

Cooperative History, Cooperative Future

Looking back provides the path forward



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER CLINT GARDNER

ONE OF MY FAVORITE SAYINGS ALWAYS HAS BEEN, “THOSE WHO do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” Yet sometimes, remembering our history with the goal of repeating it—and improving on it—can be a good thing.

For example, we never forget the struggles thousands of rural families endured before their homes were electrified, and the way electric cooperatives formed to bring

light to that darkness. As a result, employees at more than 900 co-ops across the United States dedicate themselves daily to making life better for member-owners.

As the nation’s 30,000 cooperatives celebrate National Co-op Month this October, I think it is a perfect time to take a look back—and a look forward.

Coleman County Electric Cooperative was founded when neighbors worked together to bring electricity to our rural community. Big, investor-owned power com-

panies thought they couldn’t generate enough profit, so they bypassed rural areas and only electrified the cities.

Back then, there were frequent meetings among neighbors to discuss the formation of this cooperative. Once established, the co-op’s annual meetings became “must-attend” events every year.

Fast-forward to today—and tomorrow: Your electric co-op currently serves 4,542 members, gives scholarships to local students and supports numerous community service organizations in the area. We also regularly return capital credits to our members.

We started out providing electricity, but our impact—with your support and input—has grown. Over the years, we’ve listened to you and your fellow co-op member-owners, and we know that we must keep pace as technology and consumer needs evolve. While times and technology will continue to change, our commitment to you will not. We understand that the spirit that helped create this co-op must be nurtured continually.

You can be confident that your co-op will keep exploring new ways to help our members and our community. We welcome your input as we plan for the future.

Look Up, Stay Safe

OBJECTS CAN ALMOST FADE FROM VIEW when we see them every day, but failure to notice high-voltage power lines can be a deadly oversight. Your electric cooperative wants to raise awareness about the dangers of overhead power lines and encourages you to follow these guidelines:

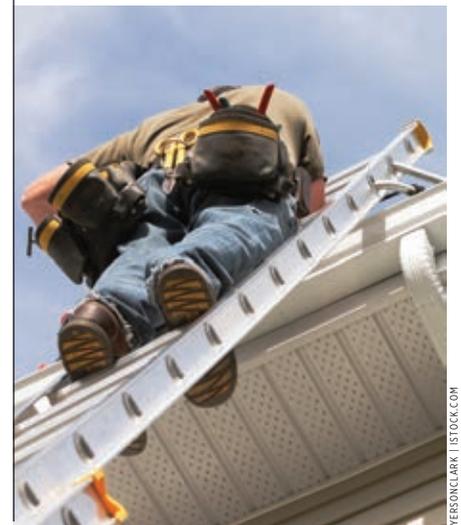
Look up and around you. Always be aware of the location of power lines, particularly when using long metal tools such as ladders, pool skimmers and pruning poles. Lower long equipment when you are moving it. Carry ladders and other long items horizontally whenever possible.

Be careful when working on the roof, installing antennas and satellite dishes, doing repair work or cleaning gutters. Never go up on the roof in bad weather.

Never trim trees near power lines—leave that to the professionals. Never use water or blower extensions to clean gutters near electric lines. Contact a professional maintenance contractor instead.

Never climb trees near power lines. Even if the power lines aren’t touching the tree, they could touch when more weight is added to the branch.

If your projects include digging, such as building a deck or planting a tree, call a local underground utility locator before you begin. This service is free, prevents the inconvenience of having utilities interrupted and can help you avoid serious injury.





NRCA

Linemen Pack Knowledge Under Their Hard Hats

EVERYONE KNOWS LINEMEN BUILD AND REPAIR ELECTRIC LINES, AND OFTEN THEY perform their craft under the worst circumstances: blistering heat, bone-aching cold, blinding rain and scathing wind. When we seek shelter, they leave theirs to go to work.

Much like the Boy Scouts, linemen always must be prepared. Their tools, trucks and other equipment are regularly inspected and tested to be ready for use at any moment. They also prepare for the worst: a lineman becoming unresponsive while working atop a pole or in a bucket. Whether an accidental injury or sudden, incapacitating illness occurs, linemen don't have time on their side. They just have to get their partner to the ground and get help as soon as possible.

Every year, every Coleman County Electric Cooperative lineman must satisfactorily perform a hurt-man rescue, as mandated by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. This operation takes place atop a 40-foot-tall utility pole. For safety reasons, the lines are not "live" with electricity during the exercise, but the test is administered as if every other aspect is real. Linemen are judged not only on the time it takes to perform a rescue, but also on the safe and efficient methods with which the task is accomplished.

Waiting for the lineman, a 185-pound mannequin hangs beside a pole's crossarm. The climber reaches the "body" and moves quickly, lowering the limp form to the ground carefully but with haste. "Time!" comes the call from the ground below. Then a nearby bucket truck lifts the mannequin to the top of the utility pole again, reattaching it so another would-be rescuer can race to the top.

The required completion time for hurt-man rescue is four minutes or less. Four minutes is the rule of thumb because after that time, a person can suffer permanent brain damage without oxygen to the brain. When a co-worker's life is on the line, linemen know every second counts.

"Our line crews are among the best-trained, most dedicated and hardest-working folks you will ever meet," says Clint Gardner, Coleman County EC's CEO/general manager. "Training such as this is critical to get them back home to their families."

Coleman County Electric Cooperative

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Operating in Brown, Callahan, Coke, Coleman, Concho, Runnels, Taylor and Tom Green counties

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Power Tip

Cooler temps are arriving! You have in your home, you can save money and increase your comfort by properly maintaining and upgrading your equipment. Contact a licensed professional to inspect your system before the winter chill arrives.