

## Metal Theft Risks Safety, Lives



**MESSAGE FROM MANAGER ALAN LESLEY**

**W**ould you risk being hit by lightning for \$100? Seems a bit ludicrous, but desperate times cause folks to do foolish things.

Thefts of copper, aluminum and bronze are on the rise at abandoned commercial buildings, empty homes, and—most dangerously—at power substations near neighborhoods. We need your help to keep our equipment safe, prevent outages and save lives.



© ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/JASON GANER

**Thieves in substations are not just risking getting caught, they're risking their lives.**

At one electric co-op last year, metal thieves took off with about \$100 of wire from a substation, but left behind a \$1 million repair bill after a fire destroyed regulators, switches and a \$600,000 transformer. More than 3,500 consumers were temporarily

left in the dark after the incident, although the co-op moved quickly to reroute power to affected areas.

It's hard to understand why folks would risk their lives for a few dollars.

Regardless of who is doing it, the damage done to our system packs a big punch because equipment can be ruined without the protection copper wires provide. There's also the potential for loss of life. Last year in the U.S., several deaths related to metal theft occurred.

The cost for scrap copper goes up and down, but recently it's been on the rise—and so have theft attempts. In January, scrap copper sold for five times the amount it went for in 2001.

We use copper to ground our equipment, protecting it from electrical surges and lightning by giving electricity a safe path to ground. We use a lot of copper wire in our substations, where we step down high-voltage electricity arriving from distant power plants before it travels to your neighborhood. Then another transformer near your home—either mounted on a utility pole or in a green box on the ground—lowers the voltage again so you can use the power at home. Copper is an essential component every step of the way.

Our linemen are highly trained professionals who understand the dangers of working with electricity and take proper safety precautions. To protect the public, we surround our substations with secure fencing and post warning signs. But some thieves will not be deterred.

Please help us prevent these thefts. If you notice anything unusual, such as an open substation gate, open equipment or hanging wire, call Comanche Electric Cooperative immediately at (325) 356-2533. If you see anyone other than our utility personnel or contractors around substations or other electric facilities, report it to the police.

## Looking Out for YOU



It's hard to predict the future, but one thing seems certain: New government regulations will increase the cost of electricity. We're controlled by members like you, and your money stays in our community. In fact, because we're nonprofit, we give money back to you when revenue exceeds costs. Find out how we're looking out for you at [www.ceca.coop](http://www.ceca.coop).



Looking Out for You



# Conservation MATTERS

THE LATEST NEWS AND INFORMATION ABOUT ENERGY CONSERVATION FROM YOUR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

## Trim the Fat from Your Biggest Electric Expenses

**K**nowing which household activities consume the most electricity can help homeowners determine where they can save on electric bills.

Regulating temperature inside the home uses the most electricity. Almost 40 percent of the electric bill for an all-electric home covers the cost of cooling and space heating, according to U.S. Department of Energy data.

As Texas approaches hot-weather months—when temperatures outside can reach triple digits—having an effective cooling system becomes crucial. Finding ways to increase the efficiency of an air conditioner can create a cost savings on electric bills during the summer.

To make the best use of an air conditioner, it helps to know two basic principles about how most units work: Air conditioners (1) decrease humidity; and (2) lower air temperature.

Decreasing humidity inside and increasing a unit's capacity for cooling can help keep your home comfortable. Here are some practical methods to keep humidity and temperatures down:

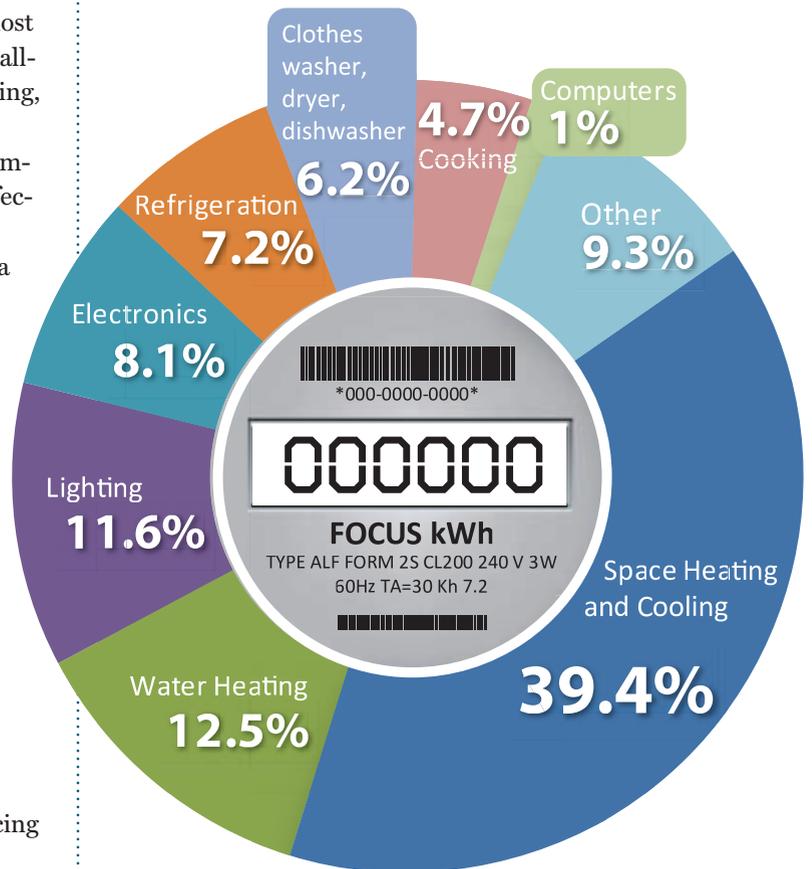
### Humidity

- Close doors and windows to prevent humid outside air from coming in.
- Vent dryer exhaust to the outside.
- Fix plumbing leaks.
- Move houseplants with wet soil and moisture-producing leaves outside.
- Prepare meals without boiling or simmering liquids, or use the exhaust fan.
- Consider investing in an energy-efficient dehumidifier.

### Temperature

- Set thermostat no lower than 78 degrees.
- Clean indoor and outdoor coils of the air conditioner.
- Change air-conditioner filters.
- Block light from entering through windows with shade trees, blinds or awnings.

### HOW YOUR HOME USES ELECTRICITY



- Consider buying a programmable thermostat. For an overview of programmable thermostats, visit [www.consumerreports.org](http://www.consumerreports.org).
- Use ceiling or box fans to bring the temperature down by about 4 degrees.

Source: 2009 Buildings Energy Data Book, U.S. Department of Energy, Table 21.5. Represents an all electric home. Updated February 2011.

# Changing Lives

*Texas Extension Education Association evolves to meet needs of women and children*

BY SHIRLEY DUKES

'Home Economists in early 20th-century America had a major role in the Progressive Era, the development of the welfare state, the triumph of modern hygiene and scientific medicine, the application of scientific research in a number of industries and the popularization of important research on child development, family health and family economics. What other group of American women did so much, all over the country, and got so little credit?'

—Joan Jacobs Brumberg, Stephen H. Weiss Presidential Fellow and Professor, Cornell University College of Human Ecology and author of *The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls*

I can remember going to a 4-H meeting at the home of my friend Sally when I was in grade school. The project that day was cookie baking: delicious-smelling chocolate chip cookies, fresh from the oven. In fact, they were best cookies I ever tasted in my life! I was hooked.

As a little girl, I had no idea what went on behind the scenes for us to have that meeting. Women like Sarah Key, who hosted the meeting, gave up their valuable time and devoted countless hours to the development of our little female minds. They deserve much more credit than they ever received. As a mom raising children, I learned first-hand how much effort it takes to host a group of grade-school girls, no matter what the issue!



## COMANCHE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

All things have to start somewhere, and it did not start with my grade-school meeting. I traveled this week to Carbon, where I met with a group of hardworking members of the Morton Valley Texas Extension Education Association (TEEA). This group of women, along with the groups before them, was very instrumental in bringing about myriad changes in the lives of women and children over the past 100 years.

TEEA, originally known as Home Demonstration Clubs, had its start in Texas in 1912 when Edna Trigg accepted the post as Texas' first home demonstration agent. The primary purpose of the organization was to work with girls' "tomato clubs" in Milam County. In 1903, the Texas Agricultural Extension Service at Texas A&M University had been established to help farmers. It soon became clear that women needed help as much as the farmers did, thus the appointment of Trigg and the development of Texas Home Demonstration Clubs.

The clubs' purpose was to have an organized way to teach homemaking and social skills to young girls. Land-grant universities were to provide the information, and the county agents and home economists would be the messengers to local communities. This was to be a means of education whereby the extension offices would bring the university to the farms instead of requiring rural citizens to go to the universities. Vegetable gardening, canning, butter making, poultry and livestock raising, bread making and even mattress making were taught via Home Demonstration Clubs.

In 1914, the Smith-Lever Act was designed as a partnership of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the land-

grant universities, which were authorized by the Federal Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890. Superintendents were appointed for girls' clubs, and home demonstration work was expanded. By 1917, rural women had joined girls in all phases of home demonstration work in Texas.

In 1919, the USDA performed its first survey of farm homes. Approximately 10,000 farm women returned records of their living and working conditions and of their major problems. The results of these surveys provided the basis for determining much of the content of early home-economics programs.

The organization constantly evolved and changed as the needs of women and girls changed. In 1926, it organized into the Texas Home Demonstration Association, started presenting scholarships to deserving 4-H girls and began taking steps to organize a World Group. During the early 1930s, it began focusing on improving education in schools, nutritional deficiencies and diseases aggravated by poor diets. In fact, it was through the efforts of these women that our children now have hot lunches at school. These organized clubs raised money to furnish kitchen equipment and lunchroom space. Through the influence of homemakers, the funds for establishing county health departments were gathered, resulting in the establishment of county public health services.

During the war in the 1940s, victory became their slogan, and the groups amazed the nation with their "Victory Gardens," where they grew food for their families and shared with their city sisters—and even taught them how to grow and conserve food. It was also during this time that



**LEFT:** Members of the Morton Valley TEEA are Eastland County Extension Agent Halee Mitchell, Flo Williamson, Sue Endebrook, Jo Haley, Janis Keith and Gerry Zummer. **ABOVE:** Photos and/or descriptions of each of the quilts donated to West Texas Rehab since 1978 are depicted in this frame, hanging in the Eastland County Courthouse. **RIGHT:** Eastland County Extension Agent Halee Mitchell found these needles in a box of old artifacts. They are approximately 6 inches long and are the actual needles used to stitch handmade mattresses in the 1940s.



the country had a surplus of cotton, resulting in organized mattress making. The club produced 530,614 mattresses and 183,552 comforters.

During the 1950s and 1960s, membership in the organizations reached new heights, upward of 40,000 in Texas. During this time, the members started beautification projects, influencing more than 3 million homeowners to clean up, repair, replace and beautify. They increased the amount of scholarships; prompted the B.E.L.T.S Program, which taught people nationwide the proper use of seat belts and car seats; and made a donation to help build the 4-H Center at Lake Brownwood.

Over the next 21 years, the name of the organization would change three times. In 1979, it was changed to Texas Extension Homemaker Association; in 1993, it was changed to Texas Association for Family and Community Education; and in 2000, the name had its final transformation to

Texas Extension Education Association.

With all the news we are bombarded with on a daily basis, it's easy to see why we hear so little about the good that these clubs do. In fact, state Rep. Jim Keffer said the Morton Valley club was "the best-kept secret in Eastland County."

Statewide, the TEEA clubs take up Coins for Friendship. Out of these funds, they provide 12 \$1,000 4-H scholarships, one for each of the 12 districts in the state. In addition, they receive a wish list each year from the Brownwood 4-H Center. This past year's wish was for the renovation of dorm rooms. The statewide organization pledged \$5,000 for this project, but was actually able to donate \$7,000.

Each of the 12 districts also offers two \$500 4-H scholarships. The local clubs have projects of their own, and these projects can be as varied as the Texas weather.

The Morton Valley club boasts 24 members from as close as Eastland, Ranger, Cisco and Carbon, and as far away as Glen Rose, Fort Worth, Crowley, Midlothian, Arlington and Azle. It is still a very active group, meeting on the second Wednesday of each month. Those involved consider the club a service organization, as most of the projects involve service to others. Some of their local projects include:

- Holding musicals, bake sales and catered dinners to help support the utilities and maintenance of the Carbon Community Center.
- Putting on a fish fry early in the year and a benefit in October to aid the Volunteer Fire Department.
- Providing backpacks and food for the Eastland Backpack Program for school-age children
- Donating a handmade quilt for auction every year since 1978 to benefit the West Texas Rehab. This year's quilt pattern will be the Irish Chain.
- Hosting this year's district conference, with the assistance of Hood and Erath counties. The Morton Valley club will also help with the state conference in Temple.
- Donating bonds to 4-H Gold Star winners in Eastland County.
- Participating in the Box Tops for Education program to earn cash for area schools.
- Donating \$100 to the Brookshire's Food Drive each Christmas.
- Providing an annual breakfast for the Eastland County Commissioners.
- Assisting the county extension office in the 4-H cooking and sewing camps.
- Stuffing decorative horned toads, with the assistance of the 4-H groups, for door prizes for the 5K run at the Old Rip Day last year.

As you can see, this is not an idle group. It is a very active, hardworking organization—an organization in which Eastland County should take great pride. Each of these women has a servant's heart and an attitude of service. Anyone looking for a worthwhile project would do well to join and be a part of this diligent band of sisters.

For information on this group, or any such group in the state of Texas, contact your local county extension office.



Along with a new coat of paint for the conference room, the members of the Morton Valley TEEA donated a gorgeous plaque and two flags to grace the Eastland County Courthouse.

# RECIPES



## Pink Salad

- |                                |                                         |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 1 large carton Cool Whip       | 1 cup pecans, chopped                   |
| 1 can sweetened condensed milk | 1 can pineapple, crushed and drained    |
| 1 cup miniature marshmallows   | 1 can pie filling, cherry or strawberry |

Mix all ingredients together. Chill and serve cold.

**DEBBIE GREEN**, *Rising Star*



## Betty's Hot Rolls

- |                           |                   |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 package cake yeast      | 1 stick margarine |
| 1/4 cup warm water        | 2 eggs, beaten    |
| 1 1/2 cups water, boiling | 5 1/2 cups flour  |
| 1/2 cup sugar             |                   |

Dissolve yeast in warm water. Combine boiling water, sugar and margarine, making sure sugar dissolves and margarine melts. Let cool. When mixture is cool, add eggs, yeast mixture and approximately 5 1/2 cups flour. Leave mixture in refrigerator, covered, overnight. The next morning, pinch dough into balls and shape as desired. Allow dough to rise. Bake at 350 degrees until rolls are brown.

**BETTY WOODARD**, *Comanche*



## Apricot Baked Ham

- |                                        |                                   |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 5- to 7-pound fully cooked bone-in ham | 1/2 cup apricot preserves         |
| 20 whole cloves                        | 3 tablespoons ground mustard      |
|                                        | 1/2 cup light brown sugar, packed |

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Place ham on rack in a shallow roasting pan. Score the surface of the ham, making 1/2 inch deep diamond shapes; insert a clove in each diamond. Combine preserves and mustard. Spread over ham. Pat brown sugar into apricot mixture. Bake for 20 minutes per pound or until a meat thermometer reads 140 degrees.

**GERRY ZUMMER**, *Carbon*

# WE WANT YOUR RECIPES!

**Do you have a favorite recipe you would be willing to share?**

Comanche Electric Cooperative would love to have your recipes for a members-only cookbook. You might even be featured on our website or newsletter! Send your submissions to:

*CECA, Attn: Shirley Dukes,  
P.O. Box 729, Comanche, TX  
76442 or sdukes@ceca.coop.*



## Motherhood

*The dearest gifts that heaven holds,  
The very finest, too,  
Were made into one pattern  
That was perfect, sweet and true;  
The angels smiled, well-pleased, and said:  
"Compared to all the others,  
This pattern is so wonderful  
Let's use it just for mothers!"  
And through the years, a mother  
Has been all that's sweet and good  
For there's one bit of God and love,  
In all true motherhood.*

HELEN STEINER RICE



**Happy Mother's Day**

Sunday, May 8



# EVIDENTLY, KEEPING THE LIGHTS ON MEANS TURNING THEM OFF.

I'm always looking for ways to save my business money. This one was a no-brainer. I'm saving us \$745 a year by turning off a few switches at night. What can you do? Find out how the little changes add up at [TogetherWeSave.com](http://TogetherWeSave.com).



[TOGETHERWESAVE.COM](http://TOGETHERWESAVE.COM)