

## Automated Meter Reading

For some members, reading their electric meter has become routine; for others, it has been a costly headache. Belfalls Electric Cooperative has adopted an Automated Meter Reading (AMR) system and will begin integrating “Turtle” meters for our members’ convenience. By upgrading our current meter system, we are enhancing customer service, resolving frequent billing questions, reducing line loss and blinks, and enabling our employees to identify failing equipment, balance loads and correctly size transformers.

### What is AMR?

AMR stands for Automated Meter Reading, a state-of-the-art technology that enables the cooperative to read your electric meter remotely without having to physically visit and manually read your electric meter. This technology will allow data to be transmitted back and forth between your meter and our office.

### How does AMR work?

The meter data is sent from a module inside your AMR-enhanced meter to a substation on the existing power lines. From the substation, the data travels to the corporate data center via communication lines, where the meter data is then integrated with the co-op’s member information and billing systems, resulting in the production of a timely, accurate bill.

### How will an AMR system benefit me?

Enhanced customer service: Data that is collected can provide accurate, daily usage for each customer. This information can be used to resolve billing questions.

Reduce line loss: Through system maintenance and diagnostic evaluation, we can reduce line loss.

Reduce blinks: The system monitors blinks and can identify the locations that experience blinks.

Identify failing equipment: Signal strength analysis of the transmitters can provide location of failing equipment such as cracked insulators, bad switches, hot line clamps and bad voltage regulators.

Balance loads: The system provides kWh usage, peak demand and phase identification. All this can be used to help identify which loads to shift.

Correctly size transformers: The system provides peak demand usage data with a time stamp. We can use this information to build a load profile for use in properly sizing transformers.

Current billing: You will be billed to your current reading instead of one month behind. In the first billing, the cycle will exceed 30 days. From that point on, you will see a concise 30-day billing cycle.

### Will Belfalls be installing AMR throughout the entire area?

Yes. The installation has begun and will continue over the next several years.

### Will I still see meter readers occasionally?

Yes. Although the new meters will be read automatically, they will still need to be inspected and serviced.

### What happens if the AMR meter does not work?

Your meter continues to operate as it always has. The meter only transmits the information that the mechanical or digital functions of the meter are recording. In the rare cases where an AMR meter doesn’t report data in time for a monthly billing, an estimated reading will be used until the problem can be fixed. Where discrepancies exist, the mechanical numbers on the meter can be used to determine actual usage.

### Why is it called a Turtle?

Compared to some methods of data transmission, the Turtle sends infor-

mation very slowly. But like the turtle racing the rabbit in the famous story, the electric Turtle is persistent. Because of this, its method of sending data, taking 27.2 hours to transmit a complete data packet to the cooperative, is very reliable.

## IN EMERGENCIES

During regular business hours:

**(254) 583-7955**

Please contact our after-hours answering service in case of an outage not occurring during business hours.

**(254) 583-7955**

**(254) 751-8458**



**Belfalls Electric  
Cooperative will be  
CLOSED**

**Monday, September 4,  
for Labor Day.**

# New Employee Spotlight



**JAMES COLEMAN** is a groom-to-be, with a wedding scheduled in October. He is a member of Gospel Lighthouse Church in Marlin. He finds enjoyment in working on cars, fishing and hunting.



**TRAVIS MACKIE** is a 2006 graduate of Rosebud-Lott High School and has been a resident of Lott since birth. Travis is an active member of First Baptist Church. In his spare time, he enjoys fishing and hunting.

*Belfalls would like to say "Welcome!" We are happy to have you as a part of our family.*

## PLUG IT IN— BUT TURN IT OFF

**C**omputers, printers, air conditioners, TVs, VCRs, DVD and CD players, fax machines, blow dryers, microwaves ... We're more "plugged in" than ever before. Average households will spend more than \$5,000 on energy in 2006 to power their homes and vehicles, projects the Alliance to Save Energy.

Forgetful? A programmable thermostat coordinates indoor climates with your daily and weekend patterns. You don't have to remember to turn the air conditioning or heating off when you won't be home.

Here's more:

When refinancing your home, consider including **ENERGY-EFFICIENCY HOME IMPROVEMENTS**. Your interest may be tax deductible.

Switch to **COLD-WATER WASHING** of



**Close window blinds to reduce energy costs.**

laundry and save up to \$63 a year.

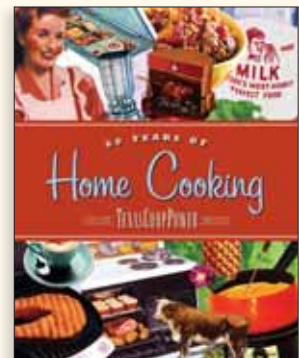
**CLOSE BLINDS OR SHADES** on the south- and west-facing windows during the day or install shading devices such as trellises or awnings.

**TURN OFF EVERYTHING NOT IN USE**—lights, TVs, computers.

Additional tips and resources for energy use can be found on the Alliance to Save Energy website at [www.ase.org/consumers](http://www.ase.org/consumers).

## Six Decades of Texas' Favorite Foods, Fads & Facts

*Full Color, Hardbound, More Than 600 Recipes From 60 Years of Texas Co-op Power*



Now available at Belfalls Electric Cooperative. Come by and purchase your copy today!