

Lower Bills Are Good for Everyone



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER KATHI CALVERT

WE KNOW HEATING COSTS THIS WINTER HAVE been tough on our members' pocketbooks. Here at Houston County Electric Cooperative, we are working to reduce your energy costs.

Many members residing in Houston County received notice of a petition filed with the Public Utility Commission

Commission will save our members money in the long run.

As this was the first severely cold winter we have experienced in many years, now is the time for you to consider ways to reduce future energy costs as well.

A few home improvements and simple changes in behavior can add up to big savings over time.

Home improvement stores offer inexpensive products that can make your residence more efficient. A few tubes of latex or silicone caulk for your windows help keep conditioned air inside and outside air out. Installing an insulation blanket on your water heater will help it operate more efficiently by reducing heat loss. And insulating hot water pipes can cut water heating costs by 4 percent.

Seeking even bigger savings? Check your home's insulation. According to energystar.gov, the insulation in your home's attic should cover joists and be evenly distributed. It is also important to use insulation with the appropriate R-value for your region. In Texas, an R-value of 30–60 is recommended. The colder the climate, the higher the R-value you will need to maximize savings. At energystar.gov, you'll find a variety of tools and tips to help maximize your home's energy efficiency.

HCEC is a not-for-profit electric power provider. That means our mission is to provide you with the



to transfer substation facilities to the Electric Reliability Council of Texas. If approved, the transfer will reduce future power costs for our entire membership, not just those in Houston County.

Like you, I prefer to see lower power costs now, not later. However, I am optimistic our effort with the Public Utility

electricity you need to improve your quality of life—not turn a profit for a shareholder or outside investor. An important part of that mission requires us to constantly seek ways to lower your costs, but it also entails empowering you to manage your electricity use. We want you to have more affordable power bills. It's good for everyone.



MORE THAN A CUSTOMER. A MEMBER-OWNER.

Customers of a big company rarely have a say in how things are run. Electric cooperatives are different. You are more than a customer. You're a member-owner.

Houston County Electric Cooperative works with local leaders to bring jobs to the communities we serve. When our neighbors are in need, Houston County EC helps. And we elect people from our local communities who we know and trust to lead Houston County EC.

We are an electric cooperative.
We are **MORE** POWERFUL TOGETHER.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 
The power of human connections

Houston County Electric Cooperative

P.O. Box 52, Crockett, TX 75835

GENERAL MANAGER

Kathi Calvert

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dan Courmier, President
Kennon Kellum, Vice President
Mitchell Huff, Secretary-Treasurer
Mary L. Pearl Adams
William Emmons
Kay Reed
Charles "Chuck" Siems
Grady Wakefield
David Whittlesey

Contact Us

**TO REPORT A POWER OUTAGE,
CALL OUR 24-HOUR HOTLINE**

1-800-970-4232 toll-free

BUSINESS HOURS

Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

*For general information
during business hours*

(936) 544-5641 local

1-800-657-2445 toll-free

To report an outage or other problem
with electrical service, press 1.

To make a payment over the phone or
speak with a member services represen-
tative in the billing department, press 2.

For electrical connects, transfers and
disconnects, press 5.

For directions to our office, mailing
address or fax number, press 6.

For satellite internet services, press 7.

For staking and construction, press 8.

FIND US ON THE WEB

houstoncountyelec.com



FIND US ON FACEBOOK



MOMCLOG | ISTOCK.COM

HAPPY EASTER!
APRIL 1

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

STEVCOLEIMAGES | ISTOCK.COM

Traveling? Let Electricity Keep Your House Safe

IF YOU RESOLVED TO TRAVEL MORE THIS YEAR, IT'S HIGH TIME TO GET YOUR HOUSE ready before you go.

Traveling is more fun and relaxing when you don't have to worry about whether your home is safe and secure. Here are five ways to prevent mishaps—and save some energy—during your absence.

1. Create the illusion that someone is home. Ask a trusted neighbor to pick up newspapers, mail and deliveries that might arrive while you're away. A pile of newspapers in the driveway is an invitation to an intruder looking for an empty house to break into.
2. Connect your outdoor lights to timers. Instead of leaving them on day and night while you're gone, install a timer that will switch the lights on when it gets dark and off when the sun comes up each day.
3. Plug indoor lamps into programmable timers set to "random" so the lights turn on and off throughout the day and evening. That will make your home look lived-in. You also can plug a TV or stereo into a timer so your house sounds lived-in, too.
4. Motion detectors not only light your property when your neighbor stops by to check on it but also serve to deter intruders. They save energy because you won't have to pay for light that no one is around to benefit from.
5. Unplug electronic devices such as your TV, computer, printer and small kitchen appliances before you leave. Left plugged into a wall socket, those items continue to draw small amounts of electricity that show up on your energy bill.



AMANDA ROHDE | ISTOCK.COM

DAYLIGHT
SAVING TIME

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

Smooth Out Seasonal Highs and Lows of Your Electric Bill

STAY IN CONTROL OF YOUR BILLS AS WE SMOOTH OUT YOUR SEASONALLY FLUCTUATING payments with Houston County Electric Cooperative's average billing plan.

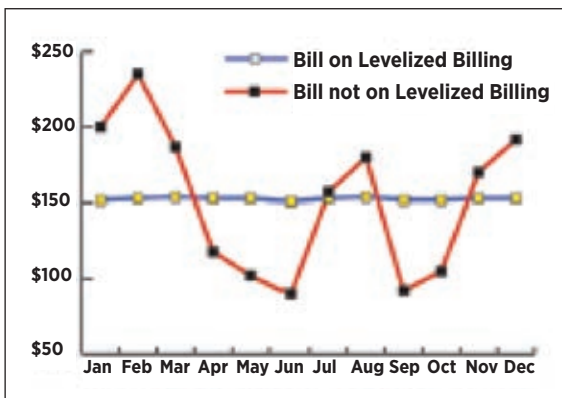
Briefly, this is how the program works:

- ▶ Your levelized billing amount is determined by averaging your electricity use from the 11 most recent months plus the current month.
- ▶ You will receive a bill every month showing how much electricity you have used that month, the levelized payment due and the current balance on your account.
- ▶ Your payment will fluctuate slightly as the oldest month is dropped and the most recent month's usage is added.

▶ To be eligible, a member's account must be paid in full, member must be a residential customer, the current account balance must be zero, and a minimum of 12 months' history is required with no more than two delinquent payments in the past 12 months.

The average billing plan is another option that Houston County EC provides to our member-owners. We know that fluctuations between extreme cold weather bills and extreme hot weather bills can cause stress to our member-owners, and this program is just one more way that Houston County Electric helps power your life.

To sign up for average billing or to find out what your payment would be, fill out the average billing plan request form on the Member Service Forms page of houstoncountyelec.com or call Houston County EC at (936) 544-5641 or toll-free at 1-800-657-2445.



ETREYS Set for June 25–29

EAST TEXAS RURAL ELECTRIC YOUTH Seminar is a leadership camp designed to foster positive ideals and values among young people and enhance skills in leadership, problem-solving and interpersonal relationships in a wholesome environment. Students living in Houston County Electric Cooperative's service area who are high school sophomores or juniors and interested in taking part in the leadership camp should apply now!

Applications are due by April 20 and can be found online at houstoncountyelec.com under the General Information tab then the Community Involvement tab. For any questions, contact Kelby Koehler at (936) 544-5641.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH



Buckeye Candies

Theresa Maddux | HCEC Retired Employee

- 1 jar (16 ounces) creamy peanut butter
- ½ cup (1 stick) butter, melted
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 5–6 cups powdered sugar
- 1 package (24 ounces) chocolate almond bark

1. Line a large baking sheet with parchment.
2. In a large bowl, combine peanut butter, melted butter and vanilla together until the mixture is completely blended.
3. Slowly add in powdered sugar, stirring after each addition. Stir in enough powdered sugar so that mixture has the consistency of play dough.
4. Roll peanut butter mixture into balls approximately 1 inch in diameter. Place peanut butter balls in freezer to harden for 45 minutes.
5. Melt the chocolate almond bark according to package directions. Place a toothpick into each peanut butter ball and dip into chocolate. Once all of the peanut butter balls are dipped, place in refrigerator to harden. Store in airtight container and enjoy!

PHOTO: ZIGAGMART | DREAMSTIME.COM

Want your recipe featured? Mail it to P.O. Box 52, Crockett, TX 75835 or email it to kkoehler@houstoncountyelec.com. Thank you!

Employee Service Awards



AT HOUSTON COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, we know our employees are an integral part of making our organization and community better. The board of directors, retirees and employees honored five of our own with milestone service awards at the December Christmas luncheon. Pictured from left are **Dan Fedak**, 5 years; **Cherry Kellum, Kraig Goolsby and Dean Shupak**, 10 years; and **Jeremy Bobbitt**, 15 years.

New Employee Spotlight

Houston County Electric Cooperative has welcomed nine new full-time employees since January 2017. Join us in welcoming them all to the HCEC family. As all of them were born in the area or have ties here, they're extremely excited to start working for their friends, family and neighbors!



Jasper Barnett



Riley Barrett



Trevor Brooks



Shiloh Crouch



Hunter Hollis



Jason LeBlanc



Perry Little



David McKinney



Brandon Neal

Growing Up Co-op

BY COMMUNICATIONS REPRESENTATIVE KELBY KOEHLER

I LOVE THE FEELING OF BEING ABLE TO WALK INTO MY FAVORITE locally owned shop or restaurant knowing that the profit, product and labor can make positive impacts on my community. The spirit of Main Street is embodied in these local businesses, just like it is in Houston County Electric Cooperative.

Electric cooperatives are as local and community-centered as they come. Founded as a way to bring electricity to communities that didn't interest investor-owned utilities, electric cooperatives have been a cornerstone of community and economic development in rural America and beyond for decades.

That feeling I get when I frequent local businesses in our community is the same feeling I get when I walk into work at the co-op every day. It is a feeling of pride. I am proud to be part of an organization that serves the community in which we live, instead of a group of shareholders who may never have set foot in our service territory.

Living on co-op lines is more than just knowing there are people out there working to bring you safe, reliable and affordable electric service. Living on co-op lines is an investment in

our community and its members.

Houston County EC is a not-for-profit business. When we make more money than we need to keep the lights on safely, affordably and reliably, we return it to our members (that's you!) in the form of capital credits. This means after all co-op expenses are paid, any additional money we earn goes back into our community, instead of going into a shareholder's pocket, which is pretty great!

And because we are owned by you, our members, we have a vested interest in making sure our community is prosperous. We do this by investing in economic development and community service projects.

I hope that you view HCEC not just as your electric utility provider, but as a local business that brings pride and prosperity to our community.

If you are interested in learning more about how we keep the lights on and more, please stop by the co-op or give us a call. We love being part of this community, and we hope you feel the same way too!

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Timothy Johnson, serviceman, flying his bucket in front of Crockett Classical Academy students while teaching them the importance of electrical safety. Donald Lamb, first-class lineman, getting ready to drive the HCEC bucket truck through the Christmas in Crockett parade. Jeremy Bobbitt, maintenance foreman, helping the city of Crockett hang its Christmas wreaths downtown. Lynne Erickson, administrative assistant, along with Bobbi Byford, Trinity Valley EC employee, getting ready for the Government-in-Action Youth Tour.

