



NEC INSIGHT

Empowering Communities



Our Co-op Family and Community Remains Strong

A message from your CEO,
Varzavand "Avan" Irani

This month, I'd like to take the time to say thank you to our members. Although these are difficult and uncertain times, Nueces Electric Cooperative remains strong and concern for our community drives everything we do. We are grateful for your understanding, patience, and cooperation as we work together to overcome this public health crisis.

Your local electric cooperative is here for you and we're ready to provide the best electric service possible, even during these unprecedented times. Our call centers, drive through, dropbox, kiosk and digital services are available.

As always, you can pay your bills digitally, by using our website, www.nueceselectric.org, or by calling 361-387-2581 and speaking with one of our member service representatives. We understand that the COVID-19 outbreak may create hardships for our members. If you are facing a hardship as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, give us a call and we will work with members on a case by case basis.

I also want to take this opportunity to encourage all of our members to make sure that NEC has your most up-to-date contact information on file. Many of you have been members of the co-op for years, and likely, your account information hasn't been updated for some time. We use a

variety of media to spread important information to our members, including mass emails and phone messages. Make sure this information is up to date so we can inform you of co-op news, event details and more.

You should also look out for suspicious emails, phone calls, or persons impersonating business employees or charitable organizations. Unfortunately, scammers take advantage of opportunities such as this when households are otherwise preoccupied. If you get a call from someone claiming to represent NEC and they make threats or demand immediate payment, hang up and call our office to report the situation.

This public health crisis has taken a toll on all of us, but Nueces Electric Cooperative is here just as we have been for more than 80 years. We are in this together. NEC continues to monitor the situation and work closely with local leaders to ensure the future of our communities remains bright.

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





Current Contact Information Means Better Service

At Nueces Electric Cooperative, we are constantly striving to improve our efficiency so we can provide the most reliable electric service possible for our members (that's you!).

We rely on data for nearly every aspect of our operations, which is why we need your help. By making sure we have your most accurate and complete contact information, we can continue to provide the high level of service that you expect and deserve. Accurate information enables us to improve customer service and enhance communications for reporting and repairing outages. It also allows co-op members to receive information about other important programs, events and activities.

Up-to-date contact information can potentially speed up the power restoration process during an outage. For

example, the phone number you provide is linked to your service address in our outage management system. This means that when you call to report an outage, our system recognizes your phone number and matches it with the location of your home. Accurate information helps our outage management system predict the location and possible cause of an outage, making it easier for our crews to correct the problem.

While we always do our best to maintain service, we occasionally plan outages to update, repair or replace equipment. In these instances, we can provide advance notification to affected members through automated

phone messages, text messages or email—but only if we have your updated contact information and communication preferences.

Keeping the co-op updated with your information also helps us when there's a question about energy use or billing. Emails and text messages are also used to notify registered members of any changes in co-op event details. In addition, discrepancies on your account can be taken care of promptly if Nueces Electric Cooperative has accurate account information.

Many of you have been members of the co-op for years, and it's likely that your account information hasn't been updated for some time. Many members now use a cellphone as their primary phone service, and we might not have that number in our system.

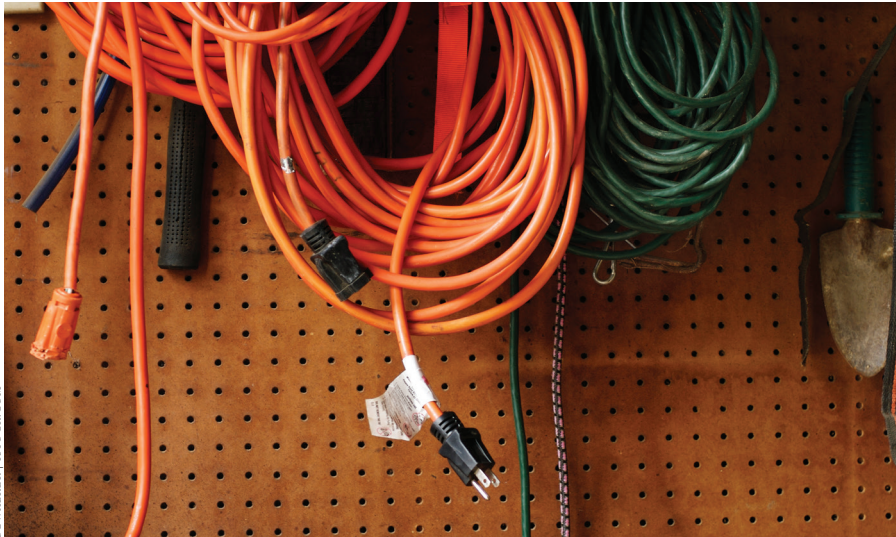
We will never share this information with any third parties. It is only used by Nueces Electric Cooperative to send important information to you. Please take a moment to confirm or update your contact information through our website or by phone. By doing so, you help us improve service and efficiency so we can better serve you and all members of the co-op.



Head Outdoors Safely

When the weather warms up, gardeners and do-it-yourselfers head outdoors. If that includes you, here are five tips for working safely with and around electrical equipment.

1. Look up before setting up a ladder to paint or climb on the roof. Your ladder should not come within 10 feet of an overhead power line. Touching a power line with anything puts you at risk of injuries or worse.
2. Unplug your power tools when you're finished using them. A plugged-in tool could overheat and cause a fire. Unplugging saves energy because anything that's plugged in continues to draw some electricity, even when it's not in use.
3. Don't use damaged tools, even if they still work. Tools with frayed power cords or cracked parts are dangerous.
4. Water and electricity do not mix. Don't use your hose while you have power tools plugged in nearby. If the grass, garage or patio is wet, don't use an electric tool while standing in or on it.
5. Teach your children how to work and play safely around electricity. Caution them about climbing trees or flying drones too close to power lines. Remind them to never touch a power line in the air or on the ground with anything.



RGWALKER | ISTOCK.COM

Reminders for National Electrical Safety Month

Every day, we rely on electricity to power our homes and offices. However, it can be easy to take for granted the safety of electric appliances, equipment and power lines. May is National Electrical Safety Month—a great time to raise awareness of how to avoid potential electrical hazards.

Indoors

- Check electric cords for fraying or cracking. Replace cords that may be damaged, and don't overload electric outlets.
- Extension cords are intended to be temporary. If you find yourself using extension cords regularly, have an electrician add outlets where you need them.
- Don't run cords under carpets or rugs and don't tack or nail cords to walls or floors.
- Keep electric appliances and tools away from water. Never reach for or unplug an appliance that has fallen into water; instead, turn the power off at the breaker before you unplug the appliance or remove it from the water.
- Never put anything other than an electrical plug in an outlet. Use outlet covers or caps to protect children.
- Keep your home's electrical system in good repair. Contact a licensed electrical contractor if you have flickering lights, sparks or nonfunctioning outlets, or need wiring repairs or upgrades.

Outdoors

- Never touch downed power lines.
- Always call 911 or your electric cooperative if you see lines down.
- Watch for overhead lines every time you use a ladder, work on roofs or in trees, or carry long tools or tall loads. Keep kites, drones and metallic balloons away from power lines.
- Know what's below before you dig. Call 811 three days in advance of your project to have underground utility lines, pipes and cables marked for free.
- Avoid planting trees underneath power lines or near utility equipment.



NATTHANIM | ISTOCK.COM

MAY HOLIDAYS

Cinco de Mayo

Tuesday, May 5

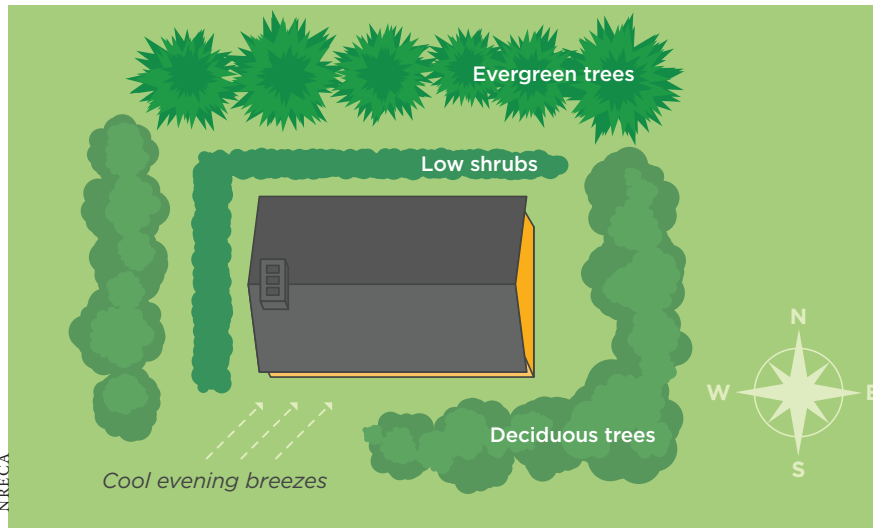
Mother's Day

Sunday, May 10

Memorial Day

Monday, May 25

Our offices will be closed in observance of Memorial Day.



Finally getting to that landscaping project you've been planning?

Always contact 811 before putting a shovel in the ground, or you could disrupt power or internet. Call 811 or go to your state 811 center's website before digging.

Call811.com/811-your-state



The Power of Planting

The decisions you make and the steps you take in planning your home's landscaping can help you stay cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter. With summer just around the corner, let's look at how strategic planting can help cool your home.

Direct sunlight hitting windows is a major contributor to overheating homes during summer months. By planting trees that block sunlight, you can improve comfort and reduce your air conditioning use. If the trees eventually grow tall enough to shield your roof, that's even better.

The most important windows to shade are the ones facing west, followed by windows that face east. Also, an eave on the south side of your home can help shade your windows during midday sun.

If you live in a colder climate, planting deciduous trees, which lose their leaves in the fall, will shield your windows in summer and allow sunlight in during winter to help warm your home. A simple approach that can deliver some shade the first year is to plant a "living wall" of vines grown on a trellis next to your home.

One cooling strategy is to make sure your air conditioning compressor has some plants near it—but not too close. The compressor should have 5 feet of space above it and a 2- to 3-foot gap all the way around so that it gets enough air to do its job.

Choosing native plants and trees that require minimal watering can contribute to your savings.

Landscaping can provide similar impact in cold months. A solid windbreak can cut harsh winter winds. The best solution for this is a solid row of trees (preferably evergreen) on the windward side of the home, with shrubs underneath the trees to keep the wind from sneaking through. In warmer climates, you don't want a wind barrier as wind flow will help cool your home.

If you live in a climate that isn't too humid, planting a row of shrubs a foot from your home can provide more efficiency. By stopping air movement, it can form a dead air space around the home that acts as "bonus" insulation. In a humid climate, however, leave several feet of space between landscaping and the home as airflow is necessary to avoid moisture-related home damage.

Before you begin any landscaping project that requires digging, remember to dial 811 to ensure all underground utility lines are properly marked.

Nueces Electric Cooperative encourages homeowners to take the following steps when planning a digging project this spring:

- Always call 811 a few days before digging, regardless of the depth or familiarity with the property.
- Plan ahead. Call on Monday or Tuesday for work planned for an upcoming weekend, providing ample time for the approximate location of lines to be marked.
- Confirm that all lines have been marked.
- Visit www.call811.com for complete info.

Everyone who calls 811 a few days before digging is connected to a local one call notification center that will take the caller's information and communicate it to local utility companies. Professional locators will then visit the dig site to mark the approximate location of underground utility lines with spray paint, flags or both. Once a site has been accurately marked, it is safe to begin digging around the marked areas.



ANDY DEAN PHOTOGRAPHY | ISTOCK.COM

Remodeling? Keep Energy Efficiency in Mind

Sunny days are prime time for tackling remodeling projects, upgrades and repairs around your home. If you're planning a project, make a point of adding energy efficiency features along the way. Here are a few ideas:

- Add insulation around recessed lights so heated or conditioned air doesn't leak out of them and the weather can't sneak in.
- If you're replacing your water heater, consider a solar-powered or tankless model. Both save energy and money on water heating bills.
- Install programmable thermostats when you add rooms to the house. While you're at it, have the thermostats in the rest of your home upgraded to programmable models.
- Your contractor will install more insulation in any new spaces you're adding than your builder did during the original construction of your home. Consider adding insulation to already-insulated areas, like the crawlspace and attic, to meet new energy efficiency standards.
- A new kitchen means shiny new appliances. Select those rated as energy efficient by Energy Star, which use less energy than unrated models.
- If your older home still has single-pane windows, consider an upgrade. Double-pane windows are more energy efficient because they better shield your home from the outdoors—and keep your conditioned air indoors.
- Replace old lightbulbs in your most-used rooms with LEDs. They last 10 years or longer and save considerable energy when compared to incandescent bulbs.
- Work with a contractor who understands how passive solar design can affect your energy bills. Rooftop solar panels, sunrooms and skylights are popular additions.
- Consider having a home energy audit conducted. Audits can help you evaluate your home for energy wasters, suggest ways to remedy inefficiencies and recommend additions that will make your house more comfortable and cheaper to heat and cool.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH



RICK PATRICK

Breakfast Cookies

- 2 cups unsalted butter, melted
- 2 cups light brown sugar, packed lightly
- 3 cups sugar, divided use
- 6 eggs
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups quick-cooking oats
- 2 cups Texas pecan pieces
- 12 ounces bacon, cooked crisp and roughly chopped
- 4 cups flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1 1/2 tablespoons baking powder
- 4 cups cornflakes
- 2 tablespoons cinnamon

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a large mixing bowl, mix butter, brown sugar, 2 cups sugar, eggs and vanilla until well blended. Fold in oats, pecans and bacon. Add flour, salt and baking powder, mixing well. Add cornflakes and mix until combined evenly. Do not overmix.
2. Drop cookie batter onto parchment at least 1 inch apart using a 4-ounce scoop. Flatten each cookie into a 2-inch disc.
3. Mix cinnamon and remaining sugar. Sprinkle atop each cookie. Bake 10–12 minutes or until cookies are set but not crunchy.

Makes 36 cookies.

Find this and more delicious recipes online at
TEXASCOOPPOWER.COM



DAVID FREUND | ISTOCK.COM

Ways To Save Water and Electricity

Using electricity efficiently is a good practice and so is conserving water. Here are a few ways you can save water and conserve electricity at the same time:

- Do full loads when you use clothes washers or dishwashers.
- Replace showerheads with low-flow models that save up to 5 gallons per minute
- Showers use less water than baths, so shower and keep it short.
- Fix leaky faucets; small drips add up to big waste.
- Wash clothes and dishes after dark, when overall electricity consumption is lower, helping keep rates more manageable.
- Turn the water off while you brush your teeth or shampoo your hair. You can save 200 gallons a week.
- Save water and reuse it. Collect rainwater, water from your fish tank and even water from half-empty glasses after dinner, and use it to water your plants.
- Cut your grass less often. Longer grass reduces the loss of water to evaporation so your lawn won't dry out as quickly.
- Adjust sprinklers so the water drops only on your lawn rather than on driveways, sidewalks and roads.
- Drain a bucket of water from the bottom of your water heater twice a year. The tank can fill with sediment, which separates water from the heating element and causes the appliance to be less efficient.
- Invest in and install an inexpensive water heater blanket or insulation kit, especially on older water heaters. Do not insulate over doors or vents.
- Set your water heater's temperature to 120 degrees or lower. This prevents scalding and standby heat loss and can lower your water heating bill by 10%.
- Insulate hot water supply pipes to reduce heat loss.



LANOLIAN | ISTOCK.COM

We Invite You To Give Us a Hand

We're not asking for applause. We're asking you to help us spot anything that looks amiss along our electric lines.

Weather conditions and accidents—and sometimes vandals—can dislodge or break a pole. Wires can sag or break.

Though we can't check every mile of line every day, our safety goals can be achieved with your help.

Contact us immediately if you think you see a problem. Our crews will check it out right away.

And you can be sure your help and cooperation will win our grateful applause.

Nueces Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Looking For Fun Activities For Kids to Do At Home?

Enter our Christmas Card Decorating Contest!

With NEC members and their families are spending more time at home, this is the perfect opportunity for kids to engage in a fun, creative activity! Did we mention that winners have the chance to receive a \$100 electric bill credit and a \$100 gift card? See the rules and entry form below to participate!



AARON BUDEN | UNSPLASH.COM

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 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.

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
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

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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Ben Bolt Service Center:
5646 S. Hwy 281 Alice, TX
M-F 8 - 12/ 12:30 - 4

Ricardo Service Center:
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 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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