

Understanding Energy Demand and Purchasing



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER ALAN LESLEY

This month I would like to share with you the following article written by Meghaan Evans. It has been adjusted to fit the needs of CECA, but it is very well-written, and I felt it might help you, our members, understand energy demand and how it affects your bill.

—Alan Lesley

YOU MAY NOT THINK YOU NEED TO HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING OF energy demand and purchasing, but do you ever look at your energy bill and wonder what it all means? If your answer to that question is “yes,” then you might be interested to learn how demand impacts your utility bill.

To start, it is important to understand how electricity is made and how it is delivered to your home.

Before CECA can send electricity to your home, that electricity needs to be generated by a generation and transmission cooperative. Once the electricity has been generated, it travels over high-voltage transmission lines to substations, where the voltage is reduced to a safer level. The electricity then travels over distribution power lines and finds its way into your home. So, while you pay your bill to us—your electric distribution cooperative—we don’t actually generate the electricity you use. That is the job of the G&T.

We do help determine how much electricity our members need to power their homes and businesses, and you play a big part in determining how much electricity the G&T needs to create to keep the lights on in our community. That is where the terms “consumption” and “demand” come in.

Consumption is measured in kilowatt-hours. Demand is measured in kilowatts. A lightbulb “consumes” a certain number of watts, let’s say 100 watts per hour. If that lightbulb stays on for 10 hours, it “demands” a certain number of kilowatts (in this case, 1 kW) from the generation station producing electricity. Now, if you turn on ten 100-watt lightbulbs in your home for one hour, you are still consuming the same number of kilowatts. However, you are placing a demand on the utility to have those kW available to you over the course of one hour, instead of 10. This requires the generation and transmission plant to produce more power in less time to meet your demand.

CECA purchases kilowatt-hours from the G&T based on the average demand of our members. Peak demand refers to the time of day when the demand for electricity is highest. This is typically during the evening when families return home from work or school, cook dinner and use appliances the most. Using electricity during this peak demand period often costs more to both CECA and to our members.

Demand is the reason your electricity bill fluctuates season to season and even year to year. Generating and distributing power can be a tricky and complicated business, but rest assured CECA will always meet the necessary demand to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity to your family.

Meghaan Evans writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Virginia-based service arm of the nation’s 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

CECA Vehicles To Be Auctioned

COMANCHE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE HAS TWO RETIRED VEHICLES THAT WILL BE auctioned through a closed-bid process. These vehicles have a few battle scars and are well broken in, as you would expect from a work vehicle.

You may come by the office at 201 W. Wrights Ave. in Comanche to inspect them in person.

Sealed bids can be mailed to: CECA, Attn: Sealed Vehicle Bid, P.O. Box 729, Comanche, TX 76442, or dropped off in person at the office in Comanche.

In all correspondence, please include a phone number where you can be reached. Questions can be directed to Dale Ogle at 1-800-915-2533. The deadline for bids is noon, February 13. Bid winners will be notified by February 15.

CECA reserves the right to reject any or all bids at the discretion of the board.

All mileage current as of December 12, 2017, but is subject to change as vehicle could still be used.



Truck 2499: 2006 Silverado 1500 4WD single cab; 4.8-liter V-8 gas engine; 4-speed automatic transmission; HD trailering equipment package; heavy-duty suspension; bearing in steering column needs replacement but does not affect driving ability. 172,361 miles. Minimum bid \$2,500.



Truck 3199: 2009 Silverado 1500 4WD extended cab; 5.3-liter V-8 engine; 4-speed automatic transmission; HD trailering equipment package; bad engine—camshaft needs replacement. 166,471 miles. Minimum bid \$2,500.



WE LOVE OUR MEMBERS!
Happy Valentine's Day
February 14



Happy Presidents Day!
February 19
FROM COMANCHE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



P.O. Box 729, Comanche, TX 76442

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

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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–Friday, 7:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

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

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

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Report an Outage

CECA crews are available 24/7 in the event of a power-quality issue by calling 1-800-915-2533.

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Taming a Wild Frontier

Mullin, Williams Ranch and Chesser Valley



STORY BY SHIRLEY KIDD DUKES
PHOTOS COURTESY SHERRIE SHELTON AND MILLS COUNTY MUSEUM

What brings an individual to a particular area to settle? I ponder that sometimes. Today it is usually a job or family. But many years ago when this country was being settled, job and family had little impact on where a person ended up. It usually had more to do with water, protection from the elements, available food sources and, eventually, the railroad. Or sometimes it was the result of a run of bad luck such as a busted wagon wheel that prevented further travel, forcing families to settle where they were. We may wonder why people settled in some areas while we marvel at the beauty of other regions and say, "I know why they settled here."

THE LITTLE TOWN OF MULLIN SITS ON THE SOUTHERN BORDER of the Comanche Electric Cooperative service territory on Highway 84/183 in Mills County. At its inception in the mid-1800s, it sat smack dab in the middle of hunting grounds for the Comanche and Apache, who defended it valiantly until

the mid-19th century. I wonder, why would anyone settle in the midst of these hazards, where Indian raids were common and danger lurked behind every copse and over every rise.

About 3 miles southwest of Mullin lies an area once known as Williams Ranch and a settlement known as Chesser Val-



Left: John Dan Chesser, Elizabeth Caroline Epley Chesser, Joe Chesser (behind), Felix Johnson, Mary Ann “Doll” Chesser Johnson and baby, Walter Johnson (hands behind him), Bert Chesser (first little boy), Ben Chesser (second little boy), Martha Ragsdale Chesser and baby, Sherril Chesser, Mary Ellen Baker Chesser, Grandma Jones (a neighbor), Della Chesser (first little girl in calico dress), Ola Chesser (second), Mrs. Swope, Mrs. Matlock, Nettie Ragsdale, Walter Chesser (behind), Jim Chesser (on horse), George Chesser

Right: John Dan Chesser and Elizabeth Caroline Epley Chesser, founders of Chesser Valley, built their one-room log home in Indian Territory in 1865 following the end of the Civil War. During the war, John Dan Chesser served as a Texas Ranger, helping to protect the frontier and settlers from Native American attacks. As their family grew, they expanded their home to a large dwelling that became the valley’s social hub and religious center.



ley. The rich histories of Mullin, Williams Ranch and Chesser Valley, fraught with danger and hardship, and the pioneers who settled there are so deeply intertwined that the story of one cannot be extricated from the history of all three.

Williams Ranch, the oldest settlement in all of Mills County, originated in 1855 when John Williams found water in the form

of six natural springs. Two years after putting down roots, he returned to Tennessee to fetch more of his family to colonize what would become the first township of the area. Williams Ranch eventually claimed the area’s first saloon, the first stone mill, the first newspaper, the first telegraph, the first public school and the first hotel.

But I digress, so let me back up just a bit to emphasize the importance of Williams Ranch to Chesser Valley and Mullin. When Williams returned to Tennessee for the remainder of his family, two sisters, Elizabeth and Louisa Epley, returned to Texas with the Williams wagon train. For reasons not known today, the sisters were wards of family members and had not been treated well. Hearing of the wagon train headed to Williams Ranch, the girls climbed out of their window in the middle of the night, barefoot and clad only in nightgowns, and joined the group headed to Texas. The Williams family cared for the Epley sisters until they each married at 18. Elizabeth, due to the frigid weather and lack of shoes, suffered from the consequences of frostbite for the rest of her life.

Here is where our story of Chesser Valley begins to merge with that of Williams Ranch. Williams had a son named George, whose best friend was a young man named John Dan Chesser. In 1847, Chesser, his family and a large group of settlers from Missouri came to what would become Williams Ranch. In 1860, when they were both 18, John Dan married Elizabeth Caroline Epley, the eldest of the two sisters rescued by the Williams wagon train. Williams and Chesser walked from Williams Ranch, 6 miles east, where they beheld a breathtaking landscape that would later become known as Chesser Valley. Williams and Chesser both staked off a section of the valley for their homesteads.

Sherrie Shelton, my guide for the day and a Mullin native and history buff, loves to tell the story of John Dan’s discovery of what would become Chesser Valley. “Can you imagine what he must have thought when he was on the edge of the valley and saw that?” asks Shelton as we survey the same expanse on a warm fall day. “It’s got water, you know you had to have water back then. Every time I stop here I think I see why he stopped his wagon, because I certainly would have.”

Chesser and Elizabeth built a home on their 160-acre homestead in that valley, where they raised 11 children. The Williams family joined them, along with a host of other friends and family, and the Chesser home became a focal point of the community. Their home served as a church, hospital, school and hotel for travelers along Williams Ranch Road. The township of Williams Ranch remained the primary shopping area, but most of the citizens relocated and lived in Chesser Valley.



Back row, from left: Ann "Doll" holding Felix Johnson, John Sherril, Benjamin, Joseph, George. Front row: Della, John Dan, Iola, Elizabeth holding Bert. Not pictured: William Franklin (killed at age 9), Henry Walter and James.



The John Dan Chesser home. No records are available to tell us the date of this photo or the date the house was built.



In the ten years after Williams Ranch was founded, a community grew around it consisting of a number of homes, a hotel, a general store, a school and other businesses. Above left, the Williams Ranch school house was built before Mills County was formed. Right, the old Williams Ranch Mill where flour was ground. Neither building stands today.

Though they did all they could to ease tensions in the area, it was a vast frontier, and Native American raids were not uncommon. Chesser devoted his life to protecting his family, friends and the valley he loved by serving as a Texas Ranger until after the Civil War. It was during his Ranger tenure that he happened on one of the grisliest sights of his career, one that is still talked about in the Mullin community and in the history of the area.

Located on two bodies of water, the Pecan Bayou and Blanket Creek, Chesser Valley was an ideal location for pioneers and Native Americans. One such pioneer family was the Jacksons, made up of Moses and Lydia Jackson and four of their seven children. One day, as they were headed to meet some friends in the pecan bottom, they met with a party of Native Americans, who, to protect the land and water, began to pursue the Jackson family. The family bolted across the countryside in their wagon. Jackson and Louisa, his 18-year-old daughter, absorbed a barrage of arrows, and with Jackson mortally wounded the wagon careened into a tree. It would be two days before their bodies were found by Chesser's scouting party. Due to the deterioration of the remains they were buried where they lay. Moses Jackson is buried alone. Lydia Jackson and two of the children are buried in a shared grave. The two middle children, Joshua and Rebecca, were abducted by the Indians and released two weeks later. The children walked, barefoot, for two days before being found near Sweetwater by a search party of settlers and Texas Rangers. In her autobiography, Rebecca tells how, as she traveled the long distance barefoot, her feet became full of thorns. Because of the



J.C. and Susan Elizabeth Mullins

The town of Mullin and Mullin Creek were named after the Mullins family. During the formative period of the county, the First Methodist Church was founded in the home of John Charles Mullins on Mullin Creek in 1858. A stained glass window in this church is dedicated to his memory.

John Charles Mullins first arrived with his team and horses that his father, Charles, had given him. The family traced their ancestry back to the Mayflower. Charles was one of the nine boys chosen to strew flowers in the path of George Washington at his inauguration.

After Mullins staked his claim here, he returned to Fayette County at the age of 24 and married his childhood sweetheart, Susan Elizabeth Allen, 17.

Because of the many hostile Indians in the area, as well as a shortage of water for horses and cattle, the family moved near a large body of water, which Mullins later named Jim Ned Creek after a Native American chief friend.



Downtown Mullin as it appeared in the late 1800s. Note the town well and windmill in the middle of the main intersection between the present community center and downtown grocery building.



Downtown Mullin as it appeared in the 1890s



The Mullin Train Depot was built in 1885 when the newly laid train tracks bypassed the frontier town of Williams Ranch. The first person buried in Mullin Cemetery, John Tuggle, was killed here by a train the night before his wedding was to take place.



The original Mullin Methodist Church was dedicated June 21, 1896, but was destroyed by a cyclone April 8, 1919. It was rebuilt in 1920.

TIMELINE : 1885-1920

1855	First Methodist circuit organized in this section
1856	Bell County was frontier line in Texas
1857	The Mullins family arrived here
1860	John Dan Chesser & Elizabeth Epley married at Williams Ranch
1863	Hannah Valley Methodist Church established
1865	John Dan & Elizabeth built their cabin in Chesser Valley
1871	Sleepy Hollow ranch house was built
1876	Baptist missionaries arrived here
1878	Average annual teacher salary was \$99
1880	First Methodist quarterly conference held at Williams Ranch
1884	Average annual circuit rider salary was \$200
1885	Railroad tracks were laid through Mullin
1886	Apache leader Geronimo surrendered
1886-87	No rainfall for two years
1887	Mills County formed from Brown, Comanche, Hamilton & Lampasas counties
1892	24 public schools in county; post office at Williams Ranch closed
1896	First Methodist Church in Mullin built at present site
1912	Mills County Courthouse burned by unknown arsonist
1920	The church building rebuilt from the rubble

harrowing ordeal, thorns worked their way out of her feet for the rest of her life.

Despite such harrowing tales, it was not long before others began to settle in Chesser Valley. While life in the valley was hard, it was not uniformly unpleasant. By all accounts, this was a lively little community, with square dancing, corn husking, candy pulling and horseshoe tournaments. Chesser eventually bought a piano and guitar, which his children played to entertain the valley residents.

As the center of the community, the Chesser home sheltered many a weary traveler and comforted and fed many homeless people. The valley became famous for the frequency and fervor of its camp meeting, the largest in the country. Whole families came for the meetings and were known to camp in a grove of live oak trees near the Chesser home for weeks at a time.

Chesser himself was a devout Methodist, though research tells us he did not discriminate, and all preachers, regardless of denomination, were welcome in the Chesser home. Family prayer was a daily tradition, and the Chesser family custom of entertaining after Sunday church services was a weekly tradition. It was not uncommon for Elizabeth and her daughters to rise before dawn to begin the noon preparations that would sometimes feed as many as 50 or more neighbors and visitors.

The first school built at Chesser Valley was constructed by the men of the community, using lumber that had been hauled from Round Rock by ox-drawn wagons. At that time, it was the largest school in Brown County and accommodated about 50 students. The floor originally consisted of

hard-packed dirt, and the room housed benches made of split logs. It was located on the east bank of Pompey Creek about a half-mile north of the old rock house originally built by Williams. The name of the school evolved as the community grew and changed. Originally known as Williams School, the name changed to Chesser Valley School after being taken over by Mills County. It changed again in 1913 when a new building was erected about 3 miles west on a hill on Driskell land, to Mount Pleasant School. In 1919, the building was moved to a new location 1.5 miles toward the original location and reclaimed the Chesser Valley School name. The school closed for the final time in 1935.

Chesser passed away November 14, 1915. Elizabeth survived another 10 years, passing away in 1925. They had 11 children: William Franklin, John Sherril, Mary Ann, Benjamin, Joseph S., George C., Walter, James M., Ardella, Louisa Iola and Florence Bert.

Chesser's close friend Williams died in his old rock home on Blanket Creek in Chesser Valley on April 4, 1902, and is buried in Williams Ranch Cemetery.

Williams Ranch and Chesser Valley are now only rough ranch and farm land. Both met their demise when they were bypassed by the Santa Fe Railroad in 1885. Legend has it that when the residents found out the railroad wanted to build there, greed incited them to raise the price of their land to such heights that the railroad passed them by, choosing instead the town of Mullin and altering the shape and scope of the three communities. Though small, Mullin still stands today, while the communities of Williams Ranch and Chesser Valley have

Williams Ranch

The first Quarterly Conference of the Methodist Church was held at Williams Ranch on January 24, 1880. The religious service was conducted by Reverend M.N. Weatherby.

John Dan Chesser donated land for the schoolhouse. School was conducted on weekdays, and church services were held on weekends in the same building. The building was furnished with simple, long, split plank slats. Women and children sat on one side, and men sat on the other. The building burned, and the old bell later occupied the belfry of the Center Point School building.

The railroad missed Williams Ranch and instead opted to go through the present-day town of Mullin. This occurred in 1885 and the church is believed to have disbanded in 1886, the same year Apache leader Geronimo surrendered.

The ranch built a second school for the African-American children of slaves who traveled there with their owners. That building is still standing today on the old French place. Teachers were paid an annual salary of \$99.

Additional Interesting Facts

- Williams Ranch missed being chosen for the location of the University of Texas by only two votes.
- In April 1857, Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. Lee, while moving a detachment of troops along the military road from Indianola to Camp Cooper, made camp and spent several days near the springs of Williams Ranch. Lee had visited the area earlier in winter 1856 while traveling to Austin. He and his troops built the road through Williams Ranch as a supply line during the Civil War. It originated in Indianola.
- The school at Chesser Valley was the largest in Brown County at one time.
- Outlaw John Wesley Hardin met Deputy Sheriff Charles Webb in Williams Ranch about a month before Hardin killed Webb.

been almost completely obliterated and forgotten.

When World War II broke out, much of the Chesser land was bought up by Camp Bowie and used as a training ground where young men learned to become soldiers. Once the war ended, the land was once again sold. As with any history, that which is not maintained is absorbed by the soil, taken back by Mother Earth and forgotten, with no trace left for future generations to peruse. Today, the only structure remaining out of the many original ones is the rock home built by Williams.

This barely touches the rich history of Mullin, Williams

Sleepy Hollow ranch house, the only remaining structure in Chesser Valley, was built by George Williams and his wife, Elizabeth Jackson Forsythe Williams, in 1871. A German rock mason laid the stone in exchange for a span of mules.



Ranch and Chesser Valley. To learn more, visit the Mills County Historical Museum at 1119 Fisher Street in Goldthwaite. Information for this article came from the memories and stories of Sherrie Shelton and the following books: *Mills County Memories* by Mills County History Book Committee; *Mills County Historical Tours, History of Mills Counties, Take a Journey With Me From the Washboard* by Lewis B Porter Sr.; *A No Man's Land Becomes a County* by Flora Gatlin Bowles, and *Mills County—The Way It Was* by Hartel Langford Blackwell.

Do you have a story idea for CECA's Local Pages? Give us a call at 1-800-915-2533 or drop us an email at sdukes@ceca.coop.