

Co-ops Are Companies That Care

Ownership of the company matters



**MESSAGE FROM
CEO AND GENERAL MANAGER RICK HAILE**

STUDIES SHOW THAT IN COMMUNITIES where the majority of residents own their homes, people are more successful academically, are more physically fit and have a stronger sense of community. Although owning a home might not be possible or desirable for everyone, ownership does matter. We often treat things we own with greater care.

Chances are that you probably don't often think about your ownership role with your electric cooperative, but every member of Heart of Texas Electric Cooperative can take pride in owning their co-op. It might seem easy to take electricity for granted, but cooperative employees and directors work 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to make sure that you, the member-owners of the co-op, have reliable and affordable electricity.

Leaders of locally based cooperatives believe that these special bonds and obligations are integral parts of the community. Your co-op knows you can't sell electricity to a business that has closed its doors, or to people who have left the community because there are not enough opportunities. Electricity is a critical need, but it takes more than poles, wires and kilowatt-hours to make a community.

We are owners of our co-op, and we are owners of our community. Our community is strong. Think about how much greater it can be when

we work cooperatively to tackle our challenges. If we consistently act like owners, we will put even more care and attention into our community, and we will look locally for solutions. Finding local

Cooperatives work to build strong communities and find local solutions that keep money and talent close to home.

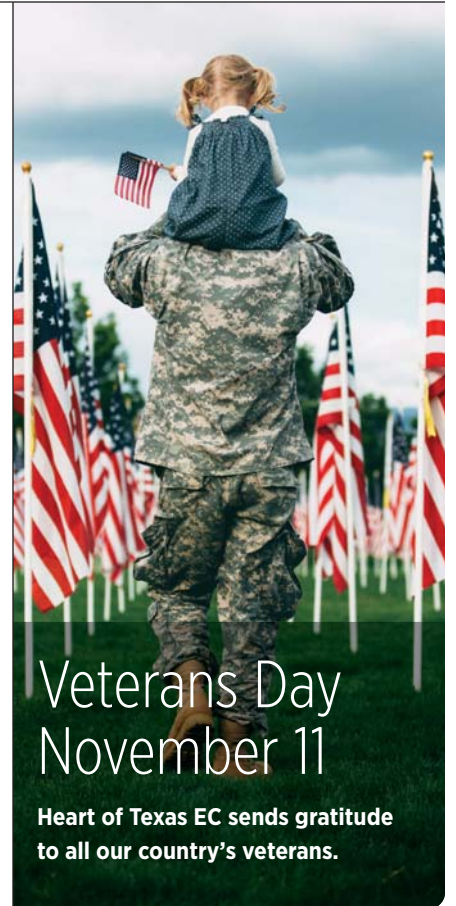
solutions can help keep money—and people—right here in our community.

We all have a role to play as fellow owners. As your local electric cooperative, we promise to do our part for the community. We appreciate our members who attended the annual meeting and will have more information on the event next month.

If you have thoughts about how we can do a better job, please contact us at 1-800-840-2957. You are the owners of the co-op, and we welcome your active participation.



STEVE DEBENPORT | ISTOCK.COM



Veterans Day November 11

Heart of Texas EC sends gratitude to all our country's veterans.

MIE AHMT | ISTOCK.COM



Happy Thanksgiving

from Heart of Texas EC

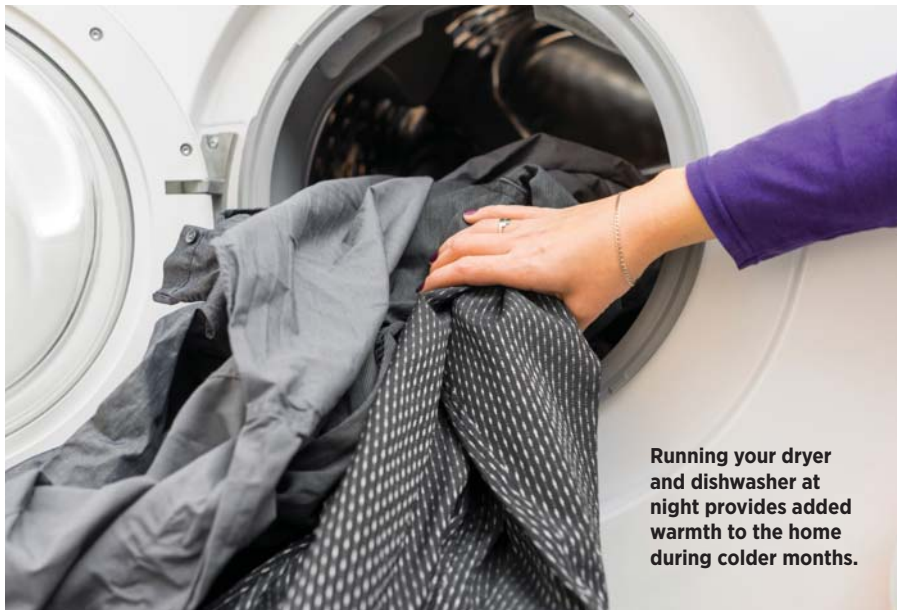
Our offices will be closed Thursday and Friday, November 24-25, to celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday.

BATES MORGAN | ISTOCK.COM

Lower Home Energy Bills When It's Cold Outside

WANT TO SAVE MONEY ON YOUR ENERGY BILLS this winter—without spending a lot to make it happen? Here are 10 low- or no-cost changes you can make:

- 1. Use ceiling fans to make rooms feel warmer.** Most people think fans are just for summer, but ceiling fans running slowly in reverse will circulate the heat that rises toward the ceiling.
- 2. Add weatherstripping or caulk around windows and doors.** Light a match or a stick of incense and hold it near the window frame. If the smoke sways, the window is leaking air. Caulking can significantly reduce heat loss.
- 3. Rearrange furniture.** Move sofas and rugs that are blocking vents, which can cause uneven heating. Situate the most frequently used furniture near interior walls; it's colder to sit near exterior walls, especially those with windows.
- 4. Install a "smart" thermostat** that lets you program it or adjust the heat even after you've left the house. There's no need to heat your home at the same level when it's empty as when your family is home. Turning back your thermostat for eight hours a day can save up to 15 percent on your heating bill.
- 5. Keep the shades open during daylight hours.** The sun heats your home for free all day. Close the curtains at night to keep heat in.
- 6. Check the seams and joints of your ductwork for leaks.** Repair leaks with a duct-sealing compound.
- 7. Pull on a sweater and keep the thermostat at a lower temperature.** You could save at least 1 percent per degree on your electric bill.
- 8. Run your clothes dryer and dishwasher after dark.** They produce heat that can help keep your home warm at the coldest time of the day.
- 9. Install compact fluorescent or light-emitting diode bulbs in fixtures you use most.** These use far less energy than incandescents.
- 10. Limit your hot water use.** Wash clothes in cold water and take shorter showers.



Running your dryer and dishwasher at night provides added warmth to the home during colder months.

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Heart of Texas Electric Cooperative

Operating in Bell, Bosque, Coryell, Falls, Hamilton, McLennan and Milam counties

CEO AND GENERAL MANAGER

Rick Haile

DIRECTORS

Garland Cook, District 1
DeWayne Draeger, District 6
Kermit Dreyer, District 7
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Contact Us

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OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

CREDIT/DEBIT CARD PAYMENTS

Online at hotec.coop

By phone at 1-855-399-2688

FIND US ON THE WEB

hotec.coop





Operation Round Up

Grants total \$31,000 this quarter

THANKS TO MEMBERS of Heart of Texas Electric Cooperative, the Operation Round Up Trust Board was able to present checks totaling \$31,000 to area nonprofit organizations.

These donations would not be possible without the pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters from members' "rounded up" electricity bills each month.

Heart of Texas EC is just one of many cooperatives across the state and nation that participate in this voluntary program.

Local nonprofit organizations may apply to HOTEK for up to \$2,500 in Operation Round Up funds each calendar year.

These funds help pay for safety equipment for volunteer fire-fighters, energy-efficiency upgrades for community centers, payment assistance for our members in need, preservation of our local history, assistance for those with special needs, and a variety of other worthy causes.

If your organization would like to apply for funds, please visit us online at hotec.coop or call 1-800-840-2957.

The board meets quarterly to review applications. The deadline for applications to be received this quarter is November 21.



BARCLAY COMMUNITY CENTER

Operation Round Up Trust Board Member Mike Garrett presents a \$2,500 check to Barclay Community Center members James Sell, and Manard and Patsy Moeller.



OLD SETTLERS AND VETERANS ASSOCIATION OF FALLS COUNTY

ORU Trust Board Member Mike Garrett presents a \$2,500 check to Executive Director Gail Wideman Palmore and LaVern Cockerham.



FLAT VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

ORU Trust Board Member Charles Boyd presents a \$2,500 check to Harold Baustian with the Flat VFD.



ROSEBUD COMMUNITY PANTRY

ORU Trust Board Member Mike Garrett presents a \$2,500 check to Rosebud Community Pantry volunteers Patricia Sharp and Barbara Sapp.



REACH THERAPEUTIC RIDING CENTER
 ORU Trust Board Member Charles Boyd presents a \$2,500 check to Executive Director Barbara Epps.



MOFFAT VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT
 ORU Trust Board Member Charles Boyd presents a \$2,500 check to Brian Falkenberg of the Moffat VFD.



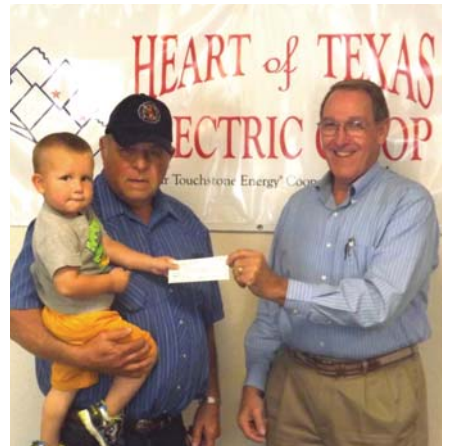
RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE CHARITIES
 ORU Trust Board Member Mike Garrett presents a \$2,500 check to Executive Director Susan Bolton.



THE WILDFLOWER GUILD
 ORU Trust Board Member Charles Boyd presents a \$500 check to Jill Lock and Sammy Freehill.



THE GROVE COMMUNITY CENTER
 ORU Trust Board Member Charles Boyd presents a \$2,500 check to Glen Winkler.



CORYELL CITY/OSAGE VFD
 ORU Trust Board Member Charles Boyd presents a \$2,500 check to Dewayne Bates representing the Coryell City/Osage VFD.



HILL COUNTRY COMMUNITY ACTION ASSOCIATION
 ORU Trust Board Member Charles Boyd presents a \$2,500 check to HCCAA Energy Assistance Director Clovia Ketchum.

NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

| | |
|---|---------|
| Barclay Community Center | \$2,500 |
| The Grove Community Center | \$2,500 |
| Coryell City/Osage Volunteer Fire Department | \$2,500 |
| Flat Volunteer Fire Department | \$2,500 |
| Jonesboro Volunteer Fire Department | \$2,500 |
| Moffat Volunteer Fire Department | \$2,500 |
| Oglesby Volunteer Fire Department | \$2,500 |
| Hill Country Community Action Association | \$2,500 |
| Old Settlers and Veterans Association of Falls County | \$2,500 |
| Ronald McDonald Charities of Temple. | \$2,500 |
| Reach Therapeutic Riding Center. | \$2,500 |
| Rosebud Community Pantry | \$2,500 |
| McGregor Lions Club | \$500 |
| The Wildflower Guild | \$500 |

Is Your Fridge Ready for Thanksgiving?

IF THANKSGIVING DINNER IS AT YOUR HOUSE THIS YEAR, your family members aren't the only ones who will be stuffed. So will your refrigerator.

Is it up to the task?

If your fridge is more than a decade old, it might not be adequate. Today's models—specifically those bearing the Energy Star label—use at least 15 percent less energy than federal standards require, and 40 percent less than models from the early 2000s, according to the Department of Energy.

Yet more than 60 million households in the U.S. have refrigerators that are more than 10 years old, according to the DOE. By replacing yours with a new, energy-efficient model, you could save up to \$300 in electricity charges over its lifetime.

When shopping for a new refrigerator or freezer, read the EnergyGuide label. It tells you how many kilowatt-hours of electricity the unit will likely consume over a year of operation. The smaller the number, the better. Look for refrigerators that have a freezer on the bottom or the top, as side-by-side designs consume more energy. Chest freezers are typically better insulated than upright models.

Whether or not you're buying a new fridge this year, follow these tips for more efficient use around the holidays:

- ▶ Brush or vacuum your refrigerator's coils regularly to improve its energy efficiency by as much as 30 percent.
- ▶ Keeping your refrigerator full shouldn't be hard at this time of year, and doing so will help your unit retain the cold better. If you have trouble keeping it stocked, fill the extra space with containers of water.
- ▶ If your milk is icy in the morning, reduce the refrigerator's temperature. Refrigerators should be set between 36 and 40 degrees. Freezers should stay between 0 and 5 degrees.
- ▶ Put a dollar bill in the door's seal to see if it is airtight. If the dollar slips out easily, so will cold air.

Use a dollar bill to check the seal on your refrigerator door.



STEPHANIE PHILLIPS | ISTOCK.COM

Power Tip

Heating your living space uses more energy than any other system in your home, accounting for about 42 percent of your utility bill. With equipment maintenance, insulation upgrades, air sealing and thermostat settings, you can save about 30 percent on your energy bill.



TIME TO FALL BACK!

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

Set your clocks back one hour at 2 a.m. Sunday, November 6.

ANDY DOUGHTY | TEC

MARTIN WINKER | ISTOCK.COM

Busting Myths About Smart Meters

BY NOW, MOST AMERICANS HAVE LIKELY HEARD of the “smart grid.” This phrase is used to describe the digitization of America’s electrical infrastructure. The purpose of this digitization is to improve the reliability, efficiency, resiliency and security of the nation’s electric grid.

A key component of the smart grid is advanced metering infrastructure, known as AMI in the utility world. AMI systems use digital meters and computer technology to measure electricity use at homes and businesses more precisely than was possible with analog meters.

The digital meters communicate via radio or existing power lines and have been loosely termed “smart meters.” AMI benefits electric co-op members through greater accuracy in billing, faster outage restoration, operational savings by eliminating manual meter readings, and detailed data that members and their co-ops can access to manage electricity use much more accurately.

Unfortunately, myths about smart meters have developed over the years. These concerns can be classified into three categories: privacy, security and health effects. Let’s take a look at each.

Privacy Myths

Heart of Texas Electric Cooperative takes great pains to keep your information private—and that information includes the details of your electricity use. The only people who see that data are co-op employees and you. Your co-op will not release this information to anyone else without your specific permission.

The myths are that the data collected can tell someone when you are away or at home, and exactly what you are doing when you are there. Some also fear that this data is being given to the government.

Naturally, the data will show when you are home because for most families, energy consumption is higher then. However, current smart meters cannot identify what activities are taking place based on the specific appliance in use. This myth is simply unfounded.

Security Myths

What about the myth that these meters actually make the electric grid less secure by providing an avenue for hackers to break into systems through a smart meter and wreak havoc? Although hackers continually attempt to break into electric systems, their focus is at higher levels in the operation. Hacking a meter is unlikely for a variety of reasons.

Hackers like to work remotely via the internet, and smart

meters don’t offer that option. Radio-based smart meters would require the hacker to be nearby to catch the weak communication signal; break the proprietary communication protocol; and be there for extended periods of time to collect and decode the short bursts of data sent. Therefore, smart meters are an unlikely and unprofitable target for hackers.



BILL OXFORD | ISTOCK.COM

Health Myths

Finally, there are myths surrounding smart meters and their perceived ill effects on health. These concerns fret that having a radio-based smart meter invites radiation equivalent to having a cellphone tower attached to the side of your home.

This fear is unfounded because smart meters communicate intermittently for as few as five minutes a day. These devices are regulated by the Federal Communications Commission, and their output is well below radiation levels set by this federal agency. Radio waves emitted by smart meters are even weaker and less frequent than other sources we use on a daily basis. The AMI waves are more like those at the level of a cordless phone or wireless router.

We will all benefit from the continued development of America’s smart grid and can rest easy with the knowledge that rumors surrounding radio-based smart meters don’t hold water.

Advanced metering equipment is safe, efficient and helps utilities control costs without any risks to homeowners.