

# Give the Gift of Your Time



## MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER/CEO STEVE YOUNG

**MANY OF US HAVE THAT ONE FAMILY MEMBER**—or maybe even a few—who, when asked what items are on his or her Christmas wish list, invariably answers, “I have everything I need.” This well-intentioned reply can frustrate a desire to cross a name off your list or check a box during the frenzied run-up to the holiday. But it’s also an opportunity to present a loved one with a more meaningful gift.

Time spent completing an errand or task that might be impractical or difficult for a relative or friend is a way to express affection without resorting to the often-impersonal gesture of pulling an item off a store shelf in defeat.

Tasks like changing the filter in a heating, ventilating and air conditioning system; replacing batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors; or caulking around windows can help make someone’s home safer or shave a few dollars off an electric bill. While you’re at it, make lunch or bring a baked good. The trinity of time together, a needed home repair or chore accomplished, and a homemade treat or meal is a tough one to

improve upon, as gifts go.

Hamilton County Electric Cooperative also appreciates the gift of your time. Whether it’s spent in attendance at the annual meeting, where we get valuable feedback on how to continually improve our processes and operations, or it’s a moment taken to alert us to a problem you notice with a power line or meter, those small yet meaningful measures of your time allow Hamilton County EC to thrive. Your willingness to engage with the co-op and frequent role as our eyes and ears in the field enable us to maintain a level of service that we’re proud of.

So why not extend that tradition of providing gifts of time and service to those closest to you this year? Take a look around an older relative’s home for any leaky faucets or outdoor light-bulbs that need replacing. Check for loose door or window locks, or clean an out-of-reach window. Your thoughtful gift will keep on giving, as it makes someone’s life that much easier or safer.

From all of us at your electric cooperative, merry Christmas and happy holidays.





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## Ready Your Home for a Winter Break

**IF YOU'RE PLANNING TO BE OUT OF TOWN FOR AN EXTENDED TIME DURING THE HOLIDAYS,** take heed of the following recommendations to save some energy and keep your home safe.

Set the thermostat to 50 degrees. This is a happy midpoint that avoids wasting energy to warm an empty house while still preventing damage to pipes and plants. If sub-20-degree days are forecast for while you are away, drip faucets.

Turn off your electric water heater at the breaker or set it to the lowest temperature possible.

To avoid a fire hazard, unplug the washer and dryer when you leave. Disconnect the hoses leading to the washer to prevent them from freezing.

Unplug all small appliances. You'll reduce the risk of a house fire and save a bit on your electric bill.

Don't broadcast your travel plans on social media. Instead, share photos from your trip after you return.

If you set a timer for lights and sprinklers, make sure to switch up the times over the days you'll be gone so it's not obvious to any onlookers that the house is empty when lights go on at 6 p.m. every day like clockwork. If possible, stagger several timers that control different lights to approximate the natural movement of someone through a house.

Close blinds and curtains. Don't advertise your belongings to any would-be house burglars.

Be strategic about putting out post-holiday recycling and trash. If you have a lot of boxes from new gadgets or other expensive electronics, wait until you get back to put them out so they're not sitting outside in full view for days. Or have a trusted neighbor set them by the curb on the appropriate day.

Place a hold on mail and newspaper deliveries, and ask a neighbor or friend to pick up any packages from your porch.

## New Meter Policy Takes Effect in 2020

**EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2020, ONLY qualified Hamilton County Electric Cooperative employees may remove or reinstall meters.** Neither electricians who are unaffiliated with Hamilton County EC nor the co-op's members will be allowed to remove or reinstall meters.

Members and electricians must contact the cooperative to request a meter removal and reinstallation by cooperative personnel. Upon receiving the request, we will do everything within our power to complete the work promptly. We recommend that you notify us in advance, preferably with at least 24 hours' notice.

To request meter removal or reinstallation, call the cooperative's main office at **(254) 386-3123** or **1-800-595-3401 Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.** Servicemen will not remove or reinstall meters after office hours or on weekends except in emergency situations.

HCEC employees are required to follow federal laws when working around energized equipment. The following regulations apply when HCEC personnel work with energized meters:

**1. OSHA 1910.269(I)(1)(i):** Only qualified employees may work on or with exposed energized lines or parts of equipment.

**2. OSHA 1926.960:** Outlines general requirements for necessary personal protective equipment when working around energized equipment.

For Hamilton County EC employees, required PPE consists of a nonconductive hard hat, safety glasses, flame-resistant clothing, rubber gloves with leather protectors, fully closed-toe leather footwear and an arc flash face shield.

We regret that we must make the procedural change restricting meter removal and reinstallation to cooperative staff, but it is necessary for the safety of our members and to limit HCEC's liability.



## Decorate Your Home Safely During the Holiday Season

**IT'S TIME TO DECK THOSE HALLS—SAFELY. MORE THAN 800 HOME FIRES ARE CAUSED** by holiday decorations each year, according to the National Fire Protection Association. An additional 170 home fires are caused by Christmas trees each year.

Keep these tips in mind for a safe holiday season.

**Carefully inspect all electrical decorations before you use them.** Cracked or damaged sockets and loose or exposed wires can cause serious shock or start a fire.

**Make sure all extension cords and electrical decorations are being used properly—**indoor-rated cords indoors, outdoor-rated cords for outside decorations.

**Inspect extension cords for damage** and discard (not repair) any that are not completely intact.

**Never mount or support light strings** in a way that might damage the cord's insulation.

**Outdoor electrical lights and decorations** should be plugged into circuits protected by ground-fault circuit interrupters.

**Exercise caution when decorating near power lines.** Keep yourself and your ladder at least 10 feet from power lines.

**Turn off all indoor and outdoor electrical decorations** before leaving home or going to sleep.

**Avoid overloading electrical outlets with too many decorations** or electrical devices. They can overheat and cause a fire.

**Never connect more than three strings** of incandescent lights together.

**Water your Christmas tree daily.**

**Keep all decorations at least 3 feet away from heating elements.**

**Avoid using candles.** The flames are just too dangerous with all the flammable decorations around.

**Purchase electrical decorations from reputable retailers and that are approved** by a nationally recognized testing lab such as UL, Intertek or CSA.

## Inspect Labels for Safety

**AS THE HOLIDAY SEASON GETS INTO** full swing, sales of electrical products tend to spike.

Unfortunately, the busy shopping season also brings out counterfeiters who use shoddy materials and don't comply with regulatory standards, enabling them to steeply discount their prices—such that no legitimate manufacturer can match them. Counterfeit materials pose significant safety hazards that can lead to damaged property, injury or death.

To stay safe and avoid wasting money on knockoffs, take the following steps:

**Look for safety certification logos** from nationally recognized testing laboratories. UL, CSA, Intertek's ETL, NSF and Nemko are a few of the trustworthy marks.

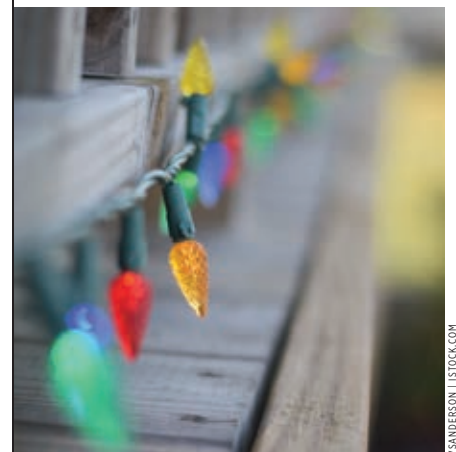
**Retain some skepticism.** If a bargain seems too good to be true, skip it.

**Shop with reputable vendors** who get their merchandise from legitimate distributors and manufacturers.

**Check an item's label for grammatical or spelling errors.** Those red flags can signal fraudulent branding.

**Look for the name and contact information of the manufacturer** on the item or its packaging. If that information is missing, think twice.

**Stay vigilant:** Read labels on every purchase. Counterfeit products range from phone chargers and smoke detectors to TVs, laptops and game systems.







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## Cool Off Your Winter Energy Bill

**YOU'VE BUDGETED FOR HOLIDAY GIFTS, MEALS, MAYBE A VACATION—BUT WITH MONEY tight, that doesn't leave much room for energy efficiency upgrades at home. Does that mean you're powerless to lower your electric bill? Not at all. Keep your energy bill cool this winter with these tips and tricks.**

**Drape delivery.** Are you using your curtains to retain heat? Open drapes and shades to catch free solar heat during the day. Close them at night to keep the heat inside.

**Got tape?** Though not as durable as foam or vinyl, you can use nonporous tape (first-aid cloth tape, for example) to keep cold air from infiltrating your home. Tape is good for blocking corners and irregular cracks, and can be used at the top and bottom of a window sash, door frames, attic hatches and inoperable windows.

**Pull the plug.** Unplug any appliance or electronic device that you don't regularly use. Most devices use electricity anytime they are plugged in even if they are off.

**Be a fan of fans.** Run ceiling fans on low and reverse the rotation to blow air up in winter. This keeps warm air circulating without cooling you.

**Flue flux.** Be sure your fireplace damper is tightly closed anytime the fireplace is not being used.

**Free your vents.** Your heating, ventilating and air conditioning system will have to work twice as hard if your air vents are blocked by rugs, furniture or drapes. Keep them clear to allow air to flow freely.

**Get caulking.** Add caulk or weatherstripping to seal gaps around leaky doors and windows.

**Garage drain.** Leave your garage door down. A warmer garage in winter will save energy.

**Rug relief.** Have a spare rug? Use it to cover bare floors for added insulation.

**Bundle up.** Slip on some fuzzy socks and a sweater and lower the thermostat. You can save 5% for every degree you drop your thermostat between 60 and 70 degrees.

**Smart food.** When cooking, keep lids on pots and let hot food cool off before placing it in the refrigerator.

**There are other ways to conserve energy, too. Remember, you don't pay for what you don't use.** When you're not watching TV or using lights, computers or other electronics, turn them off.



\$29.95

*Still cookin' after 75 years.*

*Texas Co-op Power* presents a collection of best-loved recipes from two of our most popular cookbooks ever, the *Typically Texas Cookbook* and *The Second Typically Texas Cookbook*.

This cookbook is filled with more than 700 recipes, including more than 300 dessert recipes, and makes a great Christmas gift.

**Pick up your copy today for only \$20 at Hamilton County EC!**

From the publishers of

**TEXAS CO-OP POWER**

# Community Calendar



## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Hamilton County EC will be closed December 24–25 for Christmas and January 1 for New Year’s Day.

## Comanche

**Farmers Market**, December 7, 9 a.m.–noon.

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

## Copperas Cove

**Christmas Tree Lighting**, December 5, 6–9 p.m., City Park, 1206 W. Ave. B. Tree lighting will take place at 7 p.m.

**Krist Kindle Markt**, December 6–8, City Park, 1206 W. Ave. B. New location! The Markt is moving to City Park and welcomes shoppers looking for those last-minute Christmas gifts. It also boasts great food and entertainment for all to enjoy. Brand new this year, come ice skate! Copperas Cove invites you to join us for a great weekend.

**Krist Kindle Pageant**, December 7, 10 a.m., Civic Center, 1206 W. Ave. B.

**Krist Kindle Parade**, December 7, 6 p.m. Avenue D will be lined with spectators watching the festive Christmas parade.

**Immanuel Lutheran Church Christmas Bazaar**, December 13, 9 a.m., Immanuel Lutheran Church, 922 Lutheran Church Road. Vendors, arts and crafts, hayrides, etc. For more information, contact Henry Jost at (254) 251-9685.

**Breakfast With Santa**, December 14, 8 a.m.–noon, Civic Center, 1206 W. Ave. B. The Youth

Advisory Council is hosting its first breakfast with Santa! Come enjoy breakfast and free pictures with Santa, holiday crafts for the kids and a Christmas movie.

**Chamber Banquet**, January 31, 6–11 p.m., Civic Center, 1206 W. Ave. B. Includes steak dinner and casino fun.

For information about Copperas Cove events, contact the Copperas Cove Chamber of Commerce at (254) 547-7571, email [activities@copperascove.com](mailto:activities@copperascove.com) or visit [copperascove.com](http://copperascove.com) or visit [copperascove.com](http://copperascove.com).

## Evant

**Christmas Parade and Christmas Tree Lighting**, December 7, City Park. The parade will start prior to the tree lighting, which will take place at dusk.

**Market Day**, December 21, 10 a.m.–3 p.m., Evant Square. No fee for vendors. For information, email [knw@centex.net](mailto:knw@centex.net) or [cben1115@hotmail.com](mailto:cben1115@hotmail.com).

For information about Evant events, contact Charlotte Looney at [evantchamber@gmail.com](mailto:evantchamber@gmail.com) or (512) 750-9870.

## Gatesville

**Gatesville Spursquicentennial (150th birthday) volunteer recognition program**; June 1, 2019–December 1, 2020. We want to recognize the people who make Gatesville a great place to live. Log 150 volunteer hours to be recognized. Volunteer logs are available at city hall, the chamber of commerce and the Gatesville Public Library, or download one at [gatesville150.com/volunteer](http://gatesville150.com/volunteer). For more information, visit [gatesville150.com](http://gatesville150.com) or [facebook.com/spursquicentennial](https://facebook.com/spursquicentennial).

**Chamber Market Days**, second Saturday of each month in the parking lot of the historic Cotton Belt Depot, 2307 S. Highway 36.

Vendors display unique merchandise and farm-fresh foods. Visit [gatesvilletx.info](http://gatesvilletx.info) for more information.

**Gatesville Country Music Hall of Fame Show/Jamboree**, third Friday of each month, 7–8 p.m., Gatesville City Auditorium, 110 N. Eighth St. A family-friendly event. There is no admission fee, but donations are accepted for the performers. For more information, visit [gatesvillecountrymusicHalloffame.com](http://gatesvillecountrymusicHalloffame.com) or call Roger Viersse at (254) 547-6834.

**Junk the Halls Christmas Parade**, December 14, 10 a.m.

**Christmas Market**, December 14, 6–9 p.m., the Cotton Belt Depot, 2307 S. Highway 36.

For more information about Gatesville events, go to [visitgatesvilletx.com](http://visitgatesvilletx.com) or [gatesvilletx.info](http://gatesvilletx.info), or call the Gatesville Chamber of Commerce at (254) 865-2617 or Gatesville Convention and Visitors Bureau at (254) 865-8951.

## Goldthwaite

**Holiday Lights**, December, botanical gardens. Enjoy the lights in the gardens and get into the holiday spirit.

**Parade of Lights**, December 7, dusk, downtown. Photos with Santa before the parade and hot chocolate afterward at the welcome center.

For more information about Goldthwaite events, visit [millscountychamber.com](http://millscountychamber.com) or call Mills County Chamber of Commerce at (325) 648-3619.

## Hamilton

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

**Christmas on the Square**, December 5, 3:30–7 p.m.



**Christmas Tour of Homes, December 7, noon-5 p.m.**

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

## Hico

**Christmas Market and Parade, December 7.**

For more information about Hico events, visit [hico-tx.com](http://hico-tx.com) or [facebook.com/hicochamberofcommerce](https://facebook.com/hicochamberofcommerce), or call Hico City Hall at (254) 796-4620.

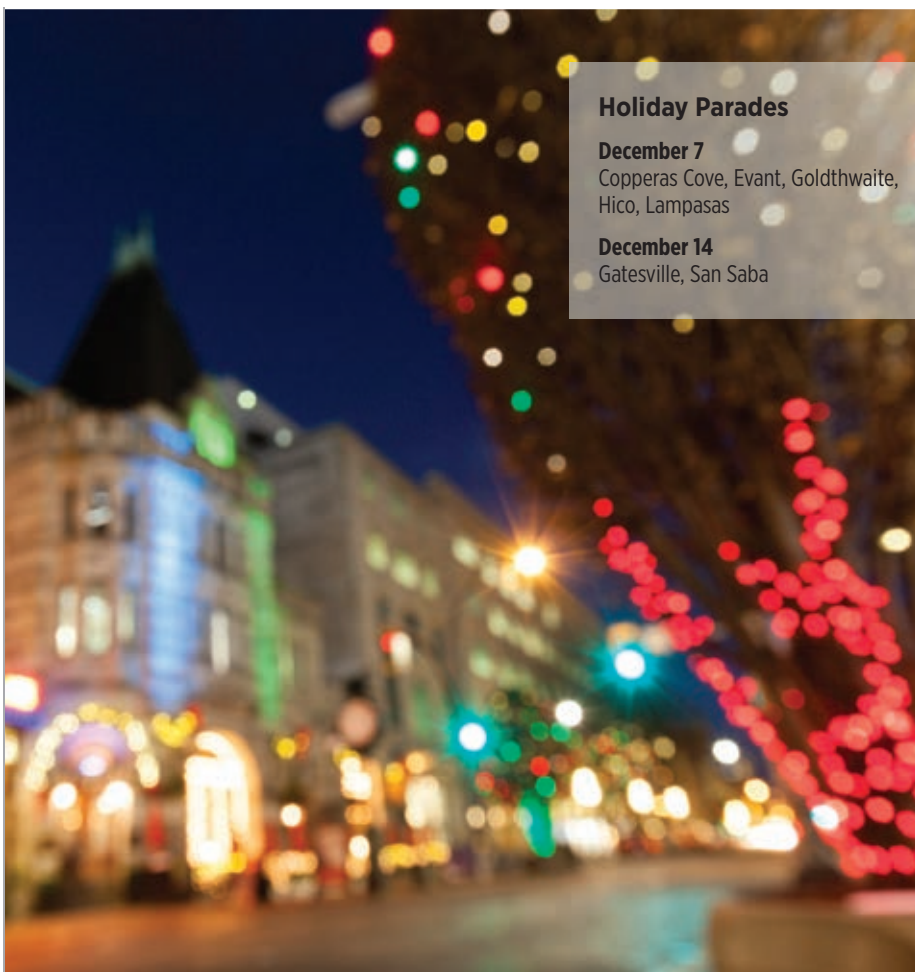
## Lampasas

**Lampasas County Museum, Fridays and Saturdays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., 303 S. Western Ave., between Second and Third streets.** Learn about the history of Lampasas County through permanent displays and special exhibitions. Free of charge.

**Lampasas Trade Day, December 7, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., 2646 E. Highway 190.** For information, contact Barbara Postel at (512) 734-1294.

**Christmas on the Creek, December 1-January 1, 5-8 p.m.** Come see Santa's village, giant 12 Days of Christmas cards, a larger-than-life lighted Nativity and beautiful light display along the banks of Sulphur Creek between Highway 190 (Key Avenue) and Highway 281. On the second Saturday in December, join us for Christmas activities at W.M. Brook Park, including sleigh rides, live music, playing in the "snow," and hot cocoa and warm snacks with your family.

**Carol of Lights, December 7, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., downtown Lampasas.** Holiday activities and entertainment will include ornament decorating and storytelling with Mrs. Claus at My Girls on the courthouse square at 415 E. Third St.; a Santa visit for kids in the Ajinomoto Foods lobby; snow queen pageant; carolers; classic cars; children's activities; and Christmas tree display and gingerbread house contests at the



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### Holiday Parades

**December 7**  
Copperas Cove, Evant, Goldthwaite, Hico, Lampasas

**December 14**  
Gatesville, San Saba

Lampasas County Museum at 303 S. Western St., two blocks from the square. Admission of \$1 funds the Town and Country Christmas Bazaar's scholarship fund. Other events are free. The day ends with the Ajinomoto Foods lighted Christmas parade at 6:30 p.m. For more information, visit [visionlampasas.com](http://visionlampasas.com) or [lampasasdowntown.com](http://lampasasdowntown.com).

**Tour of Homes, December 8, 1-5 p.m., Lampasas County Museum, 303 S. Western St.** Tour tickets will be available for \$10 at the museum and at My Girls, 415 E. Third St. For

more information, contact the museum at (512) 556-2224.

For more information about Lampasas County events, contact the Lampasas County Chamber of Commerce at (512) 556-5172 or visit [lampasaschamber.org](http://lampasaschamber.org).

## Lometa

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

## Pearl

**Pearl Bluegrass First Saturday Jam and Stage Show; December 7, January 4, February 1; Pearl Community Center.** Free stage shows 12:30-5 p.m. Open jamming all day and evening Thursday-Saturday. RV hookups \$15/\$20 per night. Bluegrass café: Saturday 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Family-friendly event that bluegrass and old-time music lovers of all ages will enjoy. For more information, visit [pearlbluegrass.com](http://pearlbluegrass.com).

**Pearl Book Cottage; December 7, January 4, February 1; 10 a.m.-6 p.m.** All kinds of books and resale items. Payment by donation with all

### WE WELCOME YOUR EVENT SUBMISSIONS

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 will be published monthly, and it will contain 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](mailto:donna.harris@hamiltonelectric.coop), write to HCEC at P.O. Box 753, Hamilton, TX 76531, or call 1-800-595-3401.

proceeds going to charity. For information, call (254) 865-9282 or (254) 865-5864.

**Community Meal**, third Thursday of each month, 11:30 a.m., Pearl Baptist Church, Highway 183. Contact Connie at (254) 223-0621.

## Pidcoke

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

## San Saba

**Mill Pond Lighted Holiday Park Christmas Extravaganza**, December 1-January 5, 6-10 p.m., Mill Pond Park, 1007 E. Wallace St. Drive or walk through. Set your radio to 88.7 FM and enjoy music synced to more than 30 acres of dancing lights. Admission is free.

**64th Annual Pecan Show**, December 3, Arrowhead Bank Building, second floor. Displays of pecan varieties and contest winners.

**62nd Annual Pecan Food Show**, December 6, 7:30 a.m., Texas A&M AgriLife Extension office, Arrowhead Bank Building, second floor. Participants submit baked goods. Judging will occur that afternoon. A bake sale will be open to the public after the judging.

**Second Sunday Brunch**, December 8, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Old Man Scary Cellars, 302 E. Wallace St. For menu details, call (325) 372-6071.

**Pecan Capital Trade Day**, December 14, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., courthouse square, 500 Wallace St. For information, contact JoAnne Van Gorp at (325) 372-4029.

**Sip 'N' Stroll Wine Tasting Event**, December 14, 2-6 p.m., San Saba Visitors Center, 113 S. High St. Tickets are \$30. Come take a leisurely stroll through historic downtown, where several wineries will offer wines to sample and purchase in beautifully decorated businesses.

**Christmas Extravaganza**, December 14, 2-6:30 p.m., historic downtown. Santa's workshop, Christmas children's activities, live Nativity scene and refreshments. River City Community Band Christmas concert.

**Lighted Christmas Parade**, December 14, 6:30-7:30 p.m., downtown. Enter your business, organization, sports team, wagon, tractor or unique vehicle as a lighted float.

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 [sansasabatexas.com/calendar](http://sansasabatexas.com/calendar) or [sansasabachamber.org](http://sansasabachamber.org).



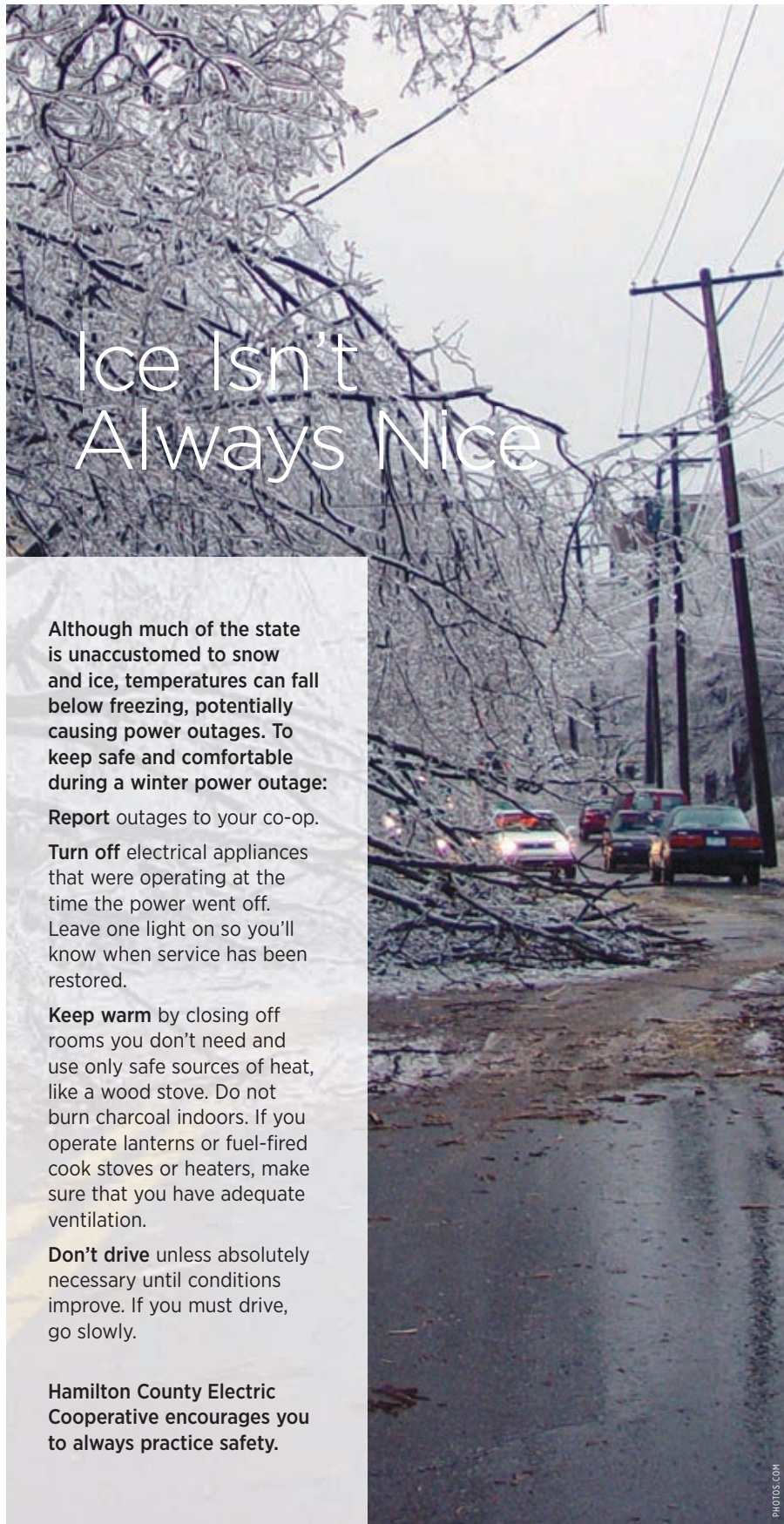
# Merry Christmas

*“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.”*

—James 1:17

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





# Ice Isn't Always Nice

Although much of the state is unaccustomed to snow and ice, temperatures can fall below freezing, potentially causing power outages. To keep safe and comfortable during a winter power outage:

**Report** outages to your co-op.

**Turn off** electrical appliances that were operating at the time the power went off. Leave one light on so you'll know when service has been restored.

**Keep warm** by closing off rooms you don't need and use only safe sources of heat, like a wood stove. Do not burn charcoal indoors. If you operate lanterns or fuel-fired cook stoves or heaters, make sure that you have adequate ventilation.

**Don't drive** unless absolutely necessary until conditions improve. If you must drive, go slowly.

Hamilton County Electric Cooperative encourages you to always practice safety.

## Hamilton County Electric Cooperative Association

420 N. Rice St. • P.O. Box 753  
Hamilton, TX 76531

### GENERAL MANAGER/CEO

Steve Young

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Dusty Duncan, Vice President, District 5

Bob Gardner, Secretary/Treasurer, District 2

Henry Langford, District 1

Melvin Eilers, Jr., District 7

Ervin Koerth, District 3

Jack Caldwell, District 1

## Contact Us

*For general information  
or to report an outage*

### CALL US

**(254) 386-3123** local or  
**1-800-595-3401** toll-free

### PAYMENT LOCATIONS

#### 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

### Online

[hamiltonelectric.coop](http://hamiltonelectric.coop)

### Telephone

Call 1-877-833-4031 to pay using our automated phone system (credit/debit card or check).

Bill payments can be set up to be bank drafted or charged to a debit or credit card monthly.

**TEXAS CO-OP POWER**   
**CELEBRATING 75 YEARS**