

## It's a Good Time To Be a Co-op Member



**MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER BUDDY BANKHEAD**

You've been hearing the bad news about the economy, rising energy prices, job losses, health-care costs and unscrupulous corporate leaders for some time now. Not a pretty picture out there. Some issues are so broad in scope that everyone is affected to some degree, including your family, friends and neighbors who belong to Rusk County Electric Cooperative.

For more than a year, we've been using these pages to inform you about possible climate-change proposals on the state and national levels that will raise the cost of power. We could bury

our heads in the sand and hope the problem goes away. Instead, we draw upon the strength of our membership to make our voices heard in Washington, D.C., and Austin. The national cooperative campaign—"Our Energy, Our Future: A Dialogue with America"—resulted in millions of e-mails and phone calls to elected officials in Congress asking the question, "What will you do to keep electricity affordable for Americans?"

We will keep you knowledgeable about advantages and disadvantages of proposals such as carbon cap-and-trade or the carbon tax. An informed membership is an effective membership, one that supports tough board decisions in difficult times.

As we tighten our belts, we'll also keep you informed about the most effective ways to save energy and lower your electricity bills. In these pages you can learn about everything from energy-efficiency standards to do-it-yourself weatherization projects with big returns for your investment. You've learned that the more energy you save, the less wholesale power Rusk County EC has to buy. That's another way to keep costs down.

One of the seven cooperative principles is to keep members informed, not only about the workings of your co-op, but about issues that affect the quality of your life as a consumer of electricity. It's always been that way, and it will continue to be that way.

So, despite the uncertain times and changes ahead, it's still a good time to be a co-op member.

**During good times and bad, you can count on Rusk County EC to keep you informed—and keep the lights on.**

## DON'T MESS AROUND WITH POWER LINES—EVEN IF THEY'RE DOWN

Downed power lines can look relatively harmless. But don't be fooled. They likely carry an electric current strong enough to cause serious injury or possibly death. These tips can help you stay safe around downed lines:

- If you see a downed power line, move away from the line and anything touching it.

- The proper way to move away from the line is to shuffle with small steps, keeping your feet together and on the ground at all times. This will minimize the potential for a strong electric shock. Electricity wants to move from a high voltage zone to a low voltage zone—and it could do that through your body.

- If you see someone who is in direct or indirect contact with the downed line, do not touch the person. You could become the next victim. Call 911 instead.

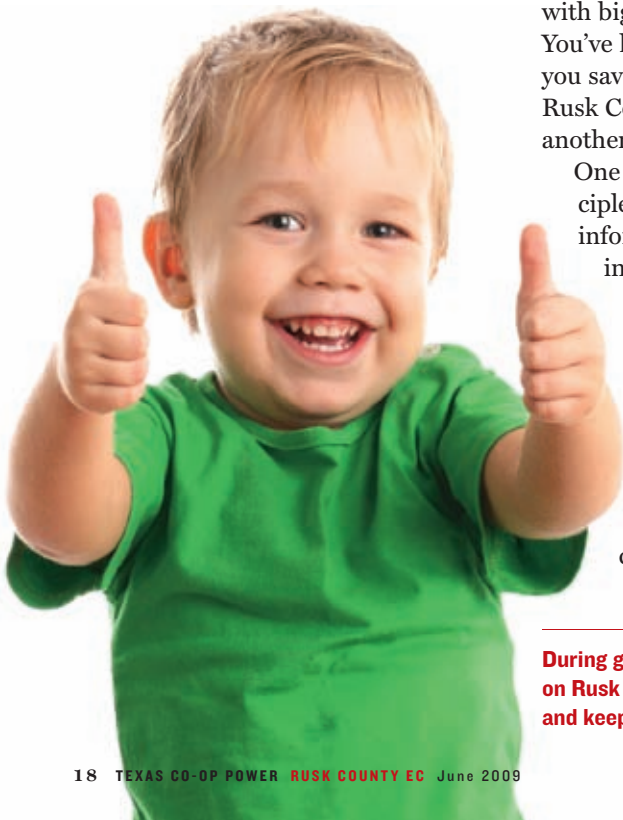
- Do not attempt to move a downed power line or anything in contact with the line by using another object such as a broom or stick. Even normally nonconductive materials like wood or cloth, if slightly wet, can conduct electricity and then electrocute you.

- Be careful not to put your feet near water where a downed power line is located.

- Do not drive over downed lines.

- If you are in a vehicle that is in contact with the downed line, stay in the vehicle. Honk your horn for help and tell others to stay away from your vehicle.

- If you must leave your vehicle because it's on fire, jump out of the vehicle with both feet together and avoid making contact with the energized vehicle and the ground at the same time. This way you avoid being the path of electricity from the vehicle to the earth.



# Changing Times, But Not Ways, May Be Costly

*By Ricki Keeling  
Manager of Member Services*

The past 10 years have certainly shown us drastically changing times in everything from world events to the energy market. Although energy costs of all kinds have now settled back down from a blastoff much like the space shuttle, history tells us they will go up again. It's a matter of time, supply and demand—and now we add taxes and carbon to the driving forces. So, what can we do?

As always, we can help ourselves by making good energy-dollar decisions. To do that we need to realize the parameters have changed around all our energy needs, so we need to re-evaluate our process of doing things. As the cost of energy goes up, the return on investment improves, and our usage patterns should change, too.

The best places to start are:

- **Insulation:** The minimum insulation recommended just a few years ago was R-30 (about 12 inches of blown fiberglass) for this area. Today, R-38, about 25 percent more, is the standard recommended for this area as a minimum, not maximum! Values up to R-50 are commonly offered in this area. There is always a point of diminishing return on any investment, but who knows what our energy will cost five or 10 years from now?

- **Air-conditioning and heating equipment:** Things have also changed in this area. Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratings (SEER) have almost doubled in the past 10 to 15 years. Therefore, high efficiency equipment should use much less energy to do the same job. This saves you money now and more in the future should energy prices rise.

- **Lighting:** Compact fluorescent

lightbulbs (CFL) consume about a quarter of the energy of incandescent lightbulbs. A 23-watt CFL can replace a 100-watt incandescent. That's more than a 75 percent energy savings.

About 90 percent of the energy used by traditional lightbulbs is given off as heat, not light. For every 1,000 watts of lighting energy, it takes almost a third of a ton of air conditioning to offset the heat produced. Fluorescent lighting saves energy two ways in summer months. So give your air-conditioning unit a break with fluorescent lighting.

Insulation, air-conditioning/heating equipment (we recommend heat pumps for year-round savings) and fluorescent lighting are all good investments in your energy future. As energy prices increase, your savings increase and you reduce your environmental impact.

## Rusk County EC Employees Receive Lifesaving Awards



Joe Collins, left, and Justin Pierce, center, received awards at the recent TEC Loss Control Conference for their efforts in helping law-enforcement personnel. TEC, represented by Loss Control Instructor Joe Snyder, right, recognized them for their lifesaving efforts.



**HAPPY  
FATHER'S  
DAY**



*June 21*