



# TRI-COUNTY Electric Cooperative, Inc.

" A Commitment to Service and Savings "

## Will Your Home Be Ready For Cold Weather?

If you haven't already done so, it is time to make sure your home is ready for winter. Proper preparation can prevent expensive repairs and reduce utility bills. Here are some of the most important tips to consider.

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### Insulate exposed pipes:

Water pipes need to be insulated to prevent freezing. This includes cut-off valves, water well pressure tanks and lines exposed to the elements. Insulation alone will work if water is frequently circulated through the line to replace lost heat. A water line that does not have circulation for extended periods of time will require one of two measures. If possible, the line needs to be opened at its furthest point and allowed to drip when outdoor temperatures drop below freezing. Fresh water flowing through the line brings in water that is at a higher temperature than water that has been standing in a line. The problem with allowing a line to continually run during cold weather is the amount of water that will accumulate. If it's not practical to keep water running, then a heat source will be required.



The most effective and economical heat source is a thermostatically controlled heat cable. It looks like an extension cord and is taped to the bottom side of the water pipe being protected. An insulating jacket needs to be wrapped around the pipe to help hold the heat. If the pipe is exposed to the weather, then the insulating

jacket needs to be water proofed with an additional wrap of waterproof foil tape. Heat cable can be installed around pipes or storage tanks to prevent freezing. It comes in lengths from 6ft. to 30 ft. and will cost about \$23.00 to \$36.00. Because the tape only operates when temperatures are below freezing, it is one of the most economical options to prevent freezing of water lines.



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Outdoor water hydrants need to be covered with an inexpensive

insulating bonnet. Thermo faucet covers are normally made of styrofoam and help prevent heat loss around the hydrant. They are simple to install and available at most hardware stores. They range in price from \$2.00 to \$8.00, depending on the manufacturer. Most are easy to remove to allow for use of outdoor water on warmer days.

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### Check doors and windows:

Doors and windows require periodic maintenance to assure that a proper weather seal is being made. Adjustment to the base plate of the door may be necessary to accommodate settling and normal wear of weather-stripping. If the door seals are defective, they may require replacement. Frequently vinyl weather-stripping will become hard with age. Once the material loses its elasticity, it becomes ineffective. The dollar bill test is one of the best ways to evaluate your door or window. Close and lock the door or window on a dollar bill. Pull on the bill and see if it meets firm resistance. Move the dollar to various locations along the door or window to identify problems. If you remove the dollar and encounter no resistance, the seal is not working properly and should be adjusted, repaired or replaced. Check caulking around doors and windows to make sure everything is in good repair. Use a silicone based, 20 year or better caulk to achieve the best results.



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### Electric Space Heating:

A space heater is an inexpensive and effective spot heater on cold days. A space heater will allow you to keep occupied rooms warmer while allowing the balance of the home to operate at a lower temperature. Avoid using space heaters in un-insulated, open environments. A 1500-watt space heater placed in a open air area such as under a home or in a garage will operate continuously. If unchecked, a 1500-watt heater that runs 24 hours a day for 30 days will consume 1,080 kWh. At around 11 cents per kWh, that translates to a operating cost of \$118.00 per heater.

## Holiday Closing

The TCEC business offices will be closed on November 22nd and 23rd for the Thanksgiving holiday. Emergency service is available by contacting the telephone numbers listed on the other side of this page. We want to wish all of our members a **Happy Thanksgiving** and if your holiday plans include long trips to see family and friends, remember to buckle up and drive safely!

# Use Your Fireplace Safely & Efficiently This Winter!



The fireplace provides a warm atmosphere for family and friends. It can also be the cause for significant heat loss when operated along with the central system. Your Cooperative recommends that you only use the fireplace when the central system is switched off. If you are unable to keep the home warm with the fireplace, allow it to burn down, remove the hot embers, close the fireplace damper and turn on the central unit. A home owner would never consider trying to operate the central heater with a window wide open, but an open fireplace damper can actually be worse. The vertical design of the chimney provides the best path for hot air attempting to escape the home. Glass fireplace doors restrict air loss up the chimney but not entirely. A close inspection of those doors will reveal more than ample opportunity for air to escape.

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Make sure your damper is closing tight by inspecting it with a flashlight. If the damper is missing or broken, there are a number of repair kits available at most fireplace hardware centers. The next time you start a fire, walk outside and take note of the amount of smoke coming from the chimney. Then remember that for every cubic foot of smoke up the chimney, an outside cubic foot of cold air had to infiltrate into the home to replace it.

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If you have trouble making the fireplace draw smoke properly, it may be that your house is too tight and not allowing sufficient air infiltration. This problem can often be solved by cracking a window near the fireplace. When starting the fire consider using a log starter that can be purchased at most retail centers. Open the damper and set a starter block in the fireplace. Light the starter block following instructions on the package. Allow the starter block to heat up the chimney before adding wood. Start with small pieces and gradually increase the size until you have a good base to start using large logs. By warming the chimney you will get a good draft started before burning material that generates more smoke.

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If you have a question concerning your home's energy efficiency, contact your Cooperative and talk with a Member Services Representative.



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Central Headquarters Office (817) 444-3201 or (817) 523-7231  
Southwest District Office (817) 279-7010 or (817) 279-7011  
Northeast District Office (817) 431-1541  
B-K District Office (940) 888-3441  
Internet: [www.TCECTEXAS.COM](http://www.TCECTEXAS.COM)

## From The Cooperative Kitchen



This month's recipe was provided by Shelia C. Root from Springtown. She will receive a Texas Co-Op Power Cookbook, compliments of TCEC.



# BANANA NUT CAKE

### ... Ingredients ...

- 1 - Package Yellow Cake Mix
- 1 - Package Instant Banana Cream Pudding
- 1/4 - Cup of Cooking Oil
- 4 - Eggs
- 1 - Cup of Water
- 1 1/2 Cups of mashed Ripe Bananas  
(About 3 Medium Size)
- 3/4 - Cup Chopped Walnuts
- 3/4 - Cup Powdered Sugar (Optional)

### DIRECTIONS:

**In a large bowl combine yellow cake mix, instant banana cream pudding mix, cooking oil, eggs and water. Beat on medium speed with a mixer for about 2 minutes.**

**Add bananas and mix well.**

**Stir in nuts.**

**Pour into a greased 9 X 13 inch baking pan.**

**Bake at 350 degrees for 50 to 55 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean.**

**Cool on a wire rack and dust with powdered sugar if desired. Once you slice this cake up it just starts disappearing ...**

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