



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER CODY LASATER

Generator Safety: A Shared Responsibility During Outages

OUTAGES CAN BE inconvenient, and for many Hamilton County Electric Cooperative members, portable or standby generators provide a valuable source of temporary electricity. But while generators can help keep homes and businesses running, they also come with serious safety responsibilities that should never be overlooked.

The most important step when operating a generator is to notify Hamilton County EC. This simple action can prevent accidents and save lives.

Additionally, the cooperative requires members to apply for approval and sign an interconnection agreement before installing any distributed generation equipment—such as solar panels, wind turbines, battery storage systems or generators—that connects to or runs parallel with the cooperative’s electrical system.

This process involves submitting an application with detailed plans, undergoing a review by the cooperative and signing a formal agreement. These measures ensure that all installations meet safety standards, Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers guidelines, and the co-op’s policies.

If a generator or distributed generation system is not properly isolated from the co-op’s system, or if it is installed without prior approval and the required interconnection agreement, it can backfeed electricity through a transformer. When this happens, power lines that appear to be de-energized can sud-

denly carry electricity at as much as 14,400 volts. This creates an extremely dangerous and potentially fatal situation for lineworkers who may be working to restore service during an outage.

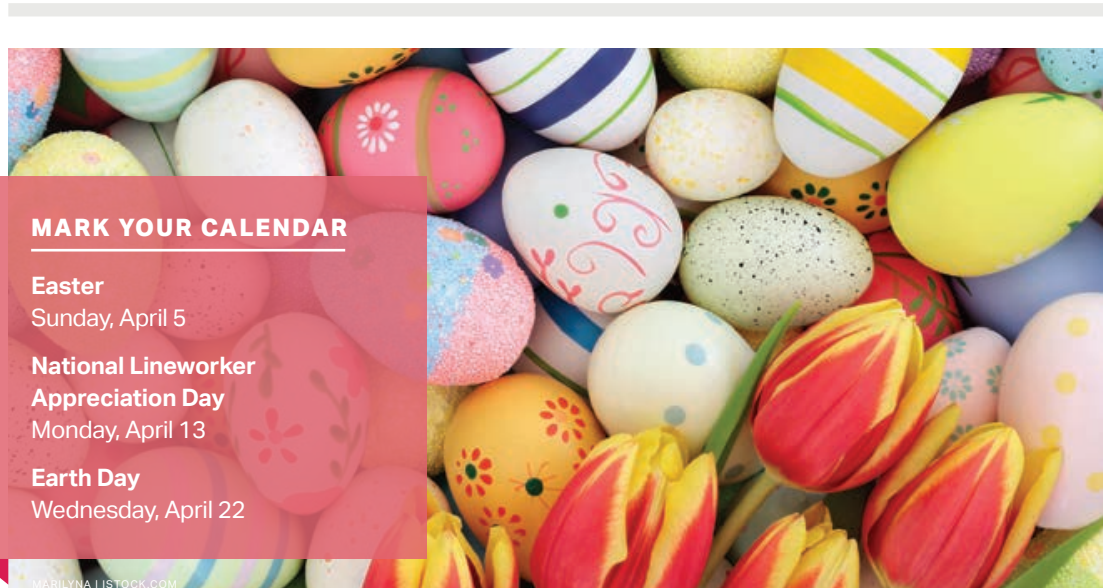
Backfeeding is particularly dangerous because it is invisible. Lineworkers depend on accurate information about the location and status of all distributed generation sources. When generators are authorized, properly interconnected and installed correctly, the cooperative can implement safety precautions and follow strict procedures before repair crews are dispatched.

To protect utility workers and the public, it’s essential that the co-op be informed whenever a generator is operational, whether during an outage or at other times. Members planning to use a generator should notify HCEC immediately.

Additionally, generators must always be installed with an approved transfer switch. Transfer switches prevent electricity from backfeeding into the utility system, safeguarding workers and the community from accidental electrocution.

Protecting lives is a shared responsibility. By operating generators correctly, obtaining necessary approvals and agreements beforehand, and keeping the co-op informed, members help protect lineworkers and enable faster, safer power restoration.

Thank you for helping us keep our employees and your community safe. ■



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Easter
Sunday, April 5

National Lineworker Appreciation Day
Monday, April 13

Earth Day
Wednesday, April 22

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Keep Your Eyes on the Road This April

EACH APRIL, THE National Safety Council observes Distracted Driving Awareness Month to draw attention to the dangers of driving while using cellphones—handheld or hands-free.

An estimated 26% of crashes involve cellphone use, making distracted driving an important topic for all drivers.

Driving is one of the most dangerous things nearly all people do. It involves moving a heavy object at high speeds around obstacles such as people and other vehicles.

To prevent tragedies due to distracted driving, the U.S. Department of Transportation urges drivers to:

- ▶ Turn off electronic devices and put them out of reach before driving.
- ▶ Set a good example for young drivers. Talk with your teens about responsible driving, and model responsible behavior.
- ▶ Speak up when you're a passenger and your driver uses an electronic device while driving. Offer to make the call for the driver so their full attention stays on the road.
- ▶ Always wear your seat belt. Seat belts are the best defense against unsafe drivers.

No text, call or notification is worth a life. Many smartphones now offer a driving mode that automatically silences notifications while you're on the road. Consider enabling these tools as an extra layer of protection.

By committing to distraction-free driving, you're not just protecting yourself—you're protecting everyone who shares the road with you. ■

Hamilton County Electric Cooperative Association

CONTACT US

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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

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



Check us out at

TexasCoopPower.com/hamilton



SANYA KUSHAK | ISTOCK.COM

Lineworkers Are Wired for Service

IN THE QUIET hours before dawn breaks, while many of us are still nestled in our beds, lineworkers begin their day, often clad in flame-resistant clothing, safety glasses, rubber gloves and heavy boots.

They epitomize dedication to service in its purest form, and that's why America's electric cooperatives have designated the second Monday of April as National Lineworker Appreciation Day.

On April 13, Hamilton County Electric Cooperative honors the hardworking people who keep the lights on, often despite challenging conditions.

To mark the occasion, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association unanimously adopted this resolution in 2014, and it still rings true today:

“Whereas linemen leave their families and put their lives on the line every day to keep the power on; Whereas linemen work 365 days a year under dangerous conditions to build, maintain and repair the electric infrastructure; Whereas linemen are the first responders of the electric cooperative family, getting power back on and making things safe for all after storms and accidents, and; Whereas there would be no electric cooperatives without the brave men and women who comprise our corps of linemen;

“Therefore, be it resolved that NRECA recognize the second Monday of April of each year as National Lineman Appreciation Day ... to recognize the contributions of these valuable men and women to America's electric cooperatives.”

Amid towering utility poles and power lines, lineworkers exhibit a strength that goes far beyond the physical. Whether

battling inclement weather, troubleshooting technical problems or navigating treacherous heights, lineworkers demonstrate resilience and a quiet determination to keep our lights on, our homes comfortable and our communities connected.

Hamilton County EC crews travel across our service territory, building, maintaining and repairing parts of our local system. Their extraordinary skills ensure we can live and work comfortably and emergency services remain accessible—a lifeline that connects us all.

In moments of crisis, when the lights go out and we find ourselves in the dark, lineworkers emerge as beacons of hope. Their swift response restores normalcy, offering reassurance in times of uncertainty. Whether repairing storm-ravaged power lines or ensuring continuity during emergencies, their unwavering commitment illuminates life when we need it most.

Hamilton County EC lineworkers also answer the call beyond the boundaries of our service territory. Our crews travel to fellow co-ops near and far when widespread outages occur and additional support is needed. Cooperation Among Cooperatives is one of our seven guiding principles, and no one embodies this core commitment better than lineworkers.

This month, as we celebrate the remarkable men and women who ensure reliable power, let's recognize their unwavering dedication to the local communities they serve.

The next time you flip a switch, please take a moment to remember those who make it possible—lineworkers, wired for service and dedicated to illuminating life. ■

Take an Extra Second To Look Up

Distracted farm workers are a major danger

AS FARMERS PREPARE to enter the fields for planting, Hamilton County Electric Cooperative urges everyone working in agriculture to be alert to the dangers of working near overhead power lines, poles and other electrical equipment.

Before you think an accident could never happen to you, consider electrical accident survivor Cody Conrady's experience. He shares what happened to him in an effort to help increase power line awareness.

It was Conrady's next-to-last day as an assistant manager for a fertilizer company. They were understaffed that day, and Conrady jumped in a truck to get ahead of a sprayer. Once the sprayer was in position, he hopped out to fill the tank with fertilizer. What happened next changed everything.

What he and his co-worker inside the cab were unaware of was that the sprayer boom had either made contact with or gotten too close to a power line. More than 7,000 volts of electricity traveled through the boom and electrified the equipment and ground where Conrady was standing. The unyielding stray voltage traveled through Conrady's body as part of its path to the ground.

In the minutes and hours that followed, he was brought back to life, rushed to a local hospital and then transferred via helicopter to a Level 1 trauma center. That was the start of a very long and arduous road to recovery that included many surgeries, rehabilitation and prosthetic fittings.

When working near power lines, "pay attention a little more," Conrady advises. "Keep an eye on your surroundings. Just take an extra second to look at things, to see how your situation is going to unfold."

To stay safe around overhead power lines, always follow safe work practices to help prevent serious and even deadly acci-

dents. Start by making sure everyone knows to maintain a minimum 10-foot clearance from power lines. This 10-foot rule applies not only to the area underneath the power line but to the full 360 degrees around it.

In addition, follow the safety guidelines below.

If your machinery or vehicle comes into contact with a power line, do not get out of the cab because you could be electrocuted. Instead, stay where you are and call 911.

If it's not safe to stay in the cab due to fire or smoke, make a solid, clean jump with both feet landing at the same time. Shuffle away with feet together as far as you can.

If you come across an accident near a downed power line, alert individuals (from at least 50 feet away) to stay in the cab or vehicle as long as there is no imminent danger. Call 911 and Hamilton County EC and do not approach the scene.

Have a daily meeting with staff to go over possible hazards. Map out and review routes where equipment will be moved and ensure it will clear power lines.

Teach anyone working with or for you (including family members and seasonal employees) about power line awareness and proper clearance distance.

When working around power lines, always use a spotter who has a broader vantage point than the person in the cab.

Lower extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads.

Even though planting season is a busy time filled with stress and tight deadlines, take time for safety, including electrical safety. It could save your life or the lives of others. ■



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Community Calendar

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

Comanche

Comanche County Art Showcases, April 3–4, various locations in Comanche. Two days celebrating the creativity of local and Texas artists with fun for the whole family. Enjoy a VIP art event Friday with award-winning artists, local wine and great food, then explore the communitywide art showcase Saturday throughout Comanche's shops and galleries.

Mother's Day Lunch, May 10, 11 a.m.–2 p.m., Comanche County Museum, 402 Moorman Road. Donations are appreciated. For more information, call (325) 356-5115 or email comanchecountymuseum@gmail.com.

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

Copperas Cove

Easter Egg Round Up, April 4, 10 a.m.–noon, Copperas Cove City Park, 1206 W. Avenue B. Egg hunting and free pictures with the Easter Bunny. Sponsored by Copperas Cove Parks and Recreation. For more information, contact Ashley at (254) 542-2719 or awilson@copperascovetx.gov.

Rabbit Fest, May 14–17, Copperas Cove City Park, 1206 W. Avenue B. The four-day event is packed with fun for the entire family, including thrilling carnival rides, live entertainment, food vendors, arts and crafts, and a lively parade Saturday morning.

For more information on Copperas Cove events, visit copperascove.com or email chamber@copperascove.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, write to HCEC at P.O. Box 753, Hamilton, TX 76531, or call 1-800-595-3401.

Gatesville

Market Days; April 11, May 9; 9 a.m.–1 p.m.; Cotton Belt Depot parking lot. Featuring local vendors, handmade goods, unique finds, food and community fun.

Country Music Hall of Fame Show; April 17, May 15; 7 p.m.; Gatesville City Auditorium; 110 N. 8th St. Featuring 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.

For information about Gatesville events, call (254) 865-2617, visit gatesvillechamber.com or email gatesvillecoc@gmail.com.

Goldthwaite

Murder at Cherry Creek Saloon, April 12, 5 p.m., Southside Tavern, 1011 Fifth St. Ticket prices are \$100 per individual or VIP sponsor table seating eight for \$1,500. For information on upcoming events, call (325) 451-1811 or visit goldthwaitetheatre.org.

Earth Week: Our Power, Our Planet; April 20–24; Texas Botanical Gardens & Native American Interpretive Center, Legacy Plaza; 1219 Fisher St. Stay tuned for individual program offerings. For more information on upcoming events, call (325) 451-1075 or visit legacyplaza.org.

Busy Lil' Bees Summer Learning Program; May 1, 8, 15 and 22; 10 a.m.–noon; Texas Botanical Gardens & Native American Interpretive Center, Legacy Plaza; 1219 Fisher St. For more information on upcoming events, call (325) 451-1075 or visit legacyplaza.org.

Growing Roots Summer Kids' Camp, May 27–30, 10 a.m.–noon. Texas Botanical Gardens & Native American Interpretive Center, Legacy Plaza, 1219 Fisher St. For more information on upcoming events, call (325) 451-1075 or visit 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.

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

Hamilton

Main Street Market on the Square, second Saturday of the month, April–December, downtown Hamilton square. Browse handmade and homemade goods, visit local shops, and enjoy a relaxed morning on the square. Vendor spots are free and available on a first-come, first-served basis. For vendor applications, contact Hamilton Main Street at (254) 386-8116 or mainstreet@hamiltontx.com.

Circle T Arena, 4007 W. State Highway 36. Catch rodeos, roping, concerts and more at Circle T Arena. For the latest event schedule, visit circletarena.net/events or call (254) 386-3559.

For more information about Hamilton events, visit allthingshamilton.org or follow All Things Hamilton on Facebook. Contact Hamilton Historic Main Street at (254) 386-8116 or mainstreet@hamiltontx.com. Visit the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce at hamiltontexaschamberofcommerce.com or contact hamiltonchambertx@gmail.com or (254) 386-3216.

Hico

Sip & Savor Festival, April 11, 9 a.m.–5 p.m., historic downtown. Food, art, wine and shopping! To purchase tickets or for more information, visit hicoctxchamber.org/events.

Texas Steak Cook-Off, May 15–16, downtown. Hico's Original Texas Steak Cook-Off is a one-of-a-kind food, wine, music and cookoff event with delicious appetizers, a rib-eye steak dinner with all the fixin's, wine tasting, live music and shopping from local vendors.

For more information about Hico events, contact the Hico Chamber of Commerce at (254) 434-1249 or visit hicoctxchamber.org or 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.

The Great Outdoor Expo & LTX BBQ Fest, April 25, 9 a.m.–3 p.m., Lampasas County Youth Livestock Center, 283 N. U.S. Highway 183/190. Vendors, hunting and fishing, outdoor gear, barbecue cook-off, and kid’s activities. For more information, visit lampasaschamber.org.

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

Lometa

Live Music, Saturdays, 1–4 p.m., Fiesta Winery at Bend, 18727 W. FM 580.

Easter Egg Hunt in the Vineyard, April 4, 12–3 p.m., Fiesta Winery at Bend, 18727 W. FM 580. Come enjoy the second annual Easter egg hunt in the Vineyard.

Yoga & Mimosas; April 11, May 9; 10–11 a.m.; 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 or visit fiestawinery.com.

Pearl

Pearl Bluegrass Jam; March 7, April 4; Pearl Community Center; 6301 FM 183. Jam rooms open at 10 a.m., kitchen at 11 a.m. and stage show at 1 p.m. Free admission for musicians and spectators; all levels of musicians welcome to come and jam. If you would like to book your band for the stage, call or text Jeffrey King at (832) 514-1909. Serving great home cooking and homemade desserts. We now accept

credit cards or cash payments. Proceeds benefit the Pearl Community Center. There are 32 RV spaces available; for rental, contact Connie Long at (254) 223-0621. Follow Pearl Bluegrass Jam on Facebook for more information on the monthly schedule.

Junk-in-Your-Trunk and Farmers Market; Pearl Book Cottage; April 4, May 2; 9 a.m.–3 p.m.; Pearl Book Cottage Bookstore and Resale Shop and Community Center parking lot. Vendor booths are \$5. Books and resale items will be available inside the building. For information, call Kay Pruett at (254) 865-5864 or Linda Ray at (254) 865-9282.

San Saba

Pecan Bottom Festival, April 4, Risien Park, U.S. Highway 190 CR 102. A full day of family fun with a kids zone, unique vendors, great food, live music and adult beverages.

Stan Weik Stomp Out Cancer 5K Run & 1 Mile Walk, April 4, San Saba River Golf Course, 723 CR 102. This is a meaningful community event supporting the fight against cancer. Hosted by the San Saba County Chamber of Commerce, this family-friendly race takes place at the San Saba River Golf Course and brings runners and walkers together for a great cause. Proceeds benefit the Never Surrender Cancer Foundation. Join us for a morning of fitness, remembrance and hope as we stomp out cancer—one step at a time. Sign up at sansabachamber.com.

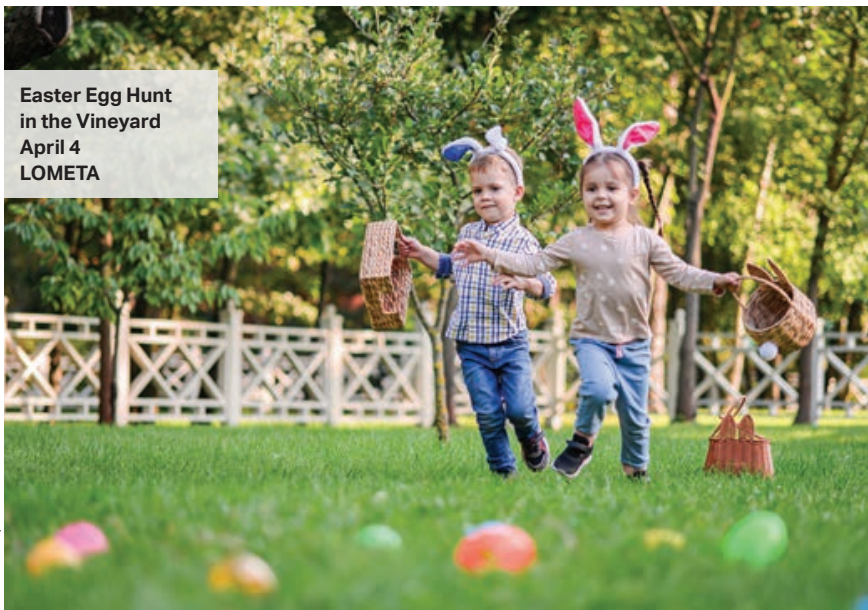
For more information about San Saba events, contact the San Saba County Chamber of Commerce at (325) 372-5141 or visit sansabachamber.com.



POWER TIP

Avoid placing lamps or TVs near your thermostat. Heat released by these devices can cause your air conditioning to run more than necessary.

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Easter Egg Hunt in the Vineyard
April 4
LOMETA

NELLY SENKO | ISTOCK.COM



DID YOU KNOW?

Even if a power line is down on the ground, it may still be live and dangerous. If you encounter a downed power line, stay back.

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