

# BELFALLS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

P.O. Box 598 • Rosebud, TX 76570 • Phone (254) 583-7955

*From the General Manager*

## If Your Power Goes Out, So Do We

**E**ver wonder about the people who go out during stormy weather to restore your electric power when it goes off? I'd like to take this opportunity to tell you a little something about your co-op employees, the fine folks I have the privilege of working with both inside and outside the office.

Most likely you know some of the people who work at your local co-op, and not just through their jobs. You probably bump into co-op employees at your church, grocery store or school, at sporting events and other community functions. Like you, our employees pay taxes, vote on important issues, and take an interest in their communities. They may be your neighbors, friends or even your relatives.

Most of the folks who work for you are co-op members, too. When a storm-related outage occurs, they may have to leave their own families at home in the dark so they can get out there and fix the problem quickly and safely. They are just as anxious as you to get the juice flowing back in the lines to power your lights, appliances, heating or cooling, TV, radio, computer, or whatever you might need.

Our outside employees work in all kinds of weather at all hours of the day and night. They may put their lives on the line several times during a regular workday. They understand the nature

of their job and they are good at it. We adhere to a regular training and safety program schedule because these folks and the work they do are too important to ever be considered "routine." Next time the wind is blowing a gale, rain is pouring down in sheets, or lightning is creating a spectacular "fireworks" display, pause and take a moment to consider that there is probably someone out there working to keep your lights—and theirs, too—brightly shining.

Our inside employees may not have to contend with the weather in quite the same way, but it often impacts their work. The inside folks manage, analyze, count, estimate, document, communicate, educate and solve problems daily. They answer your phone calls, greet you when you walk in the door, address your questions, and even try to predict the future when it comes to planning your electric system. They may not have to climb poles or trim trees, but rest assured they are just as hardworking and dedicated to serving the co-op membership.

I know you appreciate the job your hardworking co-op employees do for you—we hear it from our members regularly. Still, I can't help but brag on our employees from time to time. You'd be hard put to find another group of people as committed to doing their jobs right. And it's a good thing, too. We like to keep your lights—and our own—burning on those stormy nights.

# Look Up! Watch Out for Overhead Lines and Underground, Too

As you begin to spend more time outdoors during the warm weather, there's one thing you can't afford to overlook: the power lines that bring electricity to your home. Whether overhead or underground, these power lines present a danger to you and your family if not treated with respect. So remember:

☑ Don't trim or cut down trees that are growing near or underneath power lines. Have a qualified contractor take care of the job.

☑ When planting new trees, be careful about placing them beneath overhead lines. The tree might be small now, but in a few years it could grow into the line.

☑ Before you dig anywhere on your property, be sure you know where your underground utility services are—not only electric lines but also gas, water and cable television. Cutting into these service connections



could cause serious injury as well as a lot of inconvenience.

☑ Be careful installing or removing television antennas or satellite dishes. Check your clearance overhead to the power lines. If you aren't sure that you're well clear of those lines, don't take any chances. Have a professional relocate, install or remove the device.

☑ Take the same caution when using tall ladders, pool skimmers or other long tools or equipment. A single, careless motion could cause contact with the overhead line. If you can, use wooden instead of aluminum ladders, and always carry ladders horizontally when moving them.

☑ Supervise your children when they're flying kites and make sure they know to stay clear of power lines. Use only nonmetallic string on the kite, and if it should get entangled with a power line, drop the cord and call your cooperative for assistance.

☑ Never build a structure or pool beneath the lines that connect your home to power facilities.

☑ Keep yourself, your children and your pets away from substations and other utility equipment. If a toy rolls or bounces inside, call your cooperative. Don't try to retrieve it!

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## Keep Yourself Safe While Cleaning This Spring

It's that time of year again—time to tune up the air conditioner and run a dust mop under the guest-room beds for the first time since last spring.

While you're ridding your home of a winter's worth of clutter, play it safe. Some tips:

• **Suit up.** Wear sturdy shoes that will protect your feet in case you drop something heavy, step on a power cord or sharp object, or spill a slippery cleaning product that could cause you to slip and fall.

• **Watch your step.** Your house probably will be in disarray as you pull furniture away from the walls

and pick up throw rugs to shake them out. Keep high-traffic areas clear of buckets, extension cords and boxes.

• **Keep moisture—including cleaning liquids—away from electric appliances and outlets.** Never spray cleaning products directly onto light switches or the fuse panel of an electric stove. Don't use your vacuum cleaner on damp surfaces.

• **Never touch a light fixture while you are standing on an aluminum ladder.** And if you're using a pole to reach ceilings or wash windows, keep it away from indoor lights and outdoor power lines.

## In Emergencies

**These are telephone numbers to call to report outages after business hours and on weekends and holidays.**

Kenneth Fikes.....(254) 583-4556

Larry Koslosky.....(254) 583-4555

Doug Matous.....(254) 583-2957

Bobby Skala.....(254) 583-7219

Ernest Martin.....(254) 583-2219

Joe W. Marek.....(254) 583-4016

Josh Darden.....(254) 721-9712