

# History Helps Co-ops Stand Strong



## MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER CLINT GARDNER

**THIS MONTH, I FOUND SOME INSIGHT TO SHARE FROM CO-OP HISTORIAN Ted Case, who is the executive director of the Oregon Rural Electric Cooperative Association. His books, *Power Plays* and *Poles, Wires and War*, describe the effect electric co-ops have had on national policy since the 1930s. Case recently talked with Paul Wesslund from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association about what the history of electric co-ops means for members.**

**Q: Has researching these books changed your view of electric co-ops?**

**Case:** I have a greater appreciation. The core values of what co-ops do are the same as in 1936 when the Rural Electrification Act became law.

**Q: What are those values?**

**Case:** I think of one particular co-op: It has several thousand people who come to the office to pay their bills. They don't need to do that—it's a lot easier to just toss the bill in the mail or pay online. But they go in because the co-op has this value beyond just electric service. It really is the center of everything in the town and the economic driver. The co-op is not just a power company; it's the center of their world.

**Q: Does that kind of relationship really apply in this increasingly high-tech world in a high-tech industry?**

**Case:** As I travel the country, I'm blown away by the technical acumen and the vision and the strategic abilities of co-op leaders to see into the future. Some electric co-ops are considering providing broadband internet connections at a time when nobody else will do it.

**Q: Can a co-op be successful providing technologies as different as electricity and broadband?**

**Case:** Co-ops will embrace new technologies when that's what their members want. Co-ops have never strayed from that business model that listens and responds to their members, their customers, their owners.

**Q: How does that business model relate to the basic mission of keeping electricity reliable and affordable?**

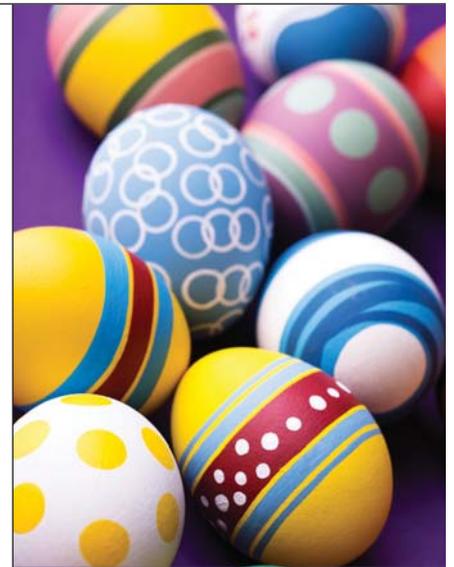
**Case:** Co-ops are very competitive, in rates, service and reliability. It comes back to that local connection. Members know the folks who work at the co-op and the directors. There's terrific customer service getting the lights back on after an outage.

**Q: One characteristic of electric co-ops is their nonprofit nature. How does that affect the members?**

**Case:** A lot. Increasingly, institutions have fallen from grace because everybody believes there's this profit motive that's just out to milk you, and there's such a lack of trust in a lot of the large institutions. Being a nonprofit is an attractive feature that means decisions are based on the best interests of the co-op and the consumer.

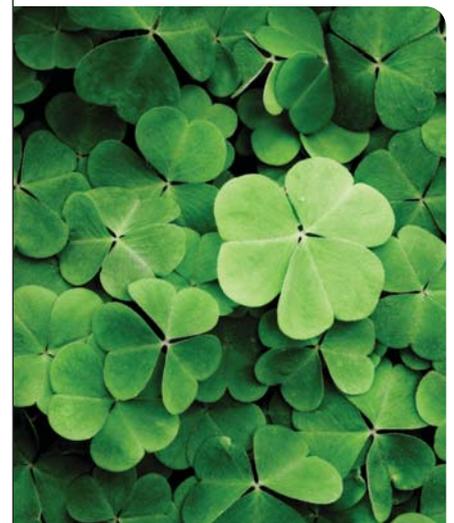
**Q: So what should members know about their electric co-op?**

**Case:** That they have the ability to influence their co-op more than they ever imagined. Directors are really interested in hearing from folks. When somebody at a co-op annual meeting has a point to make, the boards take it seriously. The co-op's management takes it seriously. That's the value.



## HAPPY EASTER! APRIL 1

The offices of Coleman County EC  
will be closed March 30 in  
observance of Good Friday.



ANITA STIZZOLI | ISTOCK.COM

## HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY

from Coleman County EC!  
Saturday, March 17

# CCEC Employees Recognized

95 years of combined service



From left: Meter Assistant/Mapping Tech Sage Brooks, 5 years; Apprentice Lineman Trent Smith, 5 years; Equipment Operator Mike Curry, 35 years; First-Class Lineman Mark Kaczyk, 25 years; Equipment Operator Kolton Titsworth, 5 years. Not pictured is First-Class Lineman Mark Garrett, 20 years.

AT A DECEMBER 21, 2017, MEETING, COLEMAN COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE HONORED employees for their years of service. Those reaching a milestone in their careers include Meter Assistant/Mapping Tech Sage Brooks, 5 years; Equipment Operator Mike Curry, 35 years; First-Class Lineman Mark Garrett, 20 years; Apprentice Lineman Trent Smith, 5 years; Equipment Operator Kolton Titsworth, 5 years; and First-Class Lineman Mark Kaczyk, 25 years. Congratulations to those receiving awards this year! Thank you for your hard work and for being dedicated employees of your member-owned electric cooperative.



**Power Tip** Consider insulating your hot water pipes. Doing so can reduce heat loss, allow you to lower the temperature setting and save an additional 3-4 percent per year on water heating.



## Coleman County Electric Cooperative

3300 N. Highway 84 • P.O. Box 860  
Coleman, TX 76834

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

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Clint Gardner

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### FIND US ON THE WEB

[colemanelectric.org](http://colemanelectric.org)

## DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

begins at 2 a.m., Sunday, March 11.  
Remember to "spring forward" by setting all clocks an hour ahead.