

MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER/ CEO STEVE

YOUNG

Saving Energy Is Just as Green as Solar Panels

MOST ELECTRICITY COMES FROM large power plants that produce many megawatts for widespread consumption, but concerns over the environment and electricity costs have prompted some consumers to invest in their own power supplies.

Known as distributed generation, or DG, on-site power sources draw electricity from wind turbines and solar panels. But not everyone is interested in or can afford to install DG equipment. Here at Hamilton County Electric Cooperative, we'd like to remind you that reducing electricity consumption can be just as green as generating your own power.

Options for energy conservation can include simple techniques such as wrapping water heaters with a thermal cover or using a solar clothes dryer (i.e., a clothesline). More involved procedures include upgrading your home's insulation and adding roof vents.

For more ways to conserve electricity, whether it's to save money or protect the environment, visit texascooppower.com or see our helpful Energy Tips page at hamiltonelectric.coop.

We encourage members to work with us before investing in DG. We have experts on hand who can help you understand the upfront costs and longterm savings of solar power and discuss the best options for our area.

Power installations connected to the electric grid must be approved by the co-op and follow safety and electric reliability guidelines for the protection of our employees and other co-op members. The guidelines also ensure that the performance of the entire electric distribution system is not jeopardized.

Also please be aware that there are scammers and dishonest installers hoping to take advantage of unsuspecting consumers who are in the market for renewable energy options. Before signing a contract, please call us at (254) 386-3123 to verify the legitimacy of sales companies and contractors.

We recognize our members' diverse approaches to energy conservation and want to remind you that we are a resource no matter which direction you go—using less power or generating your own. ●



RICK PATRICK

Susan's Sriracha Bacon Chicken Bites

4 small boneless, skinless chicken breast halves (6 ounces each or about 1½ pounds total)
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
2 tablespoons Sriracha sauce
½ teaspoon cumin
16 slices bacon
⅓ cup packed light brown sugar

1. Cut each chicken breast into large, bite-size (about 1-inch) chunks and put them in a 1-gallon zipper bag.

2. Stir together oil, lime juice, Sriracha sauce and cumin and pour over the chicken. Let marinate for about 1 hour.

3. Cut each bacon slice into 2 pieces and drape each piece over and around a chicken cube, securing with a toothpick. Arrange wraps on a flat surface and sprinkle evenly with brown sugar.

4. Spray top rack of a broiler pan with high-temperature grilling spray and arrange chicken wraps on top.

5. Bake 6 inches under the broiling element at 350 degrees for 25–28 minutes or until chicken is cooked through.

6. When chicken is cooked, set oven to broil and broil about 3–6 minutes, watching carefully all the while, until sugar starts to brown and edges of bacon are crisp.

Makes 32 appetizers.

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



Start Warm-Weather Savings on First Nice Day

THE WEATHER OUTSIDE can be as frightful in March as in January, but the early spring usually sneaks in a few warm-weather days here and there. Take advantage of them.

Turn off your furnace and treat your home—and its occupants—to a taste of the pleasant weather to come. Here's how to take advantage of those early glimpses of spring—and save some household energy while you're at it:

Open the windows. If it's warm enough to let some fresh air in during this in-between season of no heaters and no air conditioners, do it. Leave the windows open overnight to air out the house and stave off the need for the air conditioner. It's good for your health to bring in fresh air after a long winter of homes being mostly closed up.

Let the sunshine in. Open the drapes on sunny days and let nature keep your home warm. As it starts getting hot, though, cover windows up so incoming sunrays won't compete with the air conditioner.

Cook outdoors. Dust off the grill and start cookout season early this year.

Switch the direction of the blades on your ceiling fan. For warm weather, return the blades to a counterclockwise rotation. And be sure to turn off the fan when the room isn't occupied.

Readjust your water heater's temperature to 120 degrees if you cranked it up a few degrees for the winter.

Give your clothes dryer a rest and line dry clothes. When you need to run the dryer, run full loads only and make sure to clean the clothes dryer lint trap after each use.

Use LED bulbs. Replace all your old incandescent lightbulbs with LED bulbs. They use less energy and last longer. Remember to turn the lights out when you're done!

Schedule your home's air conditioner maintenance now, before you need to turn on the air conditioning for the summer.

Hamilton County Electric Cooperative Association

CONTACT US

420 N. Rice St., Hamilton P.O. Box 753, Hamilton, TX 76531 Local (254) 386-3123 Toll-Free 1-800-595-3401 Web hamiltonelectric.coop

General Manager/CEO Steve Young

Board of Directors

Sam Campbell, President, District 6 Dusty Duncan, Vice President, District 5 Bob Gardner, Secretary-Treasurer, District 2 Jack Caldwell, District 1 Melvin Eilers Jr., District 7 Ervin Koerth, District 3 Robert Straley, District 4

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

Notice of Director Election

Nominating committee to name board nominees

THE MEMBERS OF Hamilton County Electric Cooperative will elect directors by mail-in ballot Friday, August 6.

In accordance with cooperative bylaws, a nominating committee will be appointed by the board of directors at its regular board meeting March 25. The nominating committee will meet May 6 at 2 p.m. at the cooperative's main office at 112 E. Gentry St. in Hamilton to make nominations for directors to serve in districts 2 and 5. Terms of the incumbents in those districts expire this year.

District 2 is the area east of U.S. Highway 281 in Hamilton County. District 5 is the area west of U.S. Highway 281 in Lampasas County, including all the area in San Saba and Llano counties.

Prospective candidates must meet the director qualifications as specified in the HCEC bylaws (Article IV, Section 4.02).

Ballots will be mailed to members June 23 and should be returned to the cooperative no later than 1 p.m. Friday, August 6, at which time the ballots will be counted. The results of the election will be announced on the co-op's website, hamiltonelectric.coop; Facebook page; and during Hamilton County EC's annual membership meeting Friday, August 6, unless the meeting is canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following are excerpts from the bylaws of Hamilton County EC, which explain the nomination and election procedures.

Article IV: Directors

SECTION 4.01. Number and General Powers. The business and affairs of the Cooperative shall be managed by a board of seven (7) directors (herein referred to individually as "Director" and collectively as "Directors", "Board of Directors" or "Board") or under the authority of such Board of Directors, and subject to the Board's direction and oversight. The Board shall exercise all of the powers of the Cooperative except such as are by law or by the Cooperative's Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws conferred upon or reserved to the Members and such as the Board may delegate to or authorize to be performed by the Cooperative's management and employees.

SECTION 4.02. Qualifications. A Director or Director candidate must comply with the following Bylaw provisions:

(a) DIRECTOR QUALIFICATIONS. To be eligible to become or remain a Director of the Cooperative, a person shall:

(i) Be a natural person;

(ii) Be a Member of the Cooperative for a period of twenty-four (24) consecutive months immediately prior to nomination or petition for election;

(iii) Be a Member in good standing with the Cooperative and shall not have (or if a Joint Member with a spouse who has) one or more accounts with the Cooperative or its affiliates that are not in good financial standing, or have (or if a Joint Member with a spouse who has) a controlling interest in another entity, association, organization, or trust that has one or more accounts with the Cooperative or its affiliates that are not in good financial standing;

(iv) As provided in Article I, Section 1.04(f) of the Bylaws, in a Joint Membership, either spouse may serve as a Director, but not simultaneously, and only if both spouses meet the qualifications for Director as stated herein; otherwise, neither spouse may serve as Director;

(v) For at least twenty-four (24) consecutive months immediately prior to nomination or petition for election and throughout such person's term as Director if elected, maintain a principal place of residence, as required to claim such person's residence homestead exemption pursuant to Chapter 11 of the Texas Tax Code, in the District for which such person seeks election or was elected;

(vi) Receive electric service from the Cooperative at such principal place of residence described in Section 4.02 (a)(v);

(vii) Not be employed by the Cooperative or have been an employee of the Cooperative within twenty (20) years of serving on the Cooperative's Board of Directors;

(viii) Not be a close relative of an incumbent Director or of an employee of the Cooperative, unless otherwise determined by the Board of Directors in its sole discretion; (ix) Not hold office as a Director who is an incumbent or candidate for public office for which a salary or wage is paid;

(x) Not be in any way employed by or financially associated in a competing enterprise, or a business selling electric energy or selling products or services to the Cooperative;

(xi) Unless excused by the Board of Directors, which action shall be noted in the minutes of that meeting of the Board of Directors, not miss three (3) consecutive regular meetings of the Board of Directors, or miss three (3) regular meetings of the Board of Directors within the most recent twelve (12) month period; and

(xii) Not have been convicted of a felony in this State, any other State in the United States, or received the equivalence of a felony conviction in any other country.

(b) DIRECTOR DISQUALIFICATIONS. After being elected or appointed, if a Director does not comply with all Director Qualifications, the Board shall disqualify the Director and the individual is no longer a Director if:

(i) The Board notifies the Director in writing of the basis for the disqualification and provides the Director an opportunity to comment regarding the Board's proposed disqualification; and

(ii) Within twenty (20) days after the Board notifies the Director of the proposed disqualification, the Director neither complies with nor meets the Director Qualifications.

SECTION 4.03. Election. Election of Directors shall be held annually by mail-in ballot in accordance with Section 4.07 of the Bylaws.

SECTION 4.04. Tenure. Directors shall serve a term of three (3) years or until Director(s)' successor(s) has been elected or appointed. Upon the Directors' election, Directors shall, subject to the provisions of the Bylaws with respect to the removal of Directors, serve until the annual meeting of the Members of the year in which such Directors' terms expire or until such Directors' successors shall have been elected and shall have qualified. Whether elected or appointed, Directors shall have qualified subject to the provisions of the Bylaws with respect to removal or resignation of Directors. Failure of an election for a given year shall allow the incumbents whose directorships would have been voted on to hold over only until the next Member meeting at which a quorum is present.

SECTION 4.05. Directorate Districts.

(a) The territory served by the Cooperative shall be divided into the following seven (7) Directorate Districts with each District represented by one Director, who has and maintains his or her principal place of residence in that District, as provided in Section 4.02 (a)(v) of this Article:

(1) The area West of U.S. Highway 281 in Hamilton County, designated as "District 1";

(2) The area East of U.S. Highway 281 in Hamilton County, designated as "District 2";

(3) The area in Coryell County, designated as "District 3";

(4) The area East of U.S. Highway 281 in Lampasas County, designated as "District 4";

(5) The area West of U.S. Highway 281 in Lampasas County, including all the area in San Saba and Llano Counties, designated as "District 5";

(6) The area South of U.S. Highway 84 in Mills County and West to the Cooperative boundary line, designated as "District 6"; and

(7) The area North of U.S. Highway 84 bounded on East by Hamilton County line and on West by Cooperative boundary line, designated as "District 7."

(b) The Board of Directors shall annually review and if necessary, re-divide and/or geographically relocate Districts to ensure that Director Districts equitably represent the Members.

(c) Within sixty (60) days following any Director District revision, and at least sixty (60) days before the next Annual Member Meeting, the Cooperative shall notify any Members affected by the Director District revision by mail using direct mail, billing inserts, or the Cooperative's monthly magazine.

(d) No Director District revision may: (i) increase an existing Director's term, or (ii) shorten any existing Director's term unless the affected Director gives written consent.

SECTION 4.06. Nominations.

(a) NOMINATION BY COMMITTEE.

(1) COMMITTEE QUALIFICATIONS. It shall be the duty of the Board of Directors to appoint, not less than thirty (30) days prior to the date on which Directors are to be elected, a Committee on Nominations, consisting of:

(i) Not less than five (5) and no more than eleven (11) Members of the Cooperative;

 (ii) Members who are not existing Cooperative employees, agents, officers, Directors or known candidates for Director;

(iii) Members who are not close relatives (as hereinafter defined) or Members of the same household of such existing employees, agents, officers, Directors or known candidates for Director; and

(iv) Members who are selected from different geographical sections so as to ensure equitable representation, including at least one (1) Member from each of the Directorate Districts to be filled at the election.

(2) COMMITTEE NOMINATION PROCESS.

(i) The Committee shall prepare and post at the principal office of the Cooperative at least twenty (20) days prior to the date of the election of Directors a list of nominations for Directors to be elected, listing separately the nominee(s) for each Directorate District from or with respect to which a Director must, pursuant to this Section, be elected.

(ii) The Committee may include as many nominees for any Director to be elected from or with respect to any Directorate District as it deems desirable.

(b) NOMINATION BY PETITION. Any one hundred fifty (150) or more Members of the Cooperative, acting together, may submit to the Secretary of the Cooperative additional nominations in writing over such Members' signatures, listing the Members' nominee(s) in like manner, not less than one hundred (100) days prior to the date the votes are to be counted, and the Nominating Committee shall post such nominations at the same time and place where the list of nominations made by the Committee is posted.

(c) NOTICE OF NOMINATIONS. The Secretary shall mail to the Members with the notice of the meeting of the Members at which Directors are to be elected, or separately, but at least ten (10) days prior to the date of such meeting, a statement of the names of all nominee(s) for each Directorate District from or with respect to which one or more Directors must be elected, showing clearly those nominated by the Committee and those nominated by petition, if any. Notice of nominations shall be in accordance Section 4.06 of the Bylaws, Subsection (a)(2)(i) for nominations by Committee on Nominations and Subsection (b) for nominations by petition.

Notwithstanding the provisions contained in this Section, failure to comply with any of such provisions shall not affect in any manner whatsoever the validity of any action taken by the Board of Directors after the election of Directors.

SECTION 4.07. Campaigning for Election; Voting for Directors; Validity of Board Action. Any and all candidate(s) for election or re-election as Director shall: (i) comply with the Bylaws and policies of the Cooperative, as adopted by the Board of Directors; and (ii) notify the Cooperative CEO/Manager in writing, no more than fourteen (14) days after the date the nominee is notified by the Cooperative that his or her name has been certified by the nominating committee, of the candidate(s)' intention to campaign for Director, including, but not limited to, the manner and means of campaign. The election of Directors shall be held annually by mail-in ballot. Each Member shall be entitled to cast only one vote for each Directorate District for which a Director is to be elected. Ballots marked in violation of the foregoing restriction with respect to one or more Directorate Districts shall be invalid and shall not be counted with respect to such District or Districts. Notwithstanding the provisions contained in this Section, failure to comply with any of such provisions shall not affect in any manner whatsoever the validity of any action taken by the Board of Directors after the election of Directors.

SECTION 4.13. "Close Relative" Defined.

As used in the Bylaws, "close relative" means a person who, by blood or marriage, including half, foster, step and adoptive kin, is either a spouse, child, grandchild, parent, grandparent, brother or sister of the principal.



A Wild Idea

One family's business is breathing new life into Evant

JOHN DRENNAN'S ROOTS in Evant run deep. His paternal great-great-grandparents, Pompey and Ellen Callie Lee Burney,

moved to the Hill Country town in 1884. Their son, John W. Burney, operated the Burney Hardware Store on the west side of the town's square until around 1950. Drennan's maternal great-great-grandparents settled in the adjoining Bee House community around the time of the Civil War.

Drennan spent summers with his grandparents in Evant and remembers the thriving town as it was in the 1970s.

When Drennan saw the formerly bustling town at the crossroads of highways 281 and 84 languishing, it propelled him into action.

In 2009, Drennan's family began buying downtown buildings on the square and restoring them. Although Evant is located only an hour from Waco and north Austin, people driving through didn't necessarily have a reason to stop. The town needed an economic engine that would attract visitors

and revitalize the community, so the Drennans hatched a wild plan.

When the opportunity arose to purchase a former hunting preserve at the site where Coryell, Hamilton and Lampasas counties meet, the Drennans jumped on it. They bought the nearly 1,000-acre parcel, cross-fenced it, built roads, brought in more exotic animals, installed cabins and RV sites, and opened Buena Vista Wildlife Safari

and RV Park on January 23, 2019.

The safari park is home to more than 25 species that live in nature on 325 acres. The remaining acreage is held for private management of the animals. A 3.5-mile road through the park takes about an hour to navigate. Visitors can drive in the comfort of their own car or rent the site's party bus for a fun









SAFARI. CABINS. RV.



WELCOME TO EVANT, TEXAS

trip through with people in their pod. A highlight of the park is its breathtaking mountaintop view.

Some species along the safari road, such as donkeys and bison, are attention-seekers and will come right up to vehicles. Others are more reticent and must be looked for.

D'Ann, John's wife, says they designed the facility to accommodate the animals' innate proclivities. "We wanted the animals to live in the most natural, healthy environment possible," she says. "We feed daily. So when you come through with food, the animals aren't starving. They get to choose whether they want to come see you."

The Drennans have fond memories of visiting their grandparents as children and designed Buena Vista to have an oldfashioned feel. They continually add new amenities to the park, including a petting zoo, swimming and fishing holes, an orchard, a chicken coop (guests are often treated to free eggs), a playground, a dog run and horse stalls, and a walking path with old farm implements on display. The grounds also include an event center that's available for corporate functions, weddings and other events.

Building Buena Vista Wildlife Safari and RV Park was a family affair. The Drennans' daughter, Kat, created much of the artwork that hangs in the cabins, designed the park's T-shirts and runs its Instagram account. Their son, Thomas, loves working outside, so he has helped build the pavilion over the petting zoo and most recently helped remodel the bunkhouse, which will be rented out for larger family gatherings.

The plan to revitalize the area was beginning to take off when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. "That's been hard on small mom and pop businesses in Evant," John says. But with local land sales booming and a new large community being built just north of Evant, he expects that downtown buildings will again be fully leased in the near future.

In the meantime, the Drennans are doing their part. They say one of the best things about their park is its connection with the community. "We have the best staff and guests at Buena Vista," D'Ann says. "It has such a happy vibe, which spills over into the community."

Buena Vista Wildlife Safari is open every day except Thanksgiving and Christmas. Cabins, RV sites, the event center and a bunkhouse that sleeps 12 are all available for rent. For more information visit buenavistawildlifesafari.com or call (254) 791-5441. If you're interested in growing your business in downtown Evant, call (254) 781-3138 for leasing information.

Community Calendar

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

Comanche

Second Saturday Shenanigans Sip, Snack and Shop; March 13; 10 a.m.–4 p.m.; historic downtown square.

Comanche Evening Market, March 20, 5–8 p.m., downtown.

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

Copperas Cove

Free COVID-19 testing, every Tuesday, 10 a.m.–2 p.m., the Cove House Free Clinic, 108 E. Halstead Ave. Appointment required. Call (254) 289-9865. For information about Copperas Cove events, contact the Copperas Cove Chamber of Commerce at (254) 547-7571, email activities@ copperascove.com or visit copperascove.com.

Evant

Buena Vista Wildlife Safari and RV Park St. Patrick's Day Special, March 17, 9 a.m.–4 p.m., 1830 S. U.S. Highway 281. Show up to the safari wearing green and receive 10% off your ticket. Tickets are good all day with unlimited trips through the park.

Market Days, third Saturday, March–June, 9 a.m.–3 p.m., Evant square. Free for vendors. For more information contact P-Cay Burkhalter at (254) 791-5441.

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

Gatesville

Gatesville Gun Show; March 6–7; Saturday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Admission \$7, 15 and under free with adult admission. A Whipp Farm Productions show. For more information about Gatesville events, go to visitgatesvilletx.com or gatesvilletx.info or call the Gatesville Chamber of Commerce at (254) 865-2617 or Gatesville Convention and Visitors Bureau at (254) 865-8951.

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.

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

Hico

Annual Spring Open House, March 20, 10 a.m.–6 p.m. Hico merchants celebrate spring with refreshments, discounts and door prizes.





Downtown Hico Spring Market,

April 17, 10 a.m.–6 p.m. Downtown streets will be closed off for vendors and games.

Girls' Night Out, May 13, 4–7 p.m. Participating merchants will have refreshments, discounts and door prizes.

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

Kempner

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

Lampasas

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 Flea Market, March 6, 9 a.m.– 5 p.m., Pearl Community Center grounds. Secure a spot with a \$10 donation—first come, first park. For more information call Linda at (254) 865-9282 or Kay at (254) 865-5864.

Junk-in-Your-Trunk Sale and Plant

Sale, April 3, 9 a.m.–1 p.m., Pearl Community Center parking lot on FM 183. The Pearl Book Cottage will be open, and there will be free vendor spaces. For more information, call (254) 865-5864 or (254) 865-9282.

Pearl Bluegrass is canceled until further notice.

Pidcoke

For more information about Pidcoke United Methodist Church events, call (254) 300-6342 or visit pidcoke-umc.org.

San Saba

For information about San Saba events, contact the San Saba Visitor Center at (325) 372-5200 or the chamber of commerce 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 two months. 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.



Hamilton County EC Scholarships Available

WILL YOUR 2021 high school graduate need money for college? Hamilton County Electric Cooperative will award \$1,000 scholarships for the 2021–2022 school year (\$500 per fall and spring semester).

To be eligible you must:

- Be a senior attending a high school within the HCEC service area and graduating in May 2021.
- 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 fulltime student to 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 Hamilton County EC. For more information and an application, contact Keela Payne at (254) 386-9428 or keela.payne@hamiltonelectric.coop.