



MESSAGE  
FROM  
GENERAL  
MANAGER

CODY  
LASATER

## By the Community, for the Community

IF YOU'RE A frequent reader of these columns, you've read a lot over the years about how Hamilton County Electric Cooperative is different—because those differences are at the root of all that we do.

Our business model sets us apart from other utilities because we adhere to guiding co-op principles that reflect core values of integrity, transparency and service to the greater good.

As a co-op, we're well-suited to meet the needs of the community because we're locally governed. Our leadership team and employees live right here in the community. Our board of directors, which helps set long-term priorities for the co-op, is made up of members just like you. These directors are elected to represent your voice in the boardroom.

Our members have a valuable perspective. That's why we seek your input. Whether through community events, our social media channels or the annual meeting, we want to hear from you.

Our connection to the community ensures we get a first-hand perspective on local priorities, enabling us to make more informed decisions on the future of the cooperative and its long-term investments.

Because we're a co-op, the money you spend on electricity stays in the community. We don't have shareholders hoping to turn a profit. We're owned by members, and any money we collect beyond what's needed to maintain and operate our system is returned to you in the form of capital credits.

Another feature that sets our co-op apart from other utilities is one of our core principles: Concern for Community. We give back to the community by collaborating with CoBank and the Lower Colorado River Authority, supplying grants to nonprofit organizations and providing scholarships to students within our service area.

Ultimately, the larger community benefits from these programs because of you and your neighbors. You empower the co-op through your membership and through your participation in and support of these programs.

I hope you'll think of Hamilton County EC as not just your energy provider but instead as a local business that supports this community and powers economic development and prosperity for the people.

We'll continue to learn from our members about their priorities so that we can better serve you—because your electric co-op was built by the community, for the community. ■

## 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)



BY MURAT DENIZ / ISTOCK.COM

## Stop the Vampire Invasion

**WHEN ELECTRONIC GADGETS** are in standby mode, they use a small amount of energy even when you're not using them, and this "vampire power" adds up. Entertainment centers are full of these energy-sucking devices.

Most TVs slowly sip electricity while waiting for someone to press the on button. They use energy to remember channel lineups and keep time. Cable and satellite boxes also consume energy when we think they're off. Voice-activated devices draw a small amount of electricity as they continuously listen for your voice commands.

Although these products typically use less than 0.5 watts in standby, it adds up. A typical American home has a vampire load that adds up to 5%–10% of electricity use. The Department of Energy estimates that one home's energy vampires can add up to \$100 in wasted energy costs each year.

### Identify Plug Parasites

Microwave ovens and alarm clocks, which use relatively small amounts of standby power, are acceptable to leave plugged in. Gaming consoles, TVs and other entertainment components use fairly significant amounts of power when turned off. Consider unplugging the TV in the guest room or audio equipment that you rarely use.

You don't have to worry about unplugging items with mechanical on/off switches, such as lamps, hair dryers or many small kitchen appliances—they don't draw any power when turned off.

### Power Strips Save

Try plugging household electronics such as computers, monitors, printers, cellphone chargers and game systems into power strips with switches. Not only do power strips protect from power surges, they also allow you to turn off several items at once.

Consider switching to smart power strips, which help reduce energy use by automatically shutting off power to devices in standby mode. Payback for power strips can generally be achieved in less than a year. ■

## Silky Caramels

**1 cup (2 sticks) butter, plus more for pan if desired**  
**2¼ cups packed brown sugar**  
**Dash salt**  
**1 cup light corn syrup**  
**1 can sweetened condensed milk (14 ounces)**  
**1 teaspoon vanilla extract**  
**Milk chocolate or dark chocolate morsels (optional)**

1. Line a 9-by-9-inch pan with non-stick foil, or butter it very well.
2. Melt butter in a heavy two-quart saucepan. Add brown sugar and salt, stirring until completely mixed. Stir in corn syrup. Slowly add condensed milk, stirring constantly.
3. Cook, stirring constantly, over medium heat until candy thermometer reads 245 degrees (firm ball stage).
4. Remove saucepan from heat and stir in vanilla. Pour mixture into square pan and allow to cool completely.
5. Cut caramels into squares using kitchen scissors or a sharp knife.
6. If desired, melt chocolate according to package directions and dip each caramel piece in chocolate. Allow to set completely before wrapping.
7. Wrap in wax paper squares.

**MAKES 42 CARAMELS**

**TCP** Find this and more delicious recipes online at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com).

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## Keep Halloween More Treat Than Trick

**YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENS AROUND** here October 31: Small, strange creatures dot our roads at night. They creep up to homes with large bags and dash from one place to another, often forgetting about the vehicles passing them on the road.

Halloween is one of the most fun nights of the year for kids. But in their excitement, they don't always think about safety—which means grown-ups need to do some thinking for them.

### Trick-or-Treating

Outfit your trick-or-treater with a glow stick or flashlight with fresh batteries, but make it clear to never shine the beam into the eyes of drivers. Instruct children to stay on sidewalks whenever possible and to look both ways before crossing streets.

Make sure that little revelers (and you) cross streets only at corners and never from between parked vehicles.

Choose bright, reflective costumes or add reflective tape to dark outfits. Avoid masks that obstruct vision—face paint is often a safer alternative. Ensure costumes fit properly to prevent tripping, and consider flame-resistant materials.

Children under 12 should always trick-or-treat with an adult. Older children should travel in groups and stick to familiar neighborhoods. Set specific time limits and boundaries, and make sure everyone knows the planned route. Consider having adults stationed at key intersections in busy neighborhoods.

Keep youngsters from indulging until after a trusted adult has inspected their trove of treats carefully.

### Haunting the House

Never use electrical products outdoors that are marked for indoor use. You could get shocked—or worse.

Dried flowers, cornstalks, hay and crepe paper are highly flammable. Keep them away from open flames and other heat sources, including light bulbs and heaters. Always inspect each decoration before use and discard any with cracked, frayed or bare wires.

Always turn off electrical decorations and extinguish any open flames before leaving home or going to bed. Use a flashlight or battery-operated candles in jack-o'-lanterns.

Check weather forecasts and secure lightweight decorations that could become projectiles in windy conditions. Have backup indoor activities ready in case of severe weather. Keep walkways clear of wet leaves that could create slippery

conditions, and consider placing nonslip mats near entrances.

Turn on your outdoor lights. Be sure paths and sidewalks are well lit. Remove obstacles from the front yard. Restrain dogs and other animals.

Offer individually wrapped pieces of candy or hand out non-food treats like colorful stickers.

### While Driving

Slow down in residential neighborhoods to at least 5 mph below the posted speed limit to give yourself extra time to react to children who may dart into the street.

Watch for children walking on roadways, medians and curbs. Look for children crossing the street; they may not be paying attention to traffic and cross the street midblock or between parked cars. Turn on your headlights to make yourself more visible—even before the sun has set.

Avoid distractions like cellphones completely during Halloween hours. Be especially cautious when backing out of driveways and parking spaces. Consider postponing nonessential trips during peak trick-or-treating hours.

Hamilton County Electric Cooperative reminds you to take even greater care than usual to keep Halloween a special treat for all of our small, strange creatures. ■

# Do a Fire Safety Checkup During Fire Prevention Week

**OCTOBER 5–11 MARKS** Fire Prevention week. Observe it in your house by making sure your smoke alarms are in good working order and by addressing potential fire hazards throughout your house. Once a smoke alarm goes off, you may have as little as two minutes to escape. Still, having a properly installed alarm cuts your chances of dying in a fire nearly in half.

Beyond smoke detection, electrical hazards, overloaded circuits and improperly maintained appliances pose significant fire risks that every homeowner should address during their safety checkup.

## Alarm Installation and Maintenance

Install at least one smoke alarm on every level of your home. Make sure there is one near every sleeping area.

Ceiling-mounted alarms should be at least 4 inches away from the nearest wall. In homes with pitched ceilings, mount the alarm at the highest point. Don't install alarms near windows, doors or ducts where drafts might interfere with their operation.

Alarms that are hardwired to your home's electrical system should be connected with each other so that every alarm in the house sounds when one of them detects smoke.

Don't paint smoke alarms. Paint, stickers or decorations can prevent them from working properly.

Test alarms at least monthly, following the manufacturer's instructions. Replace batteries at least once a year.

Replace your smoke alarms every 10 years.

## Electrical Fire Prevention

Don't overload the circuits in your home with electronics. If your lights flicker or dim when you turn on an appliance, the load on your circuit is too high.

If a fuse blows or a breaker trips frequently, you have too many appliances on that circuit, or the fuse needs replacing.

Exchange blown fuses with appropriately sized replacements. Using fuses with higher amperage than you need is a fire hazard. A penny is not a safe substitute for a fuse.

Avoid overloading outlets with multipronged adapters or extension cords. Use extension cords only temporarily, and make sure they're not frayed or worn.

Cords should not hide under rugs. Never twist them around nails or hooks or staple them to a surface.

Don't plug space heaters into extension cords.

Buy outdoor appliances, outlets and cords that are rated for use outside.

Equip outdoor outlets—and those in kitchens, bathrooms and laundry rooms—with ground-fault circuit interrupters. Test them regularly.

Don't fold or roll an electric blanket while it's plugged in. Turn off your electric blanket or heating pad after 30 minutes. Set an alarm to remind you if you're likely to fall asleep.

## Emergency Preparedness

Stow a fire extinguisher in your house, and make sure everyone in the home knows how to use it, but remind them that their safest action is to escape as quickly as possible.

Keep a cellphone in a visible and easily accessible place in case of emergencies. That way, you can get out of the house and then call 911.

Don't waste time grabbing documents or keepsakes when there's a fire. Keep important and irreplaceable items such as birth certificates and photos in a fireproof box or a safe-deposit box at the bank. ■



# Community Calendar

The following community event information was gathered in early- to mid-August. Please contact event sources directly to confirm event dates and details.

## Comanche

**Comanche Market**, first Saturday of the month, 9 a.m.–1 p.m., 1300 E. Central Ave. Handcrafted, home-grown, unique and boutique items can be found.

**Steve Clemons Deer Hunters' Chili Supper**, November 7, time and location TBD. A Comanche tradition since 1990, this chili supper honors Clemons' legacy with a night of food, raffles and community spirit. Family chili recipes, warm memories and deer hunters from across Texas come together to celebrate.

**Veterans Day Luncheon and Tribute to Our Veterans**, November 9, 11 a.m.–2 p.m., 402 Moorman Road. For more information visit [comanchecountytxmuseum.com](http://comanchecountytxmuseum.com) or the museum's Facebook page.

For more information about Comanche County events, contact Carrie Johnson at the Comanche Chamber of Commerce at (325) 356-3233 or [carrie@comanchechamber.org](mailto:carrie@comanchechamber.org).

## Copperas Cove

**Fall-O-Ween Festival**, October 25, 4–8 p.m., Copperas Cove City Park, 1206 W. Ave. B. Trick-or-treat, market vendors, food trucks, bounce houses and more! Go to [facebook.com/copperascovespecial](https://facebook.com/copperascovespecial) for more information.

For information on Copperas Cove events, call (254) 547-7571 or email [chamber@copperascove.com](mailto:chamber@copperascove.com).

## Evant

**Farm & Market Day**, October 18, November 15; 9 a.m.–2 p.m.; Evant City Square; 115 E. Brooks Drive.

For more information about Evant events, visit [evanttxcoc.org](http://evanttxcoc.org) or email [evantchamberinfo@gmail.com](mailto:evantchamberinfo@gmail.com).

## Gatesville

**Pickleball Tournament**, October 4, Gatesville Civic Center, 301 Veterans Memorial Loop.

**Market Days**, October 11, November 8; 9 a.m.–1 p.m.; the Cotton Belt Depot parking lot; 2307 S. State Highway 36.

**Texas Game Breeders Association Conference**, October 11, Gatesville Civic Center, 301 Veterans Memorial Loop.

**Country Music Hall of Fame Show**, October 17, November 21; 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.

**Texas Trappers and Fur Hunters Association Fall Rendezvous**, October 17–18, Gatesville Civic Center, 301 Veterans Memorial Loop.

**Annual Boozaar**, October 25, Coryell County Courthouse Square. Trick-or-treating, costume contests, games, vendors and more!

**Corks & Kegs**, November 8, downtown Gatesville. More details to come.

**Powerlifting Meet**, November 8, Gatesville Civic Center, 301 Veterans Memorial Loop.

**Gun Show**, November 15–16, Gatesville Civic Center, 301 Veterans Memorial Loop.

**Almond Blossom Ministries: Apple of His Eye Women's Conference**, November 22, Gatesville Civic Center, 301 Veterans Memorial Loop.

**Christmas at the Ballpark**, November 29–December 31, Gatesville Sports Complex,

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

**Prairie Experience**, October 4, 5–8 p.m., Goldthwaite Pavilion at Legacy Plaza, 1012 W. Third St. The Texas Botanical Gardens & Native American Interpretive Center hosts its signature annual fundraiser. Now in its 16th year, this beloved event blends heart-felt community connection with rich cultural celebration and Native American representation. To get tickets, contact the Texas Botanical Gardens & Native American Interpretive Center at (325) 451-1075, Tuesday–Thursday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

**Observe the Moon at Space Night**, October 7, 6–8 p.m., Goldthwaite Elementary School, 1501 Campbell St. This free, family-friendly event invites learners of all ages on an interactive journey through the cosmos. A collaborative effort between Goldthwaite Consolidated Independent School District and the Texas Botanical Gardens & Native American Interpretive Center in association with NASA's International Observe the Moon Night.

**Kirby Fry: Permaculture Design and the Natural Regions of Texas**, October 18, 10 a.m., Goldthwaite Pavilion at Legacy Plaza, 1012 W. Third Street. More information can be found at [legacyplaza.org](http://legacyplaza.org).

**Hunters Appreciation Chili Lunch**, November 1, 11 a.m.–1 p.m., Goldthwaite Pavilion, 1014 Third St. Chili lunch for purchase. Featuring vendors, music and free beer. More info to come.

**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

**Main Street Market on the Square**, October 11, November 8; 9 a.m.–noon. Vendor spots (homemade and handmade items) are free and are on a first-come, first-served basis. For vendor applications, contact Hamilton Main Street at (254) 784-5610

### 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.

or [mainstreet@hamiltontx.com](mailto:mainstreet@hamiltontx.com).

**Halloween Trunk or Treat**, October 31, 4–6 p.m., downtown on the square. Businesses will be passing out candy for a festive Halloween celebration. More details can be found at [facebook.com/allthingshamilton](https://facebook.com/allthingshamilton).

**Christmas on the Square**, November 29, downtown on the Square. Kickoff the Christmas season with a celebration downtown. Join us for cookie decorating, hot chocolate, a vendor market, and a visit from Santa Claus. More details can be found at [facebook.com/allthingshamilton](https://facebook.com/allthingshamilton).

**Circle T Arena**, 4007 W. 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 Hamilton Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Center at [hamiltontexaschamberofcommerce.com](http://hamiltontexaschamberofcommerce.com) or [facebook.com/allthingshamilton](https://facebook.com/allthingshamilton), call (254) 386-3216, or email [hamiltonchambertx@gmail.com](mailto:hamiltonchambertx@gmail.com).

## Hico

**Choctoberfest**, October 4, 406 S. Grubbs St. The event is sponsored by Wiseman House Chocolates. For more information, call (254) 796-2499.

**Downtown Trick-or-Treat**, October 31, 3:30–6 p.m., downtown Hico. Dress up the kids and bring your candy bags for a fun family night.

**Billy the Kid Film Festival**, November 7–9. More details to come.

**Holiday Open House**, November 15, 10 a.m.–5 p.m., downtown. Participating businesses will have treats, door prizes and special discounts.

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

## Lampasas

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

**Second Saturday Sale—Flea Market Style**, October 11, November 8; 10 a.m.–2 p.m.; Storage Near Me Texas; 1010 E. Fourth St.

**Squared Silly**, October 25, 5–7:30 p.m., Lampasas Courthouse Square. Fun for the whole family. Activities include a costume contest, hay wagon, bounce houses, haunted house and more. For more information, contact [info@visionlampasas.org](mailto:info@visionlampasas.org).

**Trunk or Treat**, October 31, Sylvia Tucker Memorial Park, 12641 U.S. Highway 190, Kempner. For more information, please call City Hall at (512) 932-2180 or email [citysecretary@kempnertx.gov](mailto:citysecretary@kempnertx.gov).

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.

October 4, noon–4 p.m., music by Keelan Donovan.

October 11, 2–5 p.m., music by Acquired Taste.

October 18, 1–5 p.m., music by Nate Harris.

October 25, 1–5 p.m., music by Natalie Metcalf.

November 1, noon–4 p.m., music by Keelan Donovan.

November 8, 1–5 p.m., music by Lampasas' own Bobby Starr.

November 15, 1–5 p.m., music by Chad Alan.

November 29, 1–5 p.m., music by Chase Gassaway.

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).

## Pearl

**Pearl Bluegrass Jam**, October 4, November 1. 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. Please follow us on Facebook at Pearl Bluegrass Jam for the monthly schedule of events and more information.

**Junk-in-Your-Trunk and Farmers Market**, October 4, November 1; 9 a.m.–3 p.m. Pearl 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.

**Pearl Fall Main Street Festival**, October 4, 10 a.m.–2 p.m., Pearl Community Church, 6795 FM 183. Featuring live music with Aureorean Anthem, fried ribs and fish with fixings, bake sale of homemade goodies, junk and disorderly sale, and a bounce house for the kids. You don't want to miss this! Bring your family, friends and appetite. For more information, contact P-Cay at (817) 269-3109. All donations will benefit disaster relief.

## San Saba

**Pecan Capital Trade Days**, October 11, 10 a.m.–2 p.m., downtown Courthouse Square. For setup, details and more information, please contact Joan or Don VanGorp at (325) 372-1937.

**San Saba County Fall Festival**, October 25, Risien Park, U.S. Highway 190. Will have vendors, games, costume contest, music, food and more. For more information, contact the San Saba Visitors Center at (325) 372-5200.

**San Saba Volunteer Fire Department Steak Supper**, October 31, 4–8 p.m., San Saba Fire House, 704 E. Storey St. The San Saba VFD welcomes hunters with a delicious steak supper. The supper is a donation-only fundraiser served with all the trimmings. All are welcome!

**Dancing Lights Show**, November 28–January 6, 6 p.m., Mill Pond Park, 110 Thomas Stewart Drive. The display is set to music as you drive through colorful, twinkling lights of Christmas.

For more information about San Saba events contact the San Saba County Chamber of Commerce at (325) 372-5141 or visit [sansasbatexas.com](http://sansasbatexas.com).



### POWER TIP

Avoid heating up the fridge by inserting hot food. Let it cool to as close to room temperature as is safe for the food or recipe before putting it in the fridge.

JOSÉ ARAÚJO | ISTOCK.COM