-op Members

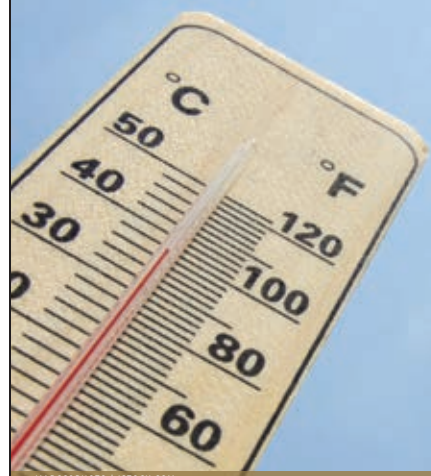
**THEFT OF ELECTRICITY AND RELATED MATERIALS IS A PROBLEM ALL ELECTRIC UTILITIES** face—and it's a problem for electricity customers, too. Because Tri-County Electric Cooperative is member-owned, electricity theft can drive up prices for everyone.

Theft of electricity also puts your personal safety at risk. Tampering with an electric meter can make it unsafe and unstable. When people steal electricity, they put themselves, their family, neighbors and pets at risk for electric shocks, power surges, sparks and fire from exposed voltage. Stealing electricity-related materials also can pose a significant threat to the culprit, resulting in injury or even death from exposure to live electricity.

Electricity theft isn't isolated to rural areas or big cities. It's a problem utilities encounter from agricultural operations to housing complexes to business offices and from coast to coast. Although electricity can be easily acquired through a utility, some people still are willing to risk physical injury or death just for the sake of a few free kilowatt-hours. Others may not realize the potentially serious legal implications. Stealing electricity is illegal under Texas law and violates electrical codes.

Keeping power safe and affordable is a priority for Tri-County EC. That's why we routinely inspect cooperative meters and equipment—to ensure we're doing our best to protect you from the risks of electricity theft. We take a proactive approach to this serious problem, reducing theft and its related costs. 800828316

You also can play a role in this process by immediately notifying us if you suspect someone is accessing our power without paying their fair share or tampering with equipment. If you have information related to electricity or materials theft, please call us at (817) 444-3201. Rest assured, we'll preserve your anonymity. Because you share in the ownership of Tri-County EC, we rely on your vigilance and willingness to alert us when people steal from the cooperative.



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## Power Tip

**EVERY DEGREE = DOLLARS**

Don't let summer heat burn your budget. When home, set your thermostat to 78. Going out for the day? Turn your thermostat up 10–15 degrees to cut your electricity bill by up to 15%.



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## HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY

Thursday, July 4



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# Plan for a Safe and Happy July Fourth

**THE MONTH OF JULY IS A FAVORITE TIME FOR MANY OF US. IT'S THE MIDDLE OF SUMMER,** the kids are out of school and, of course, we celebrate Independence Day! Many of us celebrate our nation's independence with grilled burgers and hot dogs, homemade ice cream and other sweet treats—and, needless to say, fireworks. It's a time for fellowship with family and friends, but at Tri-County Electric Cooperative, we also want to make sure our members focus on safety.

Nothing says Independence Day like a spectacular fireworks display. The safest way to enjoy this part of the celebration is to head to a local fireworks show. **But if you want to put on your own show at home (and you've confirmed it's legal and there are no burn bans), be sure to follow these safety tips:**

- ▶ Always follow the instructions on the fireworks' packaging and never give fireworks to children.
- ▶ Keep a supply of water close by as a precaution.
- ▶ Make sure to wear protective eyewear when lighting fireworks.
- ▶ Light only one firework at a time and never attempt to relight a "dud."
- ▶ Store fireworks in a cool, dry place away from children and pets.
- ▶ Never throw or point a firework toward people, animals, vehicles, structures or flammable materials.

Cookouts are a great way to bring folks together on the Fourth. Whether you are grilling in your backyard or at a community park, make sure your feast includes a generous portion of fun and a side helping of safety. **Remember to:**

- ▶ Supervise your grill at all times and use the proper tools for cooking on a grill.
- ▶ Never add charcoal starter fluid when the coals have already been ignited.
- ▶ Always follow the manufacturers' instructions when using grills. 800759089

Fireworks and cookouts wouldn't be complete without a sunny day. Here's hoping we have good weather, and if we do, make sure you are practicing sun safety by using a broad-spectrum sunscreen (and reapplying often), wearing sunglasses and drinking plenty of water.



## SAVE THE DATE

**TRI-COUNTY  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

# ANNUAL MEETING

**Tuesday, October 1, 7 p.m.  
Weatherford High School**

Please plan to join us at Tri-County EC's annual meeting of the members! This year marks 80 years of serving you, our member-owners. In celebration of our membership, we will have entertainment, dinner, booths, demos, door prizes, bill credits and more!

CALENDAR: TAPHOUSE\_STUDIOS | ISTOCK.COM

# Simple Ways To Save Water

## THE AVERAGE AMERICAN USES 88 GALLONS

of water each day at home. Showers, dishes, laundry, watering the lawn—it adds up quickly. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, we all can cut water consumption by 20% by installing water-efficient fixtures and changing a few habits. And when you reduce hot water use, you also lower your electric bill.

### Changes To Make Indoors

Keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator instead of running the tap for cold drinks. This way, every drop goes down your throat and not the drain.

Replace the showerhead with a water-efficient model if your shower can fill a 1-gallon bucket in less than 20 seconds. Install low-volume toilets. Plug the bathtub before turning the water on, then adjust the temperature as the tub fills up. Put food coloring in your toilet tank; if it seeps into the toilet bowl, you have a leak. It's easy to fix, and you could save more than 7,000 gallons a year.

Run your dishwasher only when it's full and save up to 400 gallons a month. Time your shower to keep it under five minutes; you'll save up to 1,000 gallons a month. Consider installing new appliances that are more efficient than older appliances. A new washing machine can save up to 20 gallons per load. Use the garbage disposal sparingly. Compost instead and save gallons every time. 800679874

Wash your produce in the sink or a pan that is partially filled with water instead of running water from the tap. Collect the water you use for rinsing produce and reuse it to water houseplants. When washing dishes by hand, don't let the water run while rinsing; fill one sink with wash water and the other with rinse water. Have an aquarium? Next time you clean it, use the water you've drained on your plants. The water is rich in nitrogen and phosphorus, providing you with a free and effective fertilizer.

### Changes To Make Outdoors

Adjust sprinklers so only your lawn is watered and not the house, sidewalk or street. Adjust your lawn mower to a higher setting. Longer grass shades root systems and holds soil moisture better than a closely clipped lawn. Choose shrubs and groundcovers instead of turf for hard-to-water



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areas such as steep slopes and isolated strips. Plant native plants when possible.

Don't forget to check outdoor faucets, pipes and hoses for leaks. We're more likely to notice leaky faucets indoors. Divide your watering cycle into shorter periods to reduce runoff and allow for better absorption every time you water.

Install covers on pools and spas and check for leaks around your pumps. Minimize evaporation by watering during the early morning hours, when temperatures are cooler and winds lighter. Water your lawn only when needed. You can tell this by simply walking across your lawn: If you leave footprints, it's time to water. Periodically check your pool for leaks if you have an automatic refilling device.

Plant during the spring or fall, when watering requirements are lower. Use a broom instead of a hose to clean your driveway or sidewalk and save 80 gallons of water every time. Place a layer of organic mulch around plants to reduce evaporation and save hundreds of gallons of water a year. Choose porous materials for walkways and patios to keep water in your yard and prevent wasteful runoff. Use a sprinkler for larger areas of grass and water small patches by hand to avoid waste.



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# World's Most Expensive Dirt

*Dust dollars off your energy bill by regularly changing air filters*

**THE MOST EXPENSIVE DIRT IN THE WORLD MAY LURK IN YOUR HOME'S HEATING AND cooling system.** If neglected, dust collecting in the equipment's air filter could increase your energy bills by hundreds of dollars every year and result in expensive repair or replacement costs. 800846200

Dirty filters cause a system to work harder and break down faster. That's because unfiltered dust and grime work into critical parts, creating friction that causes unnecessary wear and, eventually, failure.

As you move around your home, you drive dust into the air from carpets, drapes and furniture. Pets generate dust particles by shedding, grooming and tracking in dirt from outside.

**Regardless of where it comes from, dust trapped in heating and cooling system air filters leads to several problems, including:**

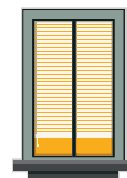
- ▶ Reduced airflow in the home and up to 15% higher operating costs.
- ▶ Costly duct cleaning or replacement.
- ▶ Decreased system efficiency.

Every time a system with a dirty filter kicks on, the day of reckoning—total replacement—draws closer. To avoid this expense, change filters monthly when a system is in regular use, like this summer. Discuss cleaning the unit and ductwork with your heating and cooling service professional.

Filters are available in a variety of types and efficiencies, rated by a minimum efficiency reporting value. The higher the MERV, the more effective the filter will be at keeping dust out of your system.

## Summer Energy-Saving Tips

Costs associated with cooling your home can make up a large portion of your summer electric bills. Stay cool and save money with these energy efficiency tips!

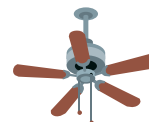


### NO-COST TIPS

Close blinds and drapes during the day to keep heat out.



Set your thermostat to 78 degrees when you are home. Set it to a higher temperature when you're away.



Turn off lights and ceiling fans when you leave a room.



### LOW-COST TIPS

Plant trees and shrubs to shade the exterior of your home.



Replace disposable air filters (or clean permanent filters) once a month to maximize efficiency.



Use solar lighting to brighten up your outdoor space. Solar lights are easy to install and low maintenance and provide free electricity.



# Include Home Energy Savings in Vacation Plans

**SLIPPING IN A LAST-MINUTE VACATION BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS? BE SURE TO GIVE YOUR** home's energy use a vacation as well. Simple tips can save you money while you're away.

**Air conditioning:** Set the thermostat to 85 degrees. If it's a programmable thermostat, use the "hold" or the "vacation" setting. For every degree a thermostat is raised during the summer, you can save 2% on your electricity bill.

**Electronics:** Computers, CD/DVD players, TVs and chargers—these and other electronic appliances use electricity even when they are not turned on. Unplug them before leaving.

**Lighting:** Improve energy savings, and your home's security, by using timers to operate lights at night. And by installing LEDs in those lamps, you'll save more energy—up to 66% for each lamp—and the bulbs last about 10 times longer than incandescent bulbs.

**Water heating:** Turn the water heater's temperature to the lowest setting. Many water heaters have a "vacation" setting for this purpose. Leave a reminder to turn it back up when you return home.

**Pool:** Shorten the operating time for the pool filter and automatic cleaning sweep. A pool cover can save energy, too. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, up to 70% of pool water loss is by evaporation.

**Refrigerator:** Set the fridge to 42 degrees and the freezer to 5 degrees. This increase is enough to keep everything cold and frozen but still save energy over the vacation period. As a precaution, it's a good idea to clean out any leftovers and raw vegetables and keep only new foods that won't spoil while the house is empty. If you're going on an extended trip, consider emptying the fridge and turning it off. If you do so, remember to leave the doors open to prevent mildew.

For more information on how to use energy efficiently year-round, contact Tri-County Electric Cooperative.



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## The Best Place for Fido

### YOUR DOG LOVES RIDING IN THE CAR

with you and playing in the grass on warm, sunny days. But when it gets really hot, keep Fido indoors where the air conditioning can keep your best friend cool.

Like people, pets can suffer from all kinds of heat-related problems, such as heatstroke, dehydration and respiratory distress. Some days, the safest thing for them is a lazy day inside your home.

### Here are five ways to keep Fluffy and Fido safe and cool this summer:

- ▶ Put out extra bowls of water indoors and outdoors so your pets can drink as much as they need. And drop a couple of ice cubes into Fido's water dish to keep the water nice and cool.
- ▶ Water isn't just for drinking in the summer. Let your pets stand or play in it to help keep them cool.
- ▶ If you're outdoors with your pet, stay in the shade. Too much sun can cause heatstroke. Short-haired pets can get sunburned. 800754602
- ▶ If you're leaving the house without your pets, keep them indoors and leave the air conditioning on. If you're taking them with you, don't leave them unattended in a hot car, even with the windows cracked.
- ▶ Exercise your pets early in the morning or late in the evening, when the weather is not so hot.



# Homemade Salsa

ELVA DELAUNE | MILLSAP

Small handful cilantro, or to taste  
¼ medium onion  
½ teaspoon minced garlic, or to taste  
2 Roma tomatoes  
1 medium jalapeño pepper (optional)  
1 can (10 ounces) Ro-Tel  
Salt and lime juice, to taste

1. Place cilantro, onion and garlic in a food processor and blend. Add tomatoes and blend again.
  2. Add jalapeño and blend.
  3. Add Ro-Tel, salt and lime juice and blend well.
- Enjoy!

**COOK'S TIP** This salsa is great for your Independence Day cookout. 800631934

## Tri-County EC Member Recipe Submission Form

NAME

CITY

EMAIL or PHONE NUMBER

RECIPE NAME

**Please return to:**

**Email:** Please include the above information with your recipe and send to [pr@tcectexas.com](mailto:pr@tcectexas.com).

**Mail:** Please detach and submit this form with your recipe and mail to:

Tri-County Electric Cooperative  
Attn: Recipe Submission  
600 NW Parkway  
Azle, TX 76020



# Play It Cool

*Tips to help you stay comfortable this summer*

## DURING SUMMER MONTHS, ENERGY

bills tend to creep up a bit—or, in some cases, a lot—but keeping your home comfortable amid the heat doesn't have to break the bank. Some energy-saving solutions are low-cost, while others require a bigger investment. Using either strategy, you can be more comfortable and have lower energy bills this summer.

The first step is to reduce your home's solar gains—the heat energy it collects from the sun. Since most solar gains originate through your home's windows, awnings are an effective solution. They can reduce solar heat gain by as much as 65% on south-facing windows and 77% on west-facing windows. You can also try less expensive solutions on the outside or inside of your windows, like reflective films and solar screens. Heavy window coverings also work and have the added benefit of reducing heat loss in winter.

Attics can be a major source of heat gain. These areas can become extremely hot and radiate heat through the ceiling and into your living space. Adequate insulation and abundant venting through the roof, gable or eaves are the solutions.

Another important step is to seal air leaks around windows, doors, plumbing and wiring penetrations. 7000038601

Excess heat can also be generated inside your home—and at your expense. **Here are some simple steps you can take to minimize this.**

- ▶ Make it a habit to turn off lights and TVs in rooms that aren't in use.
- ▶ Incandescent lightbulbs generate a lot of heat. Replace them with LEDs.
- ▶ Unplug devices when you aren't using them, including chargers, computers, monitors and other electronics. Many of these devices use phantom power that keeps them on constantly (even when they're not in use), which generates heat.
- ▶ Maintain appliances for peak efficiency.
- ▶ Set your water heater temperature to no higher than 120 degrees.
- ▶ Set your refrigerator thermostat to no lower than 38 degrees.
- ▶ Insulate your home's hot water pipes.



AVAILABLE LIGHT | ISTOCK.COM

▶ Minimize use of your oven, and don't run the dishwasher or washing machine until it is full.

Now that you've worked on keeping heat out of your home and minimizing the heat generated inside, let's look at how to make the inside air cooler. That starts with your air conditioning system.

If you have central AC, make sure it's working efficiently. Replace filters regularly, and make sure supply registers are open. AC systems need to push an adequate amount of air into the supply ductwork to function properly.

If you do not have central AC, window units can be an efficient solution if they are Energy Star-certified and only used to cool part of the home part of the time. Make sure to seal any openings around the window unit.

The least expensive way to cool yourself is air movement. A ceiling or portable fan can make a room feel up to 10 degrees cooler, but fans cool people—not rooms. Turn them off when you're not in the room.

When the night air is cool and not too humid, exchange your hot air for cool outdoor air by opening windows and turning on fans throughout the house. A permanent (but more expensive) option is to install a whole-house fan.