

Helping Balance Supply and Demand



MESSAGE FROM CEO/GENERAL MANAGER DEBBIE ROBINSON

August is typically the hottest month in East Texas, and we expect this year to follow suit. Looking back to last August, electricity use soared, causing all-time peak demands in Texas and our bordering states. Because of that high demand, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas, or ERCOT, called on folks to take action to reduce their usage. Even with those conservation efforts, ERCOT was forced to implement controlled power interruptions because demand was threatening to outstrip supply. The controlled outages were necessary to balance the supply and demand so that the entire system was not jeopardized.

The media announcements of impending rolling outages for ERCOT members caused many worried WCEC members to call our offices to get the details. Fortunately, we were able to tell them that the notices by ERCOT would not affect our membership because WCEC receives power from the Southwest Power Pool, SPP, and not ERCOT. While about 75 percent of Texas belongs to ERCOT, most of the rest of us, including in Northeast Texas, are in the SPP, a regional reliability council that serves 15 million customers in nine states. One of the missions of the SPP is to monitor power flow throughout its nine-state footprint and ensure that the amount of power needed matches what's generated and sent.

While the SPP did not see the extreme challenges that ERCOT did in 2011, there were a few days when power reserve margins were tight, and it called on consumers to conserve. If that is ever the case, the first thing WCEC will do is ask members, through radio announcements and messages on our website and our Facebook page, to voluntarily consider operating large electric appliances such as washing machines, dryers and dishwashers during nonpeak times. Peak times in the warm months are from 3 to 7 p.m.

In general, because it's one of the biggest summertime energy users, we always recommend that residential members interested in conserving energy during the summer set thermostats to 78 degrees when home and 85 degrees when away. This will not only help conserve energy and maximize savings, but lessen the load on generation facilities. For other great tips to be used, go online to www.wcec.org, and click on our energy savings center.

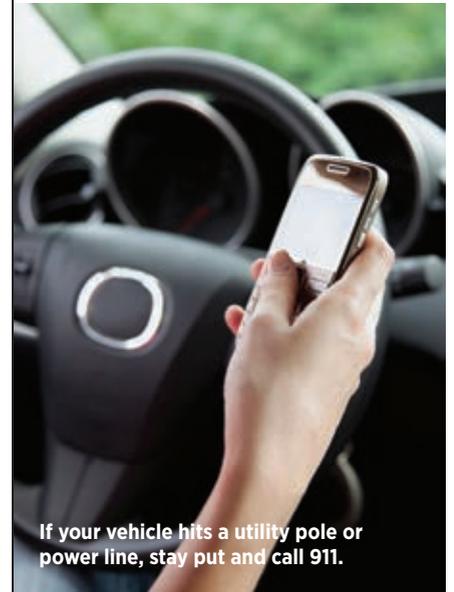
Together, we can beat the heat, and look forward to the cooling trends of fall.

During the summer, the peak load for the WCEC system generally occurs between 3 and 7 p.m. On particularly hot days, avoiding energy-consuming chores like laundry can help beat the peak and minimize the chance of blackouts.



CRASH!

What to do if your car hits a utility pole



If your vehicle hits a utility pole or power line, stay put and call 911.

If you have a car accident that involves a utility pole and fallen power lines, don't get out of your car.

Instead, stay inside and use your cellphone to call 911. If you don't have your phone with you, yell for help.

The reason: Until an electric utility line crew reaches you and de-energizes the power line, you have to assume the wire is "live" and can electrocute you and your passengers. Wait for the OK from the pros before touching anything outside of your car.

Of course, if your car catches on fire, you'll need to get out in a hurry. In that case, jump out so you land on both feet as far away from your car as possible. Don't make contact with the car and the ground at the same time. Hop—don't walk—away from the car, making sure that both feet touch the ground at the same time with each hop.

Do not touch the utility pole, any utility wire or anything that's touching or even close to a utility line. Assume everything is energized with electricity that can harm or even kill you if you touch it.

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Wood County Electric Cooperative's delegates, chaperones and youth director exuded enthusiasm as they posed for this picture. They are, from left, top row, Cristian Fraire, Michael Carrasco, Kylie O'Neal, Austin Sewell, Pete O'Neal and Laura Murdock; and, front row, Jay Murdock, Baleigh Barnes-Lyle, Ashley Brown, Cindy Gasper, Angelica Sandoval, Shelby Watson, Hannah Walker and Lindsey Kellam.

A Week in Leadership Lessons for Regional Teens

Wood County Electric Cooperative sponsored 10 youth delegates for the 2012 East Texas Rural Electric Youth Seminar, or ETREYS, held at East Texas Baptist University in Marshall from June 25-29. The youth delegates joined about 120 other participants, each sponsored by one of nine East Texas electric cooperatives, to participate in the ETREYS program. The purpose of ETREYS is to enhance leadership, problem-solving skills and interpersonal relationships through workshops, seminars and peer-group activities.

The schedule consisted of presentations by several speakers, including former NFL championship player Keith Davis, longtime cooperative advocate Tommy Engelke and motivational speaker Buddy Ritter.

The delegates that represented WCEC for ETREYS 2012 were Baleigh Barnes-Lyle, Grand Saline; Ashley Brown, Mount Vernon; Michael Carrasco, Yantis; Cristian Fraire, Winnsboro; Cindy Gaspar, Winnsboro; Pete O'Neal, Quitman; Angelica Sandoval, Yantis; Austin Sewell, Mount Vernon; Hannah Walker, Grand Saline; and Shelby Watson, Winnsboro. The group was led by Youth Director Lindsey Kellam of Van, a returning student.

The delegates were chaperoned by the husband-and-wife team of WCEC Power Quality Technician Jay Murdock and wife Laura of Winnsboro and by WCEC Business Communications Specialist Kylie O'Neal of Quitman.

WCEC CEO/General Manager Debbie Robinson said: "At WCEC we are so very pleased to make a difference in the lives of such outstanding area teens. Each year, our WCEC kids are standouts at camp, and we are so very proud of them."



Wood County Electric Cooperative

501 S. Main St. • P.O. Box 1827
Quitman, TX 75783

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Debbie Robinson

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Monday, First Methodist Church, Van
Tuesday, Family Dollar, Mount Vernon
Wednesday, City National Bank, Hawkins
Thursday, Brookshire's, Winnsboro
Friday, Economy Drug, Grand Saline



CONTACT US

CALL US
(903) 763-2203

EMAIL
info@wcec.org

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ROCKABILLY

King

Who put the turtle in Myrtle's girdle? The mystery still remains these many years later. But Sid King (aka Sid Erwin) and his brother Billy still want to warn the culprit about the angry Myrtle. Because, they say, "If she ever catches him, she is gonna make a mess of him."

The "crime" of the girdle-visiting turtle actually took place back in 1953, and it was really only perpetrated in song by The Western Melody Makers. The Melody Makers were a group of five schoolkids from Denton who were mostly self-taught musicians. Sid and Billy were members. Sid said he and Billy probably came by their musical talents honestly because their mom, the late Mattie Green Thompson, played both the piano and the violin beautifully. And she, too, was self-taught, playing by ear.

Early on, when they were about 11 or 12, Mattie bought both Sid and Billy guitars, which Sid said they'd just play. The brothers bought some chord books and took one or two lessons, but mostly just learned on their own. Sid says he played music at school and around the house until he and a friend, Melvin "Mel" Robinson, started playing and singing together. They were invited to perform on radio, where they became regulars, and then were asked to take over a show. As the radio appearances increased, Sid and Mel decided they needed a full band. Using the name of the radio show, The Western Melody Makers, the band included Sid as lead singer and a guitarist, Mel on steel guitar and sax, Billy Erwin on lead guitar, Ken Massey on bass, and David White on drums.

The Western Melody Makers were not even out of junior high, but they parlayed their local radio fame into gigs and performances at school activities, civic events and other assemblies. Billy said most of those first gigs did not pay, but the group was just happy to be performing. With their popularity growing, the band started making appearances at bigger venues, such as Dallas' Fair Park, where they played every Saturday night for the WFAA Shindig, and with Profes-



sor Floyd Graham at The University of North Texas. It was there that they met and played on the same stage with Pat Boone, who was later instrumental in getting Sid a recording contract with the Dot record label.

It was also in junior high that the band signed on with Star Day Records and made their first recording, which included two songs.

"We went to Beaumont and recorded them," Sid said. And during the process, he got to talking with another guy who was also there cutting his first record. That artist was none other than George Jones, who went on to become a well-known country great. Jones was just the first of many stars with whom the band crossed paths and eventually headlined.

At first, "we had no idea what we were doing," Sid said of the record. "Those first recordings did not come out very good at all." Because the whole group was so decidedly unhappy with the results, the boys raided their wallets to pay a quality studio to make a new recording. The two songs, "Who Put the Turtle in Myrtle's Girdle" and "If Tears Could Cry," were released by Star Day and began getting a lot of radio play. About that time, the group also started touring, playing in shows such as the Big "D" Jamboree and the Louisiana Hayride.

That's when Columbia Records agent Don Law saw them and wanted to sign them up. Law waited until the contract with Star Day finished, and then signed

LEFT: An early glamor shot of Sid King used for promotions by Columbia Studios. ABOVE: Sid King & The Five Strings in an early promo shot that includes band members Billy Erwin, Bob Belcher, Sid Erwin, Ken Massey and Melvin Robinson.

ICE COLD
NEHI
GAS
17¢
TODAY
DRINK
NEHI
old Here

CRAZY KIDS... LIVING TO A
WILD ROCK 'N ROLL BEAT!

**HOT-ROD
GIRL**



**BIG "D"
JAMBOREE**

Here Next Week

Sensational!
**SID KING
&
THE FIVE STRINGS**

REMEMBER!!!
HERE IN PERSON NEXT SATURDAY
ELVIS PRESLEY



ROCKBILLY HALL OF FAME

Sid King

is hereby officially
INDUCTED
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**ROCKBILLY
HALL OF FAME**

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<http://www.rockbillyhall.com>

the group, which by this time had been renamed Sid King & The Five Strings.

Those days were heady and exciting. The group worked hard to try to make a living; and despite its popularity, “it never was easy,” Sid said.

During those touring days, the band did not just play on the same stages as some of the greats—Elvis Presley, Roy Orbison, Johnny Cash and Buddy Holly—they headlined with them.

“I knew Buddy Holly real well,” Sid said. “He and his band actually stayed at my Mom’s house with us, and we shared Sunday dinner together and such.” In fact, Sid says, “Buddy stayed at our house, because we’d gotten him on the Big ‘D’ Jamboree.”

In 1955, at the beginning of his touring days, Sid married his junior high sweetheart, Marcia. Occasionally she’d go with him on tour, but as the first of their five children came along, she became more settled into motherhood. The band continued to tour until 1958, when it disbanded. Sid kept his hand in the music business as a guitar teacher, and he also went to barber college. Once he got his barber’s license and became more established, he bought his first shop in Richardson, where his brother Billy also came to work.

Barbering was a pretty good and stable living, especially for Sid, who was supporting four boys and a girl. He and Billy still played a few club dates and would enjoy jam sessions. But they became settled in their careers at the barbershop. So imagine their surprise when in late 1979 or early 1980, almost 20 years after their recording successes, fans started coming into the barbershop asking for autographs and pictures.

These fans were coming from places such as Spain, the United Kingdom and Germany. There had been a major revival of early of rock ‘n’ roll, which was a mix of rock and country with influences from Western swing, boogie-woogie, and rhythm and blues. A music and fashion subculture had risen among teens in the United Kingdom, whose manner of dress was influenced by the

early 1950s hot rod and music days. This genre became known as rockabilly.

Sid King & The Five Strings had been rediscovered in England, but their popularity had risen in Europe and even Australia. Bootlegged copies of their songs had been released, and the group had become an overnight sensation. So, Columbia decided to re-release some of the group’s original recordings, and promoters started calling on Sid and Billy to tour.

Sid says those first few calls were almost unbelievable because they’d been living such quiet lives. He had actually even forgotten many of the words to their popular songs. After all, it had been 20 years. Sid says things got even more interesting when a reporter for The Dallas Morning News, Bob St. John, wrote a story, and the Associated Press picked it up.

“It was all very exciting,” Sid said. “Things just started snowballing.”

Since then, Sid and Billy have played all over the world. A promoter first booked them in England, where they played several times, and then they were booked on a European tour. Since then, they’ve played in Switzerland, Holland, Italy, Spain, Germany, France and Japan.

“To this day, we still have a pretty good following over there,” said Sid, who added that they really don’t make a lot of money but that “the trips are almost like paid vacations. They take very good care of us over there.”

The rockabilly scene still exists today, as does Sid and Billy’s popularity. They have gigs booked for 2013 at an annual rockabilly weekend show in Las Vegas and in England. Sid also found out recently how relevant he is when Maybelle Lee, a 20-something Hot Rod magazine pin-up model, counted Sid King & The Five Strings as her “all-time favorite.”

“It’s amazing after all of these years that we have such a young audience, still,” Sid said.

In their heyday, Sid King & The Five Strings had their own TV spot on the Ozark Jubilee with host Red Foley, the nation’s top country music personality.

They were billed with the other greats such as Patsy Cline, Johnny Cash, Brenda Lee and Porter Wagoner.

Then, 20 years later they became wildly popular all over Europe.

And, Sid was even a “question” on Hollywood Squares: “Is it true or false: A barber in Richardson, Texas, has a hit record in Germany?” The answer was true.

And today, their album resides in the Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville, where the CD of 29 songs, “Gonna Shake this Shake Tonight,” can also still be purchased.

In 1999, Sid and Marcia moved from Richardson to Lake Fork, where Sid could enjoy fishing on a premier lake and Marcia could enjoy country living. He works as a barber in nearby Alba, where he has converted an old service station into a barbershop. Half of that shop is devoted to a sound studio, where he and others jam the days away when the mood strikes them.

Looking back at their musical successes, he says of the time with his brother Billy, “It is nice that we were able to do this together. Plus, Billy is such a very fine musician and lead guitar player.” Asked about his plans, Sid said, “I think we will just keep up with what we are doing. We also might put out some new recordings.”

That’s rather ironic coming from a ‘50s teen idol, now in his 70s, who still vigorously sings one of his signature songs, “Sag, Drag and Fall.”

The lyrics: “Too stiff to flip, too pooped to flop. ... I tell my friends that I can’t roll no more. ... My wheels are flat, my bearings kind of wore. ... Can’t have no fun at all. ... I just sag, drag and fall.” The song goes on to say, “Well, I can’t rock to save my doggone soul.”

Obviously, for Sid and Billy, that’s just a doggone lie, because they are still having fun while making the music they love. May they rockabilly on!

Sid and Marcia have been members of Wood County Electric since 1999. Those interested in CDs or booking gigs can email sidking55@aol.com or call (903) 850-6888.

LEFT: In Erwin’s Barbershop in Alba, Sid Erwin (aka Sid King) displays quite a bit of memorabilia, including a playbill from when he and his band headlined with Elvis at the Big “D” Jamboree.