



## It Pays To Be a Member

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

**THE WORD "COOPERATIVE"** in the name of a business means it operates a little differently from other organizations. At Tri-County Electric Cooperative, it means you and your neighbors—the members who buy electricity from the co-op—actually own the business.

As members, you invest in the operations of the cooperative through your one-time membership fee and by paying your monthly bills on time. Any funds the co-op earns in excess of expenses belong to you, the members, and those funds are allocated to each member in a specific account on the co-op's balance sheet. Your paid-in capital is what allows us to operate, and it's our obligation to return some of that capital to you every year, similar to how any prosperous investor-owned business returns dividends to shareholders.

That's just part of the nonprofit, cooperative model: Each member shares in the equity; you have a dividend interest in your co-op.

Of course, we don't return it all. Sound management means we use these funds to assist the co-op as it continues to grow, to prepare for disasters and

capital. In the last three years, Tri-County EC has returned almost \$20 million to our members in the form of capital credits.

Simply put, our members pitch in to share the ownership, operation and maintenance of the cooperative, and in return you also share in the co-op's success.

Capital credits are based on the amount of electricity you purchase; your share of the margins, or profits, is set aside in a separate account. Each fall, members receive notification of their allocation for the previous fiscal year, and after the fiscal year ends, the board of directors decides how much of these allocated funds can be returned to the members while preserving the financial health of the cooperative.

This year the board authorized the retirement of \$3.8 million to members who received service in 2001 and 2002. Members can expect to receive those funds in September. According to the cooperative's bylaws, if a member's share is \$150 or less, it is credited on their bill; if it is more, it is mailed to them in the form of a check. If they're no longer members, it is mailed to the most recent address we have on file.

Right now Tri-County EC is about 19½ years out on returning capital credits. That's well above average for co-ops, but we'd still like to cut that to about 15 years so members see those credits in a more reasonable time. A shorter timeline on returns makes capital credits more relevant as members see a quicker return on their investment. 800838687

We just want you to know our vision at Tri-County EC is to take care of our member-owners. Returning capital is just one way we look out for our membership.

So next time you read *Texas Co-op Power*, pay your bill or see a Facebook post, remember: There's something different about your electric utility—you own it! ■



to help improve the system that serves our members. All three are legitimate uses for capital: a safety net for emergencies, planning for the future and improving the present.

For several decades now, the co-op has also been returning a portion of capital to its members in the form of capital credits, also referred to as patronage



## How Capital Credits Work

AS A TRI-COUNTY Electric Cooperative member, you invest in the cooperative and share in the ownership of it. Each member also receives dividends, or capital credits, from the year's margins.

### Here's how capital credits work:

#### Establish Membership

When you establish service at your home or business, you become a member of Tri-County EC. When you become a member, a separate capital credits account is established in your name to track your investment in the co-op.

#### Allocations

Each year the board of directors allocates any funds remaining after expenses have been paid to the membership. Funds are allocated to each member's capital credits account based on the amount of electricity purchased. Allocations may vary from year to year.

#### Retirements

Each year the board of directors evaluates the financial status of the cooperative. Capital that is not retired will be used as operating capital for system improvements and maintenance. When capital credits are retired, the board will retire allocated funds from a previous fiscal year. The amount of capital retired to members as capital credits may change from year to year.

Capital credits are returned to members in the form of a bill credit or check. If the amount is \$150 or less, a member will receive a credit on their electric bill. If the amount is more than \$150, the member will receive a check through the mail. Inactive members will receive a check mailed to their last known address.

Capital credits are just one perk of being a member of TCEC. ■

## Tri-County Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

### CONTACT US

200 Bailey Ranch Road  
Aledo, TX 76008

**Phone** (817) 444-3201

**Email** [customer\\_service@tcectexas.com](mailto:customer_service@tcectexas.com)

**Web** [tcectexas.com](http://tcectexas.com)

### General Manager/CEO

Darryl Schriver

### Board of Directors

Jorden Wood, President

John Killough, Secretary-Treasurer

Jerry A. Walden

Steve V. Harris

Dr. Jarrett Armstrong

Max Waddell

Larry Miller

**24/7**

**Outage  
Hotline  
Number**

For information and to report outages, please contact us.

Phone: (817) 444-3201

Online: [tcectexas.com](http://tcectexas.com)

App: TCEC Connect

### ABOUT TRI-COUNTY EC

TCEC owns and maintains more than 9,100 miles of line to provide electric service to more than 91,900 members in Archer, Baylor, Denton, Foard, Haskell, Hood, Jack, King, Knox, Palo Pinto, Parker, Stonewall, Tarrant, Throckmorton, Wilbarger and Wise counties.

### OFFICE LOCATIONS

#### Aledo

200 Bailey Ranch Road, Aledo 76008

#### Azle

600 NW Parkway, Azle, TX 76020

#### Granbury

1623 Weatherford Highway, Granbury 76048

#### Keller

4900 Keller Hicks Road, Fort Worth 76244

#### Seymour

419 N. Main, Seymour 76380

### 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!

### VISIT US ONLINE

[tcectexas.com](http://tcectexas.com)





## Annual Meeting Goes Virtual Due to COVID-19

AS A MEMBER-OWNER of Tri-County Electric Cooperative, you have the opportunity to participate in the annual meeting of the members. For the past few months, we have shared how this year’s meeting was planned to be different from previous years. At the same time, co-op leadership has been monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic.

To ensure the health and safety of members and employees during the pandemic, the 81st Tri-County EC Annual Meeting of the Members has been changed from an in-person to virtual meeting.

### What To Expect

**Election.** Tri-County EC has partnered with a third-party entity, Survey and Ballot Systems, to conduct the director election at this year’s annual meeting.

**Election ballot.** Members will receive a ballot with the September issue of *Texas Co-op Power*. This year’s ballot includes elections for directors of districts 1 and 4 on the board of directors. Members who participate in the election by mail or online will receive a \$12 bill credit. Voting runs September 1–30. Members can vote:

- ▶ By mail using the ballot included in the September issue of *Texas Co-op Power*. Sign and return your ballot by mail to Survey and Ballot Systems using the postage-paid envelope.

- ▶ Online using the link and login information provided in the September issue of *Texas Co-op Power*.

A member may vote only once to receive a \$12 credit. Members do not need to vote both by mail and online. The first vote a member submits will serve as the member’s official vote.

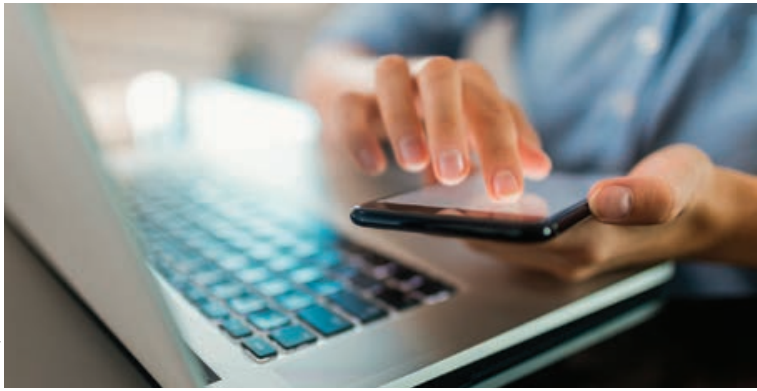
**Financial report.** Members will receive a financial report in the September issue of *Texas Co-op Power*. 49067001

**Business meeting.** Members will be able to watch and listen to the business meeting virtually from the safety of their home or business. More information on the business meeting will be included in the September issue of *Texas Co-op Power*.

**Door prizes.** The names of door prize winners will be drawn from the pool of members who vote by mail or online.

Tri-County EC is dedicated to taking care of our member-owners. The annual meeting is an opportunity for the membership to participate in the democratic process.

Look for your copy of *Texas Co-op Power* in September for more information on the 81st annual meeting of the members. ■



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## All the Ways To Pay Your Bill

### Online Member Portal

Tri-County Electric Cooperative's online member portal makes it easy to pay your bill online by credit card (Discover, Mastercard, Visa or American Express) or e-check. To access your member portal, click the gray Log In button at [tcectexas.com](http://tcectexas.com) and enter your login information. To set up your account, visit [tcectexas.com/register](http://tcectexas.com/register).

### TCEC Connect

Our mobile member app, TCEC Connect, provides an easy way to pay online by credit card (Discover, Mastercard, Visa or American Express) or e-check. Download the app today to pay your bill, report an outage or view usage. Search "TCEC Connect" to download the app from Apple's App store or Google Play.

### Auto Draft

With auto draft your account balance will be drafted on the due date indicated on your bill. You can choose to set up this payment option to draft from a credit card or bank account. To get started, simply log in to your online member portal and click Draft Payment Options in the list on the left. For assistance or more information, please call (817) 444-3201.

### By Phone

Payment by phone is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. We accept credit card (Discover, Mastercard, Visa and American Express) and e-check. Simply call (817) 444-3201 to speak with one of our member services representatives.

### In Person

You can pay your bill in person at any of the Tri-County EC offices during regular business hours. A night drop is available at the offices for depositing payment after hours. Find our office locations on Page 19 of this magazine or at [tcectexas.com/contact-us](http://tcectexas.com/contact-us).

### By Mail

You can pay your bill by mailing the bottom portion of your bill with a check or money order to the address on the bill. For convenience please use the postage-paid envelope enclosed with your bill. Please keep the top portion of the bill for your records. 800759995

If you are facing difficult times due to COVID-19 and related restrictions, please contact Tri-County EC's member services department at (817) 444-3201 or [customer\\_service@tcectexas.com](mailto:customer_service@tcectexas.com). We are here to help. ■

## Degrees Equal Dollars

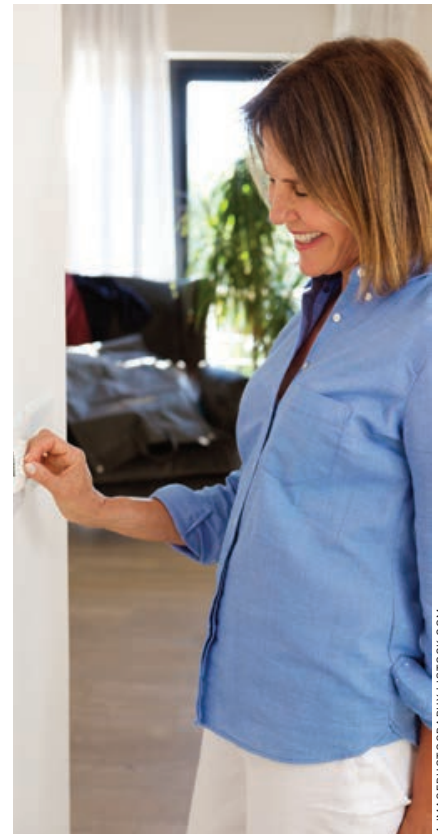
**THINK OF YOUR THERMOSTAT** like a cash register.

For every degree you decrease the temperature this summer, it's like ringing up another charge at the store. For every degree you increase the temperature, it's like using a coupon. 180200002

When home, set your thermostat to 78 degrees, as recommended by the U.S. Department of Energy. Setting the temperature at this level should allow you to stay fairly cool while avoiding a particularly high electric bill.

When going out for the day or overnight, turning your thermostat up 10–15 degrees can reduce your electric bill by up to 15%. That's 1% for every degree you raise your thermostat over eight hours, according to [energysavers.gov](http://energysavers.gov).

On a \$200 electric bill, the savings would be \$30. That's money you can take to the store. ■



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## 'Texas Co-op Power' Gets a New Look

But all your favorite content is here to stay

BY ANNIE MCGINNIS

**YOU MIGHT HAVE NOTICED** something was different when you pulled this magazine out of your mailbox this month. Perhaps you thought the cover looked a little different. Well, you're right, but the changes go deeper than that.

*Texas Co-op Power* has undergone a complete redesign. But even though it has a new look and feel, it's the same magazine you know and love. 800774315

Every month, *Texas Co-op Power* is delivered to you to entertain, enlighten and educate you and your family. The magazine is a warm and friendly source for all things Texan, and like a well-informed neighbor, it can offer the secrets to making fabulous, family-pleasing meals; reveal hidden gems of the Texas landscape; and recount the humorous, quirky, solemn and often untold stories of our state's history. Also like a good neighbor, it even reminds you how to save on your electric bill.

Most importantly, *Texas Co-op Power* is one of the primary vehicles through which Tri-County Electric Cooperative commu-

nicates directly with you, our members, and is a critical component in our efforts to fulfill Cooperative Principle No. 5—Education, Training and Information.

Through these pages we report on matters important to the co-op, such as director elections and changes to our bylaws; share tips to help you maximize the energy efficiency of your home; and offer safety information that could save your life. We also use this magazine to help you understand how new technologies—which continue to advance at a sometimes overwhelming pace—fit into your daily life.

As with everything in life, tastes change—and magazine design is no exception. While Tri-County EC is not one to jump on the bandwagon for the latest craze, we do realize when one of our products or services is in need of an overhaul. That's why we're excited to share this redesign with you.

For more than a year, the team behind *Texas Co-op Power* has worked diligently to update the look and feel of the magazine without sacrificing any of the content or character that inspires our members, month after month, to crack open these pages for some uniquely Texan stories—and a healthy dose of the cooperative spirit.

One of the major changes you may have noticed is the refreshed cover design and new *Texas Co-op Power* logo. The last time the logo was updated was in the mid-1990s, and though it suited that era well, sensibilities have changed. The new logo incorporates a modern feel that's in line with the magazine's evolution but sticks to its roots.

As you flip through this month's issue, you'll also see some smaller yet still significant changes, such as new colors and typefaces, new section headers, and more visually striking page layouts. Despite these changes all of your favorite content is still here.

*Texas Co-op Power* remains dedicated to telling the stories of Texas' unique people, history, mythology, culture and geography—the Texan way of life—as seen through the equally unique co-op lens. Readers will still enjoy all the best the magazine has to offer, from recipes, contests and event listings to travel narratives and other features, as well as local news concerning Tri-County EC and the communities we serve. Readers can also still enjoy expanded content, contests and other special treats at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com), on our Facebook page and by subscribing to our e-newsletters.

The magazine has evolved with an eye toward the future, but it retains all the hallmarks that generations of rural electric cooperative members have cherished since the first issue in 1944. Just like Tri-County EC, it's here to stay and better than ever. ■



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## Make Energy Savings Fun for Kids

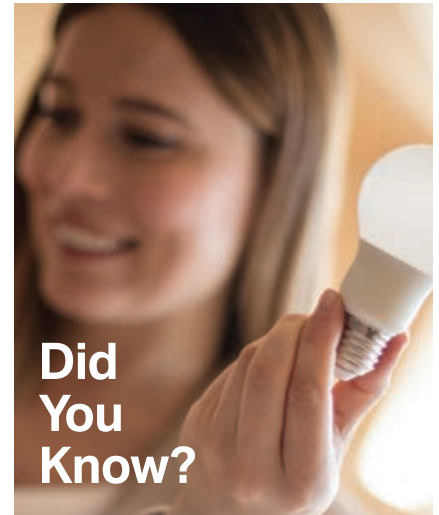
**WANT TO TRAIN YOUR CHILDREN** to use energy more efficiently? Make it a fun, interactive learning experience.

### Here are some ideas:

- ▶ Give your kids a penny or even a quarter every time you see them turning off the lights or TV when they leave a room. Take a coin back if they leave their video games running or leave lights on in an empty room.
- ▶ Reward older kids with a small bonus on their allowance each month that they help lower the household energy bill.
- ▶ Educate your children about how they might be wasting energy by holding the refrigerator door open or leaving the front door ajar when they run outside. Then deputize your little ones as your home's "energy police." Put them on the lookout for energy wasters like phone chargers that are plugged into the wall without a phone on the other end or TVs that are on when nobody's watching. 800805899
- ▶ Spend an afternoon decorating badges that put your children in charge of your home's Operation Save Energy. Then take them on a "raid" of the house, looking for ways your family is wasting energy.
- ▶ Set up an energy efficiency obstacle course. Send your kids on a race through the house to find other family members or friends acting out energy-wasting activities. Tell your kids they have to find culprits in each room and correct the energy wasters before they can move on. Time them as they race through the house and award points each time they correct an action.
- ▶ Each week, post a chart on the refrigerator and keep a tally of each time a family member gets caught wasting energy. The person with the fewest tallies by Friday night gets to pick the movie.

If you make saving energy a game rather than a chore, you might get your kids excited about your cause. Soon enough they'll be correcting you when you forget to flip the switch.

In addition to making it fun and offering rewards, remember to explain the "why" of energy conservation. Why should kids care? Saving money on the electric bill could mean more money for fun activities. ■



## Did You Know?

The terms energy efficiency and energy conservation have distinct meanings. Energy efficiency uses technology to reduce consumption while performing the same function. Energy conservation is behavior that results in the use of less energy.

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### POWER TIP

Save electricity and money on laundry day by washing clothes in cold water, doing full loads and air-drying clothes instead of using a clothes dryer.

CWA-STUDIOS | ISTOCK.COM



Knox Prairie Ranch Rodeo  
September 12



36th Annual Wild West Festival  
September 19

## Your Co-op's Community Calendar

### August

9

**Jerry Ermis Memorial Rib Feed,**  
cityofseymour.org

14

**Springtown Chamber Ninth  
Annual Sporting Clay Shoot,**  
springtownchamber.org

### September

10

**Golf Classic,** kellerchamber.com

12

**Knox Prairie Ranch Rodeo,**  
mundayfd@gmail.com

17

**Chamber Spring Swing  
Golf Tournament,**  
weatherford-chamber.com

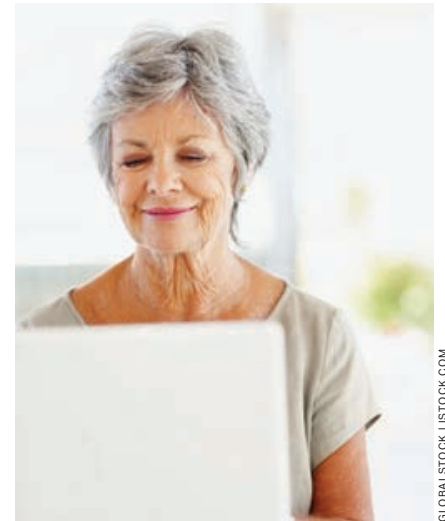
**NOTE:** Events are subject to postponement or cancellation due to COVID-19 guidance. Please check the event resource for updates.

RODEO: GRIBBEN | ISTOCK.COM. BOOT: MJ007 | ISTOCK.COM

**Interested in promoting your event in the next issue of *Texas Co-op Power*?**  
Email [pr@tcectexas.com](mailto:pr@tcectexas.com) with the event name, date and where readers can find more information. 8000934702

## Put Your Computer to Sleep

**JUST LIKE APPS** and graphics eat up the battery power on your cellphone, extra features on computers can unnecessarily use energy.



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**If your home has multiple computers, don't let them waste energy. Here's how to start:**

- ▶ Unplug seldom-used computers. Even if they are shut down, they continue to draw small amounts of electricity as long as they are plugged into the wall.
- ▶ Move computers and printers near the TV and phone charger, and plug them all into a power strip. That will make it easy to switch them all off when you leave the house for the day or turn in at night. The Natural Resources Defense Council estimates that devices that are always on use up to 23% of a home's electricity—even though the appliances are rarely in use.
- ▶ Set your computers to enter sleep mode when they're not in use—so they use less electricity.
- ▶ Program the "hibernate" function on your computers to turn them off when they're not in use for more than 30 minutes.
- ▶ Switch to a laptop or tablet. Portable devices use up to a third less energy than a big desktop computer and monitor. ■





CRAIG VELTRI | ISTOCK.COM

## Sawdust Pie

BY THERESA DUNSWORTH  
SPRINGTOWN

- ½ cup shredded coconut**
- 1½ cups graham cracker crumbs**
- 1½ cups chopped pecans**
- 1½ cups sugar**
- 1 cup egg whites (do not beat)**
- 1 pie shell**

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Combine coconut, graham cracker crumbs, pecans and sugar. Mix in egg whites.
3. Pour mixture into pie shell. 800794535
4. Bake 35 minutes. Cool and refrigerate until ready to serve. Enjoy!

### 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  
200 Bailey Ranch Road, Aledo, TX 76008

