



MESSAGE
FROM
GENERAL
MANAGER/
CEO

BILLY P.
JONES

Power On: October Is National Co-op Month

A time to celebrate the community we call home

AS AN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, our top priority is always to provide reliable, affordable energy to you, the consumer-members we serve. But our mission extends beyond that. As a co-op, we strive to enrich the lives of our members and serve the long-term interests of our community—a charge that has been more critical in recent months than ever before.

One of the seven principles that guides all co-ops is Concern for Community. To me this principle is central to the DNA of Navarro County Electric Cooperative, and it sets us apart from other utilities.

October is National Co-op Month, and as part of this year’s celebration, electric cooperatives across the country are highlighting the many ways we “Power On.”

Who could have fathomed at the beginning of the year that COVID-19 would test our community and nation? The rapidly changing circumstances caused by the pandemic have created difficulties and opportunities for your co-op. Over the past several months, we’ve been challenged to operate differently, and Navarro County EC has stepped up to help our members and strengthen the safety net for our more vulnerable neighbors.

To ensure the reliability of your power supply, we modified our operations to safeguard business continuity. Our line crews and other employees began working on staggered schedules to maintain physical separation, and some staff worked remotely. We also adjusted our walk-in office availability and in-person service calls to ensure the health and safety of our employees and valued members. We believe these measures were necessary to protect our community. For our members who needed help with their electric bills, we waived late fees and worked with those hardest hit to make special payment arrangements.

I tell you about all of these efforts to explain how much we care about this community—because we live here, too.

While the difficulties caused by COVID-19 have been daunting, I’m heartened to see how our community has pulled together.

More than 80 years ago, Navarro County EC was built by the community to serve the community, and that’s what we’ll continue to do—power on. ■

Raise Energy Awareness

OCTOBER IS Energy Awareness Month, an ideal time to teach children about energy and the role it plays in everyday life.

The U.S. Department of Education suggests using science, art and reading activities to teach children about energy and conservation this month.

Fostering strong connections with energy and technology can create appreciation for the ways energy is a part of children’s lives and helps them be mindful of the need for energy conservation to ensure future well-being.



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Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- ▶ Discover what energy is. Explain the sources of energy and how it is used to do work.
- ▶ Conduct science experiments to demonstrate energy, such as by creating a solar oven or a rain machine.
- ▶ Explore your house for ways to conserve energy: Unplug unused appliances and turn off lights.
- ▶ Color or draw renewable energy sources like solar power, wind power or hydropower.
- ▶ Read about energy in books or online. ■



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Protect Yourself Against Cybercrime

RANSOMWARE, CREDENTIAL THEFT, phishing emails and other attempts at cybercrime are no longer a question of if but of when. It only takes one click on a malicious email, website or attachment to allow access to private information or for a virus to infiltrate a smartphone or computer.

Since October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month, it's a good time to review some simple things you can do to protect yourself from cybersecurity threats.

Keep Your Defenses Up

- ▶ Make sure all your computer software—including your web browser—is updated. Keeping software up to date helps ensure that your system can block cyberthreats that are always evolving.
- ▶ Create strong passwords and keep them private. It can take five days to crack a nine-character password but more than two centuries to crack a password consisting of 12 characters or more.
- ▶ Treat all Wi-Fi networks as a potential security risk. Never check financial or other sensitive accounts when using public Wi-Fi. Encrypt sensitive data when using a public Wi-Fi network.

Don't Fall for a Phish

- ▶ Be on the lookout for emails, phone calls and other messages that try to gain access to your private information. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. If something seems off, trust your instincts.
- ▶ Think before you click! Don't click links or attached files in emails or text messages from senders you don't know. Even if you do know the sender, hover over the link before you click, as the account may have been hacked or someone could be spoofing it. There are many ways to spot a phish, and you can see them all at staysafeonline.org.

Remember, you are your best line of defense against cybersecurity threats. ■

Navarro County Electric Cooperative

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24/7

For information and to report outages, please call us.

Outage Hotline Numbers

LOCAL
 (903) 874-7411

TOLL-FREE
 1-800-771-9095

ABOUT NAVARRO COUNTY EC

NCEC owns and maintains more than 3,000 miles of line to provide electric service to more than 12,000 members in Ellis, Freestone, Hill, Limestone and Navarro counties.

OFFICE HOURS

Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

BILL PAYMENT OPTIONS

- Online at navarroec.com
- Through the SmartHub app
- By phone at 1-855-385-9975
 (Phone payments are not accepted on the NCEC office line.)

TEXAS CO-OP POWER

NCEC provides *Texas Co-op Power* and TexasCoopPower.com to give you information about events, safety, special programs and other activities of your cooperative. If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact the co-op office.

VISIT US ONLINE

navarroec.com

Save Electricity While Working Remotely

AS AMERICAN FAMILIES and businesses transition to remote work to slow the spread of COVID-19, many have seen a surge in home energy use—and in electric bills. Simple money-saving steps can help lower your bills without jeopardizing safety or comfort.

Recommended energy saving tips include:

- ▶ Program your thermostat to maximize energy savings. Setting your thermostat 1 degree lower when heating or 1 degree higher when cooling can reduce energy use by up to 5%.
- ▶ Do only full loads of laundry and wash with cold water. Using warm water instead of hot can cut a load's energy use in half, and using cold water saves even more.
- ▶ Air-dry dishes. This can cut your dishwasher's energy use by up to 50%.
- ▶ Replace incandescent lightbulbs with LEDs. Lighting can amount to up to 12% of monthly energy use. LEDs can cut lighting costs by 75%.
- ▶ Unplug appliances and electronics when not in use. Small appliances and electronics use energy even when not in use. When powered on, game consoles, TVs and similar electronics are responsible for up to 12% of a home's energy use. ■



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Your Unique Source of Power

YOU HAVE A UNIQUE story to tell about yourself because you are part of an electric cooperative community. But if you're like a lot of electric cooperative consumer-members, you might not feel you know enough to tell that story well. So here's some help.

About 1 in 10 Americans receive their power the way you do, from an electric co-op. Electric cooperatives belong to the people they serve—that would be you and your neighbors—and were first formed in the 1930s because major utilities, owned by investors wanting to make a profit, ignored rural America. They didn't think there was enough money to be earned there. So people in rural communities joined forces and formed locally owned electric co-ops.

October is National Co-op Month, the time of year when cooperatives across the country celebrate the many ways co-ops are unique and, more important, the members they serve. This year we're focusing on our ties to the local community. Your co-op was built by the community, for the community, so let's take a look at what that means for you, the members of the co-op.

Your co-op is here to stay. Since the co-op belongs to the members it serves with safe, reliable, affordable energy, it's not going to move out of the country or even across the state. It's staying right where it is.

Your co-op knows you. No two cooperatives are alike. Across the country there are more than 900 electric co-ops. Because each of those co-ops belongs to the people who live there, the co-op listens to the community it is a part of. Whether it's working with the latest energy efficiency technologies or keeping the electric grid safe and secure, your electric co-op can offer solutions that make the most sense in your area.

Your co-op cares about your community. The co-op's top priority is to power the community. It is not owned by faraway, or even nearby, investors looking only for a good return on their money. Your co-op partners with local organizations on community events, fundraisers, youth programs and more. We're your friends and neighbors. By investing in the local community, your electric co-op supports economic development and prosperity for all, right here at home.

And these are just a few ways you and your electric cooperative are one of a kind. ■



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Remodel With 2020 Electrical Code in Mind

THE NATIONAL ELECTRICAL CODE is revised every three years and outlines the minimum requirements for safe electrical installation. Many older homes may not have an adequate electrical system to meet the demands of today. If you're renovating your home, Electrical Safety Foundation International recommends having the following electrical safety devices installed to maintain a safe home.

Arc-Fault Circuit Interrupters

Available as circuit breakers and receptacles, AFCIs prevent electrical fires caused by malfunctions. The Consumer Product Safety Commission says that about half of all home electrical fires can be prevented by proper AFCI protection.

Surge Protective Devices

These devices protect against surges that can damage or reduce the life span of your electrical system and devices.

Ground-Fault Circuit Interrupters

Also available as circuit breakers and receptacles, GFCIs protect against electric shock and are required in areas where water may come into contact with electricity, such as bathrooms.

Tamper-Resistant Receptacles

These receptacles function like normal receptacles but include an internal shutter system to prevent foreign objects from being inserted into the outlets.

The 2020 National Electrical Code outlines the following protections in specific areas of the home.

Bathrooms: GFCI protection

Basements and crawlspaces: AFCI protection (finished basements) and GFCI protection (crawlspaces at or below grade)

Bedrooms: AFCI protection

Common rooms (family, dining, parlor, libraries, dens, recreation and similar rooms): AFCI protection

Garages: GFCI protection

Hallways and closets: AFCI protection

Kitchens: AFCI and GFCI protection (in areas where the receptacles are installed to serve countertop surfaces or are installed within 6 feet of a sink)

Laundry areas: AFCI and GFCI protection

Outdoors: GFCI protection

The 2020 National Electrical Code also requires:

- ▶ All receptacles in homes, garages, accessory buildings and common areas of multifamily homes must be protected by tamper-resistant receptacles.
- ▶ New and replaced service equipment is now required to be protected by type 1 or type 2 surge protective devices.
- ▶ Outdoor emergency disconnects are required for new construction and homes having their service replaced. ■