

BELFALLS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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

WHY WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO CONSERVE ENERGY

You may wonder why we encourage you to use your electricity more effectively through energy conservation. After all, we're in the business of selling kilowatt-hours. Why would we encourage our customers to use less electricity?

Your cooperative isn't in business to make a profit; it's in business to serve you in the most efficient, reliable and cost-effective way possible. Each co-op is collectively owned by the people it serves and shares its members' interest in keeping costs down.

We strongly encourage energy conservation for a number of reasons. First, it's good common sense. Although fossil fuels are still relatively abundant, they are a fixed quantity. Depleting these natural resources means there will be less fuel for future generations.

Conserving energy saves you money in two ways: (1) Your lowered usage saves on your monthly electric bill, and (2) when many consumers lower their usage, it saves your cooperative money as well. Electric co-ops must keep enough power (capacity) on hand to supply all members' highest usage (demand). If that demand can be managed effectively, new power sources may not have to be tapped as soon as they would otherwise, and the construction of costly new generating plants can be postponed. As our electric system continues to grow, we must maintain an adequate supply of power; your conservation efforts, when combined with others', can ensure that the cooperative's growth remains stable.

Here at your cooperative, we are trying to keep your electricity

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affordable by automating operations where possible and by setting reasonable budgets that do not sacrifice reliability and service. We have no control, however, over the market price of fuels needed to generate electricity. The cost of fuels such as natural gas and coal are increasing steadily, and many factors affect those prices. Do we need to conserve electricity? Of course. Will that alone solve the energy crunch? Absolutely not. Conservation of electricity is just one avenue for managing energy costs. We must all conserve energy in other ways.

Does this mean we should all get rid of our SUVs? Not necessarily, but we can save fuel by avoiding unnecessary trips, combining errands, and sharing rides to work.

We'll continue to offer tips for conserving electricity, even though we're in the business of selling it. You can count on your co-op to continue looking out for you. Just remember that we all need to conserve energy of all types—from gasoline to natural gas to propane. Many types of fuel make up our nation's energy picture and affect our pocketbooks. You can

help us keep costs affordable by looking for ways to conserve all types of energy, not just electricity.

IN EMERGENCIES

To report power failures after business hours, call:

(254) 583-7955

If no answer, call:

Kenneth Fikes (254) 583-4556

Larry Koslosky (254) 583-4555

Doug Matous (254) 583-2957

Bobby Skala (254) 583-7219

Jeremy Tepe (254) 583-2557

Jake Willis (254) 583-0191

Ernest Martin (254) 583-2219

Joe W. Marek (254) 583-4016

James Campbell . . . (254) 583-2786

PREVENT CO POISONING WITH ALARM, MAINTENANCE

Labeling harmful substances and keeping them away from kids aren't the only ways to observe Poison Prevention Week, March 20-26. The National Capital Poison Center (www.poison.org) says installing a carbon monoxide (CO) alarm could save your family from one of the most common household poisons.

- Carbon monoxide is a clear, odorless gas that is deadly but hard to detect. If you don't have an alarm, install one now. Check it monthly to be sure it's working properly.

- Carbon monoxide doesn't come just from cars. Your gas furnace or stove is a potential source of the gas. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) offers these tips to prevent CO poisoning:

- Keep gas appliances properly

adjusted and calibrated.

- Consider purchasing a vented space heater when replacing an unvented one.

- Rely on electric space heaters, which do not burn gas or create carbon monoxide.

- Use the proper fuel in kerosene space heaters.

- Install an exhaust fan, vented to the outdoors, over gas stoves.

- Open flues when fireplaces are in use.

- Choose properly sized woodstoves that are certified to meet EPA emission standards. Make sure woodstove doors fit tightly.

- Have a trained professional inspect, clean and tune up your cen-



tral heating system—including furnaces, flues and chimneys—annually. Repair leaks promptly.

- Do not idle your car inside the garage or any enclosed space.

KEEP THE DO-IT-YOURSELFER SAFE THIS SPRING



Break out the power tools, Dad—spring is here. But while the weather may be right for home improvement, your electrical system might not be ready for safe power tool use.

Ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) are fast-acting circuit breakers that cut off power in less than 1/40 of a second—enough time to save you from getting shocked in case of a ground fault. Your home may already have these in its outlets, but if not, GFCIs can be installed inexpensively. There are also portable types that can be connected either to the outlet or the cord of the tool itself.

Here are some other safety tips from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration for an accident-free do-it-yourself season:

- Never carry a tool by the cord or

yank the cord to unplug it.

- Keep cords away from heat, flammable substances and cutting edges.

- Use gloves and safety footwear and eyewear for every project.

- To avoid accidental starting, don't hold your finger on the switch when carrying a tool.

- Wait a few days after it rains to do outside work. Don't use power tools in wet or damp locations.

- Keep work areas well lighted.

- Remove cords from areas where they could be a tripping hazard.

- Tag any damaged electric tools or wires and remove them from the work area.

- Use double-insulated tools designed to prevent electric shock.

- Always read the operating manual to check for additional precautions specific to the tool you are using.