

How To Be Power Savvy



**MESSAGE
FROM CEO
AND GENERAL
MANAGER
DEBBIE
ROBINSON**

Did you know that all power is not created equal?

When you get your power bill each month, you are assessed an amount based on a single rate for the number of kilowatt-hours you used. That rate is actually an average of the prices Wood County Electric Cooperative pays to the wholesale supplier that generates electricity for us.

The electricity we deliver that allows you to power your coffee maker or blow-dry your hair in the morning did not cost the co-op the same as the electricity you use to light your home in the evening or run the dishwasher after supper.

That's because of the way the electricity distribution system works. Electricity is generated and transmitted "live"—in other words, it is put on the grid as needed. That means when demand goes up, more power plants must be put online to supply that demand.

Overnight and in the wee hours of the morning, when most people are sleeping, demand is generally lowest, and so is the price your co-op pays. A few steadily running baseline power plants can supply the demand. These are known as economy price hours.

When the sun rises and people get up and prepare for their day at work or school, they begin to use more electricity, causing demand to rise and prompting grid operators to bring more power generation online, increasing costs. These are the normal price hours, when demand can be met fairly well by full operation of

baseline plants.

In the afternoons and early evenings, the use of power spikes. In summer, that spike comes during the hottest part of the day, generally between 1 and 6 p.m., when air conditioner use is heaviest. In the winter months, that peak shifts to hours around and after sunset, from 6 to 8 p.m. or so, reflecting use of electric heating and greater indoor activity and lighting.

This peak demand often requires the use of expensive-to-run peaking power plants, which can be brought online quickly. These are the hours when electricity costs our cooperative the most.

The rate you see on your bill is a "blended" rate, combining the average of the economy, normal and peak rates. In addition to those power costs, there are fixed charges we pass along to cover the costs of system maintenance, materials and other necessary items.

You can help yourself and fellow cooperative members with some adjustments to your power usage habits. If you can, put off energy-intensive tasks such as using a clothes washer or dishwasher until after peak energy pricing has passed. If you can, adjust your thermostat a degree or two to make your heating or cooling unit run less.

Using programmable thermostats and appliance timers or delayed-start options will help make this adjustment easier.

The more our members can conserve, especially during peak hours, the lower the average rate will go, making everyone's power bills a little less expensive.

Remember, we are not here to make a profit—we are here to serve you with the best possible service at the lowest possible price. Through your actions and habits, you can have a real effect on that price.



That crackling fire may be beautiful and warm, but it's probably not energy efficient.

The Heat Is On

The heat of summer is but a memory, and colder days lie ahead. Heating season is upon us. Here are some things to remember when trying to keep your house warm:

- Remember to change your air filters regularly, at least once a month if you frequently run a central heating unit. A clogged air filter limits efficiency and could damage the system.
- If you have a fireplace, be sure to get your chimney cleaned and inspected by a qualified professional before lighting your first fire of the season.
- A fireplace creates a nice ambience, but it actually can rob heat from your home. The heat from the fire will warm those nearby, but more warm air is going up the chimney than the fire is replacing.
- Space heaters are designed as a supplemental source of heat, not as the main source. So you shouldn't use them constantly, especially in rooms you don't use much.
- Keep space heaters at least 3 feet away from drapes and furniture that could catch fire.
- Inspect the heater's cord periodically for frayed wire or damaged insulation. Don't use a space heater with a damaged cord.
- Place your heater on a flat, level surface. Don't place heaters on furniture, as they may fall and break or even start a fire.
- Unless the heater is designed for use outdoors or in bathrooms, don't use it in wet areas.

Change Seasons Safely

As the leaves change to their beautiful autumn hues and the weather gets colder, keep in mind the following electrical safety tips:

- Make sure space heaters are in good repair and certified by an independent testing lab such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL). Also check that power cords are not frayed, cracked or cut.
- Do not use an extension cord to power a space heater. Plug directly into the electrical outlet. Make sure the circuit can handle the power demands of the space heater and any other appliances plugged into it.
- Space heaters should have an automatic shut-off in the event they tip over.
- Keep space heaters at least 3 feet away from flammable materials such as curtains, draperies, loose paper and upholstery. Never use heaters as drying racks.
- Keep space heaters out of reach of small children and pets.
- If the heater is running on fuels such as gas, kerosene or wood, follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully. Make sure carbon monoxide detectors are installed. Keep chimneys and flues free from corrosion or blockages.
- Check to see if electric blankets are in good repair and certified by an independent testing lab like UL. Do not tuck your electric blanket under the mattress, and don't put anything on top of the blanket. Do not allow pets to sleep on electric blankets.
- Check cold-weather tools, like leaf blowers, to ensure power cords are in good repair. Extension cords need to be approved for outdoor use.
- Use only weatherproof electrical appliances for outdoor activities.

Source: Electrical Safety Foundation International

DON'T FALL FOR COLLECTION SCAMS

Electric cooperatives across the country are reporting that scam artists are targeting members with phone calls in which the caller purports to be from the co-op, demanding payments, account numbers, Social Security numbers or credit card numbers. Don't fall for it. Wood County Electric Cooperative will NEVER call seeking such information. In fact, you should NEVER give such information out over the telephone to ANYONE who calls.



Electric Co-op Today, a national newsletter published by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), reported recently about another scam, in which callers allude to the federal stimulus program for energy efficiency and encourage people to give their information to "apply" for a grant. Those calls are most likely just another attempt to steal personal information.

NRECA Senior Corporate Counsel Tracey Steiner, who tracks consumer protection legal issues, told Electric Co-op Today, "In today's economy, it's not surprising that we are seeing an uptick in identity theft and other fraud schemes."

If you receive a call from someone claiming to represent Wood County Electric, ask for the individual's name and callback number. If the number is not (903) 763-2203 or 1-800-762-2203, then you should be highly suspicious. Please call the co-op at one of these numbers and report any such calls. You should also report scam attempts to local authorities.

Once scammers have your personal information, they can use it to set up fake accounts in your name or sell it to someone who could use it to defraud you. Don't be a victim.

'Reflect upon your present blessings, of which every man has plenty; not on your past misfortunes, of which all men have some.'

—Charles Dickens

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

from

WOOD COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OP

The employees of Wood County Electric Cooperative wish you a healthy, happy and joy-filled holiday.

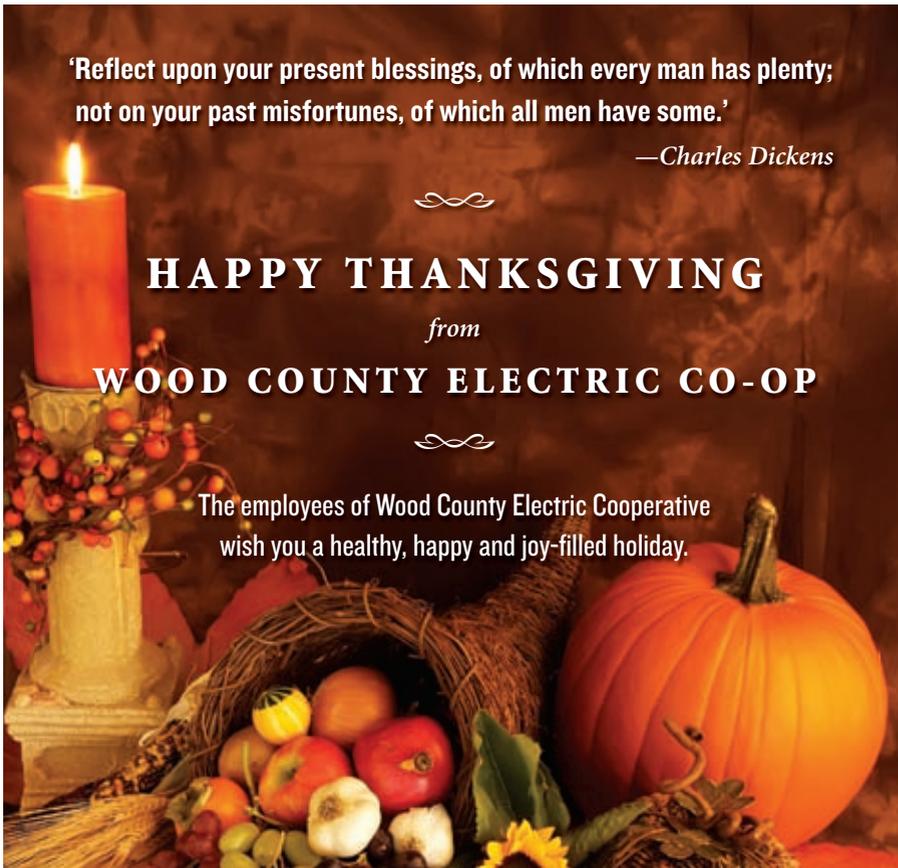


ILLUSTRATION BY EDD PATTON

Always Faithful

No one epitomizes the oft-used slogan “Once a Marine, Always a Marine” better than retired Master Sgt. Bill Hamby, with his more than 30 years of service, both active and reserve, and his continued dedication to his brothers and sisters in arms.



Bill Hamby, the commandant of the Mineola Detachment of the Marine Corps League, spends time in his home office in Lindale, which is filled to the brim with Marine Corps memorabilia, citations, awards and honorariums.

Hamby began his service with the Corps in 1953, when he went to the recruiting office to sign up for the U.S. Navy. Fortunately for the Marine Corps, and Hamby, too, the Navy had a brief hold on recruitment that day, but an enthusiastic Marine recruiter spied Hamby and said: “Boy, come on over here and let’s talk.” Soon, the ink dried on Hamby’s enlistment into the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC), and in a flash he was boots to the ground in basic training in San Diego, California.

His years and the tours of duty are too numerous to mention, but in part include service in California, Hawaii, Texas and Maryland and overseas in Japan, the Philippines, Vietnam and Thailand. But, when he starts talking of his USMC days, more than any others, his two tours in Vietnam are the ones that bring the changing emotions of reverence, pride, honor, respect and humility to his face and voice. Hamby has been out of the Corps now for more than 26 years, but his unmistakable stance, his demeanor and, of course, his still crisply brushed, cut hair, mark him for what he once was and continues to be—a U.S. Marine.

Bill Hamby wants no part of being a “former Marine,” and demonstrates daily that for a Marine, service never dies. In that spirit, in the latter part of 2006 and beginning of 2007, he worked with several community leaders to put together a benefit for the Wounded Warrior Project, which provides services to severely injured service members as they transition from active duty to civilian life. One of his co-workers on that project was Ed Hunt, who started talking about putting together a more formal Marine Corps Support Group. First things first, they got through a successful fundraiser, which garnered \$16,000, and then they turned toward establishing a Marine Corps League (MCL) Detachment for Mineola and the surrounding areas.

They kicked off their recruiting campaign in April, and by the end of May, they had secured enough qualified members to become Mineola Detachment 1278, an officially chartered member of the National Marine Corps League. There are over 50 members now, and they hold monthly meetings on the third Thursday of each month at the American Legion Post 296 on Highway 80 East in Mineola.

“This is not an organization where you get a bunch of Marines together to just tell old sea stories,” Commandant Hamby says. “There is a purpose behind it, and we have things to do.

“In the short time we have been in existence,” he says, “we have become very successful in doing a lot of things for a lot of people. We have excelled in humanitarian efforts.”

With their annual Toys for Tots program, they’ve been able to contribute thousands of toys to Wood County charitable organizations such as Kindness Cottage and Caring and Sharing. And, they’ve also given over 30 new TVs that were placed in individual rooms at the VA Nursing Home in Bonham, the recreational room there, and in veterans’ rooms in the Community Care Center, a nursing home in Mineola.

“We don’t discriminate for any branch,” Hamby emphasized. “If they are in need and they served, we help when we can.”

As another service project, the group donated vein finders, devices that facilitate access to veins, without unnecessary needle pricks, to the Grace Community Healthcare Ministry in Mineola and the VA Nursing Home in Bonham. These projects, for the most part, have been meeting with success, one by one, but happening quietly behind the scenes. But, the more quiet acts of devotion are about to take a turn with the MCL Mineola’s newest project.

Hamby started the ball rolling on the new effort as he was researching the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., and found out about organizations that offer traveling exhibits of a replica of its famous wall inscribed with the names of fallen veterans. He started thinking of the millions of Americans who will never see the impactful veterans’ memorials in the nation’s capital. So, he and his

band of brothers at the MCL decided to do something about that. They contacted the American Veterans Traveling Tribute (AVTT), an organization that encompasses a group of memorials and exhibits dedicated to honoring the men and women who have served our country. With a lot of fundraising and planning, the Mineola MCL will bring it to Wood County.

Talking to any member, it's clear that this newest project is born out of the honor and dedication they each learned and nurtured during their own service. To secure the AVTT display has taken a lot of elbow grease, pavement pounding and soliciting for sponsors, but these Marines are well on their way to having another "mission accomplished" story to tell. Because of their determination, on November 5-8, the AVTT will be on display at the Civic Center in Mineola.

The centerpiece of the exhibit is an 80 percent scale 370-foot-long replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial wall, which has the inscribed names of each of the almost 60,000 who perished in the Vietnam War. This is the largest traveling replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and it is accompanied by a tent with computers set up to help visitors find specific names. Also, there is a "Vietnam Remembered" display, composed of original commemorative paintings. As awe-inspiring as the Vietnam-era tributes are, the AVTT includes many

other educational and moving displays about every conflict that played a part in ensuring America's freedom since the Revolutionary War.

For example, tribute is paid to those killed in the global war on terrorism in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. World War II and Korean War veterans are commemorated with an exhibit as well. In addition, there is a poignant memorial to the fallen heroes and victims of the September 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and the hijacked Flight 93 that crashed in Somerset, Pennsylvania.

At the time of this article, the dates for the static exhibit were November 5-8 at the Mineola Civic Center. In addition, Hamby said, there are plans for more programs, speakers and wreath-laying services that will take place throughout the exhibit days. They plan to make an event of the arrival of the exhibit to Wood County with an official motorcade to include members of the Patriot Guard, the oldest living female and male veterans and local dignitaries. The motorcade will enter Wood County on FM 14 near Hawkins around 8:50 a.m. on Wednesday, November 4, making stops that will include Holly Lake and then Alba-Golden, Hawkins, Mineola, Quitman, Winnsboro and Yantis high schools along the way.

The exhibit will then travel to the Civic Center, where it will be erected



FROM TOP: The centerpiece of the American Veterans Traveling Tribute is the 370-foot-long 80 percent scale replica of the Vietnam Memorial wall. A poignant reminder that each name on the wall represents an individual who gave all.

and ready for opening ceremonies that will take place on November 5. The exhibit will remain in place for free viewing by all, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. through November 8. Hamby and his comrades at Detachment 1278 hope many will visit the tribute that is a solid and emotional reminder of the costs of defending our Constitution and our freedoms.

The Marine Corps defines character as "what you are in the dark," while naming the values that character is composed of as honor, courage and commitment. Those are also the values of a strong and committed community member. How wonderful it is that the members of Mineola Detachment 1278 have decided to perpetuate their traditions and spirit in our little corner of the world. As the slogan goes, "They are the few, the proud, the Marines."

Many of the members of Mineola Detachment 1278 are members of Wood County Electric Cooperative, and we salute them.

The American Veterans Traveling Tribute

November 5-8, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Mineola Civic Center, 1150 N. Newsom St., Mineola, Texas

MCL DETACHMENT 1278

The Marine Corps League Mineola Detachment 1278 meets on the third Thursday of every month at 1900 hours (that's 7 p.m. for you civilians) at American Legion Post 296 on Highway 80 E. in Mineola.

For membership inquiries and more details on the AVTT or other projects, contact:

Commandant William W. "Bill" Hamby at (903) 882-3643 or e-mail hbillyboy@suddenlink.net or Junior Vice Commandant Jerry Penrod at (903) 569-6590 or e-mail penrodjerry@yahoo.com or visit www.mcleague-mineola.org.