

Use Generators Safely

Our lineworkers' lives are on the line



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER/CEO STEVE YOUNG

NO SEASON IN TEXAS IS SAFE FROM SEVERE weather. And when one of those destructive storms rolls through our area, lines can go down and members can lose power—sometimes for an extended period.

During an outage, some folks rely on portable generators while power is being restored. If you use a generator, please follow all the safety rules.

The safety of our members and our employees is a top priority at Hamilton County Electric Cooperative, especially during dangerous times. When storms hit our area, we rush to restore power as soon as conditions allow.

Our line crews take necessary precautions before they work on downed power lines, taking care to ensure that a line is de-energized before working on it. But even after these measures, an improperly connected generator can put our workers' lives at risk.

Hamilton County EC is proud of our outstanding safety record, but sometimes, no matter how many steps we take to keep everyone safe, the very people we are there to help unknowingly put our lives—and their own—in danger.

Portable generators can prove fatal to lineworkers when used improperly. A generator connected to a home's wiring or

plugged into a regular household outlet can cause backfeeding along power lines and electrocute anyone who comes into contact with them—even if the lines seem dead.

Hamilton County EC employees are not the only ones in danger when a portable generator is used improperly. Those who operate generators improperly risk being electrocuted, starting fires, damaging property or being poisoned by carbon monoxide. Portable generators can be very helpful during outages. **But it is imperative that you follow these safety guidelines when using one:**

- ▶ Never connect a generator directly to your home's wiring unless your home has been wired for generator use, which includes having a transfer switch installed by a qualified electrical contractor. The transfer switch can be used to disconnect your home from the power grid. Connecting the generator to a house's wiring without such a switch can cause current to flow out of your home's circuitry and along power lines, putting at risk anyone who comes into contact with those lines.
- ▶ Always plug appliances directly into generators or use heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cords. Make sure extension cords are free of cuts or tears and the plug has three prongs. Overloaded cords can cause fires or equipment damage.
- ▶ Ensure your generator is properly grounded.
- ▶ Never overload a generator. A portable generator should only be used when necessary to power essential equipment or appliances.
- ▶ Turn off all equipment powered by the generator before shutting it down.
- ▶ Only operate a generator on a dry, covered surface outdoors, away from windows and doors.
- ▶ Always have a fully charged fire extinguisher nearby.
- ▶ Never fuel a generator while it is operating.
- ▶ Read and adhere to the manufacturer's instructions for safe operation. Never cut corners when it comes to safety.

We encourage you to protect the well-being and safety of your family during outages and safeguard those who come to your aid during emergency situations. When we work together for safety and the good of our communities, we all benefit.



Handle Food Safely When Grilling Outdoors

ONE OF AMERICA'S FAVORITE SUMMER PASTIMES IS GRILLING, AND SAFE GRILLING STARTS with proper food handling. Here are a few simple guidelines for grilling food safely.

Wash away harmful bacteria. Avoid providing a hotbed for bacteria. Unwashed hands are a prime cause of foodborne illness, also known as food poisoning, as are unwashed perishable foods such as meat, seafood, and peeled or cut fruits and vegetables.

Keep perishable foods cold. If you'll be meeting up with friends away from your backyard grill, it's best to transport all perishables in an insulated cooler kept cold with ice or frozen gel packs.

Throw away any perishable leftovers that have been out of a refrigerator or cooler for more than two hours—one hour if the temperature is above 90 degrees.

Keep coolers out of direct sunlight and avoid opening them frequently, to keep the cold air inside.

Marinate safely. Marinated meats should be stored immediately in a refrigerator or cooler, not on the kitchen counter or outside next to the grill. As long as a marinade is stored in a cool environment, it can remain there safely for several hours or even days.

Do not use marinade from a raw meat/marinade mixture as a sauce on cooked meat, unless you first cook the sauce to a boil for at least three minutes to kill harmful bacteria.

Use grilling shortcuts. Pre-cooking food partially indoors before putting it on a preheated grill will give you quick results when your friends are hungry or your grill is slow or small. Conversely, flame-grill meat for a smoky, charbroiled flavor, then bake in an oven until it's cooked properly.

Cook thoroughly and use a meat thermometer. It's best to cook food to the safe minimum internal temperature to destroy harmful bacteria. On the grill, meat and poultry will brown quickly, but the inside might only be cooked partially. To be sure the food has reached a safe internal temperature, use a meat thermometer.

Here are some safe minimum internal temperatures:

- ▶ **Chicken:** 165 degrees
- ▶ **Beef hamburgers:** 160 degrees
- ▶ **Beef, veal and lamb (steaks, roasts and chops):** medium-rare 145 degrees, medium 160 degrees
- ▶ **Pork:** 165 degrees

With proper refrigeration and thorough cooking, your backyard barbecue will be a tasty success.



Straley Named New District 4 Director

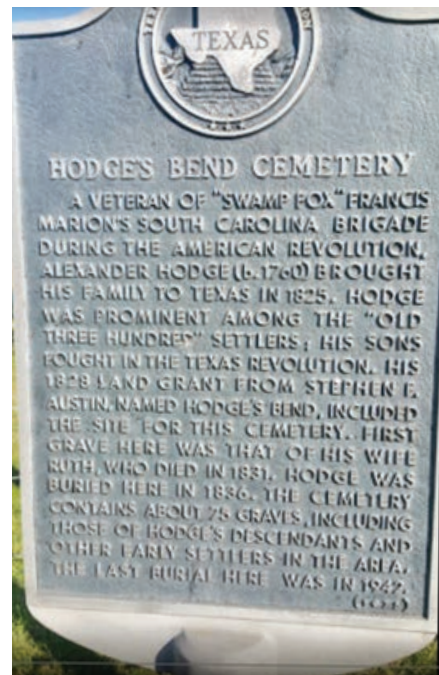
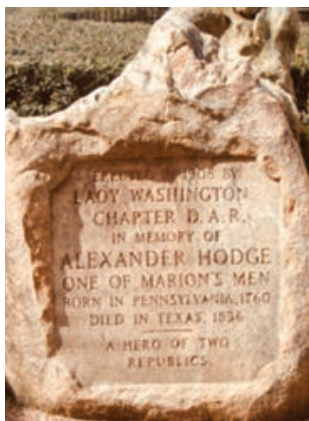
THE HAMILTON COUNTY ELECTRIC Cooperative Board of Directors appointed **Robert Straley** to fill the unexpired term of Henry Langford, who retired from the board March 26. Straley, a Hamilton County EC member from Lampasas, began serving on the board April 1, and his term will be up for election **August 7**.



Power Tip

During the summer, put your grill to use. Cooking outdoors is a great way to save energy and eliminate unwanted heat from cooking indoors.

Shared Texas Paths to Independence



BY AZALEA DELL HODGE ALDINGER

MANY PEOPLE IN TEXAS DON'T REALIZE THE PARALLEL PATHS their ancestors walked to help make our state a republic in 1836 or the coincidences that have taken place over time.

In 1760, Alexander Hodge was born in Newton Township in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania. Hodge and his brother, William, fought alongside Francis Marion, nicknamed the Swamp Fox for his elusive tactics, in the Revolutionary War, serving as scouts and sharpshooters. Decades after the American Revolution, Hodge also participated in the Texas Revolution.

After the Revolutionary War, Hodge moved to Oglethorpe County, Georgia, where he studied law; married his wife, Ruth; and had seven children. After moving westward through Kentucky and Arkansas, Hodge met and befriended Stephen F. Austin. The Hodge family moved to Texas sometime around 1824. Austin granted Hodge, now a judge, a league of land near the Brazos River around Oyster Creek, near Fort Bend. Hodge named his plantation Hodge's Bend and was said to have frequent visitors, including William B. Travis, James Bonham, Erastus "Deaf" Smith and other Texas historical figures.

Hodge's sons and sons-in-law fought during the Texas Revolution. During the Runaway Scrape, the flight of Texans from their homes as Antonio López de Santa Anna's army encroached, Hodge led a group of women and children to safety with the help of a teenager named Philip Smith, who was said to be only about 14 years old. According to reports, the group had to travel by night to avoid detection. Many chronicles of the Runaway

Scrape describe Hodge as laughing through the night, sometimes making light of frightening rainstorms they encountered, for the benefit of the group's children.

One of Hodge's granddaughters, who was along for the Runaway Scrape, Clarinda Pevehouse Kegans, related in a memoir that they took cover in a thicket April 21 and could hear the guns of the Battle of San Jacinto. Hodge was exhausted and became ill after he led the group back. He died August 17, 1836, at 76.

Hodge is buried at Hodge's Bend Cemetery, and in 1912, the city of Houston placed a monument to him in Sam Houston Park.

Smith, Hodge's young helper, eventually ended up in Central Texas, settling close to the Lampasas River and Lucy Creek and establishing a ranch there with his wife, Caroline, and their children and other family members around 1855. In 1879, the Smiths donated land for School Creek Baptist Church, which was featured in the March issue of *Texas Co-op Power*. A cemetery was also established on the east side of County Road 3420, about 1 mile east of the church.

One of those buried at Smith Cemetery is Keston O.P. Hodge, my father and the great-great-grandson of Alexander Hodge. It is amazing how their lives and paths intertwined, along with Smith's, over time. I guess you could say Smith helped Hodge again—decades later—providing a final resting place for one of Hodge's own.



FAMILY/VELDMAN | ISTOCK.COM

Safety Under the Sun

IT MAY SEEM LIKE COMMON SENSE TO KEEP KITES AWAY FROM OVERHEAD POWER LINES, but a child enjoying a breezy summer day might not even notice when they're playing too close to electrical wires. What your children learn from you today can be a life-saver later when they encounter a downed power line or think about climbing a tree.

Teach your children how to play it safe around live wires. Some good lessons for them include:

Stay away from electrical substations. If a ball or pet gets inside the fence, contact your electric cooperative for assistance—we'll come and get it out for you.

Don't fly kites, drones, balloons or other flying devices anywhere near power lines. It's important to look up and move far away if power lines are present.

Avoid climbing trees anywhere near overhead power lines. A child could be shocked or even killed in a tree that is energized with electricity.

Never throw anything onto or over a power line. If a kite or other toy gets caught in the wires, leave it there and call the electric cooperative.

Keep all electrical appliances and toys away from water, including lawn sprinklers, swimming pools, hoses, rain, etc.

Stay away from guy wires, green transformer boxes, electric meters and breaker boxes.

Never touch an electrical device if you are wet, standing in water or in a pool.

Never go swimming during a storm, especially when you hear thunder or see lightning.

Electricity and water do not mix, and swimming during a storm puts you at risk.

Never attempt to climb a utility pole or substation fence.

Call 911 if you spot a downed line, and don't go anywhere near it. Assume all lines are energized and dangerous.

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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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

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.



BILL OXFORD | ISTOCK.COM

5 Common Culprits of Electrical Fires

THERE ARE ABOUT 24,000 ELECTRICAL FIRES PER YEAR IN THE U.S., ACCORDING TO THE U.S. Fire Administration. Although most electrical fires start in the bedroom, the most fatal fires start in the living room, family room and den. Check the following areas of your home to ensure your home's electrical safety is up to par.

Electrical outlets: Faulty electrical outlets are a leading cause of home fires. As outlets age, so do the wires behind them that you can't see. Any loose, damaged or warm-to-the-touch outlets should be repaired or replaced.

Electrical wiring: Outdated wiring is another common cause of electrical fires. Frequently tripped breakers, flickering lights and burning smells are clear warning signs. If your home is more than 20 years old, it may not be able to handle today's increased power load. If you suspect your home's wiring is outdated, leave this one to the pros and contact a qualified electrician.

Overloaded cords and outlets: Extension cords are not permanent solutions. If your big-screen TV, home theater system and other electronics are plugged into extension cords, it's time to call an electrician and install additional outlets.

Old appliances: Older appliances are more likely to have loose or damaged wiring, which means they're more likely to catch fire. Check older appliances for damage and determine if it's time to upgrade or replace. Also check to ensure you're using appliance-grade outlets. A qualified electrician can help with installation.

Light fixtures: Light fixtures, lamps and lightbulbs are other common culprits behind electrical fires. Installing a bulb with a wattage too high for a lamp or light fixture is a leading cause of electrical fires. Always check the maximum recommended bulb wattage on any lighting fixture or lamp and never go over the recommendation. Keep flammable materials like cloth and paper away from light fixtures. The material can heat up and ignite, causing a fire. Faulty lamps and light fixtures also can cause fires.



DAVID OMER

Fried Rice

- 2 eggs
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons peanut oil, divided use
- 3 green onions, sliced
- 1 cup shrimp or cubed chicken or pork
- 1 cup snow peas, cut diagonally
- ½ cup roasted cashews, pecans or peanuts
- 3 cups jasmine rice, cooked and cooled
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce

1. Beat eggs with salt.
 2. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a large skillet or wok. Add onions and egg mixture. Stir-fry until set. Remove from pan.
 3. Heat 1 tablespoon oil. Add shrimp, chicken or pork; stir-fry 5–10 minutes or until cooked through. Add snow peas and nuts. Stir-fry an additional 2 minutes, then remove from pan and set aside.
 4. Add the final tablespoon of oil and heat. Add rice, stirring to heat. Stir in soy sauce, meat mixture and cooked egg.
 5. Combine all ingredients and stir gently to heat through.
- Serves 4.

Find this and more delicious recipes online at
TEXASCOOPPOWER.COM



YANA TATEVOSIAN | ISTOCK.COM

Grow Your Garden Safely

GARDENING MAY SEEM LIKE A SAFE HOBBY—AND FOR THE MOST PART, IT IS—BUT IT CAN lead to injury. Emergency rooms treat more than 400,000 injuries each year related to outdoor garden tools, reports the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Trimming trees and tall bushes can take a deadly turn when electricity is involved. Never trim a tree that has grown into a power line. Metal and wood ladders can transmit electricity into your body if you come into contact with a live wire. Instead, ask your electric cooperative to send a professional to trim the tree.

Here are more tips to help keep your gardening chores safe:

▶ At least three days before you begin a landscaping project that entails digging, call 811 to have underground utility lines marked.

▶ Never garden, trim trees or cut the lawn in bad weather. Wet and windy conditions can cause slipping and other hazards. Go inside immediately if you see lightning.

▶ Only outlets protected by ground-fault circuit interrupters should be used for electric tools and trimmers. Never use tools outdoors when it's wet.

▶ Whenever possible, work in pairs so you're not using electrical equipment when nobody else is around—in case of an accident. And hire a professional if you doubt your ability to safely complete the job.

▶ Always wear the proper clothing and safety equipment for the task at hand. Gloves, eye and hearing protection, and dust masks can help prevent injuries and illnesses.

▶ Use the right tools for the job and use them safely. If you are using electric tools, watch where the cord is and unplug tools when not in use.

▶ Keep garden tools and equipment in proper working order. Equipment that is not maintained properly leaves the door open for potential accidents.

▶ Stay hydrated, use insect repellent and sunscreen (don't forget your face, neck and ears), and take breaks as needed to rest those hardworking muscles.

Surprise Newlyweds and Grads With an Energy-Efficient Gift

IT'S WEDDING AND GRADUATION SEASON. Why not make a difference in the lives of those you're buying gifts for?

Grads and newlyweds who are furnishing their first homes need everything from small kitchen appliances, like toasters and mixers, to powerhouse machines like vacuum cleaners. If that's the gift you'd like to give, consider selecting an energy-efficient model.

Here are some ideas:

▶ Microwave ovens and slow cookers use less energy than the oven or stove-top to cook meals, and they often require less effort.

▶ Wrap up an electric blanket as a gift to help your friends stay warm in the winter and reduce heating bills. Choose one with an automatic shutoff for safety.

▶ A ceiling fan is a unique gift that anyone in a new home will appreciate year-round. Choose one in a style that matches the décor of your friends' home and offer to have it installed for them.

▶ A high-quality, shock-absorbing power strip never goes out of style and is always welcome. Plus, it's a pretty sure bet that nobody else will give that gift but you.



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Community Calendar



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

Comanche

Jams in June Free Concerts; June 4, June 11, June 18, June 25; downtown square.

Comanche County Dairy Breakfast, June 17, 6-9 a.m., Community Center.

Comanche Open Rodeo, June 19-20, Comanche Roping Club Arena.

Rodeo Parade, June 20

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

H-E-B Plus Summer Run to Fun 5K, June 20, 6:30-10:30 a.m., 2602 Dennis Drive.

For more 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, June 13, 8 a.m.-noon, 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 for more information.

For 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 information about Goldthwaite events, visit millscountychamber.com or call the Mills County Chamber of Commerce at (325) 648-3619.

Hamilton

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

Hico

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

Lampasas

For information about Lampasas County events, contact the Lampasas County Chamber of Commerce at (512) 556-5172 or lampasaschamber@sbcglobal.net, or visit 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, June 6, 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.

Pearl Book Cottage, June 6, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. All kinds of books and resale items. Payment by donation with all proceeds going to charity. For information, call (254) 865-9282 or (254) 865-5864.

Outdoor Plant Sale, June 6, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Pearl Community Center parking lot in front of the Pearl Book Cottage. Succulents, tropicals and blooming plants. For more information, call Kay Pruett at (254) 865-5864.

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; write to HCEC at P.O. Box 753, Hamilton, TX 76531; or call 1-800-595-3401.

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

Pidcoke

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

San Saba

Pecan Capital Trade Day, June 6, courthouse square, 500 E. Wallace St. For more information, contact Joanne at (325) 372-4029 or email sansabaedc@gmail.com.

Guys and Dolls Scramble Golf Tournament, June 6-7, San Saba River Golf Course, 723 County Road 102. For more information, visit golfsansaba.com, email sansabagolf@centex.net or call (325) 372-3212.

San Saba Pro Rodeo Days, June 12-13, 6-10:30 p.m., San Saba Rodeo Arena, 1951 N. Highway 16. Featuring rodeo bullfighter Leon Coffee.

Rodeo Parade, June 13, 10-11 a.m., downtown.

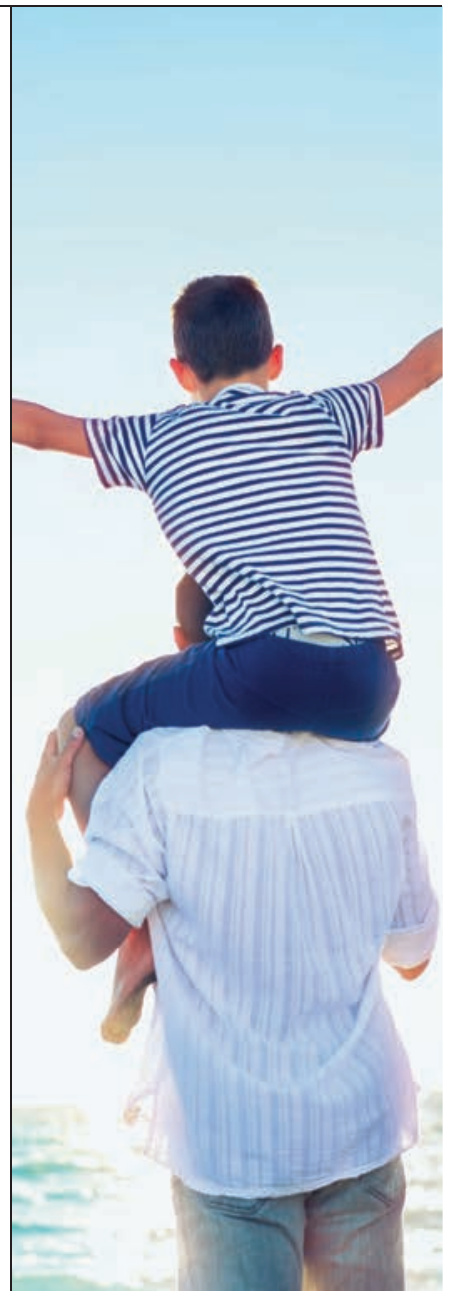
Cow Camp Cook-Off, June 12-13, all day, Risien Park. Prize money and lots of fun. For more information, contact Keith at (325) 330-2426 or Larry at (325) 372-6100.

Tournament of Hope in Memory of Larry McNeely, June 27, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., San Saba River Golf Course, 723 County Road 102. For more information, visit golfsansaba.com, email sansabagolf@centex.net or call (325) 372-3212.

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.



Outdoor Plant Sale
June 6
Pearl



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JUNE HOLIDAYS

Flag Day

Sunday, June 14

Juneteenth

Friday, June 19

Father's Day

Sunday, June 21