



MESSAGE
FROM
GENERAL
MANAGER
CODY
LASATER

Your Voice Matters

JUST AS YOU cast your ballot in local, state and national elections, as a member of Hamilton County Electric Cooperative, you have an opportunity to make your voice heard at the co-op.

That's because every co-op—whether it's your electric cooperative, your credit union or a farm cooperative—follows the basic principle of Democratic Member Control.

Most often, you're asked to vote for and elect individuals who will represent you on your co-op's board of directors. These folks are your friends, neighbors and fellow residents.

This is one of the key differences between a co-op member and a customer of an investor-owned utility. Other utilities are not too interested in customers' opinions on how the company should be run, but co-ops rely on the participation of members.

Participation can take many forms: attending the annual meeting, voting, paying your bill and receiving capital credits, or participating in other co-op events. If you're really interested in being involved, you can even run for the board of directors.

That involvement is important for the well-being of the co-op. Hamilton County EC depends on the input and guidance of our community. As the electric utility industry evolves, having engaged members willing to take an active role is increasingly valuable.

I hope you'll truly take advantage of what it means to be a member. Getting involved with the co-op is a great way to be engaged with your community.

In the early days, when the co-op was just getting started, neighbors helped neighbors. These days, it can seem like our lives are busier and more digitally demanding than ever, but the need to connect and belong is still necessary for us and our communities to thrive.

Get involved, and be sure to cast your vote in Hamilton County EC's next election. ■

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

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

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



NIRATPIX | 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. ■



POWER TIP

The dryer lint trap is an important energy saver, so make sure to clean it before each load.

SIMON2579 | ISTOCK.COM



IVANMATEEV | ISTOCK.COM

Cheesecake With Dark Chocolate

CRUST

- 1 cup crushed nuts (macadamias or walnuts work best)
- 1 cup flour
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, softened

FILLING

- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 package cream cheese (8 ounces), softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2–3 squares dark baking chocolate, to taste

1. CRUST Preheat oven to 325 degrees. In a bowl, mix crushed nuts, flour, brown sugar and butter. Press evenly into a 9-by-9-inch baking dish. Bake 30 minutes.

2. FILLING With an electric mixer, whip heavy cream until it thickens. In a separate bowl, mix cream cheese, sugar and vanilla. Fold whipped cream into cream cheese mixture.

3. Grate dark chocolate squares, reserving some to top with, and fold into cream cheese mixture.

4. Spoon mixture over crust, smooth with back of spoon, and top with reserved grated chocolate. Refrigerate at least 1 hour before serving.

SERVES 16–18

TCP Find this and more delicious recipes online at TexasCoopPower.com.



JULPO | ISTOCK.COM

Beware of Indoor Winter Safety Hazards

FIRE CAUSED BY home heating peak during winter months, with nearly half of all U.S. home heating equipment fires occurring between December and February.

Space heaters and stoves are involved in nearly one-third of house fires, accounting for about 8 out of 10 deaths and 7 out of 10 injuries. Cooking-related fires are the leading cause of home fires year-round.

Here are some tips to reduce the risk of home fires and associated hazards during the winter months.

Heating Safety

Make sure all heating equipment is in good working order. Heating systems and chimneys should be cleaned and inspected annually by a qualified professional.

Keep flammable items at least 3 feet away from all heating equipment, including furnaces, fireplaces, woodstoves and space heaters.

Always use the manufacturer-recommended fuel for fuel-burning space heaters and follow their directions for safe use.

Make sure space heaters are in good working order, and turn them off when leaving the room or going to sleep.

Electrical Safety

Only plug one heat-producing appliance (like a coffee maker, toaster, space heater, etc.) into an outlet at a time.

Check electrical cords to make sure they aren't running across doorways or under carpets, creating a tripping hazard.

Extension cords are intended for temporary use. Have a qualified electrician add more outlets so you don't have to use extension cords.

Call an electrician or your landlord if you have frequent problems with blowing fuses or tripping circuit breakers, a tingling feeling when you touch an appliance, a discolored or warm wall outlet, a burning or rubbery smell from an appliance, flickering or dimming lights, or sparks from an outlet.

Carbon Monoxide

Choose a CO alarm with the label of a recognized testing laboratory. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for placement and mounting height.

CO alarms should be installed in a central location outside each sleeping area, on every level of the home and in other locations where required. For the highest level of protection, interconnect all CO

alarms throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound.

Test CO alarms at least once a month and replace them according to the manufacturer's instructions.

If the trouble signal sounds, check for low batteries. If the battery is low, replace it. If it still sounds, call the fire department.

If the CO alarm sounds, immediately move to a fresh-air location outdoors or by an open window or door. Make sure everyone inside the home is accounted for. Call for help from a safe location and stay there until emergency personnel arrive.

If you need to warm a vehicle, remove it from the garage immediately after starting it. Do not run a vehicle or other fueled motor indoors, even if garage doors are open.

A generator should be used in a well-ventilated location outdoors away from windows, doors and vent openings.

Smoke alarms, which reduce the risk of dying in a home fire by more than half, must be installed in all required locations and work properly. People may have as little as two minutes to escape a home fire from the time the smoke alarm sounds. Knowing what to do when the smoke alarm sounds and using that time wisely can save a life. ■

Kill a What?

EVER PRETEND TO know what an electrician is talking about when he or she tells you what needs to be fixed? If so, or if you just want to expand your electrical vocabulary, here's a glossary of common electrical terms.

Amperes, or amps, measure the rate of flow of electricity. It's comparable to the flow of water through a hose. Fuses and circuit breakers are rated in amps to indicate the amount of electricity they can carry safely.

Circuit breakers and fuses are safety devices that automatically cut the flow of electricity when a circuit is overloaded.

In a fuse, an element melts when overloaded, stopping the flow. In a circuit breaker, a switch is tripped when it's overloaded. Whereas a fuse must be replaced, a circuit breaker can simply be reset after the cause of the overload has been corrected.

Circuit breakers and fuses are preset to appropriate amperage ratings, and it's important for the safety of your home or business that the amperage ratings in the main service panel are followed.

The electrical service entrance normally consists of wires enclosed in conduit, a proper ground, your electric meter base and the main service panel—essentially the entire apparatus necessary to bring safe electricity into your home.

The main service panel (referred to as the "fuse box" in many homes) is a metal box that houses the circuit breakers or fuses. The main service panel serves as the point from which

electricity is distributed to branch circuits throughout your home for appliances, lights and outlets.

An overload is when a circuit carries more electricity than it can handle, so the wires get hot and cause the circuit or breaker to trip.

Transformers are electrical devices that can increase or decrease the voltage of electricity. Some of them are underground in big green boxes, and some are affixed to power poles.

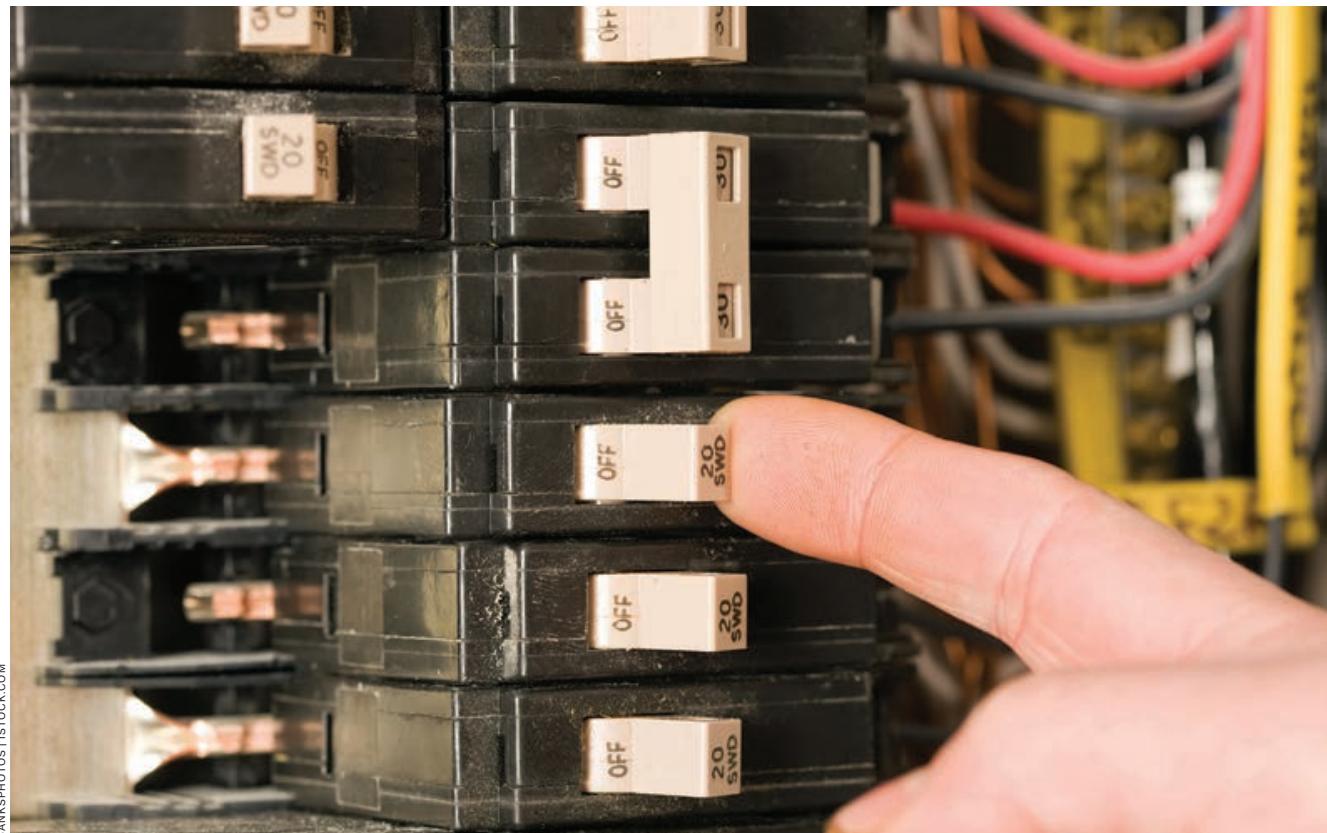
Volts measure electric force. They're the force behind the current, or amps, flowing through a wire. Just as the amp can be compared to the amount of water flowing through a hose, the volt can be compared to the amount of pressure pushing that water.

A watt is a unit of electrical power equal to 1 amp under the pressure of 1 volt.

A watt-hour is the measurement of electrical energy used, measured as 1 watt of electricity used for one hour.

A kilowatt-hour is 1,000 watt-hours, abbreviated kWh. On electric bills, this indicates the amount of electric energy used. A 100-watt lamp operated for 10 hours (100 watts x 10 hours) uses 1,000 watt-hours or 1 kWh.

Having a grasp of your home's electrical system isn't just about sounding smart; it's a key part of ensuring safety and managing your energy use efficiently. ■



Community Calendar

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

Comanche

Linda Celebrates 103 Years, February 28, 402 Moorman Road. Surprises are in store. Visit comanchecountytxmuseum.com or the museum's Facebook page for more information.

Texas Independence Day Celebration, March 8, 11 a.m.–2 p.m., 402 Moorman Road. Chili and Comanche stew lunch. Visit comanchecountytxmuseum.com or the museum's Facebook page for more information.

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

Copperas Cove

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. Five-fish limit. Anyone 17 years or older is required by the state to have a fishing license. For more info, contact Ashley Wilson at awilson@copperascovetx.gov.

Spring Fest, March 28, 3–8 p.m., Copperas Cove City Park, 1206 W. Avenue B. Come enjoy this annual celebration which will include food vendors, a vendor market, an adult softball tournament, a musical performance by Memphis Kee and more.

For more information on Copperas Cove events, visit copperascove.com or email chamber@copperascove.com.

Gatesville

Micro Wrestling, February 6, Gatesville Civic Center, 301 Veterans Memorial Loop.

Country Music Hall of Fame Show, February 20, March 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.

Gun Show, February 28–March 1, Gatesville Civic Center, 301 Veterans Memorial Loop.

Gatesville Chamber of Commerce Foundation 10K Giveaway, March 7, Gatesville Civic Center, 301 Veterans Memorial Loop.

Men's Conference, March 20–21, Gatesville Civic Center, 301 Veterans Memorial Loop. For information, contact Morgan Smart at (254) 499-0102 or msmart@gatesvilletx.com.

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

Goldthwaite

Texas Botanical Gardens & Native American Interpretive Center, Legacy Plaza, 1219 Fisher St. For information on upcoming events, please call (325) 451-1075 or visit legacyplaza.org.

Stephany Eoff: From Ocean Floor to Hill Country—Fossils of the Texas Cretaceous Sea, February 7, 10 a.m., Goldthwaite Pavilion.

Indian Lore Merit Badge, February 21, Saturday, 9 a.m.–2 p.m., Tarleton State University, Stephenville.

Spring Fling in the Gardens, March 28, 5–9 p.m., Goldthwaite Pavilion.

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

Sip & Stroll Hamilton, March 28, 3–7 p.m., Hamilton's historic downtown square. Spend the afternoon sampling wines, shopping local businesses and enjoying live downtown energy with friends. For event details, visit allthingshamilton.org.

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 email 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 hamiltontexascountychamberofcommerce.com or contact hamiltonchambertx@gmail.com or (254) 386-3216.

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, second Saturday of each month, 10 a.m.–2 p.m., Storage Near Me Texas, 1010 E. Fourth St.

Wild West Casino Night, February 28, doors open at 5:30 p.m. Dinner, auctions, entertainment and more.

Creating Badger Builders, March 21, 5–10 p.m., Lampasas Show Barn, 283 U.S. Highway 190. Come enjoy a delicious dinner and fundraiser to help support Lampasas career and technical education programs. Admission is \$25. For more information, contact Mike Olson at (254) 258-8171 or go to creatingbadgerbuilders.com.

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.

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.

Pearl

Pearl Bluegrass Jam: February 7, March 7; 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.

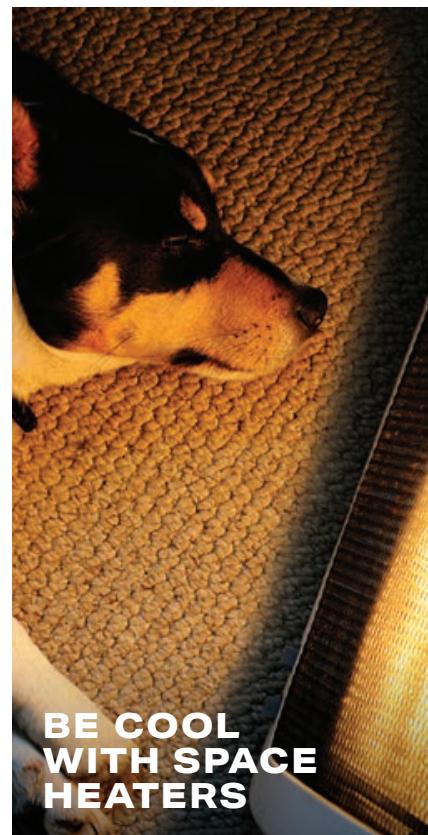
Junk-in-Your-Trunk and Farmers Market: February 7, March 7; 9 a.m. –3 p.m. Pearl Book Cottage Bookstore and Resale Shop and Comm-

unity 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

Sweetheart Ball: February 14, 6 p.m., San Saba Civic Center. \$2,000 grand prize plus other cash prizes. Entry is \$100 per couple, BYOB, live music and dancing until 11 p.m. Raffle proceeds to benefit the San Saba FFA.

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



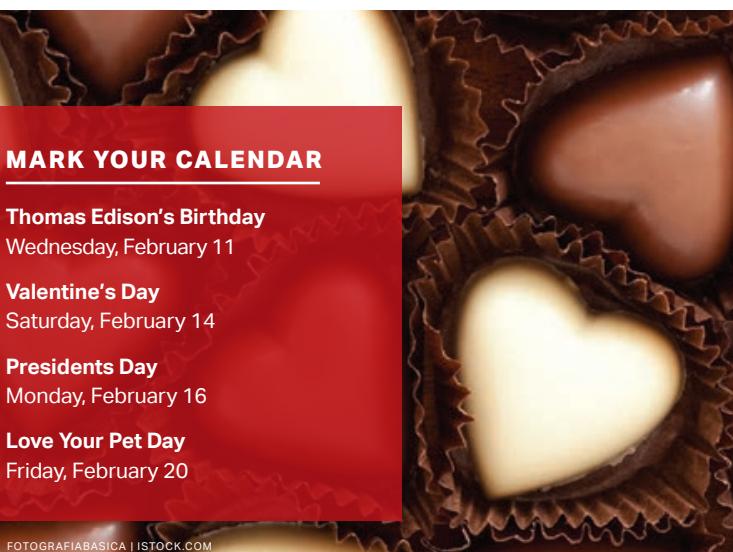
BE COOL WITH SPACE HEATERS



DID YOU KNOW?

To avoid moisture problems in the bathroom, run a ventilating fan during and for 15 minutes after showers and baths.

ROBAS | ISTOCK.COM



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Thomas Edison's Birthday
Wednesday, February 11

Valentine's Day
Saturday, February 14

Presidents Day
Monday, February 16

Love Your Pet Day
Friday, February 20

FOTOGRAFIA BÁSICA | ISTOCK.COM

Space heaters are meant to provide supplemental heat, not replace your home's heating system. If used incorrectly, space heaters can also pose fire and burn risks.

Heed these rules for portable heater use:

Read and follow the manufacturer's warnings and the operation and care guidelines before using a space heater.

Space heaters need space. Keep them at least 3 feet away from any combustible materials such as bedding, drapes and furniture.

Never use space heaters around unsupervised children or pets.

Always turn the heater off and unplug it when leaving the room or going to sleep.

Plug space heaters directly into an outlet. Do not use an extension cord.

Hamilton County EC encourages you to always practice safety.

PHOTO: ROLLING EARTH | ISTOCK.COM