



MESSAGE
FROM
GENERAL
MANAGER/
CEO

STEVE
YOUNG

Happy Holidays and Hopeful New Year

I **DON'T KNOW** about you, but I am excited about the end of this year and the approach of the clean slate that a new year offers.

Events in 2020 presented some challenges for ordinary folks and businesses such as Hamilton County Electric Cooperative—but thanks to the hard work and dedication of our employees and the forward-thinking leadership of our board of directors, your co-op met those challenges. We're poised to meet whatever challenges and opportunities might come our way in 2021.

The cooperative exists to fulfill a purpose: To provide the best possible electric service at the lowest possible cost, improving the quality of life for our communities in the process. That's the cause to which everyone at your co-op is dedicated, year in and year out.

So as the new year draws near, I'd like to take a moment to thank all of the employees at Hamilton County EC. I've never seen a more dedicated group of people. They come to work each day with service to the co-op's members on their minds and the safety of themselves and their co-workers foremost.

I'd also like to thank the co-op's board of directors, whose members have taken on the responsibility of directing a multimillion-dollar utility. It takes real commitment to keep up with the ever-evolving standards of this complex and fast-changing industry while making decisions that affect thousands of their fellow members.

I'd especially like to thank you, our member-owners, who make all of our jobs possible. Thank you for your support and understanding when things don't go right; thank you for paying your bills on time, which keeps the cooperative financially strong; and thank you for your participation in our annual meeting and community activities.

Without your cooperation, there would be no cooperative.

As we say goodbye to 2020 and look ahead to 2021, let us hope it will be a great year for all of us. Merry Christmas, happy holidays and happy new year from Hamilton County Electric Cooperative! ■

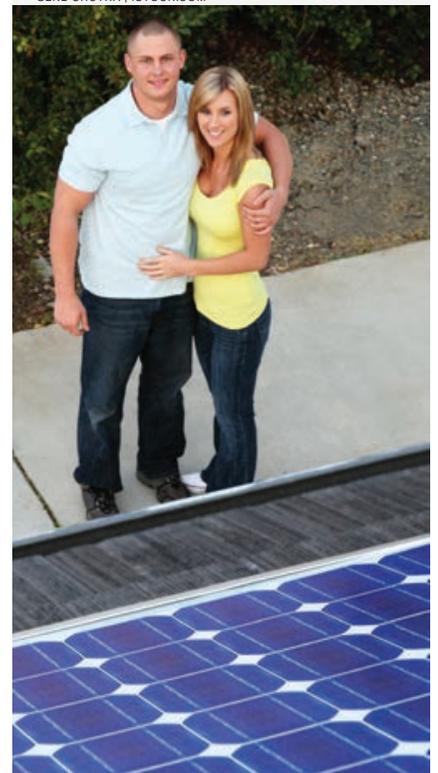


ROSCHETZKYISTOCKPHOTO | ISTOCK.COM

Considering Solar?

HAMILTON COUNTY ELECTRIC Cooperative recommends that any member who is considering the purchase of a wind or solar system contact Joe Raibourn at (254) 386-3123 or 1-800-595-3401. He can verify any energy production information given to you by a supplier and discuss HCEC's rates and requirements for distributed generation members. We urge you to take advantage of this service provided by HCEC. ■

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FILADENDRON | ISTOCK.COM

Keep Holiday Decor Safe for Children

THE HOLIDAY SEASON is a sensory treat for children and adults alike, with tempting sights, smells, tastes and textures. We decorate our homes with lights, glass, garlands, candles and more—many of which pose potential risks for youngsters.

Electrical Safety Foundation International recommends taking the following safety precautions to ensure that this special time of year does not result in a decoration-related tragedy.

- ▶ Read the manufacturer’s instructions and warning labels for any decoration that will be used around young children, such as electronic trains and animatronic dolls. Note if it is appropriate for their age group and determine whether adult supervision is required; plan accordingly.
- ▶ Instead of traditional candles, try using battery-operated candles so you can avoid the hazards associated with open flames.
- ▶ Keep candles, matches and lighters out of reach in a locked cabinet.
- ▶ Never leave children unsupervised when candles are lit.
- ▶ Strings of lights and garland are staples of holiday decorating, but they can also pose a strangulation hazard. They should never be used as toys.
- ▶ In homes with small children, try to avoid using decorations that are sharp or breakable. Otherwise, remember to place glass and breakable ornaments out of the reach of young children.
- ▶ Avoid putting Christmas tree lights, ornaments, metal hooks and other small, mouth-size decorations near the ground or on lower limbs, where they may be easily reached by young children.
- ▶ Holly berries, wax fruits and other small decorations can present choking hazards.
- ▶ Keep this in mind when arranging your decorations: Cover any unused outlets on extension cords with plastic caps to prevent children from coming in contact with the live circuit.
- ▶ Place electrical cords out of the reach of small children.
- ▶ Never allow children to play with holiday lights, electrical decorations or cords. ■

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

420 N. Rice St., 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

Add Energy Efficiency to Your Christmas Menu

IT TAKES A LOT of energy to cook all day and host a house full of company for Christmas. So while you're making your grocery list this holiday season, start a list of ways you and your family can cut down on energy use.

- ▶ **Lower the thermostat.** If you're cooking all day, your kitchen will get really warm. Some of that heat will spread throughout the house. So there's no need to keep the thermostat at its usual setting.
- ▶ **Don't turn on your oven until it's full.** Cook several dishes at once. If their recommended cooking temps are within 25 degrees of each other, everything will cook as it should.
- ▶ **Identify dishes that you can cook in the microwave,** which heats food faster than the oven and uses about one-third the electricity.
- ▶ **Run your dishwasher only when it's full.** Using the dishwasher saves more energy and water than hand-washing.
- ▶ **Cool leftovers on the counter before putting them into the refrigerator.** That will keep the fridge from having to work so hard to cool off hot food. ■



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CHARLES MANN | ISTOCK.COM

Fundraiser Supports the Co-op Family

THE TEXAS RURAL ELECTRIC Women's Association raised more than \$100,000 this year for co-op causes, despite not being able to hold its annual fundraising events at Texas Electric Cooperatives' annual meeting, which was held virtually this year amid the COVID-19 pandemic. TEC is the state association that represents and supports the more than 70 electric co-ops across Texas.

TREWA's mission is to educate co-op consumer-members and the general public about electric cooperative systems and raise awareness of the issues affecting co-ops and the good that they do. The group presents a unified front for member-owned electric cooperatives as they improve the quality of life in rural Texas.

Fundraising activities at the TEC Annual Meeting traditionally include a membership booth, arts and crafts booth, raffles, and a silent auction. Members of electric cooperative boards and their families and co-op employees support TREWA and its objectives through participation in these fundraising activities. This year, with in-person giving impossible, the group counted on the generosity of the co-op family. They came through, giving \$100,000.

"We put our good faith into the cooperative family to help us raise this money to continue our good work in these trying times," said Karen Culpepper, TREWA board president and a Wise Electric Cooperative employee. "You came through with flying colors. We are extremely grateful for this overwhelming response."

TREWA plans to give the funds to co-op initiatives: \$30,000 for scholarships, \$10,000 to the Government-in-Action Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C., and \$85,000 for government relations advocacy efforts. The group awarded 20 scholarships in 2020 to high school students who are members of electric cooperatives in Texas.

Members of electric cooperatives, board members and families of board members are welcome to become members of TREWA. Membership costs just \$10 per year, and applications can be found online at trewa.org. ■

Merry Christmas

"Glory to God in the highest, and on
earth peace, goodwill toward men."
Luke 2:14

The offices of Hamilton County EC
will be closed December 24–25
and January 1 for the holidays.



Winterize Safely

AS YOU TAKE STEPS to winterize your home, use the opportunity to check for electrical hazards. The dry winter air is a perfect environment for electric shock and fire. Use this electrical safety checklist to eliminate hazards.

- ▶ Check outlets and make sure they are not overloaded or warm to the touch.
- ▶ Examine electrical cords for cracks, frays and damaged plugs.
- ▶ Check that lightbulbs are the proper wattage and securely installed in light fixtures so bulbs don't overheat and ignite curtains or nearby furniture.
- ▶ Outlets related to frequent circuit breaker trips or blown fuses should be inspected by a professional. Dimming lights and shrinking displays on TVs and computer monitors are also electrical warning signs that warrant an inspection.
- ▶ Make sure bathroom, laundry room, kitchen and outdoor outlets have working ground-fault circuit interrupters, and test and reset them monthly. If these outlets don't have GFCIs, have them installed.
- ▶ Test your smoke detector batteries and replace them every six months.
- ▶ If an electric space heater is used, make sure the wiring is adequate. Don't place a portable heater in high-traffic areas and never use extension cords with electric heaters. ■



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BERNARD BODO / ISTOCK.COM

Driving Blindfolded on the Highway

WOULD YOU DRIVE on a highway blindfolded? Of course not. But if you text while driving 55 miles per hour on a highway, you are essentially doing just that.

Five seconds is the average time your eyes are off the road while texting. When traveling at 55 mph, that's like driving the length of a football field while blindfolded. Talking on a cellphone also carries significant risks. According to the National Safety Council, drivers can miss seeing up to half of what's around them—traffic lights, stop signs, pedestrians—when talking on a phone.

In our digital world, people feel pressure to remain in constant contact, even when behind the wheel. As mobile technology use increases, distracted driving—talking, texting, sending emails—is a growing threat to community safety. We have all seen distracted drivers, and most likely, we ourselves have used a phone while driving. Drivers don't realize the dangers posed when they take their eyes or attention off the road.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, each day in the U.S., more than nine people are killed and more than 1,100 people are injured in crashes that are reported to involve a distracted driver.

Texting and cellphone use behind the wheel take your eyes off the road, your hands off the wheel and your focus off driving—putting the driver and others in danger, including passengers, pedestrians and other drivers—and the victims' families, friends, co-workers and community are impacted.

At Hamilton County Electric Cooperative, safety is a core value. At this time of year in particular, when more people are on the roads with people out shopping and families traveling to visit loved ones, our goal is to raise awareness and spur conversation about the dangers of distracted driving. Talking on a cellphone quadruples your risk of an accident—about the same as if you were driving drunk. Risk doubles again if you are texting while driving. We are committed to eliminating this unnecessary risk and believe that no conversation or text is worth the potential danger.

We encourage everyone in our community to help keep our families, friends and neighbors safe by putting their phones down and focusing on the road when they drive. Together we can put the brakes on distracted driving. ■

Lower Your Thermostat, Lower Your Bill

Conserve electricity and avoid higher winter energy bills. Setting the thermostat to 68 degrees when home—and lower when away—saves money.

Save even more!

Turn off and unplug unused lights and appliances.

Close shades and blinds at night to reduce heat loss.

Open them to capture solar heat on sunny days.

Avoid using electric space heaters.

Change furnace filters.

Weatherstrip or caulk around doors and windows.

Hamilton County EC encourages you to always use energy efficiently.

ALEKSANDRANAKIC | ISTOCK.COM



FUNWITHFOOD | ISTOCK.COM

Cranberry Delight

1 bag (12 ounces) raw cranberries

1½ cups sugar

1¼ cups Big Red soda

1 package (3 ounces) raspberry gelatin

1 small can (8 ounces) crushed pineapple, undrained

1 cup mini marshmallows

1 cup chopped nuts (pecans, walnuts or almonds)

½ cup flaked coconut

1. Grind cranberries with a food processor, then combine with sugar and refrigerate overnight.
2. The next day, heat the Big Red (on a stovetop or in a microwave) until hot, then dissolve gelatin into soda.
3. Stir in the cranberries and fold in the pineapple, marshmallows and nuts.
4. Pour the mixture into a serving dish or mold, sprinkle with coconut and chill until set.

SERVES 10–12

 Find this and more delicious recipes online at [TexasCoopPower.com](https://www.texascoopower.com).

Community Calendar

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

Comanche

Christmas Party and Open House, December 5, 1–4 p.m., Comanche County Historical Museum, 402 Moorman Road. Class of '57 band, snacks and delicious desserts.

Comanche 4D Jackpot & Youth Barrel Race; December 6, 13, 20, 27; 8–10 p.m.; 9101 Highway 377/67.

Second Saturday Shenanigans Sip, Snack and Shop; December 12; 10 a.m.–4 p.m.; historic downtown square.

Jingle Mingle, December 12, noon–1 p.m., the depot.

Tour of Homes, December 12, 1–4 p.m.

Explore Comanche Lighted Christmas Parade, 5K and Santa pictures; December 12; 4–6 p.m.; historic downtown square.

Comanche Evening Market, December 19, 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.

Krist Kindl Markt, December 3–6, Copperas Cove Civic Center, 1206 W. Ave. B.

Arts and crafts and food vendors. Thursday, 4–8 p.m.; Friday, 4–10 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.–10 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m.–3 p.m. The Markt welcomes shoppers looking for last-minute Christmas gifts and boasts great food and entertainment for all to enjoy. Santa also visits Krist Kindl every year. We invite you to experience Copperas Cove and join us for a weekend of shopping, dining and fun!

Krist Kindl Charity Pageant, December 5, 10 a.m., Civic Center, 1206 W. Ave. B.

Lighted Christmas Parade, December 5, 6 p.m. at City Park, 1206 W. Ave. B. Join the fun with this year's reformatted parade. Instead of having the traditional parade move on a route past crowds of people, units will remain stationary while motorist-spectators drive through the route to observe the parade. It will be like a free, drive-thru light display.

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

For information about Evant events, contact Charlotte Looney at cben1115@hotmail.com or (512) 750-9870.

Gatesville

Chamber Market Day, December 12, 9 a.m.–1 p.m., in the parking lot of the historic Cotton Belt Depot, 2307 S. Highway 36. Vendors display unique merchandise and farm-fresh foods. For more information visit gatesvillex.info.

Christmas Parade, December 12, 10 a.m. Junk the halls-themed Christmas decorations on festive floats, with marching units,

music and great family fun. Sponsored by the Gatesville Chamber of Commerce.

For information about Gatesville events, go to visitgatesvillex.com or gatesvillex.info or call the Gatesville Chamber of Commerce at (254) 865-2617 or Gatesville Convention and Visitors Bureau at (254) 865-8951.

Goldthwaite

Parade of Lights, December 5, dusk, downtown. Photos with Santa before the parade and hot chocolate afterward at the welcome center.

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 about 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

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

Kempner

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

Lampasas

Lampasas Trade Day, December 5, 9 a.m.–4 p.m., 2646 E. Highway 190. Merchandise includes 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, great food and concessions. For information contact Barbara Postel at (512) 734-1294.

Holiday Tour of Homes, December 6, 1–5 p.m. Tickets are \$10. For information contact Keystone Square Museum at (512) 556-2224.

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.

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.

Lometa

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

Pearl

Junk-in-Your-Trunk Sale and Plant Sale; December 5, January 2; 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.

Pidcoke

For more information about Pidcoke United Methodist Church events, call (254) 300-6342.

San Saba

Mill Pond Lighted Holiday Park Christmas Extravaganza, through January 5, 6–10 p.m., Mill Pond Park, 110 Thomas Stewart Drive. Set your

radio to 88.7 FM and enjoy music synced to more than 30 acres of dancing lights. Admission is free.

Pecan Capital Trade Day, December 5, 9 a.m.–2 p.m., San Saba County Courthouse, 500 E. Wallace St. Handcrafted bowls, beautiful crafts, baked goods, jellies, tamales and more each month. For vendor information call (325) 372-4029 or email sansabaedc@gmail.com.

Sip 'N' Stroll Wine Tasting Event, December 12, 2–6 p.m., 113 S. High St.

Lighted Christmas Parade, December 12, 6:30 p.m., downtown.

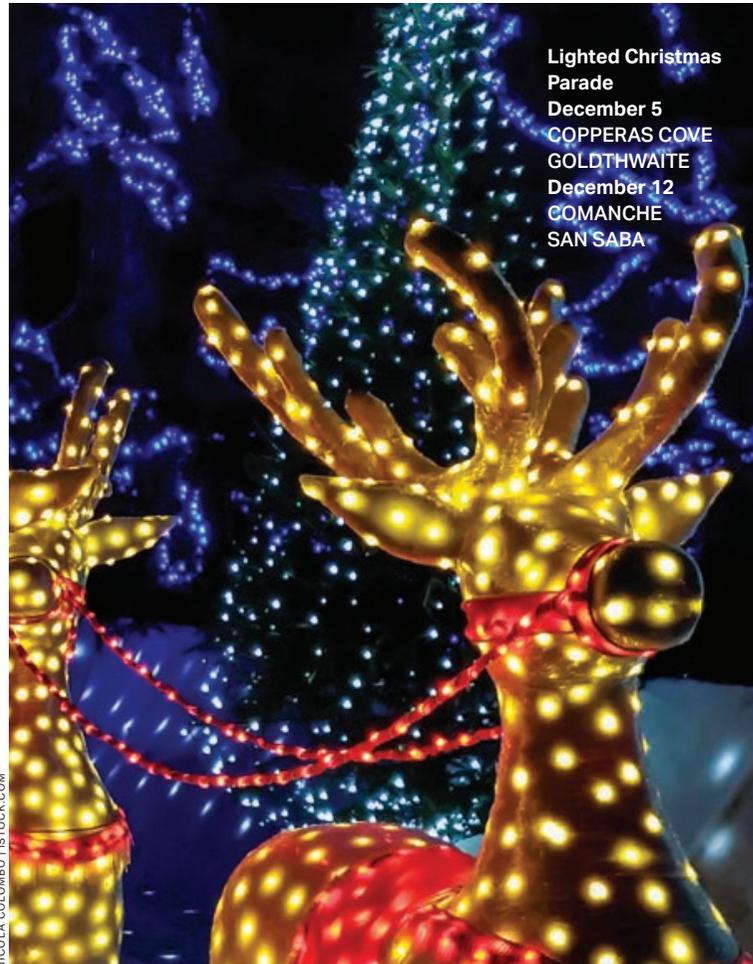
For more information about San Saba events, contact the San Saba Visitor Center at (325) 372-5200 or the chamber of commerce at (325) 372-5141, or visit sansabatexas.com/calendar or sansabachamber.org.



DID YOU KNOW?

Community-minded cooperative businesses are more likely to survive an economic downturn. Electric co-ops in Texas have been strong for more than 80 years.

PIXDELUXE | ISTOCK.COM



Lighted Christmas Parade
December 5
COPPERAS COVE
GOLDTHWAITE
December 12
COMANCHE
SAN SABA

NICOLA COLOMBO | ISTOCK.COM



POWER TIP

For protection against shock and electrocution, outdoor decorations should be plugged into outlets with ground-fault circuit interrupters.

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