

The Value of Electric Cooperatives

Why being a member of a co-op saves you money



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER ALAN LESLEY

THERE ARE THREE MAIN TYPES OF electricity providers in the United States. Investor-owned utilities, also known as IOUs, primarily serve densely populated areas. Municipal-owned utilities, or MOUs, serve cities from the very large, such as Dallas, to the very small, such as Goldsmith (population 270). And of course, there are electric cooperatives, such as CECA, that primarily serve less populated parts of the country.

In the utility business, population matters. Because the costs are similar to serve any given area, more customers means more people to share the cost, keeping rates lower. At least that is the theory.

The density of service recipients is distributed this way, according to the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association: MOUs, which operate in cities and towns, have the greatest density at 48.3 customers per mile of line, generating an average of \$113,301 of revenue per mile of line annually. IOUs follow with 34 customers per mile of line, generating average revenues of \$75,498. Finally, electric co-ops average 7.4

members (not customers, but members) per mile of line, bringing in an average of \$14,938 in revenue per mile.

CECA serves 1.85 members per mile each year, generating \$6,025 of revenue per mile.

If I were to give this data to any business school in the country and ask, based on this information, what the rates should be for each of the utilities, the answer would likely be that electric co-ops should have a rate 7.5 times greater than MOUs and 5 times higher than IOUs.

However, that is not the case. Why not? It has to do with the respective business models. IOUs are owned by outside investors who may or may not be users of

the electric utility they own. These companies' stocks are traded on Wall Street, and those investors demand a return on their investment. This drives up the price that their customers pay. Many municipal systems charge rates that generate a "profit" for their cities to help pay for other services.

CECA operates on a nonprofit basis. Of course, we must generate enough revenue to cover costs (the largest being wholesale power), but we don't have to charge rates high enough to turn a profit for outside stockholders.

Because our members are our owners, we can provide safe, reliable and affordable power to you. That is just another way your co-op brings you value.



The cooperative business model helps keep electric rates reasonable for members, who often live in the less-populated areas of Texas.



Landscaping for Savings

AS FLOWERS BLOOM AND TREES fill out with leaves, many Texas homeowners think about landscaping projects in spring.

A well-designed landscape can save enough energy to pay for itself in less than eight years by lowering maintenance costs, reducing water use, protecting the home from extreme temperatures, and helping to lower noise and air pollution.

Shading is the most cost-effective way to reduce solar heat gain in your home and cut air-conditioning costs. An effective landscape can reduce an unshaded home's air-conditioning costs by 15–50 percent.

Deciduous trees planted south of a home can screen 70–90 percent of sunlight. Shorter trees planted on the west side help shade windows from afternoon sun. Bushes and shrubs or climbing vines on a trellis can shade patio areas. And low shrubs and groundcover plants help cool air before it reaches your home.

If you determine how much water your plants need, you won't overwater. Group plants with similar watering needs together, and water in the early morning hours when water evaporates less.

Aerate your soil to improve water flow to roots and reduce runoff. Use mulch to keep plant roots cool, minimize evaporation and reduce weed growth. And during warmer months, raise the cutting height of your lawn mower blade. Longer blades of grass help shade each other and retain water.

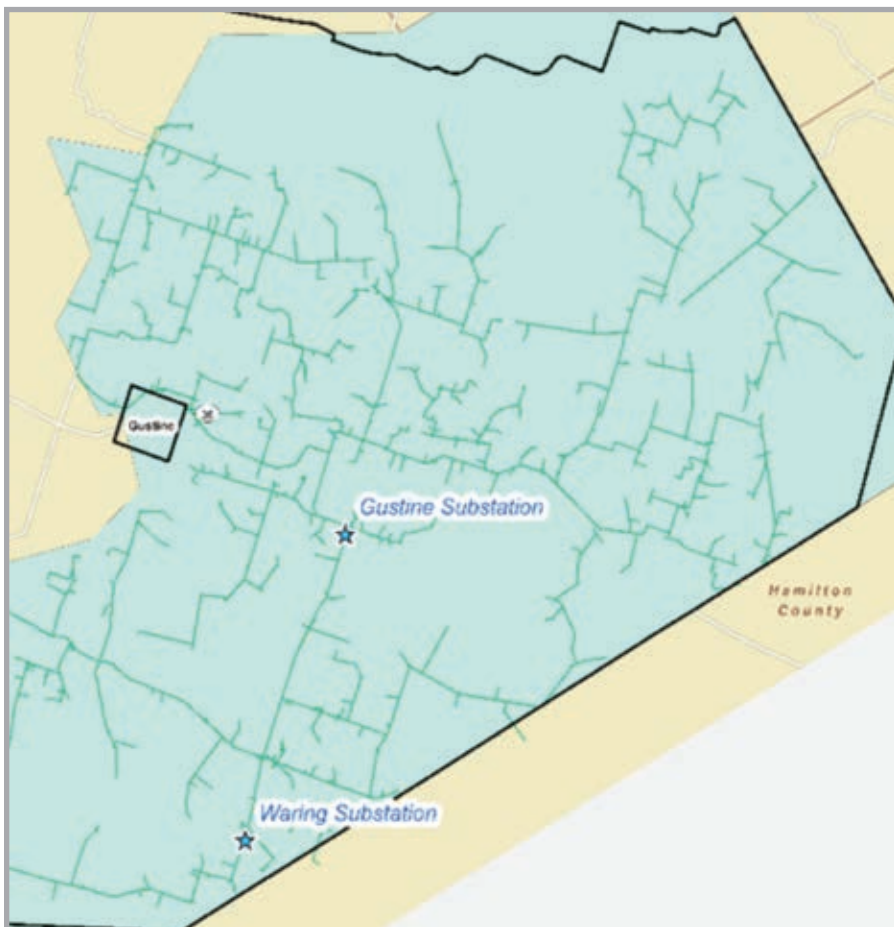
CECA AMI Installation Update

CONTRACT CREWS WITH TEXAS METER DEVICE, an experienced electric system installation service out of Waco, will be installing new, updated electric meters in the CECA service area. Crews are currently or will be replacing all of the meters in areas serviced by the Leon and Gorman metering points and the Gustine substation. This area is depicted on the map below.

The installation of the new meters will cause a brief service disruption lasting no more than a couple of minutes or less, in most cases.

All meters on the CECA system must be changed out. Therefore, each meter location in our service territory will be visited by TMD at some time. As this project progresses, we will continue to inform the CECA membership through Texas Co-op Power about where crews are or will be working.

Should you have questions or concerns about this project, you may contact CECA's metering department at 1-800-915-2533 or via email at meterdata@ceca.coop.



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

(325) 356-2533 local or
1-800-915-2533 toll-free

FIND US ON THE WEB

www.ceca.coop

 facebook.com/CECA.coop



Senior Skylar Chasteen captured the moment perfectly and won honorable mention in the photography division with his image titled “The Coming Clash in Weather and Football.”

Blanket ISD Dominates Creative Arts Competition

BY SHIRLEY DUKES

Ask Blanket ISD cross country coach E.W. Burt what challenges he faces in a small school, and he will tell you this: “The biggest challenge is funding for technology. We are a somewhat poor district.”

That is why, when an opportunity presents itself, he jumps straight in with both feet. Such was the case when he heard about the Six-Man Heaven Arts Contest.

The Six-Man Heaven Arts Contest was created in 2008 by Teresa Burkett and Granger Huntress as a way to address the increasing challenges of art in public schools due to extreme budget restraints. During the process, the students share their “perspectives on the relationship between six-man football and community life.”

Burt first heard about the program in 2011, when he received a letter from the organization. Because he is not one to waste time sitting around, he immediately got his students involved. Seventh-grader Hope Heard won first place in poetry that year,

See “Creative Arts” on page 22



Members of the 2015 Blanket ISD Six-Man Heaven Arts Contest team, from left: Luke Kinkade, Gabriel Cardenas, Skylar Chasteen, Sadie Musick, Coach E.W. Burt, Kaleena Burt, Kenzie Tidwell, Blake Hood, Marki Kinkade, Caley Bundick, Aaron Milner, Hope Heard, Bethany Wigham. The team brought home \$1,300 in award money to be utilized for technical equipment, plus six trophies, the most won by any school in a single year.



Blanket ISD sophomore Hope Heard won first place in poetry with this submission.

*It starts the second you hit the grass. In that second you know.
This is the very last game you will ever play.
Six-Man, funny,
more like "brotherhood"
You have
laughed
cried
vomited
bled
fell in love
and grown
all on this field.
Since freshman year you have become one with six-man.
And now here you are
these
refs
coaches
bystanders
are telling you
this is the last chance to show me what you have
flip a coin
run a ball
throw a spiral
and it's funny
while they say this
they are also saying men don't cry
but why is it in this moment
when I'm running the ball in the final play of my final game
in the six-man state championship game
I'm shedding a tear of joy in one eye
and sadness in the other.*

HOPE'S WINNING POEM was her third since Blanket ISD had been entering the contest. "For me, personally, it was difficult thinking of something new and not repetitive with the last year I did it," Hope said. "I knew what I wanted to say, but wasn't quite sure how to transfer it onto paper successfully.

"I obviously had never played football, but some of the guys I go to school with would kill for the sport, so I imagined what it was like to play your very last football game, and went with it. I respect the players a lot more after picturing the guts it takes every game to step onto that field.

"I am also really thankful to the seniors at my high school for being so passionate about football and giving me an outlook of playing that last game.

"I've always loved to write—not poetry in particular, but the Six-Man Heaven Arts Contest has given me the chance to step outside of my comfort zone and become a better writer. I will never be able to accurately describe my gratitude to not only my teacher, Coach Burt, for giving me the opportunity to participate in such a great contest, but the support from my family, school and community in my success.

"Winning more than once has also given me some confidence in my writing, and I hope, someday, I can become an author."

— Hope Heard, Blanket ISD, Grade 10

Creative Arts continued from Page 20

and eighth-grader James Frink received an honorable mention with his photograph depicting the chaos of a Friday afternoon pep rally.

The results were enough to keep Burt focused on the following year, when eighth-grader Caitlyn Valdez received an honorable mention for her poem. By 2013, the students were on a roll. Heard, now a freshman, again won first place with her poetry, and students won honorable mention in three categories: junior Mattie Cowder, sophomore Lexi Torres and sophomore Guadalupe Myers with their website design; and eighth-grader Selena Valle and seventh-grader Hyler Slayton in poetry.

By this time, the enthusiasm of the students was at an all-time high, and they felt the need to once again improve upon their prior year's success. Burt said, "In the words of Emerson: 'Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.' The excitement grew as the students challenged each other to be more creative and to go further. When their hard work paid off and they won—pure elation."

School year 2014 turned out to be the best yet for the students of this tiny school of 197 students when they brought home four first-place awards and two honorable mentions, plus \$1,300 in prize money. The first-place awards went to: junior Sadie Musick, sophomore Garry Cowder, sophomore Garret McDaniel and "producer" sophomore Aaron Milner for best historical film; eighth-grader Bethany Wigham for photography; sophomore Hope Heard for poetry (see her poem on Page 21); and "producer" sophomore Crystal Turner and vocalists freshmen Blake Hood, Christen Nietnamer, Marki Kinkade, Kenzie Tidwell, Emily Furry, Caley Bundick, Luke Kinkade, and Gabriel Cardenas and sophomores Kaleena Burt and Rhionna Cornell in music. Honorable mention awards went to sophomore Kaleena Burt in website design and senior Skylar Chasteen in photography.

"We compete against schools that have huge budgets for their tech classes," said Burt. "We beat schools that used video cameras that cost \$5,000 with [our] camera that cost less than \$100. All of our video and photography software is freeware. Our classroom computers are approaching 10 years old. Our tech class has no discretionary tech budget, unlike richer schools that may have budgets that range up to tens of thousands of dollars.



Eighth-grader Bethany Wigham won first place with this photo titled "Injured Player Watching the Game."

"Our students used innovation and creativity to offset this disadvantage and beat other schools that had a clear technology hardware and software advantage. They found a way not only to win, but to dominate."

Burt's pride in his students was clear as he continued, "We offer no art or music class in high school or junior high, yet we found a way to win the music award and get honorable mention in the Web design, which takes a good deal of art ability. In short, challenges are nothing more than opportunities to overcome adversity."

The \$1,300 in prize money will be used to purchase much-needed technical equipment for the school.

All film, website, poetry, photography and music projects can be viewed in their entirety by visiting sixmanheaven.org.

Blanket ISD is the only school in the history of the contest to win awards in all five categories. No doubt, the entire community of approximately 400 citizens are extremely proud of the accomplishments of these students. At CECA, we hope that they will continue this excellent streak of winning!

Get Smart About Standby Power

OUR LIVES ARE FULL OF electronic devices—at home, at work, at school and on the go. Some of these electronics are probably costing you money, even when they are turned off, because of standby power.

Standby power is the energy that is used by a device when it is turned off but still plugged in. Standby power can be useful when it powers remote control sensors, clock displays, cordless phones, satellite TV modules and the like. However, if you have a device plugged in that doesn't need standby power, then you could be wasting your hard-earned money.

Here are steps you can take to reduce the amount of standby power your home uses:

Unplug your devices. For some devices, it might be more trouble than it is worth to unplug, like clocks or cable and satellite television boxes that hold programmed information. However, unplugging devices that are seldom used, like secondary TVs or mobile device chargers, can keep you from wasting money.

Enable power management settings. Most computers and many peripherals have some sort of power management settings that will allow devices to go into a sleep mode to save energy when they are not being used.

Use a power strip. By plugging your entire entertainment or computer system into a power strip, you can flip one switch and shut down all the components.

Another money-saving option is the use of smart power strips. A smart power strip has some outlets that are always on, and some that control other outlets on the power strip. Outlets that are always on are just like those on a regular power strip outlet. These outlets are where you plug in things that should not be powered down—for example, a modem or backup power supply on a computer system, or the cable box on a home entertainment system. The control outlet, situated next to the regular outlets, determines whether the remaining switched outlets on the strip are powered on or off.

Using the home entertainment example, if the TV is plugged into the control outlet and turned on, then the rest of the switched outlets on the smart power strip will also power up. Devices like a DVD player, surround sound system or other items that are plugged into these outlets will be powered up. When the TV is turned off, everything plugged into the switched outlets will be powered down, saving you money.

Unplugging power cords is a good way to reduce standby power waste, but be sure to do it correctly. Always grip and pull on the plug—never the cord itself.



Did You Know?

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May is National Electrical Safety Month. It's a perfect time to take a look around your home and notice any lamps, toys, appliances, electronics, cords, plugs or outlets that need repair or replacement to prevent fire, shocks or other electricity-related hazards.



CECA WISHES YOU
A HAPPY
**MEMORIAL
DAY**

MONDAY, MAY 25
OUR OFFICES WILL BE
CLOSED IN OBSERVANCE
OF THE HOLIDAY