

At CECA, We're Looking Out For You



**MESSAGE
FROM
MANAGER
ALAN
LESLEY**

Approaching the year's end affords a good opportunity to reflect on the events of the past 12 months and look forward to those to come.

The year 2011 has been one of extremes. Beginning in February, we saw one of the most extreme winters that Texas has experienced in quite some time. As temperatures plummeted to record lows, the state's electric grid experienced new highs in energy demand. Many generating facilities, ordinarily engineered to withstand our extreme summer heat, were vulnerable to Old Man Winter's bite and were forced to shut down as critical valves and piping began to freeze.

As these vital power plants failed, there was not enough electric generation remaining on the grid to supply the increasing demand; thus Texas residents and businesses were faced with rolling outages. So often, the determination of success or failure is measured solely by results; however, there are times when perspective has to be taken into account. While power outages at any time are, at best, inconvenient, the ability of so many independent utilities throughout such a large area to work together simultaneously to avoid a complete blackout

was seen by industry leaders as a monumental success. Had this effort failed, more than 25 million people in the state could have been left without electric power for an extended period of time on one of the coldest days in its history.

Adding insult to injury, our summer turned out to be just as severe as our winter. With triple-digit heat beginning as early as June and lasting into September, once again the Texas grid was overloaded, and electric consumers faced the possibility, more than once, of rolling outages. Fortunately, Comanche Electric Cooperative Association (CECA) and the rest of Texas' electric utilities were prepared, urging consumers to turn off all unnecessary electric devices, shedding load to customers with the ability to provide alternate sources of generation for themselves and bringing online additional generation resources.

Unfortunately, the abnormal weather and shortage of electric power has come at a price for us all. Texas residents set records for the amount of energy consumed. Heating units had to operate for extended periods in an attempt to keep us relatively comfortable, as well as prevent our water pipes from freezing. During those triple-digit days of summer, there were some days that my air conditioning unit didn't shut off until well after my family had retired for the night. These record amounts of energy consumed have resulted in unusually high bills.

The year's severe drought has been another burden we all have dealt with. It seemed that daily we were hearing

news reports of yet another big fire consuming thousands of acres and scores of homes. While the CECA service territory did suffer through some fires, we were very fortunate not to have a repeat of 2006, when our New Year started out with the fire-ravaged destruction of so much of our service territory. Our prayers went out to our neighboring communities that did suffer such destruction, and CECA gladly sent a crew over to the Possum Kingdom area to assist in the rebuilding of electric lines.

As our year draws to a close, we are faced with regulatory issues that could affect our ability to provide reliable electric service. As the Environmental Protection Agency works to tighten the ambient air quality standards for generating facilities, we are working extremely hard to ensure rules are implemented in a responsible way. We believe in protecting our vast environmental resources as much as anyone; we just believe the reliability and affordability of electricity shouldn't be sacrificed in the process.

We hope that 2012 will be a much more stable environment, and we will not be faced with the issues we were forced to deal with in 2011. However, I want to assure you that CECA is representing your interests with the goal to deliver reliable electric energy to your home at a price that you can afford. We are proud to work for you and welcome any opportunity to visit with you with any questions or concerns you may have. Thank you for your support, and we wish you a very blessed 2012!



SAVE TIME AND MONEY

Pay your CECA bill online at www.ceca.coop.

For login instructions, give us a call at 1-800-915-2533.



Conservation MATTERS

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

Have a Happy (Energy-Efficient) Holiday Season

BY BRIAN SLOBODA

Holiday decorating can cause spikes in your January electric bill. One great way to keep your light displays from breaking the bank is to invest in light-emitting diodes, or LEDs. LED holiday lights are:

ENERGY EFFICIENT. They use 70 percent less energy than traditional incandescent light strings.

LONG LASTING. They boast a lifespan of up to 10 times longer than incandescent lightbulbs.

SAFE. They stay cool to the touch, reducing the risk of fire.

STURDY. Bulbs are made of epoxy, not glass, making them much more durable than other lights.

LED holiday lights come in a wide

variety of colors, shapes and lengths and are available at many home improvement, wholesale, drug and grocery stores. Although LEDs might be more expensive than incandescent lights at the time of purchase, energy savings over their lifetime makes them a big money saver. And prices continue to decrease as the technology becomes less expensive.

The brightness and color of LED lights have also come a long way over the past few years. For white lights, you can choose between cool white (a bright icy blue white) or warm white, (a yellow tint that's the closest LED to a white incandescent bulb).

Make sure the lights you buy are labeled for indoor or outdoor use, depending on where you want to place

them. Decorating outside with indoor lights can shorten the life of the bulbs.

For even more energy savings, use a timer to control holiday lights.

When purchasing your holiday lights, make sure the packaging bears the Underwriters Laboratories label, UL. That means an independent testing group has thoroughly checked the product for safety hazards such as fire and shock.

Careful shopping can save you money on your monthly electric bill while giving your loved ones—and the neighborhood—a festive holiday display.

Brian Sloboda specializes in energy efficiency for the Cooperative Research Network. Additional content provided by E Source.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Registration Number Required for Timber and Ag Tax Exemptions

Beginning in January 2012, Texans wanting to claim a sales tax exemption on electricity and other items used in agricultural and timber operations must provide a Texas Agriculture and Timber Exemption Registration Number. House Bill 268, passed during the 2011 legislative session, added this requirement.

The Texas comptroller's office issues the registration number, and those wanting to claim the exemption must fill out an application. Registration numbers must be renewed every four years.

Applicants can apply online at www.getreadytexas.org or request a paper application to mail in by calling 1-800-252-5555 or downloading a copy from the comptroller's website, <http://c750820.r20.cf2.rackcdn.com/ap-228.pdf>.

Happy Holidays

Spreading holiday cheer is one of the best parts of this wonderful time of year. We at CECA thought we'd spread a little holiday cheer by sharing these tasty recipes.

This collection of recipes for "goodies to go" appeared in the December 2002 issue of Texas Co-op Power and was a big hit with readers. We all enjoy giving (and receiving!) homemade goodies, and these recipes are guaranteed to bring smiles wherever you deliver them.

Chocolate Chip Cinnamon Oatmeal Cookie Mix

- ½ cup chocolate chips
- ½ cup packed dark brown sugar
- 1 cup rolled oats
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 cup buttermilk biscuit and baking mix (such as Jiffy)
- ½ cup packed light brown sugar
- Additional 1 cup buttermilk biscuit and baking mix**

Layer ingredients into 4-cup container (jar) in same order as above. If there is still room left, add more chocolate chips.

Write directions on tag:

- 1 jar cookie mix
- 1 stick butter, melted
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Empty jar of cookie mix into medium-size bowl and stir until well mixed. Stir in butter, egg and vanilla until well mixed. Shape dough into 1-inch balls and place on baking sheet coated with cooking spray. Bake 10-12 minutes until cookies are light brown. Makes approximately 2½ dozen.

Sand Art Brownies

- ⅓ cup cocoa
- ⅔ cup sugar
- ½ cup chocolate chips
- ½ cup vanilla (white) chips
- ⅔ cup brown sugar
- 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons flour
- ⅔ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup chopped nuts (or fill to top of jar)

Using spoon, layer the dry ingredients in large-mouth



quart jar, adding each in order listed (tap jar slightly after each addition to settle ingredients).

The tag or label reads as follows: Sand Art Brownies—Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix contents of jar with 1 teaspoon vanilla, 3 large eggs and ½ cup vegetable oil. Place brownie mixture in oiled 9x9-inch pan. Bake for 30-35 minutes. (If using glass or enamel pan, bake at 325 degrees.)

These gifts can keep for up to three months.

NOTE: To decorate jars for the cookie or brownie mixes,

CECA wishes you and yours a joyful

To allow our employees to enjoy the holidays with their families, our offices will be closed Friday, December 23, 2011.

ays from CECA



RENO ESPINOSA

cut fabric in 9-inch diameter circles to make a “jar lid skirt.” Place jar lid on top, drape fabric over lid and screw down the jar ring to hold fabric in place. Punch hole into the corner of tag made from stationery or heavy paper and tie on with ribbon, or glue label to the side of the jar.

Olive and Almond Cheese Ball

- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- ¼ cup pimiento olives, coarsely chopped
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic (or ½ teaspoon garlic powder)

- ½ cup sour cream
- 1 teaspoon Louisiana hot sauce (optional)
- Package of sliced almonds

Place first 5 ingredients in bowl and mix thoroughly using your hands. Form into ball.

Sprinkle almonds on sheet of plastic wrap and roll the ball in sliced almonds until outside is covered. Wrap cheese ball in clean plastic wrap and refrigerate for 12-24 hours before serving, or freeze for later use.

Spiced Nut Mix

- 3 egg whites
- 2 teaspoons water
- 2 cans (12 ounces each) salted peanuts
- 1 cup whole blanched almonds
- 1 cup walnut halves
- 1 cup pecan halves
- 1¾ cups sugar
- 3 tablespoons pumpkin pie spice
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup raisins (optional)

Mix egg whites and water until frothy. Add nuts, stir gently to coat. Combine pie spice, sugar and salt, gently coating nuts. Fold in raisins. Spread into two 15x10-inch baking pans. Bake uncovered at 300 degrees for 20-25 minutes or until golden brown. Stir gently every 10 minutes.

Cool completely. Store in airtight container.

Whiskey Balls

- 2½ cups finely crushed vanilla wafers
- 1 cup finely chopped pecans
- 3 tablespoons cocoa
- 3 tablespoons corn syrup
- ¼ cup whiskey
- 1 cup powdered sugar

Mix together wafers, pecans, cocoa, corn syrup and whiskey. Shape into balls. Roll balls in powdered sugar. Store in covered container.

For more great recipes from the archives of Texas Co-op Power, visit TexasCoopPower.com.

and richly blessed holiday season.

ember 23, and Monday, December 26. As always, crews will be on standby in the event of an emergency.



Teach Children About Electrical Safety

Amid the cooking and the cleaning and the Christmastime company, don't neglect your most important holiday blessing: your kids.

Before the bustle begins, sit them down and talk about staying safe during the holidays—how to stay safe around hot stoves, flickering fireplaces and electric lights and decorations.

The U.S. Fire Administration reports that deaths from fires caused by children spike during the winter, and twice as many kids die or are injured by fires during the holidays than at any other time of the year.

Some cautions:

- Electrical accidents involving children are far more likely to happen when no adult is supervising the kids.
- The holidays come with safety risks that might not be present during other times of the year: more electrical cords, extension cords in high-traffic areas, electric lights on the tree, burning candles and fires in the hearth.
- Keep children away from cords and decorations to prevent shocks and burns. Carefully select decorations for the bottom limbs of the tree which children can easily reach.
- Don't leave children alone with a lighted fireplace, candles or an operating space heater.
- Do not leave a hot stove unattended when children are present. Move hot pots to back burners.
- Teach your children that hot things can burn them. When they're old enough, teach them how to cook and to use the stove safely.
- Choose battery-powered toys instead of electric versions that plug in for children younger than age 10.
- Buy electrical toys only if they bear a safety label from Underwriters Laboratories (UL) or another credible testing agency.
- If you bring your children to visit someone else's home, do a visual sweep for potential hazards, such as exposed electrical outlets and cords or lit candles.

Getting wired for Christmas?

Protect Your Electronics

If you're asking Santa to leave an expensive flat-screen TV or home theater system under the tree, add something else to your wish list: effective surge protection.

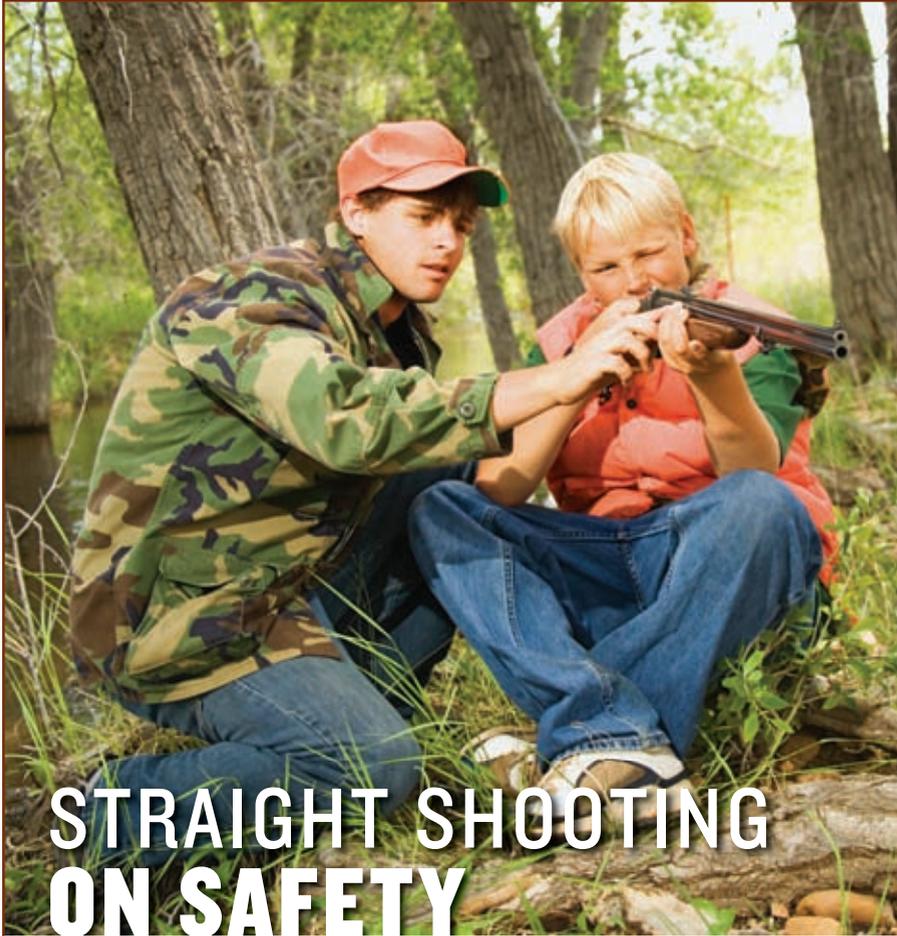
Thunderstorms, lightning strikes, minor fluctuations in the power that comes to your house, or even interference generated when you turn on a hair dryer or vacuum cleaner can cause your electronics to react—sometimes permanently and badly.

Plugging them into an inexpensive power strip won't prevent any problems unless it's designed to detect even minor surges and trip the circuit breaker or sacrifice itself to save your TV.

And power spikes also can enter the home through the lines that connect your phone, cable TV or satellite receiver to the house. So you need power protection to protect all of the lines that touch your TV, stereo, home theater system or other expensive devices.

Choose either whole-house surge protection—installed by an electrician at the breaker box—or individual surge-protection power strips that will sacrifice themselves to save your electronics during a power surge.

And consider a model that will save energy by automatically turning off a device that it senses has entered standby mode.



STRAIGHT SHOOTING ON SAFETY

Texans love to hunt. Nature beckons. There's suspense and excitement and escape from the daily routine.

Here are the "ten commandments" of shooting safety:

- Always point the muzzle of your gun in a safe direction.
- Treat every firearm or bow with the same respect you would show a loaded gun or nocked arrow.
- Be sure of your target.
- Unload firearms and unstring conventional bows when not in use.
- Handle firearms, arrows and ammunition with care.
- Know your safe zone-of-fire and stick to it.
- Control your emotions when using weapons.
- Wear hearing and eye protection.
- Don't consume alcohol or drugs before or while handling firearms or bows.
- Be responsible: Never use electrical equipment, such as insulators and transformers, as targets.

If you practice these rules, you'll help to ensure a safe future for yourself, for others and for the shooting sports.

A PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE BROUGHT TO YOU BY CECA.



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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FIND US ON THE WEB
AT WWW.CECA.COOP



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.