

Clean Air Act Needs Overhaul



**MESSAGE
FROM
MANAGER
ALAN
LESLEY**

Back in the early 1970s, when environmental protections in the United States were few, Congress passed the Clean Air Act, a seminal piece of legislation that helped reduce pollution emitted by vehicles, industrial facilities and power plants.

But like a well-worn jacket that's been mended many times, the act has been changed in a piecemeal fashion over the past 40 years—the last major amendment was passed in 1990. These moves have created a patchwork of rules that helped dampen investment in electricity production.

Today, power generators must comply not only with numerous rules and

regulations adopted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as it interpreted the Clean Air Act, but also with court decisions over how these rules should apply. These complex and sometimes ill-fitting regulations mean fewer power plants will be built and many older ones will shut down because of uncertainty over what will come next.

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Glenn English, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, in his address to electric cooperative directors/trustees and chief executives during the associa-

tion's recent 2012 annual meeting, called on Congress to revisit the landmark environmental law and give it a complete overhaul with today's environmental situation in mind. "It's time to recognize that over the past 40 years, much has been accomplished in improving the environment of this nation—no question about it," English said. "It's also time for us to recognize rules and regulations and court decisions that addressed problems over the past 40 years—their time has passed."

He continued: "What we need today is for Congress and the president, our government and political leadership, to set new goals for the future—10, 20, 30 years down the road—and work with us to help rewrite the Clean Air Act so we can move in a direction without being hindered by a lot of old rules, regulations and court decisions."

Well, you might ask, what does this have to do with me?

You, as a member of Comanche

Electric Cooperative, can have an effect on the situation. If the 42 million members of electric cooperatives across this nation work together and speak with a loud enough voice, our elected officials

will listen. We saw this a couple of years ago with the grassroots Our Energy, Our Future campaign, during which 500,000 co-op members asked Congress to keep electricity affordable.

CECA is always looking out for you. We believe that educating you, our members, about policies that affect the quality of your life will lead to better laws and regulations. CECA will continue to push for common-sense approaches to state and national policies, such as the Clean Air Act. As a member, you can help by making your voice heard.



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Monday through Friday
Eastland closed from noon to 1:15 p.m.
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YOUR "LOCAL PAGES"

This section of Texas Co-op Power is produced by CECA each month to provide you with information about current events, special programs and other activities of the cooperative. If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact Shirley at the Comanche office or at sdukes@ceca.coop.



Conservation MATTERS

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

Be Your Home's Private Investigator

Do-it-yourself home energy audits reveal savings

BY MAGEN HOWARD

No matter the age of your home, it could benefit from a private energy investigation—also known as an energy audit. To be an energy private eye, ask yourself a simple question: Does my home feel drafty and cold in the winter or stuffy and hot in the summer? If your answer is yes, then your home probably experiences air leakage.

To track down where those spots are, round up the usual suspects—culprits such as damaged seals around doors and windows. If you see daylight or feel air, then apply caulk and weatherstripping to keep outdoor air where it's supposed to be.

But don't forget spots you might not immediately think of, such as recessed canister lights and electrical outlets. Outlet insulation kits can be purchased for as little as \$2, and you can fix up your canister lights with some caulk around the edges.

Also look where walls meet the ceiling. Cobwebs mean you've got drafts.

Next, poke your head into the attic and check for sufficient insulation. Inspect the crawl space or basement, too. How much you need depends on your climate. To check out the insulation calculator from the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, go to www.ornl.gov and do a search for "insulation calculator." It's important to remember that insulation won't do its job well if there's not a proper air barrier working in tandem. That means all joints and cracks must be sealed between your living space and the insulation.

Finally, look to your light fixtures. Compact fluorescent lightbulbs are up to 75 percent more efficient than traditional incandescent bulbs, and they've come a long way in light quality, design and affordability. You can purchase CFLs in a variety of shapes and hues. They cost more upfront, but you'll make your money back in less than nine months, and after that, they start saving money. Make sure to purchase a CFL that's rated by Energy Star, the U.S. government's program that denotes products meeting specific energy efficiency criteria. Energy Star-rated CFLs will typically last 10 times longer than a traditional incandescent bulb producing the same amount of light.

To learn more about ways to reduce your electric bill, visit Comanche Electric Cooperative's website at www.ceca.coop,



Weatherstripping around doors is an inexpensive and easy way to save energy.

or call 1-800-915-2533 for a free in-home energy evaluation by a member service representative.

Magen Howard is a writer for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

This photo by James Frink won honorable mention in the Six-Man Heaven Arts contest. The judges said his photo was a great reflection of a pep rally, a snapshot of many personalities bundled together.



Not Just Friday Night

Blanket ISD Students Prove That Six-Man Contests Aren't Always About Football

If you were raised in Texas, particularly in one of the more rural communities, you know that when someone says “Friday nights,” the first place the mind wanders is football. When talking to an old or new acquaintance from out of town, one of the most common questions seems to be “So how did your football team do this year?”

Football and sports can be big business. But what happens to those kids who are not into the sports scene, or who for some reason or other cannot participate in sports? The answer: the

Six-Man Heaven Arts contest.

Initiated in 2008, the contest was the brainchild of Teresa Burkett Bourgoise and Granger Huntress. With declining school budgets, many arts programs in public schools have been increasingly in danger of either being cut or forced to operate under budget cuts, thus limiting the extracurricular activities available for activities not related to sports.

Bourgoise has worked in the film and television industry as a special effects technician for 20 years. She is also a Texas native whose father played

six-man football back in 1940, shortly after the origination of the game.

Huntress is the webmaster of www.sixmanfootball.com, called “The Bible of six-man football in Texas” by The New York Times. The two came together like chocolate and peanut butter, and the result was the Six-Man Heaven Film and Essay Contest.

The goal of the contest is to engage high school students in documenting their communities using the medium of film and powerful storytelling. A newly developed Six-Man Heaven



LEFT:
Hope Heard and James Frink with their trophies and checks.

BELOW:
Hope Heard's winning essay.

The rush, the fight, the teamwork, six men working together. These are all elements to six man football, which many small schools play by. There are so many good material things you learn from football, but six man especially. It teaches you sportsmanship, teamwork, respect, integrity, but a major subject I would like to acknowledge is the six man mercy rule and what it means, and also what it teaches young boys and girls.

The six man mercy rule is a rule that means when a team is up by forty-five or more points than the game is over before the second half. This rule is a very important rule in my opinion because it teaches young boys and girls that when you're up in the scoreboard be a good sportsman and don't rub it in the opposing teams faces. I believe that is very important for young adults to prepare them for winning and failure in their adult life.

A very good example of the mercy rule would be when the Blanket Tigers went up with the Zephyr Bulldogs. The Tigers were prepared, they thought they were the "it" team. When in reality they stunk up the football team. It was the first quarter and you could literally feel the tension when the Bulldogs scored their first touchdown. As the fans and cheerleaders watched the scoreboard being hit up with points you could see the depression in the coaches and players faces. By the time the second quarter was over we were done with. At the end of the quarter the score was zero (Blanket) to fifty (Zephyr). I think this is a good example of the mercy rule because even though Blanket lost by fifty they didn't have to stay and be beat so badly anymore.

In the end, the mercy rule will be debated for years to come, but I will be on the positive side because it truly is a great rule. Either way six man football is a great sport that everyone learns something from.

Lights

BY SHIRLEY DUKES

Angels Network provides (at no cost) technical assistance for students from filmmakers in the Hollywood, California, and Austin film communities.

Now fast-forward to the 2011-12 school year and zoom your radar to the small community of Blanket. Business and technology teacher Edward Burt learned about the contest and pitched the idea to his students. The audio-visual classes had already made some films about the school, so the kids were already enthused. This challenge was just what Burt needed to fuel the flame

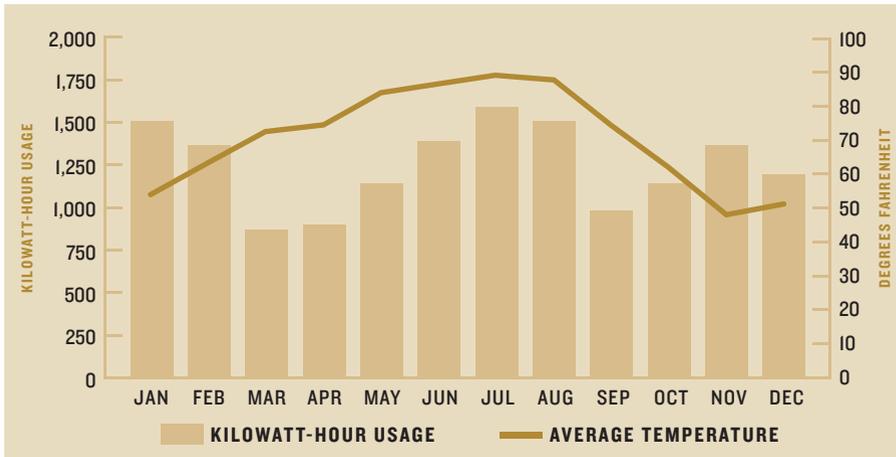
and keep them going. Burt challenged all his students, from seventh through 12th grades, and had students from all grades participating.

Imagine the excitement and surprise when it was announced that students James Frink and Hope Heard were contest winners. Frink, an eighth-grader, received honorable mention in the photo contest, and Heard, a seventh-grader, was the winner of the essay contest.

"With regard to our Blanket student winners, James Frink has an excep-

tional talent with photography—so good in fact, that I created an additional prize," Bourgoise said. "And Hope Heard was one of our youngest entrants to the essay contest but nevertheless wrote an articulate essay about six-man's mercy rule that excelled over older contest participants' entries. The judges were impressed by the Blanket students' enthusiasm for their school and community."

Please join CECA in congratulating these students and their teacher on a job very well done!



As temperatures rise and fall, so will the number of kilowatt-hours your home uses.

Electric Bills Reflect Weather Patterns

Minimizing movement of conditioned air can cut costs

Electric bills vary with the seasons, driven by weather and consumer-use patterns. Weather matters. When it's cold outdoors, family members generally want the house warm. When it's hot outside, air conditioners make living areas pleasant.

How much weather affects your electric bills depends on many factors, including your home's original construction materials, insulation and air leaks. Personal comfort plays a role too, as does the difference between the thermostat setting inside and temperature outdoors.

When a house stays at 68 degrees, but the outdoor temperature varies from minus 20 degrees in winter to more than 100 degrees on a muggy summer's day, demand for heating and cooling can be significant. Cooled air leaving a home essentially wastes the money spent to cool it. The same is true for air a homeowner has paid to warm.

R-value offers a way of measuring insulation's effectiveness (a higher R-value indicates more effective insulation). For example, on a 28-degree day, hourly heat loss from a residence set at 68 degrees could hit 2,464 British thermal units even through an 80-by-10-foot exterior wall packed with R-13 insulation. Reverse that situation on a scorching day—100 degrees outside—and heat gain indoors will still reach 2,464 Btu per hour.

To save money, set your thermostat 5 degrees closer (higher in summer, lower in winter) to the outdoor temperature. This simple change could result in a savings of 90 watts per hour of electricity—about 197 kilowatt-hours in three months.

In the meantime, adjust the thermostat. Keep blinds and drapes on the sunny side of your home closed in summer and open in winter. Find mysteriously "hot" or "cold" spots in the house and solve them by installing gasket seals around outlets and weatherstripping along doors and windows, replacing old windows, and upgrading insulation. When practical, adjust landscaping to provide shade for your property in summer and sunlight in winter.

Weather doesn't have to play havoc with electricity bills. There are a variety of tools, appliances and resources available to solve all sorts of energy challenges.

Some, such as new windows or a roof, require significant financing. But there are a lot of options that are inexpensive and simple that offer rewarding benefits.

Find more ways to save at www.cecacoop.com.



SALES TAX HOLIDAY

Save on Appliances
Memorial Day Weekend

Texas' fifth annual Energy Star Sales Tax Holiday this Memorial Day weekend is a great time to purchase new energy-efficient appliances without paying state or local sales taxes on qualifying items.

By purchasing an Energy Star-rated appliance during the tax holiday, you will not only save the sales tax, you will also save on your monthly utility bills by reducing your water and energy use.

The Energy Star Sales Tax Holiday begins Saturday, May 26, and runs through Memorial Day, Monday, May 28. The tax savings apply to the following appliances and household equipment bearing the Energy Star label:

- Central or room air conditioners priced at \$6,000 or less
- Refrigerators priced at \$2,000 or less
- Ceiling fans
- Incandescent and fluorescent lightbulbs
- Clothes washers
- Dishwashers
- Dehumidifiers
- Programmable thermostats

Visit www.texaspowerfulmart.org for details about the tax holiday.

As an added bonus, some appliances are eligible for a CECA ecoPOWR Rebate. To find out which ones, visit www.cecacoop.com where you will find a link next to the lightbulb, or contact CECA's Member Service Department at 1-800-915-2533.



CURBING COPPER THEFT

BY MAURICE MARTIN

Look at a piece of copper, and you can see why it's been popular with artists for 10,000 years. Its reddish-orange luster enhances jewelry and other decorative art. Ancient weapon makers also found it useful—axes with copper heads date back at least 5,000 years. More recently, engineers discovered that copper is an excellent conductor of electrical current.

In the past few years, copper's popularity has seen an uptick among another group: criminals. The increasing value of the metal has led to a wave of copper theft. Electric Safety Foundation International (ESFI) estimates that there are more than 50,000 copper thefts from electrical utilities in the U.S. each year.

Substation Grounding

Copper is swiped from many places, including construction sites, warehouses and abandoned homes. In some areas, crooks drag away entire air conditioning units so that they can remove the copper tubing at their leisure.

But copper theft from utility poles and electrical substations carries a particular concern. Copper energizes current-carrying conductors (wires) and plays a key role in grounding.

Substations—which contain expensive equipment for controlling the flow of electricity from high-voltage transmission lines to your home—must be grounded to the earth to prevent damage from lightning strikes and fault currents. When your co-op grounds equipment in a substation, it makes an electrical connection to a buried network of wires, called a ground grid, that dissipates an excess charge safely over a wide area.

But burying wires causes them to corrode. Buried “aluminum undergoes galvanic corrosion and can turn to dust in two years,” explains Emory Barber, director of cable and systems engineering at Southwire Company, one of the nation's largest manufacturers of transmission lines. “Given the same conditions, copper can last 60 years or more.”

Despite the extreme danger that comes with entering a substation, the copper wire inside is an attractive target. For the relatively small value of the stolen copper, crooks risk their lives and leave a dangerous mess that can be very expensive to clean up.

ESFI estimates the value of copper stolen from utilities—whether grounding wire substations, grounding wires off poles or even power lines themselves—to be about \$20 million each year. But the financial impact can run three times that amount. And when copper bandits strike, not-for-profit co-ops, like Comanche Electric Cooperative, have no choice but to pass the repair costs on to their members.

A substation or pole that's left ungrounded becomes a dangerous place. Sometimes the thieves touch or cut the

wrong conductors, exposing themselves to lethally high voltages. Errant currents can damage electrical equipment, taking the substation or line “down” and interrupting power to consumers. The electricity can even endanger co-op employees, causing injury or death. ESFI estimates that 35 Americans die each year because of copper or other metal theft.

Foiling Thieves

To prevent theft before it happens, co-ops have embarked on multipronged initiatives. Many have launched intensive public relations campaigns about the issue; others have partnered with local Crime Stoppers chapters and posted rewards. Some co-ops are replacing much of the vulnerable wire with copper-clad steel. Copper-clad steel, which has been around since 1915, boasts the electricity-carrying properties of copper but contains very little scrap value. Although bendable, it can't be cut and removed with normal tools—even hydraulic bolt cutters.

Another technology that co-ops are employing is copper wire that carries identification information, allowing recy-



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As the price of scrap metal remains high, copper has become a target for theft from electrical substations, which creates expensive clean-up for cooperatives and a potentially fatal risk for thieves.

cling centers to quickly identify the wire as stolen and contact law enforcement.

Also, keep in mind that no one should be in an electric substation except trained employees. Report any suspicious activity to local law enforcement and Comanche Electric Cooperative. Your diligence can help stop criminals and may even save a life.

Maurice Martin is a senior program manager for the Cooperative Research Network.