



What Makes a Utility Great?

MESSAGE FROM
GENERAL MANAGER ALAN LESLEY

PERIODICALLY, THE QUESTION COMES UP in discussions: What makes a utility—or any other company—great? There's an easy, one-word answer: People.

People make a utility great, and electric cooperatives know that. Electric co-op employees consistently deliver a higher level of customer service than any other type of electric utility in the country. Even research conducted by our competition gives us higher ratings than investor-owned and municipal utilities.

That fact alone makes co-ops good providers of electric service. It is the spirit of cooperation among people, however, that makes Comanche Electric Cooperative unique and a great utility.

Co-op members all across the country give their local co-op employees high marks for understanding their local needs and having the flexibility to meet their individual needs. Co-op employees also get good grades for delivering state-of-the-art service and caring about consumers and the communities they serve. Research shows that co-ops get strong ratings from consumers for their commitment to local

service, innovation and community.

Today, in Washington, D.C., legislation is being debated that could ultimately damage the ability of local co-ops to provide the great service and affordable rates that you have come to expect. But all electric co-op employees, in one way or another, are fighting to protect you from these potentially damaging changes.

The trust and loyalty electric cooperatives have earned give them the ability to continue to work for your best interests.

Comanche EC staff, management and directors are united in their efforts to provide you with the best service available anywhere in the country, and they will fight any change that prevents them from doing that.

Electric cooperatives have known all along that to be a great utility, you have to make people your first priority. To be successful in this business, you have to care about the people you serve.

America's electric cooperatives have a strong record of caring about people—a record that cannot be disputed. That record makes us a great utility.

*Cultivating a
Brighter Future
in Your
Community*



See Pages 22 and 23 to find out how CECA is involved in the communities we serve.

Save on Summer Cooling

SUMMER IN TEXAS heats up quickly, so why pay more for electricity than you have to? The less you use, the more you'll save. Here are some easy ways to pare down your use of electricity this summer:

1. Move lamps, the TV or any other heat-emitting electric appliances away from your thermostat. The heat can trick the thermostat into "thinking" it's hotter in the house than it is. In response, it will work harder to make the house colder than it needs to be.
2. If you're still using leftover incandescent lightbulbs, switch to compact fluorescent bulbs or LED fixtures and bulbs. The newer bulbs emit less heat and use less electricity when they're turned on.
3. Turn the air conditioning up to 78 degrees. If you usually run it at 72 degrees, you can save between 6 and 18 percent on your cooling bill by warming it up, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.
4. Plant trees outside of windows on the sunny side of your house. The shade can save you up to \$250 a year.
5. When you turn on your AC, turn on your ceiling fans, too. Running them together will make your house feel 4 degrees cooler—so you can raise the thermostat by 4 degrees. Turn fans off when you leave a room; fans cool people, not the air.
6. Lower the temperature of your water heater to 120 degrees. That will save you money, and it's safer than a higher setting because 120-degree water won't scald anyone.
7. Give your oven and stovetop a break on hot days. Use the microwave oven, a toaster oven or an outdoor grill instead, and you'll cut your energy use—plus you'll put less unneeded heat into the house.
8. Early summertime is no time to coop yourself up indoors with your computer. Turn it off and enjoy the great outdoors. But don't leave the computer on when you walk away; that wastes up to \$75 a year in electricity.



**HAPPY
MOTHER'S DAY**
SUNDAY, MAY 8

**Motherhood: All love
begins and ends there.**
—ROBERT BROWNING



**CECA WILL BE CLOSED
MONDAY, MAY 30, FOR
MEMORIAL DAY**

We thank all veterans
for their service



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.ceca.coop



facebook.com/CECA.coop



IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Through the Operation Round-Up program, CECA members are making a difference in the communities in which they live, work and play. For more information on the program, please contact CECA at 1-800-915-2533.



Heart of Texas Children’s Advocacy Center is a child-focused center that coordinates the investigation, prosecution and treatment of child abuse while helping abused children heal. Pictured from left are: Jennifer Yeats, HOT family advocate; Christy Robinson, HOT executive director/forensic interviewer; and Michelle Wells, CASA in the Heart of Texas executive director.



Caring Hearts for Children is a nonprofit agency that is licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. They provide child-placing, assessment and transitional living services to children placed in care by the DFPS. Pictured from left are: Heather Leach, program administrator; Brent Hagood, executive director; and Leann Hagood, office administrator.



The Ark Domestic Violence Shelter is a center for victims of domestic violence and/or sexual assault, providing survivors with the resources to become independent of their abusers. The Ark serves Brown and Comanche counties. Pictured from left are: Terri Densman, executive director, and Angela Ontiveros, finance director.



Rising Star Youth in Service is a group of high school juniors dedicated to improving their city. The students are organizing the community to clean up, repair and improve the Rising Star City Park. Pictured from left are: Barbara Long, Rising Star principal; and students Noah Simpson, Kaylee Meador, Jessica Reyes and Jacob Carnley.

EMPTY BOWLS



CECA employees donated time to the Good Samaritan Ministries of Brownwood to paint bowls for their Empty Bowls Project.

CECA EMPLOYEES HAD A GREAT TIME painting bowls for the Good Samaritan Ministries of Brownwood. Eight employees met after work one evening, enjoyed food and fellowship, and painted 12 bisque bowls to be fired at a later date and used in the Good Samaritan Empty Bowls Project.

The Empty Bowls Project is an event to raise money for and increase awareness of hunger. At the event, diners choose a hand-painted ceramic bowl and dine on a simple meal of soup and water. The empty bowl is theirs to serve as a reminder of those in our own community with empty bowls and empty stomachs.

Ninety percent of the proceeds go to the hunger ministries of Good Samaritan Ministries: Food Pantry, Food for Thought,

Deer Project, Pig Project, Homebound Program and food boxes for the homeless. Ten percent is tithed to an organization that fights hunger internationally.

The 2016 Empty Bowls Project was held Thursday, March 24, at the Brownwood Coliseum. More than \$27,000 was raised to help combat hunger in Brown County and internationally. This included a donation from CECA's Operation Round-Up program.

For more information on the Brownwood Good Samaritan Ministries programs, or to make a donation, call (325) 642-2273, email office@goodsambwd.org, stop by at 305 Clark St. in Brownwood or visit www.goodsambwd.org.

Painting bowls for the Good Samaritan Empty Bowls Project are, from left, top row: Shelley Thedford, Elizabeth Weathermon and Brenda Carroll; and bottom row: Mary Johnson, Nancy Isham and Jennifer Hanson. Not pictured are Rachel Ford and Shirley Dukes.



SHIRLEY DUKES/CECA





Summer in Texas is quickly approaching, and as we all know, there is no shortage of ways to entertain the family in the Lone Star State!

But what if you are not looking for the thrill of a roller coaster or the sun and sand of the beach?

What if you are just looking for a quiet place away from all the hustle and bustle to share some quality family time?

Well, look no further. Nestled in the countryside, just outside the city limits of Mullin, lies the perfect location:

The Duren Hotel

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY DUKES



BASED ON THE MEMORIES of some local residents, the stately edifice now known as The Duren Hotel was originally built at Williams Ranch, 3 miles south of Mullin. It was then moved into town, where it sat next to the railroad tracks across from the site of the Mullin Depot.

Historical documents show the establishment to originally have been the Star Hotel, owned by J.R. Eaton. It is said to have changed hands a number of times and was finally purchased by Dock McNeil in 1915, at which time the name was changed to the McNeil Hotel. It eventually became a boarding house, famous for its sumptuous meals, and it remained so until reaching the end of its usefulness and subsequent retirement.

The old structure fell into disrepair and was left to rot, lonely and neglected, watching as the occasional train raced past its once-bustling doorway, like so many structures we see dotting our countryside, their usefulness and history long forgotten. Thankfully, its story does not end there.

Warren Duren was raised in the Duren community, and he and his wife, Oleta, graduated from school in Mullin. In the early 1900s, weekdays were dedicated to hard work, with a Saturday trip to town serving as a reward for a long, hard week and a much-needed trip for supplies.

Duren remembered partaking of his evening meal as a child at the hotel, and those memories invoked a fondness that remained with him to adulthood. So when the building came on the market in 1985, Duren's interest was piqued, and soon the weathered and battered old hotel was his.

"It came on the market," said Sherill Duren, daughter-in-law to the late Warren Duren, "and he thought, 'Hmmm ... I just built a lake out there at my ranch. It might be a cute thing out there.'"

In 1985, Warren and Oleta moved the near-ancient structure to its current home, about 2 miles west of its original location. The outside of the building had recently been repainted and repaired, but the inside was still in a state of disrepair. The Durens began the process of renovating and upgrading, and soon the building was in a habitable state. Though they never

actually lived in it, the old hotel became their second home.

In 2004, Phil Duren, son of Warren and Oleta, and his wife, Sherill, inherited the property and several years later began a complete remodel of the building.

"We tried to save as much of the old features as we could," Sherill said. Old beams in the first-floor sitting room still grace the ceilings, as do beadboard and shiplap ceilings in the remaining rooms. The elegant staircase leading upstairs still boasts all original stair treads, with the exception of the bottom one, which had to be replaced.

The first- and second-floor rooms retain their original state as much as possible, with only minor changes and upgrades. Old wallpaper was removed to reveal shiplap, which has been left untouched in some rooms and whitewashed in others. The balcony is still in its earliest state, with only the flooring being replaced over the years.

The first floor houses two small sitting rooms, one containing the elegant staircase to the upper area of the hotel. A gas fireplace has been added. "They apparently just used old stoves of some kind," Phil said. "In some rooms, you can see where the old stove pipes were vented out."

Behind those two rooms is what was once a great dining room. Phil says his dad remembered it being an enormous room with many large tables where families and travelers would gather for meals. From the history they have been able to piece together, the kitchen was a detached structure behind the hotel.

With the remodel came the need for a functional kitchen, so the large dining area was replaced with a kitchen, laundry room and bathroom. An outdoor deck was turned into a sun porch with ample seating for large groups at mealtime.

The second floor is home to the five bedrooms that were rented out during the early days of the hotel. The doors and door frames had to be replaced, but aside from this, the rooms are still very near their original state, with beadboard ceilings and shiplap walls. Each room is graced with windows overlooking beautiful scenery, and a door at the end of the hallway leads



Owners Phil and Sherill Duren take great pride in sharing the majesty of the hotel and the properties with others. "We think it's kind of our mission to have families come out and share with nature and spend family time that's quality," Sherill said.



The grounds also host a newer cabin with four bedrooms and two baths. This beautiful addition sleeps 10 and is the perfect place for overflow from the hotel or as a stand-alone rental for smaller groups.

From the beadboard ceilings to the shiplap walls, each bedroom boasts its own charm. Bedrooms 1 and 2 face the lake and offer their residents a coveted panorama of the splendor of nature. In bedroom 2, Sherill repurposed the original bedroom doors into a one-of-a-kind headboard. Bedroom 6 was originally an attic. However, during the first remodel by Warren Duren, the attic was opened up and made into a child's room with two twin beds that feature matching alcoves on each side of the attic.

to the balcony with a picturesque view of the exquisite lake and grounds.

The third floor of the hotel was originally an attic, but Warren thought that it was just too much space not to use, and during the first remodel opened it up to make a cozy sleeping room. This adorable loft room houses two built-in twin beds, a window seat, desk and play area that are favorites with the kids.

The building and grounds stay rented out much of the time. "We enjoy the groups that come," Sherill said. "We have one family that all their kids have been baptized out here. We have other groups that come year after year. We have one that's probably been coming for 20 years. And all their kids grew up here. They can learn to hunt and fish and boat and swim. We have two canoes and two boats and a paddleboat and two kayaks, so there's a lot of water activity in the summer."

Phil and Sherill are now retired, and the venue gives them plenty to do in their spare time. Phil is a retired banker, having worked in Goldthwaite and Waco. Sherill is a retired Goldthwaite schoolteacher and recently retired a second time as a legal assistant with Baylor University. They have four grown children and six grandchildren.

The hotel, at 220 CR 549 in Mullin, will easily sleep 14. If additional space is needed, the cabin can also be rented to house an additional 10 people.

For more information, contact Phil or Sherill at (512) 608-3135 or (254) 235-0522, or visit their Facebook page at [facebook.com/TheDurenHotel](https://www.facebook.com/TheDurenHotel).

A special thank-you to the Mills County Museum for their assistance in obtaining the history of the hotel.



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In addition to reunions and family gatherings, the Duren Hotel is a favorite in the area as a wedding venue. The stunning grounds can be decorated and used in almost any way imaginable: under the oaks, next to the water, in the front yard or in any one of the open grassy areas.