



Comanche Electric Cooperative Names Youth Tour Winners

Each year, Comanche Electric Cooperative sends two area youth on an all-expense-paid trip of a lifetime to Washington, D.C. The trip is open to any student, sophomore and above, who attends a school where Comanche Electric Cooperative has facilities, or if the student's parent or legal guardians are members of CECA. The winning students will receive airfare, transportation, lodging, meals, insurance and admission charges associated with the tour.

Congratulations go to Monique Barrios and Veronica Hogue, both juniors at Mullin High School. They were chosen to represent CECA on the 2007 Government-in-Action Youth Tour trip to be held in June. They will meet up at our nation's capital with approximately 1,400 other young people from across the nation. Once in Washington, they will have the privilege of touring such historic places as Ford's Theatre, the Jefferson Memorial, the Lincoln Memorial, Mount Vernon, the Washington Monument, the Supreme Court, the Smithsonian Institution, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the Iwo Jima Memorial, the Library of Congress, the Washington Cathedral, the National Archives, and of course, the U.S. Capitol.

Monique has attended Mullin schools for the past six years. During these years she has been involved in volleyball, basketball, track, tennis and cheerleading. She also participated in UIL academics and the one-act play contest. She is involved with FFA and is the chapter vice president. She is the Junior Class president and has been elected as next year's National Beta Club vice president. Monique participated in Comanche Electric Cooperative's John Ben Shepperd Leadership Forum and in the Relay for Life Cancer Walk. She also tutors elementary students in reading and math before school.

Veronica Hogue has attended Mullin High School for the past two years, where she participates in volleyball, basketball, cheerleading, track and golf. She is also involved in UIL, Beta Club and FFA. She is vice president of her class and is a member of Union Presbyterian Church in Brownwood.

Both girls are outstanding students in the Mullin school system and should represent the membership of Comanche Electric Cooperative quite impressively.

If you know of a student who attends a school within the CECA service district who might be interested in competing for the trip next year, call Shirley at 1-800-915-2533, or e-mail sdukes@ceca.coop. Eligible schools are: Albany, Baird, Bangs, Blanket, Breckenridge, Cisco, Comanche, Cross Plains, De Leon, Dublin, Early, Eastland, Goldthwaite, Gorman, Gustine, Hamilton, Hico, May, Moran, Mullin, Priddy, Ranger, Rising Star, Sidney and Zephyr.



MONIQUE BARRIOS



VERONICA HOGUE

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 food-borne illness, also known as food poisoning, as are unwashed perishable foods such as meat, seafood, and peeled or cut fruits and vegetables.



KEEP FOODS COLD. Keep all perishable foods cold. If you'll be meeting up with friends away from your backyard grill, it's best to transport all perishables including raw meat, poultry and seafood 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 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 3 minutes to kill harmful bacteria.

GRILLING SHORTCUTS. Precooking 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 minimum internal temperature use a meat thermometer.

Here are some safe minimum internal temperatures:

- Chicken breasts: 165 degrees
- Beef hamburgers: 160 degrees
- Beef, veal and lamb (steaks, roasts and chops):
 - Medium rare: 145 degrees
 - Medium: 160 degrees
 - All pork: 160 degrees

Fortunately, most people seldom get sick from contaminated food, and consumers can feel safe knowing that with proper refrigeration and thorough cooking, harmful food-borne illnesses can be avoided all together.



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YOUR "LOCAL PAGES"

This section of *Texas Co-op Power* is produced by Comanche EC 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.

COMANCHE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

A Tale of Two Services

BY SHIRLEY DUKES

Close your eyes and picture your life as it is now: a nice home with running water, electricity, plumbing, central heat and air, a refrigerator, cook stove, washer and dryer—all the modern conveniences that make living easier. Now imagine that you move today to another country where those things don't exist yet. The only air conditioning is an open window; the only heating a closed one. An outhouse and a washtub out back serve as the only means of a bathroom, and the washtub you bathe in is also the same one you do laundry in. For the natives of this country, this life is not so hard. It is the life they were born into and it is all they know. Not so for you and your family who have known an easier, more convenient life.

Such was the case for Arthur Viertel when his parents moved the family from Jones County to Stephens County in 1942.

Art Viertel was 11 years old and living on California Creek 8 miles southwest of Stamford when electricity came to his home in Jones County in 1939. While most of the people I've spoken with recall the men digging holes by hand, Mr. Viertel can recall the excitement of watching a digger truck "make short work of digging holes so large and so deep near our house and along the road to the next house."

Having visited his mother's cousin in Cisco some years earlier, Art had gazed in wonder at the incandescent lights that dangled from a single wire in the middle of the ceiling. Oh, the excitement he and his sister and brothers must have felt when they realized they, too, would soon be doing homework and chores by those light bulbs instead of by candlelight or kerosene lamp. But for their mother, who was doing the laundry out back in a washtub and cooking on a wood stove, one can only imagine the thrill she must have felt to realize that one day soon she would have the



Mr. and Mrs. Viertel, along with Art and his brothers, stand in front of the Stephens County residence.



The original house in Stephens County is still in use.

same convenience of electricity as her city cousin. What a joy it must have been for her the day those lights blazed on.

But that joy was short lived. Max VierTEL had a dream of escaping the drudgery of the cotton fields. He had searched for several years for a place where he could raise cattle and grain. He finally found the "perfect place" east of Ibex on the west line of Stephens County. He moved his family there in February 1942, soon after the United States entered World War II. Electricity had not yet found its way out there and, with the onset of the war, all hopes of it coming in the near future vanished. After three years of electrical convenience, it was back to the drudgery of life on the farm with no electricity. Back to outhouses and washtubs, wood cook stoves and coal irons, kerosene lamps and iceboxes.

But with the end of the war came renewed growth within the rural areas and a renewed feeling of hope that some day soon electricity would once again be a part of their lives. Soon after the end of World War II, Max and Art VierTEL went to the Comanche County Electric offices to ask when they might be able to expect to receive electricity, only to find that the construction was running about five years behind.

In 1949, after seven years of being without it, electricity once again made its way into the VierTEL household. Art was now a young man, not the 11-year-old boy he had been when he first experienced the joy of electricity. Instead of watching the excitement in wonder, he was now the instigator behind the excitement. This time, Art wired the barns and shop and ran a line halfway to a large stock pond where he'd dug a pit and placed a jet water pump. He roughed in the house for electricity but hired an electrician to finish up the inside work. Art plumbed the kitchen for water, installed a water heater, built a bathroom and dug a septic tank while the lines were being built.

Much of the area in Stephens County where the VierTELs resided was thick limestone, making it difficult to

dig the holes even with the digger truck. Therefore, when the digger truck had gone as deep as it possibly could, dynamite would be placed in the hole to blast through the limestone so that the digger could continue to drill. During the Christmas holidays that year, Art and his brothers were busily digging a cellar behind the house. About 3 1/2 feet down, they hit a heavy layer of limestone. The crews had left the rigs parked at the VierTELs' home for the holiday, and Art's brother, who had been working in the oil field and fancied himself somewhat of an expert in dynamite, decided that it would be a good idea to blast through the limestone. They borrowed some dynamite off the rig and put about half a stick in several of the holes. Art recalls they had a "real blast" that Christmas.

Today, Art says that the biggest improvement in their lives came not in the form of electric light, but in the form of running water. Before this time, the water for the family's daily use came from a cistern behind the house. A wash pot was used to heat the water for cooking, cleaning and laundry. They could now bathe or shower indoors instead of going to the stock pond, and the indoor bathroom was a huge improvement over the outhouses. Art's wife, Betty, believes that Art's mother was most likely the one who benefited the most from electricity. In addition to new conveniences, she could now use an electric iron instead of the heavy coal or gas heated irons of the past. The refrigerator was a big improvement over the icebox, in which milk and meat would easily spoil when ice was in short supply. Ice was delivered only when someone happened to be going to town, which had not been often during the war due to the fuel and tire shortage. Mrs. VierTEL had said that probably the worst thing they did was to put elec-



Art and Betty VierTEL still possess relics from days gone by. These lamps and irons were the household's means of lighting and doing laundry before electricity was run to the home in Jones County and again in Stephens County.



This outhouse was built on the Stephens County property in the early 1930s by the WPA.

tricity in the barn. She did most of the milking and would have to quit work early enough to have some light to milk by. With the installation of electric lights in the barn, she would work till dark and then go to the barn and milk the cows by the light of the incandescent bulbs, thus making her workday longer.

"I have had some really wonderful experiences in my 79 years," Art says today, "but these two events rank right up there. It gives us a great appreciation of where we have come. Thanks, REA!"

Energy Efficiency

Eliminate Waste and Save Yourself Money

BY SHIRLEY DUKES

In this age of increased living expenses, it is imperative that we do all we can to reduce our expenses as well as the wear and tear on our environment. Alternative fuel sources are an important aspect in the fight against the erosion of our environment. We tend to leave the problem of how to conquer our fuel problems with the research labs and fuel companies. But how many of us realize as we go about our daily activities how guilty we are of using up some of our most valuable natural resources? And how many of us realize the little things that we take for granted that could be costing us, both monetarily and in the form of the erosion of our environment?

Our homes have become SUVs of the residential kind. According to the US Department of Energy, the typical U.S. family spends more than \$1,600 per year on home utility bills, and a large portion of that energy is wasted. In this innovative age of technology, we have turned our homes into fuel-guzzling machines capable of eating up our precious fuels and our precious pocketbooks. However, with just a few adjustments in our lifestyle, we can easily save money and resources. So this month, let's take a quick tour of our homes to determine what we can do and where we can make adjustments to correct some wasteful habits.

Kitchen

If you use an electric stovetop, turn off the burner just before the food finishes cooking. The burner will stay hot for some time, and your food will continue to cook. This not only saves energy that would be consumed by your stove, but also could reduce your cooling bill in the summer. Keep the burners clean so heat reflects properly and make sure the size of your pan matches the size of your burner. Turn off the range hood fan

as soon as you are finished with it, as running it can drain your house of heated or cooled air in just one hour.

When cooking in the oven, use glass or ceramic pans. They are better conductors of heat. You can set your oven 25 degrees cooler and your food will cook at the same rate.

Your oven can lose 25 percent of its heat when you open the door, so try to check your food through the oven glass rather than opening the door. When possible, cook several items together to shorten the time the oven is on. If you use a self-cleaning oven, clean it immediately after use so the oven does not have to reheat. Use a microwave or toaster oven when possible.

Clean your refrigerator coils every six months. This not only allows air to circulate, allowing your motor to work less, but also eliminates a fire safety hazard as well. Keep your refrigerator full enough to maximize cooling power, but don't stock it so full that the air can't circulate, and be sure the seal on your refrigerator is tight. Frost buildup makes the freezer work harder to keep your food frozen, so keep your freezer defrosted.

Run only full loads in your dishwasher and open the door during the dry cycle instead of using a heat cycle.

Laundry Room

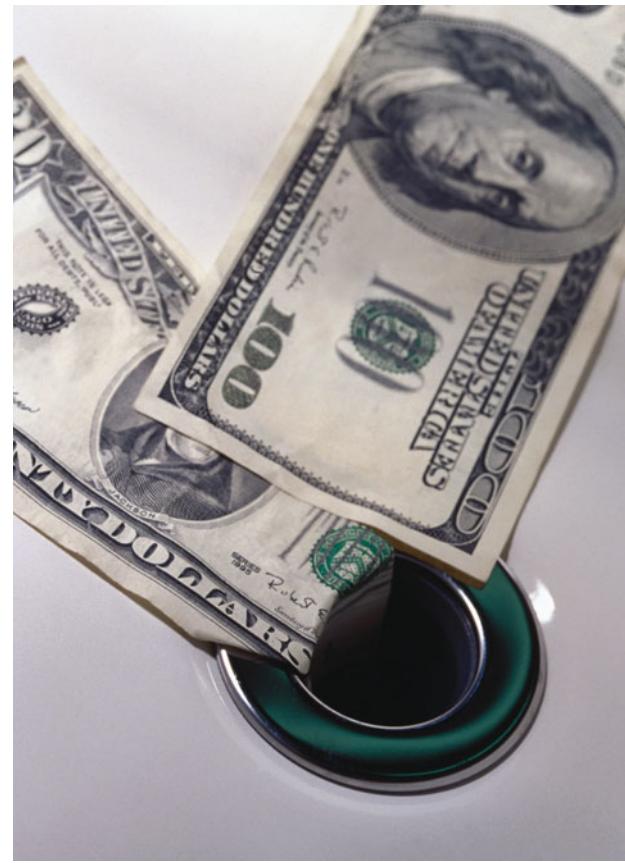
Whenever possible, wash clothes in cold water, and always rinse in cold water. Run only full loads. One load of laundry

can use as much as 35 gallons of water.

Dry loads one after another to keep the dryer from having to reheat. Regularly clean the lint screen and the outside air vent to keep your dryer running efficiently and to eliminate a safety hazard.

Bathroom

Fix leaky faucets and toilets immediately. One drip can waste 250 gallons of water a month, which translates to 3,000 gallons of wasted water annually. And if your water is served by water well with an electric pump, this can add up to a big increase in your electric bill at the end of the month. An average bath uses 15-25 gallons of water compared with 10 gallons for a five-minute shower, so take showers instead of baths and keep them as cool as possi-



ble. Replace your showerhead with one that saves water to reduce the costs of heating water. Turn off the bathroom vent as soon as you are finished with it. Like the vent in your kitchen, it can drain your home of heated or cooled air in just one hour.

Windows, Doors and Insulation

Make sure all doors and windows are thoroughly sealed to prevent loss of heated or cooled air and to prevent unwanted air from seeping in. Double-glazing windows can cut heat losses in half. On windows that face the sun, keep drapes closed during the hot summer months and open during the winter. Install storm doors with weather stripping, and make sure they are well sealed at top and bottom as well as the sides.

Make sure all air ducts are sealed and that your attic is well ventilated. If your attic has less than 12 inches of insulation, it could be to your advantage to reinsulate, but be sure to measure your savings against your cost.

Heating and Cooling

Experiment with settings to find the one that is most comfortable. The closer you can set it to the outside temperature, the less the unit will run. Every degree you move the thermostat affects the runtime of the unit by about 6 percent. Install a programmable thermostat that can be preset to a cooler or warmer temperature when you are sleeping. Properly humidified air makes your home feel warmer and more comfortable in the winter, so consider a humidifier. A humidifier can make a 68-degree room feel like 76 degrees. During summer months, use ceiling fans set to run counterclockwise, and clockwise during winter months to re-circulate the warm air. Make sure that vents are clean and not blocked, and do not place any type of light near your thermostat. Replace filters in your heating and cooling units every three to six months to help your unit run more efficiently and to keep your unit from having to work so hard.

Water Heater

Lowering your water heater thermostat setting to 120 degrees Fahrenheit can reduce energy use for a family of four by 15 percent. Water heaters set at 140 degrees can cost as much as \$20 per month more than those set at 120 degrees.

Miscellaneous

Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFL) are the most efficient lamps. A CFL will use about a quarter as much energy as an incandescent bulb. These bulbs are a little more expensive, but they will last about 13 times longer. If you would like to calculate your savings using the CFL bulbs, log onto www.touchstoneenergy.com, click on the Light Bulb Energy Saver and enter the number of incandescent bulbs in your home. The program will calculate for you the amount of savings you can experience by replacing your bulbs. For example, replacing 10 incandescent bulbs with energy-saving CFL bulbs will save you \$44 per year for a total savings of \$398 for the lifetime of the bulbs. Replacing 20 bulbs will save you \$88 per year for a total savings of \$797 for the lifetime of the bulbs.

Plug home electronics, such as computers, TVs and DVD players into power strips, then turn the power strips off when the equipment is not in use. This type of equipment uses what is called a "phantom load," meaning they still use several watts even when turned off.

When replacing appliances, look for the "Energy Star" label. These products meet strict efficiency guidelines set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy.

When a fireplace is not in use, keep the flue damper tightly closed. A chimney is designed specifically for

smoke to escape, so until you close it, air escapes 24 hours a day. Install rubber gaskets behind outlet and switch plates on exterior walls.

You may wonder why we encourage you to use your electricity more effectively through energy conservation. After all, we are in the business of selling kilowatt-hours.

Why would we encourage our customers to use less electricity?

The answer is simple. Comanche Electric Cooperative isn't in the business to make a profit; it's in business to serve you in the most efficient, reliable and cost-effective way possible. Each co-op is collectively owned by the people it serves and shares its members' interest in keeping costs down.

Here at Comanche Electric Cooperative, we are trying to keep your electricity affordable by automating operations where possible and by setting reasonable budgets that do not sacrifice reliability and service. Do we need to conserve electricity? Of course we do. Will that solve the energy crunch? Absolutely not. Conservation of electricity is just one avenue for managing energy. Does this mean we should all get rid of our SUVs? Not necessarily, but we can save fuel by avoiding unnecessary trips, combining errands and sharing rides to work.

Comanche Electric Cooperative will continue to offer tips for conserving electricity because we are convinced that consumers need to start taking control of the situation by using less. You can count on Comanche Electric Cooperative to continue looking out for you. We will do everything we can to educate, assist and advise you so you can make decisions that will be in your best interest. Just remember, we all need to conserve energy of all types—not just electricity.

