

Arborists—Our Unsung Heroes



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER KATHI CALVERT

IT TAKES A TEAM OF PEOPLE ALL PLAYING THEIR ROLES TO MEET OUR members' expectations. This month, we are taking time to recognize a group of unsung heroes at Houston County Electric Cooperative—our right-of-way team.

When you think about your co-op, you may picture the linemen who restore your power or the member specialists you speak to about your service—but our arborists also play an important role. Given HCEC's densely wooded service area, these skilled professionals work in close proximity to high-voltage power lines, removing hazardous trees to prevent outages. The right-of-way team also clears easements ahead of our construction crews to create a safer work environment, enhancing linemen's productivity by reducing potential hazards.



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Your board of directors adopted a vegetation management policy as part of its commitment to providing safe and reliable service. We have a tremendous right-of-way team, but it cannot do it all. We currently have a contract with Arbor Resources to perform the majority of our routine clearing work. Our contractors rotate throughout our system, clearing trees to prevent outages.

As crews move into different parts of our service area, you may receive a letter communicating that we will be on your property and advising you of what to expect. We ask that you share relevant information with us, such as access issues on your property. Of course, you do not need to wait for a letter to tell us if you notice a potentially hazardous tree. Please contact us if you notice leaning or dead trees that may fall on power lines. It may take a bit of time due to the size of our service area and the sheer number of trees, but we will address all potential hazards in a timely and efficient manner.

We know you love your trees. We do, too. However, please help us by understanding our clearing efforts are first and foremost for your safety as well as ours. Please do not plant trees in our easements—we will have to remove them. We want to provide the best service, and clearing our rights-of-way prevents outages.

The right-of-way team and contractors are critical elements of our strategy to provide safe, reliable service. These professionals work hard for you day in and day out, in extreme heat and cold, to ensure your lights stay on, and we thank them for the tremendous work they do. The next time you see us clearing in your area, please remember we are there for your safety and the reliability of your service.



10 Tips for Energy Savings

CLEAR THE AIR. OPEN WINDOWS TO allow fresh (free!) air to circulate.

Cook outside. Enjoy a few hours of sunshine by using your grill or smoker to add festive flavors to meals.

Search and seal. Cracks and spaces let conditioned air outside. Caulk and weatherstrip to seal leaks.

Use natural light. Open blinds and curtains, and turn off lights to save energy.

Be fan-friendly. Use ceiling fans to circulate airflow.

Adjust settings. Remember to adjust your thermostat settings during milder months.

Tune up. Schedule an appointment with your HVAC technician to identify any potential problems with your system.

Reap savings. Think about supply and demand. Tackle household chores that require electricity during off-peak hours (when energy demand is low).

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.

Move outdoors. Time spent outdoors offers opportunities to turn off lights, TVs, computers and home appliances. You'll be more active, have more fun and save some money.

Celebrating Old Glory

FLAG DAY IS JUNE 14. THIS LESSER-KNOWN AND LESSER-CELEBRATED HOLIDAY, established by Congress in 1949, pays tribute to a great and meaningful symbol.

Most of us know that the 13 red and white stripes and the field of 50 stars represent the original 13 colonies and the current 50 states. But there's much more to learn about Old Glory.

The Beginning Recognizing that a new nation needed a new flag, Congress passed the country's first flag law June 14, 1777: "Resolved, that the flag of the United States be 13 stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be 13 stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation."

A Proclamation In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson paved the way for the observance with a proclamation addressing his concerns about "forces within and forces without that seemed likely to draw us away from the happy traditions of united purpose and action of which we have been so proud." The proclamation urged Americans to "give significant expression to our thoughtful love of America."

The Symbolism The red on the flag represents valor and bravery; white symbolizes innocence and purity; and vigilance, justice and perseverance are represented by blue. The stripes are symbolic of rays of sunlight, and the stars reference the heavens.

The First Flag The oft-told story of President George Washington asking Betsy Ross to create the first flag unfortunately can't be substantiated. The Betsy Ross House, a museum in her honor, promotes her story but encourages visitors to decide whether it's historical fact or well-loved fiction.

The Pledge As originally written in 1892, it read: "I pledge allegiance to my flag and the republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." Congress added the phrase "under God" to the pledge in 1954.

While only Pennsylvania recognizes Flag Day as a state holiday, we wish you a happy Flag Day and encourage you to take time to acknowledge the significance of the day.



Houston County Electric Cooperative

P.O. Box 52, Crockett, TX 75835

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Kathi Calvert

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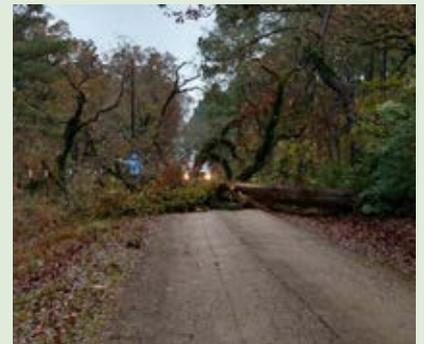


National Right-of-Way

June 11–15, 2018



Blast from the past! For as long as we can remember (1939, to be exact), Houston County Electric Cooperative's right-of-way crews have had one purpose: to serve members and maintain our rights-of-way in rural East Texas. ROW crews also help combat dead trees encroaching on members' power lines.



y Professionals Week



Why does HCEC actively manage its rights-of-way?

HCEC's primary mission is to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity to our members in rural East Texas. One of the biggest challenges to that mission is maintaining power line rights-of-way. HCEC operates and maintains more than 5,000 miles of line through some of the most densely forested areas in Texas. The No. 1 reason for outages is trees coming in contact with or destroying power lines. Proactively managing our rights-of-way helps keep the power on for you and your neighbors.

Did you know?

We cannot do it alone here at HCEC—we need help from our friends at Arbor Resources! We utilize their crews for right-of-way clearing and maintenance.



2017 IN REVIEW:

NUMBER OF DEAD TREES CUT DOWN:



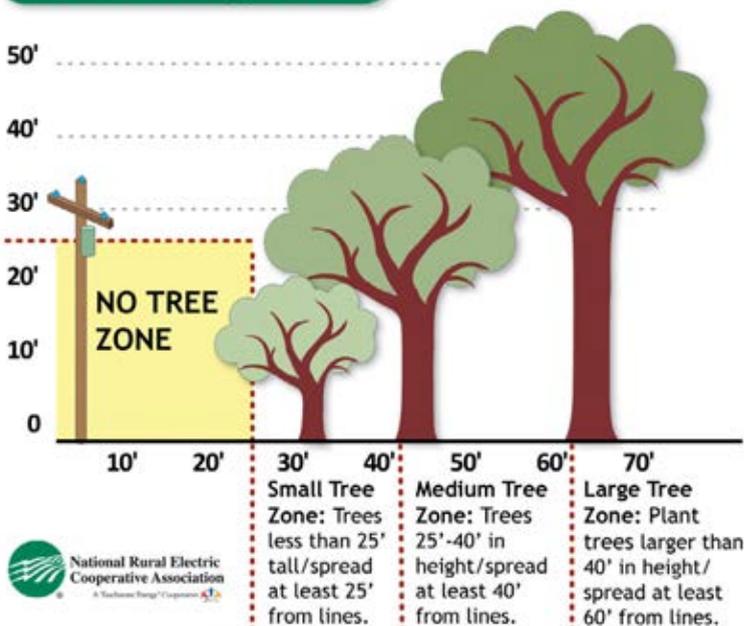
MILES OF RIGHT-OF-WAY CUT:



RIGHT-OF-WAY TICKETS RETURNED:



Tree Planting Guide



HCEC RIGHT-OF-WAY CREW MEMBERS

RIGHT-OF-WAY FOREMAN

Larry Wickersham

UTILITY ARBORIST I

Elliott Marshall

UTILITY ARBORIST III

Hayden Campbell

UTILITY ARBORIST III

Jasper Barnett



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Give Your Home an Electrical Safety Checkup

JUST AS REGULAR WELLNESS CHECKUPS ARE CRITICAL FOR MAINTAINING YOUR health, routine safety checkups are critical for the safety of your home. Use this checklist to ensure that you can identify and correct potential electrical hazards around your home.

Switches and Outlets

Are any switches or outlets warm to the touch or discolored? Unusually warm or discolored switches or outlets may indicate an unsafe wiring condition.

Do any switches or outlets make cracking, buzzing or sizzling sounds? Unusual noises from a switch or outlet may indicate an unsafe wiring setup such as a loose electrical connection.

Do plugs fit snugly into all outlets? Loose-fitting plugs can cause fires.

Cords

Is any cord cracked, frayed or otherwise damaged, or attached with staples? Damaged cords may have exposed wires that can be a fire and shock hazard.

Do you use extension cords on a permanent basis? Extension cords are designed to be used only temporarily. Extended use may damage the cord, creating a fire and shock hazard.

Are cords kept wrapped up while being used? Wrapped cords trap heat, which can lead to melting or weakening of the insulation.

Are all appliance cords placed so they will not come in contact with hot surfaces? Cords can melt or burn from excessive heat. This can expose wires and lead to a fire or electric shock.

Electric Panel

Do you have recurring tripped breakers or blown fuses? Fuses and circuit breakers are safety devices that help prevent fires caused by overloading of your home's electrical system. They stop the electrical current if it exceeds the safe level for some portion of your home's system.

Do you have arc-fault circuit interrupters, and do you test them? AFCIs are advanced circuit breakers that provide greater protection from electrical fires. You should have them and test them monthly as they can stop working without showing signs of failure.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH



JMICHL | ISTOCK.COM

Texas Lime Pie

DIANE BELL | SISTER OF BRENDA BYRD,
HCEC OPERATIONS CLERK

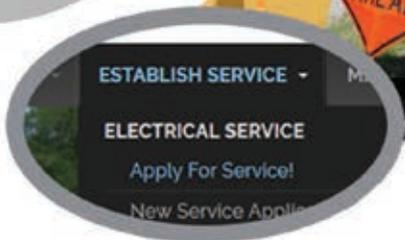
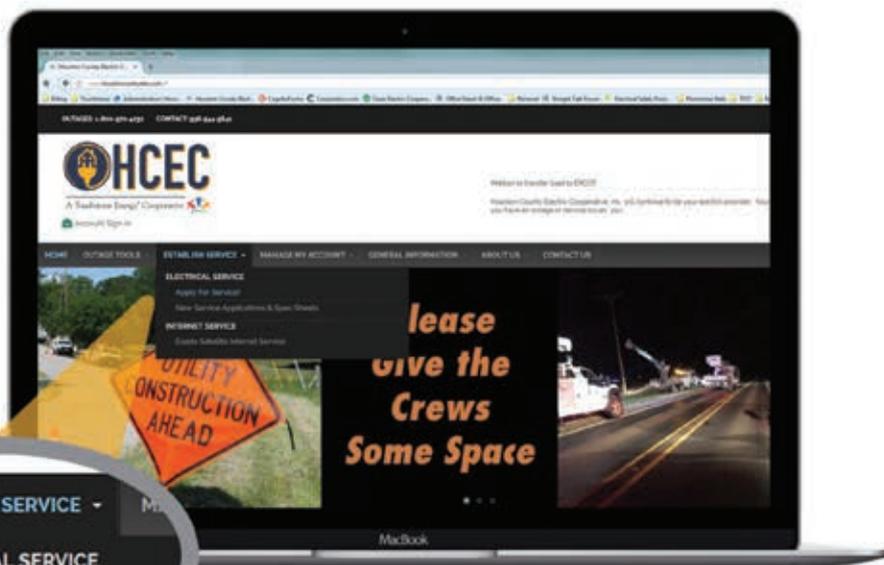
- 3 cups graham cracker crumbs**
- ½ cup packed brown sugar**
- ⅔ cup (1½ sticks) butter or margarine, melted**
- 3 cans (14 ounces) sweetened condensed milk**
- 5 egg yolks**
- 2 cups lime juice**
- Whipped topping, lime slices and fresh mint, optional**

- 1.** In a large bowl, combine cracker crumbs, brown sugar, and butter or margarine until crumbly. Press into the bottom and up the sides of two greased 9-inch pie dishes.
- 2.** In a large bowl, beat the milk, egg yolks and lime juice on low for 2 minutes or until smooth and slightly thickened.
- 3.** Pour into prepared crusts. Bake at 350 degrees for 18–22 minutes or until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool on wire racks for 1 hour. Chill for 6 hours. Garnish with whipped topping, lime and mint if desired. ▶ Makes two pies with 6–8 servings each.

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