



MESSAGE FROM  
CEO/GENERAL  
MANAGER  
TREY TEAFF

## Our Best for the People We Serve

AT WOOD COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, we care about the people we serve.

That service has historically resulted in high marks in customer service surveys for electric cooperatives, which consistently deliver a higher level of service than other electric utilities nationwide. Research conducted by the American Customer Satisfaction Index in 2020 shows that members rated co-ops higher than did customers of investor-owned and municipal utility companies.

But the ACSI Energy Utilities Report revealed a distressing trend for energy utilities overall. Overall customer satisfaction with the energy utilities sector declined, even for electric cooperatives.

Challenges since 2019 likely affected people's opinions of their utilities. Many have been hit hard by unprecedented natural disasters, including wildfires, hurricanes and winter storms, not to mention

of 100 compared to a score of 72 for investor-owned and municipal utilities, according to the report.

Co-op members across the country have historically given their local co-op employees high marks for understanding their needs and having the flexibility to address their individual concerns. Co-op employees also typically get good grades for delivering state-of-the-art service and for caring about consumers and the communities they serve.

In years past cooperatives took the lead compared to their competitors by a margin of 8–9 points.

But at WCEC, we always want to do better. We want not just to be better than our utility neighbors but better for the sake of our members—the people we serve.

The trust and loyalty electric cooperatives have earned over our long existence give us the ability to continue to work for your best interests. WCEC staff,

management and directors are united in our desire to provide you with the best service available anywhere in the country, even if we have to work a little harder to get your approval.

The ACSI report says co-op members want better service, easy-to-understand bills and faster outage restoration. The feedback also shows that although cooperatives support their communities and provide energy efficiency information, members want more.

We encourage you to reach out to us when you have suggestions or comments about what would help us serve your needs. It's the spirit of cooperation that helps make your co-op unique and a great utility.



a pandemic that upended our day-to-day operations. Meanwhile, consumers, including co-op members, are expressing their desires for cleaner energy, smarter technology and energy-saving practices, according to the ACSI.

Electric cooperatives still rank higher in terms of customer satisfaction than their investor-owned and municipal counterparts. Cooperatives' customer satisfaction score declined 2.7% to a score of 73 out

At WCEC, we know that to be a great utility company, you have to make people your first priority. And we do that each and every day, when it comes to our members and the communities we serve. ■



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## 8 Tips for Summer Savings

**JUST AS YOU CAN CUT** back on driving to save fuel, you also can limit the amount of electricity you use at home by cutting excess. Here are eight ways to reduce your energy consumption this summer.

1. Replace your old manual thermostat with a programmable model. New thermostats have automatic settings that can change indoor temperatures at strategic times of the day. If you come and go on a regular basis, you can program your thermostat to raise the temperature when you're not home and lower the temperature again just before you return.
2. Schedule a tuneup for your air conditioning system. A licensed technician will check the refrigerant level and determine whether any parts are wearing out or running inefficiently. A well-maintained system will operate more efficiently.
3. Close the blinds when direct sunlight hits your windows. The less sun that shines into your home, the cooler it will remain, saving your air conditioning system from working harder.
4. Run your dishwasher, washing machine and clothes dryer after dark. Most people run these appliances during the day, so demand for electricity soars. Doing chores, particularly ones that produce heat, at night helps lower your electric cooperative's overall peak use, which helps keep costs low for everyone.
5. Better yet, air-dry your laundry. Hang clothes outside on a clothesline when the weather is nice.
6. Turn off lights and unplug computers, TVs and phone chargers when not in use. Don't waste electricity by allowing your appliances to use power when they shouldn't.
7. Replace incandescent lightbulbs with LEDs, which use less energy, last longer and emit less heat.
8. Shop smart. If you're replacing any of your home's appliances this summer, choose Energy Star-rated models. They're guaranteed to be more energy efficient than appliances that don't qualify for the label. ■

## WOOD COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OP

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### ABOUT WOOD COUNTY EC

Founded in 1938, WCEC owns and maintains more than 5,140 miles of line to provide electric service to over 38,000 meters in parts of nine counties: Camp, Franklin, Hopkins, Rains, Smith, Titus, Upshur, Van Zandt and Wood counties.

### MEMBER BENEFITS AND SERVICES

- Online account access and bill payment
- Paperless E-Bill services
- Free bill-paying app
- Visa, Mastercard and Discover accepted
- SmartPower prepaid electric system
- Scholarships and youth programs
- Safety and energy conservation programs
- Operation Round-Up community grants

### MY WCEC

Your cooperative, in the palm of your hand, our free app gives account access 24/7. See usage graphs, get alerts, estimate upcoming bills, pay your bill and quickly report outages. Free in the App Store and Google Play, search for My WCEC and download.

### VISIT US ONLINE

wcec.org





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Be sure to follow safety precautions for all the electric appliances in today's kitchens.

## Remember Electrical Safety This Month

**MAY'S DESIGNATION AS** National Electrical Safety Month makes it a good time to review electrical hazards and think about how to keep common household dangers at bay.

Each year, electrical malfunctions account for 35,000 home fires causing more than 1,130 injuries, 500 deaths and \$1.4 billion in property damage, according to Electrical Safety Foundation International. Because the average American home was built in 1977, many can't keep up with the demands of today's appliances and devices.

To help prevent adding to the sobering statistics about electrical dangers, watch for the warning signs of an overloaded electrical system, which include:

- ▶ Frequent circuit breaker trips or blown fuses.
- ▶ Lights dimming when other devices are turned on.
- ▶ Buzzing sounds from switches.

- ▶ Discolored outlets.
- ▶ Appliances that seem underpowered.

To maintain an electrically safe home, be sure that the following safety devices are installed according to updated codes:

- ▶ Arc-fault circuit interrupters protect against electrical fires caused by malfunctions.
- ▶ Surge protective devices safeguard against surges that can damage or reduce the life spans of electrical systems and devices.
- ▶ Ground-fault circuit interrupters protect against electric shock.
- ▶ Tamper-resistant receptacles have an internal shutter system to prevent foreign objects from being inserted into an outlet.

About 3,300 home fires are started by extension cords every year, so it's important to follow these safety tips:

- ▶ Don't substitute extension cords for permanent wiring.

- ▶ Don't run cords through walls, doorways, ceilings or floors. If a cord is covered, heat cannot escape, which is a fire hazard.
- ▶ Don't use an extension cord for more than one appliance.
- ▶ Make sure the extension cord or temporary power strip you use is rated for the products it powers and is marked for either indoor or outdoor use.
- ▶ Don't use a cord that has a lower power rating than the appliance or tool you are plugging in.
- ▶ Never use a cord that feels hot or is damaged in any way.
- ▶ Ensure your extension cord has a polarized or three-prong plug, which should only be used with a three-slot outlet. ■

# The Lint Trap Isn't the Only Fire Trap

IF YOU SCRAPE THE LINT out of your clothes dryer's lint trap after every load, you're doing a lot to prevent the appliance from catching on fire. But you could do more.

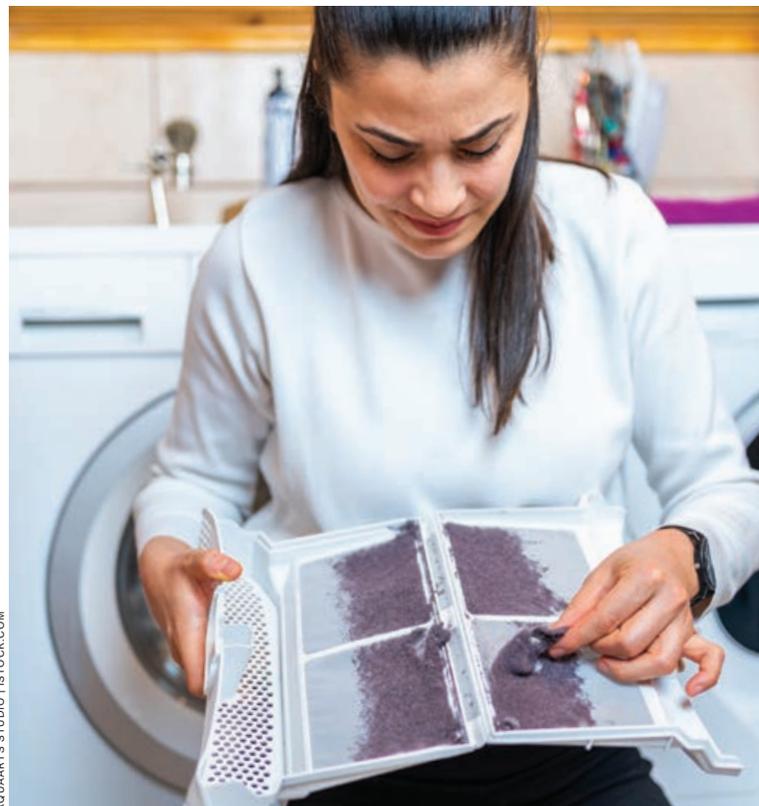
**Here are safety tips for keeping your dryer safe and energy efficient.**

**Are your clothes getting dry?** Time the cycle. Is it taking a long time for your laundry to dry? Are large items still damp when the machine turns itself off? This is a sign that your lint screen or exhaust duct is probably blocked.

**When is the last time you snaked your dryer vent?** You should do it yearly. It's a pretty easy job, but if you're not a do-it-yourselfer, any handyman or electrician can do it for you. The duct is the coil that sends the hot air from the dryer to the outdoors. The vent is the opening where the hot air leaves the house. Both can get clogged with lint. Once that happens the dryer can overheat; send dirty, moist air back into your home; or even catch on fire. You might have to disconnect the exhaust duct from the dryer and from the vent to remove a blockage.

**What's lurking behind your dryer?** Pull it out and take a look. Lint can accumulate there and also underneath the dryer. Clean the floor behind the appliance and wipe down the back of it. Call a service tech for this job if you can't manage it on your own.

**What's inside?** If you throw gasoline-, oil- or chemical-soiled clothes and towels into the dryer, even after thoroughly washing them, they can ignite. Dry them outside on a clothesline instead—after washing them several times. If your dryer is the only option, use the lowest setting and remove the items the minute the cycle is finished. ■



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## Save With the Energy Star Sales Tax Holiday

**EVERY YEAR AROUND** Memorial Day in Texas, certain Energy Star-certified products are tax-free to encourage consumers to save more energy at home.

This year's Energy Star sales tax holiday runs May 29–31. In addition to shopping in stores, you can buy qualifying Energy Star products online or by phone, mail or any other means tax-free. Items must be both delivered to and paid for by the customer during the exemption period or at least ordered and paid for during that period for immediate shipment, even if delivery is made after the period ends.

### Qualifying products:

- ▶ Air conditioners (with a sales price of \$6,000 or less)
- ▶ Refrigerators (with a sales price of \$2,000 or less)
- ▶ Ceiling fans
- ▶ Lightbulbs
- ▶ Clothes washers
- ▶ Dishwashers
- ▶ Dehumidifiers
- ▶ Some programmable thermostats

### Nonqualifying products:

- ▶ Water heaters
- ▶ Clothes dryers
- ▶ Freezers
- ▶ Stoves
- ▶ Attic fans
- ▶ Heat pumps
- ▶ Wine refrigerators
- ▶ Kegergators
- ▶ Beverage chillers ■