



MESSAGE
FROM
GENERAL
MANAGER
**CODY
LASATER**

Resolve To Save Energy in 2022

THE START of the new year always seems to bring about the inevitable lists of resolutions to improve one's life: Lose weight, stop smoking, exercise more ... conserve electricity.

Well, that last one maybe isn't actually on your resolutions list, but it can be just as important as any personal health goals—both to your financial bottom line and the overall health of our cooperative and the state's electricity system.

As one saying goes, it takes 21 days to create a new habit. During that time, it may take a conscious effort to change your behavior—for instance, remembering to switch off lights as you leave a room. But, you may find, after a few repetitions of a new behavior, you won't even have to think about it. You'll turn off the lights automatically.

Here are some other energy-saving resolutions that you might consider for 2022:

- ▶ Unplug computers, TVs and phone chargers, plus the coffeemaker and other kitchen countertop appliances, when you're through using them. These items draw electricity as long as they are plugged in, even when they're turned off.

- ▶ If any of the overhead fixtures, table lamps or outdoor lights around your home or business still have those old, inefficient incandescent lightbulbs or CFLs, change them to LEDs, which use less electricity and can reduce your power bill.

- ▶ Install a programmable thermostat. Use it to lower the heat by a few degrees when the family leaves the house every day and to raise it back up just before everybody gets home. You won't feel any less comfortable at home, but you'll notice a dip in your energy bill.

If everyone in Hamilton County Electric Cooperative's membership embraced just one or two of these ideas, or took other energy efficiency measures, the effect would be greatly magnified. And if everyone in Texas embraced even the simplest of these ideas, like turning off unused lights, it could add up to significant savings and perhaps help keep the lights on for all of us. ■

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

New Year's Day
Saturday,
January 1
Our offices will
be closed Monday,
January 3, for the
holiday.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Monday,
January 17

Holocaust Remembrance Day
Thursday,
January 27

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Hamilton County EC Scholarships Available



ZYGMAN | ISTOCK.COM

WILL YOUR 2022 high school graduate need college money? Hamilton County Electric Cooperative will award scholarships for the 2022–2023 school year (\$500 per fall and spring semester).

To be eligible, your student must:

- ▶ Be a senior attending a high school within the HCEC service area and graduating in May 2022.
- ▶ 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 Hamilton County EC's service area.
- ▶ Have applied for admission as a full-time student to a technical school, college or university.

Scholarship winners must use the scholarship within one year of issuance.

Applications are now available and will be accepted until March 31, 2022. Scholarship winners will be chosen by a committee independent of Hamilton County EC. For more information and an application, contact Keela Payne at (254) 386-9428 or keela.payne@hamiltonelectric.coop. ■

Hey, foodies!

Chet here! Join me at the all-new TexasCoopPower.com to learn about tasty Texas eats, including hundreds of recipes, and enter your recipe in our monthly \$500 contest.

TCP

HAMILTON ELECTRIC.COOP • 1-800-595-3401 • (254) 386-3123

Hamilton County Electric Cooperative Association

CONTACT US

112 E. Gentry St., Hamilton

P.O. Box 753, Hamilton, TX 76531

Local (254) 386-3123

Toll-Free 1-800-595-3401

Web hamiltonelectric.coop

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Cody Lasater

Board of Directors

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Dusty Duncan, Vice President, District 5

Brandon Haile, Secretary-Treasurer, District 2

Jack Caldwell, District 1

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Ervin Koerth, District 3

John Priddy, District 7

24/7

Outage Hotline Numbers

For information and to report outages, please call us.

LOCAL

(254) 386-3123

TOLL-FREE

1-800-595-3401

ABOUT HAMILTON COUNTY EC

HCEC owns and maintains more than 4,000 miles of line to provide electric service to more than 12,000 members in Coryell, Hamilton, Lampasas, Mills and San Saba counties.

PAYMENT OPTIONS AND LOCATIONS

Online at hamiltonelectric.coop

Call 1-877-833-4031 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, Hamilton

Brown & Wesson Insurance

915 Third St., Goldthwaite

Fort Gates Water Corporation

103 Gateway Circle, Gatesville

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

ATTENTION HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS AND SENIORS:

Win a Trip to Washington, DC!

Youth Tour is June 12–21

HAMILTON COUNTY Electric Cooperative will sponsor two students on the Government-in-Action Youth Tour, an all-expenses-paid, 10-day guided trip to Austin and Washington, D.C., June 12–21. 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 fun-filled trip. Designed to give high school students insight into U.S. history, cooperatives and the workings of federal government, Youth Tour expands participants' horizons.

Electric cooperatives in Texas have participated in the program since 1965, when they joined forces to follow then-Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson's call years earlier to send students to the nation's capital to "actually see what the flag stands for and represents."

The trip starts with a day in Austin, where students tour the state Capitol, Bullock Texas State History Museum and Texas State Cemetery. They then fly to Washington for an action-packed week that includes tours of historic sites and museums and visits to congressional offices, where they 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 inspirational speakers.

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

You could be a part of this legacy shared by the more than 3,800 past Texas Youth Tour students.

Eligibility: Students who have completed their sophomore year of high school and whose parent or legal guardian is a member of Hamilton County EC are eligible to apply for this trip of a lifetime.

Contest rules: **Students must complete a 2022 Youth Tour application and submit an essay not to exceed 500 words on the following theme: Describe a service project that would benefit your community.** The winners will be chosen according to originality and content of their essays. Essays must be attached to the completed application and submitted no later than February 11, 2022.

For more information visit texasyouthtour.com. Contact Keela Payne at HCEC at (254) 386-9428 or keela.payne@hamiltonelectric.coop for an application.

Please note, if the COVID-19 pandemic prompts cancellation of this year's trip to Washington, alternative awards will be given to the contest winners. ■

THE TRIP OF A LIFETIME

GOVERNMENT-IN-ACTION

YOUTH TOUR

JUNE 12–21, 2022



Are you a Texas high school student? Would you like to travel to Washington, D.C., and visit historic landmarks—all without spending a dime of your own money?

Perhaps you'd like to meet elected officials, or maybe you're looking for an inspirational experience in the company of other Texas teens. If that sounds like you, then the Government-in-Action Youth Tour is your tour. Apply now!

For more information, contact Keela Payne at (254) 386-9428 or at keela.payne@hamiltonelectric.coop.

Start your adventure at TexasYouthTour.com.

Be Smart With Your Generator

Portable generators are a godsend during a prolonged electrical outage—just be sure to use extreme caution while operating them.

Never try to power your home by plugging the generator into a wall outlet. This dangerous practice, known as backfeeding, reverses the electricity flow and sends it out of your house, endangering electric workers and your neighbors. If you must connect the generator to the house wiring, have a qualified electrician do it.

Plug appliances directly into the generator or use an extension cord that is rated (in watts or amps) at least equal to the sum of the connected appliance loads. Check that the entire cord is free of damage and that the plug has all its prongs.

Keep the generator dry and do not use it indoors, in a garage, near open doors or windows, or in rainy or wet conditions.

Hamilton County Electric Cooperative encourages you to always practice safety.



Stay Warm, Fed and Safe During Storms

WHEN WINTER CONDITIONS strike, staying safe and warm can be challenging. Hamilton County Electric Cooperative cares about your safety, and we want you to be prepared.

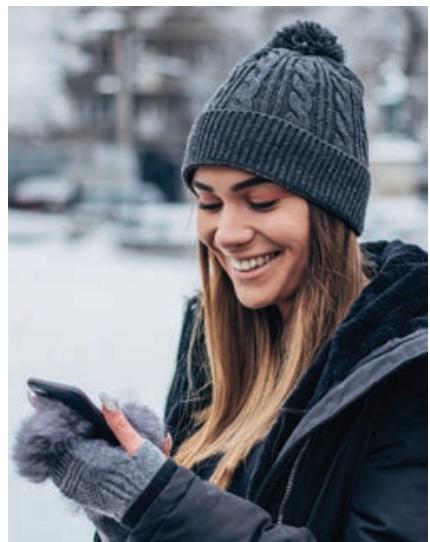
During a power outage, our crews will continue to work as quickly and safely as possible to restore power, and there are a few things you can do to protect yourself.

Stay warm. Plan to use a safe alternate heating source, such as a fireplace or wood-burning stove during a power outage.

Stay fed. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends keeping handy several days' supply of food that doesn't need to be cooked. Five gallons of water per person should also be available.

Stay safe. When an outage occurs, it usually means power lines are down. If you must travel during a winter storm, take a survival kit and do not travel alone. Stay as far away from downed power lines as possible, and report hazardous situations to Hamilton County EC.

Hamilton County EC is ready for what Mother Nature has in store, and we want you to be ready too. ■



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Community Calendar

Hamilton County Electric Cooperative is actively monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic. The following community event information was gathered in late November with sincere hopes that these events will be held. Please contact event sources directly to confirm event dates and details.

Comanche

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

Copperas Cove

Chocolate Fantasia Benefiting Special Olympics, February 11, 5:30–7:30 p.m., Civic Center, 1206 W. Ave. B. Enjoy a sweet, relaxed evening with your special someone while sampling from more than 1,600 chocolate delights! Tickets are \$10 at covechocolatefantasia.eventbrite.com.

Mommy/Daddy and Me Sweetheart Tea: Princesses and Pirates, February 12, 1–3 p.m., Civic Center, 1206 W. Ave. B. Children

and adults learn proper etiquette in a fun way with princess and pirate activities including a treasure hunt, jewel dig, walking the plank and more. Tickets are \$10 at sweethearttea.eventbrite.com. Proceeds benefit homeless veterans.

Miss Five Hills Scholarship Pageant, March 26, Civic Center, 1206 W Ave. B. Begins at 1 p.m. for contestants ages 8 and under and 6 p.m. for contestants 9 and up. More than \$100,000 in college scholarships and prizes to be awarded. Pageant is open to girls and women of all ages and boys up to age 8. Applications accepted February 1–March 1 at copperascovetx.gov/parks/five_hills_pageant.

For information about Copperas Cove events, contact the Copperas Cove Chamber of Commerce at (254) 547-7571, email chamber@copperascove.com or visit copperascove.com.

Evant

For information about Evant events, contact P-Cay Burkhalter at (254) 791-5441 or pcay@buenavistawildlifesafari.com.

Gatesville

For more information about Gatesville events, call the Gatesville Chamber of Commerce at (254) 865-2617 or visit gatesvilletx.info.

Goldthwaite

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

Circle T Arena, 4007 W. Highway 36. For information on upcoming events, visit circletarena.net/calendar or call (254) 386-3559.

Veterans Memorial, October 1–May 30, 2022. Hamilton American Legion Cunningham Post 222 is planning a new permanent memorial to Hamilton County Veterans. The plan, designed by Riley-Gardner Monument Company, includes three large black granite tablets engraved with the names of the 151 Hamilton County veterans who died in battle during the various conflicts of our country. The centerpiece of the memorial will feature a large hand-carved black granite eagle resting on a black granite hexagonal base. This base will be engraved with the POW/MIA



emblem on the front and the emblems of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard on the other five sides. Donations to assist in the cost of the memorial are welcome, and inquiries should be directed to Darryl Moore at (337) 654-2235, Glenn Jones at (254) 784-9141 or Bob Self at (254) 386-3992.

For more information about Hamilton events, visit Hamilton Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Center at hamiltontexaschamberofcommerce.com or on Facebook, call (254) 386-3216, or email hamiltonchambertx@gmail.com.

Hico

For information about Hico events, visit hicotxchamber.com or facebook.com/hicochamberofcommerce, call (254) 434-1249, or email chamberhicotx@gmail.com or bluestarhico@gmail.com.

Kempner

For information about Kempner events, call Kempner City Hall at (512) 932-2180.

Lampasas

Lampasas Trade Days: January 1-2, February 5-6; 9 a.m.-4p.m.; 2646 E. Highway 190. Antiques, collectibles, quilts, crafts, folk and fine art, new home furnishings, shabby chic furniture, new clothing, jewelry, candles, handbags, electronics, iron works, outdoor decor, plants, tools, food, and more. For more information, contact Barbara Postel at (512) 734-1294.

Bart Crow in Concert, January 8, 6-10 p.m., Putters and Gutters, 2341 U.S. Highway 281. Tickets are \$12 in advance at outhousetickets.com, \$15 day of show.

Wild West Casino Night, February 19, 5:30-11:55 p.m., Lampasas County Show Barn, 283 N. Highway 183. \$50-per-person admission

includes a steak dinner, gambling chips and a chance to win a travel voucher. BYOB.

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

Lometa

For information about Lometa events, contact the city of Lometa at (512) 752-3331.

Pearl

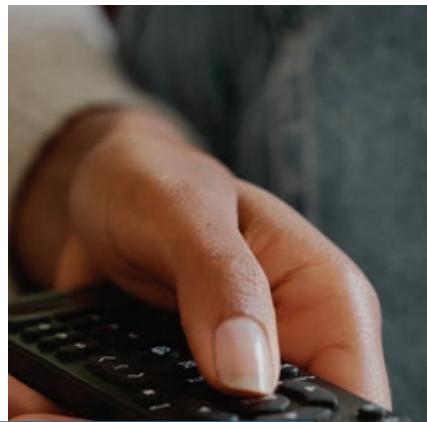
Pearl Bluegrass: January 1, February 5; doors open at 7 a.m.; Pearl Community Center; 6301 FM 183. Jams and stage shows throughout the day. Acoustic bands (no electric instruments) and musicians are invited. No fee to play on the stage or watch the stage shows. For information on how to sign up for the stage show, contact Ronald Medart at (254) 865-6013. Kitchen open 11 a.m.-5 p.m. RV parking with full hook-ups available on a first-come, first-park basis; 30 amps are \$20 and 50 amps are \$25.

Pearl Book Cottage: January 1, February 5; 10 a.m.-5 p.m. All kinds of books and resale items. Payment by donation with all proceeds going to charity. For information call (254) 865-9282 or (254) 865-5864.

San Saba

For more information about San Saba events, contact the San Saba Visitor Center at (325) 372-5200 or the chamber at (325) 372-5141, or visit sansabatexas.com/calendar or sansabachamber.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 Donna Harris. Information must be submitted two months in advance for the magazine. The calendar is published monthly and contains 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 donna.harris@hamiltonelectric.coop; write to HCEC at P.O. Box 753, Hamilton, TX 76531; or call 1-800-595-3401.



DID YOU KNOW?

Vampire loads come from electronic devices that use electricity when they appear to be off. Primary culprits are chargers, cable TV boxes and gaming systems.

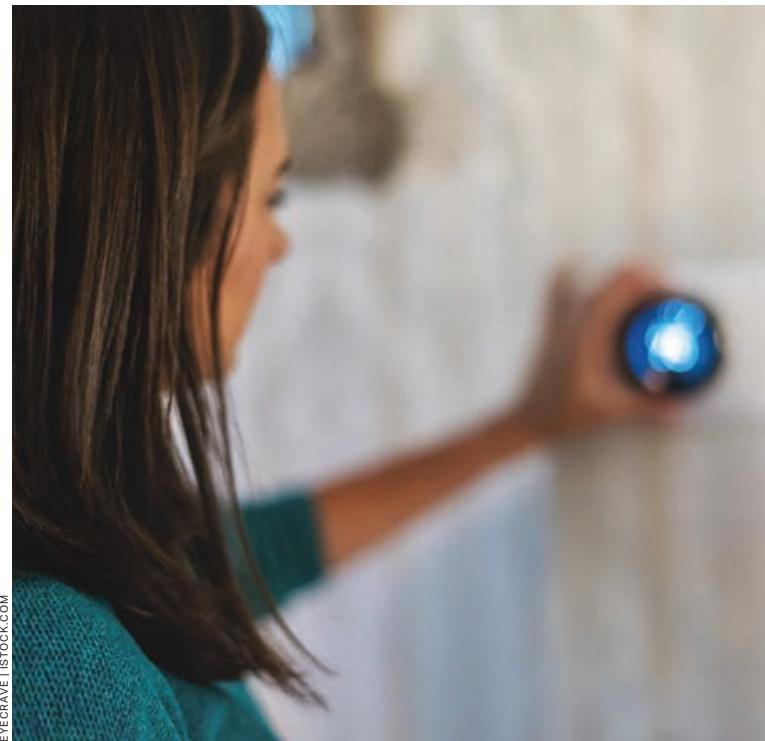
LYNDON STRATFORD | ISTOCK.COM



POWER TIP

Let the sunshine in! For extra warmth, open drapes over windows that receive sunlight, but close them at night to reduce heat loss by up to 10%.

IVAN NADASKI | ISTOCK.COM



EYECRAVE | ISTOCK.COM

Cost of Heating Expected To Rise This Winter

HOUSEHOLDS THAT HEAT their homes primarily with electricity can expect to spend approximately 6% more on energy this winter, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

The increase comes as prices for energy are at or near multiyear highs in the U.S. after changes to energy supply and demand patterns because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the expectation of a colder winter, the EIA writes in its winter fuels outlook. The EIA considers the winter heating season to last through March.

The increase in electricity prices is still expected to be lower than other energy sources for heating. Natural gas prices are expected to rise 30%, propane 54% and heating oil 43%. Depending on the severity of the cold and other factors, those percentages could rise or fall.

"Fuel expenditures for individual households depend on the size and energy efficiency of individual homes and their heating equipment, along with thermostat settings and weather conditions," the EIA reports.

Cold weather can affect expenditures for heating in two ways, the EIA says. It raises the amount of energy required to keep a room at a certain temperature and it raises demand, which could cause supply disruptions.

In the South, the rising price of electricity might not be as noticeable as in other parts of the country. Even though two-thirds of Southern homes are all-electric, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is forecasting winter temperatures in the South to be comparable to last year, so states in that region might see an increase in electricity prices of about 5% compared to last winter, according to the EIA.

Homeowners could also use more electricity in their homes this heating season because social patterns have changed. Many people continue to work from home because of the pandemic, increasing their power bills by 3%, the administration reports. ■

Pack Up Your Tree and Lights

SOME PEOPLE LIKE to celebrate Christmas year-round, but there are some practical reasons to take down your holiday decorations.

A dried-out Christmas tree is a fire risk. Real trees lose moisture and get crispy even when you trim the stump and keep it soaking in water. Those browning needles and sap make excellent kindling should a spark from the fireplace or heat from a lightbulb make contact. Take your real pine tree down soon after the holidays or as soon as it begins to show signs of drying out.

Lingering Christmas lights can cause a tangle. If they begin to sag off the house or trees, they're not only unsightly but might cause a person or pet to trip or get tangled.

Left-out lights drain electricity. Leaving Christmas lights up longer than the holiday season requires electricity that will add to your power bill.

Even if you can't wait for the next round of holidays, don't wait too long to clean up after this season is over. ■



LITTLE CITY LIFESTYLEPHOTOGRAPHY | ISTOCK.COM

CO Poisoning Cases Increase in January

GABORT71 | ISTOCK.COM



JANUARY IS THE DEADLIEST month for poisoning by carbon monoxide—an odorless, colorless gas produced when fossil fuel is burned. CO can cause sudden illness and death.

On average, two people die each day from CO poisoning in the first month of the year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That's triple the rate in summer months.

CO poisoning rates increase in the winter because more people are inside during those months, sometimes using risky heating alternatives and power sources without proper ventilation.

Many households use products that burn fossil fuels, such as gas- and oil-burning furnaces, portable generators, and charcoal grills. If used incorrectly, these items pose a CO poisoning risk.

People and pets are susceptible to the gas. Common symptoms are headache, dizziness, weakness, upset stomach, vomiting, chest pain and confusion. **Keep your family safe from CO this winter by following these important safety measures.**

- ▶ Install battery-operated CO detectors near every sleeping area.
- ▶ If a CO detector alarm goes off, exit the home immediately and call 911.
- ▶ Check CO detectors regularly for proper function.
- ▶ Have oil and gas furnaces inspected every year by a qualified technician.
- ▶ Have gas water heaters inspected annually by a qualified technician.
- ▶ Ensure that the chimney is checked annually and cleaned if necessary.
- ▶ Ensure that gas appliances are vented properly.
- ▶ Never use a generator inside the home or garage, even with doors and windows open. Use generators outside only and at least 20 feet away from the home.
- ▶ Do not use a grill, camp stove or other charcoal-burning device indoors.
- ▶ Do not run vehicles in attached garages.
- ▶ Do not use a fireplace that isn't vented.
- ▶ Do not heat your house with a gas oven or gas range.
- ▶ Seek medical attention right away if you suspect CO poisoning or feel dizzy, lightheaded or nauseated. ■

Kale and Meatball Soup

8 ounces ground beef (sirloin or round)
4 ounces ground pork
½ cup diced onion, divided use
1 clove garlic, minced
¼ teaspoon coarse sea salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
¾ teaspoon of your favorite herb or spice mixture, divided use
1 slice white bread (crust removed)
3 tablespoons milk
8 cups beef or chicken broth
1 can (15 ounces) small white beans, drained
1 large carrot, diced
3 cups kale, or more to taste, washed and chopped

1. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Combine beef, pork, ¼ cup onion, garlic, salt, pepper and ¼ teaspoon of the spice mixture.

2. Moisten the bread with the milk and then add to the meat mixture. Roll the mixture into small (about 1-inch) meatballs and place them in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet.

3. Bake the meatballs about 20 minutes, until firm and lightly browned. Drain excess grease from meatballs and pan.

4. Combine the broth, remaining onion, white beans, diced carrot and remaining ½ teaspoon of spice mixture in a soup pot and cook over medium-high heat. Bring the mixture to a boil, then add meatballs and chopped kale. Reduce heat and simmer about 15 minutes.

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

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