

Lives on the Line



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER ALAN LESLEY

WE TAKE TIME EVERY YEAR TO THANK the extraordinary lineworkers who dedicate their lives to keeping the lights on in our local communities. Comanche Electric Cooperative's service territory contains 4,929 miles of line, which is maintained by 20 lineworkers. Without them, our world would be dark.

We depend on our entire staff every day to keep your electric co-op running smoothly, but on April 10—National Lineman Appreciation Day—we're honoring our lineworkers, who regularly place themselves in challenging and often dangerous situations so that our lives can be brighter and safer every day. These brave men and women repair damaged equipment and maintain critical infrastructure. Without their hard work and commitment to a difficult job, our co-op and our communities would not thrive.

No matter the time—day or night, weekday or weekend—if the lights go out, so do the line crews. Perhaps you have seen them working in their bucket trucks in howling winds



DAVE SHAFER

and torrential rains, or in freezing, icy conditions. Linemen work around the clock near high-voltage power lines until electricity is restored to every member in Comanche EC's service area.

In addition to aiding members in our own service territory, our lineworkers are willing and eager to volunteer when a neighboring community, county or state is in need after a major outage occurs. Several Texas co-ops came to the aid of others who suffered severe outages due to winter storms over the past few months.

Our lineworkers are brave, committed, selfless and critical to our success. We hope you will join us in thanking the many lineworkers—both locally and around the world—who light our lives.

Use #thankalineman on social media to show your support.

Remember: Your power works because they do!



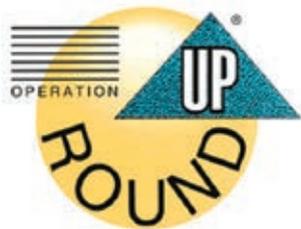
Your Spare Change Makes a Difference

CAN A MERE 50 CENTS make a difference? Depends on whom you ask. Ask the scholarship recipients, or those who lost a home in a fire. Ask the teachers and educators who receive grants or donations for their projects. Ask fire departments, the local American Cancer Society group, food banks or Christmas charities. They will all give you a resounding “Yes!”

The CECA Operation Round-Up program allows members to give back to their communities by rounding up their monthly electric bills to the nearest dollar. The extra change goes into the ORU fund and is ultimately donated to organizations and families within the CECA service territory. Members participating in the program donate an average of \$6 per year.

A board made up of CECA members (separate from the CECA Board of Directors) oversees this trust and makes decisions concerning the disbursement of funds.

If you do not participate in the ORU program and would like to sign up, call us at 1-800-915-2533, visit our website at www.cecacoop.com/content/operation-round-up, or fill out the form below and return it to us at P.O. Box 729, Comanche, TX 76442. Then keep up with the recipients of your valuable donation through these local pages of *Texas Co-op Power*, and feel the pride when you see what you, as a member, have contributed to!



Comanche Electric Cooperative “Neighbor Helping Neighbor”

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

We appreciate you taking the time to consider participating in our Operation Round Up program. Please fill out this form and return to CECA at PO Box 729, Comanche TX 76442. Thank you!

Name _____

Account Number _____

Phone Number _____

Signature _____



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–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.

General Manager

Alan Lesley

Board of Directors

- Randy Denning, District 1
- Pete McDougal, District 2
- Ruby Solomon, District 3
- Monty Carlisle, District 4
- Troy Stewart, District 5
- Loren Stroebel, District 6
- Phil Taylor, District 7

Report an Outage

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

Contact Us

CALL US

1-800-915-2533 toll-free

FIND US ON THE WEB

www.cecacoop.com



facebook.com/CECA.coop

HAPPY EASTER

APRIL 16

CECA's office will be closed April 14 in observance of Good Friday.



Jones, Calderon Win Trips to Washington, DC

IN JUNE, TWO LOCAL STUDENTS will be in Washington, D.C., expanding their horizons by exploring the monuments on the National Mall, shaking hands with elected officials and dancing on a boat on the Potomac River.

Ashley Jones and Annette Calderon won Comanche Electric Cooperative's Youth Tour contest, and the prize is a place on the 2017 Government-in-Action Youth Tour, an all-expenses-paid trip to the nation's capital June 7–16 with 145 fellow Texas students and 1,700 other young adults from around the country.

Youth Tour has been a Texas tradition since 1965, when co-ops—inspired by then-Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson, who encouraged youths to go to Washington to “see what the flag stands for and represents”—began sponsoring teens on this trip. Educating and mentoring young people fits in with co-ops' missions to support the communities they serve, and since the program's inception, nearly 4,000 Texans have gone on what many call the trip of a lifetime.

This year, Jones and Calderon will begin their adventure in Austin, where winners from across the state are greeted by Texas Electric Cooperatives, the association that organizes the state's participation in Youth Tour. From there, the planned agenda includes a tour of the State Capitol and

Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum before boarding a flight to Washington, D.C.

In D.C., the itinerary is jam-packed with sightseeing and meaningful events, including witnessing a wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and attending appointments

with elected officials. Highlights also include visiting national monuments and historic sites, touring Smithsonian Institution museums, seeing a show at the Kennedy Center and rallying with fellow students from around the U.S. for a day of inspirational leadership speakers.

After their week in Washington, Jones and Calderon will bring home memories that will last a lifetime.

For more information about Youth Tour, visit texasyouthtour.com, find the Texas Youth Tour Alumni page on Facebook or ask Comanche EC for a copy of *Your Tour* magazine.



Ashley Jones, left, is a junior at Comanche High School. She is the daughter of Brandy and Terry Jones. In her school, she has received the following awards: 4.0 average freshman and sophomore year, algebra 1 award, Spanish award, geometry award, lifetime nutrition award, art award, and academic all-district in softball, volleyball and basketball. Outside school, Jones is involved with her church youth group. She enjoys spending time outdoors with her family and friends. Her plans are to attend Tarleton State University to obtain a degree in nursing. “I’m most looking forward to getting to experience the memorials for the fallen soldiers,” Jones says. “I just think those that fight for our country are so important and are sometimes not appreciated enough. I’m also looking forward to the Holocaust Memorial Museum. I think this is also an important part of history that should never be forgotten.”

Annette Calderon, right, is a junior at Comanche High School. She is the daughter of Martin and Margarita Calderon. She is active in her community through the Angel Tree Project and Santa's Helpers. She is a director and leader of her church's youth choir and is a catechist's assistant and a Search Retreat assistant. She is involved in her school through Key Club, Junior Lions Club, FCCLA, UIL Poetry, UIL Extemporaneous Speaking, UIL Marching Band, UIL Solo and Ensemble, UIL Vocal Solo and Ensemble, UIL Current Events, UIL One-Act Play, junior class president, student council vice president, and all-region choir. Calderon is also on the Congressional Youth Advisory Council with Congressman Mike Conaway. Her plans are to attend Texas A&M Uni-

versity to obtain a degree in biomedical science. After graduating, she hopes to attend medical school and become a pediatric oncologist. “My life goal is to be the voice for the voiceless for all the children in the world, especially the unborn,” Calderon said. “I strive to become an advocate and take action for the well-being of children in our nation, in our schools and at home. My dream is for the imaginations of little ones to run wild, without limitations, so that their dreams can be made into reality one day. I also hope that as a nation, we may grow to prosper and educate all our children, for they are the future of our world. I am anticipating the journey to Washington, but especially visiting the Arlington National Cemetery, the reason being is because that is where my all-time favorite president, John F. Kennedy, rests. I admire him because as a president he challenged America to grow beyond unimaginable possibilities, and create a road to who we are today, but also for building a sense of hope and future in the world. His words of enlightenment and truth sparked when I first learned about him, and from then on, I knew that his words would forever live on.”

Operation Round-Up Awards Grant

Cross Plains ISD's theater arts class faced a dilemma. It had a great program, a great teacher and an amazing group of students to pull off a worthy production. But the finances associated with their project were in short supply.

AS PART OF THEIR LEADERSHIP and character development, Cross Plains theater teacher Stacy Jones' class prepared a "Giving Back" series. The purpose of the series is to use the students' talents to serve their community by educating, entertaining and bringing joy to people who are less likely to attend shows in their auditorium. These are free shows that the group takes to the audiences they are attempting to serve.

Through the backing of the school system, or with money raised by the students themselves, much of the production costs, such as makeup, costumes and set design, were covered. The big hurdle, however, was the cost of the sound system. To incorporate sound effects, music and vocals with adequate sound quality and volume, the group needed a portable sound system. So when CECA offered the opportunity to apply for one of five \$1,000 grants, Jones leaped at the idea, and the Cross Plains theater arts class soon became one of five recipients.

In December, after creating and rehearsing the show, the drama club students, their sponsor and principal loaded up the newly acquired CECA-sponsored equipment and pointed their bus toward Rising Star Nursing Center. "We had the opportunity to visit with the residents before and after, and they were all so excited about the show," Jones said. "It was a wonderful experience."

The Cross Plains High School Christmas Showcase was written specifically for the residents of the center. The class took into consideration the age and "heyday" of the residents in their choice of music. "We considered the rural setting and



the agricultural background of the residents to pull scenes of farmer/rancher life," Jones said. "We presented fun and whimsical scenes as well as deep and emotional scenes, and of course, you can't do a Christmas show without carols and the Christmas story."

She also said there was a lot of applause when she announced, "This show would not be possible without the Operation Round-Up Classroom Grant from Comanche Electric Cooperative. I am not sure who cheered louder," she said, "the staff and residents, or our principal and kids."

The group is deep into their one-act play season, while working on two drama club shows that will be presented in May and June.





TUEENMA/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

BE THE POWER OVER YOUR POWER!

With CECA's Pay Your Way Program



USING ELECTRICITY COULD EASILY BE COMPARED to using a credit card without keeping track of your purchases. You charge what you need, and at the end of the month you are hit with a whopping bill. It may not be entirely unexpected because you knew you were charging to your card—but maybe you just didn't remember spending that much.

What if paying your electric bill was more like fueling up your vehicle? You know you are running low, and you know you will be needing more for that trip you are about to take, so you do the responsible thing and fill up before you run out.

At CECA, an increasing number of members are beginning to enjoy the convenience of paying for electricity how and when they want through our Pay Your Way prepay program. Much like fueling up your car, these members pay for their power **BEFORE** they use it.

The Pay Your Way program is simple, affordable and flexible. By opting into this program, you decide when and how to pay your bill. It puts you in charge of your energy use. Plus, there are no fees or deposits for members on the program,

making it ideal for members on a budget.

Research has shown that members on a prepaid metering program may use less energy than they did before joining the program. Not only do you have the flexibility to pay when and how you want, but also you likely will be using less energy, helping the environment and your wallet!

Members are generally comfortable with the idea of prepayment, as they already use it in many areas of their life, such as cellphone plans and prepaid debit or gift cards. With electricity, prepayment gives you a better idea of how much energy you're using so you can budget throughout the month.

Benefits of CECA's Pay Your Way program include:

- Freedom from monthly bills, deposits and fees
- Control your energy use through regular monitoring
- Flexible payments: pay when and how you want
- Free text and email alerts

To apply, contact one of CECA's customer service representatives at 1-800-915-2533, or start the process online by visiting www.cecacoop.com and filling out a request.

Pay Your Way FAQ

PAY YOUR WAY IS A PROGRAM offered by CECA that allows members to avoid deposits and fees, customize their payment schedule, purchase energy when convenient and monitor their electricity consumption in a self-managed program.

How do I know if Pay Your Way is the right choice for me?

Would it be easier for you to make weekly or biweekly payments rather than one large payment each month? If so, Pay Your Way may be for you.

Who benefits from this program and how?

CECA, like most utility providers in America, runs a credit check on any person applying for new service. Under the traditional monthly billing system, applicants are required to pay a security deposit to open their account. Many people find it difficult to come up with the money for those deposits in the middle of moving, which is an expensive project in itself.

Through the online member services portal, members can set up several convenient options for alerts and payment. Members can be notified of low balances, daily balance, pending disconnect, disconnection and/or reconnection via email or text. Members also can set up alerts and monitor power use via our free CECA mobile app. Download it from the app store on your smartphone.

I already have a traditional CECA account. Can I switch to Pay Your Way?

Yes, you can switch to a Pay Your Way account even if you already have service with CECA. Any existing security deposit will be applied to any outstanding balance and your new Pay Your Way account.

In most cases, an outstanding balance can be spread out over a period of time through a payment agreement. If a payment agreement is made, all money applied to the account will be split between the outstanding balance and future energy use. Seventy-five percent will be applied to new energy use, with the remaining 25 percent applied toward past-due balances.

How do I sign up for Pay Your Way?

To sign up or switch an account to the Pay Your Way program, members can call CECA at 1-800-915-2533.

How much is my initial payment or activation fee if I am new to the program?

There are no deposits or processing fees to enroll in Pay Your Way. However, there must be a credit balance at all times to maintain electric service. The minimum credit balance required to begin service with Pay Your Way is \$50.

Will I need to put a deposit on my account for the Pay Your Way program?

No, Pay Your Way members do not pay a deposit.

Will I receive a bill?

No, Pay Your Way members do not receive a monthly statement. Members can access their account information via CECA's website or mobile app, in person or via telephone. They also can receive account and balance updates via text or email.

How can I check my balance?

Pay Your Way members can log in to their accounts through the member service portal found on CECA's website. You can also sign up for text or email alerts for balance notifications. By default, you will receive a notification when your account has a credit balance of \$20 unless you modify this alert level yourself.

Members also can monitor power use through the free CECA mobile app. Download the app from the app store on your smartphone.

How do I make payments?

Payments can be made at the member's convenience by visiting the online member service portal on CECA's website, via phone with check or credit card, or in person at any of our three offices. Members also can pay via the CECA mobile app for smartphones.

Members participating in the Pay Your Way program are not eligible for payment arrangements, Electronic Funds Transfer or Levelized Monthly Payment programs, unless they cease participation in the Pay Your Way program.

How much money should I keep in my Pay Your Way account?

That is the beauty of this program; it is entirely up to you. Members can put in as much or little as they need, or as fits into their budget. CECA does require that members have money in their account at all times. The minimum amount accepted to refill your Pay Your Way account is \$20. Members may purchase power by internet, telephone or mobile app, or during normal business hours at the cooperative's office.

When will I receive a low-balance notice?

Again, this is entirely up to the member. When you set up your Pay Your Way account, the default credit balance at which you will receive alerts is \$20. You select how and when you want to receive this information, whether it is through text, email or mobile app.

What if my Pay Your Way account runs low?

Payment is at the member's discretion. Once your account reaches a zero balance, it is subject to immediate disconnection. If you do not purchase more power, the meter will be turned off. The Service Availability Charge will continue to accumulate on the account and will be deducted from the next additional purchase payment. The minimum amount accepted to refill your Pay Your Way account is \$20. Once a payment is made and processed, power will be reconnected.

Will my power be disconnected on holidays, weekends or during severe temperatures?

Members may be disconnected at any time their balance falls below zero.

If I decide to no longer participate in the program, am I eligible to re-enroll in a traditional CECA account?

The Pay Your Way program is offered on a strictly voluntary basis upon election by any member receiving residential service and desiring to participate in the program. However, those members choosing the Pay Your Way program with an existing past due (e.g., delinquent) account will be required to remain on the Pay Your Way program until the balance is paid in full.

FAQ for High-Wire Heroes

Questions for-and answers from-your co-op's linemen

LIFE IS UNPREDICTABLE for all of us. Even on a good day, our best-laid plans can quickly go awry. But what if you were in a profession where you were faced with constant surprises, on the job and off, and those surprises were not only spur of the moment, but dangerous as well? Such is the life of the Comanche Electric Cooperative lineman.

CECA lineworkers face harsh elements daily, at all hours of the day and in all kinds of weather, to serve and help improve the lives of you, our members.

Imagine getting a call at 3 a.m. from your boss, asking you to go out into a tornado, hail storm, ice storm, or even a wind or rain storm. To top it off, you must work high up in the air on high-voltage power lines.

Have you ever seen a crew of CECA's linemen working high on a pole or in a bucket truck and wished you could ask them questions about their work? Not many people hold this complicated and dangerous job, so not many know the ins and outs of it. We at the co-op are proud of our lineworkers and want our members to understand exactly why. To help explain, here are a few questions that are frequently asked of linemen:

Q: It looks like a tough and scary job. What is the hardest part of being a lineman?

A: There are lots of challenging aspects to working on electric lines, and every lineman is sure to have a different answer. Some say it was difficult initially to acquire the vast amount of knowledge it took to complete the training. Others acknowledge that it's hard to leave their homes and families to work outside in rough weather—especially if the call comes on a weekend or holiday, as often seems to happen. The sometimes grueling hours and strenuous conditions are another difficulty of the job, as is the pressure of working around high-voltage lines.

Q: How do line personnel work on energized lines and avoid being injured?

A: Lineworkers receive years of extensive training before they can work on live lines. They are highly qualified to perform intricate tasks under high pressure—often at heights of 40 feet or more—that are typically required for line work. They also receive regular training throughout their careers to keep them mindful of safety requirements and apprised of updates in equipment and procedures.

Linemen also use personal protective equipment that shields them from the high voltage of electric lines. This includes insulated rubber gloves, sleeves and boots, as well as



Linemen brave heights and tough weather conditions to keep the power flowing in your area.

specially designed tools and insulated vehicles. Each piece of equipment is inspected regularly to ensure that it's intact and able to protect the lineworker from harm.

Q: Aren't power lines along the road insulated?

A: Many people think that overhead power lines along roadways have insulation material around them like the electric cords they see on appliances in their homes. Not exactly. Some low-voltage power lines are insulated; however, high-voltage distribution and transmission lines are not insulated. That's part of the reason they are suspended so high in the air—and it's the reason broken lines are so dangerous when they're down on the ground. All power lines can be deadly and should be treated with caution.

Q: Why do linemen choose such a hazardous line of work?

A: Lineworkers understand that their career choice might seem strange to other people, especially when they're outside working on lines in freezing conditions or driving rain. The reasons vary from one lineman to the next, but many say they enjoy the mastery of a complicated skill and the satisfaction of being challenged daily by work that is never repetitive. Some appreciate being part of a hardworking brotherhood. Others love the excitement and fulfillment of being called on to come through in an emergency. Nearly all linemen agree that the best aspect of their work is the opportunity to help their neighbors when things look darkest.

Every member of the cooperative benefits from the courage and dedication of our lineworkers. Please help us honor these "high-wire heroes" April 10 as we celebrate National Lineman Appreciation Day.



GOT POWER? Thank a lineman.
Celebrate **NATIONAL LINEMAN APPRECIATION DAY** April 10. #thankalinenman