

Line Crews Keep the Lights On



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

ELECTRICITY TRAVELS ALONG AN INTRICATE NETWORK OF WIRES and poles to power our homes and businesses. Most of the time, it's a seamless journey, but occasionally, the path of electricity is disrupted by obstacles like fallen tree branches, animals or car accidents. When that happens, Tri-County Electric Cooperative's lineworkers are ready to restore the connection no matter the weather or time of day.

We couldn't carry out our mission without the daily dedication of our line crews. It's a demanding job on the front line of our co-op that often requires working around the clock in challenging conditions to serve our members and communities. Lineworkers are first responders who get us through some of our darkest hours. We count on them to power our lives, day in and day out. 800609979

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association officially acknowledged the tireless efforts of this talented group with this 2014 resolution:

Whereas linemen leave their families and put their lives on the line every day to keep the power on;

Whereas linemen work 365 days a year under dangerous conditions to build, maintain and repair the electric infrastructure;

Whereas linemen are the first responders of the electric cooperative family, getting power back on and making things safe for all after storms and accidents; and

Whereas there would be no electric cooperatives without the brave men and women who comprise our corps of linemen;

Therefore be it resolved that NRECA recognize the second Monday of April of each year as National Lineman Appreciation Day and make available to electric coopera-



NRECA

Remember to **#ThankALineworker**

tives materials and support to recognize the contributions of these valuable men and women to America's electric cooperatives.

We proudly join with NRECA and cooperatives across the country to honor lineworkers and show our appreciation and respect for the service they provide for our members.

Tri-County EC's lineworkers, as well as those from across the nation, truly deserve this special day of recognition. We invite our members to take a moment to thank a lineworker for the work they do. Leave a message for them on our Facebook page and use the hashtag **#ThankALineworker** to show your support for the men and women who light our lives.



Always Call Before You Dig

One free, easy call gets your utility lines marked and helps protect you from injury and expense.

Safe digging is no accident. Know what's below. Always call 811 before you dig. Visit **call811.com** for more information.



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10 Tips for Spring Energy Savings

EVERY SEASON OF THE YEAR PROVIDES UNIQUE ENERGY-SAVING OPPORTUNITIES.

Here are some ideas particularly well suited to spring.

- 1. Clear the air:** Open windows to allow fresh air to circulate.
- 2. Cook outside:** Enjoy the sunshine by using your grill or smoker to add festive flavors to meals.
- 3. Search and seal:** Cracks and spaces let conditioned air slip outdoors. Caulk and weatherstrip to seal leaks.
- 4. Natural light:** Open blinds and curtains and turn off the lights to save energy.
- 5. Be fan-friendly:** Use ceiling fans to circulate air and keep cool.
- 6. Atmospheric adjustment:** Remember to adjust your thermostat settings for the warmer months ahead.
- 7. Tune up:** Schedule an appointment with a heating, ventilating and air conditioning technician to identify any potential problems with your system.
- 8. Peak savings:** Plan household chores that require electricity during off-peak hours (when energy demand is low). 800825259
- 9. Take charge:** Consider disconnecting electrical devices you don't use regularly until you need them. Plugged-in devices use energy even when not in use.
- 10. Move outdoors:** Time spent outdoors offers opportunities to turn off lights, TVs, computers and appliances. You'll be more active, have more fun and save more money.

Scam Alert

Tri-County Electric Co-op will never call and demand payment.

If you are unsure, hang up and call our offices at 817.444.3201.



Don't fall victim to threatening calls!



RIKE_ | ISTOCK.COM

Happy Easter!

April 12

Tri-County Electric Cooperative will be closed April 10 in observance of Good Friday.



Linemen Play a Key Role, and Not Just on a Pole

BY BOB BUCKEL, COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA REPRESENTATIVE

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES HAVE A UNIQUE ORGANIZATIONAL structure. At the top, of course, are the members—the owners—the folks the entire system is built to serve. The members elect directors, who hire a general manager, who leads a team that includes engineers, project managers, system operators, meter technicians, accountants, member service professionals, folks in the supply chain and those who keep the offices running.

But at an electric co-op, everyone knows the front-line soldiers are the linemen. 800787888

Linemen deliver the power. They set poles, build lines and install service for new members. They respond when there's trouble, fix what goes wrong and make sure the lights come on and stay on. And in a storm, they're the ones who put themselves in harm's way, spending long, grueling hours, often in harsh and hostile conditions, to get the power back on.

In addition to contractors, Tri-County Electric Cooperative has about 70 linemen working in construction, maintenance and service out of offices in Granbury, Azle, Keller, Munday and Seymour. Each office has linemen on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week to take care of whatever emergencies may arise. Serving some of the fastest-growing areas in the country,

they work together and have one another's backs.

Their days are rarely confined to eight hours. When they're not on a truck, digging a trench or up in a bucket, lineworkers are in meetings or going to training sessions, studying to move up the ladder, learning a new technology or just keeping up with a field that is constantly evolving. In short, being a lineman is a demanding, exacting, time-consuming profession that comes with a focus on teamwork, an element of danger, a lifetime of learning and a healthy amount of adrenaline.

It's not that different from being a husband. Or a dad. Or a coach.

Most of your cooperative's linemen are husbands and fathers and many coach their own and their neighbors' kids in a variety of sports. Given the teamwork required of being a lineman—and the coaching they give and get as they work together—it seems to come naturally.

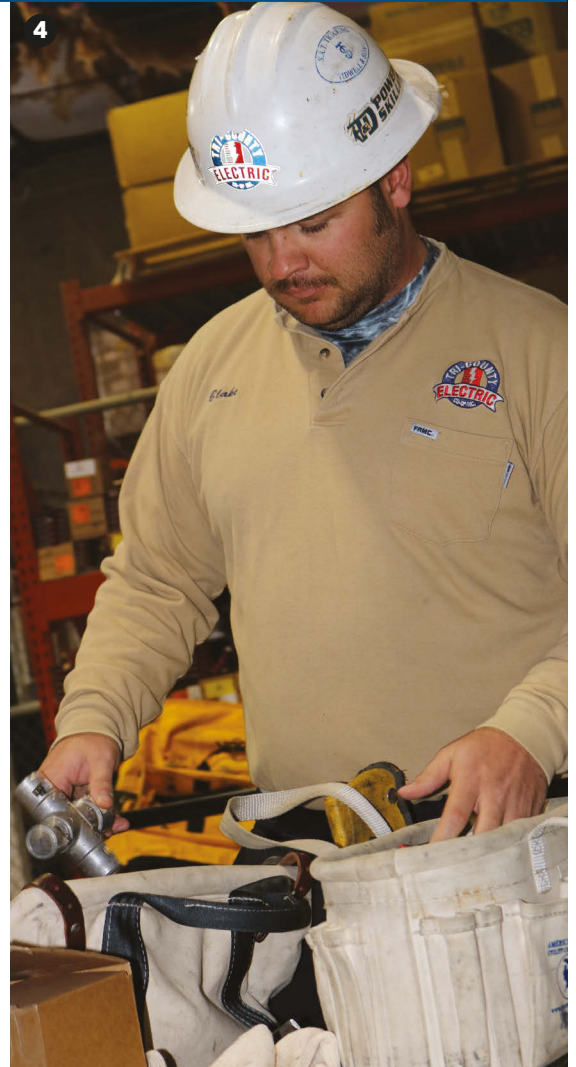
"I just like watching the team come together," says Jeremy Choate, a first-class lineman for Tri-County EC. "You take a bunch of kids who have never played that sport, get the other coaches involved and by the time the season starts, you're excited about watching these kids learn everything you're try-

1. Tri-County EC lineman Jeremy Choate has coached his sons Brock, kneeling at far left, and Bryce, kneeling, second from right, and their peewee football team to the Brock Youth Association's Super Bowl the past two years.

2. Choate works in a bucket at the Brock substation.

3. Tri-County EC apprentice lineman Blake Creamer and son Camdyn participate in the Azle Youth Association.

4. Creamer packs his tools for a weeklong training school in Waco.



ing to teach them.”

Choate, who works out of the Granbury office, lives in Brock with his wife, Aleisha, and three boys, ages 10, 8 and 6. He will celebrate 17 years at Tri-County EC in April.

“This is my third year of peewee football,” he says. “I’ve coached all three of my kids in football and baseball. Now they’re wanting to get into rodeo, and that’s what I did, so I’m coaching them in that, too. It never ends.”

Choate’s boys play football in the Brock Youth Association, and his team has gone to the league’s Super Bowl the past two seasons.

“Football in Brock is a pretty big deal,” he says. “Hopefully, we’re doing a good job there to carry them on through into junior high. Hopefully they’ll remember us.”

Wes Scheets, the co-op’s chief operations officer, was a lineman for 12 years and spent another 20 years on call as a project coordinator. He remembers those times with his own kids—and the challenge of filling those other important roles while often working overtime on the lines. That’s one reason he continues to work to get his guys’ hours down to a livable level.

“I was a coach. I was a cheerleading dad,” he says. “I had

four kids, and we had football, band, track—just like everybody else. Sometimes, it was extremely hard to get to all of it, back in the day. That’s really one of the reasons, when I took this position, that I wanted to invoke the 16-hour rule. Our focus is not to overextend these guys to the point that they get hurt.”

Under the rule, even in extreme conditions, linemen get eight hours off in every 24-hour period.

“We want them to go home at night,” Scheets says. “That’s the biggest point.”

Blake Creamer, an apprentice lineman, lives in Azle with his wife, Amanda, and three sons, ages 8, 5 and 1. He spent a few years working for an electrician before joining Tri-County EC on his 21st birthday.

He has coached Little League Baseball and peewee football in the Azle Youth Association. Right now, his oldest sons are playing basketball, and he’s “sitting out” the season to be a fan.

“I played football in high school, but I wasn’t ever good at basketball or baseball,” he says. “I do like coaching baseball, though.”

Mostly, he just likes being with his boys, spending time with them outdoors and watching them grow.

LINEMAN APPRECIATION DAY HITS CLOSE TO HOME

Tri-County Electric Cooperative's 70-plus linemen maintain 9,145 miles of line, powering more than 115,500 meters in 16 counties of North Texas—and they are building more every day, on poles and underground, serving some of the fastest-growing areas in the United States.

National Lineman Appreciation Day was declared by the U.S. Senate in 2013 to recognize “linemen, the profession of linemen, and the contributions of these brave men and women who protect public safety.” The Senate resolution reads, “The profession of linemen is steeped in personal, family, and professional tradition,” and notes that “linemen are often first responders during storms and other catastrophic events, working to make the scene safe for other public safety heroes.”

In December 2014, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association adopted a resolution recognizing the second Monday of April as National Lineman Appreciation Day. Tri-County EC will celebrate Lineman Appreciation Day this year on April 13 but recognizes the entire month of April as Lineman Appreciation Month.

If you can read this, you should probably thank a teacher. But if you're reading it by electric light, in a room that's cooled or heated to your comfort and with food on the stove or in the fridge, you should probably also thank a lineman.

Kenneth Hons, a second-class lineman who works out of the Seymour office, came to Tri-County EC after working for three years in the city of Seymour's electric department. He and his wife, Jennifer, have three children, ages 11, 6 and 6 months. Hons has coached softball, T-ball and soccer for years. Right now, he's helping with Little Dribblers' basketball.

“I don't know anything about basketball,” he laughs, “but they needed the help, so I'm volunteering.” 47305001

His daughters also show steers. “Constantly, constantly,” he says, shaking his head. “It seems like a year-round deal, so we do all that, too.”

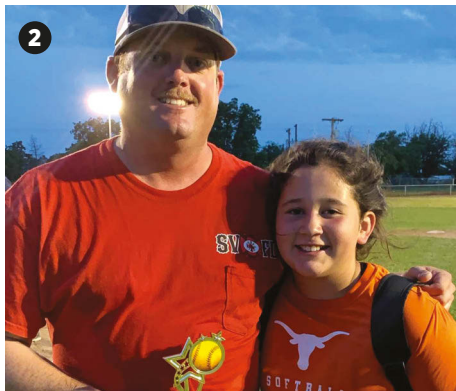
Hons, who has been with Tri-County EC for more than eight years, uses his experience as a lineman to teach his kids that academics are important.

“I tell my oldest daughter all the time, when she's complaining about school, I'm 36 years old and I'm still going to school,” he says. “It's never going to stop, no matter what job you get into. You've almost got to be an electrical engineer if you want to be a first-class lineman. There's a lot to know, which is good. You want to know it.”

Choate and Creamer say they, too, enjoy the constant learn-



1. Khloe and Kenzlee Hons, daughters of lineman Kenneth Hons, show off their winning steer and belt buckle trophy at last year's King County Livestock Show.



2. Hons helps coach his daughter Khloe's youth softball team in Seymour.



3. Hons works out of Tri-County EC's Seymour office.

ing of a lineman's job.

“It's something different every day,” Creamer says. “You never know what you're going to see or what you're going to be doing that day.”

Choate got a lot of coaching as he rose through the ranks as a lineworker.

“Those old-timers, they'll help you if you listen,” he says. “If you just do your job and do it right, it'll pay off.”

Now, as a first-class lineman, Choate is in the same position for the younger guys.

“Years ago, when I first started here, you just did what you thought was safe,” he says. “The way that it's evolved, the precautions we take and the measures that we go through—it's a real eye-opener. I tell the guys that are under me to cover it up a little bit more, wear your gloves, wear your sleeves—protect yourself, not only for your safety but for my safety and everybody else's safety. 800865824

“We're out here as a team,” he says. “Let's get it done and get it done right.”

Sounds like a good coach—and that makes for a winning team.



UTILITY POLES ARE NOT Bulletin Boards

Help us keep our linemen safe.

Electric cooperative workers find all kinds of no-nos on utility poles, such as yard sale signs, basketball hoops, deer stands, satellite dishes, lights and birdhouses.

These obstructions are dangerous for lineworkers. Unwelcome clutter on utility poles can compromise safety equipment, leaving workers vulnerable to electrocution.

Anyone posting items on utility poles also is at risk of exposure to thousands of volts of electricity pulsing overhead. Always stay at least 10 feet away from utility lines. 800874022

Think before you post that sign!

Tri-County Electric Cooperative encourages you to always practice safety.

Tri-County Electric Cooperative

600 NW Parkway, Azle 76020

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IT PAYS TO STAY INFORMED!

Find your account number in pages 18–25 of *Texas Co-op Power*, and you will receive a \$20 credit on your TCEC electric bill. Simply contact one of the offices listed above and make them aware of your discovery!

 Find us on
Facebook

DAVE SHAFER

Your Co-op's Community Calendar

April

3

27th Annual Christ's Haven for Children Golf Classic, christshaven.org

4

TCA Legacy Dinner and Auction, tcaeagles.org

15th Annual Country Spirit Jamboree, hoodcountycancerservices.com

10

Good Friday, Tri-County EC offices closed

12

Easter

13

National Lineman Appreciation Day

18

Keller Crawfish Krawl, kellercrawfishkrawl.com

23

CASA Hope for Children Fore the Kids Golf Tournament, (817) 599-6224

24-25

KellerFest, kellerchamber.com

25

Keller Education Foundation Rooted Gala, kisdfoundation.net

30

Spring Swing Chamber Golf Tournament, Weatherford Chamber of Commerce

The Taste, metroportchamber.org

May

3

Jerry Ermins Memorial Rib Feed, Seymour Volunteer Fire Department

7

United Way Havana Nights, unitedwayhoodcounty.com

8

Azle Area Chamber of Commerce Golf Tournament, azlechamber.com

14

Weatherford ISD Education Foundation Golf Tournament, weatherfordisd.com

15

Seventh Annual Dragon Classic, dragonclassic.com

21

Taste of Parker County, wc.edu/taste

25

Memorial Day, Tri-County EC offices closed



Celebrate Earth Day

TO CELEBRATE EARTH DAY, APRIL 22, here are a few green strategies to explore at your home.

Rainwater harvesting is the capture, diversion and storage of rainwater for daily use. It leverages a free resource, courtesy of nature—reducing your reliance on municipal or well water—and the collected water is ideal for container plants and your home's landscape or garden. The simplest way to begin harvesting rainwater is to use a rain barrel, annually exempt from tax in Texas during the Memorial Day weekend energy- and water-efficient products sales tax holiday, May 23-25 this year.

Another water-saving technique is xeriscaping—the practice of planning and designing landscapes to reduce the need for irrigation. One quick and easy way to incorporate xeriscape principles into your garden is to mulch. A thick layer of mulch around your plants helps maintain consistent soil moisture by minimizing evaporation. 800589105

When you have enough time to prepare a meal in a slow cooker but want to forgo electricity, try a solar oven. Lightweight, flameless and relatively portable, solar ovens harness abundant sunlight to bake fish and chicken, steam vegetables, and cook rice, beans and pasta. Tote one along on your next camping trip.

Interested in promoting your event in the next issue of *Texas Co-op Power*?

Email pr@tcectexas.com with the event name, date and where readers can find more information.

Mama T's Carrot Cake

TERRY MCNABB | KELLER

Cake

- 2 cups self-rising flour
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 2 jars (4 ounces each) strained carrots
- ½ cup shredded carrots
- ½ cup sour cream
- 4 eggs
- 2 cups sugar

- 1½ cups vegetable oil
- ¼ cup coconut flakes

Frosting

- ¼ cup (½ stick) butter, softened
- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 16 ounces powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

1. CAKE: Use an electric mixer to combine cake ingredients and blend well. Pour mixture into two greased 9-inch round baking pans.

2. Bake at 325 degrees 25–30 minutes, or until golden brown. Allow cake to cool completely before frosting. 800742480

3. FROSTING: Use an electric mixer to combine all ingredients until smooth. Apply to cake. Enjoy!

COOK'S TIP Top the cake with chopped pecans or other nuts, if you like.



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.

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



Memories and Memorabilia Wanted

TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

is documenting our 81-year history. Do you have any stories from over the years about Tri-County EC? If so, let us know! We would love to hear from you.

If you or your family have any historical photos, newspaper articles, member bulletins or other memorabilia associated with Tri-County EC that you would like to share, please contact Bob Buckel at (817) 752-8319 or bbuckel@tcectexas.com.