

What Would Life Be Like Without Electric Co-ops?



MESSAGE FROM
GENERAL MANAGER ALAN LESLEY

FOLKS OFTEN TAKE STOCK OF BLESSINGS AND CHALLENGES at the beginning of each year, thinking about the impact their lives have made on the world and envisioning the effect they'd like to have on the future. At CECA, we approach the new year with this spirit of contemplation.

In the classic movie *It's a Wonderful Life*, lead character George Bailey wishes he had never been born because he is in financial trouble. With the help of an angel, he sees how many lives would have been negatively affected if he didn't exist. Bailey comes to realize that, even with his problems, he has a wonderful life with great friends and family.

So what do you think life would be like if community leaders had not founded CECA all those years ago?

Living in the United States in 2016, it is nearly impossible to imagine life without electricity. So many of our modern conveniences that improve the quality of our lives depend on electricity as the “fuel” to make them work. From the alarm clock that wakes us up, to the refrigerator that keeps our morning milk cold and fresh. From the air-conditioning and heating units that keep us cool in summer and warm in winter, to the vacuum that lets us clean more efficiently and all those kitchen appliances

that save us time and effort. So much of our entertainment, whether from the TV, radio or computer, depends on the kilowatt-hours that your electric co-op provides. Just think: There would be no smartphones or cellphones if there were no electricity.

As you consider the new year, remind yourself to be thankful for all that you have. It also is important to remember the 1.3 billion people in the world who still live without reliable electric service—a number equal to about four times the U.S. population.

Many of the things we take for granted living in the U.S. are much harder and more time-consuming for people in developing countries around the world. We are proud members of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, which works through its affiliates, NRECA International and the NRECA International Foundation, to help empower people in developing countries such as Haiti and Liberia.

We are thankful that our community ancestors had the vision and foresight to do for themselves what needed to be done, gathering friends and neighbors to form our electric co-op. As the electric business of the 21st century continues to evolve, you can count on CECA to meet all of your electric energy needs. More important, we are here to help improve the quality of your wonderful life.

Americans are blessed to have ready access to electricity. In some countries, as few as 5 percent of the residents share that privilege.

SERGEY NIVENS | DOLLAR PHOTO CLUB



BUTLER RURAL EC

Pole Attachment Audit Underway

CECA IS CONDUCTING a pole attachment audit across the CECA service territory. This audit has been contracted to and is being performed by representatives of TechServ Consulting & Training Ltd., based in Tyler. CECA conducts this audit periodically to verify the number of pole attachments on the system to ensure that the entities owning those attachments are being billed correctly.

TechServ will also be looking for safety violations that may result from certain pole attachments, such as low clearances and proximity to energized conductor equipment. Generally speaking, pole attachments include communications cables from various telecommunications and cable companies throughout the service territory.

Representatives from TechServ will visit each pole location on the CECA system, working from the southern portion of the system toward the northern part. If you have questions, please contact CECA at 1-800-915-2533.

The Power of Operation Round Up

IT STARTED AS A SIMPLE IDEA 27 years ago at an electric co-op in South Carolina: Round up volunteer co-op members' electric bills to the next dollar, and use the proceeds to do good in the community. Today, hundreds of electric co-ops throughout the country, including Comanche Electric Cooperative, use this idea to help members and organizations close to home.

All co-ops adhere to the Seven Cooperative Principles, including Concern for Community. The Operation Round Up program is an embodiment of this core principle. Over the years, millions of Operation Round Up dollars have been collected and distributed for a wide range of activities. This can include helping a family in need after a fire; assisting the local food pantry; providing money to the local fire department for a needed piece of equipment; or dozens of other humanitarian efforts that bring electric co-ops even closer to the communities we serve.



The average co-op member donates between \$6 and \$11.88 to the program each year. This may not seem like a large amount, but when combined with similar amounts from hundreds of other members, it adds up to make a significant impact. The program is always voluntary, and at any time members can change their minds about participating. Once folks see the good work the program does in their community, they almost always keep contributing.

CECA's Operation Round Up Program is governed by a board of volunteers separate from the co-op's board of directors. This ensures that decisions are made in the best interests of the community.

If you are not participating in Operation Round Up and would like to do so, joining is easy. Simply fill out the form below and return it with your next payment, or mail it to us at P.O. Box 729, Comanche, TX 76442. If you would like more information, or would like to know how the funds are spent, visit our website at ceca.coop, or contact our Member Services Department at 1-800-915-2533.

Neighbor helping neighbor—that's the cooperative way.

NEIGHBOR HELPING NEIGHBOR

Comanche Electric Cooperative

Yes! I want to be a part of Operation Round Up.

We appreciate your taking time to consider participating in Operation Round Up. Please complete this form and return it to CECA, P.O. Box 729, Comanche, TX 76442.

NAME

ACCOUNT NUMBER

PHONE NUMBER ()

SIGNATURE

CECA

P.O. Box 729
Comanche, TX 76442

Operating in Brown, Callahan, Comanche, Eastland, Mills, Shackelford and Stephens counties

HEADQUARTERS

201 W. Wrights Ave.
Comanche, TX 76442

EARLY OFFICE

1801 CR 338
Early, TX 76801

EASTLAND OFFICE

1311 W. Main St.
Eastland, TX 76448

OFFICE HOURS

Comanche Office: Monday through Friday 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Early Office: Monday, Wednesday and Friday 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., closed from 1 to 2 p.m.

Eastland Office: Tuesday and Thursday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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.

Contact Us

CALL US

1-800-915-2533 toll-free

FIND US ON THE WEB

www.ceca.coop



facebook.com/CECA.coop



Ten teams faced challenges as they labored to safely construct children's bicycles for charity. They then had the opportunity to present the bikes to charitable organizations in three counties.

CECA Student Leadership Conference a Success

Each year, CECA invites all area schools to send up to 10 of their most outstanding students from the junior class to attend the CECA Student Leadership Conference at Lake Brownwood 4-H Center. This year, 80 students from nine schools attended the conference.

THE DAY KICKED OFF when Christopher Freeland, a freshman from Howard Payne University, presented a discourse on leadership. Freeland referenced a study by the Gallup Organization that was right on target with what the students would learn about leadership during the one-day conference.

The first student activity for the day was for each of the 10 teams to assemble a child's bicycle. Rules and challenges were inserted into the activity as obstacles to the construction process and to demonstrate to the students that nothing is quite so simple as life's instruction book seems to indicate. Despite the obstacles, all teams were able to complete the challenge—except one.

The 10th team was presented with a faulty bicycle—not on purpose! We had no idea when we purchased them that one was faulty. But to give credit where credit is due: That team persevered and refused to give in until they were told to give it up—there was no way that bike would ever be assembled with the faulty piece. Although that part of the endeavor was not planned, it was a perfect example of what the activity was designed to demonstrate.

Other leadership activities were presented to the students to force them to “think outside the box,” make difficult decisions and learn the vital skill of compromise.

The theme for the day was “The Power of Giving Back.” The first part of the day was devoted to leadership skills, and the second half was dedicated to community service and giving back. The first order of the afternoon was for the students to physically “give back” to their communities. Representatives from Santa's Helpers in Comanche County, Toys for Kids in Brown County, and the Cisco Goodfellows in Eastland County were in attendance, and the students had the privilege of giving back by presenting these organizations with the nine completed bikes, to be given to children who might otherwise not have much of a Christmas. Judging by the students' reactions, this was a touching time for many of them as they met with the representatives and presented their bikes.



ABOVE: Students present their completed bicycles to Toys for Kids in Brown County, Santa's Helpers in Comanche County, and the Cisco Goodfellows in Eastland County.

BELOW: Some activities required serious thought and deep discussion, while others were full of action-packed fun.



RIGHT, TOP: Christopher Freeland, a freshman at Howard Payne University, speaks to the students about leadership.

RIGHT, BOTTOM: To demonstrate that life sometimes throws a curveball, each student had to find a partner they had never met before and dance with them. This part of the activity also gave students the opportunity to meet and get to know other students.



THE COMMUNITY ACTION PLANS CHOSEN BY EACH SCHOOL ARE:

BANGS: VOLUNTEER SERVICE

- ▶ Offer community service projects through school website
- ▶ Projects to be done once per year
- ▶ Students get community service hours

COMANCHE: CHRISTMAS IN THE PARK

- ▶ Light up city park at Christmastime
- ▶ Businesses adopt section of the park and pay a fee to decorate their section
- ▶ Music plays as visitors drive through and enjoy the lights

DE LEON: BATHROOM REMODEL

- ▶ Remodel visitors bathrooms at football and baseball fields

EARLY: STUDENT MEMORIAL PARK

- ▶ Clean up and refurbish McDonald Field as an Early HS student memorial
- ▶ Memorial walls dedicated to classmates who have died too soon
- ▶ Handprint walls decorated with handprints of those students' parents
- ▶ Add playground

GORMAN: PLAYGROUND RESTORATION

- ▶ Upgrade and improve the playground next to the swimming pool
- ▶ Paint existing playground equipment
- ▶ Plant trees
- ▶ Install swing sets and bike racks

MULLIN: SPRUCE UP THE TOWN AND REPAIR TENNIS COURTS

- ▶ Repair cracks in tennis court, mow, add potted plants and repair surrounding fence
- ▶ Pick up trash around town
- ▶ Clean up old buildings
- ▶ Decorate for Christmas

RANGER: RANGER DANGER ROUNDUP

- ▶ Meet with local organizations to develop a recreation area to keep local teens off the streets and out of danger

RISING STAR: PARK RESTORATION

- ▶ Clean up and restore the City Park

ZEPHYR: CITY GATEWAY SIGNS

- ▶ Build metal and white rock gateway signs at each end of town
- ▶ Build flower beds at base of signs

The final, and most crucial, activity of the day was one the students had unknowingly been working up to all day: community service. Each school group was presented with the challenge of coming up with a worthy and doable project within their school or community. Once a project was agreed upon, students were given the task of preparing a summary plan for completion of their project. Included in the plan were: what it would cost and how the group would raise the necessary funding; what labor and materials are needed and how to obtain them; if school or city organizations must be involved—i.e., school board, city council, etc.—and who would speak to them. Each school then presented their idea to the entire group and were given additional ideas and suggestions to aid them in their planning and implementation processes.

It is the hope of Comanche Electric Cooperative that you, our members, will support these students and not only encourage them to complete their projects but also become involved in the projects. A community is only as strong as the members who live there, and we know from experience that the rural communities of the CECA service territory are filled with caring and supportive individuals. When our communities come together, we can grow and make a difference. Together, we can demonstrate “The Power of Giving Back.”

Newest Employees

THE NEWEST MEMBER of our team is **Victoria Mariza Martinez**, who prefers to be called Mariza. Mariza has lived in Comanche County all her life and is a graduate of Gustine ISD. She is attending Tarleton State University and plans to graduate in May 2016 with a degree in business administration. Mariza is a customer service representative in CECA's Comanche office. "I have enjoyed meeting my new co-workers as well as the members I serve," Mariza says. In her spare time she enjoys arts and craft projects, painting, fishing, hiking, being outdoors, and spending time with her husband, Felipe Martinez, and the rest of her family.



MARIZA MARTINEZ

Riley Hilliard is the newest addition to the CECA Member Services Department. He is a native of Comanche, attending Comanche ISD from pre-K through his graduation in 2007, followed by graduation from Tarleton State University. He is an outdoors enthusiast who enjoys hunting and fishing on his ranch in Comanche County, as well as being an active member at P.A.R. Country Club. In June, Riley will marry Chelsea Marlin of Comanche, and is excited about starting their life here.



RILEY HILLIARD

"I have been a co-op member for the better part of my life," Riley says, "and I cannot think of a better community or organization to start this next chapter of my life."

Statement of Nondiscrimination

COMANCHE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE is the recipient of federal financial assistance from the Rural Utilities Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and is subject to the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which provide that no person in the United States on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, or disability shall be excluded from participation in, admission or access to, denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any of this organization's programs or activities.

The person responsible for coordinating this organization's nondiscrimination compliance efforts is the human resource manager. Any individual or specific class of individuals who feels that this organization has subjected them to discrimination may obtain further information about the statutes and regulations listed above from and/or file a written complaint. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call 1-800-795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal-opportunity provider and employer.

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call 1-866-632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter by mail to U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410, by fax to (202) 690-7442 or by email to program.intake@usda.gov.



Power Tip

Dry two or more loads of laundry in a row to take advantage of an already warm dryer. Remove clothes from the dryer when they're still warm to prevent wrinkling, and clean the lint filter before every load.