



## Line Crews Keep the Lights On

A message from your CEO,  
Varzavand "Avan" Irani

Electricity travels along an intricate network of wires and poles to power our homes and businesses. Most of the time, it's a seamless journey, but occasionally, the path of electricity is disrupted by obstacles like fallen tree branches, animals or car accidents. When that happens, Nueces Electric Cooperative's (NEC) lineworkers are ready to restore that connection no matter the weather or time of day.

We couldn't carry out our mission without the daily dedication of our line crews. It's a demanding job on the front line of our co-op that often requires working around the clock in challenging conditions to serve our members and communities. They are first responders who get us through some of our darkest hours. We count on them to power our lives, day in and day out.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association officially acknowledged the tireless efforts of this talented group with this 2014 resolution:

*Whereas linemen leave their families and put their lives on the line every day to keep the power on;*

*Whereas linemen work 365 days a year under dangerous conditions to build, maintain and repair the electric infrastructure;*

*Whereas linemen are the first responders of the*

*electric cooperative family, getting power back on and making things safe for all after storms and accidents; and*

*Whereas there would be no electric cooperatives without the brave men and women who comprise our corps of linemen;*

*Therefore be it resolved that NRECA recognize the second Monday of April of each year as National Lineman Appreciation Day and make available to electric cooperatives materials and support to recognize the contributions of these valuable men and women to America's electric cooperatives.*

We proudly join with NRECA and cooperatives across the country to honor lineworkers and show our appreciation and respect for the service they provide for our members.

NEC's lineworkers, as well as those from across the nation, truly deserve this special day of recognition. We invite our members to take a moment to thank a lineworker for the work they do. Leave a message for them on our Facebook page and use the hashtag #ThankALineman to show your support for the men and women who light our lives.

Energizing South Texas for the past 80 years. That's the Cooperative difference.



# Lineman Appreciation Day

Thank You

Although we only take one day out of the year to formally say “thank you” to our linemen, safely delivering power takes 365 days a year of hard work and sacrifices. On April 13th, Nueces Electric Cooperative (NEC) will join cooperatives from across the nation to celebrate Lineman Appreciation Day.

We would like to proudly recognize the 23-lineworkers at NEC for everything they do. We would also like to say thank you to all the past lineworkers who have contributed to the strong electrical infrastructure that ensures safe and reliable power to our homes.

While reflecting on this past Winter, we are especially thankful for the lineworkers who kept the power on and our heaters running. Anytime we would post pictures or videos to our social media accounts the outpouring of gratitude was overwhelming. It takes a special individual to work with their bucket raised high in the air while winds are howling or the sun is blazing, but that speaks the level of commitment our lineworkers have to serve our members.

Two of the biggest challenges that our lineworkers face are working safely, and in remote areas. NEC has taken many steps to ensure

our safety equipment and training are in line with the top of the industry standards. “Our top priority at NEC is safety,” said NEC Safety and Loss Control Manager, Joe Huerta III. “Our lineworkers have tough jobs, and they serve a large area to bring power to our community. Our goal is to make sure that each of our lineworkers makes it home safe to their families.”

Currently, NEC’s service territory is over 2,887 square miles. That pencils out to 126 square miles per lineman. To effectively service an area this large, our lineworkers use teamwork and long hours to serve our members.

The next time you see an NEC lineworker – be sure to thank them for keeping the lights on. But more importantly, thank them for the hard – and oftentimes dangerous – work they do, day in and day out.

Use #ThankALineman or #ThankALineworker in your social media posts on April 13th to show support for our NEC lineworkers who make our lives easier every day.

Two of NEC’s certified lineworkers, Joe Rivera and Christopher Tiner.



# Employee Service Awards

Dedicated To Our Members



Albert Pena, 30-years



Pete Ramirez, 30-years



Jesus Olivarez, 10-years



Richard Padilla, 10-years



Cynthia Garza, 10-years



Roxanne Pina, 10-years



John Guzman, 5-Years



Dominique Cortez, 5-years



Vladimir Lobanov, 5-years



Bill Gun, 5-years



Joanna Prado, aPHR Certification



LaRae Martine, aPHR Certification



Joe Huerta III, Certified Loss Control Professional designation



Sarah Fisher, recognition of service



Jared Brackin, Employee of the Year



2019 Employees of the Month

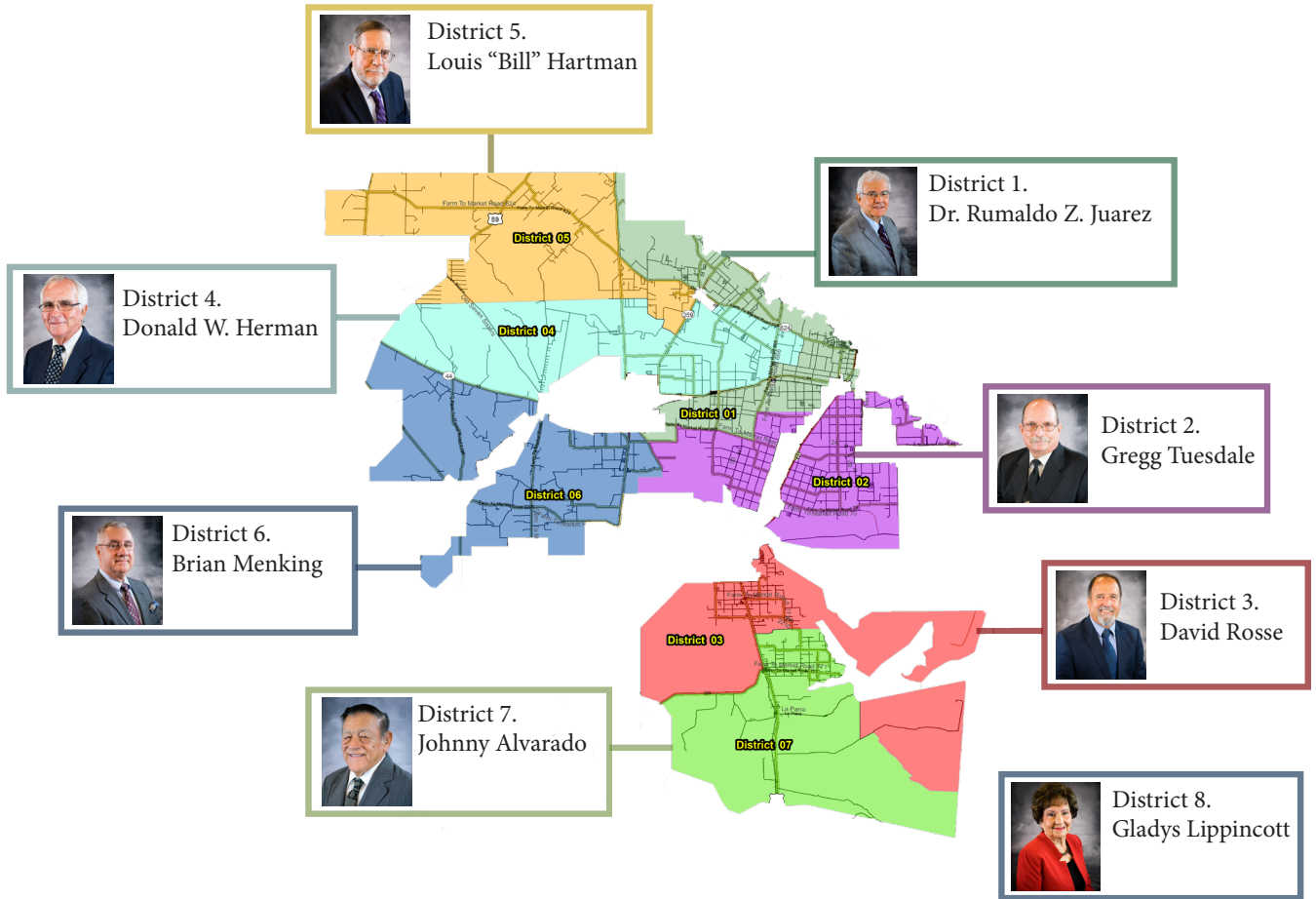
It takes a team of dedicated, skilled, and talented employees to keep the Nueces Electric Cooperative running smoothly. At the 2020 Employee Service Awards, we honor the NEC employees for their years of service and outstanding 2019 accomplishments.



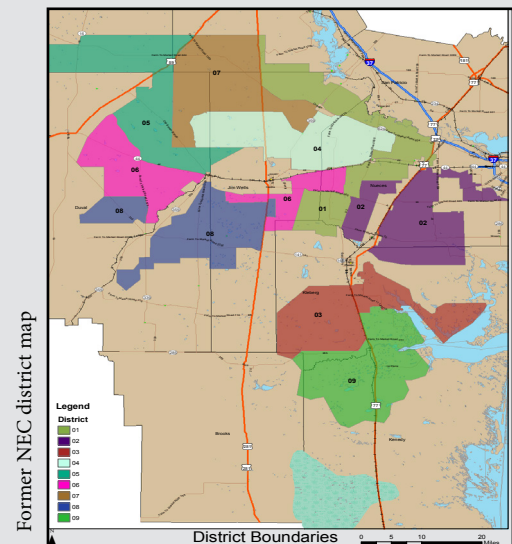
Mary Pavelka, 40-years



# New 2020 Board Districts



Due to the retirement of District 5 Director, Maxine Stewart, and the tragic death of District 6 Director, Thomas Ermis in 2019, NEC reviewed the size of its Board of Directors and District boundaries relative to other cooperatives. The review revealed that reducing the Board size would more closely align with the number of directors of similarly sized cooperatives. Therefore, the decision was made at the January 2020 board meeting to eliminate both of these director positions and continue with an eight-member board of directors. This change also provided the Board Directors an opportunity to review NEC's current district boundaries. After reviewing the potential impact on membership, the Board of Directors decided at the February 2020 Board meeting to re-draw the NEC district boundaries. This change, illustrated above, will allow the cooperative to save operating costs and improve director accessibility.





## Life Support: Make Plans in Case of an Outage

For people who rely on life-support equipment at home, a power outage could be a matter of life or death. NEC maintains a “residential critical care list” that includes consumers who have a member of the household on life-sustaining equipment and for whom a power interruption may be dangerous and life-threatening. For those who qualify, when possible and reasonable, NEC makes an effort to notify these individuals in advance of a planned outage or known pending emergency situation. “Whenever you sign up for NEC’s critical care list, we make it a priority to alert you of potential outages,” said Member Care Manager, Rhonda Bell, “You can call our office or go to our website to download the forms. Take these to your doctor and they will fax it over to us.” If you or someone in your home depends on an electrically operated health aid, take these steps to prepare for power outages.

- Plug electronic devices into surge suppressors and consider using uninterruptible power supplies on important devices. A UPS acts as a temporary battery backup to some devices.
- Consider investing in a portable generator that can power vital equipment in the event of an extended outage.
- Make arrangements to move in temporarily with friends or family, or even go to a hospital during a power failure if a generator is impractical.
- Keep an adequate supply of prescription drugs and medical equipment on hand
- Visit our website: <https://nueceselectric.org/content/critical-care-renewal-letter> to download the critical care renewal form.

## Administrative Professional Day

Wednesday, April 22, 2020, is Administrative Professional Day! This holiday was created by the president of the National Secretaries Association – Mary Barrett – in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

In 1952, U.S. Secretary of Commerce Charles Sawyer declared the first week of June to be Secretaries Week, and the Wednesday in that week to be Secretaries Day. In 1955, Secretaries Week was then changed to the last week of April. In 1981, the day was changed from secretaries day to Administrative Professionals Day to incorporate not only secretaries into the holiday but a myriad of professional and administrative assistants.

The professional and administrative employees at NEC play a huge role in making sure the cooperative runs smoothly. These employees wear many hats, from handling appointments, speaking with customers, and managing paperwork, just to name a few.

However, most of their work goes unnoticed and not many people are aware of the skills required to do their jobs well. Administrative Professionals Day aims to thank those who work as secretaries, assistants, and other employees who try their best at everything they do.

Today, the day is not only celebrated in the United States but is celebrated all over the world.

We say thank you to all those who provide support. You are greatly appreciated.





ANDREY POPOV | ISTOCK.COM

## Monitoring Energy Use at Home

As consumers, many of us try to find ways to save energy. But determining how and where energy is being used in your home can be difficult. Luckily, a new generation of home energy monitors is available, and these monitors promise useful insight into how we use electricity.

For several years, consumers could purchase energy monitoring devices that tracked how much energy an appliance was using, but the monitors had to be connected to each appliance individually, one by one. The devices couldn't be linked together and were time-consuming to install.

Newer energy monitoring devices improve on that concept by incorporating the breaker panel. (It's important to note you should consult with a licensed electrician before performing any work on your home's breaker panel.)

These new monitors can automatically recognize appliances within the home. Then, consumers can log into their account, either online or via an app, to view a breakdown of each appliance. The device may prompt you to verify individual devices, or it may ask you to manually input the identity of an appliance. But over time, as the monitor is exposed to different appliances, it will become better at automatically recognizing them.

Once properly configured, the monitor can provide a customized energy use report for the home.

You may be wondering if home energy monitors actually save energy. They do not. They simply provide information on your home's appliances and how they use energy. But you can use this information to identify energy hogs (like that spare freezer in the garage) that might need to be replaced or eliminated.

Some of the more popular home energy monitoring systems on the market today include Sense Energy Monitor, Efergy Elite, Eyedro, Aeotec and Neuroio. Different systems provide different levels of reporting. A whole-home energy monitoring system typically costs between \$100 and \$300, plus installation.

If you're looking to optimize your energy use, home energy monitors can be helpful tools. But remember, they are not a magic bullet, and you will need to act on the information provided by the system.

## NEC Distribution Service Tariff Changes

The following tariff changes were approved by the NEC Board of Directors on February 25, 2020.

### Section 2: Rates & Charges

- Update lighting tariff 203.6 Security/Street Light Service to remove new mercury vapor option and add LED pricing options. The Co-op no longer offers new mercury vapor lighting and has added new LED lighting to its products.
- Correct numbering of Section 202.18 to 203.18.
- Add tariff 203.9. Unmetered Service to allow billing for devices attached to street lighting under the photocell which use additional electricity
- Amend Section 205.11 Tampering with Cooperative's Meters, Equipment or Other Property and Unauthorized Use of Electric Service to reduce the minimum tampering charge from \$3,000 to \$300

### Section 3: Service Rules & Regulations

- Amend Section 306.8 Interest on Deposits to change interest rate NEC pays on member deposits from local market rate +1%, adjusted monthly, to the PUCT's annual required rate updated annually in/around November.
- Amend Section 309.1 Availability of Deferred Payment Plan to change the late payment penalty from 7% to 5% as allowed by the PUCT.
- Update Section 311. Procedures When Overbilling or Underbilling Occurs to change from 1% per month to the PUCT's annual required rate updated annually in/around November
- Amend section 312. Billing and Terms of Payment to update the Cooperative's address.
- Amend Section 313.2 Residential, Farm, Ranch, Small Commercial and Community Public Buildings to reduce the records retention requirement from 10 years to 5 years, and reduce the extension rebate period from 10 years to 5 years
- Amend Section 313.3 Large Commercial, Industrial, and Oil Wells to correct a typographical error ("thall" to "shall")
- Amend Section 313.6 Stock Watering Wells, Rectifiers, Radio and Microwave Towers to reduce the contract term and records retention requirement from 10 years to 5 years, and reduce the extension rebate period from 10 years to 5 years
- Amend Section 313.7 Subdivisions & Ranchette Development, to require a 911 address for each lot, to specify that developers are responsible for payment of all facilities required by political subdivisions (e.g. street lighting), to provide for refunds to builders, not just developers, and to point to organization policy for the refund amount and agreement details.

Please review the full tariff at:  
<https://nueceselectric.org/content/transparency-and-your-cooperative>

# 2020 Christmas Card Contest

**EXTENDED!**

## RULES:

Entries must be hand-drawn and follow the contest theme of combining electricity or lineworkers with a Christmas or holiday component. All entries must be received by ~~5 p.m. on Thursday, January 23, 2020.~~

**DEADLINE EXTENDED to 5 p.m. on Wednesday, July 8, 2020!**

All submitted works must be an original concept and not a copy of anyone else's copyrighted material. If your image infringes upon another's copyright, it will be disqualified. Upon submitting your work to NEC for this contest, you are solely responsible for any infringement on copyrighted materials. Artwork must be delivered to the NEC offices or emailed in a JPG format that does not exceed 1MB. This one-page submission form must also be completed and returned with the artwork submission to be considered a complete entry. All artists must be dependents of a current member of NEC. Children 17 and under are eligible to participate. One grand prize winner and one runner up will be determined in each of the three age categories, listed below. Winners will be announced in the August edition of Texas Co-op Power magazine. The three grand prize winners will each receive a \$100 electric bill credit and a \$100 Wal-Mart gift card. The three runner ups will each receive a \$50 electric bill credit and a \$50 Wal-Mart gift card. NEC will also determine which of the winners' artwork will be featured on the 2020 NEC Christmas Cards. Visit [www.nueceselectric.org](http://www.nueceselectric.org).

## CIRCLE ONE:

**8 & Under**

**9 - 13**

**14 - 17**

ARTIST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ AGE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_

PRIMARY ACCOUNT HOLDER NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

NEC ACCOUNT #: \_\_\_\_\_

By submitting this entry for the NEC Christmas Card Contest, I signify that the submission is an original work that I allow NEC to reproduce online and in print.

ARTIST SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_



## Payment Options:



### Pay Online

[www.nueceselectric.org](http://www.nueceselectric.org)

Access your account 24 hours a day from any computer to view usage, make payments or manage your account. Just click on "Pay Your Bill", on the left side of our Homepage and it will take you to the SmartHub account portal.



### Pay With Your Smart Device

Download the SmartHub app to your iPhone or Android device. View usage, weather impacts, make payments and manage your account any time of the day.



### Auto Draft:

Sign up to have your bank account or credit card drafted for your monthly bill. You can sign-up via your SmartHub online account.



### Equal Payment Plan

Through this payment program, a member's usage is averaged for the year and the member makes equal payments each month. See more information and sign up online under the Member Services -> Payment Options menu tab, or call the office.



### Pay by Phone:

800-NEC-WATT (800-632-9288)



### Pay in Person:

Pay your bill at any one of our Customer Service centers located in Calallen, Ben Bolt, Ricardo or Orange Grove.



### Pay by Mail:

P.O. Box 659821, San Antonio, TX 78265



### Pay at the Payment Kiosk

Quick, easy, and accessible 24 hours a day, the Kiosk is located at the Calallen office. Payments post immediately to your account.



### Payment Services

Pay using any Fidelity Express Pay Stations or for an additional \$1.50 service charge. Search online to find a payment station near you.



## Nueces Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Find us on the web at:  
[www.nueceselectric.org](http://www.nueceselectric.org)

Call us at:  
361-387-2581 or 1-800-632-9288

### Your Elected Board of Directors:

Brian Menking, District 6, President  
Bill Hartman, District 5, Vice-President  
David Rosse, District 3, Secretary Treasurer  
Johnny Alvarado, District 7  
Gladys Lippincott, District 10 (Retail)  
Donald Herrmann, District 4  
Gregg Truesdale, District 2  
Rumaldo Z. Juarez, District 1

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M-F 8 - 12/ 12:30 - 4

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123 CR 1026, Ricardo, TX  
M-W-F 8 - 12 / 12:30 - 4

Orange Grove Service Center:  
Office no longer open

Use the NEC Outage Viewer to view outages 24-hours a day with any device.  
The Outage Viewer is located on the homepage our website.

## NEC Power Providers

PLEASE NOTE: The (CRs) listed below have completed the process to qualify and are currently serving NEC area members. This provider list is subject to change. For the most up-to-date list of providers, please monitor our website [nueceselectric.org](http://nueceselectric.org) or you can obtain a list from any NEC office.

AP GAS & ELECTRIC  
APOLLO POWER & LIGHT  
BLUESTAR ENERGY  
CHAMPION ENERGY SERVICES  
CONSTELLATION ENERGY  
CORAL POWER SOLUTIONS  
DYNEGY  
ENERGY TRANSFER  
ENERTRADE ELECTRIC  
HINO ELECTRIC  
MPOWER /MP2  
NEC CO-OP ENERGY  
TENASKA  
ENCOA (TERM)  
SMARTCOM ENERGY SERVICES  
STARTEX POWER  
SOURCE POWER & GAS  
V247

COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL  
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