

# Margin of Error Too Thin on Electricity Supply



**MESSAGE FROM MANAGER ALAN LESLEY**

**A**nother near miss in August demonstrates again that Texas is riding too close to the line when it comes to electricity supply.

When summer's unrelenting heat prompted millions of Texans to run their air conditioners, the demand for electricity came dangerously close to outstripping available supply. This scenario was almost a repeat of the one in February, when demand for heating during one of the coldest snaps in recent years came close to triggering unplanned power interruptions. What's going on here?

First, both weather events were extreme. The heat August 1-4 topped 100 degrees in almost every part of the state, putting a strain on power plants feeding the grid controlled by ERCOT, the Electricity Reliability Council of Texas, which manages the flow of electric power to 85 percent of the state's customers. The drought that has gripped the state has also made the problem worse, hobbling some power plants that don't have enough available water to cool their turbines.

Weather won't always be as extreme, and the drought—we all hope and pray—will break. But there are other factors that figure into the power demand picture that won't go away: the state's growing population and the strong business climate.

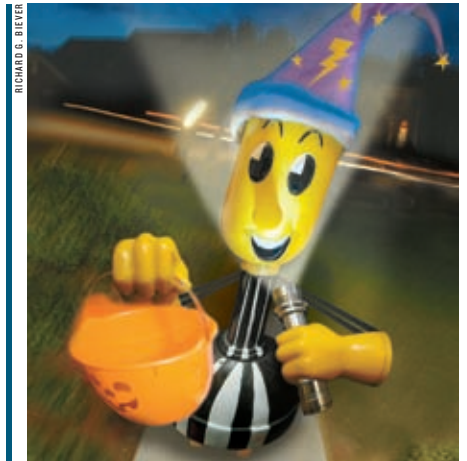
The more people who move to the state, the more electricity customers there will be. And Texas continues to grow, adding almost 5 million people from the 2000 to the 2010 census. A lot of that population growth is because people are coming here to work.

Texas appears to be weathering the national recession better than other states. That business strength increases demand for electricity to power factories and stores.

Building new generation facilities is not easy. It never has been. But the lack of a comprehensive national energy policy, which has been stalled in Congress for years, and an increasingly stringent set of regulations from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency have made it harder recently. Uncertainty about direction of the country's energy future makes investors leery of putting money up to pay for new generation.

If we don't get our energy priorities straight, the next big heat wave or cold snap could result in more than a near miss—it could leave you in the dark.

Tell your representatives in Washington that energy policy is too important to leave on the back burner.



Electric co-op mascot Willie Wiredhand encourages members to be safe.

## Don't Let Hazards Haunt Halloween!

**H**alloween is the most festively frightening night of the year. Here are some safety reminders to help keep yours free of danger:

- As you're decorating, make sure to check for cracked sockets, frayed, loose or bare wires and loose connections.
- Fasten all outdoor lights securely to trees and other firm supports. Do not use nails or tacks that could puncture insulating cords and damage wires.
- Make sure decorative lighting is well ventilated, protected from weather and a safe distance from anything flammable, such as dry leaves and shrubs. Do not coil extension cords while in use or tuck them under rugs or drapes.
- Make sure all outdoor electrical lights and decorations are plugged into an outlet protected with a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI). If your outlets aren't equipped with GFCIs, have an electrician install them or buy a GFCI adapter plug. Don't overload outlets with too many extension cords and strands of lights.
- Keep power cords off walkways and porches that trick-or-treaters might use. You don't want them to trip.
- Leave the porch light on for trick-or-treaters, and be sure to turn out all spooky lights and decorations before leaving home or going to bed. This will also save energy.

For more tips visit [www.safeelectricity.org](http://www.safeelectricity.org).

Source: *Electric Consumer*

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# Efficiency MATTERS

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

## Watch Out for Energy Vampires

**V**ampires are out and about this Halloween, but they don't want to suck your blood. These are energy vampires, and they want to suck your watts. A force as insidious as Dracula is quietly sucking a nickel out of every dollar's worth of the electricity that seeps from your home's outlets.

Insert the little fangs of your cell phone charger in the plug and leave it there, phone attached or not attached: There's a vampire.

Leave your computer hiding in the cloak of darkness known as sleep mode, rather than shutting it off: There's another vampire.

Your high-definition TV and your digital video recorder (DVR) are both lurking in the corner, plugged into the wall: Two more vampires, quietly sucking power.

Picture any appliance that displays a clock while otherwise idle, such as a

microwave oven, coffeemaker or DVD player. All of these constantly consume little bites of energy. Energy-efficiency experts find this phenomenon terrifying as energy prices rise. More than \$4 billion a year is spent on standby power in the U.S. alone.

So what can you do to combat these energy vampires? It's simple: Use a little electrical garlic.

Unplug chargers when not in use. There's one vampire gone (or more, depending on how many chargers are creeping about in your home). Plug your TV, game console and whatever else is in your home's entertainment center into a power strip. When you're not watching TV or listening to your stereo, instead of simply pressing the "off" button, switch off the power strip, thereby eliminating even more vampires. You can do the same thing for the family computer. If

your DVR is set to record certain shows, smart power strips with timers are available. It can be a nuisance to reset your clocks every day; instead, unplug them when you are going to be gone for an extended period of time.

If you want to get serious in your vampire slaying, think about upgrading those old appliances, like your refrigerator and washing machines. The government-backed Energy Star program, coordinated jointly by the U.S. Department of Energy and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, identifies appliances that consume less, and while they cost more up front, eventually they will pay for themselves. If one in 10 American homes only used appliances that were Energy Star rated, the Energy Department estimates it would reduce U.S. carbon emissions by the same amount as planting 1.7 million acres of trees.

## Have Heating Inspection Done Before Halloween



The best time to have your heating system inspected is after the hot summer air is gone—but before winter's chill sets in.

It's important to have your heater inspected every year before heating season kicks in. A licensed service technician can warn you about problems—and fix them—before they become so big that your system shuts down during the dead of winter, leaving your house uncomfortably cold for a day or more while you wait for repairs.

That inspection could also reveal needed improvements or repairs that might make it easier for your system to heat and cool your home more efficiently—helping lower your electric bill. It could also qualify you for a rebate from CECA's ecoPOWR rebate program.

If your system is more than 10 years old, it may be worth looking into replacing it. Today's systems are much more energy efficient and will likely cut your monthly heating and cooling costs significantly. Rebates are also available for replacing your old, inefficient unit.

You can do your part by changing filters regularly and having a working carbon monoxide detector in place.

For information on the ecoPOWR rebate program requirements and to verify that you will qualify for a rebate, call Shirley at 1-800-915-2333 or e-mail [sdukes@ceca.coop](mailto:sdukes@ceca.coop).



# Comanche Electric Cooperative Hold

The 73rd annual meeting of the membership of Comanche Electric Cooperative Association was held Saturday, August 6, at Comanche City Park. Three hundred twenty-one members and guests—a total of 625 people—braved the record-breaking heat to pick up their door prizes, hear the business of the cooperative, win prizes and feast on a sumptuous fish and chicken meal prepared by Cook's Fish Barn. Fortunately, there was a pleasant breeze blowing through the spacious tent, and the temperature never became unbearable.

The annual health fair was available during registration. Abilene Regional Hospital offered free cholesterol

screening to members. Other vendors attending included Comanche Medical Hospital/Clinic, Cross Timbers Community Health Center and WIC, CARR (City and Rural Rides), Curves, Comanche Hospice and Comanche Home Health, Comanche EMS, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Caring Touch, Lee Health Care, Guardian Health Care, Texas Forest Service and The White Stone retirement home. Ruth Tippie was on-site giving free back massages, and Air Evac Lifeteam had a table as well as an air ambulance onsite.

The Class of '57 entertained the membership with a delightful mix of music from the past, including some

country, some rock 'n' roll, and of course, a little Elvis!

The official business meeting kicked off at 10 a.m. after Comanche Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts presented the colors and led the membership in the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the national anthem, sung by Christine Salmon and signed by Kari Rust. Board President Monty Carlisle called the meeting to order and asked General Manager Alan Lesley to lead with a word of prayer. Along with the regular business of the day, Lesley gave a short speech.

Youth Tour winner Meagan Johnson reported on her Washington, D.C., experience, and scholarship winners



# 73rd Annual Membership Meeting

Susan Coffee and Adrian Munoz thanked the membership and spoke about their plans for the future.

Eight employees were recognized for their dedication and received service awards. They were Chad Foreman, Kay Slavens and Curtis Tippie, five years; Chad Newman, 10 years; Kendall Keith and Jim Lester, 15 years; Doug Erwin, 25 years; and William Works, 30 years.

One of the major objectives of the annual meeting is to allow the membership to have a say in their cooperative through the democratic process of electing directors who will represent their interests. Districts 2 and 4 were up for election this year, with incumbents James "Doc" Murphree and Carlisle

being re-elected by acclamation.

A brief discussion was held concerning the old business of 2010 as well as new business. New business discussion included the possibility of moving the annual meeting from August to October. Comments were encouraged, and the idea appeared to be well received. You can look for our next annual meeting to be held in October 2012.

Following the business portion of the meeting, a drawing was held to award door prizes. Thirty-two lucky members went home with prizes ranging from flashlights to TVs. The meeting concluded with a fish and chicken meal with all the fixin's, provided by

Cook's Fish Barn.

In addition to the election of directors, the annual meeting gives CECA members the opportunity to meet their board members on a personal level, network with neighbors and fellow CECA members, have their voices heard and become more informed and involved in the operations of the cooperative. If you were unable to make the meeting this year, we encourage you to make plans to attend in October 2012 to join us in this important decision-making process!

*See more annual meeting highlights on the next page.*

# More Annual Meeting Highlights





# OPEN HOUSE *and* RIBBON CUTTING



**CECA Eastland Office**  
**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12 • 10 A.M. – NOON**



Mark your calendar for October 12 and come join us in the rededication of our recently renovated office building in Eastland. Originally built in 1958, the building had certainly seen better times. With a steadfast commitment to continuing our local presence in the area, your board of directors made the decision to improve the facility, even to the point of adding a drive-through window for convenience and efficiency. After three months of renovations, the newly remodeled Eastland office building is now complete! We will be having an open house and serving refreshments from 10 a.m. to noon for those who would like to look over the new facility. The Eastland Chamber of Commerce will also be on hand to celebrate with a ribbon cutting. We look forward to seeing you there!



## WE NEED YOUR RECIPES!

CECA is in the process of developing a members-only recipe book, and we would love to have your favorite recipes to include in the first edition. Members submitting recipes will receive the first copies of the publication! So send in your recipes today to CECA, Attn: Shirley, P.O. Box 729, Comanche, Texas 76442, or e-mail [sdukes@ceca.coop](mailto:sdukes@ceca.coop).