

BELFALLS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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Your Co-op's Vital Signs Are Strong

Although your dollar seems to buy less today than it used to, that's not the case at Belfalls Electric Cooperative. The men and women working here are doing everything they can to make sure you get the most out of every dollar you spend with them.

Recent data—collected by the Rural Utilities Service for calendar year 2002—shows just that. For the past 10 years, electric co-ops across the country have shown steady improvement in the number of customers per distribution system employee. In 1992, there was an average of 228 customers per employee; in 2002, there was an average of 263 customers per employee. This shows that even though co-ops are adding customers, we are keeping our costs down by running more efficiently.

Co-ops have also managed to keep electric rates stable and competitive. The rate of inflation has been under 3 percent for most of the last 10 years; co-op rates and costs have generally stayed under that rate during those years.

Compared to other consumer goods, electricity remains a value. For example, according to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics, the cost of gas has increased nearly 4 percent every year for the past 10 years; the

cost of milk has increased about 3.5 percent every year for the past 10 years. However, the cost of electricity has increased just below 0.5 percent every year over the past decade. Even as consumer reliance on electricity increases, the overall cost has increased less than 1 percent annually.

And what of the vitality of electric co-ops compared to those other larger electric utilities? You can rest assured, co-ops are going strong. Data from 2002 showed that rural electric distribution co-ops grew 2.5 percent in 2002—which equals 800,000 additional persons served—whereas total industry consumer growth was 1.2 percent in 2002. In fact, co-ops have outpaced consumer growth in the rest of the industry for more than 10 years.

Your electric cooperative was created to serve its member-consumers, not to provide profits to big out-of-town power companies. The principle on which we were founded—service to our local communities—is just as strong today as the day we opened our doors. Regardless of how much electricity you use, your local electric cooperative will do everything it can to help you get the most out of your power dollar. You can take that to the bank!

Meter Tampering Can Kill

Tampering with your electric meter can cost you your life.

No, the crime won't land you on death row when the electric cooperative—whose technicians are trained to spot electricity theft—reports you to the police. In that case, you'll be charged with theft, possibly sent to jail, and definitely slapped with fines of about triple the money you thought you could save by rigging your meter.

But an attempt to bypass or alter an electric meter can result in shock, fire, explosion or electrocution. And if you're lucky enough not to get hurt, you'll still leave the tampered meter in a state that's dangerous to others, including the electric cooperative

employee who reads or maintains it.

Plus, you're driving up electric costs for your neighbors, just as shoplifters force department stores to inflate the price of their clothes to cover the thefts.

The cooperative does not have to

catch you red-handed to turn you over to police. In fact, the law assumes that a person who benefits from the use of stolen electricity has tampered with the meter.

Your electric cooperative can also disconnect your service.

Belfalls Electric Cooperative Nominating Committee To Meet

The nominating committee will meet on Thursday, June 24, at Belfalls Electric Cooperative to nominate two directors to be elected at the annual meeting: one from District 1, one from District 2 and one at-large.

Excerpts From Belfalls EC Bylaws

ARTICLE IV BOARD MEMBERS

SECTION 1. General Powers. The business and affairs of the Cooperative shall be managed by a Board of seven members as directors, at least one of whom must be a representative of the minority group, which board shall exercise all of the powers of the Cooperative except such as are by law, the articles of incorporation or these bylaws conferred upon or reserved to the members; and that the Board of Directors shall immediately appoint at least one member of the minority group to act and serve as director of the Cooperative until the next annual meeting of the Cooperative, and that the nominating committee include at least one member of the minority group for election of the Board of Directors at its next annual meeting and for each succeeding year.

SECTION 2. Election and Tenure of Office. The persons presently serving as directors shall compose the Board until their successors shall have been elected as hereinafter provided; and shall have qualified. At the annual meeting to be held in the year 1975, two Board members shall be elected, to serve until the annual meeting to be held in the year 1978, or until their successors shall have been elected and shall have qualified.

At the annual meeting to be held in the year 1977, three Board members shall be elected to serve until the annual meeting to be held in the year 1979, or until their successors shall have been elected and shall have qualified. At the annual meeting to be held in the year 1977, three Board members shall be elected to serve until the annual meeting to be held in the year 1980, or until their successors shall have been elected and shall have qualified. Board members elected during and after 1975 shall be elected to represent a particular district for a 3-year term to fill vacancies caused by expiration of the incumbents' terms of office, or until their successors shall have been

elected and shall have qualified. If an election of directors shall not be held on the day designated herein for the annual meeting or at any adjournment thereof, a special meeting of the members shall be held for the purpose of electing directors within a reasonable time thereafter. Directors may be elected by a plurality vote of the members.

SECTION 3. Qualifications. No person shall be eligible to become or remain a director of the Cooperative who:

(A) Is not a member and bona fide resident of the district he or she represents in the area served or to be served by the Cooperative; or,

(B) Is in any way employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise or business selling electric energy, or supplies to the Cooperative, or a business primarily engaged in selling electrical or plumbing appliances, fixtures or supplies to the members of the Cooperative.

Upon establishment of the fact that a director is holding the office in violation of any of the foregoing provisions, the board shall remove such director from office.

Nothing contained in this section shall affect in any manner whatsoever the validity of any action taken at any meeting of the board.

SECTION 4. Representation Districts. The territory served or to be served by the Cooperative shall be divided into three districts, which shall cause each director to represent as nearly as possible the same number of members. Each district shall be represented by the following number of directors:

District No. 1 - two directors

District No. 2 - two directors

District No. 3 - two directors

At-Large - one director

The three districts shall be located, defined and bounded as follows: District No.1 shall include all members in Bell and Falls Counties between Highway 190 and Highway 77, District No.2 shall

include all members in Falls and Milam Counties east of Highway 77, and north of Little River. District No.3 shall include all the members in the remainder of Milam County, Texas.

Not less than 60 days before any meeting of the members at which Board members are to be elected, the Board shall review the composition of the several districts, and, if it shall find inequalities in representation, which could be corrected by an increase or decrease in number of directors or districts, or by, a re-delineation of districts, the Board shall adjust the number of directors or districts, or reconstitute the districts so that each director shall represent, as nearly as possible, the same number of members.

SECTION 5. Nominations. It shall be the duty of the Board to appoint, not less than thirty days nor more than sixty days before the date of a meeting of the members at which directors are to be elected, a committee on nominations consisting of not less than five nor more than eight members who shall be selected from different districts so as to insure equitable representation. No member of the board may serve on such committee. The committee, keeping in mind the principle of equitable representation by and among the districts, shall prepare and post at the principal office of the Cooperative at least twenty days before the meeting a list of nominations for directors. The Secretary shall be responsible for mailing with the notice of the meeting or separately, but at least ten days before the date of the meeting, a statement of the number of directors to be elected and the names and addresses of the candidates nominated by the committee on nominations. Any fifteen or more members from the same district, acting together may make other nominations by petition and the Secretary shall post such nominations at the same place where the list of nominations made by the committee is posted. Nominations made by petition, if any, received at least five days before the meeting shall be included on the official ballot. Later nominations by petition shall be treated as nominations from the floor. The chairman shall call for additional nominations from the floor.

Small Appliances, Cords Most Likely To Electrocute

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission aims to reduce the death rate from consumer product-related electrocutions by 20 percent by the end of this year. You can help.

Extension cords and small appliances, including microwave ovens and battery chargers, are the most frequently reported group of consumer products involved in electrocutions. Large appliances, such as air conditioners, pumps and generators, are next, followed by power tools, including saws, drills and pressure washers.

Installed household wiring, lamps and light fixtures account for many electrocutions, as do antennas and ladders that come into contact with power lines.

Many of the accidents stem from misuse of the products.

It's important to use electrical products only as directed by the manufacturer; to keep them away from water; to plug them into outlets equipped with ground-fault circuit interrupters; and to discard or repair them if they're damaged or if their cords are faulty.

IN EMERGENCIES

These are the 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