Opportunity To Gain Some Leadership Skills

Since 1988, nine East Texas Electric Cooperatives have worked together to sponsor the East Texas Rural Electric Youth Seminar. The mission of ETREYS is to foster positive ideas and values while enhancing leadership skills for East Texas high school sophomores and juniors. About 125 delegates from across East Texas benefit from this opportunity each year.

ETREYS is an all-expense-paid seminar. Each cooperative selects its own delegates based on overall excellence and involvement in extracurricular activities. Each delegate’s participation is 100 percent underwritten by the sponsoring cooperative. This year, Wood County Electric Cooperative will sponsor 10 students.

Chosen delegates will travel with WCEC chaperones to East Texas Baptist University in Marshall, where they live for one week in a college atmosphere and participate in workshops, seminars and peer group activities that include leadership development, pure entertainment and more. Nationally known personalities, professional sports figures, community leaders and college professors offer messages of perseverance, motivation and inspiration. Additionally, each student has a chance to compete for college scholarships awarded at the end of the seminar.

Participants leave ETREYS much better equipped to take leadership roles in their schools and communities. Today, many of the first participants, now successful professional business leaders, still credit ETREYS with giving them their initial confidence.

High school sophomores and juniors interested in attending this weeklong camp from June 23-27, should download and complete an application from the Community Programs page on our website, wcec.org. Winners will be notified by mid-May.

Don’t Be a Target for Lightning

Lightning kills as many as 2,000 people worldwide every year. Hundreds more people are struck but survive, usually with lingering and debilitating symptoms. Here are some things you can do to avoid electrical storms or decrease your chances of getting struck.

Safety Tips

► If outside, seek refuge in a car or grounded building when lightning or thunder begins.
► If inside, avoid taking baths or showers, and washing dishes. Also avoid using landline phones, televisions and other appliances that conduct electricity. If your home’s electronics aren’t protected by a surge protector, it’s best to unplug them.
► Stay inside for 30 minutes after you last see lightning or hear thunder. People have been struck by lightning from storms centered as far as 10 miles away.
► If caught outside away from a building or car, stay clear of water bodies and tall objects such as trees. Find a low spot or depression and crouch down as low as possible, but don’t lie down on the ground. Lightning can move in and along the ground surface, and many victims are not struck by bolts, but by this current.
Legal Notice

The Elections Committee of Wood County Electric Cooperative, Inc., will meet at the cooperative office at 501 S. Main St. in Quitman at least 40 days before the annual meeting. The committee is composed of the following members:

Glenn E. Morris
268 FM 900E
Mount Vernon, TX 75457

Carolyn Bryant
201 East Oak
Yantis, TX 75497

Judy Peoples
1646 VZ CR 1222
Grand Saline, TX 75140-4628

Mike Giles
690 PR 8571
Winnsboro, TX 75494

Clarence Meiske
1547 FM 2659
Hawkins, TX 75765

Beverly Waddleton
P.O. Box 996
Quitman, TX 75783

Willie Cicero
1010 Texas Highway 64
Ben Wheeler, TX 75754-4331

This committee shall arrange for a notice to be prepared and posted at the cooperative office at least 30 days before the annual meeting that will include a list of nominations of directors. But any 100 or more members may make other nominations by official petition, but not before January 1 of this year and not less than 60 days before the meeting; and the secretary shall post the same at the same place where the list of nominations made by the committee is posted.

The committee shall cause to be mailed ballots listing all qualified candidates and a notice of the meeting, at least 21 days and not more than 30 days before the meeting. This shall include a statement of the number of directors to be elected and will show separately the nominations made by the committee and the nominations made by petition, if any.

The Elections Committee shall make nominations for directors for Districts 2, 3 and 7.

Directors whose terms are expiring are: Burke Bullock, District 2; Dennis Wright, District 3; and Lewis Young, District 7. The Annual Meeting of Wood County Electric Cooperative, Inc., will be held at 2 p.m. October 10, 2014, at Gov. Jim Hogg Park, 101 Governor Hogg Parkway in Quitman.

Spring Forward

Daylight Saving Time begins at 2 a.m. on Sunday, March 9.
Remember to set your clocks ahead one hour when you go to bed Saturday.
‘Spring Cleaning’ Delivers Safe, Reliable Power

Spring gives us a chance to thaw out after a chilly winter. Many of us take advantage of longer daylight hours by doing a little spring cleaning and yard work. But the seasonal shift isn’t all good news. The rapid change from harsh, cold air to warmer temperatures can trigger severe weather.

To protect our lines and keep power flowing safely to your home, Wood County Electric Cooperative maintains our rights-of-way. Think of it as a spring cleaning for power lines, although on our system, it’s pretty much a year-round job.

Right-of-way maintenance keeps tree limbs and other obstacles away from high-voltage power lines. It’s an important part of the service we provide to you, our members, for three reasons: safety, reliability and cost.

Our primary concern is the safety of our workers and members. Properly maintained ROW keeps our crews safe when they are restoring service and maintaining our system. Keeping trees clear of power lines also keeps your family safe.

From making sure a child’s treehouse doesn’t hit power lines to creating a safe environment while doing yard work, a well-maintained ROW helps avoid tragedy.

Power lines are a constant part of our landscape; it’s easy to forget they are around. We work hard to keep the area around our lines clear, but we need your help. Be alert this spring. Don’t plant trees or tall vegetation under power lines, and keep an eye out for power lines when working in your yard.

If severe spring weather blows through, a well-maintained ROW leads to fewer outages and faster response times. Trees are less of a threat. When trees do fall, crews are able to restore service more quickly than they could with poorly maintained areas.

As a not-for-profit company, WCEC strives to keep costs affordable for you, our members. Maintaining our ROW is an important part of controlling costs. Fewer and shorter outages save everyone money. When crews work in well-maintained areas, we can reduce risks for employees and equipment too—another way to keep costs low.

Safety, reliability and cost: This is why we believe in ROW spring cleaning. If we compromise on one of these areas, it affects the others. At Wood County Electric Cooperative, we aren’t willing to compromise. Maintaining our ROW is a priority for your safety, comfort and pocketbook.
**Power Line Facts and Myths**

If birds can touch electrical wires, are they safe for people, too? If you’re not on a metal ladder, are you clear of danger from power line electrocution?

Know for sure before you take a chance with your life.

First, the facts: Electricity is always looking for the shortest and easiest path to the ground, a path that can include people and objects that touch or come too close to power lines. Electricity is fast—it travels at the speed of light in a vacuum—and it can cause severe burns or death if it flows through the human body. Take power line safety seriously. Read on to find the facts on the following myths:

**MYTH:** Wires must be safe to touch if birds can land on them.

**FACT:** Birds don’t represent a direct path to the ground, giving electricity nowhere to go but back to the wire. It’s easier for the current to simply stay in the wire. Humans do provide a direct path, so touching a power line is not safe for humans.

**MYTH:** Power lines are safe to touch because they’re insulated.

**FACT:** Most lines are insulated only to protect against slight tree contact, but not enough to prevent human injury. Don’t touch them!

**MYTH:** It’s safe to rest nonmetal ladders on a power line.

**FACT:** Anything that can get wet can conduct electricity, and many nonmetal ladders still contain metal parts. Keep your ladder away from power lines, no matter its material.

**MYTH:** Ladders are safe near power lines as long as they don’t touch them.

**FACT:** Electricity can “jump,” especially when a good conductor such as a metal ladder comes close. Keep a safe distance of at least 10 feet.

**MYTH:** Trimming trees close to power lines is safe if I don’t use a ladder.

**FACT:** Metal isn’t the only thing that conducts electricity—the moisture in the tree can also. If a tree comes into contact with the line while you’re trimming, it has a direct path to the ground through the tree; your pruning tool and you. Call your electric cooperative when it’s time to trim trees near power lines.
Lights out? Thirty-one percent of power outages are triggered by the weather. Lineworkers must battle the elements to find problem areas and restore service as quickly and safely as possible.

Your co-op staff knows you want to know why the lights are out and when they are coming back on. First, workers must find the problem, and then they follow a series of steps to bring the lights back on.

Efforts are made to restore power to the largest number of members as quickly as possible. Then crews fix problems affecting smaller groups of members.

Restoring Power

When an outage occurs, line crews work to pinpoint problems. They start with high-voltage transmission lines. Transmission towers and cables that supply power to thousands of consumers rarely fail. But when damage occurs, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.

Next, crews check distribution substations. Each substation serves hundreds or thousands of members. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to discover if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself, or if problems exist down the line.

If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of members in communities or housing developments.

If local outages persist, supply lines (also called tap lines) are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service, outside businesses, schools and homes.

If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your home may need to be repaired.

Always call WCEC on the toll free high volume hotline at 1-866-415-2951, or on the regular number at (903) 763-2203 to report an outage. This helps crews isolate local issues.

B. Denise Hawkins writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Outage Safety Tips

Follow these safety steps at home during a power outage:

► Before calling WCEC report an outage, first check to see whether your home’s circuit panel or fuse box has tripped or blown a fuse. This can also cause a power failure. If tripped, reset the breaker or replace the blown fuse.

► If the power is out in your entire neighborhood, call Wood County Electric Cooperative at 1-866-415-2951 to report the outage.

► Turn off and unplug all unnecessary appliances and electrical equipment. When power is restored, turn on items one at a time.

► Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed. An unopened refrigerator keeps food cold for about four hours. A full freezer keeps food cold for about 48 hours.

Powering Up After a Storm

Wood County Electric starts big when tracing outages during electricity restoration
Powering UP

When electricity goes out, most of us expect power will be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm causes widespread damage, longer outages may result. Co-op line crews work long, hard hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of consumers in the shortest time possible.

Here’s what’s going on if you find yourself in the dark.

1. High-Voltage Transmission Lines
   Transmission towers and cables that supply power to transmission substations (and thousands of members) rarely fail. But when damaged, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.

2. Distribution Substation
   Each substation serves hundreds or thousands of consumers. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to determine if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself, or if problems exist down the line.

3. Main Distribution Lines
   If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of consumers in communities or housing developments.

4. Tap Lines
   If local outages persist, supply lines, called tap lines, are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service, outside businesses, schools, and homes.

5. Individual Homes
   If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your residence may need to be repaired. Always call to report an outage to help line crews isolate local issues.