WOOD COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE’S ANNUAL MEETING IS just days away, and we hope you’re making plans to attend. Before the meeting, entertainment by Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Bluegrass Band will be open to the public. It’s sure to be lively and memorable.

All members should have received their ballots for the election of directors, which were on the dust cover of the September issue of this magazine. On the ballot are incumbent board members Pat Lindley, District 1, and Brent Glenn, District 4.

If you haven’t already, detach and mail your postage-paid ballot to arrive by the deadline of noon, October 4. Members who send their ballots by the deadline will be entered in a drawing, and 10 of those will be randomly selected to receive a $100 credit toward their electricity bill.

Bring the other half of the card with you to the annual meeting. This card will be used for participation in door prize drawings. As always, there will be many special prizes donated by our generous vendors. We hope to see you at the annual meeting!
WE SURE DO LOVE OUR TREES IN EAST TEXAS. AND what’s not to love? They add beauty to our lives, contribute to a healthy environment, can raise property values and offer shade that can contribute to electricity savings. Fall is the best time to plant trees in our region, and we encourage you to do so—with the following advice.

Some of the principal contributors to electrical outages and blinks are trees and vegetation. Wind can sway branches into lines. Snow, ice and even drought can cause limbs to break or dip, causing outages. And wild animals are more apt to hop onto power lines when branches are close to lines. Trees, brush, vines and shrubs also conduct electricity—especially when wet—which can have fatal consequences.

That’s why Wood County Electric Cooperative maintains a 15-foot easement on each side of primary distribution power lines, all the way to the ground—30 feet of total clearance. For secondary lines (the lines leading to your meter), 4 feet on either side of the lines and to the ground should remain clear. These clearances are not only our policy but also federal and state guidelines that help ensure electricity remains reliable and safe for all.

Therefore, as the fall tree-planting season begins, the main rule of thumb is to respect easements and to place plants where limbs will not ever meet power lines or transformers—even when those plants reach maturity. Sometimes it’s hard to imagine the future size of a sapling, so it’s important to research the mature height and width of trees you consider.

Also, after planting, inspect growth each season and selectively shape and trim plants before they ever get near a line. This proactive measure will maintain a pleasing shape and help avoid an asymmetric, one-sided or flat-top look that happens when infrequent pruning is done on larger trees. Another benefit to pruning small amounts more often is the tree or shrub will be much healthier than if drastic cuts are needed.

At WCEC, we have a very active right-of-way program, and our crews work hard to keep troublesome trees at bay. But they certainly can’t lay eyes on every tree in our nine-county service territory, so we rely on sharp-eyed members to report any potentially hazardous trees. Importantly, please note that our crews will only trim trees that jeopardize our lines or that have the potential to fall and take down lines. If you would like to notify us of a hazardous plant or tree, call us at (903) 763-2203 or file a report online at wcec.org.
BAM! THE LIGHTS JUST WENT OUT. WHAT’S THE FIRST THING YOU should do? Call the cooperative and report it, of course.

But imagine what would happen if you call the cooperative and the automatic outage system can’t recognize your account? Now you’re frustrated. Your lights—and everything else that depends on electricity—are out. You’re feeling helpless and maybe a little mad.

The likely reason your call was not recognized is because we don’t have your correct phone number in our database. Computers rely on matching data and the correct inputs to work.

You may have changed phone numbers, and we don’t have that new number associated with your account. Therefore, you can’t log an outage or use the powerful features of the automated system. You won’t be able to use our outage texting feature either.

That’s why we encourage every single member to make sure they update their contact information. Your information will never be sold or shared and only will be used to serve you—when it’s most important to you. To update, just go to wccec.org and edit your phone number in your member profile, or simply call us at (903) 763-2203, and we’ll do it for you.

At Wood County Electric Cooperative, we believe in personal service, and we have employees to answer your calls 24/7. But the fastest and most efficient way to report an outage is to take out the middleman and let you input the outage directly. As soon as you push a few numbers, the outage will be logged. You also can use the automated system to get estimated restoration times or to request a callback when power is restored. The following steps outline how to use the outage hotline and outage texting.

**Toll-Free Outage Reporting Hotline**

This system does not replace our personal service but is intended to allow reporting en masse when needed. To use the hotline:

- **Be prepared:** Have available your WC EC account number or phone number that matches our files.
- **Dial 1-866-415-2951** to report or hear more information about an outage.
- **Listen for the updated information** regarding any large-scale outages.
- **Follow the simple prompts.**
- **The system will notify our 24-hour dispatcher to direct crews to the outage location.**
- **Lastly, the system will offer a callback feature.**

**Outage Texting**

We’re harnessing the power of texting to give members one more quick way to report a power outage. For outage texting to work for you, your mobile phone number must be in our records associated with your account. Then, it’s as simple as following these steps:

- **To register, text the word “Wood” to the number 85700.** Just do this once to get set up, and you’ll be registered to use texting unless you unenroll.
- **If you get the message, “Your location is unknown,” it means we do not have your mobile number in our records,** and you’ll need to call us so we can input it. Then, text these commands to 85700 when appropriate:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>TEXT COMMAND</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Report an outage</td>
<td>out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restoration status updates</td>
<td>status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unenroll from outage texting</td>
<td>stop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Get Social

We like you! Won’t you ‘like’ us back?

WE TAKE ADVANTAGE OF MANY DIGITAL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS TO provide information to our members. We post on our website, wcec.org, send out a monthly e-newsletter and publish news in the pages of this magazine. But one of the fastest ways, by far, for our members to get timely cooperative news is to follow us on Facebook. Our Facebook followers are among the first to find out about scholarship opportunities, contests, new programs, weather warnings, large-scale outages and all manner of cooperative news.

We have more than 3,200 followers, but that’s just a fraction of our membership. So, we invite the rest of you to “like” and follow us—because we sure like you!

Did You Know? The microwave was accidentally invented by Perry Spencer in 1945 during his radar research. He discovered microwave heating qualities when he noticed that the peanut cluster bar in his pocket began to melt.