

TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



Linemen: The Primary First Responders

IN AN EMERGENCY, WHO DO YOU CALL? 911? THE POLICE? THE fire department? These heroes all respond to emergency calls. How about (817) 444-3201? As in an emergency, people rush to call their electric provider when the power goes off.

Just like firefighters grab equipment and load trucks in response to a call, lineworkers promptly load up to restore power during an outage. These brave men and women are often the first line of defense in protecting the public. In the event of a downed line, linemen are the primary responders to make the area safe for other public safety workers.

To honor our linemen responders, Tri-County Electric Cooperative joins other electric cooperatives around the nation in dedicating the second Monday in April as National Lineman Appreciation Day. These special electric cooperative employees, who build and maintain lines, support the entire operation.

Dedicated

First responders often put their lives on the line for the public. Similarly, linemen do whatever it takes to serve the members. This dedication is most often shown during storms and inclement weather. When the storms roll in, line crews roll out.

“We were always out there in the middle of it, and everybody wanted to be at home, snug as a bug in a rug, but we were always the ones out there,” said Carl Herridge, Tri-County EC line superintendent for Azle and Keller, “whether it was a tornado, lightning storm, snow or ice.”

Late February reminded us of that unflagging devotion to members when weather officials issued flood alerts only to have Mother Nature cover North Texas in ice. Crews from Keller, Granbury and Seymour joined forces with Azle line crews to restore power to the members, battling subfreezing temperatures.

Outage restoration efforts began Wednesday, February 20,

at 3 p.m. and continued around the clock until power to all members was restored Sunday morning. Herridge said that, three days into the outage, he was forcing guys to go home to rest because they simply refused to leave their fellow linemen.

“They don’t want to leave their guys out there still working, and they don’t want to leave the members off,” Herridge said. “They feel like they’re not pulling their weight if they’re not out there till it’s all back.” 50600003

The linemen’s dedication supports the co-op. Without these brave men and women, members would not receive power, and the co-op simply would not exist.

Linemen do more than build and maintain line. They play a key part in delivering service to members, all while putting their lives on the line.

Brotherhood

Working side by side throughout the week, often in difficult situations, closely unites linemen. They are dedicated to the members but also to one another. Herridge said camaraderie is strong among the brotherhood of linemen.

“I think it’s just created by one doing that for the other, and it just becomes the norm,” he said. “You’re not going to leave your brother out there. You’re just not going to do it.”

While linemen work hard for the members, they also find time occasionally to pull pranks. Herridge recalled a lineman favorite: “They love to get what we call goose grease and put it on the headliner, so when they put their hard hat on, it gets right here,” he said, as he motioned across his forehead.

Such bonds are seen among electric cooperative line crews across the nation. Co-ops operate differently than investor-owned providers in part because of the values employees hold. These values trickle down from top management to every employee and lineman.

“It’s the culture,” Herridge said. “Members first. I’ve been around a lot of linemen in my career, and co-op linemen just



Carl Herridge, Azle/Keller line superintendent

seem to have each other's backs and care more about the member."

Linemen share these values and passion to serve, which is what makes them so powerful as a team and family. Herridge said he likes co-ops because they are family-oriented and share the same ideals.

He affectionately describes Tri-County EC's linemen as "good ol' county boys," with an outsized sense of duty and big hearts to match. When crews go out in the field, they often help the community in unexpected ways.

"If they are out there and they see something wrong, they are going to try to help," he said. "I can't think of any of them I know who would ever think twice about helping somebody."

A Tri-County EC line crew was honored at the Texas Electric Cooperatives Loss Control Conference in March for their heroic efforts. Last May, a Keller crew witnessed a car accident on Interstate 35. Bill Liedtke, Michael Whitt, Logan Fritchen and Mitchell Culpepper responded to the SUV pinned against a concrete median.

"Michael Whitt, being an ex-EMT, jumped right in there and was doing things even cops on the scene didn't do," Herridge said. The crew worked to safely extract the driver and direct traffic.

Our linemen go above and beyond the call of duty to serve the community. Helping others comes from habit developed by the co-op way of life. Sharing these values creates a unique bond among linemen.

Safety

Careers in electric line work are among the 10 most dangerous in the world. Accordingly, safety is a top priority.

Herridge recalled safety improvements throughout his 37-year career but said the safety manual is the biggest safety feature. With each accident, the manual is updated to protect lives.

"Every word of it is written in blood," he said. "A lot of peo-

ple have died in this business in the past 100 years. Nobody has to die these days if they just follow the rules."

In the past, linemen only had boot hooks and belts. Equipment has improved and reduced the risk of falling. Current belts cinch tight to the pole if a lineman starts to fall. These strides in the safety of linemen's equipment have reduced injuries.

"There is always something that could happen," Herridge said, "but if you follow all the safety procedures, it's very slim."

Storms are a terrifying time for linemen. High winds, pelting rain and icy poles escalate difficulty. Herridge said he never knew if a pole would fall in high winds when a lineman was working. Bucket truck improvements, such as fiberglass bodies and increased durability, make the job of a lineman safer and easier. However, linemen still climb poles because trucks cannot always access poles in backyards or muddy pastures.

Technological advances continue to increase efficiency and safety for linemen. Herridge said the coming technological changes will be substantial and only get better. Recently, the co-op upgraded from paper maps to electronic mapping on iPads.

Additionally, Tri-County EC is considering automatic metering infrastructure, which would help the co-op know when members lose power and when it is restored. This technology will help linemen find the root of the issue and, often, detect a problem before it happens.

"It doesn't change how it gets repaired—that will never change," Herridge said. "But making it timely will just get better and better." 146100102

Technology and Tri-County EC constantly evolve as we embrace the future of the cooperative industry.

Here at Tri-County Electric Cooperative, we are proud to work with 70 dedicated linemen. Please join us April 9, National Lineman Appreciation Day, in celebrating our hard-working men, who toil in often treacherous conditions to keep the lights on for you.

New to Your Electric Cooperative?

IT'S EASY FOR US "OLD-TIMERS" TO FORGET THAT SOMETIMES WE speak a different language out here in Co-op Country, a language that many of our newer members may not be familiar with. If you're a new member of our co-op, you may not even be aware that you're much more than a mere "customer" until you've had a personal interaction with a co-op employee who works for you.

That's right—we work *for* you. When you signed up for electric service and paid your membership fee, you became much more than a customer—you became a member and one of the owners of this business. Consumer ownership and control of an electric co-op makes it different from other types of electric utilities.

Simply put, a co-op is a business that's owned and operated by those who use it. In the cooperative form of business, any revenues realized over expenses are assigned to the membership in the form of equity, called capital credits, or are

invested back into the business for necessary improvements.

Your electric co-op is operated under the watchful eye of a board of directors, elected by the members themselves. The directors spend many hours studying and deliberating issues that affect the membership. Rest assured your board members and co-op employees work hard to provide you with the very best service possible. You see, we all have a common interest—we're all in this business together.

Each year, we hold a membership meeting to give our members the opportunity to exercise their owner-



ship rights by hearing reports from me and the board. When you attend the annual meeting, you will learn about the past year's operation and elect directors. You should consider it your chance to become involved and help decide the direction your cooperative will take. We hope you'll feel this meeting is important enough to attend every year. 800587116

Whether you're a new member or one of us old-timers, you're always welcome at your cooperative!



Boost Efficiency Outdoors

COULD YOUR GARAGE, SHED, BARN OR other outdoor building use an energy efficiency boost? Try these tips to save energy and money:

- ▶ The same rules apply for outdoor buildings as houses: Add insulation, install energy-efficient windows and seal ductwork.
- ▶ Unplug power tools and battery chargers when not in use.
- ▶ Install an insulated door and seal the sides and bottom around it to reduce air leaks.
- ▶ Install motion sensors on outdoor lights.
- ▶ Look into LED retrofits for outdoor security lights. The bulbs cost more upfront, but payback takes only a few years, and LEDs can last up to 20 years.



Saving Money Is No Joke

WE'VE ALL HEARD THIS ONE: HOW MANY (INSERT TYPE OF PERSON HERE) DOES IT TAKE to change a lightbulb? While the comedic value of the answer sometimes leaves a bit to be desired, the underlying principle—simple changes can become needlessly complicated—stays the same.

The average home contains 40 light fixtures, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. Thanks to a series of staggered federal standards and more lighting choices than ever before, the average homeowner could save \$50 or more each year by using more energy-efficient lightbulbs. 6986500004

Federal regulations now prohibit the manufacture of any bulb not meeting specific energy efficiency standards. This doesn't mean traditional incandescent bulbs went away, but keep in mind that those bulbs waste 90 percent of your lighting costs as heat.

Compact fluorescent lightbulbs slash energy use by 75 percent compared to incandescent bulbs and last up to 10 times longer.

But for folks who don't like the pigtail CFL shape or who worry about the very small amount of mercury in these bulbs, another, brighter option is available: LED bulbs. These bulbs require 75–80 percent less energy than incandescent bulbs and can last 25 times longer—by far the longest life span yet. While the upfront cost for LEDs is slightly higher, the savings over the 20 years or more the bulb will last makes it a great investment. They are particularly advantageous for light fixtures that are difficult to access.

CFLs and LEDs are available in a variety of brightnesses, come in several hues and offer styles for all types of light fixtures—from chandeliers with dimmers to floodlights.

So what's the punchline? Every time you change a lightbulb, buy a more efficient replacement. No matter which you opt for, you'll save money every time you flip a light switch—and that's nothing to chuckle about.



Seven Steps to a Safer, Spotless Spring

HERE ARE SEVEN WAYS TO AVOID MISHAPS, maximize efficiency and beautify your home as you embark on spring cleaning and other projects this month.

1. When using a ladder or step stool, ensure it is placed on a stable surface and that you are wearing nonslip shoes. Be mindful of health conditions or medications that may cause dizziness or vertigo. And be certain there are no power lines nearby.

2. Mirrors are a lovely way to increase light and open up a smaller space. Placed strategically, these affordable accent pieces can add a breath of fresh air to your home. For the most impact, situate mirrors across from visually appealing or interesting items—a fireplace or window is ideal.

3. When applying insecticide in or around your home, be sure it is human- and pet-friendly if you have small children or four-legged family members. The same goes for plants—many beautiful succulents can be toxic to pets. Doing a little research before adding to a garden can help protect your loved ones.

4. Make sure to wake up on the right side of the bed each morning after a good night's sleep by investing in blackout draperies or shades for bedrooms, increasing efficiency and comfort by reducing heat gains.

5. Dust ceiling fan blades and attached light fixtures and bulbs. While doing this, you also can change the direction the blades move by flipping the small switch just above the blades. In preparing for summer heat, you want the fan to push air down into the room to help cool it off, which is achieved with a counterclockwise spin. In winter, the reverse applies. 29139002

6. Salt is an excellent multipurpose home cleaning product. Use a handful dissolved in 1 gallon of warm water to clean a refrigerator's interior nonabrasively and without releasing any chemical fumes. You also can apply salt to a cut lemon half to lightly scour and polish brass. Just rinse with warm water when finished, and it should shine like new. A similar method works to clean wooden cutting boards. Sprinkle coarse salt onto the surface, squeeze juice from a lemon onto it, then scrub with a small brush to work the mixture into the cutting board. Finish by rinsing in hot water, and after allowing it to dry, enjoy your



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HAVE A FRIDGE IN NEED OF DEEP CLEANING? BREAK DOWN THE TASK INTO MANAGEABLE PIECES USING THESE STEPS.

1. Clear everything out of the refrigerator, taking care to separate items that will be thrown out from those you will be keeping.
2. Remove shelves (if possible).
3. Using a solution of salt and hot water, wipe down all interior surfaces.
4. Wash shelves in warm, soapy water and dry before replacing.
5. With a damp cloth, wipe down exterior of all items before returning them to the fridge.

newly disinfected meal prep tool.

7. Save more than a few pennies by investing in a programmable thermostat. While some “smart” models cost more, a basic programmable thermostat can cost as little as \$30 and, used properly, can net a 10 percent savings on the heating and cooling portion of your electric bill. Set it to around 68 degrees during waking winter hours (and lower while asleep or away), and set it to 78 degrees in summer (and higher while asleep or away).



Cultivate Farm Safety

Because many pieces of farm equipment reach heights of 14 feet or higher, always remember to look up when entering fields and barn lots to make sure there is enough room to pass beneath electric lines. Electric contact accidents can result in loss of limbs or even death.

Here are some rules to follow:

- ▶ **The No. 1 electrical farm hazard is the potential contact from a grain auger to a power line. Always look up before raising or moving an auger.**
- ▶ **The same is true of metal irrigation pipe, often stored along fence lines under an electric line. Never raise or move irrigation pipe without looking up. A few seconds of caution can mean the difference between life and death.**
- ▶ **Be sure hand tools are in good working order and use them according to the manufacturers' instructions. 47196003**
- ▶ **Ensure that the wiring in your workshop is adequate to handle your tools. Never operate any electric tools near water.**
- ▶ **Read labels and handling instructions carefully and follow them when using chemicals and herbicides. Never leave chemicals where children or animals can get into them; store them in a locked cabinet if possible. Safely dispose of containers.**

Tri-County Electric Cooperative

600 NW Parkway, Azle 76020

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tcectexas.com

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IT PAYS TO STAY INFORMED!

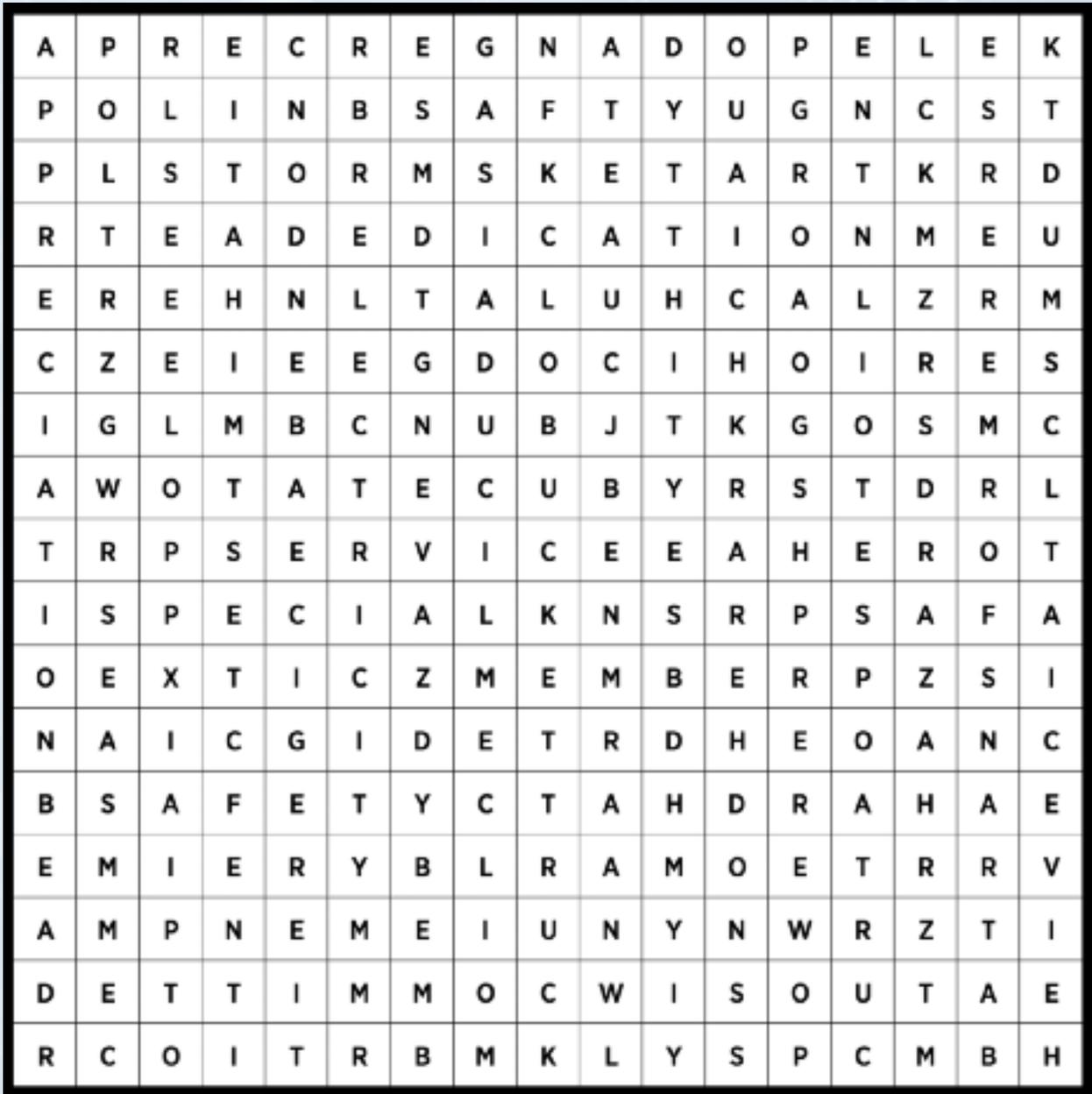
Find your account number in pages 18–23 of *Texas Co-op Power*, and you will receive a \$20 credit on your TCEC electric bill. Simply contact one of the offices listed above and make them aware of your discovery!

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LINEMAN APPRECIATION DAY

Word Search



Help Willie Wiredhand find these words in the puzzle box.

APPRECIATION
BUCKET TRUCK
CLIMB
COMMITTED
DANGER
DEDICATION

ELECTRICITY
ENERGIZED
HARD HAT
HAZARDS
HELP
HERO

LINE
LINEMAN
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POLE
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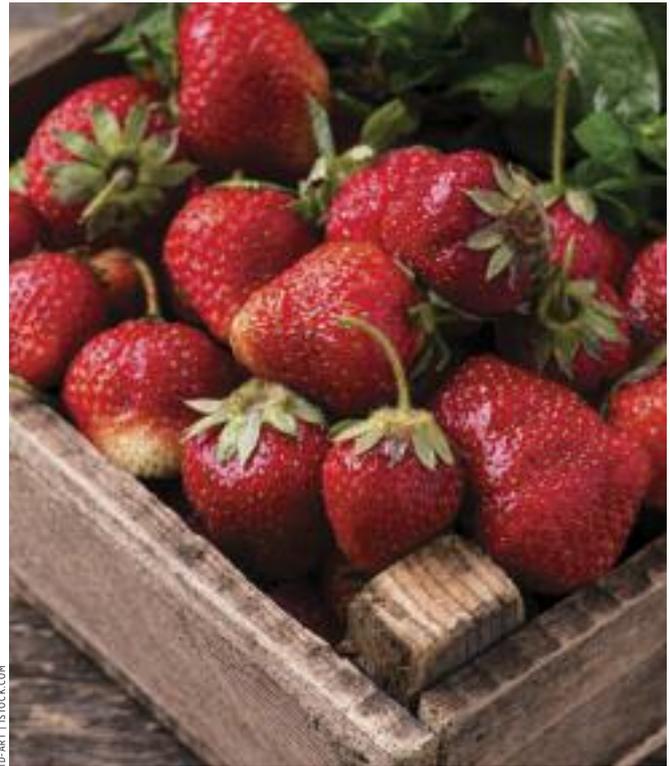
Recipes Are Back!

Strawberry Cake

TAMI MURPHY

- 1 box strawberry cake mix
- 1 can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 package (8 ounces) Cool Whip
- 1 package frozen chopped strawberries

1. Prepare cake mix as directed on box and bake. Let cool for 20–30 minutes.
2. Poke about 15 holes in cake with the end of a spoon, and pour sweetened condensed milk over cake.
3. Pour frozen strawberries into a bowl and add Cool Whip, mixing well, then spread fruit and whipped topping mixture over cake.
4. Keep refrigerated. 6591100001



YOU ASKED FOR RECIPES, AND WE HEARD you! Starting this month, a local recipe will be featured in Tri-County Electric Cooperative's local pages in *Texas Co-op Power*. Submit your recipe through email or the postal service. 8004656501

Recipe submission is a free and voluntary service provided by TCEC. As we have more than 100,000 members, we may receive a high volume of submissions. Recipes must be submitted before the 20th of each month to be considered for the next issue of *Texas Co-op Power* (i.e., April 20 for the June issue). We reserve the right to refuse any recipe. Please submit recipes through the postal service or email and not on the back of your payment stub. These stubs are processed automatically as we receive hundreds daily. 800623322

Submit your recipes by:

Email: Please include the above information with your recipe and send to pr@tcectexas.com.

Mail: Please detach and submit this form with your recipe and mail to Tri-County Electric Cooperative, Attn: Recipe Submission, 600 NW Parkway, Azle, TX 76020.

Tri-County EC Member Recipe Submission Form

NAME

CITY

EMAIL or PHONE NUMBER

RECIPE NAME

Please return to:

Email: Please include the above information with your recipe and send to pr@tcectexas.com.

Mail: Please detach and submit this form with your recipe and mail to Tri-County Electric Cooperative, Attn: Recipe Submission, 600 NW Parkway, Azle, TX 76020.