



MESSAGE  
FROM  
GENERAL  
MANAGER  
CODY  
LASATER

## Reflecting on Progress, Planning for the Future

**AS WE BEGIN** another year, I want to express gratitude for you, the members of Hamilton County Electric Cooperative, for your continued trust and support. Our cooperative was built on the promise of people coming together to improve the quality of life in their communities, and that promise still guides everything we do today.

Each decision—whether it's about delivering reliable electricity, innovating for the future or advocating for smart energy policies—comes back to one simple question: How will this benefit you, our member?

The past year has been marked by meaningful progress, both in strengthening our local system and in working at the national level to influence energy policies that directly affect reliability and affordability.

Over the past year, electric co-ops across the country came together for advocacy efforts on the Environmental Protection Agency's power plant rule. As originally written, the rule would have forced a rapid shift away from always-available power generation resources, threatening the accessibility of a diverse fuel supply that ensures reliability.

Renewable energy sources are an essential and growing part of our energy future, but we also know that the demand for electricity is rising rapidly, and natural gas, coal and nuclear remain essential for ensuring power is available around the clock.

As we collaborated and engaged with policymakers alongside other cooperatives, we pressed for a

more balanced approach to generating power—one that supports clean energy innovation while still recognizing the role of traditional resources.

Modernizing federal permitting to strengthen the grid and meet growing demand is another area we're working on. This year, electric co-ops helped move the needle on permitting reform, advocating for policies that make the process faster, more predictable and more efficient.

Achievements like these are not just wins in Austin and Washington—they're wins for Hamilton County EC members like you.

In addition to advocacy efforts, we're proactively preparing for the future by investing in technologies and programs that improve service. With advanced monitoring systems, we're better equipped to identify issues before they cause problems.

As we look ahead to a new year, I see challenges and opportunities on the horizon. The energy industry is undergoing significant change driven by rising demand for electricity, new tools and technologies, and federal energy policies.

I'm confident that with the dedication of Hamilton County EC employees and the continued support of our members, we're well-positioned to adapt and meet challenges head-on. Through it all, our promise to you remains steadfast: reliable power for today—and tomorrow. ■



ARMASIAS | ISTOCK.COM



# Hamilton County EC Offers Scholarships

**WILL YOUR 2026** high school graduate need money for college? Hamilton County Electric Cooperative will award \$1,000 scholarships for the 2026–27 school year (\$500 per fall and spring semester).

**Eligible recipients must:**

- ▶ Be a senior attending a high school within the HCEC service area and graduating in May 2026
- ▶ Be a dependent of an active HCEC member
- ▶ Reside full time in the home of a parent or guardian who is a full-time resident in HCEC’s service area
- ▶ Have applied for admission as a full-time student in a technical school, college or university

Winners must use the scholarship within one year of issuance.

Applications are now available and will be accepted until March 31.

Scholarship winners will be chosen by a committee independent of the cooperative.

For more information and an application, contact Keela McDonald at (254) 386-9428 or [keela.mcdonald@hamiltonelectric.coop](mailto:keela.mcdonald@hamiltonelectric.coop). ■



## POWER TIP

If your clothes washer is over 10 years old, consider buying an Energy Star-certified unit. Today’s washers are 70% more efficient than 1990 models.

VGENYATAMANENKO | ISTOCK.COM



## DID YOU KNOW?

Using direct lighting, such as a lamp for reading, is more efficient than brightly lighting an entire room. Use LEDs for more savings.

ROBAS | ISTOCK.COM

## Hamilton County Electric Cooperative Association

**CONTACT US**

112 E. Gentry St., Hamilton, TX 76531  
P.O. Box 753, Hamilton, TX 76531  
**Local** (254) 386-3123  
**Toll-Free** 1-800-595-3401  
**Web** [hamiltonelectric.coop](http://hamiltonelectric.coop)

**General Manager**

Cody Lasater

**Board of Directors**

Robert Straley, President, District 4  
Dusty Duncan, Vice President, District 5  
Brandon Haile, Secretary-Treasurer, District 2  
Jack Caldwell, District 1  
Sam Campbell, District 6  
Ervin Koerth, District 3  
John Priddy, District 7

**24/7**

## Outage Hotline Numbers

For information and to report outages, please call us.

**TOLL-FREE**  
1-855-955-3183

**ABOUT HAMILTON COUNTY EC**

HCEC owns and maintains more than 4,000 miles of line to provide electric service to more than 13,000 members in Coryell, Hamilton, Lampasas, Mills and San Saba counties.

**PAYMENT OPTIONS AND LOCATIONS**

**Online** at [hamiltonelectric.coop](http://hamiltonelectric.coop)

**Call** 1-855-955-3183 to pay using our automated phone system (credit/debit card or check).

**Bank draft** can be set up or bill payments can be charged to a debit or credit card monthly.

**Hamilton County EC Office**

112 E. Gentry St., Hamilton

**Fort Gates Water Corp.**

103 Gateway Circle, Gatesville

**Head Insurance**

1006 Fourth St., Goldthwaite

**Kempner Water Supply**

11986 E. Highway 190, Kempner

**Lometa City Hall**

109 W. San Saba St., Lometa

**VISIT US ONLINE**

[hamiltonelectric.coop](http://hamiltonelectric.coop)



Check us out at  
[TexasCoopPower.com/hamilton](http://TexasCoopPower.com/hamilton)



## Youth Tour Set for June

High school juniors and seniors: Become part of the legacy

**HAMILTON COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE** will sponsor two students to attend the Government-in-Action Youth Tour, an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., June 14–21. Hamilton County EC is proud to carry on its commitment to empowering local teens from its service area to participate in the trip, which is organized by Texas Electric Cooperatives.

Students selected for this opportunity join more than 150 of their peers from Texas and some 1,900 other students from across the U.S. on this trip of a lifetime. Designed to give young people insight into national history, Youth Tour expands participants' horizons while educating them about government and cooperatives.

Electric cooperatives in Texas have participated in Youth Tour since 1965, when co-ops joined forces to follow then-Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson's call to send youths to the nation's capital to "actually see what the flag stands for and represents."

The trip starts with a chartered flight to Washington for an action-packed week that includes tours of historic sites, museums and congressional offices, where participants meet with their U.S. representatives.

Other highlights of the trip include a wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and an evening cruise on the Potomac River. Participants also attend Youth

Day, hosted by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, for a day of learning and inspiration.

A sense of purpose has guided co-ops throughout their existence, and for Hamilton County EC and other electric cooperatives across the country, that means investing in our young people—the leaders of tomorrow.

To become part of this legacy and represent HCEC on Youth Tour, apply now for the essay contest.

**Eligibility:** Students who have completed their sophomore year of high school and whose parents or legal guardians are members of Hamilton County EC are eligible.

**Contest Rules:** Students must complete a 2026 Youth Tour application and submit an essay not to exceed 500 words on this prompt: "Energy conservation: What can one person do?" Winners will be chosen according to the originality and content of their essays. Essays must be attached to the completed application and submitted before Friday, January 30.

For more information, visit [texasyouthtour.com](https://texasyouthtour.com). Contact Keela McDonald by phone at (254) 386-9428 or by email at [keela.mcdonald@hamiltonelectric.coop](mailto:keela.mcdonald@hamiltonelectric.coop) for an application. ■



# Don't Let Pipes Burst

**WHEN THE TEMPERATURE** plummets, even a hardworking heating system may have trouble keeping the house warm—and a power outage can greatly exacerbate that challenge. As the house chills, it's possible that pipes can freeze and even burst.

Particularly at risk are pipes in vacation homes, guest rooms and out-buildings. If heating is available in any of those spaces and the thermostat is off, you may think you're saving money. But diving temperatures can freeze pipes or sprinkler systems, potentially causing pipe damage and flooding—and costing you thousands of dollars in repairs.

When water freezes, it expands and puts great pressure on its container—including pipes. To avoid freezing, keep the thermostat at 55 degrees or higher in vacant areas. For parts of your house without heat, like exterior walls and attics, check insulation around pipes. Any area of pipe exposed to the cold is at a greater risk of freezing.

Another way to keep your pipes—and the rest of your house—warm is to install insulation throughout your attic, walls or anywhere else you might lose heat when it's coldest. This will lower the cost of heating the areas you do live in and prevent spring from greeting you with a flood.

You should also insulate any outdoor pipes or faucets. There are various faucet covers on the market that make it simple to access the faucet when needed. Wrapping faucets and pipes in outdoor insulation and securing them with waterproof tape is also effective. A quick and easy solution for pipes is split-foam insulation that you cut to the appropriate length and wrap around the pipe.

It's also helpful to drip faucets indoors, which helps prevent freezing and allows room for ice to expand inside pipes if water does freeze. Drip indoor faucets at a steady trickle when outside temperatures are expected to fall below 20 degrees for three hours or more. ■



CROBERTSON | ISTOCK.COM



## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**National Cut Your Energy Costs Day**  
Saturday,  
January 10

**National Clean Off Your Desk Day**  
Monday,  
January 12

**Martin Luther King Jr. Day**  
Monday,  
January 19

**National Pie Day**  
Friday,  
January 23

DNY99 | ISTOCK.COM

# Community Calendar

The following community event information was gathered in November. Please contact event sources directly to confirm event dates and details.

## Comanche

**Elvis Presley Day**, January 3, 1–4 p.m., 402 Moorman Road. Celebrate Elvis' 91st birthday with music, videos, birthday cake and refreshments. For more information, visit [comanchecountytxmuseum.com](http://comanchecountytxmuseum.com) or the museum's Facebook page.

For more information about Comanche County events, contact the Comanche Chamber of Commerce at (325) 356-3233 or [comanchetxchamber@gmail.com](mailto:comanchetxchamber@gmail.com).

## Copperas Cove

**Polar Bear Plunge 5K**, January 17, 9 a.m., 1206 W. Avenue B. Come run or walk the annual 5K to the Polar Bear Plunge. Sponsored by Copperas Cove Parks and Recreation. For more info, contact Ashley Wilson at [awilson@copperascovetx.gov](mailto:awilson@copperascovetx.gov).

**Fishing in the Park**, February 28, 10 a.m., 1206 W. Avenue B. Copperas Cove Parks and Recreation invites you to spend a day fishing at the City Park Duck Pond. There's a five-fish limit, and participants age 17 years and over are required by the state to have a fishing license. For more info, contact Ashley Wilson at [awilson@copperascovetx.gov](mailto:awilson@copperascovetx.gov).

For more information on Copperas Cove events, visit [copperascove.com](http://copperascove.com) or email [chamber@copperascove.com](mailto:chamber@copperascove.com).

## Gatesville

**Coryell County Youth Fair**, January 12–17, all-day events, Gatesville Civic Center, 301 Veterans Memorial Loop.

**Country Music Hall of Fame Show**, January 16, February 20; 7 p.m., Gatesville City Auditorium; 110 N. Eighth St. Free concerts on the third Friday of every month. The Gatesville Country Music Hall of Fame is dedicated to promoting country music and local artists.

**Boots & Bling Chamber of Commerce Banquet**, January 16, 6–9 p.m., Texas Station, 305 Old Fort Gates Road. Dinner will begin at 6:30 p.m.

**Winter Powwow**, January 24, Gatesville Civic Center, 301 Veterans Memorial Loop.

For information about Gatesville Civic Center events, contact Morgan Smart at (254) 499-0102 or [msmart@gatesvilletx.com](mailto:msmart@gatesvilletx.com).

For information about Gatesville events, call (254) 865-2617, visit [gatesvillechamber.com](http://gatesvillechamber.com) or email [gatesvillecoc@gmail.com](mailto:gatesvillecoc@gmail.com).

## Goldthwaite

**Paul Staggs in Concert**, January 10, 7 p.m., 1206 Fisher St. An evening of unforgettable country and gospel music with Paul Staggs, a talented singer, songwriter and recording artist known for his heartfelt lyrics and down-to-earth charm. Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased at [goldthwaitetheatre.org](http://goldthwaitetheatre.org).

**From Ocean Floor to Hill Country—Fossils of the Texas Cretaceous Sea**, February 7, 1219 Fisher St. Join Stephany Eoff at Texas Botanical Gardens & Native American Interpretive Center. For more information on upcoming events, call (325) 451-1075 or visit [legacyplaza.org](http://legacyplaza.org).

**Mills County Historical Museum**, Monday–Friday, 10 a.m.–2 p.m., 1119 Fisher St. Free admission.

**Goldthwaite Theater**, 1206 Fisher St. For information on upcoming events, call (325) 451-1811 or visit [goldthwaitetheatre.org](http://goldthwaitetheatre.org).

For more information about Goldthwaite events, visit [goldthwaiteareachamber.com](http://goldthwaiteareachamber.com), call the Goldthwaite Area Chamber of Commerce at (325) 648-3619 or email [gcc@centex.net](mailto:gcc@centex.net).

## Hamilton

**Circle T Arena**, 4007 W. State Highway 36. For information on upcoming events, visit [circletarena.net/events](http://circletarena.net/events) or call (254) 386-3559.

For more information about Hamilton events, visit [allthingshamilton.org](http://allthingshamilton.org) or follow All Things

Hamilton on Facebook. You can also reach Hamilton Historic Main Street at (254) 386-8116 or [mainstreet@hamiltontx.com](mailto:mainstreet@hamiltontx.com) and the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce at [hamiltontexaschamberofcommerce.com](http://hamiltontexaschamberofcommerce.com), (254) 386-3216 or [hamiltonchambertx@gmail.com](mailto:hamiltonchambertx@gmail.com).

## Hico

**Hico Chamber Banquet**, January 26, 7–9 p.m., Hico Hall, 101 W. Avenue B. Expect a fabulous catered meal with dessert as they announce Hico Citizens and Businesses of the Year awards, scholarships and donations, presentations, and cash bar. Tickets are \$30 per person or purchase/renew your Chamber membership and receive two banquet tickets. Tickets can be purchased online at [hicotxchamber.org](http://hicotxchamber.org).

For more information about Hico events, contact the Hico Chamber of Commerce at (254) 434-1249 or visit [hicotxchamber.org](http://hicotxchamber.org) or [facebook.com/hicochamberofcommerce](https://facebook.com/hicochamberofcommerce).

## Lampasas

**Lampasas County Farmers Market and Crafts**, Saturdays, 9 a.m.–1 p.m., downtown Courthouse Square parking lot.

**Second Saturday Sale—Flea Market Style**, 10 a.m.–2 p.m., Storage Near Me Texas, 1010 E. Fourth St.

**Wild West Casino Night**, February 28, 5:30 p.m. Save the date. Dinner, auctions entertainment and more.

For more information about Lampasas County events, contact the Lampasas County Chamber of Commerce at (512) 556-5172 or [admin@lampasaschamber.org](mailto:admin@lampasaschamber.org) or visit [lampasaschamber.org](http://lampasaschamber.org).

## Lometa

**Fiesta Winery at Bend**, 18727 W. FM 580

For more information about Fiesta Winery events at Bend, call (325) 628-3433, email [info@fiestawinery.com](mailto:info@fiestawinery.com) or visit [fiestawinery.com](http://fiestawinery.com).

### Hamilton County Electric Cooperative welcomes your local event submissions.

If you have any events that you would like listed in the Community Calendar, please contact Maria Donahoo. Information must be submitted two months in advance for the magazine. The calendar will be published monthly, and it will contain events scheduled in the month of publication and the following month. HCEC reserves the right to edit and exclude events based on space available and other considerations. We do not certify the accuracy or reliability of any information posted in any listing in this Community Calendar. Please contact the event source directly to confirm event details. Email [maria.donahoo@hamiltonelectric.coop](mailto:maria.donahoo@hamiltonelectric.coop), write to HCEC at P.O. Box 753, Hamilton, TX 76531, or call 1-800-595-3401.





Happy  
New Year!

From Hamilton County  
Electric Cooperative

Wishing you a 2026 full of love,  
joy and prosperity.

*"Be at war with your vices, at peace  
with your neighbors, and let every  
new year find you a better man."*  
—Benjamin Franklin

## Kickin' Chicken Spaghetti


**1 pound uncooked spaghetti**  
**3 cups shredded chicken**  
**1 can cream of chicken soup**  
**(10.5 ounces)**  
**1 can cream of mushroom soup**  
**(10.5 ounces)**  
**2 cups shredded cheddar cheese**  
**1 orange bell pepper, diced**  
**1 jar diced pimiento peppers**  
**(4 ounces)**  
**2 cans diced green chiles**  
**(4 ounces each)**  
**1 teaspoon seasoned salt**  
**1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper**  
**1 cup shredded pepper jack cheese**

**1.** Lightly grease a 9-by-13-inch casserole dish. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Boil spaghetti until it's al dente. Drain noodles and pour into a large bowl.

**2.** Mix in shredded chicken, soups, cheddar, bell pepper, pimientos, green chiles, seasoned salt and cayenne.

**3.** Pour into prepared casserole dish. Sprinkle on pepper jack. Bake 45 minutes, until bubbly.

SERVES 8

 Find this and more delicious recipes  
online at [TexasCoopPower.com](https://www.texascoopower.com).

MEGAN MYERS

